

BULGARIA

Madara Rider

Brief description

The Madara Rider, representing the figure of a knight triumphing over a lion, is carved into a 100m high cliff near the village of Madara in north-east Bulgaria. Madara was the principal sacred place of the First Bulgarian Empire before Bulgaria's conversion to Christianity in the 9th century. The inscriptions beside the sculpture tell of events that occurred between A.D. 705 and 801.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription 1979

Agency responsible for site management

- National Institute for Cultural Monuments
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website: www.mc.government.bg
- Ministry of Culture
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2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C (i), (iii)
 • Change to criteria proposed: revised Statements of Significance

Justification provided by the State Party

The Madara Rider, a unique relief, is an exceptional work of art created during the first years of the formation of the Bulgarian State at the beginning of the 8th century. It is the only relief of its kind, having no parallel in Europe. It is outstanding not only as a work of Bulgarian sculpture, with its characteristically realist tendencies, but also as a piece of historical source material dating from the earliest years of the establishment of the Bulgarian State. The inscriptions around the relief are, in fact, a chronicle of important events concerning the reigns of very famous Bulgarian Khans: Tervel, Kormisos and Omurtag.

It should be emphasized that the relief has survived in its authentic state, with no alteration in the past

or the present.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

A deeper inquiry concerning the Rock sculptures and the old symbolical reliefs seems absolutely necessary to the dossier.

Committee Decision

The Committee made no statement.

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

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

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

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- Laws: law on Cultural Monuments and Museums (1969); statutory instrument of secondary legislation: Protection of the Historical and Archaeological Reserves of Pliska, Preslav and Madara (1981)
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

Actions proposed:

- Development of management plan for the entire archaeological reserve

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction

Management /Administrative Body

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

Actions proposed: amendments to the existing legislation (2007)

5. Management Plan

- No management plan is being implemented
- Although there is no proper management plan, property protection management systems do exist. It is set out in the legislation "Protection of the Historical and Archaeological Reserves of Pliska, Preslav and Madara (1981)". Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: not given

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- Budget sources: main source is the Ministry of Culture, as well as outside grant sources
- WHF: (2003, 10,526 USD) for protection planning via a round table discussion;
- Insufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- number of staff: 7

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

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

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

- Training on site management: the management of the site is executed by the Ministry of Culture and the National Institute for Cultural Monuments. Operational management is run by the Regional Museum in Shumen (the centre of the Shumen District, where the site is situated); the National Academy of Fine Arts organized a special training on techniques and technology of conservation of all types of cultural monuments with particular artistic value

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 48,000 (registered by notation), 2004
- Trend: decreasing
- Visitor facilities: access to the site via paths and alleyways, well preserved parkland, WC, parking, a small museum

- Visitor needs: a visitor centre and access to further areas of the reserve are both being developed

10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment; studies relating to value of the site; condition surveys; impact of World Heritage designation
- Studies used to address biological damage, geographic stabilization

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: visitors, local communities, businesses, local authorities
- Events: Bulgaria takes part in the European Heritage Days annual campaign of the Council of Europe and EU in which young people take part in the national section of the International Photographic Contest on cultural monuments. In September 2005 Shumen Municipality hosted the National atelier in the framework of the EHD
- Web site available: Not an individual site, but the monument is promoted through the web sites of the Shumen District:
www.oblastshumen.icon.bg
The Regional museum of history in Shumen:
http://museum-shumen.psit35.net
The Shumen Municipality:
www.shoumen.bg/bghtml/horsman.htm
- Local participation: participation in maintenance of the tourist infrastructure in the buffer zone

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- World Heritage Committee sessions: 15th (1991)

Conservation interventions

- Conservation: the rock massif on which the Madara Horseman relief is located has been the subject of numerous in-depth studies at the level of archaeology, geodesy, geology, hydrology, statics, seismics, physico-chemistry and, only recently, microbiology. It is part of a reserve area incorporating over 2,000 year-old

archaeological monuments, which are legally protected. Parts of these monuments have been uncovered and are exhibited, but there are areas which have not been explored archaeologically but nevertheless presumably contain archaeological structures

- Present state of conservation: adequate

Threats and Risks to site

- Environmental pressures, natural disasters (especially earthquakes)
- Specific issues: environmental pressure. Analyses have shown that wind erosion and surface waters after persistent rains or after snow melting have a decisive influence on the microclimatic conditions. Temperature fluctuations have a minor effect. Readings taken by the Laboratory with the Ministry of Environment and Water have showed that air pollution is negligible. The biological cover, however, disrupts the water and steam exchange and causes destruction of the rock

13. Monitoring

- A formal monitoring programme exists
- Measures taken: regular observation of biodegradation of the rock

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, social, access to expertise for conservation intervention
- Strengths of management: the Madara Rider rock relief presents a great variety of conservation problems. It has been under constant observation and will shortly be subject of a major conservation intervention, about which the Committee will be promptly approached for an expert opinion
- Weaknesses of management: lack of an appropriate management plan

Future actions:

- Development of a management plan for the whole archaeological reserve
- Conservation of the relief, including strengthening of the rock massif, and addressing the problems of biological damage