



## The Culture Sector

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منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

H. Exc. Mr. Mamuka Kudava,  
Ambassador Extraordinary and  
Plenipotentiary of Georgia to  
France,  
Permanent Delegate of Georgia to  
UNESCO  
UNESCO House

Ref. : CLT/WHC/GE/AS/KR

21 June 2012

**Subject: Transmission of the report of reactive monitoring mission  
to the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery (Georgia)**

Dear Ambassador,

Please find enclosed the report of the report of reactive monitoring mission to the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery, Georgia, requested by the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session (UNESCO, 20110).

I would like to thank your national and local authorities as well as all stakeholders concerned for the support provided to this mission.

You may wish to provide comments on the mission report at your earliest convenience.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your cooperation and your support in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

Please accept, dear Ambassador, the assurances of my highest consideration.

  
Kishore Rao  
Director  
World Heritage Centre

Cc: National Commission of Georgia for UNESCO  
ICOMOS, ICCROM



United Nations  
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**World Heritage**

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**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,  
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

**ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES  
POUR L'EDUCATION, LA SCIENCE ET LA CULTURE**

**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD  
CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

**CONVENTION CONCERNANT LA PROTECTION DU PATRIMOINE  
MONDIAL, CULTUREL ET NATUREL**

**WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE / COMITE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL**

**Thirty- sixth session / Trente sixième session  
St. Petersburg, Russian Federation /  
St. Pétersbourg, Fédération de Russie**

**22 April – 28 April 2012 / 22 avril – 28 avril 2012**

**Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda: State of conservation of properties  
inscribed on the World Heritage List and/or on the List of World  
Heritage in Danger.**

**Point 7 de l'Ordre du jour provisoire: Etat de conservation de biens  
inscrits sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial et/ou sur la Liste du  
patrimoine mondial en péril**

**JOINT WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE/ICOMOS REACTIVE MONITORING  
MISSION REPORT / RAPPORT DE MISSION DE SUIVI REACTIF  
CONJOINTE DU CENTRE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL ET DE L'ICOMOS**

**BAGRATI CATHEDRAL AND GELATI MONASTERY (GEORGIA) /  
CATHÉDRALE DE BAGRATI ET MONASTÈRE DE GHÉLATI (GEORGIE)**

**22 – 28 April 2012 / 22 – 28 avril 2012**

This mission report should be read in conjunction with Document /  
Ce rapport de mission doit être lu conjointement avec le document suivant :

**WHC-12/36.COM/7A.ADD**



International Council on  
Monuments and Sites  
Conseil International  
des Monuments et des Sites

**REPORT ON THE JOINT  
WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE/ICOMOS REACTIVE MONITORING MISSION  
TO BAGRATI CATHEDRAL AND GELATI MONASTERY**

**MISSION REPORT**

**BAGRATI CATHEDRAL AND GELATI MONASTERY**



**GEORGIA  
FROM 22 TO 28 APRIL 2012**

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- Recommendations for any additional action to be taken by the State Party
- Whenever further action is needed, clear corrective measures to be taken in order to achieve significant improvement of the state of conservation and a timeframe within which the corrective measures will have to be achieved
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The members of the mission are extremely grateful to the authorities of Georgia for their hospitality, support, availability and assistance, and would like to convey their gratitude especially to Dr Nikoloz Vacheishvili, Director General, National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation, Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia, who provided valuable information on the current situation of the World Heritage property during the meetings and assisted in clarifying many of the complex issues.

The members of the mission would like to express their thanks to all members of the Centre for Architecture, Restoration and Arts of the Patriarchy of Georgia, for their active participation to the meetings and presentations.

Special thanks go to all staff of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation, in particular to Ms Rusudan Mirzikashvili, Head of the UNESCO and International Relations Unit, and Mr Peter Kankava, who assisted with the organization of the mission and facilitated the meetings with various experts, local officials and stakeholders interested in the conservation and protection of the World Heritage properties in Georgia.

Particular thanks go to the Georgian National Commission for UNESCO and its Secretary-General Ms Ketevan Kandelaki, who continuously supported and accompanied the mission team to the World Heritage properties.

## SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As requested by the Committee at its 35th session, a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission visited the property from 22 to 28 April 2012 to discuss the requested Rehabilitation Strategy that was to be presented to the Committee for approval before a detailed rehabilitation project was submitted, and before any further work on the Cathedral was undertaken.

The mission was also asked to consider the overall state of conservation of the property, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1994.

The mission prepared a preliminary technical report including the conclusions on the base of which the document on the state of conservation and the draft decision were prepared to the attention of the World Heritage Committee.

**Please note that this mission report provides only updated information to the previous mission report of the reactive monitoring mission visited the property in March 2010.**

The summary conclusions and key recommendations of the mission are as follows:

### ***Bagrati Cathedral***

- The mission observed that a full-blown re-construction of the Cathedral is well underway, largely according to the monumental concrete and stone clad plans rejected by the Committee at its 34<sup>th</sup> session, but with a lighter modern construction at the western end.
- The mission notes that although exemplary investigative work has been undertaken on the monument and its surroundings, no attempt has been made to undertake an archaeological reconstruction using original stones, where they exist, nor to conserve the original fabric, some of which was in a fragile state, and apparently no attempt has been made to protect the archaeological layers

where reinforced concrete beams have been installed below ground, and the recently discovered tombs;

- The mission concludes that the opportunity to bring the Bagrati Cathedral back into use, while at the same time sustaining its contribution to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property has been lost;
- The mission underlines that the Bagrati Cathedral has been altered to such an extent that its authenticity has been irreversibly compromised and that it no longer contributes to the justification for the criterion for which the property was inscribed;

### ***Gelati Monastery***

- The mission assessed the progress in the implementation of the rehabilitation programme and the conservation master plan for Gelati Monastery, as well as the progress in the establishment of a clear institutional coordination mechanism within the framework of the State Programme for Cultural Heritage in Georgia, involving all stakeholders concerned;
- The mission underlines that it is essential to maintain the dominating presence of the monastic complex over the town, as well as its connection with the natural and built environment, unspoiled in the future. This should be taken into consideration regarding the volumes, the heights and the views of any new town buildings.
- The mission concluded that the State Party has made significant progress in implementing the corrective measures regarding the Gelati Monastery.

## **1 BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION**

**1.1 Justification of the mission and the background information are provided in the ANNEX I AND ANNEX II**

**1.2 NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY (see previous mission report of March 2010)**

**1.3. ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY**

***Review whether the outstanding universal value on the basis of which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List is being maintained***

### **GELATI**

The monastic complex dominates the surrounding countryside. It is essential this connection of the property with the natural and built environment is maintained.

#### **Previous positive measures**

- The master plan which was presented to the 2010 mission gives adequate answers to problems relating to the future needs of the monastic community, and of the visitors to the monastic complex. There is a proper organization of the functions inside the monastery grounds, taking in to consideration the fact that the

property is a living monument. There is also provision in case of a rising number of the monks, for them to be established in a nearby place, outside of the monastery grounds.

- The master plan very successfully dissociates the visitors' facilities from the monks' life, proposing that the new visitors' buildings be erected outside the monastery grounds, while the visitors would follow an organized route inside the monastic complex.

### **Current conservation issues**

The 2012 mission noted that the State Party has made significant progress in implementing the requested corrective measures regarding this component of the property.

A clear institutional coordination mechanism, ensuring that the conservation of the Gelati Monastery receives priority consideration within relevant governmental decision-making processes, has been established. A complex programme for the structural conservation and restoration of the churches in Gelati Monastery is being implemented.

As already mentioned by the 2010 mission, there is also provision in case of a rising number of the monks, for them to be established in a nearby place, outside of the monastery grounds. The master plan dissociates the visitors' facilities from the monks' life, proposing that the new visitors' buildings be erected outside the monastery grounds, while the visitors would follow an organized route inside the monastic complex.

Through a cooperation agreement between the Restoration Faculty at the State Academy of Fine Arts (NACHPG) and Lugano University, and with the financial support of the Swiss National Science Foundation, international conservation specialists were involved in the stone and wall painting conservation programme during 2010-2011. Within the framework of a complex programme for the systematic conservation and restoration of the interior wall-paintings and mosaics in Gelati Monastery churches. As a result of this co-operation the following works were undertaken:

- Assessment of condition of mural paintings in the St. Marine chapel of the main church of Gelati;
- Stone condition assessment of the St. George church of Gelati and risk mapping;
- Conservation of carved stone frame around the entrance door of the St. George church of Gelati.

With the support of the NACHPG, it is planned to continue the involvement of these international specialists and with their associated students in future stone and wall painting conservation work.

## **BAGRATI**

### **Brief History**

The cathedral of Bagrati was built in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century at the orders of King Bagrat III hence its name. An inscription in the church mentions "*cronicon 223*" which corresponds with the year 1003 AD. During the Turko-Russian War it was destroyed by the retreating Ottoman troops. On August 6, 1770 the Russian army bombed the Kutaisi stronghold from Mtsvanekvavila. The dome of the Cathedral crumbled, the pillars and the windows were

destroyed and then a few years later it was hit again by Russian troops which left the building as a complete ruin.

### Conservation History

1939-1992 the surviving structural elements were stabilized. The aim of this work was to consolidate and evaluate the ruin and there was no attempt to rebuild, to restore or to re-consecrate the church.

In 2001 all ecclesiastical buildings were handed over to the Georgian Orthodox Church for whom re-consecration was a priority.

In 2002 a company headed by I. Gremelashvili, was requested to prepare a preservation concept for Bagrati.

In 2003, Architectural Heritage Restoration Centre Ltd developed Bagrati Preservation Project. Structural designs were made by a team of structural designers of Capital Ltd.

In 2004, ICOMOS took the view that any reconstruction must be carried out in keeping with the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and its authenticity and therefore it would be more appropriate to retain the property as a ruin.

In 2005 a full technical, engineering, archaeological and architectural study was commissioned from Arch. I. Gremelashvili. The object of this study was to prepare the remaining structures for the reconstruction of the Cathedral so that it could be used for liturgical activities once again by the Georgian Church.

Two options were considered:

1. the first was to entail the creation of a light superstructure built from steel and glass that would provide protection from the elements,
2. the second was a fuller reconstruction using stone and reinforced concrete.

The option of conserving the ruins *de facto* was not taken in to consideration.

In January 2008, the Georgian authorities initiated the reconstruction project of the Bagrati Cathedral with the intention of restoring the initial religious use and functions of the Cathedral, as previously discussed at the 28<sup>th</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee (Suzhou, 2004).

The World Heritage Committee at its 32 session (Quebec City, July 2008) urged the State Party not to carry out any reconstruction work which may adversely affect the Outstanding Universal Value and its authenticity and strongly urged the State Party not to commence any constructions before consideration of the project by the World Heritage Committee.

The joint UNESCO (WHC)/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission in 2008 informed the authorities of the provisions in the *Operational Guidelines* concerning authenticity, in particular that the reconstruction of historic buildings is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances, and only on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture.

The authorities confirmed that the final decision will only be made after an analysis of reconstruction possibilities for the Cathedral has been completed, and following a review of the project by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, and examination by the World Heritage Committee.



In the 2010 state of conservation report, the State Party underlined that the rehabilitation of Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery is a priority. The report mentioned some works accomplished. While these works mark the initial stage of the conservation process of Bagrati Cathedral, they seem also to be preparatory activities for its reconstruction: documentation, detailed examination of structures and stability of the walls, evaluation of the general state of conservation and examination of construction materials, preliminary art history research, as well as reuse of more than 400 authentic stone construction elements inventoried inside and outside the historic building. The detailed rehabilitation/reconstruction project of the Bagrati Cathedral has not been provided by the State Party as requested by the World Heritage Committee at its 32th session (Quebec City, 2008).

The 2010 mission ascertains very serious interventions already started on the monument:

- An underground ring of reinforced concrete around the foundations of the building has already been installed.
- Parts of columns of reinforced concrete in the very places of the old stone columns have been constructed. The new, concrete columns have been covered by a thin layer of stone slabs.
- The damaged exterior surface of the building has been partially covered with stone slabs similar to the original stones.
- Exposed parts of the interior wall surfaces (where the original stones have disappeared) have been covered with iron reinforcement. A cement plaster has been applied to the reinforcement and a layer of stone cladding will follow, which will provide a thin new covering of these problematic surfaces.

The aforementioned reconstruction works had been begun without any systematic conservation-restoration-strengthening of the original fabric of the building in the places where it is at risk (open joints, missing parts of stones, cracks, breakage etc.). So, practically the monument continues to suffer from the atmospheric conditions and the ageing of the fabric, due to the absence of essential conservation work.

While the engineers from the architectural restoration company of I. Gremelashvili state that their project proposal will have sufficient seismic resistance, the 2010 mission expressed concern over the lack of flexibility and the excessive weight that will be placed on the medieval walls, as well as the methodology being used for their consolidation, which not only significantly reduces the material authenticity but may create additional conservation issues in the future through the choice of methods and materials.

The 2010 mission expressed its strong concern by this hard reconstruction, which is outside the framework of any scientific deontology for the conservation/restoration of the monument's stone fabric. Even more, the rehabilitation by total reconstruction is in conflict with the philosophy of the international principles, being accepted only in exceptional cases. Regarding that, the mission also underlined that the monument was not inscribed as "a symbol of national identity and unity" as was expressed by the Patriarchate Technical Office Representative, but as an achievement of medieval Georgian architecture, in a half-ruined condition. It was also underlined that this hard intervention obviously changes the conditions under which the property was inscribed on WH List, with probable consequences – Danger Listing and beyond that the possible delisting of the monument.

The reconstruction project was presented to the Committee in 2010 within the mission report. The Committee expressed its serious concern about irreversible interventions carried out by the State Party as part of the preparations for the Bagrati Cathedral reconstruction project prior to any review or approval of the project and its impact on the

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

The Committee invited the State Party to organize consultations 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 Committee considered that the State Party has not complied with all the requests expressed by the Committee in Decision 33 COM 7B.103, and that therefore the property is in danger in conformity with Chapter IV.B of the Operational Guidelines.

At its 34th session the Committee requested the State Party to halt work on a monumental, stone-clad, reinforced concrete reconstruction of Bagrati Cathedral that had been started without its approval and **decided to inscribe the property on the World Heritage List in Danger.**

At the 35th session, the Committee noted that work on reconstructing the Cathedral according to the monumental scheme had been halted.

The Committee also took note that according to the international conservation architect appointed as a consultant for the Bagrati Cathedral that the incomplete structural condition of the Bagrati Cathedral was not sustainable, that it might not be feasible to reverse what has been recently built as the interventions are almost irreversible, and that a lightweight roof could be mounted on the existing concrete columns.

The Committee requested the State Party to produce a Rehabilitation Strategy that could allow the building to be brought back into use, while reversing the maximum amount of recent work and incorporating fragments of the original building where they form part of the walls.

The Rehabilitation Strategy was to be presented to the Committee for approval before a detailed rehabilitation project was submitted, and before any further work on the Cathedral was undertaken.

### Considerations

1. In 1994, the Cathedral at Bagrati was inscribed as a ruin as stated in the Nomination file (no. 710) – “Bagrati Cathedral is ruined and may be considered *ipso facto* to be completely authentic.” But in the same file also “expressed grave doubts about the projects being discussed for the reconstruction of the Cathedral and its reconsecration as a church”.
2. Article 86 of the Operational Guidelines states: *“In relation to authenticity, the reconstruction of archaeological remains or historic buildings or districts is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances. Reconstruction is acceptable only on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture.”* In the “Executive Summary of the Rehabilitation Project of Bagrati Cathedral (Justification of the Selected Methodology)” provided by the studio of I. Gremelashvili some of the projected reconstruction is based on acceptable documentation while most is based on conjecture. It is possible to extend mouldings and to complete partially collapsed arches through geometrical projection but the heights of the vault, the shape of the drum and the height of the cupola are conjecture. The mission also has doubts as to the “exceptional circumstances” in this particular case. While there seems to be a

popular and political desire for this reconstruction, the building became a ruin many centuries ago and has already taken on a life and a history after its ruin.

3. In the 2004, ICOMOS Mission report carried out by Prof. Andrzej Tomaszewski he states that “We gained the impression however that the determination to rebuild is so great that it may take place despite the risk of the building being removed from the World Heritage List as a result” and adds that “We are of the opinion that ICOMOS and the World Heritage Committee should make use of every form of persuasion to avoid rebuilding.”
4. In 2007, the authorities mentioned in the state of conservation report, proposals for a new statement of authenticity/integrity, and a new approach to the justification of the property, including possible re-evaluation of the monuments and possible re-nomination under two additional criteria :
  - criterion (i) : Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery are the masterpieces of human creative genius;
  - criterion (vi): Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery are the monuments directly associated with the historic and religious events of Christianity, living traditions of the area and with the wall painting of outstanding significance.
5. The 2010 mission did not consider that a re-nomination of the property under new criteria would be justified. However, the State Party should provide a draft of Statement of Outstanding Universal Value.

### **Current conservation issues**

### **REHABILITATION STRATEGY**

The first draft of the Rehabilitation Strategy submitted by the State Party in January 2012 set out an approach based on recreating the eastern and central part of the Cathedral for which evidence exists, and completing the building with new structures at the western end where there is no evidence or little original material remains.

The draft Strategy was reviewed by ICOMOS who considered that in some places there was a need for further information and analysis in order to provide a clearer understanding as to the extent of the interventions to the fabric so far, the technical and conservation issues that these create. In general terms, ICOMOS considered that Strategy needed to be clearer on what could be reversed and what could not be reversed and how much of the existing recent work was needed from a structural point of view, what would be modified, and how new strengthening would be addressed. ICOMOS also considered that there was a certain amount of overlap between the strategy and the resulting project which needed to be resolved in the document. ICOMOS stressed that no approval had been given for the re-building project – as inferred in the draft strategy.

It was agreed that the reactive monitoring mission should discuss these comments with the State Party, so that a revised Rehabilitation Strategy could be submitted to the Committee at its forthcoming session.

This aim has however been overtaken by the resumption of work on the Cathedral which appears to have started after the last session of the Committee.

### **STABILISATION WORKS OF THE BAGRATI CATHEDRAL**

Although the State Party report states that some urgent stabilization works were undertaken to the west wall necessary for further supporting structures that might be needed for the rehabilitation strategy, as explained in a letter to the World Heritage Centre of 27 September 2011 to which the World Heritage Centre responded in the affirmative on 5 October 2011, the mission observed a very different situation.

Work on re-building the Cathedral was seen to be progressing non-stop to achieve a full reconstruction of the building, using stone-clad reinforced cement in the central and eastern parts, together with modern interventions in the western part, mostly along the lines of the original monumental project combined with the plans drawn up by the international conservation architect. A cast concrete cupola had already been partially raised up. The State Party confirmed to the mission that the inauguration of the Cathedral is being planned for September 2012.

The idea of restoring those parts of the building where evidence exists, on the basis of careful documentation and research, and conservation of the original fabric, has been abandoned.

### **STRUCTURAL ADDITIONS:**

- Completion of consolidation work on interior and exterior foundations of the load bearing walls;
- Creation of four central concrete pillars on the bases of the original ones;
- Installation of underground reinforced concrete beams, connecting the four pillars with the underground foundation of the exterior walls, which according to Georgian engineers, are placed under the archaeological level;
- Covering of the interior surface of the church walls with stone cladding, on a reinforced base – a totally irreversible process.

Although these works were stated to be necessary for the stability of the church in an earthquake zone, in reality these drastic interventions actually allowed the realisation of the first phase of the reconstruction project, in providing the necessary stability to allow for the proposed concrete cupola and the new roof.

### **RE-CONSTRUCTION WORKS:**

The mission observed the following work being undertaken:

#### **- Western part:**

In this end of the church, where inadequate original material and evidence exists for a full reconstruction, reinforced concrete beams have been installed in order to support the new stone and metal roof.

#### **- North-west corner:**

A metal construction has been prepared (with iron inserts into the original fabric), to support the new staircase and a lift that will lead to a first floor museum.

#### **- Central part:**

The whole central space has been covered by the reconstruction of the initial plan, proposed by Georgian authorities.

A reinforced concrete dome has been installed, theoretically supported by the four central concrete pillars together with concrete arches to supplement the concrete pillars, although the latter are still under construction.

The whole construction has been made out of reinforced concrete, which allows the dome to be supported already by itself, before the realization of the complementary western pair of pillars. All the new (interior and exterior) surfaces are stone-clad. The old surfaces of the church walls that reflect the history of the building have already received the same new stone cladding, based on reinforced concrete.

All the new (interior and exterior) surfaces are stone-clad. The only non-clad surface is in the area of the proposed museum. The gaps in the interior of the fabric are grouted with cement.

- Northern and southern wings:

Raised over the historical porticos with their famous stone reliefs, are reinforced concrete constructions, with iron supports for the metal roof covering.

- Eastern end:

This is being completed by continuing the reconstruction work of the 1950's. It is being roofed over in a similar way to the rest of the building.

The mission observed that the current work has not been based on conservation of the existing fabric, some of which was acknowledged as being in an extremely fragile state during the previous mission in 2010, has not respected the archaeological layers, is not reversible.

Furthermore all these interventions have completely ignored the evidence brought to light by recent archaeological research. This identified the precise place of almost 400 of the original building stones that survived on the site. Of these, only two or three have been placed in their original position as examples.

In the Mission's view the necessary stabilisation of the Cathedral could have been achieved in other less drastic ways and should have been submitted as part of the rehabilitation strategy for discussion.

In order to support the new reinforced concrete dome, excavations have been made in the central part of the church, to install additional sub-foundations for the parametric walls and large reinforced concrete beams have destroyed much of the archaeological layers, including, it appears, important discoveries of tombs inside the church, as reported in the media.

The overall approach was not considered to respect the aim to rehabilitate the church in a way that respected its fabric, archaeological layers and overall its Outstanding Universal Value, as had been envisaged by the Committee. The almost completed reconstruction works have followed a totally different methodology and concept: they are irreversible, heavy interventions on the original fabric of the monument, under the rationale of strengthening the building against possible earthquakes. The work now being undertaken has not been discussed with the Advisory Bodies, is not set out in an agreed Rehabilitation Strategy and neither has it been approved by the Committee.

## **TOPOLOGICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEYS AROUND BAGRATI CATHEDRAL**

The State Party report provides details of work undertaken to increase knowledge of the wider archaeological area around the Cathedral. In addition to topographic and cadastral surveys of the site carried out in early 2011, a non-intrusive archaeological survey of the

entire Bagrati Cathedral part of the property was undertaken in November-December 2011. The results of this survey revealed a high density of archaeological layers in the survey area, including evidence of fortifications and royal residences.

The mission considers that the resulting data is highly important for understanding the significance of the context of the property. Such evidence could have been used as the basis of a Master Plan for the property and its setting to allow understanding of the way the area has evolved.

#### **4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The mission deeply regrets that the opportunity to undertake a careful, reversible reconstruction of the majority of the building based on clear evidence of what previously existed, with sensitive new work introduced where evidence is lacking, which could have allowed the Cathedral to be re-used and valued as part of contemporary society has not been taken.

The mission underlines that the decision to inaugurate a new reconstructed Cathedral of Bagrati in September 2012 has prevailed over the commitment of the State Party to implement the Committee's decisions to allow future removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger, as well as over the responsibility to sustain the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

While the State Party has made significant progress in implementing the corrective measures regarding the Gelati Monastery, the mission considers that the work undertaken at Bagrati Cathedral does not respect the Corrective Measures developed by the 2010 mission jointly with the State Party authorities and agreed by the Committee nor will it contribute towards achieving the Desired State of Conservation.

The new work has overwhelmed the original masonry to such an extent that the authenticity of the Cathedral has been irreversibly destroyed. Bagrati Cathedral can no longer be said to contribute to the criterion for which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List.

#### *ANNEX I*

#### **THE BAGRATI CATHEDRAL AND GELATI MONASTERY**

##### ***Inscription history***

Justification provided by the State Party :

##### ***Gelati Monastery***

Gelati ensemble is a set of well preserved historical monuments. It is especially valuable for the preserved monuments of architecture, mosaic, mural painting, metalwork and enamel. Gelati was not only a monastery, but a centre of science and education, while the Academy, founded in the monastery, was one of the most significant centres of culture in the ancient Georgia. High skill of execution and expressiveness of the mosaic preserved in Gelati Monastery place it among the outstanding artistic monuments of the worldwide significance. Mural painting, chronological range of which comprises 12th-17th c., is a peculiar significant museum of Georgian monumental painting. Up to recently, the unique samples of Georgian metalwork were kept in Gelati; some of them are adorned with enamels, for instance 12<sup>th</sup> c. magnificent Khakhuli triptych 12-17th cc. icons are distinguished by lavish ornamentation and masterly execution. Illuminated manuscripts kept in Gelati are also the unique samples of Georgian culture.

Thus, Gelati monastery due to its architectural merits and magnificent samples of Georgian culture kept in it, is the unique treasury of culture. Such a collection of excellent monuments of high artistic value, gathered in a single ensemble, is a rare case in the history of the world culture.

### ***Bagrati Cathedral***

The outer appearance of the building is monumental and grand, varied and dynamic. Ornamental decoration contributes to the picturesqueness of the cathedral. The building amazes and fascinates the viewer by perfect proportions, free and perfect execution of the mouldings, ornaments, arches, light constructions.

Bagrati cathedral ornamentation makes it possible to trace the evolution undergone by Georgian architectural ornament in less than half a century; this ornamentation is an excellent sample of the world architectural plastics.

High artistic value of Bagrati cathedral goes far beyond the local significance. It is one of the best monuments of the medieval Christian architecture.

### **As provided in ICOMOS evaluation**

[...] Detailed maps showing the areas proposed for inscription and the buffer zones, which had been omitted from the nomination dossier, were supplied to the mission. [...]

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion iv.

### ***Inscription criteria and World Heritage values***

The nominated property of the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery correspond to criteria (iv) :

*Criterion iv.* Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery represent the highest flowering of the architecture of medieval Georgia.

## ***ANNEX II***

### ***Examination of the State of Conservation by the World Heritage Committee***

<b>35th session of the World Heritage Committee, Brasilia, 2011 Decision 35COM 7A.29</b>
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The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-11/35.COM/7A.Add,
2. Recalling Decision 34 COM 7B.88, adopted at its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010),
3. Welcomes the halting of all work on the Bagrati Cathedral, as well as progress in the implementation of the rehabilitation programme and the conservation master plan for Gelati Monastery;
4. Notes with satisfaction that the coordination between the Georgian Church and the national authorities has been enhanced, joint activities reinforced and the management of religious and sacred World Heritage properties in Georgia improved;
5. Also notes that the State Party has appointed an international conservation architect as a consultant for Bagrati Cathedral and that Georgian engineers are working on a three-phased approach to fully rehabilitate the Bagrati Cathedral, as an enclosed space;
6. Takes note that the international consultant considers that the incomplete structural condition of the Bagrati Cathedral is not sustainable, that it might not be feasible to reverse what has been recently built as the interventions are almost irreversible, and that a lightweight roof could be mounted on the existing concrete columns;
7. Urges the State Party to develop a rehabilitation strategy for the Bagrati Cathedral that reverses the maximum amount of recent work, incorporates fragments on site if possible where they form part of the walls, ensures any lightweight roof provides a profile for the building that is similar to what might have once existed and leaves the interior unplastered;
8. Requests the State Party to submit this rehabilitation strategy to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies, before any commitment is made;
9. Also requests the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to assess the overall state of conservation of the property and to discuss approaches to the rehabilitation strategy of Bagrati Cathedral;
10. Further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1February2012, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session in 2012;
11. Decides to retain Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery (Georgia) on the World Heritage List in Danger.

**34th session of the World Heritage Committee,  
Brasilia, 2010  
Decision 34COM 7B.88**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-10/34.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decision 33 COM 7B.103, adopted at its 33rd session (Seville, 2009),



3. Acknowledges the information provided by the State Party on the "Bagrati Cathedral preliminary rehabilitation project", the general report on the studies conducted within the framework of this project and the "report on Bagrati Cathedral rehabilitation works";
4. Notes the recommendations of the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM advisory mission to the property;
5. Expresses its serious concern about irreversible interventions carried out by the State Party as part of the preparations for the Bagrati Cathedral reconstruction project prior to any review or approval of the project and its impact on the Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity of the property;
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;
7. Also urges the State Party to immediately adopt all necessary measures aiming to ensure the safeguarding of the Outstanding 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);
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;
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.
10. Considers that the State Party has not complied with all the requests expressed by the Committee in Decision 33 COM 7B.103, and that therefore the property is in danger in conformity with Chapter IV.B of the Operational Guidelines and decides to inscribe the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery (Georgia) on the List of World Heritage in Danger;
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 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;

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,

b) Changes to be carried out within one to two years:

- Interventions already carried out at the Bagrati Cathedral reversed entirely or in part (taking into consideration the underground reinforced concrete ring around the foundations of the building),

- An overall consolidation project of the Bagrati Cathedral ruins elaborated in consultation with international conservation engineers and architectural conservators,

- Monitoring regimes for the physical conservation of all components of the property to ensure the long-term conservation, consolidation and protection of the property developed,

- A clear institutional coordination mechanism, ensuring that the conservation of the property receives priority consideration within relevant governmental decision-making processes, established,

c) Changes to be carried out within two to three years:

- Legislation adopted that assures the protection and maintenance of all the component parts of the property in order to sustain its Outstanding Universal Value,

- A comprehensive management system adopted that includes 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 property and its buffer zone and an Urban Master Plan including land-use regulations,

d) Changes to be carried out within five years (after possible removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2 to 3 years):

- Documentation and recording of all historical monuments as a digitized information database for management, conservation and planning purposes completed,

- A full inventory of paintings including digitalization and reference system for all historical monuments of the property established,

- Agreed upon restoration of all monuments, including paintings carried out,

- A complex programme for the structural conservation and restoration of the churches, in Gelati Monastery to be carried out,

- A complex programme for the systematic cleaning, conservation and restoration of the interior wall-paintings and mosaics in Gelati Monastery churches, with the involvement and collaboration of international specialists in this domain, to be carried out;

13. Also requests 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, considering that, if further reconstruction works are carried out on Bagrati Cathedral, the property might be considered, in conformity with Chapter IV.C of the Operational Guidelines, for deletion from the World Heritage List.

<p><b>33rd session of the World Heritage Committee, Seville, Spain 22-30 June 2009 Document WHC-09/33.COM/7B</b></p>
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*Main threats identified in previous reports*

- a) General need for interior and exterior conservation work on the monuments;
- b) Insufficient coordination between the Georgian Church and the national authorities;
- c) Lack of co-ordinated management system;
- d) Major reconstruction of the structure of Bagrati Cathedral.

*Conservation issues*

The World Heritage Committee, at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008), strongly urged the State Party to immediately start preventive conservation work on the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Complex, as well as to develop, in coordination with the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, a long-term programme for the systematic conservation of the mural paintings and mosaics with the involvement and collaboration of international specialists in this domain. The World Heritage Committee noted the State Party's intention to prepare a new reconstruction project for Bagrati Cathedral and requested the State Party to provide assurances that no reconstruction work shall commence until the State Party has provided complete and detailed documentation concerning this project for review by the World Heritage Committee. The State Party was requested to urgently prepare, approve and provide to the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, the management plan of the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Complex, including the boundaries clarification document clearly indicating its buffer zones. The World Heritage Committee encouraged the State Party to organize an awareness-raising campaign for all World Heritage properties in Georgia and invited the State Party to prepare relevant documentation in order to initiate an international donors conference designed to address the major problems identified for all World Heritage properties in Georgia. The State Party submitted a state of conservation report dated 29 January 2009 which provides a summary of some activities accomplished and little information relevant to the state of conservation of the property. The State Party report underlined the main factors affecting the property which are the lack of a fast solution to the long-standing problems, the scarcity of the resources, as well as the unavailability of a flexible management; the negative climatic and environmental affect on the monument; the lack of qualified specialists in the domain of conservation, restoration and management of properties and unorganized visiting of the property.

a) *Preventive conservation work on the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Complex*

The State Party informed that monitoring activities at the property have been undertaken and provided the list of the accomplished works without any detailed report. On the basis of the evaluation of the stability of the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery, the State Party proposed technical measures aiming to increase the stability of the structures. The

State Party also informed that the database, containing information on Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery has being created.

*b) Reconstruction project for Bagrati Cathedral*

In 2004, ICOMOS noted that any reconstruction must be carried out in keeping with the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and its authenticity and therefore it would be more appropriate to retain the property as a ruin. In January 2008, the Georgian authorities initiated the reconstruction project of the Bagrati Cathedral with the intention of restoring the initial religious use and functions of the Cathedral, which was previously discussed at the 28th session of the World Heritage Committee (Suzhou, 2004). The World Heritage Committee at its 32nd session (Quebec City, July 2008) urged the State Party not to carry out any reconstruction work which may adversely affect the Outstanding Universal Value and its authenticity and strongly urged the State Party not to commence any constructions before consideration of the project by the World Heritage Committee. The reactive monitoring mission in 2008 informed the authorities of the provisions in the *Operational Guidelines* concerning authenticity and, in particular that the reconstruction of historic buildings is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances, and only on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture. The authorities confirmed that the final decision will only be made after an analysis of reconstruction possibilities for the Cathedral has been completed, and following a review of the project by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, and examination by the World Heritage Committee.

In the report, the State Party underlined that the rehabilitation of Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery is a priority. The 2009 budget resources for the conservation of the monuments highlight the State policy regarding the preservation of the cultural heritage.

The report mentioned some works accomplished. While these works mark the initial stage of the conservation process of the Bagrati Cathedral, they seem to be preparatory activities of its reconstruction : - Technical status of the surface and underground bearing structures assessed and studied (laboratory research and analyses, fixation of micro and macro cracks, study of their length, width, depth and gaps, mapping and drafting passports of damages). - Research of construction materials, laboratory analyses (recommendations on compliance of the materials existing on the site with the materials to be used). - Preliminary art history research (bibliography, on-site research and recommendations, drafting reference and archive material list). The detailed rehabilitation / reconstruction project of the Bagrati Cathedral has not been provided by the State Party as requested by the World Heritage Committee at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008).

*c) Management plan of the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Complex*

The State Party informed that all necessary documents have been prepared in order to start the elaboration and implementation of the management plan of the property. No documents have been submitted by the State Party in the report for review.

*d) Boundaries clarification issue*

The State Party underlined that the Law of Georgia "On the Cultural Heritage" determines a 1 km special protection area for the property. The protection zones of the monuments are being adjusted and expanded. No documents have been submitted by the State Party in the report for review.

e) *Awareness-raising campaign and international donors conference*

The State Party did not provide any view concerning the eventual preparation of the international donors conference designed to address major problems identified for all World Heritage properties in Georgia. The World Heritage and ICOMOS noted that the State Party should provide the detailed information on any accomplished works. Taking into account the brief summary report it would be necessary to obtain further detailed information concerning each element of the report, especially concerning the rehabilitation project, management plan and the conservation and monitoring work progress report, as well as the information on boundary issues. The World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS remain greatly concerned by the scope of the problems, in particular the Bagrati Cathedral reconstruction project and the absence of the detailed report responding to the World Heritage Committee requests. The World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS recall the recommendation that the work programme designed to address the major problems identified with this property and the preparation of the donor's conference for all World Heritage properties in Georgia should be included in the Georgian Cultural Heritage Programme.

**Decision 33COM 7B.103**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-09/33.COM/7B,
2. Recalling Decision **32 COM 7B.91**, adopted at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008),
3. Reiterates its request to the State Party to urgently prepare, approve and submit to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies the management plan of the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery, including the boundaries clarification document clearly indicating its buffer zones;
4. Requests the State Party to provide detailed and complete information concerning the monitoring of the state of conservation of property as well as the reconstruction project and a progress report on works carried out;
5. Invites the State Party to prepare relevant documentation in order to initiate an international donors conference designed to address major problems identified for all World Heritage properties in Georgia;
6. Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2011**, a progress report, including the complete and detailed documentation concerning the new reconstruction project for Bagrati Cathedral, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session in 2011.

**32nd session of the World Heritage Committee,  
Quebec City, Canada ; 2 - 10 July 2008  
Document WHC-08/32.COM/7B.Add**

*Main threats identified in previous reports*

- a) General need for interior and exterior conservation work on the monuments;
- b) Insufficient coordination between the Georgian Church and the national authorities;
- c) Lack of co-ordinated management system;
- d) Major reconstruction of the structure of Bagrati Cathedral.

*Conservation issues*

The Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia submitted, as requested by the World Heritage Committee, at its 31th session (Christchurch, 2007), a state of conservation report dated 25 January 2008 confirming that no significant progress has been made since the World Heritage Committee's last decision.

A joint World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission carried out from 2 to 10 June 2008 to the Historic Monuments of Mtskheta and to the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery, met all relevant representatives and discussed the following issues:

#### *Bagrati Cathedral*

In January 2008, the Georgian authorities initiated the reconstruction project of the Bagrati Cathedral based on the intention to recreate the initial religious use and functions of the Cathedral, which was previously discussed at the 28th session of the World Heritage Committee (Suzhou, 2004). ICOMOS, in 2004, took a view that any reconstruction must be carried out in keeping with the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and its authenticity and therefore it would be more appropriate to retain the property as a ruin. The World Heritage Committee urged the State Party not to carry out any reconstruction work which may adversely affect the Outstanding Universal Value and its authenticity and strongly urged the State Party not to commence any constructions before consideration of the project by the World Heritage Committee. The mission informed the authorities of the provisions in the *Operational Guidelines* concerning authenticity, in particular that the reconstruction of historic buildings is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances, and only on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture. The authorities confirmed that the final decision will only be made after an analysis of reconstruction possibilities for the Cathedral has been completed, and following a review of the project by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, and examination by the World Heritage Committee.

The preparatory activities, including, documentation, detailed examination of structures and stability of the walls, evaluation of the general state of conservation and examination of construction materials, as well as reuse of more than 400 authentic stone construction elements inventoried inside and outside the historic building will be finalized by the end of 2008.

Following the evaluation of the state of conservation of this element of the World Heritage property, the mission noted the critical structural stability of the walls and recommended starting immediately, in parallel to any possible decision concerning the project, the preventive conservation works of the Bagrati Cathedral.

#### *Gelati Monastery Complex*

The mission evaluated the general state of conservation of the main components of the property.

##### *- Virgin Mary Church:*

The mission observed the damage of the roof, stone elements and accumulation of humidity in the north-eastern part of the Church and concluded that the exterior of the Cathedral is in need of urgent conservation/restoration work. The Ministry of Culture confirmed that a competition for an architectural conservation project had already been organized. The mission underlined the need for the authorities provide the project proposal for review by the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies.

The mission noted that no preventive actions have been undertaken by the Georgian conservation services concerning the mural paintings of great value. Only in the narthex, has diagnostic research on the wall paintings of the Virgin Mary Church been carried out by the Cultural and Art Fund of Georgia in 2004-2005. However no conservation action has been taken.

The mission strongly recommended that the authorities prepare, in coordination with the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, a long-term programme for the systematic conservation of the mural paintings and mosaics with the involvement and collaboration of the international specialists in this domain.

- St George Church, St. Nicolas Church, Bell Tower

The architectural conservation project for these monuments is part of the above-mentioned competition organized by the Ministry of Culture. The mission expressed its concern about the increasing gravity of the physical situation of these monuments and strongly urged the authorities to undertake the necessary conservation works to ensure the long term survival of these monuments.

#### *Management plan and boundary issues*

In accordance with the 2007 Law on Cultural Heritage and with this Constitutional Agreement, the management of the religious cultural heritage properties still lies under the State Party's authority but is carried out in agreement with the Church. No management plan exists for the property. The mission recommended that the preparation of the World Heritage property management plan, in coordination with all relevant stakeholders, be added, as a priority, to the Cultural Heritage Programme.

In addition, the mission underlined the necessity to prepare an awareness-raising campaign for all World Heritage properties in Georgia, including installation of the plaques commemorating the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List.

The authorities did not mention their 2007 proposals concerning a new statement of authenticity/integrity, as well as a new approach to the justification of the property, including the possible re-nomination under two additional criteria, (i) and (ii). The mission did not consider that a re-nomination of the property under new criteria would be justified. However, the State Party should provide a draft of Statement of Outstanding Universal Value.

The mission recommended to the authorities that the work programme designed to address the major problems identified with this property and the preparation of the donors conference for all World Heritage properties in Georgia be included in the Georgian Cultural Heritage Programme.

#### ***Decision 32COM 7B.91***

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-08/32.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decision **31 COM 7B.97**, adopted at its 31st session (Christchurch, 2007),
3. Strongly urges the State Party to immediately start preventive conservation work on the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Complex, as well as to develop, in coordination with the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, a long-term programme for the systematic conservation of the mural paintings and mosaics with the involvement and collaboration of international specialists in this domain;
4. Also recalling the earlier discussions among the Advisory Bodies, international experts and the World Heritage Committee, notes the State Party's intention to prepare a new reconstruction project for Bagrati Cathedral in order to recreate its initial religious use and functions, and underlines that in accordance with Paragraph 86 of the Operational Guidelines the reconstruction of historic buildings is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances;
5. Requests the State Party to provide assurances that no reconstruction work shall commence until the State Party has provided complete and detailed documentation concerning this project for review by the World Heritage Committee;

6. Also requests the State Party to urgently prepare, approve and provide to the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, the management plan of the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Complex, including the boundaries clarification document clearly indicating its buffer zones;

7. Encourages the State Party to organize an awareness-raising campaign for all World Heritage properties in Georgia;

8. Invites the State Party to prepare relevant documentation in order to initiate an international donors conference designed to address the major problems identified for all World Heritage properties in Georgia;

9. Further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2009**, a progress report, including the complete and detailed documentation concerning the new reconstruction project for Bagrati Cathedral, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 33rd session in 2009.

<p><b>31st session of the World Heritage Committee, Christchurch, New Zealand, 23 June – 2 July 2007 Document WHC- 07/31.COM/7B</b></p>
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*Main threats identified in previous reports*

- a) General need for interior and exterior conservation work on the monuments;
- b) Insufficient coordination between the Georgian Church and the national authorities;
- c) Lack of co-ordinated management system;
- d) Major reconstruction of the structure of Bagrati Cathedral.

*Current conservation issues*

The World Heritage Committee at its 29th session (Durban, 2005) encouraged the State Party to take appropriate measures, including seeking of funds, to address conservation issues identified in the state of conservation report.

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Georgia submitted a report on 12 March 2007 to the World Heritage Centre, dated January 2007. This report provides a comprehensive overview of all the issues relevant to the long term conservation of the property. This detailed report includes a proposal by the State Party for a new statement of significance, a statement of authenticity/integrity, a description of the situation for management, detailed monitoring reports concerning the physical condition of frescoes and materials within the two ensembles, and recently completed conservation work and studies addressing some of the problems identified.

More specifically, the report proposes a new approach to the justification of the property, including: nomination under two additional criteria, (i) and (ii), but without justification as well as a statement of authenticity/integrity not fully in compliance with the *Operational Guidelines*.

Concerning the lack of a management plan for the two properties, unresolved management conflict between Church and State and the physical state of conservation of the two ensembles the report provides observations included already its report of January 2005. The Committee's request (**29 COM 7B.75**) is not addressed in the State Party report. Indeed, all of the problems described at the time appear still in place, and in most cases worsened by the passage of time without positive treatment.

The current report also notes that the major reconstruction project for the structure of the Bagrati Cathedral, first questioned at the 28th session of the Committee (Suzhou, 2004), is no longer being considered.



The World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS express their concern about the increasing gravity of the physical situation described of the two ensembles, the continuing inability of the State Party to provide the necessary management, and institutional conditions necessary to ensure the long-term survival of these monuments, and for the apparent failure to secure the necessary financial support to address previously defined problems.

**Decision: 31 COM 7B.97**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-07/31.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decision **29 COM 7B.75**, adopted at its 29th session (Durban, 2005),
3. Regrets the late submission of the state of conservation report but notes the efforts of the State Party in reviewing the values, integrity and authenticity of the property;
4. Expresses serious concern about the continuing urgency of the problems described by the State Party report, and its inability to respond to these issues with appropriate managerial, institutional and financial measures;
5. Encourages the State Party to prepare, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS/ICCROM a 5 year work programme designed to address the major problems identified, for presentation to potential donors;
6. Requests the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS mission to assess the state of conservation of the property;
  
7. Strongly urges the State Party to initiate preparation of an integrated management plan for the World Heritage property, with the assistance of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;
8. Also requests the State Party to provide a progress report to the World Heritage Centre by **1 February 2008** for examination by the Committee at its 32nd session in 2008.

<p><b>29 session of the World Heritage Committee, Durban, South Africa 10-17 July 2005</b></p>
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*Main threat(s) identified in previous report(s):*

Major reconstruction of the structure of Bagrati Cathedral; general need for interior and exterior conservation work of the monuments; insufficient coordination between the Georgian Church and the national authorities.

*Current conservation issues:*

The State Party submitted a state of conservation report on 1 February 2005 which outlined in great detail the current condition of each of the monuments that constitute the World Heritage property.

No conservation or consolidation works have been carried out over the recent decade for Bagrati Cathedral, and the lack of care has worsened its physical state. In 2003, the Centre for the Reconstruction of the Architectural Heritage produced the 'Concept of Scientific Protection of Bagrati Cathedral' with financial assistance from UNESCO, but there is no Management Plan. Factors affecting the property include harsh climatic conditions, an ineffective management system, lack of financial subsidies, and interventions by the clergy. In the context of 'The Concept of Scientific Protection of Bagrati Cathedral,' the following studies have been carried out: geological and seismic research; analysis of the physical state of the Cathedral; research into the building materials; bibliographical studies; archaeological research; analysis of the methodology of reconstruction; and the concept of protection. The structurally unstable parts of the monument have been recorded, as well as the preserved fragments of wall paintings.

With regard to the Gelati Monastery, the report stated that two interventions made by the local clergy have affected the appearance of the observatory building and St. Nicolas Church, and that no Management Plan existed. Factors affecting the property include harsh climatic conditions, an ineffective management system, the lack of financial subsidies, and interventions by the clergy. In addition, diagnostic research of the wall paintings of the Virgin Mary Church was carried out by the Cultural and Art Fund of Georgia. This included the study of the archives, the condition of the frescoes, geological research of the area, research of the moisture content, and laboratory research (chemical and biological analysis).

The condition of the basement, the walls, floors, and plaster was analysed. The condition of the fence needs attention.

The state of conservation report submitted by the State Party made no specific mention of the major reconstruction project for the structure of the Bagrati Cathedral discussed during the previous session of the World Heritage Committee. The World Heritage Centre is in contact with the State Party to seek clarification.

This state of conservation report shows that the State Party is well aware of the condition of these two World Heritage properties. However, no long-term, effective steps have been undertaken by the Georgian conservation services to confront the very serious problems of these monuments. There are no Management Plans for the Bagrati and Gelati ensembles, and the UNESCO and UNDP-SPPD Heritage and Tourism Master Plan for Mtskheta has not yet been translated into Georgian. With regard to problems of funding, the State Party should be encouraged actively to undertake initiatives with international donor institutions in order to fulfil the highest priority need for the protection and conservation of the monuments.

Serious problems exist stemming from the current legal framework for monuments in Georgia, and particularly those relating to the ownership and management of religious monuments. To this is added the lack of strong and effective control of monuments and archaeological properties at all administrative levels. It is clear, however, that although ownership of ecclesiastical monuments in Georgia is constitutionally vested in the Georgian Orthodox Church, the management of these monuments is the responsibility of the State. In consequence, the state authorities should accept permanent responsibility for the preservation and protection of religious monuments as well as historical buildings and archaeological properties, and act in a timely manner to prevent any destructive intervention and reconstruction activity.

**Decision: 29 COM 7B.75**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document **WHC-05/29.COM/7B.Rev**,
2. Recalling its Decision **28 COM 15B.93**, adopted at its 28th session (Suzhou, 2004),
3. Encourages the State Party of Georgia to take appropriate measures, including seeking of funds, to address conservation issues identified in the state of conservation report;
4. Requests the State Party to provide the World Heritage Centre by **1 February 2007** with an updated report for examination by the Committee at its 31st session (2007).

**28 session of the World Heritage Committee,  
Durban, South Africa  
10-17 July 2005**

*Conservation issues:*

During a joint UNESCO-ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to City-Museum Reserve of Mtskheta (Georgia) from 8 to 16 November 2003, observations were also made on the state of conservation of Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery. The mission observed that the exterior of the buildings of Gelati Monastery is in good condition. The windows, however, need to be conserved to keep out the wind and rainwater as damages have been caused to the mural paintings particularly on the southern wall. In Bagrati Cathedral scaffolding from the previous conservation work still stands against the wall of the fortress, and open trenches indicate that archaeological excavation have been left incomplete.

Conservation work on the chapel in the fortress and the walls of the cathedral also need to be concluded. The authorities of Georgia intend to undertake a major reconstruction of the structure, either by using artificial stones to recreate the original form of the building or to use glazed steel to build a transparent dome, which can be illuminated. ICOMOS, however, took a view that any reconstruction must be carried out in keeping with the outstanding universal value of the property and its authenticity and therefore it would be more appropriate to retain the site as a ruin.

**Decision 28 COM 15B.87**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Acknowledging the outcomes of the joint UNESCO-ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to the property,
2. Takes note with concern of the conservation problems affecting the property and encourages the State Party to respond to them taking into account the recommendations made by the mission;
3. Urges the State Party not to carry out any reconstruction work which may adversely affect the outstanding universal value and its authenticity and strongly urges the State Party not to commence any constructions before consideration of the project by the Committee;

4. Requests the State Party to provide to the World Heritage Centre an updated report by 1 February 2005 so that the World Heritage Committee may examine the state of conservation of the property at its 29th session in 2005.

**World Heritage Committee  
XVIII session / Phuket, Thailand / December 1994**

Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery

The Committee inscribed this property on the World Heritage List and requested the ICOMOS mission evaluation report to be transmitted to the State Party.

**ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL**



Figure 5: Bagrati Cathedral, south-west side at the time of World Heritage inscription in 1994, archive photograph by National Agency

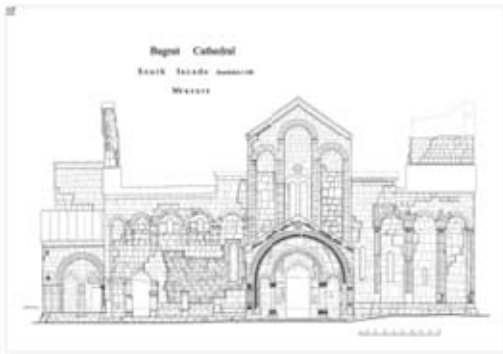


Figure 7; Bagrati Cathedral, measured drawing of south elevation, 2009; Ivane Gromelashvili & team



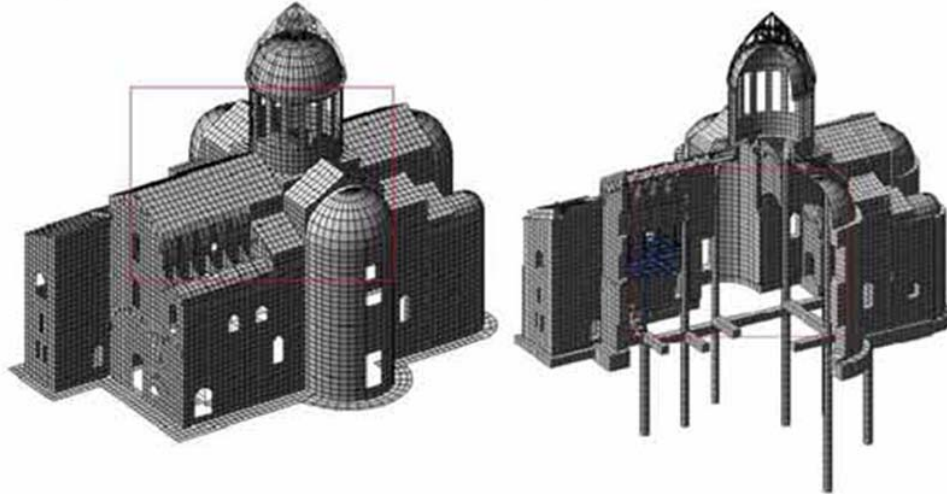


Project presented to the Committee at its 35<sup>th</sup> session.

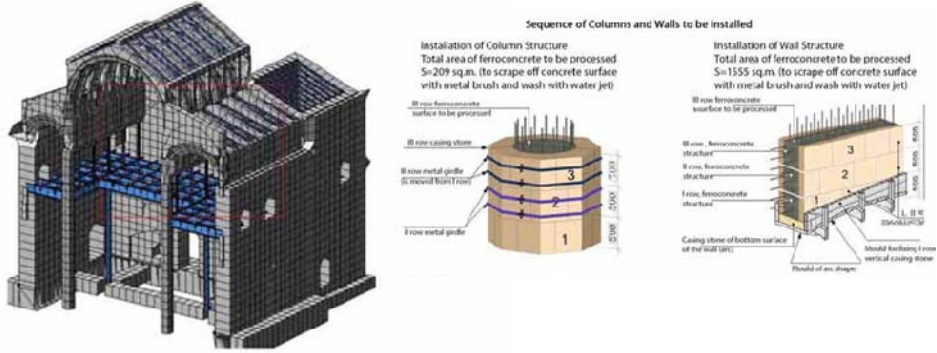


Project presented by the State Party to the 2012 mission.

Spatial Scheme ("4"). Rehabilitation of a Cathedral Using ferroconcrete and metal bearing structures



Calculation Scheme for Bearing Metal Structures of Entresol between B-D



Current view (April 2012)