

GREECE

Mount Athos

Brief description

An Orthodox spiritual centre since 1054, Mount Athos has enjoyed an autonomous statute since Byzantine times. The 'Holy Mountain', which is forbidden to women and children, is also a recognized artistic site. The layout of the monasteries (about 20 of which are presently inhabited by some 1,400 monks) had an influence as far afield as Russia, and its school of painting influenced the history of Orthodox art.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription

1988

Agency responsible for site management

- Hellenic Ministry of Culture - 10th Ephorate of Byzantine and Postbyzantine Antiquities
63100 Polygyros, Chalkidiki, Greece
e-mail: protocol@10eba.culture.gr
Website: www.culture.gr; www.10eba.gr
- Ministry for the Environment, Spatial Planning & Public Works (YPEHODE)
Directorate for Environmental Planning
Department for the Management of the natural Environment
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2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C (i), (ii), (iv), (v), (vi) N (iii)

Justification provided by the State Party

Il est évident, d'après notre rapport, et en particulier au 3a, que le Mont Athos est véritablement un musée unique au monde qui possède une multitude d'œuvres d'art d'architecture, de peinture, des arts mineurs et en même temps, un unique archive historique à cause de la multitude des documents en sa possession.

Or, le Mont Athos n'est, dans le sens propre, un musée, mais un organisme vivant qui conserve une façon de vivre et une organisation administrative qui reste inaltérable depuis le X^{ème} siècle, époque pendant laquelle on a mis les bases de la vie monastique.

C'est une espèce de société close, aux conditions de vie singulières, au moins pour les données du monde occidental. Le Mont Athos a toujours été le centre spirituel du monde orthodoxe.

Les valeurs spirituelles et culturelles qui caractérisent le Mont Athos ont joué un rôle important au formement de sa physionomie morphologique et artistique qui a été créée par les plus importants artistes Grecs qui représentaient presque toutes les tendances dominantes de toutes les périodes.

Cette singularité de l'organisation sociale athonienne était la cause de la préservation des éléments spirituels, historiques et artistiques cités ci-dessus. Cette même singularité est reflétée dans la vie quotidienne des moines. Les activités productives sont limitées à l'exploitation des forêts, aux diverses occupations artisanales et artistiques (peinture, sculpture sur bois etc), à l'agriculture, à la pêche etc. Ici on doit remarquer la préservation d'une technologie déjà disparue ou extrêmement rare, hors du Mont Athos (un nombre illimité des objets, outils, machines).

On doit encore mentionner la particularité de la morphologie géologique d'Athos. L'ambiance a été transformée conformément aux besoins et aux usages de cette société singulière, de façon que sa formation a suivi un cours différent de ce qu'on a suivi des régions d'une autre structure.

L'intervention humaine sur les relations naturelles du sol, du faune et de la flore a été la moindre possible et quand avait lieu, était d'un caractère et d'un contenu complètement différent de ce du monde extérieur. Comme résultat, l'ambiance naturelle est restée inaltérable pendant mille et plus ans.

Comme récapitulation, on peut dire qu'au Mont Athos est préservée une richesse énorme d'éléments historiques, artistiques et culturels dans un encadrement social et naturel qui est resté vivement traditionnel, ce qui fait de Mont Athos un espèce d'archive de l'activité humaine pour dix siècles. En parallèle avec tous ceux et au fond de tous ceux existe quelque chose qui est très difficile d'exprimer avec des mots: c'est la révélation du divin, l'accord mystique de la vie et de la mort qui surpasse les limites de temps et de lieu.

As provided in ICOMOS/IUCN evaluation

(ICOMOS): Mount Athos satisfies criteria I, II, IV, V and VI of the "Guidelines".

- Criterion I. As was the case with Machupicchu (inscribed in 1983) and Taishan (inscribed in 1987),

the transformation of a mountain into a sacred place made Mount Athos a unique artistic creation combining the natural beauty of the site with the expanded forms of architectural creation. Moreover, the monasteries of Athos are a veritable conservatory of masterpieces ranging from wall paintings by Frangos Castellanos at the Great Lavra to portable icons, gold objects, embroideries or illuminated manuscripts which each monastery jealously preserves.

- Criterion II. Mount Athos exerted lasting influence in the orthodox world, of which it is the spiritual centre, on the development of religious architecture and monumental painting. The typical layout of Athonite monasteries (mentioned below to illustrate criterion IV) was used as far away as Russia. Iconographic themes, codified by the school of painting at Mount Athos and laid down in minute detail in the *Guide to Painting* (discovered and published by Didron in 1845), were used and elaborated on from Crete to the Balkans beginning in the 16th century.

- Criterion IV. The monasteries of Athos present the typical layout of orthodox monastic establishments: a square, rectangular or trapezoidal wall flanked by towers, which constitutes the *peribolus* of a consecrated place, in the centre of which the community's church, or the *catholicon*, stands alone. Strictly organised according to principles dating from the 10th century are the areas reserved for communal activities (refectory, cells, hospital, library), those reserved solely for liturgical purposes (chapels, fountains), and the defense structures (arsenal, fortified tower). The organization of - agricultural lands in the idiorrhythmic *skites*, the *kellia* and *kathismata* (farms operated by monks) is also very characteristic of the medieval period.

- Criterion V. The monastic ideal has, at Mount Athos, preserved traditional human habitations, which are representative of the agrarian cultures of the Mediterranean world and have become vulnerable through the impact of change within contemporary society. Mount Athos is also a conservatory of vernacular architecture and agricultural and craft traditions.

- Criterion VI. In 1054, the sacred mountain of Athos, a holy place in the Christian world, became the principal spiritual home of the Orthodox church. It retained this prominent role even after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the establishment of the autocephalous patriarchy of Moscow in 1589. Mount Athos is directly and tangibly associated with the history of Orthodox Christianity which, in varying degrees, is present in more than 20 nations. In the 20th century. It is no exaggeration to say that

this thousand-year old site, where the weight of history is palpable in the countryside, the monuments and the precious collections collected slowly over time, has retained even today its universal and exceptional significance.

(IUCN): Our conclusions on the World Heritage natural values are similar for both the Meteora and Pamukkale nominations. The natural features of all these sites provide the setting which attracted settlement and the building of religious structures in historic times. All, thus, have natural features which form an important backdrop for a cultural landscape which now represents the dominant values.

Mt. Athos itself, though scenic, is not exceptional or outstanding on a global scale. There are no unique geological features and it is not of particular importance for its scientific values or species. The flora has, however, been well protected and contains a variety of plant species now becoming rare in the region. The natural features of Mt. Athos, therefore, do not complement the cultural values as strongly as they do in Goreme, Mt. Taishan, or Machu Picchu.

Committee Decision

Bureau (1988): The Bureau recommended inscription of this site. Moreover, it requested that IUCN communicate to the December 1988 session of the Committee its evaluation of the natural aspects of Mt. Athos.

Session (1988): The Committee accepted the ICOMOS proposal to add natural criterion (iii) - outstanding universal value from the point of view of natural beauty - to cultural criteria, since this site involves a humanized landscape the characteristics of which are due to persistence of farming practices and traditional arts and crafts linked to the stringent observance of monastic rules.

- Statement of Significance does not adequately define the outstanding universal value of the site. At the time of initial inscription the WH Committee did not approve a Statement of Significance for the site, which defined the outstanding universal value
- Proposal for text has been made by State Party
- Change required by the State Party in UNESCO's official description of the site

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Natural criteria (**N**): The delimitation of the area in terms of the EU-wide Natura 2000 network is adequate, because it includes all the important

elements of the natural environment (habitats and areas where species are spreading). Also, the special administrative status of Mount Athos contributes to the sufficient delimitation of the area.

- Buffer zone: further work needed
- Cultural criteria (C): The Ministry of Culture, through its competent Service (the 10th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities), provides for the observance of the archaeological legislation, taking into consideration the self-governing system of Mount Athos, which is enshrined in the Greek Constitution, as well as the Constitutional Charter regulating the operation of the monastic city. Presidential Decrees define the competencies of the Ministry inside Mount Athos.

The delimitation of the buffer zone aims not only at protecting the monument-archaeological site, but also at preserving its form and character in relation with the area neighbouring Mount Athos, which is the «gate» to the Holy Mountain. Building in this area is controlled by the 10η E.B.A. Also, the Ministry of Macedonia-Thrace has designated the area as an area of natural beauty.

In order to protect the cultural landscape of Mount Athos, the Ministry of Culture has designated Mount Athos, including the 20 monasteries, their dependencies and their surrounding landscape, and the area before reaching the property of Mount Athos, whose boundaries extend to the Xerxis Canal, a protected site (Ministry of Culture Decision 5980/16.10.1965. Government Gazette 714/29.10.1965). The above mentioned area, which is a sufficient buffer zone, is under the control of the competent Ephorate of Antiquities (the 10th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities); it includes monuments such as the Monastery of Zyghos, the tower of Prosfhoriou (Ouranopoulis), the Monastery of Melisourgheiou, the locations Koumitsa, Pyrgoudia etc.

N: The peculiar/singular self-governing system under the Greek Constitutional Law of Mount Athos along with its secluded character, establish a clearly defined spatial entity, when it comes to protection issues as well. Following the completion of the Special Environmental Study (SES), special protection issues will be examined and the zoning of the area with varying degrees of protection will take place.

Measures are being taken:

- **N:** The Special Environmental Study (SES) of the area has yet to be completed, as is

stipulated in the Law 1650/1986 “On the protection of the environment”; as a result, the enactment of legislation for the buffer zones in the area has not taken place yet, and the Presidential Decree for the delimitation, management and protection of the area has yet to be issued. At this point, it is worth noting that the elaboration of the SES is progressing on the initiative of the Ecclesiastical Administration. However, the special status of the area, characterized by a controlled number of visitors with a specific profile (religious tourism is predominant), constitutes an important and critical measure for the preservation and the management of the area.

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained
- **C:** Radical changes in the past decades both in social life and in the field of technology have had an inevitable effect on the form and course of Athonite life. Most changes are due to natural disasters and human interventions to cover vital needs. The increase in the number of visitors- pilgrims creates further requirements (construction of big buildings, piers, reception and hospitality facilities etc.). Support and restoration work has been carried out, as well as conservation work on monuments and reliquary treasures.
- **C:** The ongoing conservation work on reliquary treasures and works of art -wall paintings, portable icons, manuscripts, wood carving, sculptures and marble floors, miniature art objects- that are preserved in the monasteries of Mount Athos and are in need of immediate intervention, is judged to be a positive change. The above mentioned work averts any likelihood of a partial or total destruction thereof and ensures the integrity of the works of art. On the contrary, radical changes in the past decades both in social life and in the field of technology have an inevitable effect on the form and course of Athonite life. Given that Mount Athos is a living timeless site where human beings act, and given the considerable number of visitors-pilgrims, there will be changes regarding the facilities, in an effort to improve living conditions. However, these changes are always carried out in a controlled manner and in such a way that they are not detrimental to the authenticity of the site or its surrounding environs.

N: Due to the particularity of the area, its conservation and sustainable management are being secured, whereas no major changes are

expected to an extent that would affect the authenticity and integrity of the area

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- **C:** Ministry of Culture decision /5980/16.10.1965. Government Gazette 714/29.10.1965
Presidential Decree 941/77 «On the Organization of the Ministry of Culture and Sciences » Government Gazette 320/A/17-10-1977. N. 2557/97 «Institution laws, measures and actions for cultural heritage», article 7 (on the special conservation status in Mount Athos), Government Gazette 271/A/24-12-1997. Presidential Decree 264/99 « Organization and execution of Conservation Work in Mount Athos» Government Gazette 215/A/19-10-1999. Law 3028/2002 «On the Protection of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage in general », Government Gazette 153/A/28-6-2002. Presidential Decree 191/2003 «Organization of the Ministry of Culture », Government Gazette 146/A/13-6-2003.
- For the natural criteria please refer to the section on buffer zones above
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

Actions taken:

- **N:** The preparation of the SES will result in the complete stock-taking of the items under protection status. It will provide information on their state as well as management proposals for the area, placing special emphasis on the natural environment

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction; religious use; property frequented by naturalists

Management /Administrative Body

- Steering group: **C** =No, **N** =The establishment of a management body for the area, as this is stipulated in the Laws 1650/1986 and 2742/1999, has not progressed with regard to the Peninsula of Mount Athos. In general, first an area is legislated as a protected area (article 21 of the Law 1650/86), and then a system for its management and operation on the local level is opted for. The organizational scheme is selected on the basis of objective criteria (importance, land surface, location, financial

viability, particular religious importance, etc) in order for the best management of the area, to the extent possible, and following consultations with the local community. In general, activities in the area have a limited effect on the environment, being small-scaled, and given the existing institutional framework, the expert opinion of the competent Ministry (YPEHODE) is not required. Issues regarding the natural environment are taken care of by the Ecclesiastical Authorities

- Site manager on full-time basis
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: by the State Party; under protective legislation; other effective management system: **C** Mount Athos has a peculiar/singular self-governing system under the Greek Constitutional Law; the sovereignty of the Greek state thereon remains intact (article 105, 1st paragraph of the Constitution), whereas the management is exercised by the representatives of the Holy Monasteries, who comprise the Holy Community (article 105, paragraph 2 of the Constitution). The Greek State has placed the responsibility for the protection and conservation of monuments, into public agencies, namely to the Ministry of Culture through its 10th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, the Ministry of Macedonia- Thrace, through the Centre for the Preservation of the Athonite Heritage, the Ministry for the Environment, Spatial Planning and Public Works, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Directorate for Churches– Mount Athos Administration). Restoration work, in particular works co-funded by the European Union, are performed by the Centre for the Preservation of the Athonite Heritage (in accordance with the Law 1198/81), which comes under the authority and control of the Ministry of Macedonia-Thrace. Within the framework of its competencies, the Ministry of Culture has proceeded with the enactment of a special regime for the execution of conservation work in Mount Athos, on the basis of the Law 2557/1997 “Institution laws, measures and actions for cultural development”, where it is stipulated that conservation work carried out in Mount Athos by the Ministry of Culture Services constitute models; also on the basis of the Presidential Decree 264/1999 “Organization and execution of Conservation Work in Mount Athos” (Government Gazette 215/A/ 19.10.1999) article 2, where it is stipulated that the “Competent Services for overseeing the Conservation work in Mount Athos, performed

by the Ministry of Culture, are the Directorate for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments, the Directorate for the Conservation of Antiquities and the 10th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities". There is an ongoing collaboration between the competent services of the Ministry of Culture and of other Ministries. However, it should be stressed that the scheduling and execution of the above mentioned work requires the consent of the individual Holy Monasteries, when it comes to works pertaining to them, and of the Holy Community in order for the execution of works within its competency. **N:** The Law 2742/99, article 15, sets the procedures for the enactment and selection, the organization and competencies of the management bodies for the protected areas. They may be legal entities operating under private law, or they may be services and bodies performing work that they have been assigned, having knowledge and experience in the management of the object under protection. So far, 27 management bodies have been established and operating under private law, whereas for the area of the Peninsula of Mount Athos no management body has been established, since this will follow the completion of the Special Environmental Study.

- The current management system is **C** highly **N** sufficiently effective

Actions are being taken: **N** The preparation of SES and the final enactment of the buffer zones for the area

5. Management Plan

- **C** The management and protection of monuments and Archaeological sites in Greece is not based on a concrete management plan. Greece has a system of protection, which is administered centrally by the Ministry of Culture through its regional services, i.e. the Ephorates of Prehistoric & Classical and Byzantine Antiquities. The Ministry of Culture is the competent Body supervising the sites and overseeing all works carried out. As far as the safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage is concerned, there are cases where other competent bodies besides the Ministry of Culture are involved.

The Ministry of Culture sets out the guidelines and the general policy for the management of the monuments and sites which is then implemented by the competent Ephorates. In the case of Mount Athos the 10th Ephorate

of Byzantine Antiquities is responsible for the management and protection of the monuments. In accordance with the Presidential Decree 941/77 "On the Organization of the Ministry of Culture and Sciences", Government Gazette 320/A/17-10-77, article 35, it is the "10th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, which includes the Prefecture of Halkidiki and Mount Athos".

The Presidential Decree 264/99 "Organization and execution of Conservation Work in Mount Athos" Government Gazette 215/A/19-10-1999, article 2, stipulates the following: "The competent Services for overseeing the Conservation work in Mount Athos, performed by the Ministry of Culture, are the Directorate for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments, the Directorate for the Conservation of Antiquities and the 10th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities".

The Presidential Decree 191/2003 "Organization of the Ministry of Culture", Government Gazette 146/A/13-06-2003, article 43 paragraph 4, mentions the "10th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, which is seated in Polygyros and whose competency is extended in the Prefecture of Halkidiki and Mount Athos", whereas paragraph 6 mentions "The 10th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, in particular with respect to the area of Mount Athos, is also competent for the antiquities of the pre-Christian times"

- **N** The management plan follows the special environmental study and the presidential decree on the protection and management of the natural environment in the area. At this stage, it is not possible to estimate the timeframe required for the completion of necessary procedures. The management body, established by force of a presidential decree, will be the competent body for the implementation of the management plan

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- State budget: 4 Ministries
- 2nd - 3rd Community Support Framework of EU
- Adequate funding

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 164

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

- Very good: conservation, management, promotion; interpretation, education, visitor management
- Access to adequate professional staff: experienced conservators of all specialities staff of the 10th Ephorate of Byzantine and Postbyzantine Antiquities: conservators of wall paintings, icons, marble floors, parchment and paper, wood, stone, metal etc. In this way, any conservation problems that may arise are dealt with immediately and at all times in collaboration with the Directorate for Conservation of the Ministry of Culture. However, when this may be required, the 10th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities collaborates both with scientific experts (archaeologists, historians, art historians etc) and with technical staff, such as conservators (of parchment, mosaics, wood carvings, embroidery etc), civil engineers, surveyors, etc. from Greece and abroad

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

- The staff of the Ephorate participates in congresses and educational programmes for their information on conservation matters. The conservators of works of art who are involved in the precious and unique works of art that are kept in the sacristies-museums of the monasteries of Mount Athos, are regularly brought up to date (by taking part in congresses and educational programmes) on the new methods of conservation for metal, parchment, wall paintings etc, but also on new materials used for a more effective and safer approach in conservation issues pertaining to reliquary treasures

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 72.850, 6/2004-5/2005 (Year of "Epistasis": 12-month period corresponding to the annual appointment of the four-member executive committee, the "Epistasis")
- Visitor facilities: in general, male visitors to Mount Athos can stay at any of the foundations (monastery "scete", cell), provided that such possibility exists. There is a guesthouse—"archontariki" in every monastery for receiving and offering hospitality to the visitors-pilgrims. Hospitality is more than a customary institution;

it transcends the offering of food and a place to sleep. Also, the monasteries offer guided tours in the buildings, the libraries and the halls where reliquary treasures are kept. Hospitality facilities are set up by the fraternity of each monastery

- The Holy Community and the twenty monasteries have set a limited number of visitors-pilgrims that can be received on a daily basis (circa 150), in order to carry out to the extent possible, an appropriate and systematic control, and also to offer visitors quality services
- The pathway starting at the tower of Prosporou (a monastery dependency), where reliquary and historical exhibits from the rich history of Mount Athos are on display, passes from selected archaeological and historical spots, and ends up in the Athonite monastery of Zyghos, at present outside the boundaries of Mount Athos; in this way, women too can visit an Athonite monastery

10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment; studies related to the value of the site; monitoring exercises; archaeological surveys
- Studies used for management of site: the data collection and scientific approach that are necessary for the elaboration of these studies resulted in new information regarding the preservation of the authenticity of all the monuments or works of art

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem used on some publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: local authorities
- Need for awareness raising: public awareness on the importance and significance of the monument/archaeological site can be increased with proper and systematic information through printed material that the 10th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities prepares. More specifically, this information material will highlight the unique character of the monument and put emphasis on the elements that make Mount Athos a World Cultural Heritage Site. The material will stress the uninterrupted presence, for 12 centuries, of an organized

monastic life in Mount Athos, a peculiar Peninsula, as regards both the natural environment and the residential complex therein. Special reference will be made to the building complexes of the twenty monasteries and the twelve “scetes” (dependencies), the settlements of Karyes and Daphni, and the approximately 1.700 cells. The material will stress that there are more than 100,000 square meters of wall painted surfaces, and circa 20,000 portable icons. It will also be mentioned that more than 14,500 manuscripts are kept in the libraries of Mount Athos, constituting the largest collection of Greek manuscripts in the world, and that there are collections of thousands of documents in parchment or in paper, constituting unique sources of information for studying and learning more about the social and economic stratification in the Byzantine state.

Finally, information material will underscore that it is the numerous quality monuments, both movable and immovable, that render Mount Athos a living vector of history and cultural heritage, whose spiritual essence is addressed to the whole world.

- Web site available

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- World Heritage Bureau sessions: 18th (1994)
- World Heritage Committee sessions: 16th (1992); 28th (2004); 29th (2005)

Conservation interventions

- Conservation and restoration works:
 - C:** Since 1988, large-scale interventions that were of particular importance to the site have been performed. Follows an indicative list of interventions:
 - Monastery of the Great Lavra: conservation of wall paintings in the catholicon and the refectory, conservation of portable icons and of miniature art relics, conservation of manuscript codices, conservation of mosaics, excavation surveys at the Tower of Tsimiskis and at Docheio
 - Monastery of Vatopedi: conservation of wall paintings in the “Kyriakon” (the main church of a scete) of the Scete of St. Demetrius, in the cell of St. Prokopius, in the chapel of St. Nicholas, conservation of manuscript codices, conservation of portable icons and mosaics,

conservation of wood sculpture relics, excavation survey at Docheio

- Monastery of Iviron: conservation of wall paintings in the catholicon, conservation of the “iconostasis” (templon) in the chapel of Panaghia Portaitissa, excavation surveys at the tower, the old “arsanas” (a landing place) and in the chapel of St. John the Baptist, conservation of portable icons, of embroideries and of miniature art relics
- Monastery of Dionysou: conservation of parchment codes, conservation of portable icons, of embroideries and of miniature art relics.
- Monastery of Pantokrator: cleaning work of the wall paintings in the catholicon, conservation of portable icons and of embroideries
- Monastery of Xenophontos: conservation of wall paintings in the esonarthex of the old catholicon, conservation of portable icons, of embroideries and of miniature art relics, excavation surveys outside the old catholicon
- Monastery of Simonopetra: conservation of wall paintings on the domes of the “prothesis” (a small chapel or apse) and of the “diaconicon” (a sacristy) in the catholicon
- Monastery of St. Paul: conservation of marble architectural members, conservation of portable icons, of embroideries and of miniature art relics
- Monastery of Philotheou: conservation of wall paintings of the catholicon.
- Monastery of Karakalou: conservation of manuscript codices.
- Monastery of Zographou: cleaning work of the wall paintings in the chapel of the Assumption of the Theotokos
- Monastery of Docheiareion: conservation of wall paintings of the catholicon, conservation of portable icons and of embroideries
- Monastery of Koutloumousiou: conservation of manuscript codices
- Monastery of Chelandari: conservation of wall paintings and of portable icons
- Monastery of St. Panteleimon: conservation of marble architectural members and of sculptures.
- Monastery of Xeropotamou: conservation of wall paintings of the chapel of the Forty Martyrs, conservation of a manuscript code.
- Monastery of Gregoriou: conservation of manuscript codices, of miniature art relics, conservation of wall paintings of the “antiprosopeion” of the monastery in Karyes (cell of St. Tryphona)
- Karyes: conservation of the iconostasis (icon screen) of the cemetery church of St. Nicholas,

conservation of the icon screen of the cell of St. George, the so-called “of the Skourtaion”

- Holy Church of Protato: inventory of damages and conservation of wall paintings.

With respect to interventions regarding the rehabilitation and sustainable use of historical buildings, the competent body is the Centre for the Preservation of the Athonite Heritage

- Present state of conservation: very good

Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressure; natural disaster(s) visitor/tourism pressure
- **N:** To this day, the natural environment in the area is well preserved
- Specific issues:
 - C:** Radical changes in the past decades both in social life and in the field of technology have had an inevitable impact on the form and course of Athonite life. Given that Mount Athos is a living timeless site where human beings act, there will be changes in an effort to improve living conditions; however, these changes are always carried out in a controlled manner and in such a way that they are not detrimental to the authenticity of the site and to its surrounding environs. This problem, in combination with a large number of visitors-pilgrims practically throughout the year, influences, to some extent, the form and course of life in Mount Athos, and creates further requirements (construction of big buildings, improvement of living conditions in the facilities etc.). Fires and thefts also constitute a major threat
- Emergency measures taken:
 - C:** competent agencies (the fire brigade and the police) are strengthening fire protection and security measures

13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme: permanent staff of the 10th Ephorate of Byzantine and Post Byzantine Antiquities stays in Mount Athos, and monitors the monuments closely, round the clock, 365 days a year. Autopsies are performed on the monuments and their state is checked at regular intervals through photographic documentation. More specifically, humidity of wall paintings is monitored in monuments that are faced with humidity problems; controls are carried out in the halls where the reliquary treasures are kept and displayed; air-conditioning is installed in libraries and inventory rooms to ensure stable

temperature and humidity conditions in the areas where books and documents are kept

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation
- Strengths/Weaknesses of management:
 - C:** Need for a more systematic promotion-presence of the site on the Internet
 - N:** The Special Environmental Study has to be completed; as a result, a management Body has yet to be convened

Future actions:

- **C:** The elaboration and implementation by the 10th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities of a comprehensive plan for the promotion of the site through the internet, is under way
- **N:** Speed up procedures for the enactment of the protection status in the area on the basis of the institutional framework in force; initiatives will be taken in order to ensure the necessary national and community resources for the management and the protection of the natural environment