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## Sucevița (Romania) No 598 bis

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*Official name as proposed by the State Party:*

Church of the Resurrection of Sucevița Monastery

*Location:*

Historical Region of Moldavia, Suceava County,  
Suceava, Romania

*Brief description:*

The interior and exterior walls of the church of Sucevița Monastery are entirely covered in painted murals dating from the end of the 16th century. It is located inside the enclosure of a fortified monastery and is the only church with a representation of the Ladder of St John Climacus. It is one of the painted churches of northern Moldavia, seven of which are already inscribed on the World Heritage List (1993). With their exterior walls entirely covered in 15th and 16th century paintings, directly inspired by Byzantine art, these eight churches in northern Moldavia are unique in Europe.

*Category of property:*

In terms of the category of cultural property, as defined in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention 1972, this is a *monument*.

### 1. BASIC DATA

*Included in the Tentative List:* 3 February 2005

*International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination:* No

*Date received by the World Heritage Centre:*

7 February 2007

1<sup>st</sup> February 2010

*Background:* This nomination is for the extension of the Churches of Moldavia that were inscribed at the World Heritage Committee's 26th session (Cartagena, 1993) on the basis of criteria (i) and (iv).

The extension nomination was examined by the World Heritage Committee at its 33<sup>rd</sup> session (Seville, 2009), and decision 33 COM 8B.35 was adopted:

*The World Heritage Committee:*

1. Having examined Documents WHC-09/33.COM/8B and WHC-09/33.COM/INF.8B1,

2. Refers the extension of the Churches of Moldavia to include the Church of the Resurrection of Sucevița Monastery, Romania, back to the State Party to allow it to:

a) Promulgate the management plan for the Painted Churches of Moldavia property, along with the section dealing with the management of Sucevița;

b) Establish the Coordination Committee and its local representative in Sucevița;

c) Define a tourism development plan for each of the properties, within the management plan, boosting tourism infrastructure and stipulating the protection measures to be implemented within the buffer zones in relation with the tourism projects;

d) Complete the management plan relating to the property nominated for the extension by adding a programme of planned conservation work;

e) Produce without delay the Regional Town Plan designed to guarantee that development in the buffer zone is compatible with the value of the property;

f) Strengthen cooperation between the partners in the management of the property: the Orthodox Church, the national, regional, and local public authorities, and private owners.

The State Party submitted additional information on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2010.

*Consultations:* ICOMOS consulted its International Scientific Committee on Wall Paintings.

*Literature consulted (selection):*

Grabar A., *Roumanie, églises peintes de Moldavie*, Paris-New York 1962.

Dragut V., *Peintures murales de Moldavie*, Bucharest 1982.

*Technical Evaluation Mission:* 10–15 September 2008.

*Additional information requested and received from the State Party:* None

*Date of ICOMOS approval of this report:* 17 March 2010

### 2. THE PROPERTY

#### *Description*

The Church of the Resurrection is located in the middle of a square monastic enclosure (104m x 100m) 6m high that is built of stone, with its corners flanked by polygonal towers. It is accessible through a square gate tower in front of the monastery buildings built against the east wall. It has a basilical floor plan with a single nave and a trilobate apse. In terms of its overall volumes, it is

close to the Church of Saint Nicolas at Probota Monastery (part of the inscribed series). On the north and south facades two porches house the entrances to the exonarthex. Under a single overhanging shingle roof, interrupted by the transept crossing tower, the interior is covered with a series of four cupolas; the bay preceding the transept is covered with a transverse barrel arch (funeral chapel) and has an additional storey that is also arched, used as the treasure chamber. The exterior walls intermingle the Byzantine–Balkan tradition (lantern tower supported on diagonal arches) and elements inspired by Western European Gothic (buttresses, frames, and bay tracery).

The entire surface of the interior and exterior walls is covered by fresco mural paintings with a *secco* details presenting an iconographic programme that reflects the same theological and aesthetic themes as the seven churches already inscribed. The interior paintings are predominantly gilded and the compositions are often small in size, similar to miniatures.

The exterior iconography includes:

- The Church Hierarchy triumphing on the apses. Arranged in seven horizontal registers, the angels, the patriarchs, the apostles, the bishops, the martyrs, and the monks are facing emblematic figures painted along the axis of the church: God the Father, Christ, the Virgin and Child, Jesus Christ the Great Archbishop, and Saint John the Baptist.
- The Jesse Tree, the philosophers of antiquity, and the Akathist Hymn to the Blessed Virgin (chanted during the siege of Constantinople) are represented on the south facade.
- The Ladder of St John Climacus is painted on the north facade. Sucevița is the only church to represent this rare emblematic composition of monastic life. On the same facade there is also a Genesis cycle and the life of St Pacôme, founder of Cenobite Monachism.

In addition to its iconographic specificity, the Sucevița church is notable for a more graphic pictorial style and brighter colours, with a predominance of red and emerald green, than the seven other churches in the group.

Inside, the iconographic programme by and large respects the canonical indications of Byzantine painting:

- On the intrados of the lantern tower cupola, Christ Pantocrator is surrounded by the symbols of the Evangelists and groups of angels of the celestial hierarchy, followed by prophets, apostles, and bishops;
- In the lunettes formed by the oblique arches, scenes from the life of Christ (annunciation, nativity, presentation at the temple, baptism) are shown;
- There is an angelic liturgy at the base of the drum;
- The spandrels are occupied by the Evangelists;

- In the choir, the traditional Virgin and Child is here exceptionally replaced by the Ascension, and 17 of the 24 scenes of the Akathist Hymn of the Annunciation are painted on the vault. The following registers show the Tent of Witness, the twelve sons of Jacob, the communion using bread and wine in two separate scenes in accordance with the Orthodox tradition, the washing of the feet, and the Last Supper, as well as two compositions on the theme of divine wisdom. The lower register includes the Offering Child towards which the Hierarchs and the Deacons are moving;
- The vision of Peter of Alexandria is painted in the prothesis niche;
- In the nave, the paintings are structured into two zones: the vaults with the Marian Hymns and the walls with the life of Christ (passion and miracles). The lower register includes a mixture of scenes from Genesis, mystical themes, and figures of the warrior saints. On the western wall, the votive presentation of Ieremia Movila's family unfolds. On the opposite side, there is another votive painting showing the Metropolitan Gheorghe Movila, founder of the church, in front of a Deiesis;
- In the funeral chapel, figures of saints sit alongside the life of Moses.
- The narthex cupolas are decorated with God Sabaoth and God of the Trinity. The vaults present the seven ecumenical councils. The walls are covered with scenes from the liturgical calendar and the lives of St Nicolas and St George;
- The walls of the exonarthex show a Last Judgement and the vault the Virgin and Child surrounded by the signs of the zodiac. The remainder of the walls show various themes, including the life of St John the New whose relics were transferred to Suceava in the 15th century.

#### *Extension*

The seven churches of Moldavia already inscribed on the World Heritage List form a very coherent group in terms of the religious themes of their mural paintings and the representation techniques used by the regional artists. It is an aesthetic and spiritual programme dating back to the years 1530–50. The group of churches I, moreover, also located in the same region of northern Moldavia. The majority of the wall paintings were completed over a twenty-year period, although some decorative elements date from the end of the 15th century.

From an architectural point of view, they were sometimes older churches at the time of the programme of systematic exterior paintings, but they were restored or even rebuilt at this time. The other religious buildings were new or recent, built during the first half of the 16th century. Several of these churches are Orthodox monasteries:

- Church of the Holy Cross of Pătrăuți;
- Saint George Church, Voronet Monastery;

- Church of the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist in Arbore;
- Metropolitan Saint George Church, St John Monastery in Suceava;
- Church of St Nicolas, *katholikon*, Probata Monastery;
- Church of the Virgin Assumption, Humor Monastery;
- Church of the Annunciation, Moldovița Monastery.

### **History and development**

Moldavia became an independent state in the 14th century; its peak was during the Crusades of Stephen the Great against the Ottomans (1457–1504) and those of Pierre Rareș (1527–38 and 1541–46). This period also bears witness to the birth of a great cultural movement, of which the churches with their exterior painted walls are the most astounding manifestation. A great Christian tradition of decorating the exteriors of churches then developed throughout Moldavia, to the extent that the entire surface of the facades was covered in paintings. This tradition had its own iconography, dominated by certain essential specific themes – the Church Hierarchy, the Last Judgement, and the Tree of Jesse.

Sucevița Church was built from 1584 to 1586, probably on the site of an earlier timber building, on the initiative of the Bishop of Rădăuți, the future Metropolitan of Moldavia, Gheorghe Movila, aided by his brothers Ieremia and Simeon, the future prince regents.

The paintings were commenced in 1595 and finished in the following years, by the latest in 1601 when the monastic ensemble was completed. They are attributed as being the work of two icon painters, the brothers Ioan and Sofronie.

The church lies at the centre of a monastery that has operated as such continuously since its foundation through to today, initially for monks and then for nuns.

The only transformations and changes to the monastic buildings have been those made necessary by the natural evolution of monastic life.

After World War II the church was restored on several occasions, and the Monastery underwent restoration from 1963 to 1968.

### **3. OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE, INTEGRITY, AND AUTHENTICITY**

#### **Comparative analysis**

The nomination of the churches of Moldavia contained in the justification made for the property's inscription a reference to the Sucevița Monastery to justify the use of

criterion (ii) and the fact that this tradition had spread to other churches in Moldavia.

The comparative analysis of the present proposal for extension is essentially that made in relation to the seven Orthodox churches on the World Heritage List. This ensemble has already been judged to be a unique example of historiated religious murals painted on the exterior walls of churches. No comparison is possible elsewhere in Christian religious art, since murals are essentially inside the church, as in the Abbey Church of Saint-Savin sur Gartempe (France, 1983).

Sucevița belongs to the same region of northern Moldavia and is based on the same theological and aesthetic vision. Reference may then be made to a spiritual and artistic programme, manifested from 1530 onward by the creation of murals illustrating scenes from the Bible and sacred history. This is a regional ensemble of churches and monasteries of which Sucevița is the latest example. The murals are designed for the religious edification of the generally illiterate peasant population, in the context of the political and religious tension that was affecting south-eastern Europe at the time.

These are excellent quality murals painted by local artists with a rich colour range, of which Sucevița is simultaneously the culmination and a form of spiritual and artistic testament.

The Sucevița church fits perfectly into this series and provides several specific features worthy of attention, such as the specific iconographic themes and the chromatic range.

The initial nomination dossier for the painted churches of Moldavia, Romania, did not include a comparative analysis.

ICOMOS considers that with the addition of Sucevița the series of externally painted churches in Moldavia, dating from the end of the 15th century to the end of the 16th century, will include all the elements required to establish the property's outstanding universal value. ICOMOS therefore considers that the series comprising the property will be complete once the Sucevița extension proposal has been examined.

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ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis, although limited in its development, justifies considering the inscription of Sucevița on the World Heritage List, as an extension of the series of painted Moldavian churches already inscribed.

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#### **Justification of the Outstanding Universal Value**

The extension is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- From the point of view of its architecture and its painted decoration, the Sucevița church belongs to the same group as the internally and externally painted churches of northern Moldavia, already inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (i) and (iv).
- The Sucevița church displays special chromatic and iconographic features which complement the inscribed churches. It provides an extension to the historiated themes already present in the other churches.
- The Sucevița church is testimony to the building of externally painted churches in Moldavia over a considerably longer period than that of the series already inscribed, ranging up to the end of the 16th century.

*Justification for the inscription of the original nomination*

With their exterior walls decorated with mural paintings, works of art inspired by Byzantine art, these churches in northern Moldavia are unique in Europe. Far from being mere wall decorations, these paintings form a systematic covering of all the facades and represent complete cycles of religious themes. Their exceptional composition, the elegance of the characters, and the harmony of the colours blend perfectly with the surrounding countryside.

ICOMOS considers that the justification is appropriate, as the monastery church of Sucevița is a consummate example of the final period of development of the painted churches of Moldavia, which was not represented in the series. The period has stylistic particularities, and completes the range of religious themes previously represented.

*Integrity and authenticity*

*Integrity*

The church has not undergone any modification throughout its history. It fully retains the integrity of its original structure from the end of the 16th century, along with its ensemble of exterior paintings.

The monastic enclosure has fully retained its initial appearance. It has not undergone any structural change.

The surrounding rural and wooded landscape has undergone only minimal transformation and development through to the present day; it has retained its integrity.

This is still a monastery of the Orthodox Church, the functional integrity of which has been retained continuously, including during the period of the Communist regime after World War II. Today it houses a fully functioning convent with seventy nuns, giving the site the character of a living monastery.

ICOMOS considers that the urban plan specific to the proposed extension must be directed towards protecting the integrity of the property's landscape, which is affected by contemporary built structures in some instances.

*Authenticity*

The paintings are authentic, in that they have been subject to only minimum work. The restorations undertaken since the 1970s have been performed with care and considerable attention to respecting the authenticity both of the motifs and the pigments and of the conservation conditions (see Conservation).

The restoration of the roof has returned the church to its original appearance, as documented in old iconographic sources.

The restoration of the quarter-sphere calotte of the choir, the largest, concentrated mainly on the filler components (solid background, vegetation).

The presence of an active young monastic community concerned for the cultural and spiritual values associated with the property is an important aspect of its authenticity.

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ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

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*Criteria under which inscription is proposed*

The extension is nominated on the basis of the same criteria used for the inscription of the original nomination: cultural criteria (i) and (iv).

*Criterion (i): represent a masterpiece of human creative genius.*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the entire church is painted, both internally and externally. The exterior scenes are the best preserved of the northern Moldavian churches. It is the end point in an evolution which has seen it described as 'a testament to Moldavian art.' The stylistic differences displayed here are testimony to the persistence and the evolution of this artistic phenomenon beyond 1550. Sucevița provides a special and complementary distinction.

ICOMOS considers that the special features of the Sucevița paintings and their good state of conservation complete the range already inscribed of the seven other painted Moldavian churches.

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

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*Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history.*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that from an architectural point of view the Sucevița church forms part of the Moldavian monuments created from the second half of the 15th century, providing an original synthesis between the Byzantine–Balkan traditions and the contributions of the Western Gothic. The Monastery’s fortified enclosure is one of the most representative examples in Moldavia.

ICOMOS considers that the painted Sucevița church is the culmination of the evolution of this typology of artistic creation.

The idea of completely covering the exterior surfaces of churches with paintings was adopted from other churches in Moldavia in the cultural, religious and political context of the Balkans from the 15th to the 16th centuries.

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

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ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (i) and (iv) and that the Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated.

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#### *Description of the attributes*

- The Sucevița Church belongs to the same group as the churches of northern Moldavia already inscribed on the World Heritage List. They are remarkable for the quality of their exterior wall paintings dating from the 16th century.
- With their exterior walls decorated with mural paintings, which are masterpieces inspired by Byzantine art, these churches in northern Moldavia are unique in Europe. The paintings form a systematic covering on all the facades and represent complete cycles of religious themes taken from the Bible and Holy Scripture. Their exceptional composition, the elegance of the characters, and the harmony of the colours blend perfectly with the surrounding countryside.
- Sucevița presents rare iconographic themes that complement those on the other churches. It is the only one to show a representation of the ladder of St John Climacus.
- Chronologically, Sucevița is the last representative of the externally painted Orthodox churches in northern Moldavia; it completes the group already inscribed on the List.

## **4. FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY**

### *Development pressures*

The Monastery is sited outside industrial and mining zones and so is not affected by this risk.

The extraction of timber does not affect the property. If it were to develop, it might eventually lead to an intensification of road traffic in the immediate vicinity of the Monastery, with heavy loads perhaps causing vibrations and atmospheric pollution. Furthermore, the intensive extraction of timber could lead to significant and notable changes to the traditional landscape.

### *Tourism pressures*

The Monastery is one of the most visited places in Romania, by both pilgrims and tourists. It is one of Romania’s most prized tourist destinations (125,597 visitors in 2007). At present the number of tourists does not threaten the property. All visits are with a guide, and if these were to increase they might cause damage to the church with its limited interior space and alter its immediate surroundings with the installation of uncontrolled commercial activities and an expanding car park.

The construction of a hotel infrastructure could affect the property’s surroundings.

### *Environmental pressures*

There is currently no pollution in the immediate surroundings of the Monastery.

The *Eternit* roofing on the Monastery buildings, a potential source of asbestos pollution, is being replaced with copper.

### *Natural disasters*

The Monastery is not located in a seismic zone.

Spring flooding due to thawing and heavy rain mainly threatens the inhabited areas immediately adjacent to watercourses.

A fire in 2004 was caused by an electrical short-circuit.

### *Impact of climate change*

The threat from climate change is only of a general order; the rainfall in this mountainous region is high. Thanks to the height of the enclosure wall, the exterior murals are protected from the prevailing winds, apart from the tower murals, which are located at a greater height.

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ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are uncontrolled development of tourism and extensive forestry operations.

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## 5. PROTECTION, CONSERVATION, AND MANAGEMENT

### ***Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone***

The boundaries of the property for inscription correspond to the Monastery enclosure (1.4ha), and coincide with the statutorily protected monument.

The buffer zone extends to the top of the surrounding hills, including the slopes and built zones to the south and north, and to the east as far as that part of the river and the road where the Monastery starts to come into view (36.4ha).

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ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the property and buffer zone of the nominated property are adequate.

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### ***Ownership***

The Monastery and the Church are owned by the Sucevița Orthodox convent.

### ***Protection***

#### ***Legal protection***

Canonically, the Monastery comes under the Archdiocese of Suceava and Rădăuți, in the Romanian Orthodox Church.

The Monastery was added to the register of Historical Monuments of Romania on 16 July 2004, and as a result it benefits from the Protection of Historic Monuments and Protected Zones Law No 422/2001, revised under No 258/2006.

In addition, the following apply:

- The Order by the Minister of Culture and Religious Affairs No 2682/2004 pertaining to the method for classifying properties as historic monuments;
- Law No 5/2000 on the approval of the national development plan, section III, protected zones;
- Special legislative regulations concerning properties inscribed on the World Heritage List;
- Government Ordinance No 47/2000 pertaining to special measures concerning these same properties;
- Law No 350/2001 on land use and town planning;
- Law No 564/2001 promulgated by the President of Romania;
- Decision No 493/2004 by the Government of Romania concerning the monitoring of monuments inscribed as World Heritage and the method for establishing protection and management plans.

The buffer zone is under the protection of the 1992 General Town Plan of the municipality of Sucevița, which

is currently undergoing revision (2009). The revision forms part of a wider overhaul of the general town plans pertaining to the churches already inscribed and to the proposed extension, in accordance with governmental decision 738 of 9 July 2008.

For the general town plan in preparation pertaining to the Sucevița monastery zone (UTR1), the Ministry of Culture has carried out a study of the historical and heritage aspects of the property, particularly in landscape terms, in accordance with recommendation 392/U/2009. The specific regulation for the zone UTR1 (285 ha) has been drawn up, and has been promulgated by Ministry for Regional Development recommendation n°5/2010; it was issued to the municipality of Sucevița on 28 January 2010 for application. Four zones are established inside UTR1, regulating the height of buildings and construction density for the privately owned buildable area (ZCP3), inside the monastery (ZCP2) and in the forest zone (ZCP4); in the latter, only maintenance works on existing structures will be authorised. The church constitutes the property, while the buffer zone consists of the monastic enclosure and its immediate surrounds.

ICOMOS considers that the town plans specifically applying to the land occupied by the painted churches of Moldavia are in line with recommendation e) of Committee decision 33COM 8.B35. The plan pertaining to Sucevița has just been promulgated. The town plans for the other churches included in the property are either undergoing revision, or in the promulgation phase, or in preparation.

#### ***Traditional protection***

The current use as a convent is an important element in the property's protection.

#### ***Effectiveness of the protection measures***

To date, the protection measures have proved effective and relevant.

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ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place is adequate, but that the promulgation of the new Regional Town Plan must be confirmed.

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### ***Conservation***

#### ***Inventories, archives, research***

The Monastery and its murals have been the subject of several publications since 1923.

A multi-disciplinary research project, 'The Movila family in the history of Moldavia: an element of 16th and 17th century European history,' has been initiated by the Archdiocese, the Monastery, the University of Iași, and the Municipality of Sucevița.

The National Institute of Historic Monuments and the University of Iași have begun research on the murals.

The archives concerning the Monastery are conserved in national institutions.

#### *Present state of conservation*

The church and the convent are generally in an excellent state of conservation, except for the church roof. The roof shingles need replacing with identical material.

The church structure was consolidated in 1983; the building does, however, have a fissure in the choir vault and another deeper one in the arch stone between the nave and the funeral chapel.

The exterior paintings are in a good state of conservation, except for those on the lantern tower, which are exposed to the winds and partially erased.

The interior paintings on the lantern tower, the nave, and choir have been restored and are in a good state of conservation. Those in the funeral chapel and the narthex are undergoing chemical and biological analyses prior to restoration.

The paintings are totally preserved on the exterior, especially on the north wall.

#### *Active conservation measures*

The Monastery was completely restored between 1953 and 1968.

In 1953–54 the church timber roof underwent initial repairs in the style of early 20th century work. A new restoration in 1983 restored its fragmented appearance typical of medieval Moldavian churches, as shown in a votive painting of Prince Movila in the nave.

The exterior paintings were restored between 1989 and 1998.

In 1999 restoration work commenced on the interior paintings, planned for their entirety.

A project to reroof of the north wing of the enclosure in sheet copper has been implemented, as has another for the nuns' cells which is now in progress.

A programme for the systematic analysis of the state of conservation and establishment of best rules of practice was approved in 2004, in the form of a document committing the property's various stakeholders, 'Obligations concerning the use of the historic monument.' It mainly follows French heritage evaluation standards. These provisions are restated and supplemented by the new management plan for the property.

An additional restoration programme for the church (consolidation of the vaults and inspection of the timber frame), as well as the monastic buildings and the enclosure, has been announced. The works schedule presented as an annex to the property management plan foresees the replacement of the timber roof in 2010. This is in line with recommendation d) of Committee decision 33COM 8B.35.

#### *Maintenance*

Routine maintenance of the building is performed on a daily basis by the nuns, in association with their opening the monument to tourists and its supervision.

#### *Effectiveness of conservation measures*

ICOMOS considers that a conservation management dynamic has been in operation since the start of the restoration of the exterior paintings, in accordance with international conservation standards. In this respect, ICOMOS recommends in particular monitoring the most vulnerable paintings on the lantern tower exterior. The drawing up of the management plan for the church of Sucevița, as part of the management plan for the whole of the serial property, represents the culmination of these efforts.

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ICOMOS considers that the conservation of the property nominated for the extension is satisfactory.

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#### **Management**

##### *Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes*

The following organisations involved in the protection and management of the property are of international standard:

- The Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs is involved on an administrative level through the Department of Historic Monuments and Museums, and on a public finance level through the National Office of Historic Monuments.
- The National Institute of Historic Monuments is in charge of monitoring conservation and research.
- The National Historic Monuments Commission has a consultative role.
- The G. Oprescu Institute of Art History of the Romanian Academy contributes to research.

At the regional and local levels:

- The Order of Orthodox Nuns is the owner and manager of the Monastery; it plays an essential role in the everyday management of the property. These prerogatives are exercised under the authority of the Archdiocese of Suceava and Rădăuți of the Orthodox Church of Romania.
- The Sucevița County Council is also involved in financial, environmental and regional development aspects.

- The County Department of Culture, Religion and National Heritage provides monitoring on behalf of the Ministry of Culture.
- The Sucevița Town Hall is involved in the municipal land use plans and building permits, notably in the buffer zone.

The *Coordination Committee* for the whole serial property was created by Order 2140 of the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs dated 24 March 2009. The Committee is responsible for coordinating the management of the various components of the property, preparing a detailed schedule and monitoring works in accordance with the management plan, monitoring the whole serial property, and accordingly updating conservation initiatives. It is required to draw up a report at prescribed intervals. It is assisted by a Scientific Committee which is particularly responsible for links with the university, research and educational initiatives. The Coordination Committee is chaired by an eminent scientist from the National Institute of Historic Monuments.

A Committee member is to be appointed by the Sucevița site and will carry out local coordination for the property. A local representative of the owner will be appointed as the site manager.

ICOMOS considers that the institution of the Coordination Committee for the whole of the serial property is in line with a significant part of recommendation b) of Committee decision 33COM 8.B35. However, no indications have been given about the work schedule of the Coordination Committee, the intervals at which its reports are to be drawn up, or the constitution of its local unit.

*Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation*

Several general documents are currently being applied in the management of the property, in particular the Strategic plan for the management of monuments inscribed on the World Heritage List (2007-2013) and the Five-year plan for the management and monitoring of monuments inscribed on the World Heritage List (2007-2011).

Up to now, an Annual plan for the management and monitoring of the monuments inscribed on the World Heritage List has been drawn up, in accordance with the above master plans.

The State Party has recently drawn up a Management plan for the Churches of Moldavia; it was written and published in 2009. For the proposed extension, it sets out in particular the works planned for 2010-2011 (roofing, museum reorganisation) and ongoing conservation and monitoring actions (humidity control and protection of the lower painted parts during religious

services). Funding guarantees are also provided for the various components of the serial property.

In practice, pilgrims and visitors are managed by the nuns of the Monastery of Sucevița, several of whom speak foreign languages. 143,000 people visited the property in 2009. A limit has been placed on the number of visitors to the church, in order to regulate humidity levels.

With regard to tourism management and development, on the one hand the Management plan indicates the main priorities for the projected approach for explaining the value of the serial property, and personnel training, and on the other hand the State Party has provided a voluminous document, partly translated into French (Tourism in Bukovina). This is a regional plan for studying and forecasting regional tourism development in future years, in which the serial property has an important place.

The new Management plan announces a programme for studying and explaining the value of the proposed extension through several programmes:

- explaining the value of the mural paintings by reference to historical and art history research;
- awareness raising and guided visits for the general public and the media;
- a projected laboratory for the conservation and restoration of the Medieval icons, books and textiles; this project is to be set up in cooperation with Japan, and the construction of a building inside the monastery enclosure is planned;
- the rehabilitation of the medieval art museum;
- the rehabilitation of the library storerooms.

ICOMOS considers that the Management plan published in 2009 is in line with recommendation a) of Committee decision 33COM 8.B35. Special care must however be taken to ensure the architectural and landscape compatibility of the new building projected for the laboratory outside the monastery but inside the buffer zone.

ICOMOS considers that the level and the quality of visits to Sucevița appear satisfactory. However, visitor facilities outside the Monastery are insufficiently controlled at present, and there is therefore a risk of seeing private commercial operations and uncontrolled tourist facilities proliferate. Furthermore, the programme aimed at explaining the values of Sucevița should in principle make a significant cultural contribution in terms of interpreting and focusing on the values of the property. Finally, the vast general tourism study programme sets the serial property into a regional perspective. Recommendation c) of Committee decision 33COM 8.B35 has thus been taken into account by the State Party. However, a functional tourism development plan for Sucevița has not yet been drawn up, including effective control of peripheral tourist facilities: parking



areas, vehicle and pedestrian circulation, shops, visitor accommodation, etc.

#### *Risk preparedness*

The structure of the church was reinforced against earthquake activity in 1983, even though it is not located within a risk zone.

#### *Involvement of local communities*

The municipality is responsible for the management of the buffer zone, mainly through the implementation of the Regional Town Plan, which regulates permits for building and other works.

The Coordination Committee members include representatives of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The Management Plan has been drawn up in conjunction with local religious officials from the churches and/or monasteries. For the church and the monastery of Sucevița, the works and tourism development programmes are implemented in agreement with the regional and local religious authorities.

ICOMOS considers that the State Party has provided the information referred to in recommendation f) of Committee decision 33COM 8.B35.

#### *Resources, including staffing levels, expertise, and training*

Restorations are financed by the State through the intermediary of the Minister for Culture and Religious Affairs (over 1 million euros from 2004 to 2008).

Management of the property is financed by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Tourism, and by the Suceava County Council.

The Monastery has its own income from the sale of entrance tickets, publications and pious objects, etc which is used in part for the maintenance and preventive conservation and restoration of the iconostases.

Restoration experts are trained in various universities. Each year the sisters who take guided tours attend refresher training courses.

The monastic community of Sucevița has 70 members.

#### *Effectiveness of current management*

The nuns provide the everyday management of the Monastery and the church, and missions by the relevant services of the Minister for Culture and Religious Affairs vouch for the effectiveness of the current management.

The Coordination Committee is in charge of monitoring conservation and the project for the tourist development of the whole property, in conjunction with the religious officials of the property and the monastic community

which lives there. However, no details have yet been provided about the local body representing the Committee at Sucevița and its operational means.

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ICOMOS considers that the management dynamic of the proposed extension is positive and on the right track, particularly following the improvements made by the 2009 Management plan. However, no details have yet been provided about how the Committee will function or about the setting up of its local unit at Sucevița.

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## **6. MONITORING**

Monitoring is provided jointly by the Ministry for Culture and Religious Affairs and the owner. It is to be carried out from 2010 onwards within the framework of the Management plan, under the control of the Coordination Committee.

Monitoring of the climatic and biological conditions of the interior paintings is regularly performed using specialist equipment. The results are fed into a database.

Paintings undergoing restoration work are monitored monthly, and those that have already been restored are monitored twice-yearly. A monitoring data sheet has been drawn up by the Ministry of Culture.

The number of visitors in the church is also constantly monitored and is limited so as to prevent overcrowding of the space and thereby potentially altering the atmosphere.

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ICOMOS considers that the monitoring is satisfactory. Details must however be given about the local unit of the Coordination Committee in charge of monitoring.

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## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

ICOMOS recognises the contribution of the Church of the Resurrection, Sucevița Monastery, Romania, in strengthening the Outstanding Universal Value of the Churches of Moldavia, already recognised on the basis of criteria (i) and (iv).

#### ***Recommendations with respect to inscription***

ICOMOS recommends that the extension of the Churches of Moldavia to include the Church of the Resurrection of Sucevița Monastery, Romania, be **approved** on the basis of *criteria (i) and (iv)*.

ICOMOS considers that this extension completes and closes the series of Painted Churches of Moldavia.

## *Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value*

### Brief synthesis

The churches with external mural paintings of northern Moldavia, built from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century to the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, are masterpieces inspired by Byzantine art. These eight churches of northern Moldavia are unique in Europe. They are authentic and particularly well preserved. Far from being mere wall decorations, the paintings form a systematic covering on all the facades and represent complete cycles of religious themes. Their exceptional composition, the elegance of the characters, and the harmony of the colours blend perfectly with the surrounding countryside.

**Criterion (i):** The external paintings of the churches of Northern Moldavia cover all the facades. They embody a unique and homogeneous artistic phenomenon, directly inspired by Byzantine art. They are masterpieces of mural painting, and are of outstanding aesthetic value in view of their consummate chromatism and the remarkable elegance of the figures. They present cycles of events taken from the Bible and the Holy Scriptures, in the Orthodox Christian tradition.

**Criterion (iv):** The idea of completely covering the external facades of churches by paintings is an eminent example of a type of church construction and decoration adopted in Moldavia, which illustrates the cultural and religious context of the Balkans from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century to the late 16<sup>th</sup> century.

### Integrity and authenticity

The monastic church of Sucevița has undergone no significant alteration in the course of its history. It preserves with total integrity its original late 15<sup>th</sup> century architectural structure, and its set of mural paintings, both internal and external. The monastery which surrounds it has conserved its initial appearance, and in particular its historic enclosure. The surrounding countryside, rural and forested, has undergone few transformations and changes up to the present day.

The mural paintings are authentic, as they have undergone only minimal interventions. They are in a good state of conservation. The restorations undertaken since the 1970s have been carefully carried out, with great emphasis being placed on respecting authenticity in respect of motifs and pigments, and on conservation conditions. The restorations to the roof have resulted in the church regaining its original appearance, as documented by ancient iconographic sources.

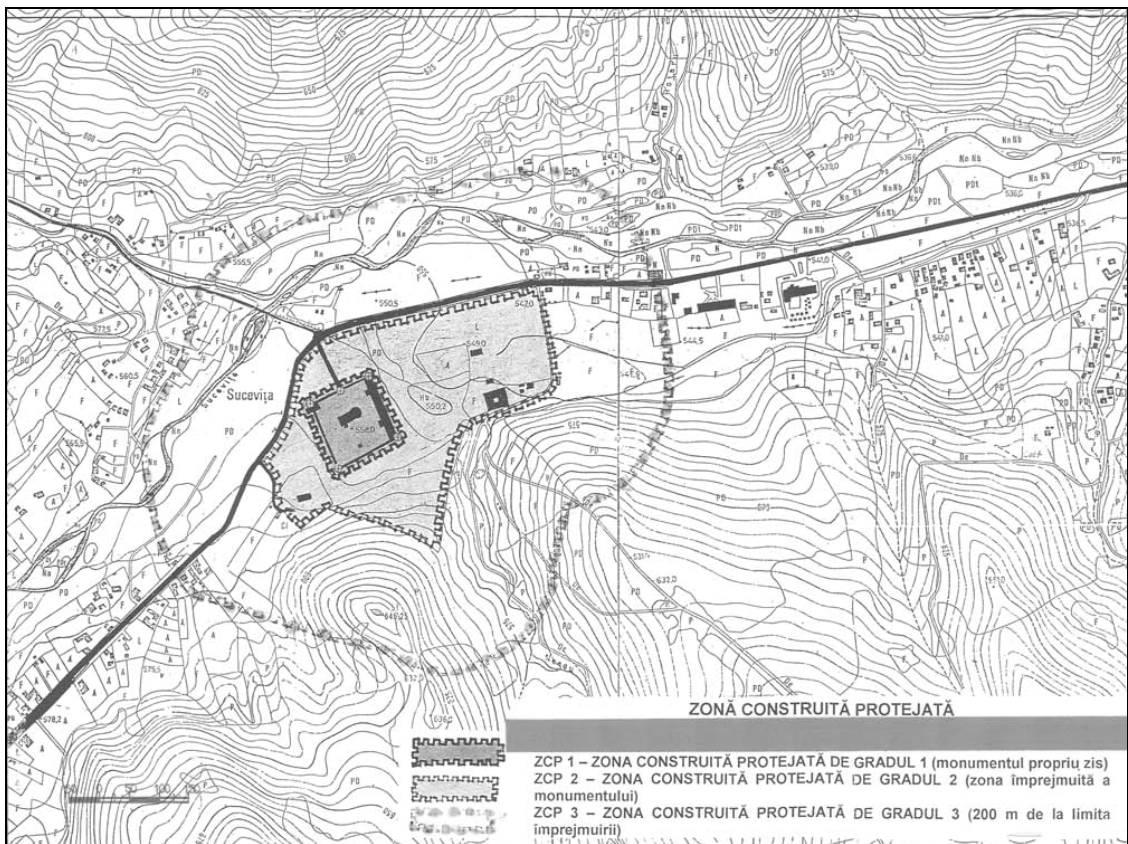
### Protection and management requirements

The protection of the property is satisfactory, both for the serial property as a whole and for Sucevița, where the property is a place of worship inside a functioning monastery. The protection is completed by the

municipality of Sucevița's general town plan for this zone, which was recently promulgated (January 2010). The plan should enable active control of building and other works inside the buffer zone and in the landscape environment of the church and monastery. The management plan has been drawn up, including the part pertaining to the extension. The Coordination Committee for the serial property has been set up, but details must be provided about how it functions locally.

ICOMOS recommends that the State Party should give consideration to the following points:

- Provide a report for the 34<sup>th</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee (2011) to inform it about the actual functioning of the Coordination Committee and its local unit at Sucevița.
- Ensure control of the likely increase in visitor numbers to the Monastery and the church of Sucevița.
- In the framework of the updated Town Plan, establish a practical plan for the reception of visitors in the vicinity of the monastery of Sucevița.
- Keep the World Heritage Committee informed about architectural projects pertaining to the conservation laboratory planned in the buffer zone of Sucevița monastery, in line with paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*.



Map showing the boundaries of the proposed extension



General view of the monastery



Church of the Resurrection



South apse



Interior