

# ITALY

## Castel del Monte

### Brief description

When the Emperor Frederick II built this castle near Bari in the 13th century, he imbued it with symbolic significance, as reflected in the location, the mathematical and astronomical precision of the layout and the perfectly regular shape. A unique piece of medieval military architecture, Castel del Monte is a successful blend of elements from classical antiquity, the Islamic Orient and north European Cistercian Gothic.

### 1. Introduction

**Year(s) of Inscription** 1996

#### Agency responsible for site management

- Soprintendenza for the monuments and landscape for the provinces of Bari and Foggia  
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### 2. Statement of Significance

**Inscription Criteria** C (i), (ii), (iii)

#### Justification provided by the State Party

Monument exceptionnel, Castel del Monte réunit et valorise tous les éléments de la culture de l'époque dans les différents domaines: de l'architecture aux mathématiques, de la philosophie à l'astronomie, de la technique à la technologie. Chacun de ses aspects contribue à rendre unique cet édifice extraordinaire, d'un type sans précédents et qui n'a pas eu de suite. Le plan octogonal (avec la répétition constante du nombre 8 aux évidentes significations ésotériques) sa position privilégiée dans la région de Bari, la séduction émanant de son architecture, sa technique exceptionnelle, les installations dont il fût équipé et même sa destination originaire couverte de mystère.

Ce dernier élément est probablement à mettre en relation avec la personnalité et l'œuvre de l'empereur Frédéric II qui fut le commanditaire et probablement l'inspirateur de l'entreprise;

Son état de conservation est également exceptionnel; c'est en effet l'un des rares monuments qui a gardé intactes ses caractéristiques originelles, bien que privé de ses marbres et, plus généralement, de l'appareil décoratif.

Si d'un côté son utilisation vulgaire et son état d'abandon dans les siècles passés ont eu pour conséquence: une sensible dégradation, ils ont cependant évité au château des travaux de systématisation et de restructuration utilitaires, qui probablement en auraient la physionomie.

#### As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

(1987): That the proposed cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion I.

Criterion I (representing a unique artistic achievement) is clearly applicable to Castel del Monte, the astonishing fortress built around 1240 for Frederick II on a rocky peak in the sunburnt countryside of the Puglia, about 25 kilometres from Barletta,

The castle layout -a regular octagon with an octagonal tower at each angle around an inner octagonal courtyard- is exceptional, even bearing in mind the circular keeps of northern Europe flanked by square towers (such as Coninsborough Castle in England). This search for formal perfection distinguishes it from contemporary castles such as Castello Maniace in Syracuse and Castello Ursino in Catania which was built along the same lines but to a square plan with round towers at the angles.

Symbolic of the Mediterranean policy of a Germanic Emperor, born at lesî, brought up in Sicily and attracted at a very early age by the East, Castel del Monte combines in one creation, unrivalled either before or since, various original features : an ancient-style gateway In the shape of a triumphal arch framing a pointed arch, ribs which stand out clearly on the ribbed vaults descending on to the telamon-shaped sculpted bases similar to the Burgundy style in the Upper rooms, and highly perfected hydraulic installations, mosaic and incusted marble decoration, all inspired by oriental palaces,

Inseparably linked to Frederick II of Hohenstaufen (just as the Chateau of Chambord is linked to François I or the Taj Mahal to Shah Jahân) the building of Castel del Monte illustrates the open-mindedness of the Emperor who brought together, at his court in Palermo, Greek, Arab, Italian and Jewish scholars and who borrowed intellectual and moral elements from the great Mediterranean

civilisations which, though leading him during his lifetime to be accused of irreligion, designate him as one of the precursors of the modern humanists.

(1996): At its 11th Meeting in 1987 the World Heritage Committee deferred consideration of this nomination, since “the Italian Government had not yet given assurances regarding the protection of the landscape which surrounds Castel del Monte and which is an integral part of the site.” ICOMOS is satisfied that the protection accorded to the area designated in the 1968 ministerial decree under the provisions of Law No 1479M939 provides the assurances sought by the Committee in 1987.

Recommendation: That this Property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria (i) and (iii)*:

In its formal perfection and its harmonious blending of cultural elements from northern Europe, the Muslim world, and classical antiquity, Castel del Monte is a unique masterpiece of medieval military architecture, reflecting the humanism of its founder, Frederick II of Hohenstaufen.

Inscription should be accompanied by a request to the State Party that the proposed car-park is relocated to a site where it would be less visually obtrusive and that urgent consideration be given to the removal of the tree cover on the hill.

### Committee Decision

Bureau (1987): The Bureau drew the attention of the Italian authorities to the need to protect the surrounding landscape in the same way as the castle.

Session (1987): (...) the Committee decided to defer the examination of the following nominations:

The Committee noted that the Italian Government had not yet given assurances regarding the protection of the landscape which surrounds Castel del Monte and which is an integral part of the site.

Bureau (June 1996): The Bureau recommended the Committee to inscribe the nominated property on the basis of criteria (i) and (iii) considering that the site is of outstanding universal value as in its formal perfection and its harmonious blending of cultural elements from northern Europe, the Muslim world, and classical antiquity. Castel del Monte is a unique masterpiece of medieval military architecture, reflecting the humanism of its founder, Frederick II of Hohenstaufen. The Bureau requested that the competent Italian authorities provide information on the car park project which would be visually obstructive and consider the suppression of the

trees planted near the top of the hill where the castle is built.

Session (1996): The Committee decided to inscribe the nominated property on the basis of cultural criteria (i), (ii) and (iii) considering that the site is of outstanding universal value in its formal perfection and its harmonious blending of cultural elements from northern Europe, the Muslim world, and classical antiquity. Castel del Monte is a unique masterpiece of medieval military architecture, reflecting the humanism of its founder, Frederick II of Hohenstaufen. The Delegation of Mexico emphasized the importance of the Castle as a reference point in the landscape and the need to preserve it.

- 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
- A large area around the castle, protected by law (Legislative Degree 22.1.2004, n. 42, “Cultural heritage and landscape Code”) constitutes an effective buffer zone for the castle

### Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained
- Castel de Monte has been the subject of various campaigns since 1878, after it came into State ownership. Consolidation and stabilization work took place between 1879 and 1902. In 1928/32 a number of later dry stone walls were removed and the soil level round the perimeter was raised. Final consolidation work took place in 1962-65 and the last major campaign, in 1975-81, concerned repairs to the roofs, consolidation of the walls, waterproofing of the towers, and repair of the *cocciopesto* (crushed brick) surface of the courtyard. Currently there are no major conservation projects in hand, but there is a rigorous programme of systematic maintenance. Thanks to its history subsequent to the end of Hohenstaufen rule Castel del monte has been subjected to almost no structural alteration. The interior has been degraded by the removal or decay of its marble and mosaic decoration, but there have been few later interventions. Conservation work since 1878 has been of a high order, consistent with Italian standards, and so the authenticity of the monument is high

### 3. Protection

#### Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- The monument was acquired by the Italian State and is protected under several state laws; Law n° 1089/39 concerning the artistic, archaeological, and cultural heritage of the Italian State; Decree of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities in 1978: declares the monument to be of great artistic and historical importance; Ministerial decree in conformity with Law N° 1497/39 concerning the protection of natural heritage, year 1968: it protect a large area around the castle. Territorial Landscape Plan: manages the territorial transformation
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

### 4. Management

#### Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction, site of conferences, spectacles, exhibitions

#### Management /Administrative Body

- Management by the State Party, under protective legislation
- Site manager on part-time job
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national; local
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

#### Actions proposed:

- Increasing of the management staff
- The management Plan is under preparation; timeframe within the year 2006; within the management plan the setting up of a committee to coordinate and monitoring the initiatives is being drawn up

### 5. Management Plan

- No management plan; under preparation, to be completed and adopted December 2006

### 6. Financial Resources

#### Financial situation

- State Budget (ordinary funds from Ministry of Cultural heritage and Activities)
- Insufficient
- Needs: advertising material and brochures in foreign languages; better upkeep of the castle;

maintenance staff for toilettes; a larger staff; better cultural service for visitors

- Research of private sponsors

### 7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 7
- At present the staff sources are inadequate

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

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

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

- No specialized expertise, training and services on or off-site
- Training needs: Courses of languages for keepers in order to give suitable information to the tourists
- Training available for stakeholders

### 9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 220.455 (ticket counting), 2004
- Visitor facilities: didactic panels describing the castle, in Italian, English and German languages; brochures in Italian and English
- Some facilities are entrusted to private companies
- The Superintendence is also engaged in the realization of the project for the virtual reconstruction of the monument in order to allow a virtual visit by internet
- Visitor needs: sound-guide, reception centre, coffee-shop, cloakroom

### 10. Scientific Studies

- Studies related to the value of the site, monitoring exercises, condition surveys, visitor management, new studies for the investigation about the construction materials
- Numerous studies have been conducted for the site by the architectural and engineering departments of University. Besides, from 1996, (year of inscription) is been conducting an annual and monthly monitoring
- Studies used for management of site: the results of these studies have contributed to

guide the most recent investigations of maintenance

- The design of the scientific studies has been guided from the problems of conservation of the monument

### **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: businesses, local authorities
- Need for awareness rising: A bigger awareness of the World Heritage site needs to be achieved, though public initiatives about the importance of the inscription in the World Heritage List. These initiatives should involve the largest numbers of people, in order to assure a large participation in the conservation of the site. The historical, artistic and architectural values are already part of the cultural heritage of the community
- There are many educational initiatives for the site that involve school. One of these concern cultural exchange; in fact Castel del Monte has been the site of the Bonomo Research Center, for exploring the theme of European Citizenship and Education
- In summer 2006 could have an exhibition organized by Ferrara Province about UNESCO sites of Adriatic Sea. A national seminary was held in May 2005 for Italian managers of UNESCO's sites to present the final version of the methodology needed to draw up Management Plans. Over 2005 a national convention will be held to talk about the UNESCO's sites within the framework of the actions estimated by the agreement with two nearby sites at Alberobello and Matera
- Web site available

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

#### **Reactive monitoring reports**

- N/A

#### **Conservation interventions**

- Works of periodic upkeep about walls; remaking of lighting system in according to CEE law standard; Antitheft devise
- Present state of conservation: Good

#### **Threats and Risks to site**

- No threats or risks

### **13. Monitoring**

- No formal monitoring programme
- Measures planned: The realisation of the future management plan will allow developing key indicators for monitoring the preservation of the site's value

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

- Main benefits of WH status: increasing of the tourist flow
- Strength/Weaknesses of management: the number of management staff and funds for maintenance and conservation are not enough

#### **Future actions:**

- Preparation and adoption of the management Plan. Timeframe: December 2006