

# ITALY

## Archaeological Area of Agrigento

### Brief description

Founded as a Greek colony in the 6th century B.C., Agrigento became one of the leading cities in the Mediterranean world. Its supremacy and pride are demonstrated by the remains of the magnificent Doric temples that dominate the ancient town, much of which still lies intact under today's fields and orchards. Selected excavated areas throw light on the later Hellenistic and Roman town and the burial practices of its early Christian inhabitants.

### 1. Introduction

**Year(s) of Inscription**

**1997**

### Agency responsible for site management

- Archaeological and Landscape Park of the Valley of the Temples  
Strada Panoramica dei Templi  
92100 Agrigento, Sicily, Italy  
E-mail: [parcodeitempli@regione.sicilia.it](mailto:parcodeitempli@regione.sicilia.it)  
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### 2. Statement of Significance

**Inscription Criteria**

**C (i), (ii), (iii), (iv)**

### Justification provided by the State Party

L'art, l'histoire et la nature ont rendu célèbre ce lieu dès l'antiquité jusqu'à nos jours selon témoignages des écrivains classiques (Pindaro, Polibio, Diodoro Siculo, etc.), des historiographes du XVI<sup>e</sup>-XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle (Fazello, Cluverio), des artistes et voyageurs du XVIII<sup>e</sup>-XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle qui nous ont laissé des textes et des images mémorables. Il suffit penser à Houel, Saint-Non, Denon, Swinburne, Brydone et, surtout, à Goethe dont les pages plus émouvantes de l'« Italianische Reise » sont consacrées aux beautés naturelles et artistiques de Agrigente.

### As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

Pindar described the Agrigento of his day as "the most beautiful of mortal cities." Many contemporary visitors would echo his views, because of the magnificence of the site and the quality of the excavated remains. The temples in particular are among the most impressive and best preserved from the Greek world.

In view of the fact that the modern town covers only a relatively small part of the area of the ancient city, the vast area proposed for inscription on the World Heritage List may be considered to have something of the nature of a cultural landscape. The row of great temples is the only significant upstanding monuments; the remainder of the site has preserved the rural setting of fields and orchards, with a handful of vernacular buildings that it acquired with the disappearance of the ancient city.

Recommendation: In the event of the assurance requested by the Bureau being received before its Extraordinary Meeting in November 1997, ICOMOS recommends that this property, as revised, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (i), (ii), (iii), and (iv):

Agrigento was one of the greatest cities of the ancient Mediterranean world, and it has been preserved in an exceptionally intact condition. Its great row of Doric temples is one of the most outstanding monuments of Greek art and culture.

### Committee Decision

Bureau (June 1997): The Bureau referred the examination of this property and requested the State Party to provide assurance for adequate funding for the management and maintenance of the property. In case this information be provided and judged satisfactory by the next extraordinary session of the Bureau, the Bureau recommends the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv).

Bureau (November 1997): The Bureau recommends the Committee to inscribe the property on the basis of criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv). Agrigento was one of the greatest cities of the ancient Mediterranean world, and it has been preserved in an exceptionally intact condition. Its great row of Doric temples is one of the most outstanding monuments of Greek art and culture.

Session (1997): The Committee decided to inscribe this site on the basis of criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv), considering that Agrigento was one of the greatest cities of the ancient Mediterranean world, and it has been preserved in an exceptionally intact condition. Its great row of Doric temples is one of the most outstanding monuments of Greek art and culture.

- Statement of Significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site
- No change required

**Boundaries and Buffer Zone**

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: adequate

**Status of Authenticity/Integrity**

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

**3. Protection****Legislative and Administrative Arrangements**

- As the site is a cultural and archaeological property, it is protected by national law according to the rules of the Legislative Decree n°. 42 of Jan 22 2004 of the Cultural Heritage and Landscape Code. The Gui Mancini Act of May 16th 1968 established the perimeter of the Valley of the Temples of Agrigento, as well as the usage precepts and the building limitations of the area. Moreover the approval of the Park Plan is underway. That plan will also include the renovation and the use of buildings and any activity in the park
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

**4. Management****Use of site/property**

- Visitor attraction

**Management /Administrative Body**

- Steering group. Set up: 3.11.2000. Mandate: 4 years. Legally constituted
- Management under protective legislation; Archaeological and Landscape Park of the Valley of the Temples
- Site manager on full-time basis
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: regional
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

**5. Management Plan**

- Management plan under preparation; to be completed and adopted: 12.2006
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: Archaeological and Landscape Park of the Valley of the temples

**6. Financial Resources****Financial situation**

- Funds from the Sicilian Regional Authority; Tickets and different activities in the Park
- Funds from the EU (2000-2006)
- At the moment with the current funds available it is not possible to open all the visiting areas also on public holidays due to lack of custody personnel and lack of funds which do not allow to pay the salary of any additional staff
- Sufficient for adequate management

**7. Staffing Levels**

- Number of staff: 100

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

- Very good: conservation, management, promotion; visitor management
- Good: interpretation

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

- The Park managing the site has competence with regard to certain classes of actions and its own staffs are skilled in restoration and renovation of monuments, environment and landscape. With regard to excavations, research and promotion, the Park is helped by outside skilled archaeologists and engineers or by different research institutes and universities. A group of experts in planning has been co-operating with the Park for implementing a management plan
- Training available for stakeholders

**9. Visitor Management**

- Visitor statistics: 660.616 (tickets counting), 2004
- Visitor facilities: bookshops and gift shops, toilets, automatic distributors of drinks, a museum and permanent exhibition centres concerning special subjects, a multimedia centre, educational guided tours, auto guides
- Visitor needs: the present facilities should be improved and increased in number, new restaurants, snack bars and car parks are needed

### 10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment; Studies related to the value of the site; Monitoring exercises; Condition surveys; Archaeological surveys; Visitor management
- Preliminary studies to the restoration plan of the monuments of the Valley of Temples; Historical and archive research about the temple of Concord, Juno, Dioscuri; Static studies of the temple of Concord and Juno; Studies and archaeological investigations, re-planning of the temples road; Cartographic elaboration of the Archaeological Park of the Valley of the Temples; Planning and studies about the entrance of the Archaeological Museum of Agrigento through the area of the Ekklesiasterion; Geological investigations of the Barabadoro house in the Valley of the Temples; A computer data bank about research and study in the valley in the field of restoration is being implemented; the research of the latter concerns the creation of a prototype for developing a web site where to publish the scientific data about the remains of the temples of the valley; the result of the studies have produced the knowledge for the lay out of the restoration plans and the gathering of information about the site pursued by the former Monuments and Fine Arts office of Agrigento. It is important to underline that the research is based on a deeper knowledge of the stone material of the Temples and the disclosure of these information in perspective of new restoration plans
- Contacts with the other world heritage properties have increased the research of the values of the site itself and have boosted the study of the monuments and of their state of conservation

### 11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem used on publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, businesses, local authorities
- The site takes part to the "Diasakos" project which acknowledges the high value that Sicily still keeps and makes available to the people. As part of the project it has been created a web site which the wealth, the variety, and the

deeply meaningful features of the Valley of the Temples of Agrigento are described. Our Human kind Heritage monuments aim at attracting students that are not only Sicilian or Italian

- Web site available
- Local participation: The mayor of Agrigento and representatives of other different local associations are members of the Council of administration of the Park

### 12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

#### Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

#### Conservation interventions

- Restoration intervention have been carried out on the main monuments of the Park and especially: Restoration of the temple of Concordia; Restoration and setting of the Ekklesiasterion aiming at fruition; Interventions of structural consolidation have been carried out on the monumental remains of the Porta VI, on a section of the ancient road and on the ridge of the hill of the Temples; Wide archaeological investigations have aimed at reaching a deeper knowledge of some important areas such as : Excavation of the lower Agorà, excavation, fruition and restoration of the areas close to the Porta VI and the Porta VII, archaeological excavation of the Porta V and the fortifications; Archaeological excavations along the axis of the Decumano; More limited explorations carried out in occasion of the above mentioned restoration works have produced relevant results for the history and the tutelage of the site; Routine maintenance works are regularly carried out on every building in order to grand their tutelage. This routine maintenance is extended also to the vegetation and includes ploughing and fertilization of the land owned by the state in the Valley of the Temples
- Present state of conservation: good

#### Threats and Risks to site

- Natural disasters
- In the past the area of the Valley of the Temple has been damaged by the illegal builders. Nowadays there is higher vigilance on this matter thanks to specific laws in town planning (both at regional and national level) and also to the creation of the Park as an independent

body which has erased the problem almost completely

- Since the 1976 landslide the rocky cliff of the Ridge of the Temples has been running seriously the risk of collapsing

Emergency measures taken:

- Reinforcement of the cliff. At the moment the cliff is being reinforced with poles, micropoles and reinforced concrete girders; When the work is completed, the environment will be renovated

Assembly. Organisation responsible: Sicilian Assembly. Timeframe: during 2006

- Partial closure of the roads to the traffic. Closure of the road that goes from the Archaeological Museum of San Nicola to the Porta Aurea roundabout

### **13. Monitoring**

- Formal monitoring programme; because of landslide problems a check up of the edge of the natural limestone balcony where the main buildings of the Valley lay, has been planned after a detailed topographic survey and on the state of conservation of the monuments In the field of management rules which are under realisation, research is underway for finding out the monitoring data which better represent the characteristics of the Agrigento site

### **14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions**

- Main benefits of WH status: Conservation; Economic
- Since the site has been included in the World Heritage List, the local, regional and national communities have taken more into account the importance of the site which as a consequence of that has priority in the field of economic aid. The institution of the Park has been fundamental because it allows to meet the needs in a quicker way through the use of its independent budget instead of forwarding the request to the Regional Monuments and Fine Arts Office as in the past
- Strengths/Weaknesses of management: The weaknesses of the site concern above all the insufficiency of the staff and the risks coming from hydro-geological upheaval (land slides, etc.). Among the weaknesses we must also include the site is divided in sections due to the passage of national, provincial and town roads

#### **Future actions:**

- Recruitment of staff for the Park. There is the chance to stabilize the short term contract personnel that already works for the Sicilian