

ROMANIA

Churches of Moldavia

Brief description

With their painted exterior walls, decorated with 15th- and 16th-century frescoes that are considered masterpieces of Byzantine art, these seven churches in northern Moldavia are unique in Europe. Far from being merely wall decorations, the paintings represent complete cycles of religious murals on all facades. Their outstanding composition, elegant outline and harmonious colours blend perfectly with the surrounding landscape.

1. Introduction

Year of Inscription

1993

Agency responsible for site management

- Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs
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2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria

C (i), (iv)

Justification provided by the State Party

Crit. I La peinture extérieure des églises du Nord de la Moldavie représente un phénomène artistique unique dans l'art byzantin, un chef-d'œuvre de la peinture murale. D'une valeur esthétique exceptionnelle, la peinture recouvre l'ensemble des façades des églises, tout en réalisant une parfaite symbiose entre la couleur et l'architecture par l'emploi ingénieux des espaces architecturaux.

De même, la chromatique de la peinture extérieure s'intègre parfaitement à l'ambiance du paysage environnant.

Crit. II L'idée de recouvrir complètement les surfaces extérieures des églises par des peintures a été reprise à d'autres églises de la Moldavie: l'église du monastère de Risca, peinte en 1552, celle de la monastère de Sucevita, peinte à partir de 1595 ou 1596, ou bien l'église de Saint Elie, près de Suceava, dont l'extérieur fut peint entre 1632-1653.

Crit. IV Dans l'art européen de l'époque, la peinture murale extérieure des églises du Nord de la Moldavie représente phénomène unique. Considérant l'art roumain, l'ensemble des églises à peinture extérieure se constitue dans un phénomène spécifique, autant du point de vue de l'architecture que de la peinture, pour l'art de la Moldavie dans la première moitié du XVIe siècle.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

That this group of properties be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion i:

Criterion i: The seven painted churches of northern Moldavia constitute a unique European cultural phenomenon, that of decorating the entire exterior facades of churches with mural paintings of high quality.

[The Committee added criterion iv: "The Committee inscribed the site on the World Heritage List under criteria (i) and (iv), noting in particular the exceptional value of the external mural paintings."]

Committee Decision

Bureau (1991): The Bureau deferred the examination of these nominations, considering it necessary for these monuments and sites to be afforded satisfactory legal protection, particularly with regard to the proposed protective perimeters. The Bureau also considered it desirable for a mission of experts to these three sites to be organized so that the Romanian authorities could be helped to prepare the necessary protective measures.

Bureau (June 1993): The Observer for Romania informed the Bureau of the interest of the national authorities in heritage conservation and expressed the wish that the nominations for inscription proposed by his country be re-examined. The Bureau recommended that the three nominations deferred during the June 1991 Bureau session be examined at the next session in December 1993 on the condition that the competent authorities provide assurances that there exists in Romania a real legal protection for monuments and cultural properties.

Bureau (December 1993): Responding to the Bureau request, the Romanian authorities provided information on the legal protection of cultural heritage in Romania confirming the adoption of legislative protection in April 1992. ICOMOS considers the legal texts provided as appropriate and therefore recommended the inscription of the site. The Bureau decided to recommend to the Committee to inscribe this site under criterion (iv).

However, it made a strong recommendation that the surrounding landscape not included in the buffer zone, should be adequately protected. In view of the above information concerning legal protection, the Bureau recommended that the Committee inscribe this site under criterion (i).

Session (1993): The Committee inscribed the site on the World Heritage List under criteria (i) and (iv), noting in particular the exceptional value of the external mural paintings.

- Statement of Significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site
- No change required

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: adequate
- Comments on buffer zone proposed by State Party: According to the legislation, for Protected zones, including buffer zones, more detailed urban planning is needed; specific regulations are obligatory

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- Ordinance (2000) and Law 564 (2001) concerning the protection of historical monuments inscribed on WHL, the Governmental Decision (2004) for the approval of the Methodology for the monitoring of the monuments inscribed on the WHL
- General Urban Planning for each town/commune elaborated between 1995-2000
- Law 350 (2001) for the organization of the state territory and urban planning
- The Order of the minister of transports, buildings and tourism (2003) for the approval of the "Methodology for the elaboration and the content of the documentation for protected built zones (PUZ)"
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

Actions proposed:

- To strictly respect the protection laws and mechanisms through national and local level communication and programmes

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction, urban centre, religious use

Management /Administrative Body

- Steering group: does not exist at this time. However, a person is designated at the County Council with dealing with problems at the site, and a steering group will be created at the regional level with representatives of the site
- Site manager : has responsibilities in addition to another job
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national; regional; local; the Orthodox Church
- The current management system is not sufficiently effective

Actions proposed:

- Nominate a coordinator by Suceava County Council. The coordinator should implement the requirements of the Law no 564/2001 concerning the protection of the monuments inscribed on the WHL and the Methodology for their monitoring and management

5. Management Plan

- No management plan is being implemented at this time, but one is foreseen for 04/2006
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: Suceava County Council

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- Budget sources: All the sites are under religious administration (parish, monastery); funds given by the state budget of the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs for the restoration; funding given by the County Council of Suceava derived from national or international programmes especially for the infrastructure or from the local council (for water, phone, etc.)
- Bi-lateral: UNESCO International Campaign, national and/or regional projects by international agencies, Japanese Funds in Trust, parish and private donations
- Insufficient: address this with some State funding and some private-public partnerships

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: not given, but staffing considered insufficient

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

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

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

- Training on site management: Yearly Courses for the monastery guides are organized by Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs (State Secretary for Religious Affairs) and Romanian Orthodox Patrarchate
- Needs: restorers for paintings, young restorers for architecture, technical personal, special qualified workers for traditional craftsmanship, cultural managers for monuments, guides, conservators for the site, training of the school teachers

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: change from one area of the site to another, with Arbore – about 2,000; Humor – about 20,000; Moldovita – about 8,000; Patrauti – about 1,000; Probota – about 2,000; Suceava - uncertain; Voronet – about 100,000; total = 205,000 (2004, tickets counted)
- Trend: generally, growing 5% annually
- Visitor facilities: also changes from one are of the site to another, but generally includes guides, restaurants, some parking, publications, pensions
- Visitor needs: generally to increase the quality of infrastructure, comfort level of tourist facilities, more publicity and publications

10. Scientific Studies

- Studies related to the value of the site; Archaeological surveys; transportation studies; monitoring of the churches during and after restoration
- Studies used for: aid in implementing programmes, publications, aid in training courses for guides

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site

- World Heritage Convention Emblem used on publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local authorities
- Need for awareness raising: better communication and accessibility for local community; publicity, special visits and programmes for local businesses; training on legislation and conference for local authorities;
- Events: various exhibitions both at the site and international ones concerning the site; exhibitions concerning Romanian World Heritage for school groups; presentations at international conferences
- Web site available: not available at this time
- Local participation: locals are involved, but details are not available

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- World Heritage Bureau sessions: 21st (1997)

Conservation interventions

- Conservation: A programme for the restoration of interior murals was developed in 1990; Wooden churches were built in the neighbourhood of inscribed monuments (Arbore, Patrauti, Humor, Probota) in order to protect the new restored churches; The UNESCO Project "Restoration and Conservation of Probota Monastery", 1997-2001, including excavations, restoration of murals, publication of the monograph
- Present state of conservation: need more resources

Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressures, Environmental pressures, natural disasters, visitor/tourism pressures
- Specific issues: The number of visitors in some sites (Voronet, Moldovita) is a pressure. It would be preferable to better monitor the flux of visitors; Local pressure – especially in building of new houses or weekend/holiday houses is very great in some places; the danger of pollution exists; Development pressure is one of the most crucial

13. Monitoring

- A formal monitoring programme exists (under Law 564 (2001) and detailed in a follow up Government Decision (2004)

- Measures taken: measurements of temperature, humidity, some measurement of visitor numbers

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, economic, management
- Strengths of management: restoration projects completed; better overall site conservation; better infrastructure; local economic development; exposure to new international tourism groups
- Weaknesses of management: the effort to collaborate with property owners (in particular the Church); lack of a Management Plan; lack of a Tourism Plan; need modernized accommodation