

GEORGIA:

- City - Museum Reserve of Mtskheta (No 708)
- Bepshi Cathedral and Jishi Monastery (No 710)
- Upper Svaneti (No 709)

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WORLD HERITAGE

REPORT ON THE ICOMOS MISSION
TO THE REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA

May to June 1994

Undertaken by Prof. Nevzat Ilhan and John Warren

EVALUATION MISSION TO GEORGIA ON BEHALF OF ICOMOS.

May - June 1994

1. Outline of the Brief and Circumstances of the Mission.

Following previous missions by Dr. Ernst Badstübner and Mr. Said Zulficar, three sites among those on the State Party's tentative list were established as being the prime candidates for inclusion in the World Heritage List. These sites were:

- i. Mtskheta City Museum Reserve
- ii. Grouped sites at Kutaisi
- iii. Grouped sites at Upper Svenati.

The evaluation and precise definition of these sites were the objective of this visit.

The mission was carried out by Dr. Nevzat Ilhan and Mr. John Warren.

The mission was hosted by Mr. Petre Metreveli of the Commission of the Georgian Republic for UNESCO. It was assisted by other officers and received by the Mayor of Kutaisi, the Foreign Secretary of the Georgian Republic and the President of the Republic, Mr. Shevardnadze.

The mission was not able to visit, and, therefore, not able to report upon the grouped sites at Svenati due to lack of security in the northern part of the country. Other sites were visited as part of general investigation into the tentative list. The following report is, therefore, confined to the sites at Mtskheta and Kutaisi.

2. Summary.

The evaluation consisted of several visits to the sites, and to the relevant offices; examination of documents; verbal examination of procedures and processes supported by written evidence of legislation; evaluation of authenticity; assessment of management proposals and discussions on appropriate site boundaries and buffer zones. Conservation and management proposals were assessed and the agreement of the State Authorities was obtained to boundary definitions and management criteria.

The assessment and recommendation of the mission is that the two sites at Mtskheta and Kutaisi should be recommended for inclusion in the World Heritage List.

3. Significance.

The State of Georgia is a distinct ethnic grouping, having had its own language and its own church from the 3rd century AD. Its culture is, therefore, specific and identifiable, although in some aspects are closely related to parallel cultures in the region. It has been a disturbed territory throughout the centuries and consequently much destruction has taken place. Substantial parts of the land once occupied by Georgian people and, therefore containing their monuments, do not lie within the present Republic. These outlying monuments, however, are unlikely to figure in World Heritage evaluations by reasons of comparative importance in countries such as Turkey, where they may lie. Those which stand within the present Republic, therefore, represent the prime reservoir of historic monuments relating to this particular ethnic and cultural group. On the basis of the documented and visited evidence before it this present mission accepted that the sites selected by the State Party and the previous mission represented those most appropriate to immediate inclusion in the World Heritage List, although one site, Svenati, cannot at this stage be included

as it has not been visited by either mission. This particular site represents a tradition of fortified dwellings continuous from medieval times and, therefore, containing a proportion of buildings of relatively recent construction. It is an entirely separate aspect of Georgian history compared with the ecclesiastical traditions which reached a peak of achievement in 10th and 11th centuries. The Georgian and Armenian traditions in architecture in the first millenium run parallel courses and there was an important cross relationship with the Byzantine and Orthodox churches by which Caucasian influences were carried into the West. Scholars such as Stryzowski have identified here important precedents in the evolution of western medieval building. While this report is not the place to argue the merits of these assertions in the Caucasus the very high calibre of ecclesiastical architecture by the end of the first millenium may be profoundly important in scholarly terms as well as being visually stimulating and of the greatest significance to the Georgian nation.

The sites at Mtskheta and Kutaisi evaluated by this mission represent the heights of achievement of their genre and stand comparison with Romanesque architecture in any part of Europe. These sites include five major churches with a number of smaller ecclesiastical buildings and secondary structures.

At its floruit the standard form of the Georgian Church was triple apsed with the entire east end being set behind an iconostasis. A high central drum dominated the interior carrying a steepled dome externally. The transepts were generally short and the nave with lateral aisles would normally be no greater in length than the combined width of the transepts and crossing. Thus although the plan of the church approached the cross-in-square pattern the accessible interior would be an approximate square formed by the nave aisles and transepts. In effect this is a combination of Eastern (or Syrian) Orthodox and Greek Orthodox practice.

By the end of the first millenium the height given to the principal structure and extended upwards into the cupola offered proportions equivalent to the later Gothic cathedrals with similar but earlier effect. These prototypes have provided the standard form for subsequent Georgian design which has remained essentially bound to the Romanesque.

The major churches of the two sites nominated represent the greatest achievements of this period of development. In juxtaposition each also contains one or more significant early small churches clearly illustrating the architectural evolution.

Against this background the churches at Mtskheta and Kutaisi are outstanding examples of the pinnacle of achievement in Romanesque architecture in the East, in terms both of isolated rural establishment and urban cathedrals. They illustrate a significant phase in history. They would, therefore, qualify under Article 24A(iv) of the Operational Guidelines.

4. Authenticity.

Subject to the detailed evaluations below it may be said that the monuments defined in the sites at Mtskheta and Kutaisi have suffered little alteration or damage in their history with the single exception of the cathedral at Kutaisi, known as the Bagarat from the name of the monarch who built it. This was seriously and deliberately damaged in the 17th century and stands as a ruin, carefully conserved by recent repair and consolidation work.

An important feature of these churches was their internal decoration. This survives in varying condition in the churches and has generally been carefully stabilised and conserved. Some of the better mosaics and cycles of painting are among the most important of their kind.

We are, therefore, satisfied that the buildings are authentic in design, material, workmanship and in setting and that no significant or adverse reconstruction has been undertaken. Therefore these buildings meet the Operational Guideline criteria set out in Clause 24B(i).

5. Protection

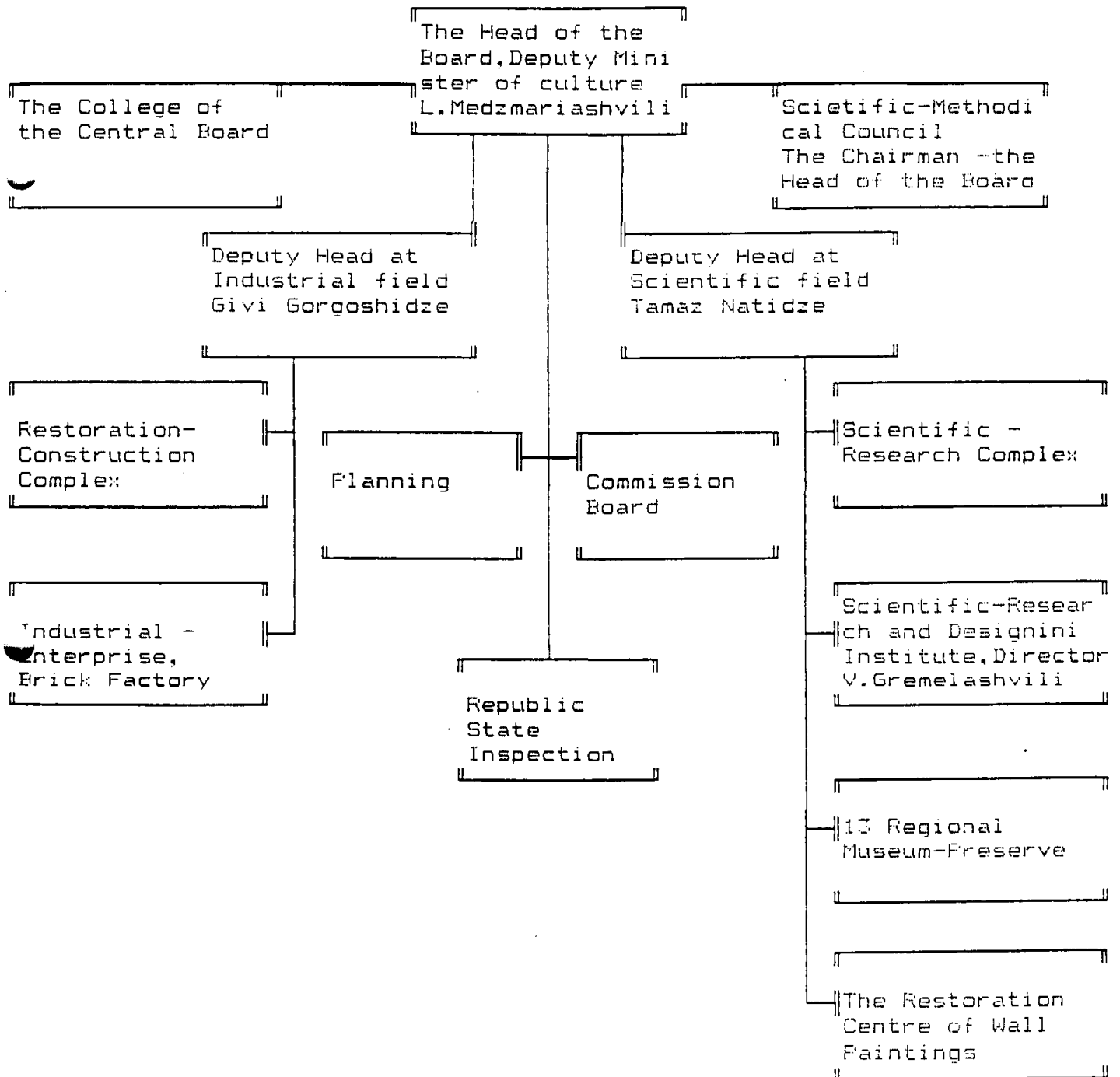
These two sites, Mtskheta and Kutaisi lie within separate Mayoralties. Nevertheless they are both protected by the same national legislation and criteria which devolves from the legal structure of the Soviet Union. This legislation is currently being reviewed with the object of making it more specific to the circumstances of the Republic. Generally, however, the broad principles behind the conservation legislation are to stand. This mission was involved in creative discussion over modifications to the legislation and is satisfied that the intentions and broad criteria of the Operational Guidelines will be respected in the modified laws.

Two specific references are identified below:

The first expresses the structure of the conservation beaurocracy and the second identifies the statutes which have protected, and will continue to be used to protect the monuments identified.

First reference

The Central Board for Protection and Utilization of
Historic and Cultural Monuments of Georgia
Organizing Structure



Republic Committee of ICOMOS -
The Chairmen, professor Irakli Tsitsishvili

Georgian National Commission of UNESCO,
The President Alexandre Chikvaizde

General Secretary Peter Metreveli

Second reference:

საქართველოს სსრ მინისტრთა საბჭოს დადგენილება № 564
1968 წ. 6 ნოემბერი - " ქალაქ- მცხეთის მუზეუმ- ნაკრძალად
გამოცხადების შესახებ: .

საქართველოს სსრ მინისტრთა საბჭოს დადგენილება № 653
1977 წ. 14 სექტემბერი - " ქალაქ მცხეთის ისტორიულ- არქიტექტ-
ურულ რეზერვუარ- ნაკრძალის შექმნის შესახებ" .

საქართველოს კონსტიტუციის ცვ-ს და საქართველოს მინისტრთა საბჭოს
დადგენილება № 319 , 1981 წ. 21 აპრილი -" ქუთაის- გელათის მუზე-
უმ- ნაკრძალის შექმნის შესახებ" .

This reference on the Statute Book translates as follows:

'The enactment number 534 of the Ministerial Council of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic on November 6th 1968 concerns the zone of the Mtskheta as a Museum preserve.

Enactment number 653 of the Ministerial Council of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic of September 14th 1977 concerns the establishment of the historical conservation area of Mtskheta.'

Enactment number 369 of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Georgian Ministry Council of April 21st 1981 concerns the establishment of the Kutaisi Gelati Museum preserve.'

The mission did not examine these enactments but noted that the boundaries shown on the submitted plans were those attaching to the legislation.

The mission takes the view that the boundaries shown in the national legislation exceed those required for World Heritage Site purposes and by site examination and discussion with the Georgian authorities have now identified the boundaries mutually agreed as appropriate to the World Heritage Site and buffer zones. These are attached. It is to be noted, however, that the national legislation gives even wider protection. This will not be diminished by the grant of World Heritage Status.

Having investigated the structure responsible for administering the legislation and for detailed management of the sites the mission is satisfied that these conform to the standards required.

6. Conservation.

The churches, including to some extent the ruined Bagarat cathedral, are all in active use as centres of worship. Effectively the church is the tenant of the buildings but the responsibility for the maintenance and repair rests with the State as building owner. The State is, however, sensitive to the needs and wishes of the user while upholding its duty to keep the buildings in a satisfactory condition. It is also apparent that the Mayor and local civic authority at large have considerable influence on the administration and hence on the condition of the Monuments. However, it is also clear that the overriding authority is the State advised by the Commission for UNESCO, set up by the Republic and operated through its Foreign Office. The links between this organisation and the national committee of ICOMOS are close.

The mission was assured, and can be reasonably satisfied by results, that this structure is an effective working mechanism which leaves the duty of Conservation and the ultimate in control in the hands of a benevolent state authority advised by the full weight of available expertise in the country. The structural relationship between state parties is illustrated on the diagram provided. (see 5.1 above).

The Foreign Minister and the President, as Head of State, separately gave the mission very clear and firm assurances that it was the Republic's intention that the historic buildings and particularly World Heritage Monuments would be firmly safeguarded and properly maintained and the current intention to update the conservation legislation of the Republic is evidence of that intention.

It was the mission's conclusion, therefore, that these monuments have adequate legal protection and management mechanisms to ensure their conservation and the mission, therefore, believes that the proposal conforms to Section 24B(ii) of the Operational Guidelines.

7. Economic Circumstances.

These applications are made at a time when the Republic has entered into an existence independent of the previous Soviet Union and has suffered the effects of a serious civil war. The resultant economic circumstances are grave. The effective cessation of conservation and restoration work is, however, unlikely to be significantly detrimental to the monuments proposed for inclusion on the World Heritage list, their current state of repair being good, and their continuing use for religious purposes being assured.

The mission was encouraged also by discussions with the Head of State on the basis that monument conservation provides local employment, does not require expenditure of hard currency for imported materials and can be conducted with local skills and supervision. Subject, therefore, to political stability in the Republic the mission does not see these sites as being potentially included in the World Heritage List of sites in danger. ICCROM technical aid and cooperation could be provided for the restoration of mosaics and frescoes.

8. Failure to complete mission.

The impossibility of visiting the group of sites at Svaneti due to danger postponed one important component of the work of the mission. However, this component is not essential to the inclusion of the other sites in the World Heritage List. It is of a different architectural and cultural type and of a different period.

9. Relationship between the two sites: - Mtskheta and Kutaisi.

A watershed divides the state into distinct zones; east and west, one site attaching to the capital city of each half.

Both nominations concern groups of buildings which are principally ecclesiastical. At Mtskheta one church stands outside the urban precinct prominent on a hill top and two others stand within the historic city.

At Kutaisi one church group is extramuros and so far removed, at Gelati, that it is not within sight of the city although it is part of a scattered grouping of churches which effectively form a cultural landscape. The church within the city of Kutaisi stands within the precinct of the citadel, which has been partially excavated archaeologically but is not of sufficient importance alone for inclusion in the World Heritage List.

However, in the view of the mission, the relationship between these churches and the presence of the cathedral within the citadel raise the importance of the site at Kutaisi to a World Heritage Status.

In both instances landscape quality is important. All the sites are situated in dramatic landscapes with extensive views and the impact of the buildings depends considerably on the shapes, usage and quality of the land. In consequence substantial or inappropriate intrusion into these landscapes over quite wide areas could have a disadvantageous effect and the wide drafting of the protective zone under state legislation is, therefore, an important advantage. While the mission's identification of the specific sites and buffer zones is conventional and adequate under present circumstances, future consideration may be given to extending these to incorporate other areas protected under present state legislation.

10. Mtskheta

(Note: this section of the report deals only with aspects specific to the site at Mtskheta.)

10.1 Brief Description.

At Mtskheta, one church (Mtskhetis Jvari) - Church of the Holy Cross - stands outside the urban precinct high on a hill top, while two great churches, Santavro and Sveti Tskhoveli cathedral stand within the historic city.

The medieval capital of Georgia at Mtskheta lies in a sharp valley at the confluence of two rivers. On its eastern and southern sides the town is afforded natural protection by the river banks and elsewhere by a background of low ridges, one of which is fortified as a citadel. Within the town itself stands the 11th century cathedral, the Sveti Tskhoveli. This is the

archetypal great Georgian church of 11th century, unaltered, containing frescoed walls and standing within a fortified precinct from which the contemporary Bishop's Palace has disappeared. Skilful conservation has retained the evidence of the earlier smaller church encapsulated in the present building. Nearby stands the Santavro Monastic complex, with a small convent. A restored 4th century church stands in the shadow of a church of standard plan dating from 11th century.

Four other early Christian or medieval churches are to be found in the town together with other medieval fragments and substantial evidence of prehistoric habitation. The town itself is of modest scale and no pretention providing a simple backdrop to the major monuments.

A high fortified ridge beyond the southern arm of the river is complemented on the east by the stark hill on which, in a fortified enclosure, sits the domed church of Mtskhetis Jvari. A 6th century church attaches to the principal church of the 11th century. As the burial place of St. Nino, the evangelist of Georgia, this church has a certain pilgrimage value. It does not serve for regular congregational purposes although the Georgian church maintains a continuous presence.

The mission considers the three principal sites, comprising five churches, to be authentic.

- 10.2 The churches in the town, together with their lesser confreres, are a natural group but their visual cohesion is insufficient to justify the designation of a single site and the two principal churches are, therefore, recommended for separate individual designation: likewise the extramuros church of the Jvari (Holy Rood).

- 10.3 A buffer zone is proposed embracing the churches in the town and the Jvari Church sufficient to protect their environs and principal views. The buffer zone is less extensive than the zone of protection afforded by the state.
- 10.4 The conservation of the structure and the paintwork of the churches was considered by the mission to be well up to the standards expected of a World Heritage Site. Although the work is incomplete and to a small extent temporary this condition must be seen as part of the normal process of conservation.
- 10.5 Management proposals:
The State is in the process of removing old military installations and industrial plant from the valley floor particularly in the area beneath the Jvari Church. It also proposes the abolition of a guard hut near the church and in substitution the creation of a suitably sited and screened vehicle parking area some distance from the church. Near the Sveti Tskhoveli complex it proposes an increase in the pedestrian area outside the fortified enclosure and the expropriation of some unsuitable private housing close to the Santavro church and within the buffer zone. These proposals seem desirable to the mission, which has suggested also that there should be a more extensive programme of public interpretation and service facilities.
- 10.6 The mission recommends the inclusion of the sites at Mtskheta with buffer zones as defined on the accompanying plans. It recommends that the proposals of the Authority for the Mtskheta Museum Reserve stationed in the town should be carried forward and augmented with interpretation facilities.

11. Kutaisi.

- 11.1 The Bagarat Cathedral stood in ruin from the seventeenth century until conservation work was carried out in recent decades. The authenticity of the monument is beyond doubt and recent conservation work has not obscured the fundamental surviving elements of the structure. The precinct of the cathedral is the ancient citadel of Kutaisi which stands on a high bluff above the river. While some parts of this fortification are solid and substantial a considerable part lies within gardens and roadways of a thinly populated hilltop. A programme of archaeological research has been carried out across the citadel generally revealing elements of habitation and elucidating the plan of a small early church originally aisled and barrel vaulted. In some areas these archaeological remains will need attentive conservation. Only in the vicinity of the cathedral itself are they of visual significance or substantial importance.
- 11.2 The monuments should be quite precisely defined, encompassing the fortified hilltop and the slopes down which the fortifications descend to the river bank. The slopes of the hill itself, and the river valley in which the old town lies, are an essential buffer zone.
- 11.3 The quality of conservation in the cathedral itself is high. Part of the work on the principal fortifications is of similar calibre but elsewhere the less significant archaeological remains have not been protected.
- 11.4 The mission believes that the future management of the site should provide for consolidation and retention of the whole archaeological area, the removal of 'non-significant' houses from the north buffer zone area (approximately 32 in number), and the improvement of access to all parts of the archaeological site with public safety, amenity and structural conservation in mind. Bituminous road coverings should be avoided in this area.

11.5 Public interpretation and display facilities should be provided in due course and carefully considered proposals for car and coach parking will be essential.

11.6 The proposal, powerfully supported by the Metropolitan bishop is that the building should be repaired structurally and restored to use as a church. Such a policy could be justified only if the buildings were to be seriously used as a congregational church and it would then be necessary to show that there is no hypothetical element in the restoration. It is difficult to see how this could be achieved since the destruction preceded the age of photography and there will, therefore, be no evidence as to the exact proportions of the drum and steeped cupola. The use of appropriate but identifiably modern construction might offer a solution to this problem.

11.7 The building is profoundly significant in Georgian art and the mission believes that it should be included in the World Heritage List, subject only to appropriate recommendations as to management.

12. Kutaisi (Gelati)

12.1 The Gelati complex is a monastic grouping principally of the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries containing three churches other than the monastic buildings and the academy, which later acted as a refectory. Having been in continuous use there is a continuous occupational pattern in the complex. It stands in an unspoiled situation on a hillside with extensive views and the whole quality of the environment is one with the buildings. On the steep hillside below the monastery stand the once-cultivated terraces. The group is totally authentic. An important feature is the range of paintings carried on the walls of the several buildings and the very important Virgin and Child mosaic of the 12th century in the conch of the apse.

- 12.2 The entire monument can be embraced within one single site. An extensive buffer zone is needed to protect the inward views. The State protection zone covers the entire area.
- 12.3 The site is quite distinct from others in the region of which several are included in the State conservation zone.
- 12.4 Although the church is the effective administrator of the property as its user, the State as owner and the museums organisation have the responsibility for major conservation works. These have reached the stage at which there is no need for further immediate attention although some works, such as the overlying roof structures are to be considered temporary. There is sufficient evidence for the form of the original roof to allow its restoration in due course. The quality of the conservation work is high.
- 12.5 Further proposals for this site include the extension and relocation in a suitably screened area of the car park and more controversially the reroofing of the academy building. While this can undoubtedly be done satisfactorily and without impact upon the remainder of the complex it will involve careful and probably acceptable conjecture as to the exact form of the timber structure to be adopted.
- 12.6 The mission was satisfied that the site meets the criteria for inclusion in the World Heritage List and recommends accordingly. After inclusion management policies as presently outlined should be pursued with discretion and with appropriate emphasis on public interpretation facilities.

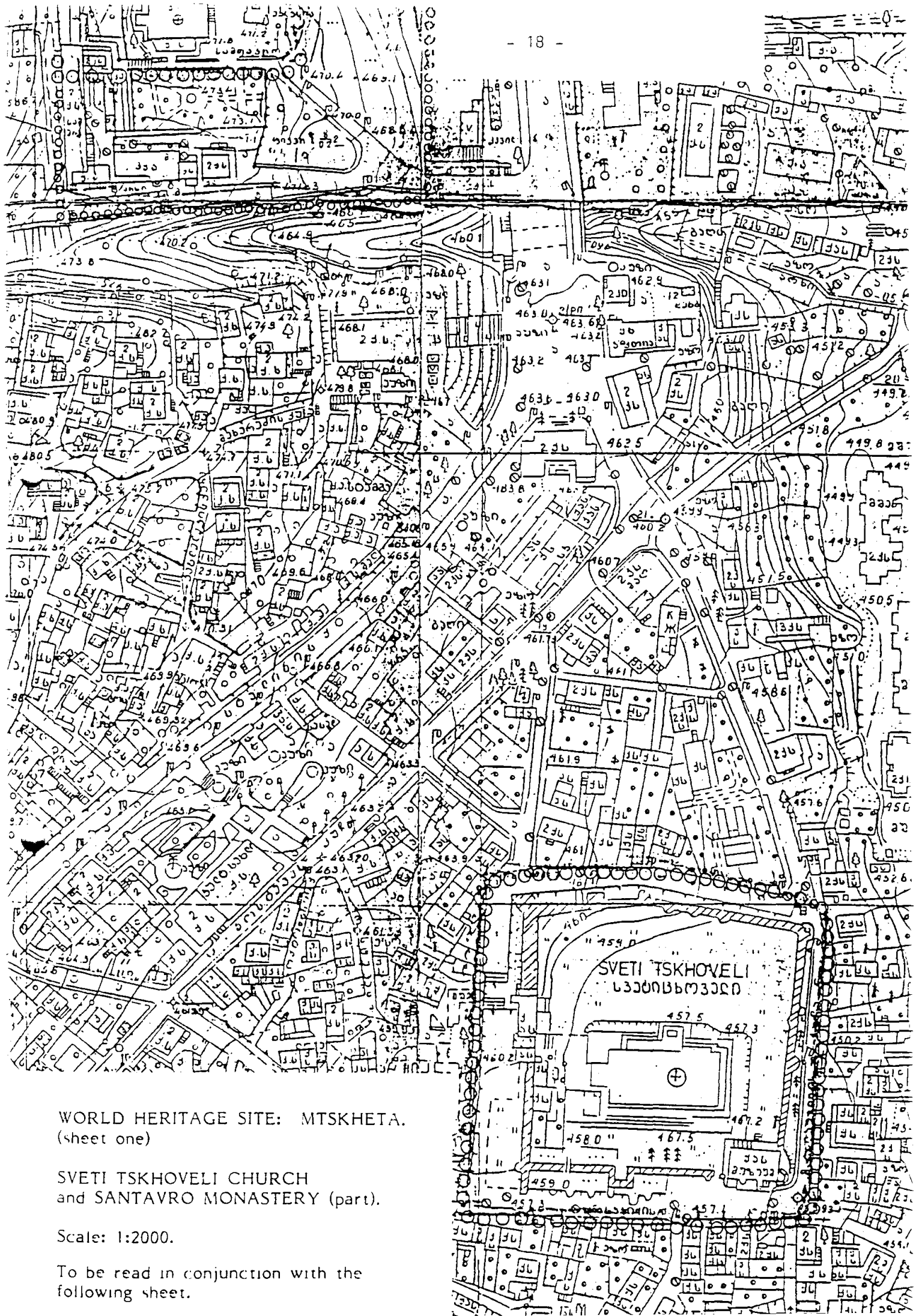
REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA

WORLD HERITAGE SITE :
"CITY-MUSEUM RESERVE MTSKHETA"

OOOOOOOO — SVETI TSKHOVELI Cathedral_ensemble
World Heritage Site boundaries

OOOOOOOO — SAMTAVRO CHURCH
World Heritage Site boundaries

oooooooo — SAMTAVRO CHURCH WHS buffer zone
(archaeological park area)

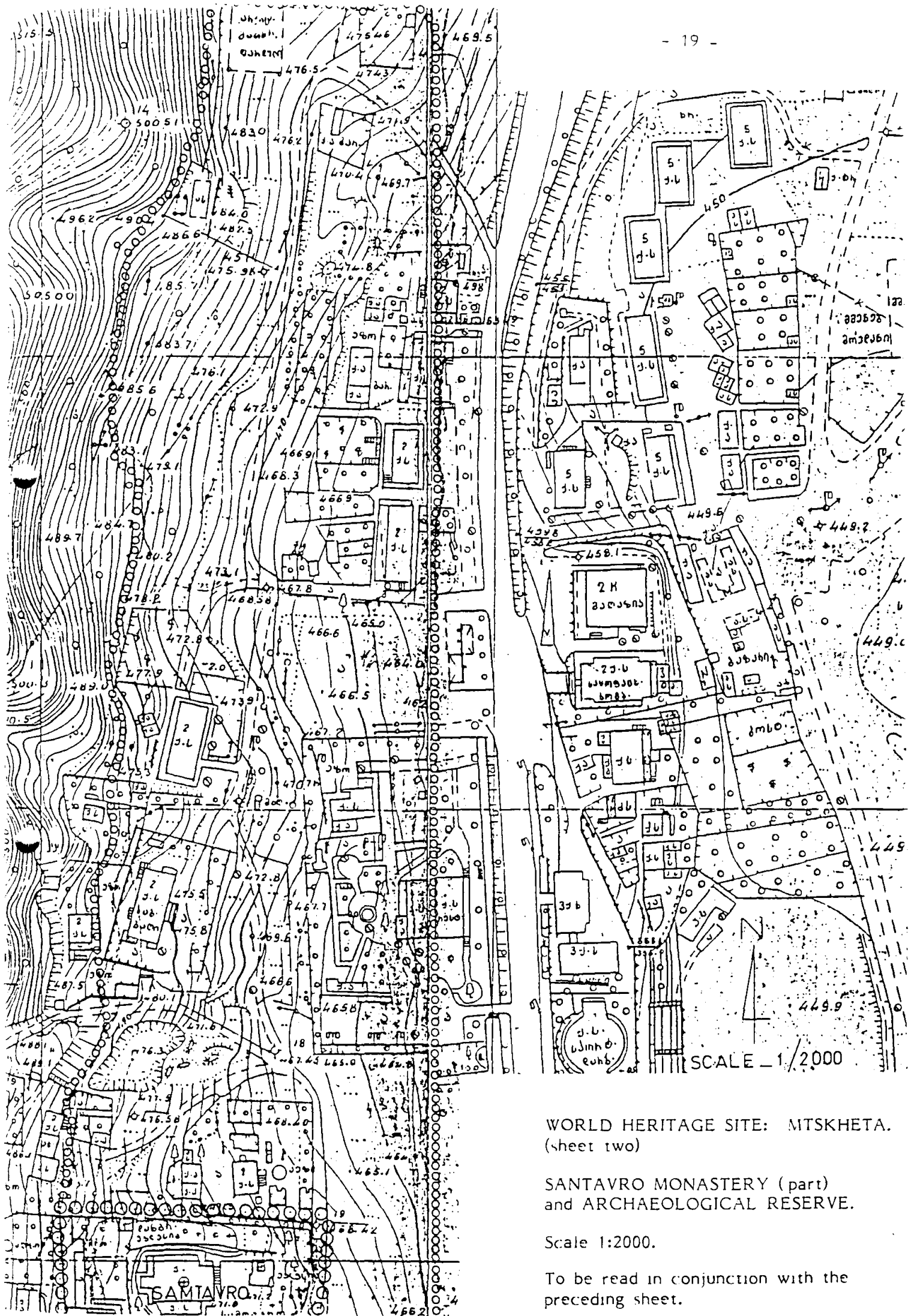


WORLD HERITAGE SITE: MTSKHETA.
(sheet one)

SVETI TSKHOVELI CHURCH
and SANTAVRO MONASTERY (part).

Scale: 1:2000.

To be read in conjunction with the
following sheet.



SCALE - 1/2000

WORLD HERITAGE SITE: MTSKHETA.
(sheet two)

SANTAVRO MONASTERY (part)
and ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESERVE.

Scale 1:2000.

To be read in conjunction with the
preceding sheet.

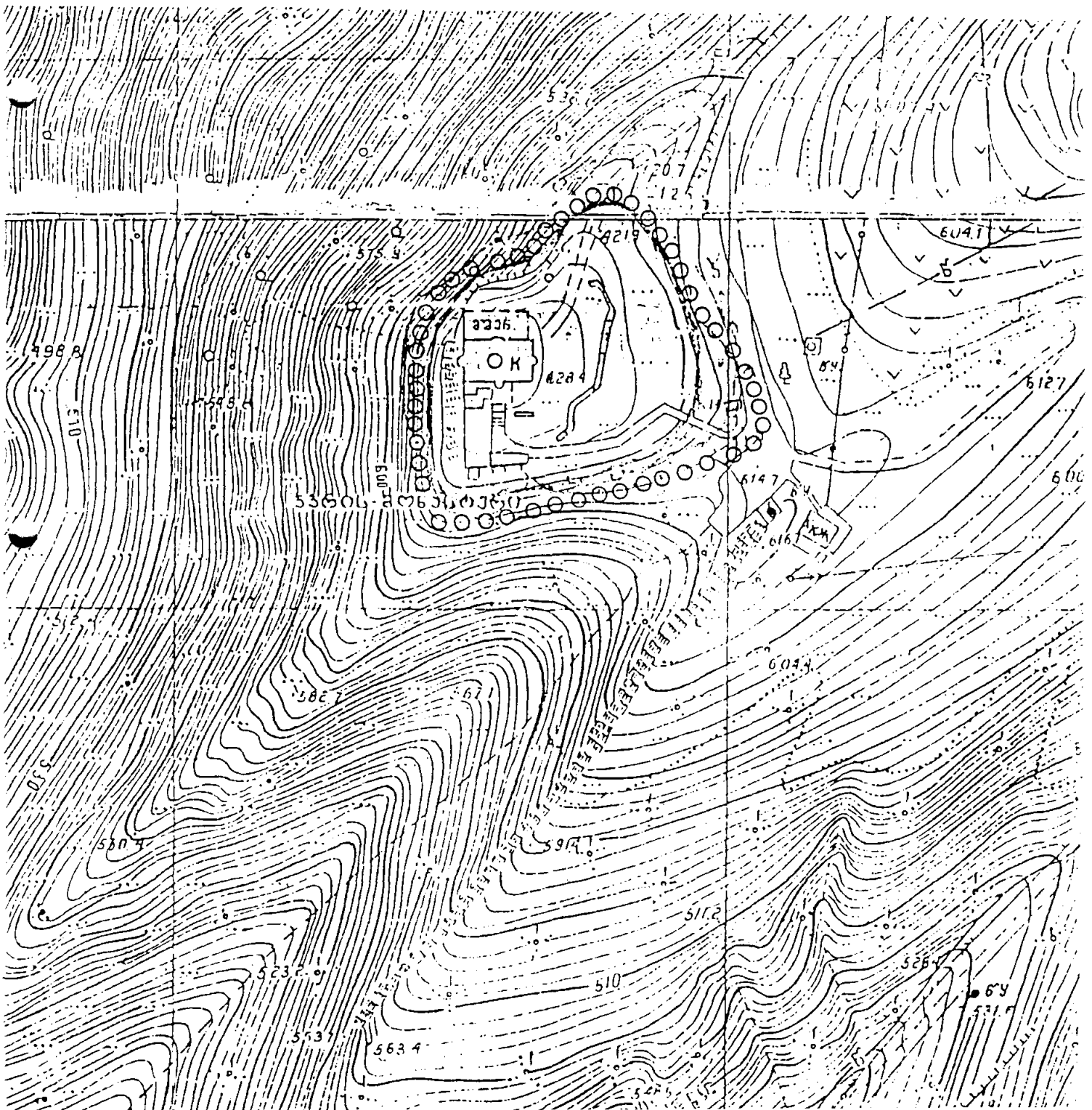
REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA

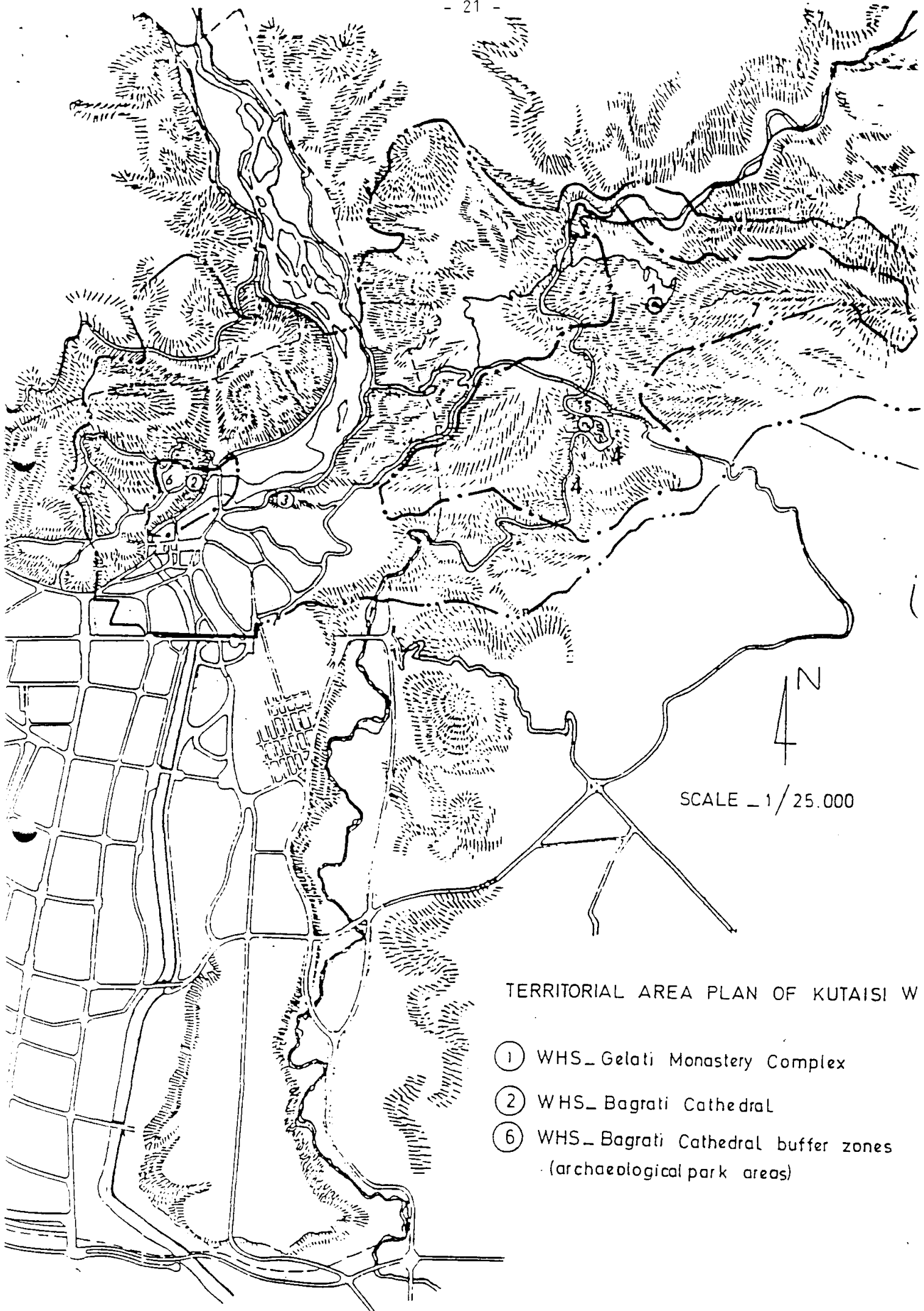
WORLD HERITAGE SITE :
"CITY_MUSEUM RESERVE MTSKHETA"

OOOOOOO — MTSKHETIS JVARI (The Church of the Holy Cross _Mtskheta)
World Heritage Site boundaries.



scale — 1/2000





TERRITORIAL AREA PLAN OF KUTAISI W

- ① WHS_ Gelati Monastery Complex
- ② WHS_ Bagrati Cathedral
- ⑥ WHS_ Bagrati Cathedral buffer zones
(archaeological park areas)

ქუთაისის ბაგრატის ტაძრის ძეგლის დაცვაში სტრატეგია
ATC Strict Protective Zone of Bagrati Cathedral in
Kutaisi.....



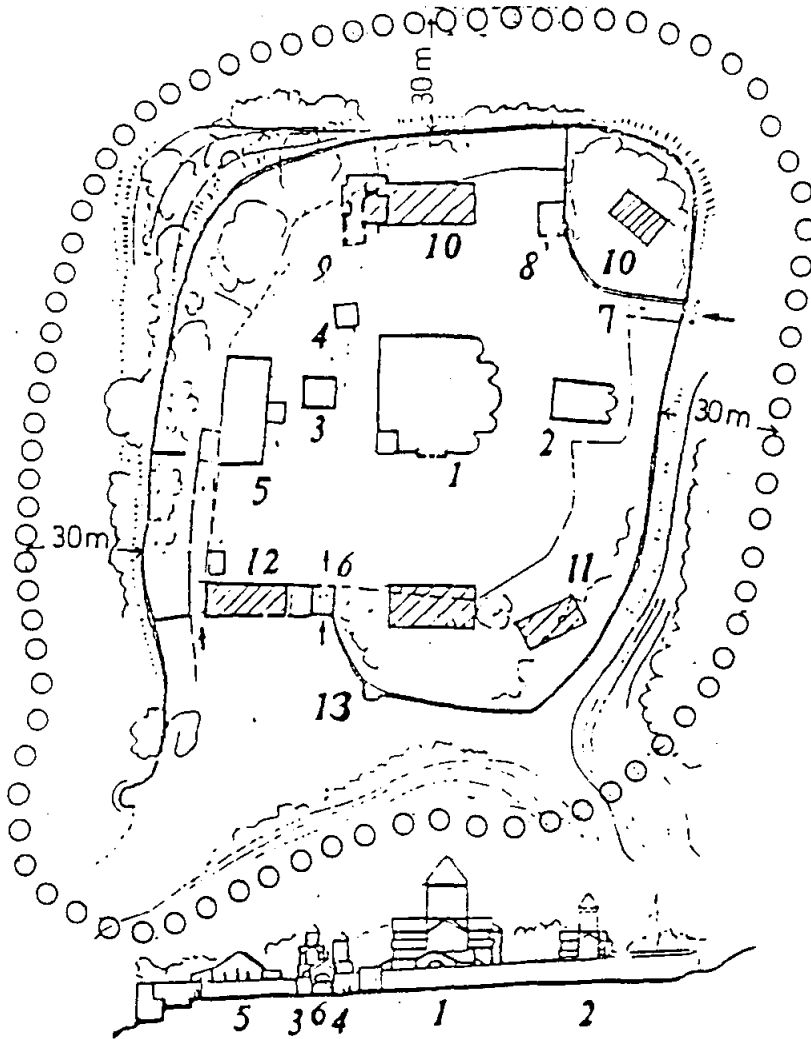
ა. 1:5000. მ. 1/5000



WORLD HERITAGE SITE - KUTAISI

○○○○○○○○ — BAGRATI CATHEDRAL World Heritage Site boundaries

○○○○○○○○ — BAGRATI CATHEDRAL WHS buffer zones north and south
(archaeological park areas)



გელათის საშინაო კომპლექსი

- 1. მთავარი ტაძარი, გელათის ღვთისმშობლის სახელობის ეკლესია
- 2. „წმინდა გიორგის სახელობის ეკლესია“
- 3. „წმინდა ნიკოლოზის სახელობის ეკლესია“
- 4. საშრეკლო
- 5. აკადემიის შენობა
- 6. თაქლიპირველი კარიბჭე
- 7. აღმოსაღმოს კარიბჭე
- 8-9. ძველი ნაგებობის ნაშთები
- 10. საცხოვრებელი სახლი
- 11. ხის სახლი
- 12. სახალხო აკადემიის შენობა
- 13. ძველი გალავანი

KUTAISI WHS:

Gelati Monastery Complex :

- 1. The Main Cathedral, St. Mary Cathedral of Gelati;
- 2. St. George Church;
- 3. St. Nicolas Church;
- 4. The Bell-tower;
- 5. The building of Academy;
- 6. The Original Entrance;
- 7. The East Entrance;
- 8.-9. The remains of old buildings;
- 10. The Dwelling house;
- 11. The wooden house;
- 12. The building of Public Academy;
- 13. The Old Enclosure;

OOOOO _WORLD HERITAGE SITE BOUNDARIES

The mission was in the Republic of Georgia from May 26th 1994 until June 1st 1994. In addition to the proposed World Heritage Sites it visited sites in and around the capital city Tbilisi and in eastern Georgia. The mission was most hospitably received and wishes to express its gratitude to the President of the Republic, Mr. Shevardnadze, his Foreign Minister, Dr. Chikvaдзе and to the following:-

Malkhaz D. Kakabadze, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.
Dr.P. Metreveli, National Commission for UNESCO.
Anna Lomeiko, National Commission for UNESCO.
Dimitri R. Gvindadze, National Commission for UNESCO.
Prof. Irakli Tsitsihvili. President, ICOMOS National Committee.
Prof. Gia Shaishmelashvili, Revival and Development Fund
Mtskheta.
Ivane Gremelashvili, Director, 'Georgia Restoration' Institute.
Konstantin Slovinsky, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
Prof. Levan Svanadze, Kutaisi.
Teimuraz Iosebashvili, Advisor, Kutaisi Town Council.
Teimuraz C. Shashiashvili, The Mayor of Kutaisi.
Leri Medzmariashvili, Deputy Minister of Culture.

Signed.

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John Warren.

Signed.

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Nevzat Ilhan.