



**Significant Boundary Modification**  
**Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery WHS**  
**Georgia**



**10 January 2017**

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## Executive Summary

### State Party

Georgia

### State, Province or Region

Republic of Georgia, Tkibuli district

### Name of Property

Gelati Monastery

### Geographical coordinates to the nearest second

Geographical Coordinates: E 42° 17' 40.58

N 42° 46' 05.62

600m altitude

### Description of the boundaries of the nominated property

To ensure the long-term protection and sustainable retention of the structural and visual integrity of Gelati Monastery within its immediate surroundings, a property and a buffer zone have been proposed around the nominated property.

The property is formed by the Gelati Monastery in its entirety. This includes the entire monastic precinct enclosed by a stone wall. The boundary of the World Heritage area extends 30m outside the stone wall of the monastic area.

To preserve the visual and structural integrity of the Gelati Monastery, a buffer zone has been proposed, which encompasses the immediate surroundings of the nominated area and the visually critical area required to retain the visual integrity of the site. The buffer zone includes the entire wooded hillside and the access road to the monastic area.

The proposal for extension of the boundary of the visual protection area of Gelati Monastery as a buffer zone was approved on January 9, 2014 by the Minister of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia after consultations with the Georgian Orthodox Church.





Fig. 1: The boundaries of the World Heritage property as confirmed in 2009



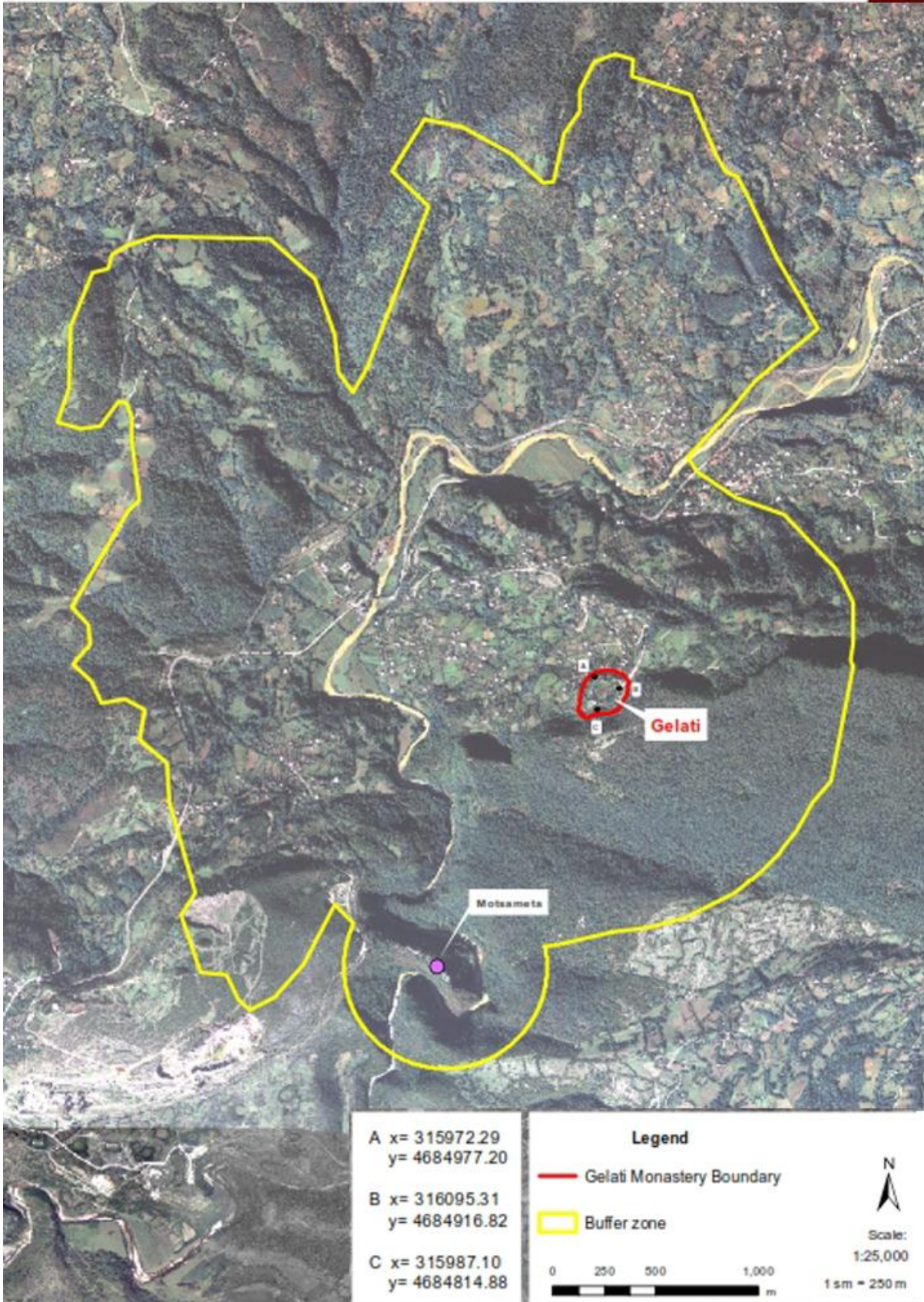


Fig. 2. Map of the nominated property, showing boundaries and buffer zone



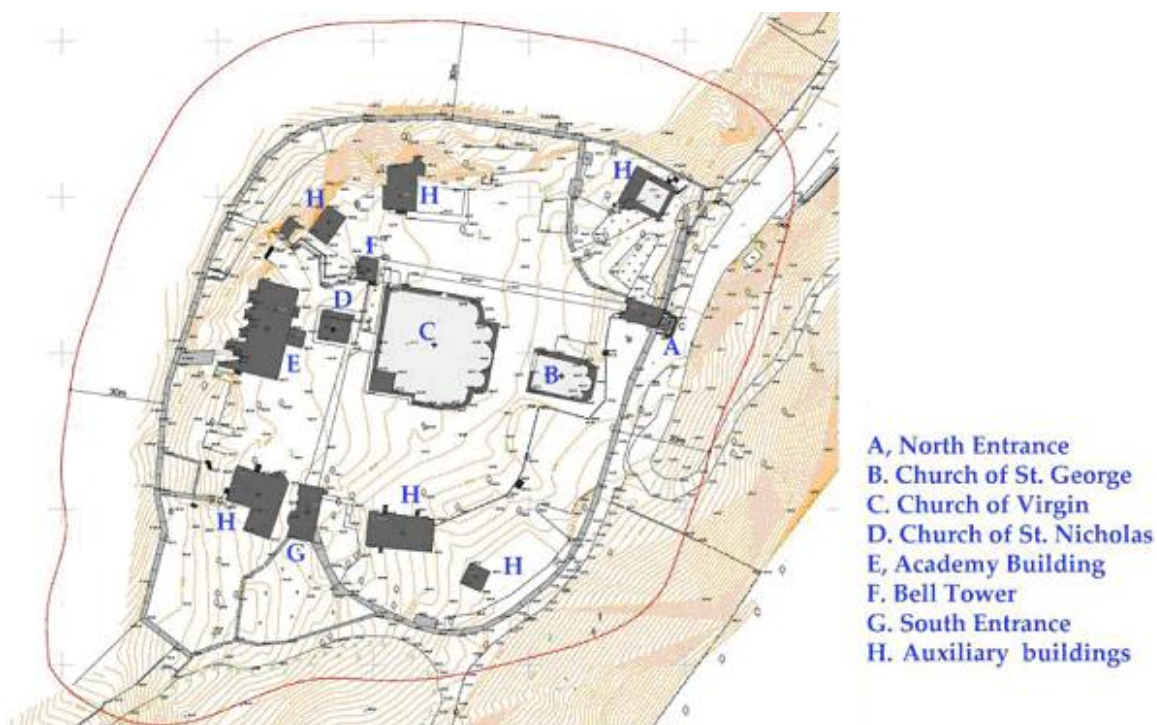
### Criteria under which property is nominated

*Criterion (iv): to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history.*

Gelati Monastery is the architectural masterpiece of the Georgian “Golden Age” and the best representative of its style. The main church of the monastery is an important example of the inscribed cross architectural type.

Gelati is one of the largest Orthodox monasteries, distinguished for its harmony with its natural setting and a well thought-out overall planning concept.

The main church of Gelati is the only medieval monument in the larger region of Eastern Asia Minor and the Caucasus that still has well-preserved mosaic decoration, as well as a large ensemble of paintings of different periods, including more than 40 portraits.



**Fig. 3. Gelati Monastery site plan.**

### Draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

#### *Brief synthesis*

Gelati is a large monastery near Kutaisi, Imereti Region, West Georgia. It was founded in 1106 by King David the Builder (1089-1125). The main church dedicated to the Nativity of the Virgin was built between 1106 and 1130. The Academy and the southern gate date from the same period. In the 13th century, the churches of St George and of St Nicholas and the bell tower were built and in the early 14th century the eastern porch was added to the Academy. The monastery has preserved a great number of mural paintings from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as the 12<sup>th</sup>-century mosaic in the apse of the main church, depicting the Virgin with Child flanked by archangels. The monastery also contains the grave of David the Builder.

Troubles of the late Middle Ages, such as the arsons of Gelati in 1510 and 1759, caused serious damage to its buildings, but in both cases it was quickly restored. Around 1570, Gelati became the residence of the Catholicos of West Georgia.

The reign of David the Builder was the beginning of the “Golden Age” of the Medieval Georgia that lasted until the reign of Queen Tamar (1184-1213). The Gelati Monastery is the highest expression of the artistic idiom of the architecture of the Georgian “Golden Age”. It is distinguished for its harmony with its natural setting, a well thought-out overall planning concept, and the high technical and artistic quality of its buildings. In the round, this magnificent architectural ensemble illustrates the Georgian appropriation of the Imperial idea of power. It is one of the most powerful visual symbols of Medieval Georgia and the most vivid reflection of cultural and intellectual development in the “Golden Age”, which was a significant expression of the power and high culture of Eastern Christianity at this time.

### ***Justification for Criteria***

Criterion iv:

Gelati Monastery is the masterpiece of the architecture of the “Golden Age” of Georgia and the best representative of its architectural style, characterized by the full facing of smoothly hewn large blocks, perfectly balanced proportions, and the exterior decoration of blind arches. The main church of the monastery is one of the most important examples of the inscribed cross (cross-in-square) architectural type that had a crucial role in the East Christian church architecture from the 7<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

Gelati is one of the largest Medieval Orthodox monasteries, distinguished for its harmony with its natural setting and a well thought-out overall planning concept.

The main church of the Gelati Monastery is the only Medieval monument in the larger historic region of Eastern Asia Minor and the Caucasus that still has well-preserved mosaic decoration, comparable with the best Byzantine mosaics, as well as having the largest ensemble of paintings of the middle Byzantine, late Byzantine, and post-Byzantine periods in Georgia, including more than 40 portraits of kings, queens, and high clerics and the earliest depiction of the seven Ecumenical Councils.

### ***Statement of Integrity***

Gelati is a large Monastery that consists of the main church, the two other churches, the bell tower, the two gates, the Academy, and a number of dwellings and subsidiary structures. The monastic precinct is surrounded by the wall circuit. These features fully convey the significance and outstanding value of the property. The whole monastic precinct is included in the nominated property. The boundaries are sufficiently large to include all the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.

No important original feature of the property has been lost during the centuries. The main buildings of the monastery – the three churches and the bell tower, all constructed in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, - are preserved almost intact, apart from repairs of their interior fittings and roofs that occurred in both Medieval and modern times. The mosaic of the main church has come to our days in a good condition.

Since the declaration of Georgia’s independence in 1991, Gelati has always been favoured with particular attention by state, society, and church, though it does not mean that care has always been provided properly. Pressures exist, but the processes are under control. The level of threats is low.



**Fig. 4. The Gelati Monastery seen from the north (photo D.K and N. N)**

### ***Statement of Authenticity***

Features central to the expression of the site's Outstanding Universal Value have been fully preserved. The buildings within the property have a high level of surviving authentic fabric and decoration and the spatial planning and layout of the property is authentic in form and design.

All of the main buildings of the monastery dated back to its foundation in 12<sup>th</sup> century have survived and are in good physical condition, as well as the buildings added in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In the main church, original mosaic decoration of the apse and wall painting of the narthex are preserved. Murals painted in the late Middle Ages are integral to the history of the monastery.

The monastery occupies the same area as it did in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Borders of the precinct have not been changed over the centuries. The natural setting of the monastery has generally been preserved.

Gelati has had an uninterrupted monastic life from foundation to the present, except for the Soviet period (1923-1988). The monastery still keeps its medieval spirit that is emphasized by the authentic function and use of the property for its original purpose. Gelati was and still is a national symbol, an architectural manifestation of the Georgia's "Golden Age".

### ***Protection and management requirements***

In accordance with the Constitutional Agreement concluded between the State of Georgia and the Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia, all ecclesiastic buildings in Georgia, Gelati Monastery among them, are owned by the Georgian Orthodox Church.

Gelati monastery has been a Listed Monument of National Significance since the Soviet period. Currently it is listed in the national register of monuments by the presidential decree from 07.11.2006. It has both physical and visual protection areas and the latter has been recently extended to provide an adequate buffer zone. The protective measures are implemented according to the Law of Georgia on Cultural Heritage (2007), utilising the state budget for cultural heritage protection.

In 2015 a number of powers related to issuing administrative and legal acts prescribed by the Law on Cultural Heritage were delegated by the Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia to the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.

Since then, The National Agency has been the main body to ensure the protection of the visual integrity of the site within the designated protection zones of the property.

The Master Plan for the rehabilitation of the Gelati Monastery has been elaborated in 2008 by the Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sports of Georgia. It has been reviewed and approved by World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, providing a formal framework for the National Agency to implement conservation works on the site on a sustainable basis. All conservation-rehabilitation activities since then have been carried out according to this Plan. In 2015 the Conservation Master Plan was updated to reflect new realities and meet current and future needs of the monastery complex.

The Management Plan for Gelati Monastery elaborated within the World Bank funded Imereti Regional Development Program was completed in 2015 and submitted to the World Heritage Centre. The document was further revised in compliance with the ICOMOS comments and recommendations in 2016.

Both the Church and the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia are involved in the management of the monastery. The monastery administration is responsible for day to day management of the site, general upkeep of the territory, ensuring safety, basic cleaning and maintenance within the precinct. Gelati monastery is open for visitors and there are no special regulations established. However, the Management Plan for the property foresees the Visitor Management Program which will improve physical access to the site, ensure the proper visitor services and well trained staff, manage visitor flows and introduce different touristic routes throughout the new buffer zone that offers rich diversity of cultural and natural heritage, etc.

On the side of the State the management of the property is implemented by the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia and its structural unit - the Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve. The Agency is responsible for monitoring and maintaining good state of conservation of the site, providing proper methodology for interventions and issuing permits, providing a general management framework as well as visitor facilities and information.

**Name and contact information of official local institution/agency**

*Organization:* National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.

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*Tel:* 995 32 298 39 24

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*Web address:* [www.heritagesites.ge](http://www.heritagesites.ge)



# 1. Identification of the Property

## 1.a Country

Georgia

## 1.b State, Province or Region

Republic of Georgia, Tkibuli District,

## 1.c Name of Property

Gelati Monastery

## 1.d Geographical coordinates to the nearest second

Geographical coordinates: E42 17 40.58

N42 46 05.62

Altitude above sea level: 600m

<b>Id n°</b>	<b>Name of the component part</b>	<b>Region(s) / District(s)</b>	<b>Coordinates of the Central Point</b>	<b>Area of Nominated component of the Property (ha)</b>	<b>Area of the Buffer Zone (km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>Map N°</b>
001	Gelati Monastery	Village Gelati, Tkibuli Region	E42 17 40.58 N42 46 05.62	4,20 ha	12,46 km <sup>2</sup>	
Total area				4,20 ha	12,46 km <sup>2</sup>	

## 1.e Maps and plans, showing the boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone



Fig. 5: Map showing the location of Gelati Monastery in reference to Georgia

See Annex 1:

1. Map of Georgia , 1: 1 000 000.
2. Map of Tkibuli Municipality and the environs of the city of Kutaisi, 1: 100 000.
3. Map of the nominated property and buffer zone, 1:15 000.
4. Map of the nominated property, 1:750.
5. Map of the nominated property and buffer zone showing listed monuments, 1:15 000.
6. Map of the nominated property showing listed monuments in 1 km visual protection zone, 1:10 000.
7. Map showing proposed boundary modification, 1:20 000.
8. Map of territorial functional units within the buffer zone, 1:15 000.
9. Map of land use within the buffer zone, 1:15 000.

## 1.f Area of nominated property (ha.) and proposed buffer zone (km<sup>2</sup>)

Area of nominated property:	4,20 ha
Buffer zone	12,460 km <sup>2</sup>
Total	12, 502 km <sup>2</sup>





Fig. 6. Gelati Monastery (photo D.K and N. N)

## 2. Description

### 2.a Description of Property

The Gelati Monastery is situated in Western Georgia on the left side of the river Tskhatsitela, some 12km east of the city of Kutaisi and 8km west of Tkibuli. The climate of the area is humid subtropical with monsoonal flow during autumn and winter months. Summers are generally hot and relatively dry, while winters can be wet and cool.

Location in a picturesque natural setting on the gentle slope of the hill, in the outskirts of the village of the same name, adds to the beauty of the Gelati Monastery. Monastic buildings stand on a natural terrace with a scarped edge on the western side. Below the monastery, the village stretches down the hill to the riverside while the upper part of the hill is covered with deciduous forest. Obviously, the site was chosen because of its visibility from many points, both far and near, including the royal palace in Kutaisi (located close to the Bagrati Cathedral). Depending on the point of observation, from a distance the monastery is seen against the background of either the wooded slope or a broad hilly landscape.



Fig. 7. View from the Gelati Monastery (photo S.T.)

The Gelati Monastery was established by the king of Georgia David the Builder in 1106. During the following decades, the main church of the monastery dedicated to the Nativity of the Virgin and the building of the Gelati Academy were constructed. In the 13th century, the churches of St George and of St Nicholas and a bell tower were built. There are also several one and two-storey



houses dating from the 18th to the 19th centuries, which were built on the remains of much earlier structures. The site is surrounded by a stone wall of irregular shape with two gatehouses, one in the east that is the current entrance, and the other in the south that used to be the original main entrance.

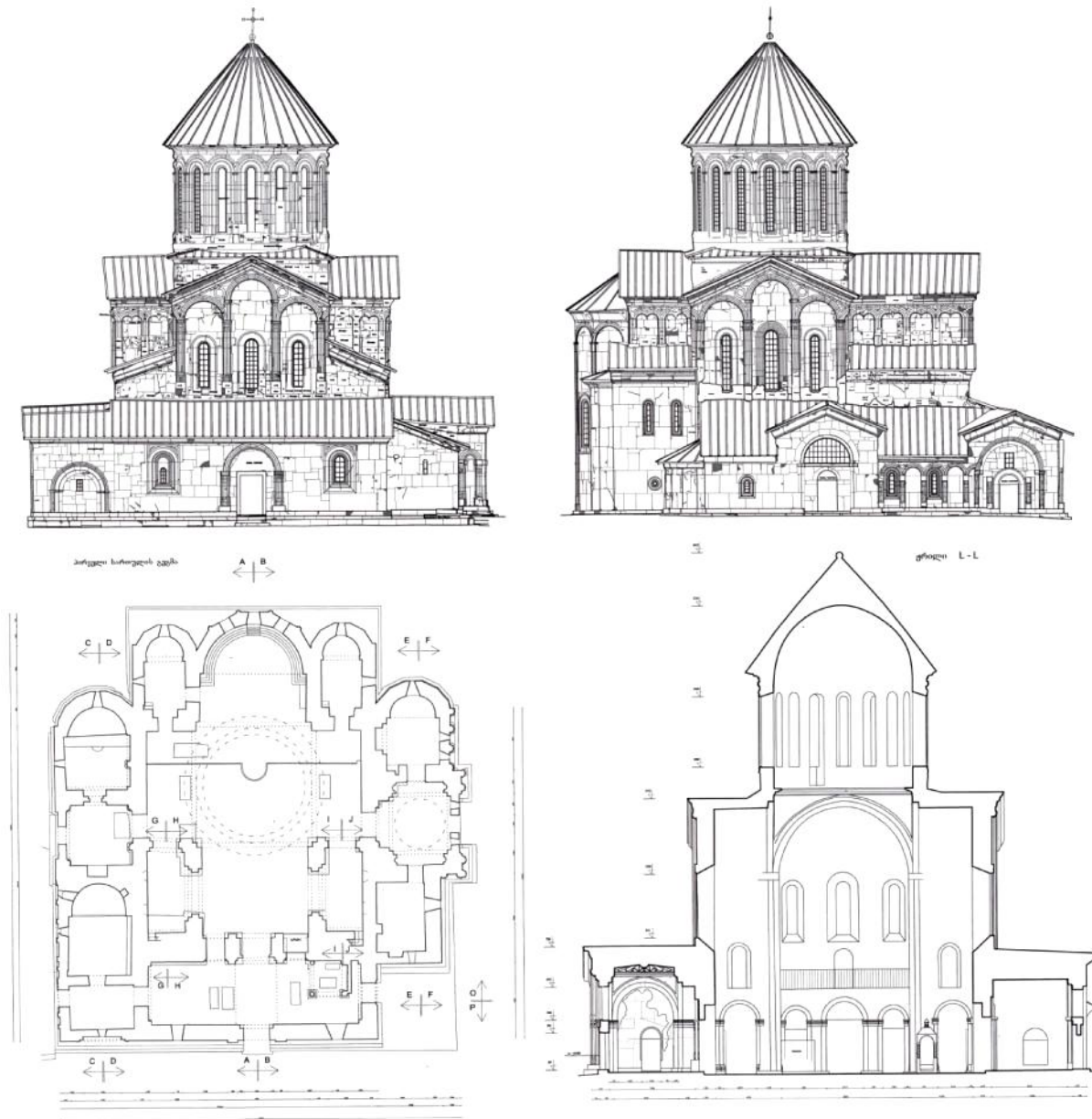
The overall planning concept of the site is clear. High domed buildings, i. e. the churches and the bell-tower occupy the centre of the enclosure with the main church rising in the very middle while the lesser buildings stand – and apparently stood in the early times of the monastery - around its edge.



**Fig. 8. The Church of the Nativity of the Virgin (main church of the monastery) (photo D.K and N. N.)**



**The Church of the Nativity of the Virgin** is the largest building and the main church of the monastery. Its construction was begun by King David the Builder in 1106 and completed under his son, King Demetre I in 1130. The church is inscribed-cross in plan, with dome resting on the corners of the apse walls and two massive piers. The facing of the church is of smoothly finished yellowish limestone blocks, some of which are very large. According to tradition, the largest blocks were placed there by King David the Builder himself. The east façade has three apses projecting in pentagons. The façades are decorated with blind decorative arches, which are echoed in the window frames. Carved ornamentation was made only on certain elements of the façades, e.g. on a decorative boss under the middle window of the sanctuary.



**Fig. 9: The main church, measured drawings of west and north elevations, plan and cross-section**

On the west, the church has a narthex from which three large doors lead to the church. The arched baldachin in the southern part of the narthex was built around 1660 as a commemorative chapel of the King Alexander III of Imereti (West Georgia). A porch was added to the southern entrance of the church around 1140. The chapels of St Andrew and St Marina respectively to the east and to



the west of the porch date from the same period; however the latter was reconstructed in the 13th century. The northern porch and the chapel of the Saviour to its east date from the early 13th century. The second chapel of St Marina to the west of the northern porch and adjacent chamber were added in the mid-13th century. The façades of the later chapels and porches have the ashlar facing of the same yellowish limestone and are in harmony with the external appearance of the church.



**Fig. 10. Main church, decorative arches of the south façade (photo D.K and N. N.)**



**Fig. 11-13. Main church, carved decorative details (photos D.K and N. N.)**

The airy space of the church is lit up by sixteen windows of the drum and twelve large windows of the cross arms and sanctuary. To the west, the church has a gallery along the first-floor level, the northwest and southwest corners of which are provided with two stairways. The apse is flanked by side chambers, a prothesis and diaconicon. The episcopal seat on the High Place in the sanctuary was made in 1519 by the order of Bishop Melchisedec Sakvarelidze. The baldachin



over the episcopal throne to the east of the north pier was commissioned by Metropolitan, later Catholicos, Joseph Bagrationi in 1760.



Fig. 14. Main church, interior view looking east (photo D.K and N. N.)





Fig. 15. Main church. View on the dome and vaults (photo D.K and N. N.)



Fig. 16. Mosaic decoration of the apse of the main church. the Virgin with Child flanked by archangels (photo GCNRC)



The interior of the church is a marvellous marriage of architecture and wall painting. Upon entering the church, the viewer's glance is directed to the mosaic which occupies the most important place – the conch of the apse. The mosaic executed between 1125 and 1130 is an outstanding monument of Medieval Georgian art. It shows the Virgin with Child flanked by archangels on a glittering gold background that is radiating all over the interior and forms excellent setting for the images. At present, the mosaic occupies the conch of the apse (almost 50 m<sup>2</sup> area). Its lower part had been damaged in the fire of 1510 and was replaced with painting in the following decades. The mosaic was composed mostly of small smalts that are extremely rich in tints and shades. Natural materials extracted near Gelati - sandstone and limestone of various colours and black amber were also used.



**Fig. 17. Narthex of the main church. Mural with the representation of the ecumenical council (photo D.K and N. N.)**

The wall paintings of the narthex, also executed between 1125 and 1130, are remarkable for their iconography. The centre of the vault features the Ascension of the Cross by the Archangels, the vault and the upper registers of the walls display the seven ecumenical councils, and the window has St Euphemia's Miracle at the Council of Chalcedon. The murals that are characterized by monumentality, soft modelling, refined colour and the individuality of the images, are ranked among the best examples of 12th century Georgian wall paintings.

The majority of the paintings in the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin date from the period after 1510, the year when Gelati was set on fire by the Turks. The murals were executed in several stages during the 16th century. Painting of the dome representing Christ Pantokrator with apocalyptic symbols and the prophets in the drum belong to 1520s. Representations of the Divine Liturgy and the Communion of the Apostles in the apse and of the scenes from the life of the Virgin in the chancel bay date from the 1550s. The Great Feasts in the north and south arms and the Passions in the west arm were painted in 1550s and between 1565 and 1578. The murals also contain numerous donor portraits of royal persons and high clerics. In the lower register of the north wall, along with the kings of Imereti, David the Builder is represented as well. Though dated from the 16th century, the portrait is very important since it is the only preserved medieval image of the king.



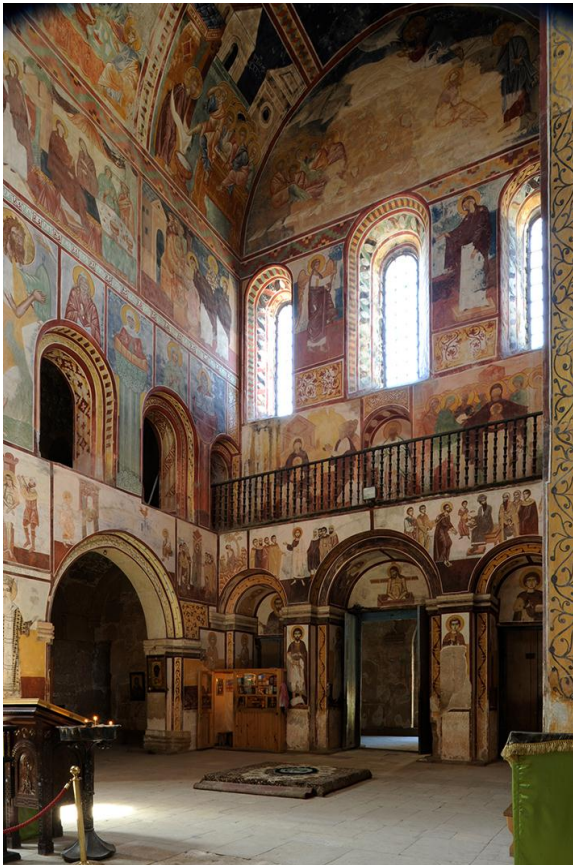


Fig. 18. Main church, interior view looking north-west (photo S. Sasano)

Fig. 19. Arched baldachin of the King Alexander III of Imereti in the narthex (photo D.K and N. N.)

Murals can also be seen in the chapels and porches of the church. Among them the most significant is the wall painting of the Chapel of St Andrew commissioned by the King David VI Narin and dated from 1291 and 1292. It contains the double portrait of the king. Wall painting of the first Chapel of St Marina belongs to the so-called “folk trend,” which prevailed in West Georgia in the 16th century. The murals of other chapels date from the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries.

**Church of St George** was constructed to the east of the main church in the mid-13th century. Actually, it is a reduced copy of the main church, though it shows some departures from the original, such as more elevated proportions, which affiliates it with 13th century Georgian architecture. Unlike the main church, it has no upper gallery. The dome rests on the corners of the apse walls and two round monolithic columns. On the west, there is a three-arched narthex. Façades have more lavish adornment that includes carved ornamentation of window frames. The church was damaged during the 1510 invasion by the Turks and was renovated by King Bagrat III (1510-1565). The small chapels arranged at the south and north edges of the narthex are of that period. A painted sculpture of St George carved by the priest Ioanne Bakhtadze (†850) can be seen on the west façade of the narthex.

Originally, St George’s was built as a “Queen’s church,” i. e. a praying chapel or a burial place of the queens of Georgia and later those of Imereti. Under Catholicos Evdemon Chkhetidze (1557-1578), after the transfer of the see of the Bitchvinta Catholicos to Gelati, the church became a cathedral, rather than the main church of the monastery.





**Fig. 20. Church of St George from the north-west (photo D.K and N. N.)**

The church of St George was painted between 1565 and 1583 by order of the Catholicos Evdemon I Chkhetidze and King George II of Imereti. The programme of the murals highlights the importance of the church as a cathedral and royal burial place: the dome is taken up by the theme of the Glory of Christ; the conch depicts the Virgin flanked by the apostles Peter and Paul; the apse and the chancel bay feature the themes of the eucharistic sacrifice and the resurrection. Along with the extended cycle of the Great Feasts, scenes from the life of St George are also displayed. Among the figures of the prophets and saints, the Georgian martyrs David and Constantine Mkheidze are depicted. The lower register of the paintings is almost fully occupied by the portraits of the kings and queens of Imereti.





**Fig. 21. Church of St George, interior view looking east (photo D.K and N. N.)**

The murals of the Church of St George are among the best examples of Post-Byzantine art. They owe much to the late Palaeologan art; however, the relatively laconic representation and tectonic compositional structure are indicative of local artistic traditions.



**Fig. 22. Church of St Nicholas seen from the north-east (photo ST.)**

**The Church of St Nicholas**, standing 10 metres to the west of the main church, dates from the late 13th century. The church is two-storied, which makes it almost unique in the Georgian church architecture. All four sides of the lower storey consist of arches, supported by corner piers. For this reason, in old records, the building is referred to as a “four-columned church” The upper storey is a small domed church, cruciform in plan, but with very short cross-arms. The altar apse, adorned with blind arches, projects sharply forming a pentagon from the outside. The windows are furnished with neatly profiled frames. Originally, the church must have been accessed through a wooden staircase. Later a stone stairway was built to the northern wall.

In 1650, when Russian ambassadors arrived in Gelati, the church had already been neglected. In 1770, it was restored by Catholicos Joseph Bagrationi.





**Fig. 23. Bell-tower seen from the south (photo D.K. and N.N.)**

**Fig. 24. Spring in the ground floor of the bell-tower (photo D.K and N. N.)**



**Bell-Tower.** A pool and a spring to the northwest of the main church, dating from the time of the foundation of the monastery, receive water from outside the monastery. The pool was covered with a square structure, open through arches on three sides. The building was altered in the second half of the 13th century to accommodate a bell-tower above it. This is one of the oldest bell-towers in Georgia. A stone stairway leading to the arched octagonal belfry was made in the wall. The first floor, above the spring, shelters a low, vaulted room with a fireplace and two windows, which was sometimes used as a prison in the late Middle Ages. In the last years of his life, Catholicos Joseph Bagrationi (†1776) enclosed himself in this room as a protest against the disreputable activity of his brother, King Solomon I.

Both the churches of St George and St Nicholas and the bell tower have façade ashlar of the same yellowish limestone as the main church, which contributes to the integrity of the architectural ensemble of the monastery.



**Fig. 25. Academy, Church of St Nicholas, and bell-tower seen from the south (photo D.K and N. N.)**

**Academy.** A large, oblong hall of rectangular plan, standing to the west of the Church of St Nicholas fits well into the monastery ensemble. According to established opinion, it housed the Gelati Academy, founded by David the Builder, and must be dated to the foundation of the monastery. The Academy is built of coarsely dressed stones. The west wall rising from the edge of a cliff is pierced with eight large arched windows, which command a spectacular view of the area. The east wall has three doors, the central one being the largest. A stone bench runs along the walls, above which niches can be observed.

In the early 14th century, an arched porch covered by a richly ornamented scalloped vault was added to the central eastern entrance of the Academy. The arches of the porch rest on low quatrefoil piers topped with wide, massive capitals, the north-eastern of which bears the carved image of a lion on its western face. An ornamental rosette, framed with a thick fillet, can be seen above the arch on the east façade of the porch. The academy used to have another porch to the west, of which only ruined walls remain.





**Fig. 26. Academy of the Gelati Monastery. Eastern porch (photo D.K and N. N.)**

In the 16th century, the hall was converted into a refectory, in which in 1651 Alexander III, king of Imereti, arranged a feast for Russian ambassadors. In the early 19th century the building collapsed, after which it was neglected. Conservation and partial restoration works were carried out in 1962 and 1963. In 2009, the hall was restored once again and covered with a timber roof.

Excavations conducted in 2008 and 2009 revealed a previously unsuspected basement storey under the Academy building. In the late Middle Ages, it was divided into two chambers the larger one of which served as a wine cellar and the smaller one as a cold store.





Fig. 27. Academy of the Gelati Monastery. Scalloped vault of the porch (photo GCNRC)

Fig. 28. Academy of the Gelati Monastery. Quatrefoil pier with the image of lion in the porch (photo D.K and S.T.)



Fig. 29. Academy of the Gelati Monastery. Interior view (photo D.K and N. N.)





**Fig. 30. Vaulted passage adjacent to the northern wall of the basement of the Academy (photo D.K and N. N.)**

**Structural remains adjacent to the Academy.** As a result of the excavations of 2008 and 2009, the remains of a large structure were unearthed to the north of the Academy, immediately adjacent to the northern wall of its basement. The structure was formed as a result of several building periods dating from the 12th to the 19th century. It consists of a long passage running from south to north and chambers of various sizes on its both sides. A small portion of the barrel vault of the passage survived in its northern part. The discovery suggests that the subsidiary buildings from the Academy northwards may all have been linked by vaulted passages.

To the north of these remains, a small rectangular structure built of rubble stone can be found, which probably served as an oil press. Its roof is missing.

**Gates.** The monastery premises of an area of more than four hectares are enclosed by a wall built of coarsely dressed stones. The wall, presumably of the same age as the monastery itself, was repaired under the guidance of Isidore Berekashvili in 1895 and 1896. It also serves as a retaining wall in the north and, partly, in the west.

The wall circuit has two gates. The smaller one on the north-eastern side has served as the main entrance to the monastery ever since the 17th century. Originally, however, the road led to the southern gate that dates to the early years of the monastery. Having undergone numerous alterations, it has taken the shape of an elongated vaulted passage with wide arches to the north and south. In the centre of the passage is the grave of David the Builder, whose huge tombstone is carved with the following inscription: "This is my resting place forever: here will I dwell for I desired so." The stone is positioned so that those who wish to enter the gate have to step onto it. Tradition holds that this was the wish of King David himself.





**Fig. 31. North-eastern gate of the monastery from the east (photo D.K N. N.)**

and



**Fig. 32. Southern gate of the monastery from the north (photo D.K and N. N.)**



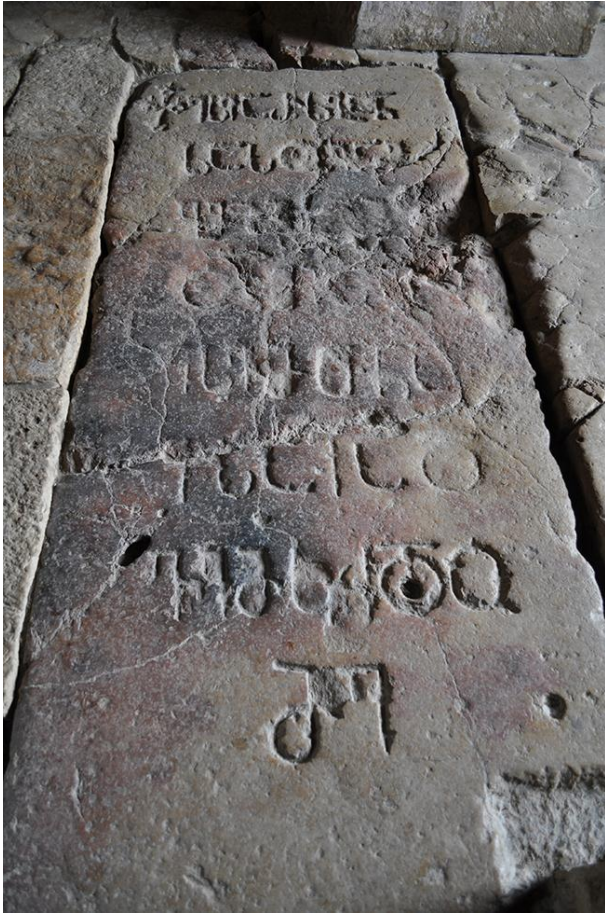


Fig. 33. Tombstone of the King David the Builder in the southern gate (photo D.K and N. N.)

Fig. 34. Iron door made in 1062 by the blacksmith Al-Hadad Ibrahim by order of the Emir of Gandza Abu-I-Asvari. Kept in the southern gate since 1139 (photo D.K and N. N.)

Preserved in the gate is an iron door which, according to its Arabic inscription, was made in 1062 by the blacksmith Al-Hadad Ibrahim by order of the Emir of Gandza Abu-I-Asvari. The Georgian king, Demetre I took it as a trophy in 1139, during a campaign in Gandza, and presented to the Gelati Monastery.

In the late Middle Ages, the southern gate served as a Chapel of St Demetre and was painted. Together with the separately standing figures and the Great Feasts of the Nativity and the Raising of Lazarus, the representations of the miracle of the Calming of the Sea by Christ and the Tree of Jesse can be seen in the preserved fragments of murals that date from the later half of the 17th century.

**Houses.** To the west of the southern Gate, there is a single-storey house built for the Bishop Gabriel Kikodze in 1890s after the design of the architect Vertsinsky, under the guidance of Isidore Berekashvili. It stands over the ruins of a medieval structure.

Another single-storey house standing to the east of the southern gate (south of the main church) was constructed by the master builders from the Berakashvili family in 1882. In the outer right corner of its veranda, a fragment of a medieval round column and its capital are inserted.





**Fig. 35. House of the Bishop Gabriel Kikodze (photo D.K and N. N.)**



**Fig. 36. Monks' to the east of the southern gate (photo D.K and N. N.)**





**Fig. 37. Monks' house to the north of the main church (photo D.K and N. N.)**

A single-storey house to the north of the main church dates from the late 19th century. At present, it serves as the dwelling of the abbot. Its high basement contains the remains of a 12th or 13th-century building that consisted of several rooms.

**Graves.** The Gelati Monastery was a burial place of the Georgian royal family of the Bagrationi. According to written sources, apart from David the Builder, the monarchs of Georgia Demetre I, George III, Queen Tamar, George IV, Queen Rusudan, Vakhtang II, David IX, and Bagrat VI are buried there, but their graves are lost. The grave of David VI Narin is in the chapel of St Andrew. Also, the graves of the kings of Imereti (West Georgia) Rostom I, George III, Alexander III, George VI Solomon I, and Solomon II are to be found in the main church and its chapels.

## **2.b History and Development**

### **The historical context: Georgia in the early Middle Ages**

Between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC two states were formed on the territory of present day Georgia – Colchis (later Lazica) in the west and Iberia in the east. Over the centuries, they existed side by side. From 66 BC onwards, West Georgia was subjected to the Roman (later Byzantine) Empire – either directly, or as an allied state. In East Georgia, the domination of Sassanian Iran was established around 250 AD; however, the Romans (Byzantines) were not going to give up the country. The rivalry between the two great powers for the control over Iberia lasted until the early 7<sup>th</sup> century. Around 650, the Arabs conquered Iberia for a long time.

Christianity became known in Georgia as early as 1<sup>st</sup> century. Church architecture began around 330, when Christianity became the state religion in Iberia (East Georgia). The peculiarity of the Georgian culture in general, and of architecture in particular, was to a great extent determined by the geographical location of the country at the crossroad of the great Western and Eastern cultures. Foreign influences combined with strong local traditions contributed to creation of a unique background for the development of Georgian architecture.

In the 9<sup>th</sup> century, a strong Kingdom was formed in South Georgia (at present mostly in Turkey) ruled by the Bagrationi dynasty. In late 10<sup>th</sup> century, the representative of the dynasty, King Bagrat III united the most part of Georgia under his rule. He moved his capital to Kutaisi, an ancient city reputed by the Greeks to be the final destination of the Argonauts and the residence of the legendary Colchian King Aeëtes. In Kutaisi, Bagrat III built a new magnificent cathedral known after his name. The Bagrati Cathedral (completed in 1003) is one of the most well-known Georgian churches remarkable both for its history and its artistic value.

### **The Golden Age of Georgia**

The revival of Georgian culture that started with the unification of the country continued in the eleventh century, resulting in great works of art, architecture, and literature. However, the development of culture was often hampered by political instability in the country. Invasion of the Seljuk Turks in 1060s caused an economic and cultural decline in the whole Caucasus region including Georgia that lasted until the end of the eleventh century.

In 1089, David IV, later named “the Builder”, was crowned the king of Georgia. He was destined to play a crucial role in the Georgian history. King David’s reforms of the army and administration enabled him to expel the Seljuk Turks from the Caucasus, complete the unification of Georgia and bring most of the lands of the Caucasus under Georgia’s control. David the Builder was actively involved in international politics of that period. He established relations with the Crusaders and successfully coordinated his military campaigns with them. He lent his support to the monasteries located on the Mount Sinai by sponsoring construction works.

The reign of David the Builder is the beginning of the “Golden Age” of the Medieval Georgia that lasted until the reign of Queen Tamar (1184-1213). A spell of nearly 120 years between the reigns of these two rulers is not only the period of a complete stabilization, but a political strength and economic upheaval. Georgian culture flourished unhindered and bore fruits of abiding value.





**Fig. 38. Portrait of the King David the Builder in the main church of Gelati Monastery (photo GCNRC)**

### **The foundation of Gelati Monastery and the Academy**

The Gelati Monastery and Academy, both established in 1106, were the favourite creations of King David and the most vivid reflections of cultural and intellectual development in the Golden Age of Georgia. The monastery was not intended to be a merely religious foundation. King David wanted to create a centre of knowledge and education of the highest international standard of his times. He established an academy in the monastery and made every effort to gather there the most eminent Georgian intellectuals, both living in and outside his kingdom. Famous theologians and philosophers invited by King David came to work in the Gelati Academy. Among them was Johannes Petritzi, a thinker of a broad philosophic outlook, the translator of classical works and the author of an extensive commentary on Neoplatonism. Another noted person working in Gelati was Arsen Ikaltoeli, a learned monk, whose formidable efforts at translating and compiling major doctrinal and polemical works from Greek gave a novel impetus to the Georgian philosophical literature. Both brought the Byzantine philosophical tradition to the newly founded Gelati Academy. Tradition says that Shota Rustaveli, the greatest poet of Georgia, whose ideas and world-view were close to the humanist secular culture of the Italian Proto-Renaissance, was educated at the Gelati Academy.



Contemporaries were enraptured with the newly established monastery and academy. Georgian chroniclers described the history of their foundation as an exceptional event in the life of the nation. “This is now a foreshadowing of the second Jerusalem in the whole East, a school of all virtue, an academy of instruction, another Athens but much superior to it in divine doctrines,” wrote the royal chronicler of King David. The allusion to Athens and Jerusalem must have stressed the importance of the Gelati Monastery as the centre of both secular and ecclesiastical knowledge, philosophy and theology.

The construction of the Gelati Monastery took place in the 12th and 13th centuries. The main church dedicated to the Nativity of the Virgin was built between 1106 and 1130. The Academy and the southern gate date from the same period, as well as the earliest building layer of the recently unearthed passage to the north of the Academy. In the 13th century, the churches of St George and of St Nicholas and a bell tower were built and in the early 14th century the eastern porch was added to the Academy.



Fig. 39. Icon of the Virgin of Khakhuli (photo Georgian National Museum)

Since its foundation, Gelati was a royal monastery. It possessed vast lands and rich treasure that contained a number of marvellous icons and other objects, including the well known Icon of the Virgin of Khakhuli (now kept in the Georgian National Museum). The icon itself was created in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, but David the Builder decided to set it in a large and exceptionally rich tripartite frame adorned with cloisonné enamels and chased decoration. This work was executed in the reign of David’s son King Demetre I (1125-1156) by three skilled masters in the goldsmiths’ workshop of the monastery. Gelati also had a scriptorium where monastic scribes copied



manuscripts. Among several books created there the best known is an amply illuminated 12<sup>th</sup> century gospel, which is kept in the National Centre of Manuscripts (No Q-908).

In his will, David the Builder expressed his desire to be buried in Gelati and made it a burial place of the royal family of the Bagrationi. Since then, The Gelati Monastery was a burial place first of Georgian and then of Imeretian (West Georgian) kings and queens.

### Later developments

The Golden Age of Georgia was followed by a long period of decline that started with the invasion of Tamerlan and lasted four hundred years. In the late Middle Ages, Georgia was to learn many times the bitterness of conquest and destruction at the hands of the Ottoman Turks and Persians.



**Fig. 40. Portraits of the kings of Imereti in the main church. From right to left: King Bagrat III (1510-1565), his wife Queen Helene, King George II (1565-1583), his wife Queen Rusudan, and their son Bagrat (photo GCNRC)**

After the disintegration of Georgia in the late 15th century, the monastery became the property of the kings of Imereti. At that time, The Academy had already been closed. Later monks used its building as a refectory. In 1510, the Gelati Monastery was burnt down by the invading Turks. The fire particularly harmed wall paintings of the main church and that of St George. King Bagrat III (1510-1565) restored the buildings and in 1519, established there an Episcopal See. Between 1565 and 1578, the See of the Catholicos of West Georgia was moved from Bichvinta (in Abkhazia) to Gelati. The Church of St George became a Catholicate Cathedral.

During the 16th century, the main church was painted in several stages. The murals of the Church of St George were executed between 1565 and 1578.



**Fig. 41. Gelati Monastery seen from the north-east as in 1880s (Photo D. Ermakov, courtesy of the National Museum of Georgia)**

In 1759, the monastery was set on fire by the horde of the Lezghians. In 1770s and 1780s, King Solomon I made efforts to restore it. He imported copper plates from Russia specially to cover the main church of the monastery.

After the conquest of the Kingdom of Imereti by the Russian Empire in 1810, the Russian authorities decided to put an end to the ecclesiastical independence of West Georgia as well. They abolished the Catholicate of West Georgia in 1814 and the Gelati Episcopal See in 1820. The monastery was functioning until the Soviet occupation of Georgia. In 1923 it was closed and turned into a branch of the Kutaisi Museum. Religious service and monastic life resumed in Gelati in 1988.

By the 20th century, the major buildings of the Gelati monastery, except for the Academy, were in a relatively good condition. Conservation and restoration work was conducted in Gelati in 1962 and 1963. A new roof covering of tin plates was made above the churches and the bell tower. The Academy was partly restored (without roof).

In 1994, The Gelati Monastery together with the Bagrati Cathedral of Kutaisi was inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Between 2007 and 2011, an extensive conservation and restoration works and archaeological investigations were carried out in the Gelati Monastery. The domes of the churches of St George and St Nicholas and of the bell tower were covered with new glazed tiles which were made according to medieval tiles found in the monastery. The building of the Academy was restored once again, roofed with timber and covered with tiles. Roofing was made in order to protect the building from destruction.





**Figure 42. Gelati Monastery seen from the south as in 1970s (photo GCNRC)**

The first archaeological investigation in Gelati was conducted by G. Tsereteli in 1880. Limited excavation works were carried out in 1939 and 1945. Archaeological excavations carried out in several parts inside the complex between 2007 and 2014 by the team of the Kutaisi Architectural Museum-Reserve led by R. Isakadze gave the most significant results. They revealed a previously unsuspected basement storey under the Academy building and the remains of a large structure were unearthed to the north of the Academy, immediately adjacent to the northern wall of its basement. In the southern gate, at the south edge of the David the Builder's grave another gravestone with Asomtavruli script, limestone paved floor and stairs leading from the courtyard and built up with large slabs of the limestone were discovered. Close to the eastern wall, remains of the buildings and structures pre-existing the gate were revealed. Rich information obtained after the excavations provides the necessity of further comprehensive archaeological study of the religious complex.

### 3. Justification for Inscription

#### 3.1.a. *Brief synthesis*

Gelati (Georgian: გელათის მონასტერი) is a large monastery near Kutaisi, Imereti Region, western Georgia, in the southern Caucasus. It was founded in 1106 by David the Builder (1089-1125), the most famous Medieval Georgian king. The construction of the Gelati Monastery took place in the 12th and 13th centuries. The main church dedicated to the Nativity of the Virgin was built between 1106 and 1130. The Academy and the southern gate date from the same period. In the 13th century, the churches of St George and of St Nicholas and the bell tower were built and in the early 14th century the eastern porch was added to the Academy. The monastery has preserved a great number of mural paintings dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as the renowned 12<sup>th</sup>-century mosaic in the apse of the main church, depicting the Virgin with Child flanked by archangels. The monastery also contains the grave of King David the Builder.

Troubles of the late Middle Ages, such as the arsons of the Gelati monastery in 1510 by Turks and in 1759 by Lezghians, caused serious damage to its buildings, but in both cases it was quickly restored. Around 1570, Gelati became the residence of the Catholicos of West Georgia.

The reign of David the Builder was the beginning of the “Golden Age” of the Medieval Georgia that lasted until the reign of Queen Tamar (1184-1213). A spell of nearly 120 years between the reigns of these two rulers is not only the period of a complete stabilization, but a political strength and economic upheaval. The Gelati Monastery is the highest expression of the artistic idiom of the architecture of the Georgian “Golden Age”. It is distinguished for its harmony with its natural setting, a well thought-out overall planning concept, and high technical and artistic quality of its buildings. In the whole, this magnificent architectural ensemble illustrates the Georgian appropriation of the Imperial idea of power.

The Gelati Monastery is the most vivid reflection of cultural and intellectual development in the Georgian “Golden Age”, which was a significant expression of the power and high culture of Eastern Christianity at this time. The monastery was not intended to be a merely religious foundation. King David wanted to create a centre of knowledge and education of the highest international standard of his times. He established an academy in the monastery and invited there the most eminent Georgian intellectuals, both living in and outside his kingdom. Contemporaries compared the Gelati Monastery with Athens and Jerusalem thus stressing its importance as the centre of both secular and ecclesiastical knowledge, philosophy and theology.

#### 3.1.b. *Criteria under which inscription is proposed (and justification for inscription under these criteria)*

##### **Criterion (iv):**

The Gelati Monastery illustrates cultural and intellectual developments of the Middle Byzantine period in general and of the “Golden Age” of Georgia in particular. It is the masterpiece of the architecture of the “Golden Age”, the best representative of its architectural style characterized by the full facing of smoothly hewn large blocks, perfectly balanced proportions, and the exterior decoration of blind arches. The main church of the monastery is one of the most important examples of the inscribed cross (cross-in-square) architectural type that had a crucial role in the East Christian church architecture from the 7<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

Gelati is one of the largest Medieval Orthodox monasteries, distinguished for its harmony with its natural setting and a well thought-out overall planning concept.



The main church of the Gelati Monastery is the only medieval monument in the larger historic region of Eastern Asia Minor and the Caucasus that still has a well-preserved mosaic decoration. The apse mosaic depicting the Virgin with Child flanked by archangels is of an outstanding artistic quality comparable with the best Byzantine mosaics. In addition, churches and chapels of Gelati have the largest ensembles of paintings of the middle Byzantine, late Byzantine, and post-Byzantine periods in Georgia. They represent more than 40 portraits of kings, queens, and high clerics. Murals of the narthex of the main church contain the earliest depiction of the seven Ecumenical Councils.

Having had the role as a political statement of King David's firm royal authority over his Kingdom, the Gelati Monastery provided the architectural expression of the Georgian appropriation of the Imperial concept of power. It is the most powerful visual symbol of the "Golden Age" of Medieval Georgia.

### ***3.1. c. Statement of Integrity***

The integrity of Gelati Monastery, its wholeness, completeness, and the extent to which it suffers from the adverse impacts of development, has been assessed in accordance with the proposed definition of the Outstanding Universal Value for the property. This assessment shows that Gelati has a high level of integrity.

Gelati is a large Monastery, the largest in Georgia and one of the largest in east Christian world. It consists of the main church, the two other churches, the bell tower, the two gates, the Academy, and a number of dwellings and subsidiary structures. The monastic buildings stand in the vast precinct surrounded by the wall circuit.

The whole monastic precinct is included in the nominated property, which fully meets the notion of wholeness. The boundaries of the property are sufficiently large to represent features necessary to convey its significance and outstanding universal value.

No important original feature of the property has been lost during the centuries. The main buildings of the monastery – the three churches and the bell tower, all constructed in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, are preserved almost intact, apart from repairs of their interior fittings and roofs that occurred both in the Middle Ages and modern times. Recently excavated archaeological areas adjacent to the Academy contain well-preserved structural remains. The only building that experienced essential damage in the late Middle Ages and 19<sup>th</sup> century, was the Academy. It had lost its timber roof, which was restored in 2009 in order to prevent deterioration of the building. In the whole, there have been no substantial changes to the integrity of the property since its inscription on the World Heritage List in 1994.

The mosaic of the main church has come to our days in a good condition. At present, the mosaic occupies the conch of the apse (almost 50 m<sup>2</sup> area). Its lower part had been damaged in the fire of 1510 and was replaced with painting in the following decades. Conservation work to stabilize and fix the mosaic was conducted in 1985 and 1986. The 12<sup>th</sup>- and 13<sup>th</sup>-century wall paintings in the narthex and the Chapel of St Andrew of the main church are partially damaged. Late Medieval paintings in the main church and in St George's are preserved better.



**Fig. 43. The Gelati Monastery seen from the south-west (photo D.K and N. N.)**

Gelati is a site of a national significance. Since the declaration of Georgia's independence in 1991, it has always been favoured with particular attention by state, society, and church, though it does not mean that care has always been provided properly. At present, general maintenance of the monastery is provided by monks, which is not always sufficient. Sometimes petty problems (e. g. replacement of a broken window) are only solved after a delay.

In general, the physical fabric of the property is in a good condition. Pressures exist, but the processes are under control. Heritage values of the property are respected in all decisions and actions affecting the site. The level of threats is low. None of the important features of the property runs the risk of being substantially altered, impaired, or deteriorated. No large-scale agricultural developments or inappropriately sited buildings that could harm the visual integrity of the property are planned.

### ***3.1.d. Statement of Authenticity***

Despite the fact that Gelati has and continues to be a living site - a home to monks, a place of worship and pilgrimage, and a popular visitor attraction, - the architectural heritage features central to the expression of the site's Outstanding Universal Value have been fully preserved.

**Form and Design.** All of the main buildings of the monastery dated back to its foundation in early 12<sup>th</sup> century have survived and are in good physical condition, as well as the buildings added in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In the main church, original mosaic decoration of the apse and wall painting of the narthex are preserved.

Murals painted between 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in the main church and its chapels and in the Church of St George are integral to the history of the monastery, illustrating its development in the turbulent late Middle Ages.

Extant historic features which reflect the authenticity of design and form of the monastery include: the main church dedicated to the Nativity of the Virgin, the Academy, the southern gate,



the churches of St George and of St Nicholas, the bell tower, and excavated remains of the passage to the north of the Academy, all dated from the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. The layout of the monastery has undergone no essential alterations since the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Since the inscription of Gelati on the World Heritage List in 1994, the only significant change in the authentic fabric of the architectural ensemble was the restoration of a timber roof over the Academy in 2009. It was made after a thorough study of the preserved wall pockets and gables, in order to prevent deterioration of the building. The roof is reversible.

**Materials and Substance.** All buildings of the monastery are built of stone. The churches and bell tower have an authentic full facing of smoothly hewn large limestone blocks. Some of them are superficially weathered.

As witnessed by archaeological finds, initially the monastic buildings had roofs covered with glazed tiles. Presumably, they were repaired several times during the Middle Ages. In 1770s and 1780s, a new roof of copper plates was made over the main church. In 1962 and 1963, new roof coverings of tin plates were made above the churches and the bell tower. They did not fit the medieval architecture of the monastery and besides soon showed signs of rusting thus being in danger of leaking. During conservation works carried out between 2007 and 2011, the domes of the churches of St George and St Nicholas and of the bell tower were covered with new glazed tiles which were made according to Medieval tiles found in the monastery. The methodology of this work was positively assessed by ICOMOS. The rehabilitation of the roofing of the Main Church with new glazed tiles was partially completed in 2016 and is expected to be finalized in 2017.

**Function and Usage.** Gelati was the largest monastery in Medieval Georgia. It has had an uninterrupted monastic life over the last 900 years, from foundation to the present, except for the Soviet period (1923-1988) when the monastery was closed. In 1988, it recovered its previous function.

**Location and Setting.** The Gelati monastery has always been in the same location. It occupies the same area as it did in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Borders of the precinct enclosed by the stone wall circuit have not been changed over the centuries.

The natural setting of the monastery has generally been preserved including the deciduous forest on the hill to the east and south of the monastery. To the west and north, there are one and two-storied houses of villagers. Standing much below the monastery, they do not cover its authentic view. There are no elevated buildings in the vicinity of the monastery.

**Feelings and Spirit.** For Georgians, Gelati was and still is a national symbol, an architectural manifestation of the Georgia's "Golden Age". The monastery still keeps its Medieval spirit that is emphasized by the presence of monks, i. e. by the authentic function and use of the property for its original purpose.

Thus, the key attributes that contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value of the Gelati Monastery meet the conditions of authenticity. The buildings within the property have a high level of surviving authentic fabric and the spatial planning and layout of the property is authentic. The majority of the elements of the property (churches, bell tower, houses, and gates) are still used with the same function as they did in the Middle Ages.

### ***3.1.e. Protection and management requirements***

In accordance with the Constitutional Agreement concluded between the State of Georgia and the Georgian Apostolic Autocephalous Orthodox Church, all ecclesiastic buildings located at the territory of Georgia, Gelati Monastery among them, are owned by the Georgian Orthodox Church.

Gelati monastery has been a Listed Monument of National Significance since the Soviet period. Currently it is listed in the national register of monuments by the Presidential decree no 665 07.11.2006. As a national monument Gelati monastery is protected by the Georgian legislation, and more particularly by the Law of Georgia on Cultural Heritage of 2007 (see attached).

The system of protection zones of cultural heritage is given under Chapter 8 of the Law on “Cultural Heritage Protection Zones and their Regimes”. As of 2012 the territorial protection system of Gelati Monastery contains physical as well as one kilometer visual protection area, in which the protective regimes defined by law are applicable.

In 2012 the state took an initiative to study in depth the need for a buffer zone for Gelati Monastery. As a result the proposal for extension of the boundary of the visual protection area of Gelati Monastery as a buffer zone was prepared and submitted to the Minister of Culture and Monuments Protection for consideration and approval. It was approved on January 9, 2014, after consultations with the Georgian Orthodox Church.

The protective measures are implemented according to the Georgian national legislation with the state budget for cultural heritage protection. In 2015 a number of powers related to issuing administrative and legal acts prescribed by the Law on Cultural Heritage were delegated by the Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia to the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia. Since then, The National Agency has been the main body to ensure the protection of the visual integrity of the site within the designated protection zones of the property.

The National Agency provides mandatory advice to the local Municipality on all development projects and construction activities. The recommendation of the Director General of the National Agency is mandatory by law on Cultural Heritage and forms part of the process of issuing a building permit by the local municipal services.

The physical conservation of the property is undertaken by the National Agency for Cultural Heritage as well. According to the Law, the National Agency issues a permit for all types of conservation-restoration works on the listed buildings, including Gelati Monastery. The National Agency and its structural unit - the Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve are responsible for monitoring and maintaining a good state of conservation of the site, providing a proper methodology for interventions, general management framework as well as visitor facilities and information. At the local level the Museum-Reserve is responsible for monitoring of the state of conservation of the monument. The local staff provides technical consultation and advice to the monks on minor repair works at the site. Together with the **Cultural Heritage Inspection Unit** of the National Agency the Museum-Reserve is in charge of monitoring of activities in the area and, in the event of illegal interventions, putting in place necessary legal procedures for immediate halting of the activities.

Another body involved in decision making over the conservation and protection of the site is the Orthodox Patriarchate of Georgia. It is involved in the process as the owner of the property. The consent of an owner is formally required by law before the permit for restoration/conservation is issued by the National Agency. The Council for Architecture, Art, and Restoration of the Patriarchate cooperates on behalf of the church with the National Agency as well as the Ministry and advises the church authorities at all levels on what interventions are appropriate. All the physical interventions carried out by the owner within Gelati monastery require the prior approval of the National Agency.

The monastery administration is responsible for day to day management of the site, general upkeep of the territory, ensuring safety, basic cleaning and maintenance inside the churches as well as for the whole area within the enclosure walls. Unlike some other monasteries in Georgia,



Gelati is open for visitors and there are no special regulations established. The monks often serve as guides to the territory. However, the Management Plan for the property foresees the Visitor Management Program which will improve physical access to the site, ensure the proper visitor services and well trained staff, manage visitor flows and introduce different touristic routes throughout the new buffer zone that offers rich diversity of cultural and natural heritage, etc.

The Master Plan for the rehabilitation of the Gelati Monastery has been elaborated in 2008 by the Ministry of Culture, Monuments protection and Sports of Georgia. It has been reviewed and approved by UNESCO World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS. Despite not having a legal status, it provides a formal framework for the National Agency to implement conservation works on the site on a sustainable basis. The Conservation Master Plan provides full documentation of the site components, rehabilitation projects for each of the architectural components as well as plans for archaeological excavations and conservation of wall paintings; the Master Plan also includes the designs for the visitor centre and improvement of access to the Monastery, proposals for regulation of the visitor flow, and proposals for zoning of the territory of the Monastery to ensure the privacy for monks and enough space for visitors. In 2015 the Conservation Master Plan was updated to reflect new realities and meet current and future needs of the monastery complex.

The Management Plan for Gelati Monastery elaborated within the World Bank funded Imereti Regional Development Program was completed in 2015 and submitted to the World Heritage Centre. The document was further revised in compliance with the ICOMOS comments and recommendations in 2016.

The main sources of funding the Gelati Monastery are the State Budget, grants and donations. The funding of most conservation and restoration works, as well as elaboration of Conservation Master Plan is borne by the state budget. Other important donors are the Georgian Historical Monuments Protection and Rescue Foundation, the World Bank, U.S. Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP), etc. Compared to the allocations from the budget of the National Agency and the donor organizations the financial contribution of the church administration to conservation- restoration of Gelati Monastery is rather modest. However the work that is being undertaken by the monks – cleaning, providing basic security, etc. is a valuable in kind contribution to the overall protection of the property.

The Master Plan on its own provides for the improved presentation of the property. It contains all the updated data, including the full set of drawings, necessary for identification and interpretation of the site.

### 3.2 Comparative Analysis

Monasticism as the expression of spirituality had a particular significance in many of the world's cultures and most notably in Christianity. Arisen in Egypt in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century AD and widely spread in Eastern and Western Christendom in the following period, monasticism exerted a profound influence on the development of Christian civilization. In the Middle Ages, monasteries were not only the places of ascetic life, but also the major centres of knowledge and learning.

Eastern Christianity has an important tradition of monasticism going back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century and persisting strongly to the present day. Georgia was among those countries where monasteries were founded already in the early Christian times. In the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, Georgian monasticism developed under a strong influence of Syrian asceticism, while from the 9<sup>th</sup> century it became closer to Byzantine monasticism. The following period saw a great revival of Georgian monasteries that resulted in the flourishing of theology, literature, art, and architecture. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the leading intellectual and cultural role belonged to the monasteries of Tao-Klarjeti (historic south-west Georgia, now in Turkey), in the 11<sup>th</sup> century to the Georgian monasteries outside Georgia (in Athos, Antioch, Mount Sinai) and in the 12<sup>th</sup> century to Gelati, where King David the Builder assembled the most eminent Georgian intellectuals of his time. Gelati is the outstanding example of monastic foundation in Georgia with additional importance from its special academic role.

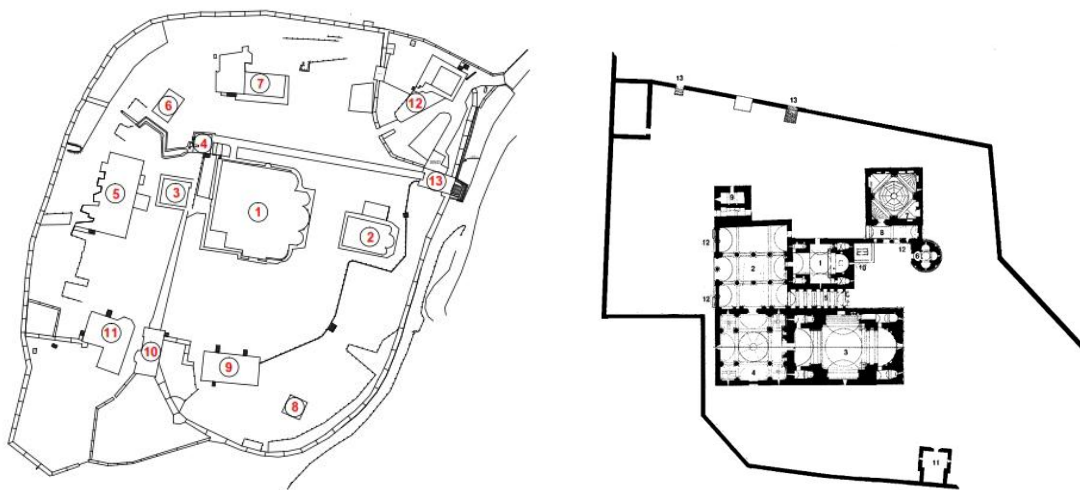


Fig. 44. Plans of the monasteries of Gelati (left) and Sanahin, Armenia

While linked together overall by the doctrine and rites of the Orthodox Church, monastic tradition was expressed with significant distinctions in different parts of Eastern Christendom that resulted in different plan forms. The general layout of Gelati is an excellent illustration of the Georgian monastic architectural tradition of free standing buildings in courtyard. In Gelati, open land sets off separate buildings – the main church, two other churches, bell-tower, and Academy. High domed buildings, i. e. the churches and the bell-tower occupy the centre of the enclosure with the main church rising in the very middle while the Academy and the lesser buildings stand around its edge. The same general concept can be seen in Medieval Georgian monasteries at Ikalto, Nekresi, Shiomgvime, Martvili, etc, though none of them is as large as Gelati and none of them has three domed churches.





**Fig. 45. Churches of St George and of the Nativity of Virgin in Gelati Monastery (photo D.K and N. N.)**



**Fig. 46. The Church of Christ Pantokrator, the Imperial Chapel and the Church of the Theotokos Eleousa in the Pantokrator Monastery, Constantinople**

This layout concept differs from that of the Byzantine and Armenian monasteries, which usually consist of structures that are attached to each other. For instance, in the well-known Monastery of the Pantokrator in Constantinople, an imperial foundation of the Komnenian dynasty which is almost contemporary to the Gelati Monastery, three churches are built in one line forming one continuous fabric. In the monastery of Hosios Loukas, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Greece,

the 11<sup>th</sup>-century Katholikon was attached to the 10<sup>th</sup>-century Church of the Theotokos, despite the fact that there was enough space in the courtyard to build a new church separately. Sanahin and Haghpat, two Medieval Armenian monasteries listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, are clusters of buildings of various types and functions - churches, chapels, *gavits* (large vestibules), libraries, galleries, etc, which occupy relatively small areas as there is no open land between them.

The architectural concept set by the King David the Builder determined the further development of the Gelati Monastery for almost 200 years. Spatial features of the architectural ensemble remained unchangeable. Moreover, builders of the 13<sup>th</sup> and early 14<sup>th</sup>-centuries additions diligently followed the initial concept not only in general character, but also in material, proportions, and system of decoration. This contributed to the amazing architectural integrity of the monastery. It is the best representative of the architectural style of the Georgian “Golden Age”, which is characterized by the full facing of smoothly hewn large blocks, perfectly balanced proportions, and the exterior decoration of blind arches. The architecture of the Gelati Monastery vividly reflects cultural and intellectual developments in the Georgian “Golden Age” that was a significant expression of the power and high culture of Eastern Christianity at this time.

Georgian architecture is an important branch of Byzantine (East Christian) art. It differs in materials, building techniques, plans, forms, adornment and proportions from that of the Byzantium more narrowly speaking. Medieval architects and masons in various parts of Georgia developed a distinctive style that absorbed both external influences and strong local traditions. The Gelati monastery displays the fusion of the architectural experience of different regions of Georgia, as well as ties to Byzantium. The main church of the monastery is one of the most important examples of the inscribed cross (cross-in-square) architectural type. In the early Middle Ages, it developed in East Georgia and in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries in Abkhazia that resulted in a number of important church buildings, which obviously influenced the main church of Gelati. Some peculiarities of its inner space have been inspired by the Cathedral of Bichvinta in Abkhazia. The system of façade decoration with blind arches and wide window frames was developed in East and South Georgia in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Around 1000, it was introduced in the architecture of West Georgia being splendidly applied in the Cathedral of Kutaisi (Bagrati Cathedral), which must have been the source of inspiration for the builders of Gelati. On the other hand, an unusual width of the dome of the church and the abundance of light in the interior recalls middle Byzantine churches and is indicative of the appropriation of the Imperial aesthetics. Thus the main church of Gelati displays a marvellous synthesis of artistic developments of its period in and outside Georgia. The creative skill and high proficiency of its architect made the church the most outstanding example of such synthesis in Georgia.

In reproducing the spirit and concept of Byzantine Imperial monasteries, the mosaic of the main church of Gelati had a particular role. The mosaic is remarkable for its high artistic value. It is the only well-preserved mosaic decoration of the sanctuary in the larger historic region of Eastern Asia Minor and the Caucasus. The practice of decorating churches with mosaics was not widely spread in Georgia. Few other examples are either preserved in small fragments (Tsromi) or completely destroyed (Akhiza). In other parts of the Caucasus, mosaic decoration of church walls was unknown.

Study of the plaster in the apse attested that from the beginning, the conch was prepared for mosaic decoration, while the apse was prepared for murals in *secco* technique. Thus, the mosaic was incorporated into the original decoration of the church, which mainly consisted of wall paintings. The combination of mosaics and murals is rare in Middle Byzantine churches. Among few other examples, the interior decoration of St Sophia Cathedral of Kiev (1043-1046), a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Ukraine, can be mentioned. In Georgia, mosaic was combined



with mural painting in the apse of the Tsromi Church, which, however, belongs to the much earlier period (7<sup>th</sup> century).



**Fig. 47. Mosaic decoration of the apse of the main church. Detail (photo GCNRC)**

The Gelati mosaic shows original interpretation of the Virgin-Nicopeia iconographic type. The Virgin-Nicopeia is usually represented in a strictly frontal pose, with Child in her arms or on the shield at her breast. She is usually shown with her right hand on the right shoulder of the Child or touching his breast and with her left hand touching his left knee. This typical iconography of the Virgin-Nicopeia can be seen both in Byzantine (the south gallery of St Sophia of Constantinople, 1119-1122; Zeno Chapel of San Marco in Venice, 13<sup>th</sup> century) and Georgian wall paintings (Ateni and Ipari, both 11<sup>th</sup> century). Unlike these examples, the Gelati Virgin supports the Child with her arms from underneath. Besides, she is not strictly frontal; a slight asymmetry of her shoulders attaches to her figure an unusual dynamism. The image of the Gelati Virgin with her elongated face, large chin, and almond-shaped eyes does not completely conform to the Greek type of the Virgin and has analogies in Georgian art.

Stylistically the Gelati mosaic shares the general artistic principles of the Middle Byzantine mosaic art. However, one can observe a certain linearity of form, which is rooted in local Georgian art. According to the received opinion, the mosaic was made by a local master profoundly aware of Byzantine art of his period. Its outstanding artistic quality and height level of craftsmanship can be compared with the best Byzantine mosaics.

The wall paintings of the narthex of the main church of Gelati (1125-1130) are remarkable for their iconography. Here we have the earliest surviving representation of the seven ecumenical



councils in the East Christian world. Scenes of the individual councils can be found earlier both in manuscript illuminations and in murals (e. g. the council of Ephesus is depicted in St Cyril Church in Kiev, 12<sup>th</sup> century), but as for the whole cycle of the seven councils, there are no examples earlier than Gelati. For the later representations, the 13<sup>th</sup> century murals of the Sopoćani monastery, a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site in Serbia, should be mentioned.



**Fig. 48. Narthex of the main church. Detail of the representation of the ecumenical council (photo GCNRC)**

The representations of the ecumenical councils in Medieval art often echoed real church councils. Apparently, the murals of Gelati reflect the disputes between the Diophysites and Monophysites that took place in the Caucasus in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century and local ecclesiastical councils convened twice by King David the Builder between 1103 and 1125. It is known, that the Gelati Monastery with its Academy took active part in the disputes. The Council of Chalcedon that denounced Monophysitism is highlighted in the Gelati murals by displaying additionally St Euphemia's Miracle that happened at the council.

The murals painted between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in the main church and its chapels as well as in the Church of St George are important examples of the Late Byzantine and Post-Byzantine art. They contain over 40 portraits of kings, queens, and high clerics, which is unparalleled in Georgia.

The Academy of Gelati is the largest building (about 300 m<sup>2</sup>) of this type in the South Caucasus region. It is larger than a similar building in the Ikalto Monastery in East Georgia, which according to tradition served to house another academy established by Arsen Ikaltoeli after he had left Gelati. The academy founded by Gregory Magistros in the 11<sup>th</sup> century in the Sanahin Monastery is eight times smaller than one in Gelati. Besides, the Sanahin Academy is not a free standing building, but is squeezed between two churches having a form of a vaulted passage.





**Fig. 49. Academy of the Gelati Monastery. Interior view (photo D.K and N. N.)**

The Church of St Nicholas is a splendid representative of the rare type of two-storey churches. In Georgia, it has only one analogue (in the Martvili Monastery). Two-storey churches of Constantinople, Bulgaria, and Armenia are very different from the Church of St Nicholas both in architectural form and in function. Unlike Byzantine two-storey churches, in the Church of St Nicholas the lower storey was not intended to be used for cult, but served as a passage being open with arches on all four sides.

Another rare feature of the Gelati Monastery is the bell tower built above the old spring. Actually, this combination of bell tower and spring is unique, though there are a number of churches and chapels built above springs and wells at different periods in different countries (e.g. the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth first built in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and later reconstructed several times, 10<sup>th</sup>-century chapel in the Khandzta Monastery in Georgia, 16<sup>th</sup>-century church in the Univ Laura in Ukraine, etc).

In the whole, the Gelati Monastery is a magnificent architectural ensemble illustrating the Georgian appropriation of the Imperial concept of power and the most striking reflection of cultural and intellectual developments in the “Golden Age” of Georgia. It is the best example of a Georgian monastery from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards due to its considerable size, clear spatial concept, and the high architectural quality of its main buildings. The murals of the monastic churches display one of the largest – if not the largest – galleries of donor portraits in the Byzantine world. The mosaic of the main church is of outstanding artistic quality and is the only well-preserved large mosaic decoration in the Caucasus.

### ***3.3 Proposed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value***

#### ***Brief synthesis***

Gelati is a large monastery near Kutaisi, Imereti Region, West Georgia. It was founded in 1106 by King David the Builder (1089-1125). The main church dedicated to the Nativity of the Virgin was built between 1106 and 1130. The Academy and the southern gate date from the same period. In the 13th century, the churches of St George and of St Nicholas and the bell tower were built and in the early 14th century the eastern porch was added to the Academy. The monastery has preserved a great number of mural paintings from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as the 12<sup>th</sup>-century mosaic in the apse of the main church, depicting the Virgin with Child flanked by archangels. The monastery also contains the grave of David the Builder.

Troubles of the late Middle Ages, such as the arsons of Gelati in 1510 and 1759, caused serious damage to its buildings, but in both cases it was quickly restored. Around 1570, Gelati became the residence of the Catholicos of West Georgia.

The reign of David the Builder was the beginning of the “Golden Age” of the Medieval Georgia that lasted until the reign of Queen Tamar (1184-1213). The Gelati Monastery is the highest expression of the artistic idiom of the architecture of the Georgian “Golden Age”. It is distinguished for its harmony with its natural setting, a well thought-out overall planning concept, and the high technical and artistic quality of its buildings. In the round, this magnificent architectural ensemble illustrates the Georgian appropriation of the Imperial idea of power. It is one of the most powerful visual symbols of Medieval Georgia and the most vivid reflection of cultural and intellectual development in the “Golden Age”, which was a significant expression of the power and high culture of Eastern Christianity at this time.

#### ***Justification for Criteria***

##### **Criterion (iv):**

Gelati Monastery is the masterpiece of the architecture of the “Golden Age” of Georgia and the best representative of its architectural style, characterized by the full facing of smoothly hewn large blocks, perfectly balanced proportions, and the exterior decoration of blind arches. The main church of the monastery is one of the most important examples of the inscribed cross (cross-in-square) architectural type that had a crucial role in the East Christian church architecture from the 7<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

Gelati is one of the largest Medieval Orthodox monasteries, distinguished for its harmony with its natural setting and a well thought-out overall planning concept.

The main church of the Gelati Monastery is the only Medieval monument in the larger historic region of Eastern Asia Minor and the Caucasus that still has well-preserved mosaic decoration, comparable with the best Byzantine mosaics, as well as having the largest ensemble of paintings of the middle Byzantine, late Byzantine, and post-Byzantine periods in Georgia, including more than 40 portraits of kings, queens, and high clerics and the earliest depiction of the seven Ecumenical Councils.

#### ***Statement of Integrity***

Gelati is a large Monastery that consists of the main church, the two other churches, the bell tower, the two gates, the Academy, and a number of dwellings and subsidiary structures. The monastic precinct is surrounded by the wall circuit. These features fully convey the significance and outstanding value of the property. The whole monastic precinct is included in the nominated



property. The boundaries are sufficiently large to include all the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.

No important original feature of the property has been lost during the centuries. The main buildings of the monastery – the three churches and the bell tower, all constructed in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, - are preserved almost intact, apart from repairs of their interior fittings and roofs that occurred in both Medieval and modern times. The mosaic of the main church has come to our days in a good condition.

Since the declaration of Georgia's independence in 1991, Gelati has always been favoured with particular attention by state, society, and church, though it does not mean that care has always been provided properly. Pressures exist, but the processes are under control. The level of threats is low.

### ***Statement of Authenticity***

Features central to the expression of the site's Outstanding Universal Value have been fully preserved. The buildings within the property have a high level of surviving authentic fabric and decoration and the spatial planning and layout of the property is authentic in form and design.

All of the main buildings of the monastery dated back to its foundation in 12<sup>th</sup> century have survived and are in good physical condition, as well as the buildings added in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In the main church, original mosaic decoration of the apse and wall painting of the narthex are preserved. Murals painted in the late Middle Ages are integral to the history of the monastery.

The monastery occupies the same area as it did in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Borders of the precinct have not been changed over the centuries. The natural setting of the monastery has generally been preserved.

Gelati has had an uninterrupted monastic life from foundation to the present, except for the Soviet period (1923-1988). The monastery still keeps its Medieval spirit that is emphasized by the authentic function and use of the property for its original purpose. Gelati was and still is a national symbol, an architectural manifestation of the Georgia's "Golden Age".

### ***Protection and management requirements***

In accordance with the Constitutional Agreement concluded between the State of Georgia and the Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia, all ecclesiastic buildings in Georgia, Gelati Monastery among them, are owned by the Georgian Orthodox Church.

Gelati monastery has been a Listed Monument of National Significance since the Soviet period. Currently it is listed in the national register of monuments by the presidential decree from 07.11.2006. It has both physical and visual protection areas and the latter is currently being extended to provide an adequate buffer zone. The protective measures are implemented according to the Law of Georgia on Cultural Heritage (2007), utilising the state budget for cultural heritage protection.

In 2015 a number of powers related to issuing administrative and legal acts prescribed by the Law on Cultural Heritage were delegated by the Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia to the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.

Since then, The National Agency has been the main body to ensure the protection of the visual integrity of the site within the designated protection zones of the property.

The Master Plan for the rehabilitation of the Gelati Monastery has been elaborated in 2008 by the Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sports of Georgia. It has been reviewed and

approved by World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, providing a formal framework for the National Agency to implement conservation works on the site on a sustainable basis. All conservation-rehabilitation activities since then have been carried out according to this Plan. In 2015 the Conservation Master Plan was updated to reflect new realities and meet current and future needs of the monastery complex.

The Management Plan for Gelati Monastery elaborated within the World Bank funded the Imereti Regional Development Program was completed in 2015 and submitted to the World Heritage Centre. The document was further revised in compliance with the ICOMOS comments and recommendations in 2016.

Both the Church and the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia are involved in the management of the Monastery. The monastery administration is responsible for day to day management of the site, general upkeep of the territory, ensuring safety, basic cleaning and maintenance within the precinct. Gelati monastery is open for visitors and there are no special regulations established. However, the Management Plan for the property foresees the Visitor Management Program which will improve physical access to the site, ensure the proper visitor services and well trained staff, manage visitor flows and introduce different touristic routes throughout the new buffer zone that offers rich diversity of cultural and natural heritage, etc.

On the side of the State the management of the property is implemented by the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia and its structural unit - the Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve. The Agency is responsible for monitoring and maintaining good state of conservation of the site, providing proper methodology for interventions and issuing permits, providing a general management framework as well as visitor facilities and information.



## 4. State of Conservation and factors affecting the Property

### 4.a Present state of conservation

The components of the Monastery are preserved in an authentic state. The state of conservation of the components varies from component to component. Before describing the present state of conservation of Gelati Monastery, it is useful to have a look at the wider history of restoration and its state of preservation at the time of inscription. Restoration works had been conducted on different buildings of the monastery already in late Middle Ages, while major conservation works were implemented in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, according to the ICOMOS evaluation the state of preservation at the time of inscription was good:

*“A major conservation campaign has now been completed at Gelati Monastery. Its condition is now good and no further major work is planned” (ICOMOS, 1994).*

The situation has changed over the following decade. In 2010 the joint monitoring mission of ICOMOS-WHC expressed concerns over the grave state of the interior paintings in the main church as well as in the church of St George mainly due to water penetration from the roof and the upper windows. At the same time the progress of the State Party in preparing the Conservation Master Plan for the site was positively received.

The development of the Conservation Master Plan in 2008 was indeed a great step forward towards the improvement of the state of conservation of the site. The intensive research and archaeological works enabled the development of the individual rehabilitation projects for different components of the site. The Master Plan provides a full set of updated documentation and research material to plan the long term restoration of the interior and exterior of the ensemble and to develop adequate infrastructure for visitors, taking into account the demands that the monastic life, increased number of clergy and the congregation places on the sustainable use of the ensemble. The Master Plan guarantees the preservation of the authenticity of the monument, restoration and rehabilitation of all its components and at the same time its presentation to visitors and its utilization by the clergy. In 2015 the Conservation Master Plan was updated to reflect new realities and meet current and future needs of the monastery complex.

It is important that apart from specific conservation aspects, the Master Plan incorporates issues such as zoning of the territory, ownership, and legal issues as well as visitor management, facilities and interpretation.

The Conservation Master Plan covers the following themes:

1. Updated topographic map and cross section of the terrain
2. Updated measured drawings of each of the 14 components of the Monastery
3. Geological survey report
4. Archaeological survey report
5. Wall Painting Survey report
6. Technical evaluation report
7. Legal report
8. Master plan of the site (functional zoning, visitor circulation, facilities, location of proposed buildings)
9. Description of the site and its components and proposed rehabilitation measures
10. Rehabilitation Project for each of the 14 components of the Monastery

11. Preliminary Designs for the visitor centre outside the walls of the monastery
12. Preliminary Designs for the new cells outside the walls of the monastery, should they be needed
13. Designs for adaptation and reconstruction of nearby cemetery wall and the 20<sup>th</sup> century house on the territory of the Monastery
14. Plans for infrastructure: water supply, sewerage and electricity, heating-ventilation, drainage, safety system
15. Dendrology plan
16. Designs for interpretation boards and other visitor facilities like benches, lightning, etc.
17. Budget estimations, project implementation plan and implementation time table
18. Photo documentation
19. Cadastral documentation
20. Bibliography

The Master Plan was approved by the State as well as the Patriarchate. Both parties are committed to its implementation. Since 2008, the State implemented step by step rehabilitation of the Gelati monastery based on the comprehensive studies in cooperation with different international institutions and donors in conformity with the Conservation Master Plan. Namely, the following works have already been completed at the site:

- Restoration of St Nicholas church
- Restoration of the Academy building and reconstruction of its roof
- Restoration of the bell tower
- Restoration of bishop Gabriel Kikodze's house
- Restoration of the South and East gates
- Conservation of wall paintings in the Main Church
- Reinforcement of the base of the drum of the dome of the main church
- Restoration of the roofing of the St George church
- Conservation of the wall paintings in the St George church
- Archaeological excavation around the Academy buildings and *in situ* conservation of the revealed material
- Restoration of the roofing of the Main Church (in progress)
- Stone conservation of the Main Church (in progress)

The methodology of works was based on *Minimum Intervention* principles and was normally limited to: dismantling and re-assembling the loosened stones, fixing and plastering with lime, cleaning the stones, infilling the missing stones, replacing with traditional tiles the tin roof coverings installed in 20th century.

Special note has to be given to the re-roofing of the academy with reversible light wooden roofing that after a centuries-long break brought back public use and function to the building. The building is now used for different educational purposes, presentations, lectures, etc. In this way the original educational and civic function of the site was restored. The careful excavations made inside and outside the Academy building have produced very interesting finds, bringing unknown aspects of the medieval period of the monastery life to light. The finds inside the Academy have been incorporated successfully in the restored building and presented to public. All interventions were carried out by hand without the use of large mechanical equipment. The tiles for roofing were acquired locally, most of them probably from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A further significant



improvement was the removal of a reinforced concrete addition that had been installed on the south-west part of the building. The original appearance was restored with a wooden balcony.



Fig. 50. Academy of the Gelati Monastery. Interior view as in 1970s (photo GCNRC)



Fig. 51. Academy of the Gelati Monastery. Interior view after restoration (photo D.K and N. N.)

Thanks to the efforts of the Restoration Faculty at the State Academy of Fine Arts, it was made possible to develop the stone conservation program at the site with the financial support of the Swiss National Science Foundation, in partnership with the Lugano University. The two-year project (2010-2011) included the assessment of the masonry and wall painting state of conservation of Gelati Monastery. The project included student exchange and on site workshops with the guidance of international specialists. 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
- Masonry condition assessment of the church of St. George and risk mapping
- Conservation of the carved stone frame around the entrance door of the church of St. George.

One of the particular problems of the site has been to elaborate a proper methodology for the repair of the cornices of the churches heavily damaged as a result of inappropriate treatment during Soviet period. In co-operation with Italian stone conservators an adequate method was selected using a mixture of lime, crushed stone and straw to infill the weathered surfaces, cracks and gaps and replacing missing stones with the same kind of stone where large blocks are missing.

Based on these preparatory works the conservation of the Main Church was planned and funding secured from different international donors. In 2013 funding was confirmed by the US Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (ASCP) for the implementation of the two projects (2013-2017) - *Architectural Rehabilitation of the Church of the Virgin* and *Emergency Conservation Works on Mural painting in the Dome of the Church of the Virgin*. The projects are based on the collaboration of the State academy of Fine Arts and the Georgian Arts and Culture Centre. The works include: conservation of the mural paintings of the dome of the main church, stone conservation, roofing of the dome and the arms, rehabilitation of the cornices. The project duration was extended to 5 years and will be completed by the end of 2017. With the ASCP's funding the stone conservation project of the main church has started in 2016.

Since 2012 the restoration of the Main Church also became the focus of the World Bank within the scope of the Imereti Regional Development Program. Within this program the funds were secured for further conservation of the Main Church and construction of the visitor centre outside the Monastery as agreed with the WHC and advisory bodies in 2013. In the restoration process of the main church the question of additional consolidation of the dome was put on the agenda. In order to assess the current state of the implemented interventions, the joint ICOMOS/World Bank advisory mission was invited in 2015. The project on the reinforcement of the base of the drum of the dome, elaborated in accordance with the ICOMOS recommendations was completed in 2016. Following the ICOMOS recommendations, digital system for monitoring structural health of the main church will be installed on its dome in 2017.

The information on the abovementioned projects as well as the Master Plan has been regularly submitted to the WHC in 2009-2016.

The Master Plan remains a guiding document for future conservation works. Within the state program for cultural heritage Gelati Monastery receives priority consideration that allows for further implementation of the Master Plan along with the funding provided by international donors.



The detailed description of the state of conservation of the components of the Monastery is given in the table below:

	<b>Component</b>	<b>Present State of Conservation</b>	<b>Concerns and threats</b>	<b>Implemented Conservation Works</b>	<b>Works planned to be implemented</b>
1	Main Church of the Nativity of the Virgin	Satisfactory	Damaged facing stones.	<p>In 1962-63 the church was covered with the new roof.</p> <p>In 2008 detailed physical survey conducted.</p> <p>In 2010 -2011 detailed survey of wall paintings implemented.</p> <p>In 2013 urgent conservation of wall paintings in St. Marine Chapel and the South gate in the main church as well as repair of the roof covering in the chapel implemented.</p> <p>In 2014 preliminary survey and project for the conservation of the wall painting located in the dome of the main church conducted.</p> <p>In 2015 the urgent conservation of the wall painting located in the dome of the main church implemented.</p> <p>In 2014-2015 the dome of the main church was covered with the new roof - the traditional glazed tiles; The window frames of the dome repaired.</p> <p>In 2015 the stone conservation (cornice stones of the dome) and the cleaning of the dome facing stones implemented; the loosened stones have been removed, cleaned and returned back.</p> <p>The project of the monitoring system of the dome was designed and reinforcement</p>	<p>Conservation and the cleaning of the stone of the main church chapels.</p> <p>Conservation of the stone of the socle.</p> <p>Roofing of the chapels of the main church with the traditional glazed tiles.</p> <p>Conservation of the cornices.</p> <p>The concrete drainage around the church will be removed and the ground drainage system will be arranged.</p>

				<p>works implemented. The reinforced ring beam of the stainless metal and the lime installed.</p> <p>In 2016 the conservation of the stone of the dome square (the square basic of the dome) implemented. Together with the church arms it was covered with the traditional glazed tiles. The window frames of the dome changed.</p>	
2	St George Church	Good	No threat is identified as of today	<p>The church was first restored in 1962-63. The tin roof put on in those years was replaced with traditional glazed tiles in 2007-2011.</p> <p>The window frames in the drum were replaced. In 2010-2011 thorough laboratory analysis, detailed survey of the wall painting and respective urgent conservation works implemented.</p> <p>In 2012-2015 the dome and the arms of the church was covered with the traditional glazed tiles; the restoration of the cornices and the vaults implemented, the loosened stones have been removed, cleaned and returned back, the drainage around the church arranged.</p>	Roofing of the below parts of the church with the traditional glazed tiles.
3	St Nicholas Church	Satisfactory	Moisture	<p>The church was first restored in 1962-63. In 2011 the tin roof of the dome put on in those years was replaced with traditional glazed tiles.</p> <p>In 2013-2014 the arms of the church were covered with the new tin sheets. The cornice stones were cleaned, consolidated and restored. The filled-up windows in the dome and arms were re-opened. The</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conserving the fragments of wall painting preserved in the cupola and the drum.</li> <li>2. Removing white paint from the apse of the altar.</li> <li>3. Removing biological growth from the façade.</li> </ol>



				facing stones of the exterior and interior were restored and consolidated with lime mortar. The broken tympanum of the west entrance was restored in its original form with limestone via removing added layers. The socle cleaned and injections with lime mortar made. The stair repaired and the new hand-rail for the stairs installed.	
4	Bell tower	Good	No threat is identified as of today	In 2009-2011, the tin roof from 1962-63 was replaced and the original glazed tile roof was restored. The corners of the base of the drum were covered with dark color tin. The damaged cornice stones were restored. The facing stones of the facade were consolidated with lime mortar injection.	Day to day maintenance and preventive conservation.
5	Academy	Good	No threat is identified as of today	In 1962-63 the conservation of the Academy was conducted, nevertheless it remained without a roof till 2009. In 2009 the building was covered with a traditional tile roof on a wooden frame The intervention is fully reversible.	Day to day maintenance and preventive conservation. Elaboration of the concept of the building in the framework of the visitor interpretation plan.
6	Basement storey of the Academy and adjacent structural remains	Satisfactory	No threat is identified as of today	The territory was excavated in 2009-2010 and has been covered with a tin roof on wooden supports. The wine cellar and cold store room were cleaned. The floor was re-paved with bricks. Walls were injected with lime mortar. Windows and doors replaced. Ancient earthenware wine vessels conserved.	Basement storey must be connected with the archaeological excavations located nearby. Elaboration of the conservation concept
7	East Gate	Good	No threat is identified as of today	In 1980 the gates were roofed with the tin cover. In 2009-2011 it was replaced with traditional tile roofing on a wooden	Day to day maintenance. Preventive conservation.

				frame. The cornices were repaired. The transversal cracks were carefully cleaned and injected with lime mortar.	
8	South Gate	Good	No threat is identified as of today	<p>In 2009-2010 tin roof was replaced with traditional tile roofing on wooden frame.</p> <p>In 2013 the wooden door dividing the David's grave and the Southern part of the building removed. The tympanum above the door opening and the stairs restored. Infill of the joints on the floor as well as walls with lime mortar. The new archaeological layer revealed.</p>	Conservation of the newly excavated graves. Archaeological excavations must be continued.
9	Oil press	Poor	The building stands without a roof and exposed to precipitation. The interior is completely covered with plants that damage the walls of the building.	The rehabilitation project of the building is provided in Conservation Master Plan of Gelati. The works have not yet been conducted.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Roofing of the building with traditional tiles</li> <li>2. Restoring the walls, ensuring the stratigraphy of different construction periods remains visible</li> <li>3. Restoring the wooden balcony on the west wall</li> <li>4. Paving the floor with brick or stone</li> <li>5. Cleaning the interior and facades from plants and biological growth</li> <li>6. Consolidating the masonry</li> <li>7. Infill of the joints with lime mortar</li> <li>8. Removing the earth around the building and arranging the drainage according to the vertical planning project of the territory in the Conservation Master Plan.</li> </ol>
10	Monks house north of the main church	The condition of the 19 <sup>th</sup> century building is poor. The state of preservation of the 12-18 <sup>th</sup> centuries' remains is grave.	The vaults are partially ruined. The bearing walls are deteriorated. There is a risk of collapse.	In 1962-63 the 19 <sup>th</sup> century building was covered with a tin roof. The windows were replaced by monks in 2007-2012.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Replacing the roof and the damaged windows/doors with traditional tile cover and wooden frames</li> <li>2. Urgent consolidation of the remains of the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries</li> <li>3. Removing the late additions of low value</li> <li>4. Conducting archaeological excavations</li> <li>5. Elaborating the detailed rehabilitation project of the building</li> </ol>



					6. The archaeological survey must be conducted.
11	Monks house south of the main church	Good	There is no risk to the building identified as of today.	In 1962-63 the 19 <sup>th</sup> century building was covered with a tin roof. The windows were replaced and the wooden balcony was repaired by monks in 2007-2012.	Replacing the roof cover with traditional tiles
12	House of the Bishop Gabriel Kikodze	Good	There is no risk to the building identified as of today.	In 2010-2011 the building was roofed with tiles, the windows and doors restored, the wooden balconies renewed.	Day to day maintenance and preventive conservation.
13	Enclosure wall	Satisfactory	Biological growth	No major conservation or restoration works have taken place so far	The archaeological survey must be conducted. Removing the plants from the wall along all its perimeter.

## **4.b Factors affecting the property**

### **(i) Development Pressures (e.g., encroachment, adaptation, agriculture, mining)**

Gelati village does not face intensive development pressures. Should any large scale developments be considered - the buffer zone established for the property will ensure that the skyline and setting of the site are protected and that the new development does not damage its visual integrity.

The quarrying activity that is carried out near the Gelati monastery area does not have a visual or other direct physical impact on the site. However, there is an indirect impact of heavy loaded trucks that pass close to the property causing noise and pollution. In January 2015, a Memorandum of Mutual Cooperation was signed between the Municipal Development Fund and the quarry operator to limit the movement of heavy vehicles in the area adjacent to the World Heritage property to early morning and evening hours (before 10.00 and after 19.00) in workdays and to stop it completely on weekends and religious feasts. The agreement ensures safe pedestrian traffic for visitors of Gelati monastery and creates appropriate conditions for touristic infrastructure arrangements.

One of the possible problems may arise due to increasing number of monks in Gelati Monastery. This problem is addressed by the Master Plan that provides location and design of additional cells for the monks outside the monastery walls should additional accommodation be needed in the future. This issue is also balanced due to the fact that some of the Monks are based on the nearby chapels that are also part of the Gelati monastery.

### **(ii) Environmental pressures (e.g., pollution, climate change, desertification)**

Gelati is located close to the urban-industrial hub of Kutaisi, second largest city in Georgia with about 180,000 population where the air pollution is one of the highest in Georgia. However, Gelati remains sufficiently isolated from the urban area in its natural environment to avoid the direct impact of pollution.

In the village itself, the main source of air pollution is tourist traffic on the main village road. The Traffic Management Program elaborated within the Management Plan provides a plan to make a new coach park for long and medium-size tourist buses outside the village and restrict their entrance into the village and the area adjacent to the World Heritage property. It will significantly limit traffic and thus contribute to reducing air pollution in the village and the World Heritage property.

The risks of damage to the interior paintings due to air pollution may be a subject of particular attention in future. Special attention should be given to studying potential impacts of the global climate change in general and severe weather events and significant temperature changes in particular. The Risk Preparedness Plan, which is to be developed in the property Management Plan period (2017-2021), should address these issues together with other risk factors.

### **(iii) Natural disasters and risk preparedness (earthquakes, floods, fires, etc.)**

Georgia is situated in a seismically active zone defined as a region of medium seismicity. Despite the fact that in the World Heritage property area and its Buffer Zone the earthquake hazard is low, in planning and assessing rehabilitation measures of the property the need for sufficient structural stability has to be considered.

Certainly, the risk of fire in the Monastery is perhaps the most serious hazard. On November 9, 2014, a fire broke out in the eighteenth-century wooden house located to the south-east of the main church, which had been used as a dwelling of monks since 2000s. Nobody was hurt but by the time a fire brigade came from Kutaisi it was completely burnt down. In the



following months the shortcomings in fire safety in the monastery have been partly eliminated, however fire safety management at the World heritage property is still poor.

Fire safety measures should be integrated into the Risk Preparedness Plan that is to be developed in the Management Plan period (2017-2021).

#### **(iv) Responsible visitation at World Heritage sites**

The visitor number and patterns in Gelati monastery can be only generally estimated as there is no updated statistics on the visitors at the site. Gelati monastery is one of the most visited sites in Georgia with estimated average 200,000 visitors per year. The pattern of visitors is diverse - it is a must see site for both Georgian and foreign travelers; it is commonly visited by schools and university excursions; it is a favourite wedding place for residents of Kutaisi, Tkibuli and nearby villages. Since the collapse of the Soviet regime, the restored monastic function has added to the site significant numbers of religious visitors from all over Georgia of both individual and organized tourists (both international and domestic) wedding parties, religious practitioners, and visitors with special interest (academics, church representatives, authorities, etc).

The proposed modification of the boundaries will not affect existing visitor numbers or patterns. On the other hand the general state policy prioritizing tourism development may have an impact in terms of raising the number of tourists in the long term. The potential effects on the site of uncontrolled access by large numbers of visitors are not recognized. There is neither an official guide service established nor a full time caretaker employed. Monks are responsible for day-to-day management of the site, visitor monitoring, general upkeep of the territory, ensuring safety, basic cleaning, and maintenance inside the churches as well as for the whole area within enclosure walls. This is not enough for proper management of the site especially during peak periods such as important religious holidays and weekends.

The Conservation Master Plan provides a clear plan to balance and regulate visitor access and to ensure the privacy of the local monks. The Master Plan also provides for signage, interpretation and pathways for circulation of visitors and the visitor centre.

Relevant Programs of the Management Plan provide a plan to regulate visitor access and thus to reduce risks of deliberate or accidental damage to the site that may be caused by an influx of visitors. It also provides a new traffic management plan that will solve the problem of traffic jams and help to manage the visitor flow inside the World Heritage property. These measures are essential not only for protecting the property, but also for keeping its tranquility and dignity.

#### **(v) Number of inhabitants within the property and the buffer zone**

Estimated population located within:

Area of nominated property: up to 30 (the number varies as the monks are changing locations among different monasteries and placed in the chapels that belong to Gelati monastery which are located nearby)

Buffer zone: approximately 2 500

Total: 2 500

Year: 2016

Area of the proposed buffer zone is 12,46 km<sup>2</sup>

**(vi) Other factors**

Georgia is a country with the painful memory of recent war as a result of which more than 20% of its territory is occupied. The risk of military conflict is an unfortunate reality that the Gelati site management should also address. The issues related to such risks (evacuation, protection, etc.) should be integrated into the Risk Preparedness Plan that is to be developed in the Management Plan period (2017-2021).

In this context it is important that Georgia has ratified the Hague Convention and its Second Protocol. The Georgian National Committee of the Blue Shield was established in 2012 and is active since 2013.



## 5. Protection and Management of the Property

### 5.a Ownership

In accordance with the Constitutional Agreement (*Concordat*) concluded between the State of Georgia and the Georgian Apostolic Autocephalous Orthodox Church, all ecclesiastic buildings located at the territory of Georgia, Gelati Monastery among them, are owned by the Georgian Orthodox Church.

### 5.b Protective designation

Gelati monastery has been a Listed Monument of National Significance since the Soviet period. Currently it is listed in the national register of monuments by the presidential decree no 665 07.11.2006.

As a national monument Gelati monastery is protected by the Georgian legislation, and more particularly by the Law of Georgia on Cultural Heritage (2007) (see attached).

The law provides for three level hierarchies of listed buildings: a monument, a monument of national significance, and a monument of international significance (i.e. World Heritage Site). While the general conservation approach remains the same, the different levels have different scope of territorial protection that attached higher priority to national and international monuments.

The system of protection zones of cultural heritage is given under Chapter 8 of the Law on "Cultural Heritage Protection Zones and their Regimes".

The Law determines two types of protection zones - (a) individual and (b) general. Individual protection zones, on their part, consist of physical and visual protection areas. These types of zones enter into force automatically, upon granting a status of a monument to the object.

The extent of the above areas is determined by law as follows:

1. The Physical Protection Area covers immediate environs of an immovable monument no matter its category (monument, national monument, monument of world heritage) with an aim to regulate and prohibit any action that may inflict physical damage on a monument. The area of physical protection is determined with the following distance – height of a monument multiplied by 2, but with at least 50 meter radius.
2. Visual Protection Area is a territory beyond the area of physical protection, the change of which may affect the historical environment or/and high-quality interpretation of a monument. Visual Protection Area is measured beyond the physical protection area boundary according to the following distances:
  - a) For monuments – with 300 meter radius;
  - b) For monuments of national significance - with 500 meter radius;
  - c) For World Heritage Monuments – with 1000 meter radius.

The visual protection area can be extended by the decree of the Minister of Culture and Monuments Protection.

Respectively, according to the law, as of 2012 the territorial protection system of Gelati Monastery contains physical as well as 1 kilometre visual protection area, in which the protective regimes defined by law are applicable (see annex).

Cultural heritage law also determines the general protection zones which may be:

- a) Historical development protection zone;
- b) Development regulation zone;
- c) Historical landscape protection zone;
- d) Archaeological protection zone.

The methodology of establishing such zones and the regimes applicable within their borders is specified in the respective articles of law in details. The Individual as well as General Protection Zones are legally binding in the process of elaboration of the land use and spatial planning regulations.

The regulations prescribed by the Cultural Heritage Legislation provide only immediate and general protection regulations for the listed buildings. Certainly the need remains for detailed planning regulations. There is a need to establish a full scale town planning documentation for the site and its Buffer Zone. The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia is the state authority overseeing the field of spatial planning. At the local level planning issues are the direct responsibility of the self-government. If the state funding of the project is secured the process of elaboration of the Land Use Master Plan for the Buffer Zone of the property may start in the following years.

In 2012 the state took an initiative to study in depth the need for a **buffer zone** for Gelati Monastery. The works were undertaken by an interdisciplinary group of experts based on GIS technologies. The works were based on the study of earlier zoning documents existing during the Soviet period as well as the proposals elaborated in the recent years. The significant part of the work was comprised of field observation and inventory, as well as GIS modelling. The study of historical context and social and cultural links with the setting, wider environment and with Kutaisi was also provided to give additional argumentation.

The comparative visual analysis of the existing visual protection area of the Gelati monastery and the nearby monuments played an important role in defining the buffer zone. The graphical representation of the automatic visual protection area clearly showed the need for modification and adaptation to the specifics of the topography of the site. The analysis of the terrain in GIS revealed those areas that are crucial for maintaining the visual integrity and setting of the monastery. Based on the analysis of all factors mentioned above the boundary of the buffer zone was drawn to include the part of the river valley where monastery is located (see. Annex). An average 3 km - the distance allowing identification of an architectural object by the human eye, was used to establish the border, where the visibility from or to the monastery was too large. The nearby Motsameta monastery with its visual protection area, as well as minor satellite chapels of the monastery, the David's watchtower and other historically significant places in the surroundings were integrated into the Buffer Zone as they form an integral part of the Gelati cultural landscape.

As a result, the proposal for extension of the boundary of the visual protection area of Gelati Monastery as a Buffer Zone was prepared and submitted to the Minister of Culture and Monuments Protection for consideration and approval. It was approved by the minister on January 9, 2014, after consultations with the Georgian Orthodox Church by the end of October 2013.

### ***5.c Means of implementing protective measures.***

The protective measures are implemented according to the Georgian national legislation with the state budget for cultural heritage protection.



**The Patriarchate of Georgia** is involved in the process as the owner of the property. It is responsible for day-to day management of the site, general upkeep of the territory, ensuring safety, basic cleaning and maintenance within the precinct. The consent of an owner is formally required by law before the permit for restoration/conservation issued by the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation. The Council for Architecture, Art, and Restoration of the Patriarchate cooperates on behalf of the Church with the National Agency as well as the Ministry and advises the church authorities at all levels on what interventions are appropriate. All the physical interventions carried out by the owner within Gelati monastery require the prior approval of the National Agency.

**The local self-government of Tkibuli municipality:** Within their competence, the municipal and local authorities participate in development of various programs and projects and perform supervision of their implementation; provide general management and takes part in the maintenance of the property, mainly when the issues relate to transportation, roads, solid waste management, etc. The local self-government is responsible for the regulation of the spatial development within the boundaries of the Buffer Zone. The local governor issues permits for any new construction, extension or reconstruction of existing structures within the municipality administrative boundaries, including the Gelati monastery Buffer Zone, which covers the territories of the villages of Gelati, Kursebi Plains and Motsameta Plateau. The village trustees, appointed by the local governor, ensure the communication between the villages and the municipality administration. Within the limits of the Buffer Zone, all applications need to be reviewed and approved by the National Agency.

**National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia**, a subordinated body to the Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia, undertakes the physical conservation and registration of historical sites. The Agency has been constituted to care for the protection and conservation of monuments and sites all over the country. As prescribed by the national cultural heritage legislation all the applications for new constructions, or reconstruction, including the infrastructure and earthworks within the Buffer Zone require the approval of the Cultural Heritage Protection Council – Section for Cultural Heritage Protected Zones and Urban Heritage of the National Agency. The Cultural Heritage Protection Council is an advisory body to the General Director of the National Agency, which considers applications, submitted from the municipality and prepares recommendations to the Director General. Though the new constructions are very low in the area, the National Agency is in full control of the process and acts to guarantee harmonious integration of new developments with the cultural landscape of the area, ensuring that the OUV of the property is maintained.

**Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve** was established in 1981. Following the institutional reform in the field of cultural heritage in 2008, the Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve along with other museum-reserves in the country has become a structural division of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation. The Museum-Reserve participates in planning and implementation of conservation and research activities. Together with the **Cultural Heritage Inspection Unit** of the National Agency it is in charge of monitoring of activities in the area and, in the event of illegal interventions, putting in place necessary legal procedures for immediate halting of the activities.

**Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia:** on the basis of Georgian legislation, the Ministry defines the general strategy, develops policies on protection and promotion of cultural heritage and coordinates their implementation. The inter-ministerial Advisory Council to the Minister provides advice to the Minister in special circumstances, where the processes require higher level coordination and commitment by different state authorities.

The full list of the stakeholders involved in the protection and management of the Gelati Monastery and description of their responsibilities are provided within the draft Management for Gelati Monastery, WHS.

#### ***5.d Existing plans related to municipality and region in which the proposed property is located***

The Master Plan for the rehabilitation of the Gelati Monastery has been elaborated in 2008 by the Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sports of Georgia and submitted to the World Heritage Centre in 2009. The Master Plan provides full set of documentation and research material to plan long term restoration of the property and to develop adequate infrastructure for visitors, taking into account the demands that the monastic life, increased number of clergy and the congregation poses to the utilization of the ensemble. In 2015 the Conservation Master Plan was updated to reflect new realities and meet current and future needs of the monastery complex. The Master Plan guarantees the preservation of the authenticity of the monument, restoration and rehabilitation of all its components and the same time its presentation to visitors and its utilization by the clergy.

The World Bank funded Imereti Regional Development Program, run since 2012 by the Municipal Development Fund of Georgia in consultation with the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation, envisages implementation of conservation and restoration works and development of the tourist infrastructure at Gelati Monastery as provided in the Conservation Master Plan and agreed with the World Heritage Centre and its Advisory Bodies.

#### ***5.e Property management plan or other management system***

There are two main bodies involved in the day to day management of the Gelati Monastery. Primarily it is the Orthodox Church of Georgia as the owner of the site. The Gelati Monastery is part of the Eparchy of Kutais-Gaenati with 14 other monasteries and 112 churches. Until 2012 Gelati had been the seat of the Metropolitan of Kutais-Gaenati (since 2012 the seat has been moved to Bagrati, Kutaisi). There are about 30 monks living in Gelati on a fairly permanent basis, with some of these based in small chapels that are satellite churches of Gelati Monastery scattered in the surrounding forest. The monastery administration is responsible for day to day management of the site, general upkeep of the territory, ensuring safety, basic cleaning and maintenance inside the churches as well as for the whole area within the enclosure walls. Unlike some other monasteries in Georgia, Gelati is open for visitors and there are no special regulations established. The monks often serve as guides to the territory; provide other kinds of help in case of necessity. They oversee general behaviour of visitors and watch they do not damage the monument e.g. by touching/scratching wall paintings, climbing in/on unsafe parts of the buildings, etc.

On the side of the State the management of the property is implemented by *the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia* and its structural unit - the Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve. The Agency is responsible for monitoring and maintaining a good state of conservation of the site, providing a proper methodology for interventions and issuing permits, and also providing a general management framework as well as visitor facilities and information. The agency also acts in case of illegal or inappropriate intervention (penal actions; criminal proceedings), ensures the proper documentation and recording of the site and reports to World Heritage Centre as appropriate.



It is through the initiative and budget of the Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection and the National Agency that the Conservation Master Plan for Gelati Monastery has been prepared in 2006-2008 and in the process of implementation.

The Conservation Master Plan provides full documentation of the site components, rehabilitation projects for each of the architectural components as well as plans for archaeological excavations and conservation of wall paintings; the Master Plan also includes the designs for the visitor centre and improvement of access to the Monastery, proposals for regulation of the visitor flow, and proposals for zoning of the territory of the Monastery to ensure the privacy for monks and enough space for visitors. Also, based on the needs specified by the Monastery administration the Master Plan provides the plan for new cells and monastic buildings in case the number of monks should exceed the capacity of present buildings and the need for the extension arises.

The Master Plan has been reviewed and approved by World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS. It was also approved by the Patriarchate and the National Agency. Therefore, despite not having a legal status, it provides a formal framework for the National Agency to implement conservation works on the site on a sustainable basis. In 2015 the Conservation Master Plan was updated to reflect new realities and meet current and future needs of the monastery complex. In recent years the following works have been completed:

- Restoration of the Academy building and reconstruction of its roof
- Restoration of the St Nicholas Church
- Restoration of the South and East gates
- Restoration of the bell tower
- Conservation of wall paintings in the main church
- Stone conservation of the Drum, Northern, Southern and Western arms of the Main Church
- Conservation of the wall paintings in the St George Church
- Restoration of the Bishop Gabriel Kikodze's house
- Restoration of the roofing of the St George church
- Stone conservation of the Main Church (in progress)
- Restoration of the roofing of the Main Church (in progress)
- Archaeological excavation around the Academy buildings and *in situ* conservation of the revealed material

At the local level the Museum-Reserve is responsible for monitoring of the state of conservation of the monument. The local staff provides technical consultation and advice to the monks on minor repair works at the site. At the moment there are no official guides available at Gelati monastery, neither there is a permanent exhibition or other kind of explanation for public provided by the museum-reserve. It is planned that following the construction of the visitor centre some of the staff of the museum reserve will move to Gelati to operate the centre.

The current level of staffing is as follows:

1. Manager
2. Exhibition curator
3. Museum Collections Keeper
4. Site Manager for Geguti fortress
5. Site Manager for Historical Architectural Museum (in Kutaisi)
6. Specialist

7. Specialist
8. Educational Program Specialist
9. Technical Support Specialist
10. Cleaner
11. Security Guard of Geguti fortress
12. Security Guard of Geguti fortress
13. Security Guard of Bagrati Cathedral

The relationship of the Museum-Reserve and Monastery administration are further specified in the Management Plan for Gelati Monastery. The Management Plan elaborated within the World Bank funded the Imereti Regional Development Program by the G.Chubinashvili National Research Centre for Georgian Art History and Monuments Protection was completed in 2015 and submitted to the World Heritage Centre. The document was further revised in compliance with the ICOMOS comments and recommendations in 2016 (*ICOMOS Technical Review of the revised management plan of the World Heritage property “Bagrati cathedral and Gelati Monastery”*, ref:CLT/HER/WHC/EUR/16/8811, 6.06.2016). The Management Plan will be also updated to incorporate the legal changes expected to be enforced in 2017.

The process for establishing a necessary legal basis for adoption of the Management Plan, considered as a major step towards achieving a higher level of commitment to its implementation, has been put in place by the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation since 2014. The Code on Cultural Heritage will incorporate the special chapter dedicated to the protection and management of the World Heritage in Georgia and provide the platform and respective regulations for elaboration and adoption of Site Management Plans, as well as for the World Heritage Council to be established at the Ministry level. The EU funded Twinning project “Support to the Institutional Development of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia” (completed in April, 2015) gave considerable inputs in the process of elaboration of the Code on Cultural Heritage, with the particular emphasis on the issues of World Heritage. The revised legislation will be the basis for adoption of the Gelati Monastery Management Plan.

### ***5.f Sources and levels of finance***

The main sources of funding the Gelati Monastery are the State Budget, grants and donations. Annually the state allocates budget for the Church as well as for the cultural heritage - the special budget allocation: “the State Program for Cultural Heritage” was launched in 2004.

The funding of most conservation and restoration works, as well as elaboration of Conservation Master Plan ~~and Management Plan~~ is borne by the state budget. The budget is allocated to the Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection and further to the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation, which according to the rules of state procurement, plans and manages implementation of different conservation activities at the site. The Conservation Master Plan and the decisions of the World Heritage Committee serve as the basis for defining the annual action plan and the respective budget. The state funding for the conservation of the Monastery has been stable and mostly adequate for the last 10 years. The figures below give the information on the budget of the National Agency over the last 7 years:

2008	475,604.00 GEL
2009	533,514.00 GEL
2011	170,775.00 GEL

2012	68,000.GEL
2013	51,990.63 GEL
2014	39,957.16 GEL
2015	59,830 GEL

The “Georgian Historical Monuments Protection and Rescue Foundation” represents another major source of financing for the cultural heritage sites in Georgia. This private foundation focuses mostly on Orthodox churches. In 2010-2011 The Foundation allocated the total amount of 210,000.00 GEL for the different rehabilitation projects in Gelati Monastery.

Other international donors such as embassies and international foundations provide additional contribution to the site. With the funding of the US Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (ASCP), with grant amount of USD 600 000 two projects - *Architectural Rehabilitation of the Church of the Virgin* and *Emergency Conservation Works on Mural painting in the Dome of the Church of the Virgin* – are being implemented in the period from 2013-2017 to ensure the improving the state of conservation of the monument. Additional grant amount of USD 150 00 was confirmed in 2016 for the stone conservation of the main church.

Another important donor is the World Bank. In 2012 the agreement was reached with the World Bank to ensure further necessary financing for the research works and conservation of the main church as well as for the construction of the visitor centre at the property. The project is run within the Imereti Regional Development Program with the overall amount of USD 600 000.

Compared to the allocations from the budget of the National Agency and the donor organizations the financial contribution of the church administration to conservation-restoration of Gelati Monastery is rather modest. The church provides funds mainly for the operation of the monastery. However the work that is being undertaken by the monks – cleaning, providing basic security, etc. is a very valuable in kind contribution to the overall conservation of the property.

### ***5.g Sources of expertise and training in conservation and management techniques***

The conservation and rehabilitation works in Gelati monastery are carried out by private and non-governmental contracted organizations that provide nationally available crafts and conservation skills, as well as using foreign conservation expertise where necessary.

A special source of expertise and training, particularly for wall painting conservation, is provided by the Restoration Faculty of the State Academy of Fine Arts of Georgia. This faculty, through its international contacts, has been successfully involved in Gelati conservation issues for the last decade.

Thanks to the co-operation with the Restoration Faculty it was made possible to develop the stone conservation program at the site together with international conservators. In partnership with the Lugano University, the State Academy of Fine Arts implemented a two-year project (2010-2011) for assessment of the masonry and wall painting conservation issues of the Gelati Monastery. The project included the student exchange and on site workshops with the guidance of leading international specialists.



In the scope of the Imereti Regional Development Program the stone conservation methodology of the main church was elaborated in 2015 in cooperation with international consultant Mr. Stefano Volta.

The National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation in collaboration with ICCROM launched in 2015 the long-term (2015-2017) project on establishment of the multidisciplinary training platform for the development of professional opportunities through improvement of the education and professional system and policies in the field of conservation and management of cultural heritage in Georgia.

### ***5.h Visitor facilities and infrastructure***

Construction of the visitor centre outside the monastery as agreed with the WHC and its Advisory Bodies in 2013 started in 2015 and will be completed in 2017. The project funded by the World Bank also includes improved visitor access routes to the site. The visitor centre will operate under the Kutaisi Historical-Architectural Museum-Reserve. The works on the improvement of technical installations (electricity, water, sewerage, heating-ventilation, and drainage systems) foreseen by the Master Plan have been already implemented or are currently in progress.

### ***5.i Policies and programmes related to the presentation and promotion of the property***

The Master Plan responds to problems relating to the future needs of the monastic community, and of the management of visitors to the monastic complex. This includes a proper organization of the functions inside the monastery grounds, taking into consideration the fact that the property is a living monastery and a monument at the same time. 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 restoration of the roof of the Academy building has brought the possibility to this building to get integrated in the functioning of the whole site. At the moment it is used for temporary thematic exhibitions, public events, presentations of different kinds. In future it is planned to establish a more permanent exhibition space in the Academy building which will be managed by the museum reserve staff similarly to the visitor centre outside the enclosure wall.

The Master Plan on its own provides for the improved presentation of the property. It contains all the updated data, including the full set of drawings, necessary for identification and interpretation of the site.

### ***5.j Staffing levels and expertise (professional, technical, maintenance)***

Together with the Orthodox Church of Georgia, the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation and its structural unit - Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve staff are responsible for the preservation and management of Gelati Monastery.

The Head of the Museum-reserve and Monitoring specialists are responsible to provide the periodical monitoring and reporting on the Gelati monastery as well as other sites within their territory to the relevant unit of the National Agency Central office. There are 13 persons in the staff:

14. Manager

15. Exhibition curator
16. Museum Collections Keeper
17. Site Manager for Geguti fortress
18. Site Manager for Historical Architectural Museum (in Kutaisi)
19. Specialist
20. Specialist
21. Educational Program Specialist
22. Technical Support Specialist
23. Cleaner
24. Security Guard of Geguti fortress
25. Security Guard of Geguti fortress
26. Security Guard of Bagrati Cathedral

The level of staffing at the moment can be considered appropriate. However, extension (at least one guide, one site manager and a guard) is envisaged for the managing of the visitor centre at Gelati when it is completed. Most of the staff focuses on monitoring; there are no technicians at the museum-reserve. Thus the maintenance and some kind of technical work are being undertaken by the staff, as well as invited expert.

The day to day maintenance and operational activities, such are: basic tourist services, cleaning of the territory, etc. are carried out by the monks.

One of the key objectives of the EU funded TWINNING project “Support to the Institutional Development of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia” (2013-2015) implemented by Italian-Danish consortium was to improve governance in the field of cultural heritage protection and management through strengthening the capacities of the National Agency central level staff, site managers, museum-reserves staff and relevant stakeholders. A wide range of training courses included trainings on Strengthening Museum-Reserve Activities, Site and Museum Collection Management, Exhibition Design and Site Presentation, etc.

## 6. Monitoring

National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia, through its structural unit in Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum–Reserve, implements the periodical monitoring of the property. The expert is obligated to present the short monitoring report to the National Agency central office monthly. The report is compiled from textual and photo documentation.

The Cultural Heritage Inspection Unit of the central office implements the monitoring of the property once per 3 months, to evaluate the different issues of the state of conservation.

On the basis of the short periodical reports the annual report on state of conservation of the property is elaborated by the UNESCO and International Relations Unit of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.

On the basis of periodical reports the short and long term strategies are planned to maintain and improve the state of conservation of the property.

In line, the special council established at the National Agency implements the periodic monitoring of the ongoing works of the property. The periodicity of this monitoring depends on the specification and duration of the particular project.

### 6.a Key indicators for measuring state of conservation

Indicator	Periodicity	Location of Records
Cleanness and order of the site and the buildings	Continuous maintenance records; seasonal and yearly reports on the state of conservation;	Local manager, monitoring expert National Agency for Preservation of Georgian Cultural Heritage
Rate of change in the condition of the structures, the exterior ashlar, roofs and fittings, and in interior architectural surfaces	State of conservation report every five years, including photographic records;	Local manager, monitoring expert National Agency for Preservation of Georgian Cultural Heritage
Rate of change in environment and surrounding landscape, taking into account planning and development trends in the setting;	Yearly reports;	Local manager, monitoring expert National Agency for Preservation of Georgian Cultural Heritage
Changes in use of the site, visitor facilities, site presentation, numbers of visitors;	Yearly reports;	Local manager, monitoring expert National Agency for Preservation of Georgian Cultural Heritage



## **6.b Administrative arrangements for monitoring property**

National Agency for Preservation of Cultural Heritage of Georgia

5, Tabukashvili street, 0105, Tbilisi, Georgia

Tel: 995 32 298 39 24

[www.heritagesites.ge](http://www.heritagesites.ge)

## **6.c Results of previous reporting exercises**

The property of Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery was nominated for inscription to the World Heritage List in 1993. It was inscribed in 1994 on the basis of criterion (iv). It has since been subject to a number of State of Conservation Reports.

During a joint UNESCO-ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to Georgia, from 8 to 16 November 2003, Gelati Monastery was found in good condition apart from some problems in windows.

On 1 February 2005, the State Party submitted a detailed State of Conservation report, which observed some problems with the interventions of the local clergy and the lack of management plan.

In 2006, detailed information on the state of conservation of the site was provided in the section ii of the national Periodic Report for Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

On 12 March 2007, the State Party submitted a State of Conservation report with an overview of all issues relevant to the long-term conservation of the property.

From 2 to 10 June 2008, a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission visited Gelati Monastery, reporting on the condition of the church buildings and the problems related to management.

On 29 January 2009, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, informing about preventive conservation measures undertaken on Gelati Monastery.

From 11 to 17 March 2010, a World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM advisory mission visited Gelati Monastery, noting: “that the master plan which was presented to the 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 into 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.” (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/575>)

In its session in 2010, the WH Committee decided inscribe the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger (34COM7B.88).

On 31 January 2011, the State Party addressed the requests of the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session, highlighting the current state of the conservation works, the preparation of

the Management Plan, the issues related to the clarification of the boundaries and buffer zone, as well as coordination between the Georgian Church and the national authorities.

From 22 to 28 April 2012, a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission visited the property to discuss the Rehabilitation Strategy and to consider the overall state of conservation of the property. As a result, ICOMOS recommended to remove Bagrati Cathedral from the World Heritage List, and to re-nominate Gelati Monastery. The decision concerning Bagrati Cathedral was exceptionally postponed to the next session.

Based on the state of conservation report submitted by the State Party in January 2013, including the draft proposal for the modification of the boundary of the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery world heritage site, the World Heritage Committee session in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in 2013 approved the need for major boundary modification for the site in a way to remove Bagrati Cathedral from the property and to allow Gelati monastery to meet on its own the criterion iv defined at the time of its inscription (37 COM 7A.32).

The request for Major Boundary Modification for the property submitted to the World Heritage Centre on 1 February 2014 was referred back to the State Party in 2015 by the decisions of the World Heritage Committee in Bonn (39 COM 8B.35) in order to clarify the legal and management procedures for the property.

The World Heritage Committee at its 40<sup>th</sup> session in Istanbul in 2016 requested from the State Party to resubmit the Major Boundary Modification for the property together with the annual state of conservation report by 1 February 2017 (40 COM 7A.28).

## 7. Documentation

The detailed documentation on Gelati Monastery, the rehabilitation master plan as well as the reports of all rehabilitation actions implemented since 2008 have been duly provided to the World Heritage Centre. See annex.

### 7.a Photographs and audiovisual image inventory and authorization form

#### PHOTOGRAPHS AND AUDIOVISUAL IMAGE INVENTORY AND AUTHORIZATION FORM

<b>Id. No</b>	<b>Format (slide/print/video)</b>	<b>Caption</b>	<b>Date of Photo (mo/yr)</b>	<b>Photographer/Director of the video</b>	<b>Copyright owner</b>	<b>Contact details of copyright owner (Name, address, tel/fax, and e-mail)</b>	<b>Non exclusive cession of rights</b>
1	JPG	The village and Monastery of Gelati, General view	Sep 2012	D. Khoshtaria and N. Natsvlshvili	Chubinashvili National Research Centre	9 Atoneli St, Tbilisi, 0105, Georgia +995 32 293 13 38 research@gch-centre.ge	NA
2	JPG	General view from the south-west	Sep 2012	""	""	""	NA
3	JPG	General view from the north-west	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
4	JPG	General view from the north-west	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
5	JPG	General view from the north-west	Oct 2012	""	""	""	NA
6	JPG	General view from the north-east	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
7	JPG	General view from the north-east	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
8	JPG	General view from the south-west	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
9	JPG	General view from the south-west	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
10	JPG	Main Church, Church of St George, Church of St Nicholas, and Bell-tower from the north-west	Oct 2012	""	""	""	NA
11	JPG	Main Church and Church of St George from the north	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
12	JPG	Main Church and Bell-tower from the east	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA



13	JPG	Domes of Main Church and Church of St George from the east	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
14	JPG	Church of St Nicholas and Bell-Tower from the north	Aug 2012	""	""	""	NA
15	JPG	Church of St Nicholas and Bell-Tower from the north-east	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
16	JPG	Church of St Nicholas, Bell-Tower, and Academy from the south-east	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
17	JPG	House of the Bishop Gabriel Kikodze and house of monks from the south-east	Oct 2012	""	""	""	NA
18	JPG	South gate from the north	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
19	JPG	Courtyard and east gate from the west	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
20	JPG	Main Church from the north-east	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
21	JPG	Main Church from the south-east	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
22	JPG	Main Church from the north-east	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
23	JPG	Main Church from the south-east	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
24	JPG	Main Church and Church of St Nicholas from the south-east	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
25	JPG	Main Church, north façade	Aug 2011	""	""	""	NA
26	JPG	Main Church from the south-west	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
27	JPG	Main Church, lower part of the eastern façade	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
28	JPG	Main Church, 12 <sup>th</sup> century carved decorative boss under the middle window of the east façade	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
29	JPG	Main Church, east façade of the south chapel	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
30	JPG	Main Church, south façade of the south chapel	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA

31	JPG	Main Church, south chapel, detail of the decoration	Oct 2012	""	""	""	NA
32	JPG	Main Church, masonry of south-west corner of the south chapel showing sundial and large facing blocks	Aug 2011	""	""	""	NA
33	JPG	Main Church, interior looking east	Aug 2011	""	""	""	NA
34	JPG	Main Church, interior, apse mosaic showing the Virgin and Child and Archangels	1985	Chubinashvili National Research Centre	Chubinashvili National Research Centre	9 Atoneli St, Tbilisi, 0105, Georgia +995 32 293 13 38 research@gch-centre.ge	NA
35	JPG	Main Church, apse mosaic, the Virgin and Child, fragment	1985	""	""	""	NA
36	JPG	Main Church, apse mosaic, St Archangel Michael, fragment	1985	""	""	""	NA
37	JPG	Main Church, apse mosaic, St Archangel Gabriel, fragment	1985	""	""	""	NA
38	JPG	Main Church, apse murals showing liturgical scene and Communion	Jul 2011	Pino Dell'Aquila	Pino Dell'Aquila	-	NA
39	JPG	Main Church, interior, dome	Aug 2011	D. Khoshtaria and N. Natsvlshvili	Chubinashvili National Research Centre	9 Atoneli St, Tbilisi, 0105, Georgia +995 32 293 13 38 research@gch-centre.ge	NA
40	JPG	Main Church, murals in the dome and vaults	Jul 2011	Pino Dell'Aquila	Pino Dell'Aquila	-	NA
41	JPG	Main Church, interior looking north	Sep 2013	D. Khoshtaria and N. Natsvlshvili	Chubinashvili National Research Centre	9 Atoneli St, Tbilisi, 0105, Georgia +995 32 293 13 38 research@gch-centre.ge	NA
42	JPG	Main Church, interior, north cross-arm murals showing donors: the King David IV the Builder (1089-1125), the Catholicicon Evdemon I Chxetidze (1557-1578), the King Bagrat III of Imereti (1510-1565), his wife the Queen Elene, the King George II of Imereti (1565-1583), his wife the Queen Rusudan, and their son Bagrat	Aug 2011	""	""	""	NA
43	JPG	Main Church, interior, north wall, the King David IV the Builder,	1985	Chubinashvili National Research Centre	Chubinashvili National Research Centre	9 Atoneli St, Tbilisi, 0105, Georgia +995 32 293 13 38 research@gch-	NA

		fragment				centre.ge	
44	JPG	Main Church, interior, north wall, Royal family of the Bagratians	1985	""	""	""	NA
45	JPG	Main Church, interior looking north-west	Sep 2011	S. Sasano	Tokyo Institute of Technology	ssasano@enveng.titech.ac.jp	NA
46	JPG	Main Church, lower part of the north-west choir, throne of Archbishop	Sep 2011	""	""	""	NA
47	JPG	Main Church, interior, south cross-arm, Glorification of the Virgin, fragment	1985	Chubinashvili National Research Centre	Chubinashvili National Research Centre	9 Atoneli St, Tbilisi, 0105, Georgia +995 32 293 13 38 research@gch-centre.ge	NA
48	JPG	Main Church, interior, south wall of the west cross-arm	Jul 2011	Pino Dell'Aquila	Pino Dell'Aquila	--	NA
49	JPG	Main Church, interior looking south-west	Aug 2011	S. Sasano	Tokyo Institute of Technology	ssasano@enveng.titech.ac.jp	NA
50	JPG	Main Church, interior, looking north-west	Sep 2013	D. Khoshtaria and N. Natsvlshvili	Chubinashvili National Research Centre	9 Atoneli St, Tbilisi, 0105, Georgia +995 32 293 13 38 research@gch-centre.ge	NA
51	JPG	Main Church, chapel of St Andrew the Apostle, Deesis	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
52	JPG	Main Church, chapel of the Saviour, east wall	Sep 2011	S. Sasano	Tokyo Institute of Technology	ssasano@enveng.titech.ac.jp	NA
53	JPG	Main Church, chapel of the Saviour, apse, and vault murals	Sep 2011	""	""	""	NA
54	JPG	Main Church, chapel of St Marine, east wall	Sep 2013	D. Khoshtaria and N. Natsvlshvili	Chubinashvili National Research Centre	9 Atoneli St, Tbilisi, 0105, Georgia +995 32 293 13 38 research@gch-centre.ge	NA
55	JPG	Main Church, chapel of St Marine, south wall, Entry into Jerusalem	1985	Chubinashvili National Research Centre	Chubinashvili National Research Centre	9 Atoneli St, Tbilisi, 0105, Georgia +995 32 293 13 38 research@gch-centre.ge	NA
56	JPG	Main Church, chapel of St Marine, west wall	1985	""	""	""	NA
57	JPG	Main Church, chapel of St Marine, Donors		D. Khoshtaria and N. Natsvlshvili	""	""	NA
58	JPG	Main Church, interior of north porch	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
59	JPG	Main Church, west vault of narthex, the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon	1985	Chubinashvili National Research Centre	""	""	NA



60	JPG	Main Church, west wall of narthex, Holy Bishops, fragment	1985	""	""	""	NA
61	JPG	Main Church, narthex from the south	Aug 2011	D. Khoshtaria and N. Natsvlishvili	""	""	NA
62	JPG	Main Church, ciborium in narthex from the north-west	Aug 2011	""	""	""	NA
63	JPG	Main Church, south wall of ciborium showing the King Alexander III of Imereti (1639-1660), and his wife the Queen Nestan-Daredjan	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
64	JPG	Academy from the south-east	Aug 2012	""	""	""	NA
65	JPG	Academy from the north-east	Aug 2012	""	""	""	NA
66	JPG	Academy, south façade	Aug 2012	""	""	""	NA
67	JPG	Academy, porch	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
68	JPG	Academy, carved decorative ornament on the porch	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
69	JPG	Academy, scalloped vaulting of the porch	1985	Chubinashvili National Research Centre	""	""	NA
70	JPG	Academy, quatrefoil south-east pier of the porch	Aug 2011	D. Khoshtaria and N. Natsvlishvili	""	""	NA
71	JPG	Academy, quatrefoil north-east pier of the porch showing a lion	Aug 2011	""	""	""	NA
72	JPG	Academy, porch, western façade of the north-east pier bearing the carved image of a lion	Aug 2011	""	""	""	NA
73	JPG	Academy, interior looking south-west	Aug 2011	""	""	""	NA
74	JPG	Academy, interior looking north	Aug 2011	""	""	""	NA
75	JPG	Structural remains adjacent to the Academy looking east	Sep 2012	""	""	""	NA
76	JPG	Structural remains adjacent to the Academy looking north-west	Sep 2012	""	""	""	NA

77	JPG	Structural remains adjacent to the Academy looking north	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
78	JPG	Vaulted passage next to the Academy	Sep 2012	""	""	""	NA
79	JPG	Vaulted passage adjacent to the Academy	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
80	JPG	part of the vaulted passage adjacent to the Academy	Sep 2012	""	""	""	NA
81	JPG	South gate from the north-west	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
82	JPG	South gate from the south-west	Aug 2012	""	""	""	NA
83	JPG	South gate, north façade, entrance into the gate	Aug 2012	""	""	""	NA
84	JPG	South gate, east wall of the interior	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
85	JPG	South gate, west wall of the interior	Aug 2012	""	""	""	NA
86	JPG	South gate, mural in the east vault, Samaritan woman at the well, fragment	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
87	JPG	South gate, mural in the north vault, fragment	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
88	JPG	South gate, south entrance from the interior	Aug 2012	""	""	""	NA
89	JPG	South gate, interior, footsteps and the tombstone of Adais the son of Nechai	Aug 2012	""	""	""	NA
90	JPG	South gate, interior, the tombstone of Adais the son of Nechai	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
91	JPG	South gate, interior, the tombstone of David IV the Builder	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
92	JPG	South gate, interior, Iron door from Ganja made by Blacksmith Al-Hadad Ibrahim in 1062	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
93	JPG	Church of St George from the north-east	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
94	JPG	Church of St George the from north-west	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA

95	JPG	Church of St George from the south-east	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
96	JPG	Church of St George from the south-west	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
97	JPG	Church of St George, West façade	Aug 2012	""	""	""	NA
98	JPG	Church of St George, west porch	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
99	JPG	Church of St George, dome from the east	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
100	JPG	Church of St George, west window	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
101	JPG	Church of St George, south window	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
102	JPG	Church of St George, carved frame of the west door	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
103	JPG	Church of St George, relief of St George on the west wall	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
104	JPG	Church of St George, interior looking east	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
105	JPG	Church of St George, crossing	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
106	JPG	Church of St George, south wall mural showing donors: the Catholicion Evdemon I Chxetidze (1557-1578), the King Bagrat III of Imereti (1510-1565), and his wife the Queen Elene	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
107	JPG	Church of St George, west vault, scenes from the life of the Saviour: Meeting of the Lord, Theophany, Raising of Lazarus, Transfiguration	1985	Chubinashvili National Research Centre	""	""	NA
108	JPG	Church of St George, Murals in the vault of the north-west corner bay: St George standing in front of Diocletian, St George destroying idols	Aug 2013	D. Khoshtaria and N. Natsvlshvili	""	""	NA
109	JPG	Church of St George, west wall	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
110	JPG	Church of St George, north wall, St Theodore the Tyron	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
111	JPG	Church of St George, west pier	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA



112	JPG	Church of St Nicholas from the east	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
113	JPG	Church of St Nicholas from the north-east	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
114	JPG	Church of St Nicholas from the north-east	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
115	JPG	Church of St Nicholas, stairway	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
116	JPG	Church of St Nicholas, from the south-east	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
117	JPG	Church of St Nicholas from the south-west	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
118	JPG	Church of St Nicholas, crossing	Sep 2012	""	""	""	NA
119	JPG	Church of St Nicholas. north-east pier of the crossing	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
120	JPG	Bell-tower from the east	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
121	JPG	Bell-tower from the north-west	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
122	JPG	Bell-tower from the south	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
123	JPG	Bell-tower, spring on the ground floor in the interior	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
124	JPG	House to the north of the Main Church, south façade	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
125	JPG	House to the north of the Main Church from the south-east	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
126	JPG	House to the north of the Main Church, west façade	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
127	JPG	Remains of the 12 <sup>th</sup> and 13 <sup>th</sup> -century building in the basement of the house to the north of the Main Church	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
128	JPG	Remains of the 12 <sup>th</sup> and 13 <sup>th</sup> -century building in the basement of the house to the north of the Main Church	Aug 2012	""	""	""	NA
129	JPG	East gate from the east	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
130	JPG	East gate from the south-	Aug	""	""	""	NA

		west	2012				
131	JPG	East gate, west façade	Aug 2012	""	""	""	NA
132	JPG	East gate, interior looking east	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
133	JPG	Oil Press from the north-east	Aug 2012	""	""	""	NA
134	JPG	Oil Press and Academy from the north	Aug 2012	""	""	""	NA
135	JPG	Oil Press, interior looking south-west	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
136	JPG	Monks house to the south of the Main Church from the north-west	Aug 2012	""	""	""	NA
137	JPG	Monks house to the south of the Main Church, North façade	Aug 2013	""	""	""	NA
138	JPG	Fragment of the 12 <sup>th</sup> century column in the corner of the monks house	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA
139	JPG	House of the Bishop Gabriel Kikodze from the north-east	Aug 2012	""	""	""	NA
140	JPG	House of the Bishop Gabriel Kikodze from the north-west	Aug 2012	""	""	""	NA
141	JPG	House of the Bishop Gabriel Kikodze from the south	Aug 2012	""	""	""	NA
142	JPG	House of the Bishop Gabriel Kikodze, balcony	Sep 2013	""	""	""	NA

## ***7.b Texts relating to protective designation, copies of property management plans or documented management systems and extracts of other plans relevant to the property***

See annexes.

## ***7.c Form and date of most recent records or inventory of property***

The registration card of the Gelati Monastery including the full documentation of the site, as considered by the law on Cultural Heritage were completed in 2008.

These records are kept in the archive of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.

## ***7.d Address where inventory, records and archives are held***

### **National Agency for Cultural Heritage of Georgia.**

Established in 2008 in accordance with the Decree of the President of Georgia.

The Agency has been constituted on the bases of the existing complex monuments of national and global significance, represents their totality and is there legal successor.

Address: 5, Tabukashvili, 0105, Tbilisi, Georgia

Tel: 995 32 298 39 24

<http://heritagesites.ge/>

## ***7.e Selected Bibliography***

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## 8. Contact Information of responsible authorities

### 8.a Preparer

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**Tel:** +995 32 293 13 38  
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### 8.b Official Local Institution/Agency

**Institution:** National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia  
**Address:** 5, Tabukashvili, 0105, Tbilisi, Georgia  
**Tel:** 995 32 298 39 24  
**E-mail:**  
**Web address:** [www.heritagesites.ge](http://www.heritagesites.ge)

### 8.c Other Local Institutions

**Institution:** George Chubinashvili National Research Centre for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation (GCNRC)  
**Address:** 9, Atoneli St, 0105, Tbilisi, Georgia  
**Tel:** +995 32 293 13 38  
**E-mail:** [research@gch-centre.ge](mailto:research@gch-centre.ge)  
**Web address:** <http://www.gch-centre.ge>

## 9. List of Annexes

### **1. Maps on CD ( A3 size, PDF format):**

1. Map of Georgia, 1: 1 000 000.
2. Map of the Tkibuli Municipality and the environs of the city of Kutaisi, 1: 100 000.
3. Map of the nominated property and its Buffer Zone, 1:15 000.
4. Map of the nominated property, 1:750.
5. Map of the nominated property and Buffer Zone showing listed monuments and monuments proposed for listing, 1:20 000.
6. Map showing proposed boundary modification, 1:30 000.
7. Topographical Map, 1:25 000.
8. Map of territorial functional units within the Buffer Zone, 1:17 000.
9. Map of land use within the Buffer Zone, 1:15 000.

### **2. Revised Draft Management Plan and Action Programmes (on CD)**

### **3. Conservation Master Plan (on CD)**

### **4. Law of Georgia on Cultural Heritage (on CD)**