

## **Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value**

**Jesuit Missions of the Guaranis: San Ignacio Mini, Santa Ana, Nuestra Señora de Loreto and Santa María Mayor (Argentina, 291), Ruins of Sao Miguel das Missoes (Brazil, 275)**

**Date of inscription: 1983, 1984 extension**

**Date of RSOUV: 2011**

### **Brief Synthesis**

The Jesuit Missions of the Guaranis, a joint Brazil-Argentina trans boundary property, used to lie at the heart of a tropical forest, today deforested. The property consists of the ruins of São Miguel das Missões in Brazil, and those of San Ignacio Mini, Santa Ana, Nuestra Señora de Loreto and Santa María la Mayor in Argentina. These are the impressive remains of the settlements established in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> on lands originally occupied by Guarani native indigenous communities. In Brazil, the ruins of the São Miguel Arcanjo church constitute the most intact and complete structures among the period's designated heritage properties. In Argentina, the Jesuit-Guarani Missions located in southern Misiones Province provides an exceptional example of systematic and organized territorial occupation. The property encompasses a series of sites made up of four primary components: the Jesuit Missions of Santa Ana, Our Lady of Loreto, San Ignacio Mini, and Santa María La Mayor.

The property depicts, through the surviving sites, the experience of the Society of Jesus in the Americas, a singular system of spatial, economic, social, and cultural relations composed at the time by 30 settlements – referred to as *reducciones* – including ranches, *mate* plantations, and networks of trails and waterways extending across the River Uruguay and its tributaries. The particular model of the *reducciones* also included smaller structures and constructions designed to support the basic functions of the settlements. Together, these elements, closely integrated within productive lands, each manifesting the distinct potential and complementary traits of the various settlements and the other Jesuit provinces in the region inform this underlying interpretation, reflected by the heritage property in singular and specific fashion.

An integral part of the evangelization campaigns, the missions stand as an important testament to the systematic occupation of the area and to the cultural relations forged between the area's native populations, mostly ethnic Guarani communities, and the European Jesuit missionaries.

### **Justification for Criteria (1980)**

**Criterion (iv):** The surviving remains of the Jesuit Mission represent outstanding examples of a type of building and of an architectural ensemble which illustrate a significant period of the history of Argentina and Brazil. They are a living testament to Jesuit evangelization efforts in South America.

### **Statement of Integrity (2011)**

At the majority of sites, the components that convey the Outstanding Universal Value of the property are contained within the boundaries of the designated zones. On the Argentine side, three of the four Missions have either maintained their original rural configuration or been subject to minor modifications (Santa Ana, Loreto, and Santa María). By contrast, the fourth site, San Ignacio, is located within the urban grid of the city of San Ignacio. On the Brazilian side, the surviving material traces and evidence of the heritage site (São Miguel Arcanjo), in addition to the main body of the church, the belfry and the sacristy, portions of the convent structures, the surviving foundations of the indigenous dwellings, the square, the vegetable garden, the storm drains, and the sacred objects converge to give expression to a singular model of territorial occupation permeated by the cultural interaction and exchange between the native populations and European missionaries.

The various Missions include fragments of walls corresponding to the original monuments (churches, dwellings, workshops, vegetable gardens). Progressively, however, these structures lost their original religious, residential, educational, and cultural functions. Today, they are deemed historic monuments

and important to the development of the respective local communities. In exceptional cases, they are used for religious or recreational events.

None of the components of the designated heritage site are under threat, having been preserved through direct government action, primarily in Argentina and Brazil.

### **Statement of Authenticity (2011)**

The components of the property have maintained the two basic intersecting compositions: first, the European convent, constituted by a main church, residence, and school and, second, a section occupying the remaining three sides of the central square erected primarily for the local indigenous populations. Conservation work in the case of San Ignacio Mini has enabled the overall preservation of the existing urban architectural scale.. Conservation work has been carried out in order to preserve the monuments and to facilitate responsible tourism.

In the Brazilian case, a full reading and understanding into the spatial configuration of São Miguel Arcanjo are provided in a set of surviving documents. The site's physical authenticity has been maintained through preservation of the original construction materials and techniques. The series of interventions, all duly recorded and mapped, executed from the time the Reduction continued in operation have been aimed at ensuring the property's structural stability.

### **Requirements for protection and management (2011)**

Management of the cross-border cultural heritage site is undertaken by the two countries – Brazil and Argentina – at the respective archaeological sites located in their national territories.

In 2009, the Missões National Historic Park was established, with a view to providing integrated and complementary management of the Mission territories in Brazil and using the cultural heritage to support the socioeconomic development of local communities. Further, interpreting and signage systems were implemented at the historical sites, as well as infrastructure for visitors and to facilitate access to the site. Since 1982, IPHAN has a technical office in São Miguel, establishing, in the process, the technical structures necessary to manage and conserve the cultural heritage. In 1998, guidelines were issued to regulate urban planning in the areas surrounding the cultural property. The Missões National Historic Park Management Plan is under preparation, through the Project Valorization of the Cultural Landscape and of the National Historical Park of the Jesuit Guarani Missions, having the purpose of ensuring shared management at the various levels of government and in partnership with the private sector; the São Miguel Municipal Urban Plan, prepared jointly with IPHAN on the basis of the preservation guidelines established for the São Miguel site; the proposed establishment and drafting of a Cultural Itinerary for the Jesuit-Guarani Missions, encompassing all of the respective countries into which the Missions extend, with a view to providing an integrated interpretation and recognition of the cross-border heritage, as reflected in its cultural dimensions and the interconnection between individual sites.

In the Argentine case, all of the complexes comprising the missionary site are legally protected at the national level: Santa Ana and Loreto were declared National Historic Monuments in 1983 through National Executive Order 2217; San Ignacio, in 1943, through National Executive Order 16482; and Santa María, in 1945, through National Executive Order 31453. The four properties were declared a Historic Cultural Heritage with the enactment of Provincial Law 1280 of 1983. The site is protected and preserved by the National Museum Commission (Comisión Nacional de Museos y Monumentos y Lugares Históricos), pursuant to Law 12665. For its part, the National Architectural Service (Servicio Nacional de Arquitectura), a component of the Ministry of Public Works and Services, has primary responsibility for all restoration and maintenance services. The respective agencies will need to develop plans of action to ensure proper management of the site.

The Department of Technical Planning of the Subsecretariat of Strategic Management of the Province of Misiones is in charge of periodic reporting and planning for the conservation of the Argentinean missions, in agreement with national authorities. The management plan of the Missions must comply and be consistent with national legislation of historical monuments. It should also consider tourism as part of a major effort to provide a broader interpretation of the missionary system and to promote cultural activities within the community.

Workshops between the responsible managers of the Jesuit-Guarani Mission Historic Sites were held from 2005-2007 with the support and cooperation of the World Monument Fund – WMF, the respective national Governments and the provincial government of Misiones

Measures will be adopted over the medium- and long-terms to ensure proper conservation of the component parts of the World Heritage property.