

ITALY

Archaeological Areas of Pompei, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata

Brief description

When Vesuvius erupted on 24 August A.D. 79, it engulfed the two flourishing Roman towns of Pompei and Herculaneum, as well as the many wealthy villas in the area. These have been progressively excavated and made accessible to the public since the mid-18th century. The vast expanse of the commercial town of Pompei contrasts with the smaller but better-preserved remains of the holiday resort of Herculaneum, while the superb wall paintings of the Villa Oplontis at Torre Annunziata give a vivid impression of the opulent lifestyle enjoyed by the wealthier citizens of the Early Roman Empire.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription 1997

Agency responsible for site management

- Superintendence for archaeological heritage of Pompei
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2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C (iii), (iv), (v)

Justification provided by the State Party

Pompeii is the only Roman city to be preserved in such an exceptional way. Pompeii shows the visitor a full picture of a Roman town from the First century B.C. until the First Century A.D., in all of its aspects: urban, architectural, decorative, etc.

Herculaneum was constructed on a promontory overlooking the Gulf of Naples. In the city, which has an orthogonal plan, 7 insulae have been excavated. They are rich in houses decorated with highly refined wall-paintings and marble pavements, such as the House of the Stags, the House of the Mosaic Atrium, The House of the Bicentenary and the House of the Wooden Partition. Several public buildings have also been

discovered, such as the Central Baths, the Suburban Baths, the College of the Priests of Augustus, the Palestra and the Theatre. The presence, in numerous houses, of furniture in carbonised wood due to the effects of the eruption is characteristic of Herculaneum.

The Villa of Poppea is preserved in exceptional way and is one of the best examples of residential roman villa. The Villa of Cassius Tertius is one of the best examples of roman villa rustica.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

Qualities: Owing to their having been suddenly and swiftly overwhelmed by debris from the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79, the ruins of the two towns of Pompei and Herculaneum are unparalleled anywhere in the world for their completeness and extent. They provide a vivid and comprehensive picture of Roman life at one precise moment in time.

Recommendation: That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii), (iv), and (v):

The impressive remains of the towns of Pompei and Herculaneum and their associated villas, buried by the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79, provide a complete and vivid picture of society and daily life at a specific moment in the past that is without parallel anywhere in the world.

Committee Decision

Bureau (June 1997): The Bureau recommended the Committee to inscribe this property on the World Heritage List on the basis of cultural criteria (iii), (iv) and (v). The impressive remains of the towns of Pompei and Herculaneum and their associated villas, buried by the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79, provide a complete and vivid picture of society and daily life at a specific moment in the past that is without parallel anywhere in the world.

Session (1997): The Committee decided to inscribe this property on the basis of criteria (iii), (iv) and (v), considering that the impressive remains of the towns of Pompei and Herculaneum and their associated villas, buried by the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79, provide a complete and vivid picture of society and daily life at a specific moment in the past that is without parallel anywhere in the world. The Committee asked Italy to submit a progress report in time for the Bureau meeting in June 1998, on the management measures taken at Pompei, with particular reference to experience gained through planned partnerships between the State

and private enterprises, as well as information concerning the protection of the environment surrounding the area.

- Statement of significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: adequate
- The buffer zone protects the non state surrounding areas near the sites from interventions which could compromise the use of the same area. For the site of Pompei it has been fixed by the law by ministerial decree 1929, while for Torre Annunziata (Oplontis) the archaeological bonds are established by the conservation law Cultural Heritage and Landscape Code. For the site of Ercolano, where most of the ancient city is under the modern city, and then difficult to bind, it is the Territorial Plan for the Coordination of the Province of Naples, adopted preliminary in 2003, which identifies a vast buffer zone for the protection in the modifications expressed in Regional Law 16/04 "Rules about the territory government". Territorial Plan for the Coordination of the Province of Naples is nowadays almost definitive approved

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained
- The Superintendence executed in Pompei further significant excavations in Insula IX 12 (insula Casti Amanti) with the discovering of new valuable houses full of very instructive proof of life and organization of the ancient world. At Herculaneum the Superintendence continues excavations in Villa dei Papiri and put to light the street that links the Villa to the rest of the excavations, with discovering of buildings of great interest. In the restoration field the Superintendence is progressively replacing reinforced concrete, improperly used during the second middle of the last century, with proper stuff compatible with ancient structures and easily reversible. All these works have been improving the conditions of integrity of the archaeological properties also raising the monuments' level of authenticity

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- All the three archaeological sites are State property. In general the Site, as part of the

cultural and archaeological heritage, is under the state protection regulations (Legislative Decree 22 January 2004, n. 42 Cultural Heritage and Landscape Code)

- Concerning Pompei, the expropriation of a part of land between the Villa dei Misteri and the necropolis of Porta Ercolano allowed to physically link the villa to the rest of the excavations
- The protection arrangements are considered highly effective

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction

Management /Administrative Body

- The Italian Government gave the deputy Ministry of Cultural heritage and Activities the task to verify the setting up a Foundation for the site
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national
- The current management system is highly effective

5. Management Plan

- Management plan under preparation; timeframe: 10/2006

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- State Budget; Region budget
- European Community (POR)
- Incomes from the tourist flow according the economic autonomy of the site
- Sponsors
- Sufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 700

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- Very good: conservation, management, promotion, interpretation, education, visitor management

8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques

- A scientific research centre, a museum, a library, an educational centre, a restoration laboratory. In general the site is directly linked with the other structures of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities, and with its specialized centres (Central Institute for the Restoration, Central Institute for the Catalogue and the Documentation). Within a radius of 30 Km there are six Universities, many specialized libraries, archives, high qualified research centres, museums and many culture centres
- Museum conservation facilities, etc.
- Training available to stakeholders

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 2.450.483 (counterfoils of the issued tickets), 2003; 2.633.576 (counterfoils of the issued tickets), 2004
- Visitor facilities: info point; Bookshop; Audio-guides; Tour guide; Bar; Restaurant; ATM; School booking service; School guided tours and educational documentation for schools; Maps and brief guides; Thematic routes; Periodical exhibitions; Special events; visits night (Not guided) and with a show of sounds and lights; Theatre shows; Animation; Conferences; Meetings
- Visitor management: different tours; different entrances; limited entrances for some houses

10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment; studies related to the value of the site; monitoring exercises; condition surveys; archaeological surveys; visitor management; transportation studies
- The studies and the maps help in establishing the properties for the restoration and the needs of upkeep, besides the different opening of the single sites, and the use of suitable materials for the restoration. The mentioned studies are the basis for the writing of the Management Plan, at the moment in progress

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem is not used on publications

- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, businesses, local authorities
- Education strategy; through lessons to the local schools and through lessons to schools of the territory, thematic visits, "adoption" of a particular monument on behalf of schools, publications for students of different levels
- Web site available

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- An important program for restoration of the main archaeological monuments of the site was carried out. In Pompei remarkable excavations were carried out in the insula IX 12 and at Herculaneum in the Villa of Papyrus. At Pompei excavations were also carried out in the areas of the necropolis. Different universities from many nations made archaeological stratigraphic sages. At Pompei new tours have been created for a better allocation of the tourist flow. At Herculaneum a Museum will be opened in the next future
- Present state of conservation: Good

Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressure, natural disasters
- Specific issues: The conurbation of the site of Herculaneum. The risk of eruption of the Vesuvius

Emergency measures taken:

- Reducing pressure: expropriation and demolition of some uninhabited old houses at the northern side of the ancient city
- Monitoring of the Vesuvius: there are not yet effective remedies in case of eruption. It is only possible the transportation of archaeological materials in places far from the Vesuvius

13. Monitoring

- No formal monitoring programme
- Measures taken/planned: the Archaeological Superintendence for Pompei, according to the Plan for management, is working with the collaboration of the three involved municipalities to identify indicators of monitoring. It considers the map of the preservation state of the site a starting point

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: management, increasing of the visitors, creation of a Management plan
- Strength/Weaknesses of management: volcanic threat, atmospheric degradation characteristic of an open-air museum

Future actions:

- Saving archaeological materials: transportation of the archaeological movable materials, kept in places far from the areas under volcanic threat. Organisation responsible: Superintendence for Archaeological Heritage of Pompei. Timeframe: in case of threat of eruption
- Protection of human life and reduction of material damages: the "Linea Guida per la Pianificazione Comunale d'Emergenza" (Guidelines for the Planning of the Municipal Emergency) (according to the law of the President of the Cabinet Office of 27/2/2004; and the regional law n. 877 of 8/2004) have as aims the protection of human life and the reduction of material damages. Organisation responsible: Civil Defence. Timeframe: ongoing