

Date inscribed: 1994

Date of report: 31/01/2011

Criteria: (iv)

City of Kutaisi, Region of Imereti

N42 15 43.992 E42 42 59.004

Report on the State of Conservation

The report is submitted in response to the World Heritage Committee Decision 34 COM/7B.88 requesting the State Party ...“to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2011, a report on the state of conservation of the property and on the steps taken to implement the World Heritage Committee’s decision, including three printed and electronic copies of the draft management plan, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session in 2011”.

The report reflects the activities implemented by the State Party in the period 08.2010-30.01.2011

1. Response from the State Party to the World Heritage Committee’s Decision(s)

Decision: 34 COM 7B.88

State Party response

6. *Urges the State Party to halt immediately all interventions at Bagrati Cathedral, which threaten the Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity of the property;*

All interventions at Bagrati Cathedral are halted. The authentic architectural layers discovered during the works at Bagrati Cathedral are conserved. The method of presentation of authentic elements, as well as detailed guidelines for further rehabilitation and an action plan for the implementation of corrective measures set out in the decision of the Committee are being elaborated together with Dr. Andrea Bruno, a renowned conservation architect, Honorary President of the R. Lemaire International Centre for Conservation in Leuven, Belgium and the professor at the University of Milan, Italy. The decision to invite Dr. Bruno as an advisor in the issues related to the rehabilitation of Bagrati Cathedral (Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery WHS) was taken by the State Party on the recommendation of Dr. Alkiviades Prepis, who presented Dr. Andrea Bruno’s works during his visit to Georgia in March, 2010 in the capacity of member of the joint World Heritage Centre-ICOMOS-ICCROM advisory mission to Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery.

7. *Also urges the State Party to immediately adopt all necessary measures aiming to ensure the safeguarding of the Outstanding*

The National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation has established a working group to ensure monitoring and survey of the state of conservation and preparation of the draft

Universal Value, integrity and authenticity of the property, monitoring and survey of the state of conservation of the property, preparation, adoption and implementation of a Management Plan (including a tourism strategy and guidelines for the use of historic buildings and monuments, an Urban Master Plan and a Conservation Master Plan for the monuments);

Management Plan of the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery WHS. The group also aims to ensure the scientific interpretation of the wider archaeological area around Bagrati Cathedral. The topographic and cadastral survey of the site was already undertaken to delineate the scope of the archaeological area, which is to be transferred under the management of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation. Further works are being planned to evaluate the significance of the site and define the necessary conservation measures. The working team will closely cooperate with the international experts invited by the State Party.

The significant progress has been achieved in conservation and rehabilitation of Gelati Monastery. The State Party developed the comprehensive rehabilitation program and the conservation master plan in 2008-2009, which is adopted as a guiding document. It incorporates the strategy for visitor management and integration of tourists into the monastery life. The program was presented to the WHC in early 2010 and was positively admitted by the joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/ICCROM mission to Georgia in March 2010. Based on the program the rehabilitation works are continued to ensure step by step rehabilitation of the monastic complex and improving the visitor infrastructure. The main goal of the rehabilitation program is to safeguard and better represent the outstanding universal value of the site.

The works undertaken in 2010 in the Gelati Monastery included the activities funded by the state budget and by the Fund for Preservation of Georgia's Historical Monuments, namely:

- Conservation of the wall paintings of the St. George church;
- Rehabilitation of the St. George church;
- Rehabilitation of the bell tower;
- Rehabilitation of the South entrance gate (the gate of the David the builder);

The works were implemented with the highest respect to the authenticity of the monument and significantly improved the state of conservation of the buildings of Gelati Monastery.

The detailed information on the state of conservation of buildings of Gelati monastery as well as of Bagrati Cathedral has been submitted to the WHC in July 2010. The summary reports of the projects implemented in 2010 are currently being translated into English and will be presented to the WHC together with the respective photo documentation to provide more detailed

information on the state of conservation of the different components of the property.

8. *Invites the State Party to organize a consultation with international conservation engineers and architectural conservators in order to consider how the interventions already carried out might be reversed entirely or in part and to consider the overall consolidation of the Bagrati Cathedral ruins;*

The state party established contacts with the leading international experts of the field. Georgian authorities are privileged to co-operate with Prof. Dr. Andrea Bruno on the issue of rehabilitation of Bagrati Cathedral. Dr. Bruno undertook his first working visit to Georgia on 4-7 January 2011. He visited Bagrati, Gelati and Mtskheta and held high level official meetings at the Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia as well as working meetings at the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation. Dr. Bruno was provided all the relevant working material of the Bagrati Cathedral.

The state party offered Dr. Andrea Bruno to be an official advisor to the Georgian national authorities on the matters concerning the rehabilitation of Bagrati Cathedral. At the first stage of the cooperation Dr. Bruno will provide the national authorities with the detailed guidelines for rehabilitation as well as an action plan for the implementation of corrective measures set out in the decision of the Committee, as it was suggested by the Assistance Director General for Culture Mr. Francesco Bandarin during his meeting with the Minister of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia Mr. Nikoloz Rurua.

The State Party has opened up international discussion on the issue. The rehabilitation of Bagrati Cathedral was presented at the international seminar on the Role of Religious Communities in the Management of World Heritage properties, held in Kyiv 2-5 November 2010. It was particularly important that the official representatives of the Georgian Orthodox Church were also present in the Georgian delegation together with the national monuments protection authorities. The improved coordination and close cooperation with the church representatives is a great step forward made by the State Party in meeting the recommendations of the WHC.

The participation in the seminar was highly important to exchange experience among different countries and establish professional contacts with leading international experts, such as Dr. Jukka Jokilehto, who accepted the state party's proposal for co-operation. He was offered to undertake his first working visit to Georgia in early 2011. It is proposed that the expert team lead by Dr. Jokilehto will assist the state authorities in defining strategies for improved

management of the WHS.

The effective communication and active coordination with the World Heritage Centre is to be admitted as one of the most important success factors. Particularly helpful was the visit of the joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/ICCROM mission to Georgia that provided the national authorities with the valuable advice, e.g. the decision to invite Dr. Andrea Bruno as an advisor in the issues related to the rehabilitation of Bagrati Cathedral (Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery WHS) was taken by the State Party on the recommendation of Dr. Alkiviades Prepis, the member of the joint World Heritage Centre-ICOMOS-ICCROM advisory mission to Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery. Similarly, the participation of the State Party to the international seminar on the Role of Religious Communities in the Management of the World Heritage was encouraged by the member of the mission as a representative of the World Heritage Centre, Ms. Anna Sidorenko who informed the national authorities on the upcoming seminar and further on assisted to develop contacts with the organizing party.

A continuous support and advice has been provided by the WHC throughout 2010 on different matters concerning the World Heritage properties in the country. The meeting of Mr. Nikoloz Rurua, the Minister of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia and Mr. Francesco Bandarin, Assistant Director-General for Culture, provided firm basis for improved communication and exchange of ideas on the future of the Georgia's World Heritage Sites.

9. Requests the State Party, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, to develop a draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the property, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session in 2011

Together with the invited international experts the working group at the National Agency will assess the significance of the site considering the present circumstances and the scientific interpretation of the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery WHS. The draft statement of OUV will be elaborated in close consultations with the World Heritage Centre and its advisory bodies and will be presented to the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session in 2011.

11. Adopts the following Desired State of Conservation for the property based on its Outstanding Universal Value, in view of its future removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger:

- a) The reconstruction of the Bagrati Cathedral halted,*
- b) Interventions already carried out at the Bagrati Cathedral reversed (entirely or in part),*
- c) The overall consolidation project of the*

- a) The reconstruction of Bagrati Cathedral is halted.
- b) The authentic architectural layers discovered during the works at Bagrati Cathedral are conserved. The method of their presentation will be elaborated together with Dr. Andrea Bruno.

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- Bagrati Cathedral ruins, elaborated in consultation with international conservation engineers and architectural conservators, implemented,*
- d) *The boundaries and buffer zone of all component parts of the World Heritage property precisely clarified,*
 - e) *A comprehensive management system including an integrated management plan with tourism strategy and guidelines for the use of historic buildings and monuments, conservation master plan for all components of the World Heritage property and its buffer zone and urban master plan including land-use regulations approved and implemented,*
 - f) *Long-term consolidation and conservation of the historical monuments of the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery ensured;*
- c) The international experts accepted the state party's proposal to study the site and propose solution to its problems, including conservation, rehabilitation and management.
 - d) The boundaries and the buffer zone of the site are clarified as provided at the time of nomination in 1994. The updated maps of the site were presented to the WHC in 2009 in scopes of the Retrospective Inventory.
 - e) The State Party developed the comprehensive rehabilitation program and the conservation master plan for Gelati Monastery in 2008-2009, which is adopted as a guiding document. It incorporates the strategy for visitor management and integration of tourists into the monastery life and detailed guidelines for the use of historic buildings of the ensemble. The program was presented to the WHC in early 2010 and was positively admitted by the joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/ICCROM mission to Georgia in March 2010. Based on the program the rehabilitation works are continued to ensure step by step rehabilitation of the monastic complex and improving the visitor infrastructure and management.
 - f) The main goal of the rehabilitation program is to safeguard and better represent the outstanding universal value of the site and ensure its long term consolidation and conservation.
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12. Also adopts the following corrective measures and the timeframe for their implementation:

a) Changes to be carried out immediately:

- *The reconstruction of the Bagrati Cathedral halted and a consultation organized with international conservation engineers and architectural conservators in order to consider how the interventions already carried out might be reversed (entirely or in part) and how the overall consolidation of the Bagrati Cathedral ruins might be achieved*

The reconstruction of Bagrati Cathedral is halted. The efforts undertaken by the state party, including the continued consultations with leading international experts promise that the best solution will be found to reconcile the functional demands and conservation needs of the site.

a. Progress towards the removal of the property from the list of the World Heritage in Danger

The State Party has developed substantial efforts to respond to the Decisions of the World Heritage Committee. The most important progress factor is the raised political awareness of

the national authorities and improved coordination between all stakeholders. The visits of the Minister of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia to the World Heritage Centre and official meetings held with the Assistant Director-General for Culture Mr. Francesco Bandarin, as well as high level representation of the State Party at the 34th session of the World Heritage Committee in Brazil provides for sustained political support at the national level to the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in Georgia.

A significant step made by the State Party towards meeting the requests of the Committee was to halt the reconstruction of Bagrati Cathedral. The efforts undertaken by the state party, including the continued consultations with the WHC and the leading international experts promise that the best solution will be found to reconcile the functional demands and conservation needs of the site.

The State Party achieved progress in involving the leading international experts in rehabilitation and improved management of the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery WHS.

An improved communication and coordination with the Georgian Orthodox Church is another breakthrough towards meeting the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee.

The State Party actively responded to the request of the WHC to update cartographic information of the World Heritage sites. The maps of the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery submitted at the time of inscription were updated, geo-referenced and provided to the World Heritage Centre. The updated maps provide clarified boundaries of the site as requested by the WHC. These efforts were positively admitted by the World Heritage Centre.

b. The success factors and difficulties in implementing the corrective measures

As to the present date the most important success factor is the raised awareness of the national authorities on the needs of the property as well as of the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. The state authorities became more sensitive about the World Heritage issue and the overall attention to the issue has significantly increased.

As recommended by the Committee the national authorities opened up the subject of the rehabilitation of Bagrati Cathedral for international professional discourse. The project was presented at the international seminar organized in Kiev on the role of religious communities in the management of the world heritage sites.

Thanks to the efforts of the high level national authorities the most distinguished international experts have been involved in the processes concerning the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery WHS. The presence of international expertise increases the expectations to achieve best possible solution to the problems of the site.

c. The timeframe for corrective measures

Most of the corrective measures indicated in this report are planned over one year period as defined by the budget of the Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia in 2011, however the period needed to achieve substantial progress towards removal of the property from the list of the World Heritage is much longer. The National Agency plans to follow the timeframe of corrective measures defined by the decision of the Committee to ensure the continuation of efforts over the following years.

2. Other current conservation issues

The State of Conservation Report presented to the WHC in July 2010 provides the comprehensive information about the works implemented on the site and its state of conservation. The urgent consolidation works that were indispensable to stabilise the

condition of the Bagrati Cathedral were brought to an end in autumn 2010. The authentic architectural layers discovered during the works at Bagrati Cathedral were conserved. The interventions are halted until the adequate strategy for rehabilitation of the Cathedral and the method of presentation of the authentic architectural layers is defined in co-operation with the international experts invited by the state party and in consultation with the WHC.

The comprehensive conservation and rehabilitation works were continued at the Gelati monastery throughout 2010, based on the rehabilitation program of the site prepared in 2008-2009. The program was provided to the World Heritage Centre in January 2010. The program and the implemented works were positively admitted by the joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/ICCROM mission to Georgia in March 2010. The works undertaken in 2010 in the Gelati Monastery included the activities funded by the state budget and by the Fund for Preservation of Georgia's Historical Monuments, namely:

- Conservation of the wall paintings of the St. George church;
- Rehabilitation of the St. George church;
- Rehabilitation of the bell tower;
- Rehabilitation of the South entrance gate (the gate of the David the builder);

3. Potential interventions

The state party plans to continue its efforts towards implementation of the recommendations of the World Heritage committee.

In 2011 the major concern will be given to the elaborate the detailed guidelines for rehabilitation, draft management plan and an action plan for the implementation of corrective measures set out in the decision of the Committee for Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery WHS in consultation with international experts, the World Heritage Centre and its advisory bodies. The contacts already established promise for successful and productive co-operation.

Based on the rehabilitation program of the site prepared in 2008-2009 that was provided to the World Heritage Centre, in 2011 the conservation-rehabilitation works at the Gelati Monastery will focus on the rehabilitation of the Bishop's palace and the St. Nokolos church. The funding will be provided by the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation and the Fund Preservation of Georgia's Historical Monuments.

Signature on behalf of the State Party

Nikoloz Vacheishvili

Director General

National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia

31.01.2011