

# BULGARIA

## Boyana Church

### Brief description

Located on the outskirts of Sofia, Boyana Church consists of three buildings. The eastern church was built in the 10th century, then enlarged at the beginning of the 13th century by Sebastocrator Kaloyan, who ordered a second two-storey building to be erected next to it. The frescoes in this second church, painted in 1259, make it one of the most important collections of medieval paintings. The ensemble is completed by a third church, built at the beginning of the 19th century. This site is one of the most complete and perfectly preserved monuments of east European medieval art.

### 1. Introduction

**Year(s) of Inscription** 1979

#### Agency responsible for site management

- National Institute for Cultural Monuments  
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### 2. Statement of Significance

**Inscription Criteria** C (ii), (iii)

#### Justification provided by the State Party

A striking example of the Tarnovo School of painting, the Boyana Church is a composite of three parts:

- the Eastern part, the oldest, built during the 10th century;
- the central part, which was added during the 13th century;
- the Western part, built in the 19th century.

From an architectural point of view, this monument is the only one of its kind in Western Bulgaria. It is a pure example of a church with a Greek cross

ground-plan with dome, and richly decorated façades. The Boyana Church is one of the most remarkable Bulgarian monuments of the Middle Ages; its wall paintings have brought it world-wide fame.

The most recent research done on the façades suggests that they had been decorated with ceramic elements. The Boyana Church frescoes include four layers of wall paintings from the 11th, 13th, 14th-15th and 19th centuries, reflecting Bulgarian art from those different periods. The frescoes present a realistic interpretation of the Christian canon: those of the central part of the building complex, dating from the 13th century, are the prototype of medieval Bulgarian painting, the precursor of early Renaissance art in Italy.

#### As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

ICOMOS: (Second year of inscription) A national building celebrated as a result of A. Grabar's study. It is an important landmark in the history of Greek Christian Art.

- No Statement of significance has been required for adoption by the World Heritage Committee at the time of inscription
- Proposal for text has been made by State Party
- Additional change proposed by State Party

#### Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: adequate

#### Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

### 3. Protection

#### Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- Agreements: Instructions on Protection and Preservation of the World Monument of Culture "Boyana Church" (1989)
- Law: law on Cultural Monuments and Museums (1969)
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

### 4. Management

#### Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction

**Management /Administrative Body**

- Steering group: no plans exist at this time to set up a Steering Group
- Site manager on full-time basis
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

Actions proposed: elaboration of the management plan

**5. Management Plan**

- No management plan is being implemented
- Although there is no proper management plan, property protection management systems do exist. It is set out in the Instructions on Protection and Preservation of the World monument of Culture "Boyana Church" (year 1986) and its protective zone. The Instructions are mandatory and set out the responsibilities of the interested state and local institutions and the owners
- Management plan: considered adequate
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: National Museum of History

**6. Financial Resources****Financial situation**

- Budget sources: main source is the Ministry of Culture
- WHF: funds for monitoring equipment
- Sufficiency of funding not supplied

**7. Staffing Levels**

- number of staff: 8

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- Very good: conservation, management, promotion, interpretation, education, visitor management

**8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques**

- Museum conservation facilities: National Institute of Cultural Monuments, National

Academy of Fine Arts, National Historical Museum experts

**9. Visitor Management**

- Visitor statistics: 20,909, mechanical counting method (2004)
- Trend: steady increase
- Visitor facilities: souvenir shops, video player, guide services, interpretation on site

**10. Scientific Studies**

- Studies relating to the value of the site; monitoring exercises, visitor Management, microclimatic research
- Studies used for: use and justification of replacement of technological equipment

**11. Education, Information and Awareness Building**

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- Some World Heritage Convention Emblems used on publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, businesses, local authorities
- Events: visit of ICCROM experts, 2004 and 2005
- Web site available: [www.boyanachurch.org](http://www.boyanachurch.org)

**12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)****Reactive monitoring reports**

- World Heritage Bureau sessions: 18<sup>th</sup> (1994)

**Conservation interventions**

- Conservation: all the necessary activities on conservation and restoration of the architectural structures have been carried out. The property has air-conditioning and is under permanent surveillance. In order to enhance the security and reliability of its microclimate maintenance, all microclimate equipment is duplicated. The frescoes restoration is not yet completed
- Present state of conservation: needs more resources

**Threats and Risks to site**

- Development pressures

- Specific issues: controls are necessary for visitors within the church to protect the frescoes
- Emergency measures taken: lighting, climatic and visitor numbers are controlled

### **13. Monitoring**

- No formal monitoring programme exists
- Measures taken: monitoring program under the National Institute of the Monuments of Culture. Data is measured on air temperature and humidity, wall temperature and humidity, air circulation, amounts of fresh air, fresh air, summarized annual set of the microclimate parameters, justification for climatologic intervention in the buffer premise – the Revival period section, permanent control measurements taken at pre-set intervals

### **14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions**

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, social, management, protection measures
- Strengths of management: significant amount of conservation-restoration activities covering both the architectural structures and the frescoes
- Weaknesses of management: The Boyana Church is institutionally subordinate to the National Museum of History (directly subsidized by the Ministry of Culture). As such the coordinating Department has restricted decision-making power regarding the development of the site, its management and the disposal of the box office revenues