

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

WORLD HERITAGE LIST

N° 484

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Xanthos-Letoon

Location : Provinces of Muğla and Antalya

State Party : Turkey

Date : December 22, 1987

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria II and III.

C) JUSTIFICATION

Xanthos, the capital of ancient Lycia, and the neighboring and indissociable site of Letoon located five miles away form a famous archaeological complex. Ever since the excavation work carried out from 1838 to 1844 by the Englishman Charles Fellows, the results of which were published in his Travels in Lycia, the monuments at Xanthos have been referred to in all art history textbooks on antiquities. These monuments first became known because of the monumental tombs taken to the British Museum, the most famous being the Nereid Monument, the Harpy Monument and the Payava Sarcophagus.

The Lycians, who were referred to as the Lukka in the Egyptian annals, were one of the "Peoples of the Sea" who invaded the Hittite Empire around 1200 B.C. The Greek legends gave them a place on the fringe of the Homeric cycle. Herodotus relates that under the leadership of one of Minos' brothers they came from Crete to take part in the Trojan War.

Throughout its long history, this ethnic group displayed two apparently contradictory characteristics. In the first place they were extremely loyal to their traditions: the Lycian language was preserved over a very long period of time. And even today the farmers of the region build wooden houses and barns whose structure is comparable to the monuments found in the Lycian rock art tombs. Their second characteristic is their capacity for acculturation. It enabled them to assimilate in turn the cultural contributions of hellenism, transmitted by the Greek colonies located on the Aegean Sea, followed by those of Rome. In 167 B.C. a confederation based in Letoon was formed by Xanthos and a number of other towns. Having

sided with the Romans against Mithridates, it enjoyed a privileged status long after Asia Minor was conquered. The Roman Agora rebuilt in the 3rd century A.D. but still dedicated to their twelve Lycian gods is symbolic evidence of this.

The town was still inhabited in the Byzantine period when several basilicas were built. It was only in the 7th century that the Arab raids left the town in ruins.

A long and complex history has left many splendid but at times hard to distinguish remains on the two neighboring sites of Xanthos and Letoon.

East of the Xanthe River, a first monumental zone includes the old Lycian Acropolis, which was remodelled during the Hellenistic and Byzantine periods. At that time a church was built at the North-east corner, while an advanced defensive structure fortified the western side of the citadel along the river. Directly north of the Acropolis stands a very beautiful theater which dominates the roman Agora. To the west one can distinguish the ruins of a second basilica. This entire area is marked with great Lycian funerary monuments which are characteristic of Xanthos' archaeological landscape and which rise up spectacularly from the ruins.

East of the dirt path that cuts through the site, there is a second more confused archaeological zone that extends between the Vespasian Arch to the south and the Hellenistic Acropolis to the north. This is where the lower part of the town was located; only part of it has been excavated. Several large complexes have been identified such as the Hellenistic Agora and two Byzantine churches.

The archaeological site of Letoon, dedicated to Leto, Artemis and Apollo, includes, in addition to the temple ruins, the ruins of a Nymphaeum dating back to Hadrian. It was built on the site of the sacred source that was at the origin of the creation of the sanctuary. There are other remains of the Hellenistic and Roman periods such as porticos, theaters, etc., coexisting with buildings from the Lycian age which are frequently flooded.

ICOMOS recommends that Xanthos and Letoon be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria II and III.

- **Criterion II.** Xanthos directly influenced Lycia throughout Antiquity, as can be seen for example at the archaeological sites of Patara or Pinara. However, it also considerably influenced the neighboring provinces. The Halicarnassus Mausoleum, which the Ancients ranked as one of the Seven Wonders of the World, is a direct descendant of Xanthos' Nereid Monument.

- **Criterion III.** Xanthos and Letoon bear exceptional testimony to the Lycian civilization both through the many epigraphic texts found on the 2 sites as well as by the remarkable funerary monuments preserved there or originating from the area.

The famous trilingual inscription in Lycian, Aramaic and Greek dated back to 358 B.C. (Year I in the reign of Artaxerxes III Okhos) was discovered near the temple of Artemis in the Letoon. Furthermore, it is in Xanthos and Letoon that one also finds the longest and most important texts in the Lycian language : most of them are carved in rock or on huge monoliths. They cannot be moved and are the major monuments of a unique Indo-European language that disappeared long ago.

The rock art tombs, pillar tombs and pillar-mounted sarchophagi represent a novel type of funerary architecture. The rich series of Lycian tombs in Xanthos and Letoon enable us to fully understand the successive acculturation phenomena that took place in Lycia from the 6th century B.C. on.

ICOMOS Observations

The Xanthos site encompasses an archaeological zone more or less embracing the ancient town. However, a relatively busy dirt path cuts through the site and a rerouting would be desirable. A comprehensive study of the site layout is essential.

As far as the Letoon site is concerned, the protected perimeter is insufficient: the area surrounding the theater is not included and to the south, ruins that are probably from the Early Christian period can clearly be seen emerging from the alluvial deposits. Moreover, no protection has been provided for the vast necropolis zone stretching along the banks of the Xanthe River between Xanthos and Letoon.

Given the intensive farming of these fertile alluvial lands and the recent appearance on the landscape of many greenhouses for tomato-growing, while the proposed demarcation appears compatible with the present situation, it seems to be insufficient in the short term. A management plan, including environmental control and a study of the preservation of the monuments, which are threatened by seasonal rising of the groundwater table at Letoon, is extremely desirable.

ICOMOS, May 1988

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LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

N° 484

A) IDENTIFICATION

Bien proposé : Xanthos-Létôon

Lieu : Provinces de Mugla et d'Antalya

Etat partie : Turquie

Date : 22 décembre 1987

B) RECOMMANDATION DE L'ICOMOS

Que le bien culturel proposé soit inscrit sur la Liste du Patrimoine mondial au titre des critères II et III.

C) JUSTIFICATION

Xanthos, la capitale de l'ancienne Lycie, forme avec le site voisin et indissociable du Létôon, distant de cinq kilomètres, un complexe archéologique célèbre : depuis les fouilles pratiquées, entre 1838 et 1844, par l'anglais Charles Fellows qui en publia les résultats dans ses Travels in Lycia, tous les manuels d'histoire de l'art antique font une place aux monuments de Xanthos, qui furent d'abord connus par les tombes monumentales entrées au British Museum, le Monument des Néréides, le Monument des Harpyies, le sarcophage de Payava étant les plus célèbres d'entre elles.

Les Lyciens, mentionnés sous le nom de Lukka par les annales égyptiennes, sont un de ces "Peuples de la Mer" qui, vers 1200 avant J.C., investirent l'empire hittite. Les légendes grecques leur ont fait une place en marge du cycle homérique. Hérodote raconte que, venus de Crète sous la conduite d'un frère de Minos, ils participèrent à la guerre de Troie.

Ce groupe ethnique a fait la preuve, au cours d'une longue histoire, de deux caractéristiques apparemment contradictoires. La première est une grande fidélité à ses traditions : la langue lycienne s'est longtemps conservée; aujourd'hui encore, les paysans de la région bâtissent des maisons et des granges en bois dont la structure est comparable à celle des monuments transposés dans les tombes rupestres lyciennes. La seconde est une grande faculté d'acculturation. Elle leur a fait assimiler successivement les apports culturels de l'hellénisme, transmis par les colonies grecques de la côte égéenne, puis ceux de Rome : en 167 avant J.C., Xanthos forma avec d'autres cités une confédération dont le siège était au Létôon; ayant pris le parti des Romains contre Mithridate, elle jouit d'un statut privilégié longtemps après la conquête de

l'Asie Mineure, comme en témoigne symboliquement l'Agora romaine, reconstruite au IIIe siècle après J.C., mais toujours consacrée aux douze dieux lyciens.

La ruine de la ville, encore peuplée à l'époque byzantine où plusieurs basiliques y furent élevées, n'a été consommée que par les raids arabes du VIIe siècle.

Une histoire longue et complexe a laissé des traces nombreuses, souvent splendides mais parfois peu distinctes, sur les deux sites voisins de Xanthos et du Létôn.

A l'est du Xanthe, une première zone monumentale comprend la vieille Acropole lycienne, remodelée à l'époque hellénistique puis à l'époque byzantine : une église fut alors bâtie à l'angle nord-est tandis qu'un ouvrage défensif avancé venait fortifier le flanc ouest de la citadelle, du côté du fleuve.

Immédiatement au nord de l'Acropole, le très beau théâtre qui lui est adossé domine l'Agora romaine; les ruines d'une seconde basilique se distinguent à l'ouest. Toute cette zone est jalonnée de grands monuments funéraires lyciens, éléments caractéristiques du paysage archéologique de Xanthos où ils se dressent de façon spectaculaire parmi les ruines.

A l'est du chemin de terre qui traverse le site, une seconde zone archéologique, plus confuse, s'étend entre l'arc de Vespasien, au sud, et l'Acropole hellénistique, au nord. C'est là que se trouvait la ville basse, dont une partie seulement a été fouillée. De grands ensembles, comme l'Agora hellénistique et deux églises byzantines, y ont été reconnus.

Le site archéologique du Létôn, consacré à Létô, à Artémis et à Apollon, comporte, outre les ruines des temples, celles d'un nymphée de l'époque d'Hadrien bâti sur l'emplacement de la source sacrée qui est à l'origine du sanctuaire. D'autres vestiges d'époque hellénistique et romaine, portique, théâtre, etc. coexistent avec des structures d'époque lycienne, fréquemment inondées.

L'ICOMOS recommande l'inscription de Xanthos et du Létôn sur la Liste du Patrimoine mondial au titre des critères II et III.

- **Critère II.** Xanthos a exercé une influence directe au cours de toute l'Antiquité dans la Lycie comme on peut l'observer par exemple sur les sites archéologiques de Patara ou de Pinara. Mais elle a également exercé une influence considérable sur les provinces voisines. Le Mausolée d'Halicarnasse, dont les Anciens avaient fait une des sept merveilles du monde, se situe dans la filiation directe du Monument des Néréides de Xanthos.

- **Critère III.** Xanthos et le Létôn apportent un témoignage exceptionnel sur la civilisation lycienne tant par les textes épigraphiques, si nombreux sur ces deux sites, que par les

monuments funéraires remarquables qui y sont conservés ou qui en proviennent.

C'est près du temple d'Artémis, au Létôon, qu'a été découverte la fameuse inscription trilingue en lycien, araméen, et grec datant de 358 avant J.C. (an 1 du règne d'Artaxerxès III Okhos), mais c'est également au Létôon ou à Xanthos que se trouvent les textes les plus longs et les plus importants en langue lycienne, gravés pour la plupart dans le roc ou sur d'énormes monolithes. Ils ne peuvent être déplacés et sont les monuments essentiels d'une langue indo-européenne unique, disparue depuis longtemps.

Les tombeaux rupestres, tombes piliers ou sarcophages montés sur pilier constituent un type original d'architecture funéraire. La riche série des tombes lyciennes de Xanthos et du Létôon permet de saisir pleinement les phénomènes successifs d'acculturation dont la Lycie a été le théâtre depuis le VI^e siècle avant J.C.

Observations de l'ICOMOS

Le site de Xanthos comprend une zone archéologique recouvrant approximativement le site de la ville antique. Toutefois cette zone est traversée par une route en terre relativement fréquentée dont le détournement serait souhaitable. Une réflexion d'ensemble sur l'aménagement du site serait indispensable.

En ce qui concerne le site du Létôon, le périmètre protégé est insuffisant : l'environnement du théâtre n'y est pas compris et, au sud, des ruines, probablement paléochrétiennes, émergent de façon très visible des alluvions.

D'autre part, la vaste zone de nécropole qui s'étend sur les rives du Xanthe, entre Xanthos et le Létôon, ne bénéficie d'aucune protection.

Compte tenu d'une exploitation agricole intensive de ces terres alluviales fertiles et de l'apparition récente de nombreuses serres à tomates dans le paysage, la délimitation proposée, tout en étant compatible avec la situation actuelle, paraît insuffisante à court terme.

Un plan de gestion incluant la maîtrise de l'environnement et l'étude de la conservation des monuments, menacés par les remontées saisonnières de la nappe phréatique au Létôon, est hautement souhaitable.

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ICOMOS, July 1988