

Ferrapontov (Russia)

No 982

Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	The Ensemble of Ferrapontov Monastery
<i>Location</i>	Vologda Region
<i>State Party</i>	Russian Federation
<i>Date</i>	29 June 1999

Justification by State Party

The Ferrapontov Monastery is unique in its beauty, authenticity, and the harmony of architectural details from different centuries. The ensemble is designed to depict images of God through architecture and painting. This was later symbolized in the 15th and 16th centuries by the dedication of the summer and winter churches of the cathedral to the Nativity of the Virgin and the Annunciation respectively and in the 17th century of the gate church to the Epiphany.

The church of the Nativity of the Virgin is of special significance to Russian and world culture. Its interior was painted by Dionisy, the leading Russian artist of the late 15th/early 16th centuries, and his sons, and it is the only surviving mural known to have been painted by him.

The complex of Ferrapontov Monastery is a rare example of the preservation and stylistic unity of a 15th-17th century northern Russian monastery in which are to be found the characteristics of the architecture of this period when the unified Russian state was being formed. The ensemble is an outstanding example of harmonious unity with the surrounding landscape which emphasizes the special spirituality of the northern monastic communities and at the same time throws light on the daily life of the northern peasants.

The Ferrapontov Monastery participated in the crucial events of the period when the political influence of the Moscow Great Principality was being strengthened and the foundations laid for the Russian centralized state in the 15th-17th centuries. The Monastery was later to become a major cultural and ideological centre of the Lake Beloye region and a monastery whose monks had a strong influence on the policies of Moscow.

Note 1 The State Party does not make any proposals in the nomination dossier concerning the criteria under which it considers this property should be inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Note 2 The text above is an abridged version of the justification in the nomination dossier.

Category of property

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *group of buildings*

History and Description

History

The Monastery was founded in 1398 by St Ferrapont, a friend and associate of St Kirill Belozerskii. It achieved renown thanks to St Kirill's pupil, St Martinian Belozerskii, who was *hegumen* (abbot) of the Troitse-Sergiev Monastery in 1447-55.

Together with Kirillo-Belozersk Monastery, it became the favoured place of worship and of endowment for many members of the Russian feudal aristocracy, such as Andrei and Mikhail Mozhayskiye, and rulers, like Vassili III and Ivan IV. At the turn of the 15th century it produced many notable leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church who played leading parts in the country's life, such as Archbishops Rostovskii and Yaroslavskii Ioassaf (Obolensky), Bishops Permskii and Vologodskii Filofei, and Bishop Suzdalskii Ferrapont. It was also the place of exile of leading churchmen who had fought for the priority of the church, such as Metropolitan Spiridon-Savva and Patriarch Nikon.

Work began on the brick ensemble of the Monastery in 1490 with the erection of the Cathedral of the Nativity of the Virgin by master builders from Rostov. During the century that followed, the monumental church of the Annunciation, the Treasury Chamber, and ancillary buildings were added. It recovered from the Lithuanian incursions of the 16th century and during the following century the Gate Church, the Church of St Martinian, and the bell-tower were added.

The 16th century was the period of the monastery's greatest prosperity. Princes and tsars came to worship there and Ivan IV granted it special privileges and charters. Securing the relics of Martinian and his subsequent canonization made it a place of pilgrimage and attracted many gifts and endowments. The Monastery became the richest landowner in the Lake Beloye region, owning some sixty villages.

The Monastery was formally abolished by decree of the Synod in 1798. In the 19th century a diminished area of the complex was enclosed by a brick wall. It reopened as a convent for nuns in 1904, but this was closed in 1924. It currently serves as the museum of the frescoes of Dionisy, opened in the first half of the 20th century, but greatly enlarged and improved since 1975.

Description

There are six major elements in the complex of the Ferrapontov Monastery.

- The Cathedral of the Nativity of the Virgin (1490)

This is the nucleus of the Monastery. It is a three-aisled structure surmounted by a dome, its slender proportions emphasized by vertical rows of pilasters. The upper parts of the facades are decorated with rows of balusters and ceramic plaques with floral ornamentation, whilst the lower portions bear fantastic masks and floral ornament reminiscent of the white limestone carvings of the Vladimir churches. The

interior is divided by two rows of four stout pillars and the drum is supported by vaulting.

The entire surface of the interior is covered by the mural paintings of Dionisy Mudriy (the Wise), arranged in rows that vary in size with the architectural elements of the building. There are also paintings on the exterior, in the central part of the western wall and in the lower part of the southern wall, above the grave of St Martinian. The subject matter of the interior paintings is in accordance with the Orthodox canons, progressing upwards from saints and martyrs to Christ in the drum.

- The Church of the Annunciation (1530-31) and refectory

This unique architectural monument from the first third of the 16th century was donated by the Great Prince Vassilii II to commemorate the birth of his heir, the future Tsar Ivan IV. It is the earliest example in northern Russia of a church surmounted by a bell-tower. The interior is divided in three levels, the church being in the central one. Adjoining the church is the massive refectory, a spacious square hall with four cross-vaults.

- The Treasury Chamber (1530s)

This is the oldest brick civil building in northern Russia. It was used for storing the Monastery's documents and other treasures. It is a two-storey building with a pitched roof and cylindrical vaults. It is plain but powerful in appearance: the massive walls have small windows without frames.

- The Church of St Martinian (1641)

This "tent" church in the style characteristic of Russian church architecture in the 17th century was built above the grave of St Martinian, up against the southern wall of the Cathedral of the Nativity of the Virgin. In form it is a simple cube with an eight-faceted "tent" or spire and a slender drum. It is lit from above, directing the daylight on the grave of the second founder of the Monastery. In the interior is a rare wall painting of Ferrapontov and Martinian, on what was the original outside wall of the Cathedral.

- The Gate Churches of the Epiphany and St Ferrapont (1650)

These two small churches are built around the double Holy Gates, and their structure is unusual. Their spires surmount the centre of the gate building and are supported on its walls rather than those of the churches themselves.

- The bell-tower (1680s)

This crowns the building linking the refectory and the Cathedral of the Nativity of the Virgin. It contains seventeen bells and the spire contains a clock mechanism from 1638, the oldest in Russia.

Management and Protection

Legal status

Four methods of legislative protection apply to the Ensemble of Ferrapontov Monastery: protection as an Historical and Cultural Monument of federal significance under the provisions of the 1978 Law; protection of a series of zones in the surrounding area (monument protection zone, controlled building zone, and protected landscape) established under a 1986 directive; protection as a Specially Important Cultural

Monument, as the buildings complex of the Kirillo-Belozerskii Museum-Reserve, in accordance with a 1997 Presidential Decree; and protection of the surrounding area as part of the Rouskii Sever National Park (166.6ha) under the 1991 Law.

Management

The nominated property is in public ownership, as established by a 1992 Presidential Decree which restricts the restitution of church property and forbids the privatization of cultural monuments of federal importance.

The management plans currently in force ensure protection at three levels. The Rouskii Sever National Park Plan defines the functional zones, the boundaries of the protection zones, and the respective regulations. The plans relating to the land surrounding the monument delineate the three protection zones. The Ferrapontov Urban Plan defines the character of the environment in the immediate vicinity of the property.

Management is exercised at the three administrative levels in operation in Russia - federal, regional, and departmental. At the *federal* level the Ministry of Culture is responsible for overseeing, methodological control, and coordination. Three specialized institutes of the Ministry are responsible for the conservation of the Dionisy murals, architectural conservation, and management of the protection zones respectively. At the *regional* level, the Vologda Administration provides financial resources for the conservation of the ensemble, control of the works, technical supervision, and the issuing of building permits. At the *departmental* level the main institution, the Historic-Architectural and Artistic Museum-Reserve of Kirillo-Belozerskii is the contracting authority in respect of the federal and regional funding and is responsible for planning technical control, etc. Its subsidiary, the Ferrapontov Monastery Museum, shares these functions, monitors the condition and conservation of the ensemble, organizes scientific, cultural, and educational events and exhibitions, builds up its own funds, etc.

The conservation of the ensemble is financed from four possible sources: federal (Ministry of Finance), regional (Vologda Administration), local (the Museum's own budget), and extra-budgetary (sponsorship).

Monitoring is carried out at different levels - by the Special Curator of the Museum, the specialized institutes of the Ministry of Culture, and by the federal coordinating architect. Rapid communication between the various parties involved is effected according to a programmed system.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

Conservation work carried out at the property since the beginning of the 20th century reflect the successive stages of the Russian school of conservation. At the present time the following types of interventions are carried out:

- *conservation* (wall paintings, foundations, vaulting, floors, roofs, etc);
- *restoration* (work carried out as a result of thorough research and scientific investigations);

- *reconstruction* (justifiable restoration of secondary and vanished elements of buildings);
- *maintenance* (repair of damaged elements such as walls, roofs, doorways and windows, etc).

Since 1981 the wall paintings have been the object of a series of successful operations: investigation, consolidation, cleaning, microbiological studies, and stabilization of the conditions within the Cathedral of the Nativity of the Virgin. So as to ensure the complete authenticity of the paintings, no retouching or free improvization has been permitted.

Authenticity

The property has preserved a high level of authenticity in terms of its original layout, its materials and techniques, and its setting. Conservation work on the wall paintings has been especially commendable, being restricted to consolidation and cleaning. Certain original architectural forms and structures have been reconstructed on the basis of scientific study and using traditional materials. The authentic setting has been preserved in its entirety in the surrounding landscape as far as the eye can see. Changes in the authenticity of function form part of the history of the property and the insertion of the new museum function plays an indispensable role in the protection of the authenticity of the ensemble.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

An ICOMOS expert mission visited the Ferrapontov Monastery in February 2000.

Qualities

In its layout and architecture the Ensemble of Ferrapontov Monastery is a remarkable model of the northern Russian Orthodox monastery, the creation of which is characteristic of a key period in the Russian Orthodox tradition.

The wall-paintings of Dionisy in the Cathedral of the Nativity of the Virgin constitute a masterpiece of human creative genius and the most valuable evidence of the flowering of Russian national art in the 16th century.

Comparative analysis

The strength and purity of the cultural value of the Ensemble of Ferrapontov Monastery becomes most clearly defined when a comparative study of other Russian monastic ensembles (including those on the World Heritage List) is undertaken. Unlike the other monasteries, Ferrapontov possesses wall-paintings which are not secondary elements but have a value that is equal to the architectural and group values of the monastery as a whole. Its architecture and layout retain a purity that has been lost as a result of many modifications and additions at other monastic establishments, such as the Kirillo-Beloserskii Monastery. It also preserves the purity of its links with its environment, a purity which becomes more marked when compared with the deterioration of the surroundings of, for example, the Kirillo-Belozerskii, Goritzki, Spasso-Preloudskii, or Novodevichskii Monasteries.

ICOMOS comments and recommendations

The nomination dossier does not indicate the precise boundaries of the nominated property nor the buffer zone. The ICOMOS expert mission established that this information does exist for the protected zones in the surroundings of the Monastery. Discussions during the mission resulted in the delineation of the nominated property and the buffer zone and a map was provided which met the requirements.

It is recommended that the name of the nominated property be changed to "The Ensemble of the Ferrapontov Monastery and the wall-paintings of Dionisy" so as to give proper recognition to the exceptional value of these paintings.

Brief description

The Ferrapontov Monastery is an exceptionally well preserved and complete example of a Russian Orthodox monastic complex of the 15th-17th centuries, a period of great significance in the development of the unified Russian state and its culture. The architecture of the monastery is outstanding in its inventiveness and purity and it is graced by the magnificent wall-paintings of Dionisy

Recommendation

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria i and iv*:

Criterion i The wall paintings of Dionisy in the Cathedral of the Nativity of the Virgin at Ferrapontov Monastery are the highest expression of Russian mural art in the 15th-16th centuries.

Criterion iv The complex of Ferrapontov Monastery is the purest and most complete example of an Orthodox monastic community from the 15th-17th centuries, a crucial period in the cultural and spiritual development of Russia.

ICOMOS, September 2000