

# ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES  
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES  
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS  
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

WORLD HERITAGE LIST

N° 527

## A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Cathedral of St. Sophia of Kiev

Location : Kiev

State Party : Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic

Date : 30 May, 1989

## B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That this cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria I, II, III, IV and VI.

## C) JUSTIFICATION

The Committee can only welcome the proposal submitted by the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic for the inclusion of St. Sophia of Kiev on the World Heritage List. Indeed, it has often deplored the loss of credibility resulting from the temporary absence from the List of this exceptionally valuable cultural property.

The construction of St. Sophia began in the first half of the 11th century, probably in 1037 as related in the Tales of Bygone Years (and not 1017 as given in the Novgorod Chronicles and defended only by G.N. Logvin in an article in 1977). It was meant to replace Kiev's very first church, the Dessiattinnaya (Our Lady of the Tithes), whose vestiges may be seen in the Museum of History's enclosure on Volodimirska Boulevard. The project was the initiative of Yaroslav the Wise, the son of Vladimir, whose baptism in 988 and alliance with Basil II (by marrying Basil's sister, Vladimir strengthened his ties with the Byzantine empire) were decisive factors at the end of the 10th century in shaping the destiny of an area that had long wavered between the influences of the Vikings and those of its powerful neighbors to the east and the south.

Conceived in the form of a five-nave church in opus mixtum, St. Sophia is a grandiose cathedral whose interior is covered in mosaics, paintings and marble work. A complex of monastic buildings surrounds the church. Built originally of wood in 1633, the buildings were destroyed by fire in 1697; reconstruction in stone began in 1699. In the 18th century, the bell tower, the Metropolitan's house, the refectory, the west gate, the tower at the south entrance, the Brothers' building and the seminary were built.

A stone enceinte encircled these buildings, which are typical of the Ukrainian Baroque style, whose influence is also seen in contemporary restoration work on the Cathedral (transformation of the original galleries and the shape of the cupolas, changes on the facade with the addition of a large window and a system of exterior buttresses).

In the latter half of the 19th century, mainly after 1882, further renovations were undertaken, the principal ones being the addition on the west side of a narthex in the Byzantine style and the often inept restoration of murals and mosaics.

Having been designated an "architectural and historical reserve of the State" in 1934, St. Sophia was spared by the widespread devastation of World War II, which was particularly severe in Kiev from 21 September 1941 to 6 November 1943. The Cathedral, now administered as a monument museum, has been the focus of various restoration campaigns, efforts that culminated in 1987 with the award of the "European Gold Medal for the Protection of Historic Monuments".

ICOMOS recommends the inclusion of St. Sophia of Kiev on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria I, II, III, IV, and VI.

- **Criterion I.** The Cathedral of St. Sophia of Kiev is a unique artistic achievement in both its architectural conception and its remarkable decoration.

By virtue of its plan whereby 12 columns divide the interior into five naves, this church represents a perfect fusion between symbolic image and architecture: the 13 cupolas which crown it evoke Christ and the 12 apostles in a pyramidal composition so strongly expressed that it was not diminished in the restoration of the onion domes in the 18th century. The design of the five apsidal chapels on the east side and of the double galleries on the north, south and west (where two unsymmetrical towers lead to the tribune) is quite original in both structure and technique.

By virtue of its unique mosaic decoration which covers about 260 m<sup>2</sup> and includes such masterpieces as the Pantocrator in the cupola, the Annunciation in the transept, the Virgin Mary at Prayer, the Communion of the Apostles and the Deisis in the main apsidiole, St. Sophia of Kiev is a mayor monument of Christian art. The 3,000 m<sup>2</sup> of wall paintings, often greatly restored, which complete the mosaic decor contribute to the paradisaical aspect of the interior; its richness makes it comparable to contemporary edifices of the Byzantine empire like Hosios Loukas in Phocide.

- **Criterion II.** Just as the architectural structure of St. Sophia served as a model, the stylistic features of its decoration were spread throughout Kievan Russia in the 11th century by the icon painters working in Kiev. Despite the destruction of a large part of their work in the invasions by the Mongols under Batou Khan in 1240 and the Tatars from Crimea in 1416 and 1482, their influence can be seen in the centers of Novgorod, Pskov, Vladimir and Souzdal.

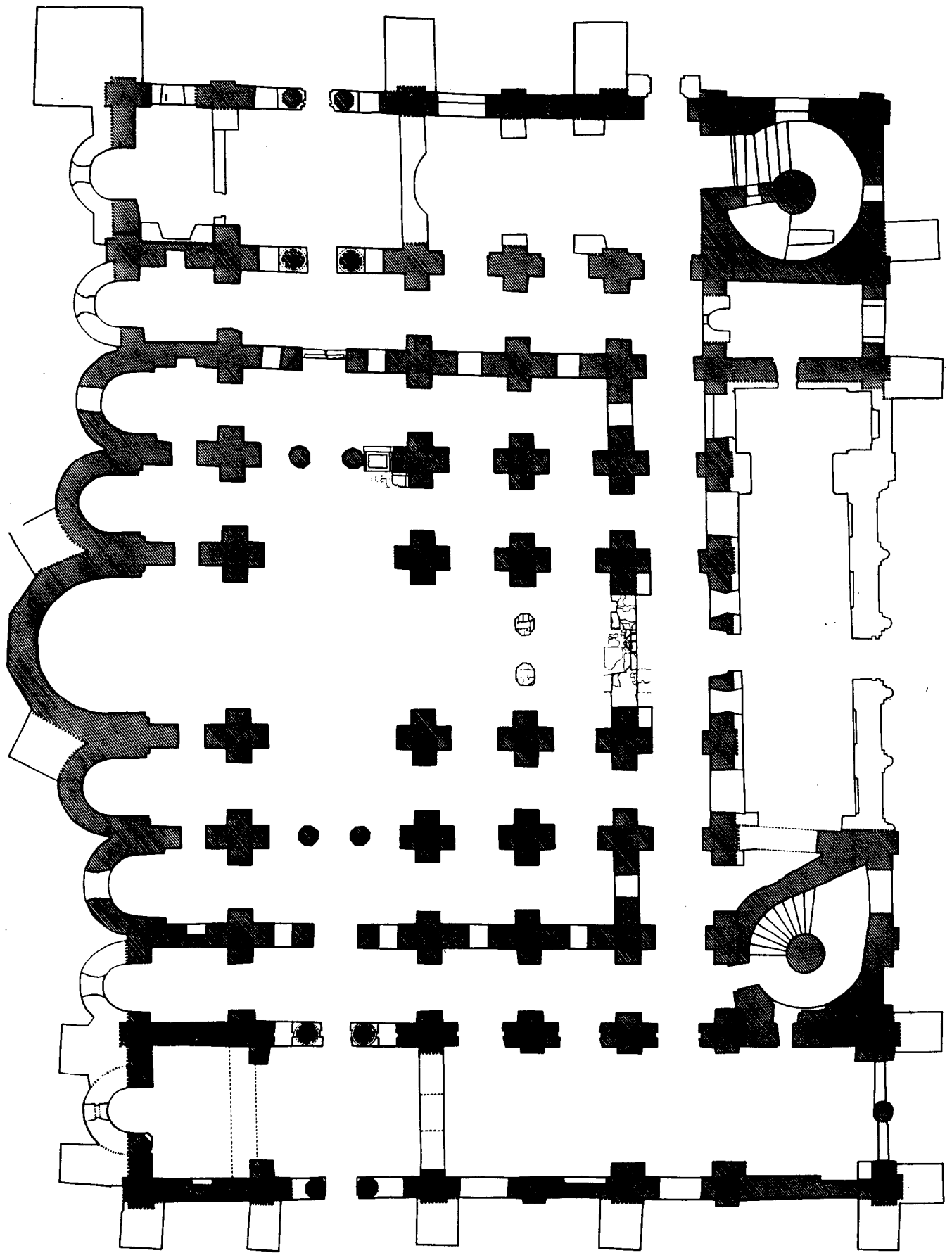
- **Criterion III.** The decoration of St. Sophia, in particular the paintings in the west towers which depict historical events (the visit of Princess Olga of Kiev to Constantinople) or anecdotes (the bear hunt, the squirrel hunt, the wild boar hunt, musicians and court entertainers), bear excellent testimony to the medieval civilization in a region long characterized by interethnic exchanges.
  
- **Criterion IV.** Conceived to rival with Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, St. Sophia of Kiev is an outstanding example of a Greek-cross church. The central space plan is used but the transversal area is more developed. It is one of the major edifices of Eastern Christianity in the 11th century. Inspired by Byzantine models, the Cathedral has the profound originality of a unique monument strongly influenced by both the Slavic and the cosmopolitan culture of the Prince of Kiev.
  
- **Criterion VI.** In the center of the city of Kiev, St. Sophia symbolizes "New Constantinople", the capital of the Christian state founded by the son of St. Vladimir. It was the cathedral where princes were crowned and - following the burial of Yaroslav the Wise in a marble sarcophagus decorated with crosses, palms and shells in 1054- were buried. At the time it possessed the first library of all the Russias. St. Sophia of Kiev is directly and tangibly linked with the history of the foundation of the Russian state which, even under Peter the Great, celebrated its victories there.

#### **ICOMOS observations**

The nomination form for inclusion leaves a doubt as to the delimitation of the proposed property. ICOMOS is of the opinion that the whole of the monastic enclosure, including the buildings inside the enceinte which, since the 17th century, share a common history with the Cathedral, should be part of the proposal. The Baroque bell tower built by the architect Schaedel (1699-1706, remodeled 1851-52), the church refectory (1722-30), the monks' cells, the Metropolitan's house, and other buildings are, like the enceinte and the gates, significant elements of the past history of St. Sophia of Kiev.

Furthermore, ICOMOS, noting the deleterious effect on the monastery's environs with the reconstruction of the heavily damaged city after World War II, recommends that in future the authorities of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic respect building standards compatible with the exceptional quality of St. Sophia.

ICOMOS, April 1990



Kiev: cathédrale Sainte-Sophie, plan  
/ Cathedral St. Sophia, plan



Kiev : cathédrale Sainte-Sophie,  
choeur /

Cathedral St. Sophia,  
choir

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WORLD HERITAGE LIST

N° 528

## A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Kiev - Pechersk Lavra

Location : Kiev

State Party : Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic

Date : 30 May, 1989

## B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That inclusion of this cultural property be deferred to enable the authorities of the Soviet Socialist Republic of the Ukraine to complete the dossier and to formulate a joint proposal with that of St. Sophia of Kiev.

## C) JUSTIFICATION

In a wooded area on two hills overlooking the right bank of the Dnieper River is Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, a 24-hectare monastery complex consisting of numerous monuments and grottoes. The area is now surrounded by the urban agglomeration of Greater Kiev, which has undergone rapid expansion: since 1980 the capital of the Ukraine has a population of much more than two million inhabitants.

Lavra boasts very ancient origins: in 1051 St. Anthony the Athonite, a monk so faithful to the hermetic ideal of desert solitude that he lived in a cave on the cliffs overlooking the river, founded an establishment here. It rapidly became the seat of a community governed by the abbot St. Theodosius. With the support of the princes of Kiev, who possessed the neighboring domain of Berestovo (whose Church of the Savior is included in the proposal), the monastery immediately began to prosper. It was here that the monk Nestor wrote Annals of the Years of the Chronicles, The Lives of Saints Boris and Gleb, and The Life of Saint Theodosius. All are monuments of Old Russian historical and hagiographic literature.

Devastated by the Mongols and the Tatars, Lavra was almost entirely rebuilt in the 17th century and afterward. A printshop was founded in 1615, mainly issuing devotional literature and history. Lavra played a highly important intellectual role in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. These were times of great prosperity- pilgrims flocked to the site, and the grounds were filled with numerous baroque monuments. The Clock Tower, built

in 1731-45 by Johann Schaedel with Stephan Kovnir, a native Kievan and a self-taught architect, and the Refectory Church (1793-1895) are two of the main landmarks in a monastic landscape totally transformed by the construction or the renovation of numerous churches (e.g. All Saints' Church, the Churches of the Exaltation of the Cross, the Nativity of the Virgin, the Conception of St. Anna, St. Onufry, St. Nicholas). Declared a "historical and cultural reserve" in 1926, Lavra was very severely damaged in 1941 when its oldest edifice, the Dormition Cathedral (Ouspenski Sobor), built in 1073-89, was entirely destroyed except for its southeast tower.

Today the major elements of the very old historic heritage are Trinity Church, whose 12th-century structure is hidden by the extremely rich baroque decor, and especially the catacombs which include the Near Caves (Blijnie pechtchery) and the Far Caves (Dalnie pechtchery), whose entrances are respectively at All Saints' Church and at the Church of the Conception of St. Anna (Anna Zatchatievskaja). Over the years the monks' cells became a necropolis where hundreds of their mummified bodies have been preserved.

The majority of the monuments of Lavra were given new cultural functions in 1926: the Metropolitan's residence is now the State Museum of Ukrainian Decorative Folk Art, the printshop houses the Book and Bookbinding Museum, the Refectory Church is a museum of Christianity, and the Church of the Exaltation of the Cross the museum of the history of the catacombs.

While aware of the outstanding value of Kiev-Pechersk Lavra in the Ukrainian national heritage and of the role played by this very ancient monastic foundation in the spiritual and intellectual life of the Russian world, ICOMOS is tempted to doubt the unicity of a cultural property whose historic and architectural characteristics are not absolutely exceptional. However, having considered that the site and the monuments of Kiev-Pechersk Lavra are inextricably linked with the town of Kiev, ICOMOS recommends that a joint proposal be drawn up for Lavra complex and St. Sophia. The resulting proposal would request inclusion on the World Heritage List of the following property: religious monuments of Kiev, the Cathedral of St. Sophia and Kiev-Pechersk Lavra.

#### **ICOMOS OBSERVATIONS**

- 1) The revised dossier should include a map of the proposed zone (desired scale - between 1/5,000 and 1/25,000), an aerial view and panoramic views of the surroundings as well as groundplans and photographs of the principal monuments. The protection zone of the Church of the Savior at Berestovo, south of the Park of Eternal Glory, should also be detailed.
- 2) ICOMOS should like to note the reservations and fears it has in regard to the plans for an fundamentis reconstruction of the Dormition Cathedral, as extensively commented in the press, and would like to have further details on this subject.

ICOMOS, April 1990

In a letter dated 31 August 1990 the competent authorities of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic expressed their agreement to a joint nomination proposal for St Sophia Cathedral in Kiev and the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, stressing the complementary character of the two properties.

ICOMOS is pleased with this proposal. It will permit the immediate inclusion on the World Heritage List of an ensemble representative of the Russian culture of Kiev from its Christian origins to the 18th century.

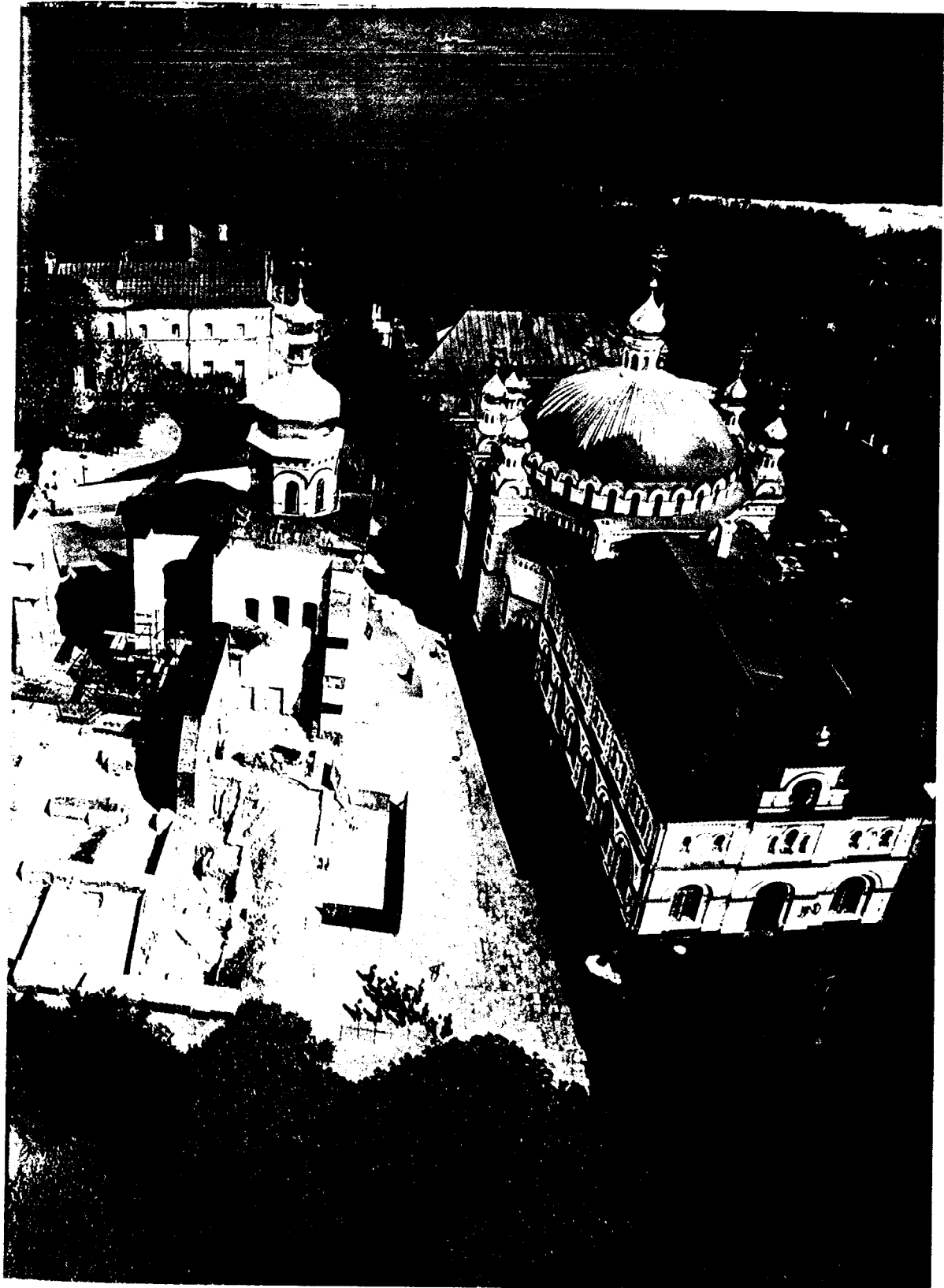
ICOMOS, October 1990





Laure des Catacombes, Kiev, plan/

Plan of the Kiev-Petchersk Lavra



Laure des Catacombes :  
Collégiale de la Dormition et église-  
réfectoire /

Petchersk Lavra :  
Dormition Cathedral and Refectory  
Church