

Georgia

Cultural Heritage Initiative IDF Grant Programme

World Bank, Municipal and Social Services (Dept. IV)

Mission report 2 - 14 December 1996 by Flemming Aalund

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Introduction:

1. This World Bank mission by Flemming Aalund, under the Cultural Heritage Initiative for Georgia, took place from 2 - 14 December 1996 under Trust Fund agreement with Danish Foreign Ministry. The scope of work is defined within the framework of an extended assignment to include the following main objectives: (i) assist in the selection of the sites to be targeted under the Cultural Heritage Initiative, (ii) evaluate the priority needs for foreign assistance and (iii) propose a viable implementation plan for the World Bank initiative.

2. The itinerary and summary of discussions are rendered in Annex I, providing a narrative description of findings and general background information. The executive summary is referring to the scope of work as stipulated above. Considering the rather ambitious TOR in view of the short time at disposal, I have expressed my reservations towards fulfilment of para. iii within the limited time frame of this initial mission and I have concentrated my attention to the immediate and short-term initiatives. Para. ii, priority needs can only be decided after final selection of pilot sites. The framework is only suggestive, depending on the detailing of individual components as the project materializes during the next 18 months. All details are resulting from close discussions with the members of the Executive Committee: Mr. David Ninidze, Director, and Mr. Kakha Khimshiashvili, Technical Coordinator, who have provided expert advises and guidance throughout my stay in Georgia.

Executive summary:

3. Protection and enhancement of cultural heritage as a vehicle to promoting social and economic development is the main objective of the World Bank Initiative. The historic heritage of Georgia is providing a very rich source for the building of national identity and creating a common goal. Without a history, no feeling of identity and no trust in the future, this essential knowledge is true for the individual as well as the society. The World Bank programme in the field of cultural heritage is designed to initiate many different initiatives that may evolve around three main issues:

(i) Six pilot project schemes involving project preparation and providing testing ground for integrated preservation of physical heritage, community participation and economic development.

(ii) Revision of the existing legislation, organization and management of physical heritage at a national level.

(iii) Public awareness of ethics and practices in restoration and preservation of the physical heritage at all levels in the society.

4. I have made a cursory visit only to five of the ten proposed pilot sites, representing a broad spectrum of problems that Georgia is facing in the current situation. All the proposed sites are very important, but some are more relevant than others to serve as pilot projects. The English translation of the projects concentrate on the historic building description, paying less attention to the immediate social and economic implications and potentials of community participation. For this reason I find that the projects need more specification before the final selection be made, possibly by the end of January 1997.

As for the more general issues of legislation, management and public awareness, an outline plan for major events and arrangements are outlined below.

Operational framework for 18 months project duration:

- outline proposals only for discussion and further elaboration.

Immediate initiatives December 1996 - February 1997

5. Establishment of office accommodation and formulate detailed programme of activities for each of the selected pilot sites e.g.: (i) criteria for selection; (ii) description of the site and its specific historical and architectural features; (iii) aims and purpose of the project; (iv) final goal and output by the end of the project period and (v) means to achieving this objective in terms of manpower, equipment and cooperation partners. A detailed job description of duties and required qualifications are needed for each of the vacancies that need to appear in the press. Foreign consultants are to be engaged according to priority needs for each of the projects; additional to working directly together with the Georgian counterparts, the consultants can take part in seminars on specific topics as stipulated below. (as for project preparation, cf.: Danida, *Guidelines for project preparation*, 1992).

The pilot projects will follow the detailed work plan as stipulated in individual planning. Each project will have a team leader, who relates directly to the Executive Committee. An initial as well as a midterm review of progress of the implementation will be arranged for each of the pilot projects. The purpose of the review is to describe the progress of the project and its result. Plan adjustments in relation to the objectives will take place if necessary for solving accumulated problems.

Surveys and investigations at each of the pilot sites will require special equipment. The Executive Committee will stipulate these needs, which include cameras, basic equipment for architectural surveys, light and portable scaffolding and a computerized

theodolite ('total station', which is not available at the Remote Sensing Scientific Centre). Office equipment and stationeries, likewise according to specifications, including copy machine, telefax, computer, software and possibly Internet connection.

6. Prepare work seminar on revision of the national legislation on cultural heritage preservation during joint WB - European Council mission in January-February 1997. The seminar will aim at providing a platform for thorough discussion on the new draft legislation under preparation by a parliament commission and by the Ministry of Culture respectively. A possible agenda will include: (i) Information about European Council charters and conventions, (ii) presentation of examples on legislation and administration of cultural heritage in Denmark and possibly other European countries, relating also to general planning of the physical environment; (iii) presentation of the current situation in Georgia and (iv) report on the law revision in Georgia followed by round table sessions. An English translation of the draft text is to be forwarded for scrutiny by the invited specialists well in advance of the arrangement, including explanatory notes to the draft legislation. In order to ensure coherency between all planning related to preservation of the physical heritage, also urban development, environment and nature protection and f.ex. municipal planning need to be scrutinized.

Short term initiatives December 1996 - May 1997 (6 months):

7. Working sessions and seminars are arranged in cooperation with other institutions and NGO organisations working in the fields of cultural heritage preservation. The idea is to disseminate the ideas and inspiration to a wide public and incorporate people from all walks of life in the initiative e.g.:

(i) Involve the Georgian Orthodox Church in seminars where ethics and principles in preservation and restoration of physical heritage are discussed. Proceedings and pamphlets/booklets directed towards professionals and laymen will be published on these topics.

(ii) Involve the Board of Monuments and the Church Centre for Art and Architecture in working sessions aiming at a revision of the present organizational structure. The main purpose will be to define the responsibilities in cultural heritage preservation and to separate responsibility between administrative and executing authorities. A special problem relates to the uncertain position of the Georgian Orthodox Church concerning the administration/ownership of medieval church buildings, requiring the establishment of a clear division of responsibilities between the Church and the State, possibly dividing responsibility of (a) churches in current use and (b) obsolete churches and ruins; there is no clear line of division, however, and many border cases have to be discussed and economy is a very essential issue.

(iii) Involve the National Committee of ICOMOS, the Institute of Restoration, Faculty of Architecture and vocational training institutions in discussions about traditional crafts

and materials. The main purpose will be to reinstate appreciation of good craftsmanship, especially with regard to discarding cement in restoration and resort to lime for mortars, plasters and wall washes. Emphasis on reversibility and authenticity in craftsmanship as well as in materials is the main objective.

(iv) Arrange working sessions for all directors of the 13 Museum Preserves and related bodies discussing management of cultural heritage sites and properties in cooperation with the Board of Monuments, local governments and possibly museums and educational institutions. The main purpose will be to reinstate good management and professional administration. Possible output of the sessions will be the formulation of general rules and regulations, including the obligations to formulate job descriptions for all employees and evaluate output in relation to actual activity. (cf.: Bernard Feilden and Jukka Jokilehto, *Management guidelines for world cultural heritage sites*, ICCROM, 1993)

(v) Arrange working session together with the Board of Monuments in order to finalize modalities for future documentation methods and establishment of a new updated register of historic buildings on electronic database as a substitute to the existing building 'passports'.

(vi) Arrange seminar on the specific problems related to preservation of Tbilisi central district. This event is already planned by joint effort of the National Committee of ICOMOS and the Municipality of Tbilisi with a possible financial contribution by the World Monuments Fund.

(vii) Arrange together with the tourist agencies and other relevant bodies a seminar aiming at the planning and promotion of cultural tourist itineraries.

(viii) Miscellaneous arrangements to be determined as the Cultural Heritage Initiative develops.

Medium term initiatives December 1996 - November 1997 (12 months):

8. International seminar in September 1997: Proposal for the arrangement of a seminar aiming at in depth discussions of the current problems of cultural heritage preservation in Georgia. The seminar may be titled: 'Legal and administrative aspects in cultural heritage management'. The seminar is to be arranged in collaboration with international institutions operating in the field and it should have three main objectives: (i) to focus on the current problems in Georgia during a difficult period of transition towards national sovereignty; (ii) raise public awareness about the rich cultural heritage of Georgia and (iii) establish an international network of experts and specialized institutions for the exchange of information and experiences.

A stipulated programme could possibly involve the following international

participation: (i) World Bank : Report on the WB initiative and related involvements in Georgia; (ii) European Council: Information about European charters and conventions in the field of cultural heritage preservation; (iii) UNESCO World Heritage Centre or Physical Heritage Division: Information about International conventions and charters in the field of cultural heritage preservation and (iv) ICCROM: Ethics in conservation and restoration of cultural heritage.

Long term Initiatives December 1996 - May 1998 (18 months):

9. April 1998, International fund-raising seminar with attendance of prospected donor countries and NGO organisations. This ambitious seminar is aiming to launch a major international appeal under patronage of the President of Georgia for the preservation of the nation's cultural heritage. A possible subject matter has been proposed by Eduard Shevernadze under the headlines: (i) Democratic development, (ii) market economy, (iii) transition period and (iv) problems of cultural heritage. This intend has already been communicated orally to the Council of Europe, possibly coinciding with the signing of credentials for full membership of the European Council.

On this occasion a travel exhibition can be put on stage on the cultural heritage of Georgia, which also involves the museums on applied art.

Copenhagen, 18.12.1996.

Flemming Aalund, architect MAA

Enclosures:

Narrative description of itinerary and summery of main findings	annex	I
List of people met		II
Select bibliography.....		III
List of members at the Board of Trustees and the Advisory Board		IV
Chart showing present organizational structure of the Board of Monuments.....		V
Map showing present administrative divisions		VI
Map showing proposal for division of new administrative districts		VII
Summery description of pilot projects		VIII

Documentation on historic buildings and monuments are deposited mainly in the archives of (i) The Board of Monuments, (ii) the Institute of Restoration, (iii) The Academy of Science/ Inst. of Art History and Inst. of Manuscripts. A computerized data base need to be established for new documentation; this electronic data base will be set up as a part of the present cultural heritage initiative according to established European standards (cf.: *Recommendation on co-ordinating documentation methods and systems related to historic buildings and monuments of the architectural heritage* (R (95) 3); future responsibility of the database need to be transferred to the responsible authority for listed monuments after completion of the 18 months project period and reorganization of the Board of Monuments.

The former Soviet legislation related to cultural heritage preservation is *de facto* no longer functioning; alternative drafts for a new legislation are being prepared by Ministry of Culture and a subcommittee of the Parliament respectively; the Executive Committee needs to be actively involved in the revision of the legislation; an English translation of the draft is needed for comments and amendments, possibly by the assistance of legal expert from Council of Europe; a seminar with the attendance of all concerned parties may also be relevant focusing on the aims and objectives before the final draft is presented to Parliament.

Technical training is offered in three places: (i) the Polytechnic University, Faculty of Architecture, centring upon engineering training; (ii) Academy of Fine Arts, Faculty of Architecture, which also includes a Department of Historical Monuments Conservation and Faculty of Art History and (iii) Tbilisi State University, Dept. of Art History. Training in conservation of movable objects and manuscripts is not formalized and questions related to capacity needs, qualifications, career structure, etc. need clarification. It will be advisable to involve students in the practical field work through this initiative and start international summer schools and alike.

Short tour to the old quarter of Tbilisi town late afternoon visiting Metechi and Sioni church and occasionally attending services with beautiful Gregorian liturgical songs performed from different parts of the church; newly restored Turkish sulphuric bath complex bricked up with cement mortar already badly deteriorated; municipality beautification project of external facades and commercial street for art craft shop not functioning very well and painted surfaces flaking due to impervious surfaces; some small scale lime production resumed recently may enlarge capacity eventually, if there is a demand; the present project for the Church in Pitareti may set precedent for the reintroduction of lime mortars in all restoration work; this 20.000 USD project is sponsored as one of 100 most endangered historic monuments worldwide by the US based World Monument Fund. Perhaps economic incentives will be needed to reintroduce lime in a broader context of restoration; stone pavement preserved in many streets, scale and proportions of streetscape and roofscape generally maintained, but obvious need of repair and service improvements; special problems

are created by newly established private ownership to individual flats not taking into account common needs for external upkeep and infrastructure improvements; obviously establishment of compulsory maintenance funds is required, possibly with public/ municipal subsidize to enforce general maintenance and create job opportunities; the present building control system is not adequate in the future (also with regard to the poor public salaries paid to municipal officers amounting only about 20-30 USD a month and the possible risk of corruption and conflict of interests).

Wednesday 4 Dec.: Meeting with Mr. Zaza Shengelia, Deputy State Minister. Georgian government contribution to the Cultural Heritage Initiative amount to 40.000 USD; urgent demand of 10.000 to be defrayed as soon as possible for the setting up office premises, purchase of most needed office equipment and payment of salaries to Executive Committee; the prospects of the visit to the Council of Europe on 7-11 December by official delegation, including Dep. State Minister, MP, Head of Board of Monuments and Executive Committee Director was discussed. Also, a joint WB and EC mission in Jan.-February 1997 was discussed, possibly using this visit as a platform for a seminar, discussing the draft law on historic monument preservation.

I raised doubts about the institutional separation between CHI and the Board of Monuments but justified on the grounds that the Cultural Heritage Initiative should work at interministerial level and not be impeded by existing bureaucratic obstacles and reservations towards the former establishment that may linger on. Anyhow, quite congenial working relations seem to exist at personal levels ensuring good cooperation, but the risk of creating some resentment by the old staff may be real.

Meeting with Ivane Gremelashvili and Merab Botchoidze at the Board of Monument; the building is in a deplorable condition. Georgian National Committee to ICOMOS was founded in 1993 and will provide a good independent platform for professionals in the field of historic building preservation; the national Committee can possibly undertake responsibility of a seminar reviewing the draft law on historic building preservation; a seminar is under preparation about Tbilisi Central Area, possibly financed by the World Monuments Fund.

An organizational chart of the Board of Monuments is shown in Annex IV. The bureaucratic structure needs revision, especially separation between administration and actual execution of projects; a Parliament committee is presently working on this issue. A system of licence to be awarded recognized architects, craftsmen and restorers may help create more professional attitudes to restoration.

A total of about 8.000 buildings are listed as historic monuments, of which about 5.000 are provided with a 'passport' including a short descriptive text, one or more photographs and measured drawings if they exist; the remaining structures are listed on inventory cards by name and location, including one photograph; the inventory do exist in only one original and I think at least one copy should be made for security, possibly entrusted to the local Departments of Culture at district level. There might be

about 8-12.000 more buildings qualified for listing and many regions have not been surveyed. A systematic survey is need, computerized and updated according to European standards. About 80 % is church buildings, about 8 % fortifications, another 8 % civil architecture. Many churches are in ruin and ownership and responsibility for upkeep not clearly established. Ownership and land register is not existing creating a general problem; presently farmers at the former kolhooses are given property rights to land and a common system of land registry needs to be worked out.

The Board of Monuments has a total budget of about 400.000 USD for restoration work and salaries to about 2-300 staff members on the payroll, increasing to about 500.000 USD in 1997 suffice to cover only the cost of 3 to 4 restoration projects in a year. Specific problems after earthquake at Imereti and Racha in 1991.

Tuesday 5 Dec.: Eduard Shevarnadze, President of Georgia, officially signs the project document on the cultural heritage initiative on behalf of the Georgian Government at an extended Government session.

Meeting with the Parliament Committee responsible for the preparation of the new legislation on historic monument preservation; a total of nine members of the committee were present, chaired by professor George Shaishmelashvili, MP; lengthy discussion about the draft, which has been inspired especially from the independent Baltic States. Specially the legal status of the many church buildings need clarification. I suggested explanatory text following the legal text and this can be prepared before mid-January with an English translation to be discussed during meeting with joint WB and Council of Europe mission. Ministry of Culture prepares an alternative draft proposal based mainly on the previous Act, but I was informed that they prefer a bill that regulates physical heritage in more general terms and specific decrees be adopted as need arises. New legislation on urban development also under preparation with special status of Tbilisi as the capital city; coordination needed especially with regard to preservation and integrated development of historic districts. New administrative districts/provinces not yet finalised due to conflict in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. I suggest a public hearing to be held sometime in spring, when the draft is finalized and distributed for comments. Legal expertise needed. The current intention is that the new legislation may be ready for the spring Parliament session in June-July 1997.

Export of movable heritage pose a problem. Violations of cultural heritage according to the Haag Convention in Abkhazia to be raised with the Council of Europe; monitoring of the field situation is required, but safety of the observers may be difficult.

Meeting with NGO-organization for social-economic development of the Alpine Regions, discussing especially Shatili included among the pilot projects. The region only accessible by car from April to November, served by helicopter twice a month during winter. A new settlement was constructed 15 years ago, and the old settlement

is not inhabited and so is the case with most of the fortified villages in the area. Previously sheep-breeding provided an income, but winter pasture on the northern slopes of the Caucasus range no longer available and subsequently the number of sheep is drastically reduced. Spaced with a distance of about 10-15 kilometres the villages may provide ideal possibilities for development of adventurous tourism and studies have been carried out to this effect by Erhest Enslow, IESC (International Executive Service Corps, cf.: tourist development report), but there are no need for new, modern vacation houses, when old buildings in need of restoration are in plenty. Drawings in scale 1:200 showing location of all houses, but land register or cadastral map do not exist; houses/keeps are owned by individuals or families living elsewhere, mainly in Tbilisi, and they have suspicions of government intentions. Councils of elders decide, and old customs prevail. Integrated preservation planning needs to consider socio-economic conditions and unwritten customs and traditions.

I propose land register be completed and ownership be secured on condition that roof and outer walls of the house/keep are well maintained. If this condition is not met confiscation may be used to enforce authority and a common village foundation take responsibility for restoration and resale using revolving funds designed so as to benefit the local community as a whole, in this way a collective responsibility may evolve, and possible conflicts directed away from central institutions. The keeps may originate from the 11-12 cent., but do not have elaborate and sophisticated architectural details and the arrangement of international youth camps is a possible way to initiate restoration under professional guidance; contacts to the 'Earth Watch Organisation' is established to this effect, but others may be identified; tourist promotion necessary as well as the creation of an appropriate infrastructure in Tbilisi and elsewhere; pertinent experience may possibly be sought from the Norwegian Tourist Organisation by approaching UNESCO WH office in Oslo.

Friday 6 Dec.: Visit to Scientific Research Institute on Remote Sensing at the Tbilisi University. Very well furnished with equipment 7-8 years of age, missing modern software, however; about 10 students but no commissions and little activity; no doubt possessing considerable capacities in all fields related to data processing and surveys of land and buildings; f.ex risk preparedness and investigations of destruction after 1988 avalanches, destroying several villages in alpine regions. The vice president speaks good English and is furthermore associate to the NGO for development of High Alpine Regions. Cooperation with this university institute preferable to the state department for Geodesy and Cartography due to the equipment and competence in the field of photogrammetry. Contacts with a foreign university institution may give a further spin-off, f.ex. Technical University of Copenhagen, Inst. of Land Survey.

Meeting with Basil Kobakhize, priest with the University Church and member of the Advisory Board for the Cultural Heritage Initiative. The Church is separated from the State. According to para. 9 of the State Constitution all confessions are equal and free, but the Georgian Orthodox Church is the absolute dominating religious institution. The Patriarch is the head of 27 dioceses, divided in a larger number of parishes (is there

a parish register ?); ownership to all church buildings, including ruins, has officially been transferred to the Georgian Orthodox Church, consequently the church is responsible for upkeep; to this effect the church runs their own Art Historian and Architectural Centre in Tbilisi, which is responsible for the maintenance and restoration (capacity and qualifications ?). Allegedly a decree do exist requiring that all works on historic monuments need licence by the Board of Monuments; evidence is needed, especially with regard to the new legislation on preservation of historic monuments, and it seems to me that there are a need to distinguish between (i) church buildings in current use and (ii) obsolete or ruined church buildings in order to establish a clear and undisputed responsibility for upkeep.

The church as a respected institution has big influence on the treatment of historic monuments, and the Church may actually be the very best fund-raising institution. The priests are most often genuinely interested to do the very best for their beloved church and their communion, but from my experience values of historic authenticity may not be understood or highly appreciated; these issues need to be judged on a more scientific and professional background by an interdisciplinary and independent body. Donations may pose a specific problem, which cannot be handled entirely by the church. Dissemination of knowledge creating a better understanding of proper use of materials and ethics of restoration may result from seminars arranged by the Church under assistance by the Cultural Heritage Initiative; proceedings and popular booklets for wide distribution will serve the purpose.

At the moment considerable arguments are concerned with the rebuilding of the Bagrati Cathedral in Kutaisi; remaining as a ruin since the cathedral was blown up by the Ottomans in the 16 cent., the monument evokes considerable nationalist and religious feelings; Bagrati Cathedral ranks among the three most important cathedrals in the country besides the cathedrals in Msketta and Alaverdi, located in the western, central and eastern part of the country respectively. A possible reconstruction is justified for symbolic reasons as a major national undertaking.

Visit to the Open-Air Museum founded about 20-25 years ago with very fine examples of vernacular architecture, mainly in wood originating from the western regions of Georgia; buildings, however, badly in need of maintenance showing leaking roofs, etc.

Meeting with art historians from the Academy of Science, Institute of Art History; the destruction of the Institute's premises by a fire during the recent strife is most unfortunate; by this tragic event the archive with valuable documentation on historic buildings originating from the last hundred years or so, as well as about one half of the library, disappeared. The staff members of the Institute have considerable knowledge and experience in their field, especially in medieval art and wall paintings; they expressed grave concern whether the Church is able to respect historic values and authenticity in restoration; they alluded to a Parliament Decree from 1993 and promised to supply a copy. Afterwards I have been informed that the transfer of state property to the former users by decree in 1991 has been moderated by a 1993 Parliament Law of the Georgian Republic stating *inter alia* that ownership to cultural

and historic monuments of great importance remain with the state (e.g. listed historic monuments and among them the majority of church buildings); as I understand the situation, ownership to land and buildings is still in under dispute and clarification is needed, not least with regard to economic responsibility for upkeep and regular maintenance.

Saturday 7 Dec.: Left early on a two-day trip to the south near the Turkish border visiting prospected project sites together with Kakha and Tamar Nemsadze, architect from the Institute of Restoration. Commercial advertisements start to pop up in the open landscape along the road; prohibition needed by law in the Nature and Environment Protection Act. Lunched at Mtsvane Monastery on the road shortly after Borzomi city famous for the thermal springs, mineral water and former sanatoriums, also an imposing railway station from the Stalinist period. The bell tower has preserved medieval stone tiles on the roof, whereas the chapel has a 15 years old roof of cement stones copying the original form; these artificial tiles have been developed by the laboratory of the Institute of Restoration and employed in about ten other places; they may be cheap in a short perspective, but not enduring, corrupting traditional crafts and authenticity of materials. Also, abundant use of cement mortars is badly damaging the structure. This is a general problem everywhere in the country and great efforts are needed to discard this material in restoration and resort to lime for mortar, plaster and wall wash.

Hertvisi fortress ruin is sited at a commanding position at the confluence of the Mtkvari and the Taparavani (Djavakhiti Mtkvari) rivers. Vardzia cave monastery is situated 15 kilometres upstream the Mtkvari river. Other cave monasteries are situated high up on the steep cliffs along the road and the lower slopes have manmade terraces of great age everywhere. The dramatic landscape and spectacular sites are impressive indeed creating an enigmatic feeling of timelessness.

The Vardzia Museum Preserve is one among a total of 13 in the country with 17 people employed at present. A 280 beds Intourist hotel was in full operation here from 1980 to 1992 creating direct job opportunities for personnel of about 160 as well as spin off to the neighbouring settlements. The present economic situation in the district is precarious and the call on the local governor at the obsolete townhall of Aslindza was telling in this respect; deforestation is mainly the result of Ottoman suppression policy during the 18 cent. and during the USSR period a 60-kilometre border zone was put under special restrictions not allowing normal traffic. To-day economy mainly relies on subsistence agriculture with no market opportunities and no retail. On this background a project that centre upon cultural tourism would help create new opportunities and economic incentives. The site is located about one days travel from Tbilisi with several interesting sites along the road; a stay of several days may include visits to the caves, a one day walk to the Kumurdo cathedral ruin and recreation at the thermal springs. The project includes, e.g. preparation of a complete elevated drawing of the cave monastery, geological and static investigations of the soft limestone rock, highly vulnerable to water infiltration and seismic action;

extension of the landscape preservation zone; feasibility study for rehabilitation and management of the hotel, infrastructure improvements, tourist promotion, etc...

Application for the participation in the programme 'Les Campus Europeans du Patrimoines' has been prepared by the National Committee of ICOMOS, but it failed this year due to time constraints; in my view the programme is too theoretical centring upon site visits and needs more practical work.

Overnight stay in Tmogvi village enjoying hospitality by Vladimer Zazadze, director of the Vardzia Museum Preserve, and his family.

Sunday 8 Dec.: Kumurdo Cathedral is situated on the plateau above the Mtkvaki river; the site can be reached on foot from Vardzia and be included in the tourist itinerary. Access by car needs a deviation of about 60 kilometres through the provincial town Ahalkalaki with Russian army barrack. The Armenian people at the plateau and the neighbouring lake district were expatriated by the Ottomans in the end of the 18 cent., they relate to the Armenian Orthodox Church and speak Armenian and Russian. Poor living condition of the ethnic minority living close to the border and the presence of the Russian army do create a potential conflict to Georgian sovereignty.

The building history of the cathedral is published by the USSR Academy of Architecture in 1947 and various restoration initiatives have been undertaken from 1937 onwards, most recently in the 1980s under direction by Tamar Nemsadze, but there is a long way to go; most promising is the reproduction of carved stone slabs, each measuring 60cm in width and varying in length from 60 to 120 cm; genuine craftsmanship and use of authentic materials are sustained, creating professional job opportunities and self-respect; more discouraging is the use of cement mortars leaving traces of slurry down the medieval walls. Extend of further action needs to be carefully considered, since a completion of the cathedral can hardly be justified due to its isolated location, now in the centre of a village, which is mainly inhabited by Armenian expatriates. Included as a pilot project there is need of preparing a detailed project for the preservation and consolidation of the structure as a ruin, including detailed building surveys, project preparation and costing by experienced architect restorer exercising sound judgement on ethics of restoration; this is not by any means a simple undertaking.

Three small medieval churches of the one-nave type are situated in the Sagamo village, with a gorgeous view to the Sagamo Lake; one building is in fair condition, whereas the other two are in ruin.

A relative large ruin of a medieval church with excellent carvings is situated in Poka village at the southern end of Paravani Lake; ordinary living houses are encroaching on the site; severe static problems occur in the one corner of the structure; several large stones seem to have been deliberately torn down and the walls are damaged by graffiti depicting Mount Ararat, symbolic sign of Armenian sovereignty that has

appeared sometime after 1972 and they seem to be very recent. A similar medieval ruin in Paravna (Radionovka in Russian) at the northern end of Paravani Lake was not visited in lack of time due to bad weather conditions and very rough roads on the whole distance between Ahalkalaki and Calka and further on to Tbilisi, most of the way following the railway, which is in disorder.

Completion of a systematic survey and establishment of scientific records will in my opinion be the main justification for including these buildings (and many more archaeological sites), followed by a program for emergency repairs. Otherwise, I find the situation in these Armenian villages so appalling that there is a call for integrated social improvement and infrastructure schemes (e.g. road improvement) and a program for preservation of Church ruins at this stage can hardly be justified in the eyes of the local population, who may rather see it as a demonstration of arrogance.

Monday 9 Dec.: Reading project documents and keeping up with the notes.

Considering the different scope and problems involved in each of the selected pilot project, I suggest that each project be prepared by individual project teams with specific qualifications. Additionally, each team can draw upon consultant expertise, foreign or local, as needs occur. In order to ensure the best possible integration and use of existing expertise, I propose active involvement of staff members of the Institute of Restoration and the Church Centre of Art and Architecture, who have good merits and expertise in their field of competence. Their present salaries can be supplemented through payment of per diem according to established rates and subsidiary payment according to qualifications. They may be chosen by the Board of Trustees on basis of their *curriculum vitae* and appraisal of previous records. These staff members will naturally continue their involvement in the executing phase of the respective projects; in this way a smooth reorganisation of the Board of Monuments can take place and continuity be secured. I consider this a very important issue!

Tuesday 10 Dec.: Visit to Signahi, a provincial town situated about 115 kilometre east of Tbilisi; good asphalt road but misty whether condition allowed no view of the landscape and the town for the whole day. Institute of Restoration accomplished a project here during a ten-year period in the 1980s including the restoration of traditional houses with open balconies along a whole street in the centre of town. About 3.100 inhabitants; app. 900 families now occupying their own flat or house; tax is levied on land, property and communal services; allegedly public water supply and sewage works well, but electricity supply is scarce. The town is surrounded by a town wall with 23 keeps and 6 gates; houses originate from early 18 cent. or later of varying architectural styles and quality; there are no houses of exceptional quality, and many houses are modern, but in general I feel that the town is typical for a small provincial town. The courtesy visit to the local governor, Vaja Zabutaschivili, was very encouraging with prospects of future cooperation; presently four banks in the town provide short term loans only and the governor readily promised to provide the premises and a government contribution of 50.000 Lari (app. 40.000 USD) to help establishing a housing bank institution; the meeting was attended by a local journalist,

who later asked for an interview and the whole atmosphere was very promising. Discussions with the mayor and the municipality architect corroborated the interests of future cooperation expressed by the governor.

The pilot project will eventually involve the completion of an integrated development and preservation plan for the historic town and establishment of a land- and housing register. Point of departure will be a town plan of 1975 that needs much elaboration and updating; community participation essential and contact with the journalist from the local newspaper gave promise of public debate and active community participation. The municipal architect related that four architects in the district are unemployed at present, and I strongly support the suggestion of employing local expertise for the Cultural Heritage Initiative, if they have adequate qualifications and assistance by Nuanzia Guardiani very pertinent in this urban development project.

After an agreeable lunch with endless toasts, we paid a short visit to Bodbe Monastery in the outskirts of the town, where a coffin with the remains of Saint Nino is kept, according to legend she brought Christianity to Georgia in the 4th century. She is also associated with Ninotsminda, a fortified complex with a bishop's house and a ruined church, which we saw in the dusk on our way back to Tbilisi and here again received with a warm welcome of Georgian hospitality.

Wednesday 11 Dec.: Day trip to the Gori about 60 kilometre west of Tbilisi. Stalin was born here, and a museum is erected to his honour!! The historic sites in the vicinity are intended for a pilot project that includes development of a tourist itinerary to these sites. We visited a number of them: (i) Atani village with the small Atani Sioni Church is a true medieval replica of the Djvari church at Mtskheta, located in beautiful surroundings within the narrow gorge of Tana river; the local community has collected about 5.000 USD for the restoration of the frescos, which is hardly enough; a thorough condition report of the frescos is needed to decide on the extend of further preservation apart from the consolidation that is already completed by filling the lacunas. Condition reports including proposal for interventions can be carried out by specialists from the Centre of Mural Paintings at the Board of Monuments, however, cooperation with a foreign university institution or ICCROM can be recommended.

A total of about 70 historic buildings or ruins are located in the vicinity within reach of a one-day journey from Gori. The most spectacular is the prehistoric, mainly hellenistic, site of Uplistsikhe situated on the cliffs at the opposite side of the Kura River; the site is proposed for inclusion in the World Heritage List and apart from the historic interest, it provides a fine view to the river and the surrounding landscape. For this reason, it has been a popular place for a day's outing. The site is one of the 13 Museum Reserves in the country and the director related that they had 140.000 visitors a year of which about 17.000 were foreigners, mainly on group tours arranged by Intourist; today a maximum of 60 visitors may come on a fine Sunday. There are 13 permanent staff members employed, mainly occupied with cleaning of the site, but it seems to me that much maintenance is undone and job descriptions with clear work

instructions are obviously required. For the future a visitor centre for proper presentation and interpretation of the site is needed as well as a maintenance plan.

On the way back we passed by the village of Ertatsminda and saw the fine medieval church, which is also proposed for inclusion in the pilot project; the roof was in poor condition and the northern wall with ornate carvings badly deteriorating due to dampness. The church has no priest and no communion. The village had no specific historic quality, but individual houses displayed interesting features. The church is an interesting monument in its own right and certainly an interesting site on a tourist itinerary, but if the project shall have any meaning in terms of community participation and local development, cooperation with the Orthodox Church is needed to secure ordination of a new priest and social development furthered through identification of needs and future prospects. Information and debate about environmental qualities and proposals for improvement may further the cause. I should also think that the 'Intersave' system for evaluation of buildings and urban structures from a preservation point of view can be used as a model for a summary survey of environmental qualities in the surrounding villages (cf: Ministry of Environment and Energy, *InterSave, International survey of Architectural values in the Environment*, Copenhagen 1995; see also Flemming Aalund, *Physical Planning and Preservation of Buildings and Historic Settlements in Denmark*, Interplan 1996)

Thursday 12 Dec.: General discussions about the programme and translation to English of the descriptive text for the ten proposed pilot projects. The ten proposed sites are: 1. Aspindza and Akhalkalaki Regions, incl. Vardzia as the main attraction and Kumurdo cathedral ruin (recommendable in my view) ; 2. Central Region, incl. Uplistsikha (recommendable in my view); 3. the Khobi Valley (not visited); 4. Shatili high Alpine Region (not visited, but recommendable in my view); 5. Signagi historic town (recommendable in my view); 6. Ninotsminda Region (Lake district - which I do not recommend for inclusion due to more relevant priority needs); 7. Racha Region (not visited, but possibly justified due to earthquake damage in 1991); 8. Tbilisi old area of Kldis Ubani with residential quarter (recommendable in my view because of the possible major impact and attention this project may be afforded in the capital city); 9. Dzalisa Palace and Tsilkani church (not visited); 10. Dmanisi and environment, incl. Sioni cathedral (not visited).

Friday 13 Dec.: Appearing for an interview on State Television in the programme 'Good morning, Georgia' introducing the WB Initiative together with Zaza Shengelia, David and Khakha; also, the recent contact to the Council of Europe was presented. Internal discussions about the outline proposals and implementation plan contained in my draft report and the need of further elaboration and specifications of modalities, aims and purpose.

Saturday 14 Dec.: Departure by Georgian Air at 14.00 p.m., arriving in Copenhagen at 18.10 p.m. End of Mission.

Annex II:**List of Persons met.**

David Ninidze	Director, Executive Committee, Cultural Heritage Initiative
Kakha Khimshiashvili	Technical Coordinator, Executive Committee, Cultural Heritage Initiative
Michael Ardia	General Manager, Municipal Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project
Zaza Shengelia	Deputy State Minister, State Chancellery of Georgia
Sandro Urushadze	Head, Bureau of International Programme Relations, State Chancellery.
Merab Botchoidze	Secretary general, Georgian National Committee of ICOMOS; Head of International Information Dept., Board of Monuments.
Ivane Gremelashvili	Director, Scientific Research and Design Dept., Board of Monuments.
George Shaishmelahvili	MP, Professor, Chairman of Sub-Committee of Urbanistic and heading Parliament commission for new legislation on Historic Building Preservation.
Koba Arabuli	Executive Director, The Facilitation Centre of Social-Economic Development of the Alpine Regions (NGO organization).
Waja Echynchoirauly	Architect, Institute of Restoration, owner of keep in Shateli and associated with NGO for development of Alpine Regions.
George Gotsiride	Vice President, Scientific Centre of Remote Sensing, Tbilizi University, specialist in Geographical Information Systems (GIS), associated with NGO for development of Alpine Regions.
George Abuladze	President, Scientific Centre of Remote Sensing, Tbilizi University
Basil Kobakhidze	Priest at the University Church, Member of the Advisory Board on WB Cultural Heritage Preservation Initiative.
Zaza Djinchradze	Director, Open Air Museum, Tbilizi.
David Khoshtaria, Nika Vacheishvili, Marika Didebulidze: Art historians associated with the Academy of Science, Institute of Art History.	
Tamar Nemsadze	Architect, Institute of Restoration, with special working experience in restoration of Vadzia and Kurmodo Cathedral.
Vladimer Zazadze	Director of the Vardzia Museum Preserve.
Joseb Nagladze	Architect, Institute of Restoration, with special working experience in Signahi.
Shota Chutlashvili	Mayor in Signahi.
Vaja Zabutaschvili	Local Governor, Signahi District.
Vakhtang Kvirikashvili	District architect, Signahi.

Karlo Sadagashvili

Director of Ulistsikhe Museum Preserve

Giorgi Tsereteli

Vice mayor, Municipality of Tbilisi

Annex III: Select bibliography in English or German.

Documents of Armenian Architecture, 1-9 monographic studies of Medieval Armenian architecture. The research conducted by the Department of Architecture of Milan University in close cooperation with the Institute of Architecture of the Academy of Science of Armenia provide an number of individual studies, exemplary of its kind that may serve as a model for documentation of individual, outstanding monuments in Georgia.

Ghivi Gaprindashvili, *Vardzia, history, architecture, wall paintings, applied art*, (in Georgian, Russian and English), Leningrad 1975.

Wachtang Beridse and Edith Neubauer, *Die Baukunst des Mittelalters in Georgien* (translated from Russian), Berlin, 1980.

Tony Hackens (ed.), *Arts and Architecture in Medieval Georgia*, Institut Supérieur d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art, l'Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la Neuve, 1980.

Russudan Mepisaschwili, *Georgien, Wehrbauten und Kirchen*, Leipzig 1986.

Kakha Khimchiachvili, *Uphlistsikhe, the preservation, presentation and management of an abandoned city*, unpubl. M.A. dissertation, Inst. of Advanced Architectural Studies, University of York, 1995.

