

The Processes of Change in Understanding of World Heritage – Between International and National Context

ABSTRACT

The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage is an international agreement that fosters an inseparable connection with the past of different cultures and peoples of the world, strives for the harmony of the present with the remains of the past, but also aims at raising global awareness of the identities that heritage transmits to generations and those yet to come. The reasons for its definition and adoption half a century ago lie in the endangerment and threats of the disappearance of the unique cultural and natural heritage. Although dangers and conflicts about cultural and natural heritage are observed and manifested in complex forms today, its primary mission in recognizing and preserving exceptional universal value, regardless of geographical boundaries and cultural distances, is still at the center of its existence. The aim of this paper is to show the process of changes in protection policies, followed by other international conventions and documents that have contributed to the expansion of understanding of cultural heritage, through the relationship between the international and national context of national assets that are inscribed in the World Heritage List.

KEYWORDS

WHS Convention, endangerment, sustainability, cultural landscape, management plan.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most influential international agreements, the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage, for 50 years has been a witness to the mission of international communication and the importance of international cooperation in building strong ties with the past of different cultures and peoples of the world, but also to the aspirations to preserve and manage cultural and natural heritage by mitigating the dramatic changes that often have a turbulent impact on the resource of cultural and natural heritage in the world.

The idea of the universal value of cultural heritage gradually developed during the 18th and 19th centuries, where attention was directed to individual monuments of outstanding value within the framework of national cultural traditions. By the end of the 19th century, important steps had been taken to save the material remains of the past, while only during the 20th century, numerous dramatic events encouraged the world to recognize the necessity and need to preserve cultural heritage as a link between different cultures and peoples of the world. The idea of common (world) heritage became the guiding thread in the gradual formation of international doctrines and activities related to the preservation of cultural and natural heritage on the international level, which implied their inclusion and implementation in national frameworks.

A great jubilee like this is often an occasion to refocus attention on important events from the past. The collection of many experiences and knowledge, and also their review, enable a clearer understanding of the evolution of the main ideas and principles related to the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. Therefore, this paper aims to point out the important steps that built international cooperation and activities that led to the formation of UNESCO, and afterwards to the adoption of the Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, whose influence gradually improved the policies of protection and conservation of cultural and of natural heritage both internationally and nationally.

Taking into account the particularity of cultural traditions, the beginnings and development of institutional actions and the complexity of the issue of protection and preservation of cultural heritage, it is necessary to point out the socio-political and ideological processes that took place in the national framework, affecting changes in the understanding, valuation and meaning of the most valuable cultural heritage, which, due to its recognized universal values, came under the auspices of the World Heritage Convention.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EXPANSION OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND CULTURE

Cultural internationalism arose as a consequence of the First World War with the founding of the League of Nations (1919–1946) “to promote international cooperation

and to achieve peace and security.”¹ The establishment of the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (ICOC) in 1922, as an advisory body of the League of Nations, whose focus was scientific, educational and cultural issues, is considered a forerunner or one of the foundations of the later UNESCO.² Already in 1926, this Committee founded the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation in Paris, and in the same year the International Museums Office (IMO), also based in Paris, as a response to the specificity and importance of the needs required by the richness and diversity of cultural heritage.³

Two historic conferences were organized under the auspices of the International Museums Office, the first one in Rome in October 1930, with the aim of studying movable heritage and methods in the examination and preservation of works of art,⁴ and the second one in Athens in 1931, which related to the conservation of architectural monuments. In the charter of the Athens conference, for the first time, recommendations for the development of administrative and legal measures, aesthetic improvement of monuments, restoration, deterioration, conservation techniques appeared, where in its final point dedicated to conservation and international cooperation, the idea of preserving the heritage of humanity was unequivocally promoted.⁵ Another of the early events related to the international consideration of architectural heritage in a wider context, was related to the IV International Congresses of Modern Architecture from 1933 (*Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne /C.I.A.M./ 1933*) whose focus was on city planning and modern architecture, but which included important questions about the protection of historic areas of cities. At this congress, an international document known as the Athens Charter was adopted, which was supplemented and edited by Le Corbusier with his comments, and then published in 1943.⁶

The Treaty on the Protection of Artistic and Scientific Institutions and Historic Monuments, also known as Roerich Pact, drawn up by the Governing Board of the Pan-American Union, represents another in a series of fundamental documents in which the need for the protection and preservation of immovable monuments, constituting “*the cultural treasure of peoples*” was expressed. This treaty was agreed upon in order to respect and protect the cultural treasure in times of both war and peace.⁷ The positions from this pact were the basis for the adoption of other agreements during, and especially after, the Second World War.

1 Cultural internationalism, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/history-of-the-un/predecessor> (accessed March 2023).

2 M. Grandjean, *Centenary of the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation of the League of Nations*, in: *Centenary of the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation of the League of Nations*. (ed.) M. Grandjean, Geneva 2022, <https://intellectualcooperation.org/grandjean-2022> (accessed March 2023).

3 IMO, <https://atom.archives.unesco.org/international-museums-office-imo> (accessed March 2023).

4 *Conferenza Internazionale per lo studio dei metodi scientifici applicati all'esame e alla conservazione delle opere d'arte* (Rome 1930).

5 *The Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments, 1931* https://civvih.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/The-Athens-Charter_1931.pdf (accessed March 2023).

6 Le Corbusier, *La Charte d'Athènes*, Paris 1943.

7 Roerich Pact, <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/roerich-pact-1935> (accessed March 2023).

The Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME)⁸ was held in London in 1942, who considered education and culture to be the key elements of healing the world from the horrors of war and building a more peaceful future. Despite the war conflicts, the ministers focused on the restoration of educational systems as soon as peace was established, considering that the preservation of peace could not be maintained only through economic and political agreements between the countries of the world, but that it was necessary to direct all efforts towards programs for the development of education, science and culture, which would enable permanent international intellectual exchange with the goal of bringing cohesion among the peoples of the world.⁹ The enormous loss of human life and property, great suffering in the Second World War, initiated efforts to establish a system through international policies that would enable the resolution of many clashes and conflicts.

Thus, in 1945, the League of Nations was transformed into the United Nations Organization, and The International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation grew into the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), just a few days after the end of the war, at the United Nations Conference, which gathered representatives of 44 countries of the world in London, in November 1945.¹⁰ Its primary vision was to strengthen the “intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind” and to enable the protection of human rights and the improvement of living standards in underdeveloped parts of the world. By launching pioneering projects, UNESCO mobilized scientists, philosophers and artists from different nations, developing projects that would change the world.

In 1946, the International Museums Office grew into the International Council of Museums (ICOM).¹¹ At the 9th Session of the UNESCO General Conference in New Delhi in 1956, a proposal was adopted for the establishment of the International Center for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), which was officially founded in 1959 with its headquarters in Rome.¹²

The first international three-year course on architectural conservation was designed and organized in 1965–1966 at the Faculty of Architecture in Rome in cooperation with ICCROM. In the first years already, students from around 50 countries were trained, and the course itself was enhanced with international study tours or field projects in the Mediterranean countries, one of which was organized in SFR Yugoslavia. This course had an impact on forming and further development of training and education in various countries, and at the University of Zagreb, the Split department, Yugoslavia, an architectural conservation course was organized under the leadership of Tomislav and Jerko Marasović.¹³ The implementation of this international course lasted more than 30 years, and in 1997 it grew into a territorial

8 CAME, <https://www.unesco.org/en/brief>.

9 M. Intrator, *The Conference of Allied Ministers of Education, 1942–45*, <https://lawexplores.com/educators-across-borders-the-conference-of-allied-ministers-of-education-1942-45/> (accessed March 2023).

10 UNESCO in brief, UNESCO: <https://www.unesco.org/en/brief> (accessed March 2023).

11 ICOM, <https://icom.museum/en/about-us/history-of-icom/> (accessed March 2023).

12 ICCROM, <https://www.iccrom.org/about/overview/history> (accessed March 2023).

13 J. Jokileto, *ICCROM and Policies for Training and Capacity Building*, *Modern Conservation* 5 (2017) 13.

and urban conservation course, including it in a wider regional framework – North Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

In the same year, in 1965, the non-governmental organization, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)¹⁴ was founded in Warsaw and Krakow, thus establishing the main organizations that would later be in charge of the world cultural heritage.

The establishment of ICOMOS was preceded by two important events. Recommendations concerning the Protection, at National Level, of the Cultural and Natural Heritage, UNESCO, Paris, 1962, were adopted at the 17th session of the General Conference of UNESCO, where member states were invited to formulate, develop and apply policies of preservation, conservation and presentation of their cultural and natural heritage. It was also proposed to take scientific, technical, administrative, legal, financial, educational measures and involve the public. This important document ultimately recommended areas for international cooperation to preserve cultural heritage.¹⁵

Extremely important for the future of historic monuments was the International Congress of Architects and Technicians, held in Venice in 1964, which left behind the unsurpassed *Venice Charter*. Already the following year, when ICOMOS was founded, this charter was included in the founding act as its ethical statement. The *Venice Charter* laid the foundations for the subsequent development of methodologies and training in the field of conservation and restoration of historic buildings, i.e. the doctrine of protection and conservation. In the preface to the Charter, the fundamental significance of the principles that must be recognized and harmonized internationally with each country was emphasized, as each country is individually responsible for its own cultural heritage and traditions.¹⁶ The understanding of national versus international relations is best evidenced by the selection of 22 professionals from different countries, who designed the content of the Venice Charter. They were individuals with exceptional national and significant international professional reputation. This group also included a Serbian architect, conservator who led the projects of the most important Serbian medieval and other monuments, professor at the Faculty of Architecture of Belgrade – Đurđe Bošković.

The international position that SFR Yugoslavia, comprising of Serbia and other socialist republics, was confirmed by the testimonies about the founding states of ICROM, and then ICOMOS. Yugoslavia was one of them at the time. That fact made it possible to achieve continuous international cooperation in the field of cultural heritage conservation in these lands. We should not forget the fact that FNR Yugoslavia joined UNESCO as an equal member back in 1950, when the first Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO was formed in that country.¹⁷

14 ICOMOS, Cracow, Poland. Regulations, The First General Assembly of ICOMOS -1965 /by-laws and national commitments https://www.icomos.org/public/publications/JS5_1.pdf (accessed March 2023).

15 Recommendation concerning, <https://en.unesco.org/about-us/legal-affairs/recommendation-concerning-protection-national-level-cultural-and-natural> (accessed March 2023).

16 The Venice Charter, https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Charters/Venice_Charter_EN_2023.pdf.

17 B. Šekarić, *On the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of ICOMOS – The Importance of International Cooperation for Conservation Heritage*, *Modern Conservation* 3 (2015) 72.

DISASTER AND SOLIDARITY IN THE BIRTH
OF THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

The need to protect the world's most valuable architectural and artistic testimonies from deterioration had not been fully expressed until 1959, when the waters of the Nile River caused by the construction of the high Aswan Dam threatened to flood as many as 23 temples – invaluable cultural, historical, architectural and artistic legacy of the world's earliest great civilization. It encompassed the evidence of the cultures that preceded it and those that succeeded it, spreading on the banks and islands of the Nile.¹⁸ In October 1959, UNESCO gathered an international group of experts who drew up priority lists for saving the monuments, affirming that their disappearance would be “an irreparable loss to the cultural heritage of mankind”.¹⁹ The greatest concern was centered on the threat of submersion of the most significant architectural and sculptural masterpieces of ancient Egypt, the temples of Ramesses II at Abu Simbel with the adjacent smaller temple of his wife Nefertari. It is known that the relocation of temples was the largest and most demanding undertaking, in which a large number of countries of the world participated, followed and helped. Then, a large international campaign to save Nubia was launched by UNESCO, with the invitation of all member countries to participate in the protection of the monuments of Nubia on March 8, 1960 (fig. 1).²⁰

The first campaign, which included work on prospecting, documenting and archaeological excavations, lasted from March 1960 to December 1962, with the participation of 25 countries, including the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.²¹ The extremely favorable relations that were nurtured in many spheres between Egypt and the SFRY after the Second World War, and then through the Non-Aligned Movement, influenced the quick reaction of the Yugoslav authorities to the unfortunate events that threatened Egypt. Yugoslavia expressed its readiness to provide unconditional professional assistance for and funding the international campaign for the preservation and protection of cultural monuments of Old Nubia. In July 1960, the National Committee for the Implementation of the International Action for the Preservation of the Monuments of Old Nubia was formed, which involved 17 members.²² From October 16–26 in the same year, a delegation from the National Committee, consisting of:

18 V. *Temples and Tombs of Ancient Nubia: The International Rescue Campaign at Abu Simbel Philae and other Sites*, ed. T. Save-Soderbergh, Paris – London 1987.

19 Ch. Maurel, *Le sauvetage des monuments de Nubie par l'Unesco (1955–1968)*, Égypte Monde arabe 10 (2013) 1–22; DOI:10.4000/ema.3216.

20 J. Salmon, *De certains aspects juridiques et financiers de la campagne internationale pour la sauvegarde des temples de Nubie*, *Annuaire Français de Droit International* 9 (1963) 641; S. Tutundžić, *Četrdesetogodišnjica spasavanja spomenika u Nubiji*, *Glasnik Srpskog arheološkog društva* 17 (2001) 259–269.

21 *Ibid.* 642 (note 5).

22 V. Mađarić, *Participation de la Yougoslavie dans campagne international pour la sauvegrade des monuments de la Nubie Anciene*, *Recueil des travaux sur la Protection des monuments historiques* 16 (1965) 24–25, 27; As its contribution, Yugoslavia made available the sum of \$226,000 and in particular another \$20,000 intended exclusively as aid to Sudan for the rescue of wall paintings, i.e. equipment, preparation, stay of the members of the expert team and all costs related to the work in the Sheikh abd el Ghadir church.

Fig. 1



Abu Simbel
Temples

The Small Temple
of Nefertari /1963



The Great Temple
of Ramses II
(part) /1963

(Institute for
the Protection
of Cultural
Monuments
of Serbia)

Professor Dr. Radivoje Uvalić, then Director of the Institute of Social Sciences and Chairman of the National Committee, Vlado Mađarić, Director of the Federal Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments and Professor Branko Gavella, visited Egypt and Sudan in order to assess the possibilities of including the Yugoslav and Serbian experts in such major campaign. The cooperation agreements were about the rescue of early Christian monuments, for which Yugoslavia had excellent experts. A team of conservators and restorers was formed, mostly from the Federal Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Belgrade.²³

In the period from October 1963 to May 1964, an expert team was sent from Yugoslavia, led by conservators Mihailo Vunjak and Milorad Medić, whose task was to save, remove, consolidate and place on a solid surface wall paintings from four sites – Christian churches in the former temple of Amun Ramses II in the Valley of the Lions (Wadi es-Sebua); the underground chapel of Horemheb, carved into the rock, known as Abu Oda, the 8th century church of Abdallah Nirqi, and in Sudan the 11th century church of Cheik Abd el Gagir.²⁴ The endangerment of these monuments was reflected in the fear of disappearance of the Christian wall paintings of outstanding cultural value from the threatening floods. A valuable photo archive of these activities has been preserved in the extensive photo documentation that Miha Pirnat, from Slovenia, made with special care during the works. The mission of the Yugoslav team was extremely successful, and some of the frescoes that were saved on that occasion represent cultural treasures that are kept and are still exhibited in museums of Egypt and Sudan.²⁵ During the same campaign, architectural recordings were also carried out in the temples of Dakka and Gerf Hussein, led by architects Milka Čanak-Medić and Branislav Vulović,²⁶ and architect Jovan Nešković recorded and created the technical documentation for the church of Cheik Abd el Ghagir (fig. 2).²⁷

Within the framework of the big campaign, professional help, knowledge and resources that came from all over the world, and whose contribution was joined by the activities of the team from Yugoslavia, resulted in the relocation of six groups of monuments, i.e. the total saving of 22 monuments and architectural complexes and works of art, all in cooperation with 40 technical missions from 5 continents.

In 1982, the Egyptian government, with the support of UNESCO, launched a continuation of the international campaign to establish the Museum of Nubia in Aswan

23 *Ibid.* 19–27, 85–88.

24 M. Vunjak, M. Medić, *Travaux de depose et de transfert des peintures murals en Nubie*, Recueil des travaux sur la Protection des monuments historiques 16 (1965) 29–40, 89–91. Temples and Tombs, *op. cit.* 212.

25 M. Frelih, *Above the cataracts: Slovenian perspective of ancient Nubia between 19th and 20th Century*, prispevek na mednarodni konferenci Egypt and Austria X, Prague (1st – 3rd October 2014) 149–150.

26 M. Čanak Medić, *Participation des architectes yougoslaves dans l'action pour la sauvegarde de monuments de la Nubie Antique*, Recueil des travaux sur la Protection des monuments historiques 16 (1965) 81–84, 95.

27 J. Nešković, M. Medić, *Cheik abd el Gadir*, Recueil des travaux sur la Protection des monuments historiques 16 (1965) 67–80, 94–95.

Fig. 2



Nubia
Ouadi es Sebuwa /1963



Figure of St. Peter
Archangel in a
medallion
Entrance to the
sanctuary
Abu Oda /1963



Figure of Christ
Capital of the
central nave
Architrave with
fresco decoration



(Institute for the
Protection
of Cultural
Monuments
of Serbia)

and the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Cairo, to display the artifacts found and saved during this great world campaign.²⁸

The expressed solidarity of numerous countries of the world and the joint responsibility for preventing the irreparable impoverishment of the world in cultural and ethical terms ensured a special reputation for UNESCO, which proved to be active in the protection of the endangered cultural heritage of the world in subsequent campaigns.

As early as in 1966, UNESCO played an important role in saving Venice, when devastating floods threatened to endanger the cultural treasures of the inimitable Italian historical city. For its protection, material resources were provided for the construction of a series of portable flood barriers.²⁹ Thanks to UNESCO, Japan funded research and managed the restoration of the Borobudur Buddhist temple on the island of Java in Indonesia.³⁰ One of the oldest preserved human settlements in the world dating back to 5000 BC in Pakistan's Indus Valley, Mohenjo-Daro, was damaged by heavy rains, which led to an upstream breach of the dam, causing catastrophic damage. As an exceptional testimony of civilization, this oldest planned fortified city on the Indian continent was inscribed on the World Heritage List as late as in 1980.³¹

Encouraged by these large campaigns, UNESCO prepared a draft Convention as the first international legal instrument, which would enable the protection of the world's cultural heritage. The International Union for Conservation of Nature created a document to protect the natural wonders of the planet Earth. Both proposals were presented at the United Nations conference on the environment held in Stockholm in 1972, when the joint text of the Convention was agreed upon, underlining that the heritage, both natural and cultural, was increasingly threatened due to the social and economic development of society and that, due to permanent physical degradation, the planet was threatened with impoverishment of all humanity.³²

At the General Conference of UNESCO, on November 16, 1972 in Paris, the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage was adopted, as the third UNESCO convention related to cultural heritage.³³ UNESCO's ambitious goal was recognition of the idea of "universal" value, establishment of criteria for the inscription of cultural properties, verification of authenticity and integrity, but also study and preservation of monuments, complexes and locations of inestimable historic artistic, scientific, natural or anthropological value.³⁴

28 50th Anniversary of Nubia Campaign, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/497/> (accessed April 2023).

29 International Safeguarding Campaign of the City of Venice (1966, Italy) <https://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/350> (accessed April 2023).

30 Borobudur Temple Compounds, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/592/> (accessed April 2023).

31 Archaeological Ruins at Mohenjo-Daro, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/138/> (accessed April 2023) Even today, these sites are under great threat from natural disasters and climate change.

32 Stockholm 1972, <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/environment/stockholm1972> (accessed April 2023).

33 The other two are: the Convention on the Prohibition and Prevention of Illegal Import, Export and Transfer of Cultural Heritage from 1970 and the Convention on the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Area of Armed Conflict from 1954.

34 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/> (accessed April 2023).

The Convention entered into force in 1975, when it was ratified by twenty countries, including the SFRY.³⁵ It directly influenced the establishment of the World Heritage List of those cultural and natural assets that are determined to possess Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), and which should be placed “under the protection of the Convention“. In addition to the World Heritage List, the List of World Heritage in Danger was also established, in accordance with Article 11.4 of the Convention, which from the very beginning indicated an awareness of the need to provide international assistance to the member states with particularly endangered cultural assets. For the purpose of the implementation of the Convention and the inscription of cultural properties on the List, UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee was formed, which consists of representatives of the member states, and still operates with three advisory bodies: ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and ICCROM (International Center for the Study of the Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage).

The Committee, along with its advisory bodies, developed precise criteria for the entry of assets on the List, after which the most important document for the implementation of the Convention was created, called the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the Convention, initially written in 1977, which would indicate the principles that guide the Committee when verifying requests for inscription and formation of the World Heritage List.³⁶ Unlike the Convention, this document has been constantly supplemented and revised throughout the fifty years, keeping up with all the changes that have led to new insights and expansion of the definition of cultural heritage. It represents an auxiliary tool for the implementation of the Convention and a methodological framework for the protection and management of the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage and the activities carried out within it.³⁷ By signing the Convention, each member state undertook to preserve and protect its cultural and natural heritage and institutionally carry out work on its discovery, study, conservation and management.

Under the umbrella of the Convention and its guidelines, a process took place that changed the understanding of the value and character of cultural heritage. Categories such as monuments (architectural works, monumental sculptural works and paintings, archaeological structures, cave dwellings) groups of buildings (historic urban areas and cities) and memorial sites, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art, science, or aesthetics, ethnology, anthropology, and represent the greatest achievements of humanity, should have the character of a masterpiece of human creative genius, that is, they should be exceptional examples of human creativity. A special moment in the application of the Convention was related to the expansion of the list with a new category of heritage in 1992, the cultural land-

35 SFRY ratified the Convention among the first ten countries in the world on October 31, 1974.

36 World Heritage List, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/> (accessed April 2023).

37 UNESCO, 2021. Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. (1977–2021, latest version) Paris: WHC.21/0. July 31, 2021. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/> (accessed April 2023).

scape. The significance of this category lie in the fact that areas of cultural landscapes can encompass a large number of different historical territories, urbanized and rural, within the context of their natural environment expressed in the interaction between nature and man.

The primary structure and content of the Convention have been supplemented from the very beginning by other conventions, declarations and recommendations adopted by the UNESCO General Conference, but also by many strategic documents and charters, which have enhanced its full meaning.

SELECTION OF THE FIRST CULTURAL PROPERTIES FOR THE INSCRIPTION ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST

Serbian medieval heritage

The first nominations for inscription on the World Heritage List took place in 1978 with a total of 12 properties. Eight cultural assets and four natural properties possessed all the requirements defined by the criteria for inscription on the List. All proposed properties were recognized as cultural or natural heritage of outstanding value in the national framework, but due to their historical, cultural or natural-geographical attributes, they were not unknown in the international context either. The selection for inscription consisted of different types of cultural and natural heritage properties defined in the first articles of the Convention – monuments, groups of buildings, famous places (Art. 1), and natural monuments, geological and physiographic formations and famous natural places (Art. 2).³⁸ Among the first inscriptions were the famous cathedral in Aachen, Germany, the historic core of Krakow, a city with extraordinary layers, scars of suffering and reconstruction in Poland, the historic city of Quito, Ecuador, but also the “memory island” of Gorée, Senegal, which bears witness to one of the largest tragedy in the history of human society – the slave trade with a procession of suffering, tears and death, the largest center of human trafficking on the African coast. The first natural asset inscribed on the List was the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, and the “natural heritage” category also included national parks such as Nahani National Park, Canada and Yellowstone National Park, USA.³⁹

In the following year, 1979, among the nominations from 23 countries whose properties were accepted for inscription, SFR Yugoslavia inscribed six properties from four socialist republics: SR Croatia (*Old Town of Dubrovnik, Historic Center of Split with Diocletian's Palace and the Plitvice Lakes National Park*), SR Macedonia (*Natural historic region of Ohrid*), SR Montenegro (*Natural and cultural-historical region of Kotor*)

38 The Convention, <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>, 6–7 (accessed August 2023)

39 CC-78/CONF.010/10Rev; https://whc.unesco.org/archive/1978/cc-78-conf010-10rev_e.pdf, 7–8 (accessed August 2023).

Fig. 3

Serbian Medieval
Heritage – UNESCO
World Heritage
Dečani Monastery
(14th century)
([https://www.
blagofund.org/](https://www.blagofund.org/))



Detail of the fresco
Sopoćani Monastery
(13th century)

(© N. D. Ristić) ([https://
www.blagofund.org/](https://www.blagofund.org/))

Detail of the fresco
Church of the Holy
Virgin of Ljeviša
Holy Virgin



Church of the
Virgin Mary
Studenica
Monastery

(© M. Todorović)



and SR Serbia (*Stari Ras and Sopoćani*).⁴⁰ Another nomination from the territory of the SR Serbia, while it was still part of the SFRY, met the criteria for inscription on the World Heritage List in 1986 – the Studenica Monastery. One of the most significant royal endowments with the burial church of Stefan Nemanja, the progenitor of the famous Serbian medieval Nemanjić dynasty,⁴¹ was connected both territorially and historically to the previously confirmed inscription of the Serbian medieval heritage “Stari Ras and Sopoćani” whose territory once represented the “*administrative seat of medieval Serbia*.”

The richness of the Serbian medieval heritage remained in focus even after the collapse of the SFR Yugoslavia and the wars that marked a whole decade in the countries of the so-called “Western” Balkans, which had an impact on the change of relations and the establishment of other new values. Important Serbian medieval monuments in Kosovo and Metohija after the “March Pogrom”⁴² that took place in 2004 were inscribed on the List of World Heritage Sites. The Dečani Monastery was originally inscribed in 2004, and in 2006, the Church of the of the Holy Virgin of Ljeviša in Prizren, the Gračanica Monastery and the Peć Patriarchate Monastery were inscribed as well, as their extreme vulnerability was established (fig. 3).⁴³

The assessment of the selection of cultural properties of the two first inscriptions from Serbia shows directional movements in the development of conservation thought and practice on the national level, but also the great potential of the previously established set of values, which denoted the cultural significance of the medieval heritage, as a reflection of the identity of the rich and distinctive cultural tradition that belonged within the framework of a wider European cultural circle.

Identification and evaluation of Serbian medieval cultural heritage

After centuries of Ottoman domination in the Balkans, the first activities in identifying the Serbian national heritage were carried out at the beginning of the 19th century with the formation of the Principality of Serbia. In the newly liberated Serbia, there was a strong awareness of the need to preserve heritage, when the first legal act on the protection of cultural monuments was drawn up. On February 9, 1844, Prince Aleksandar Karadžević issued the *Decree Prohibiting the Demolition of Old Cities*

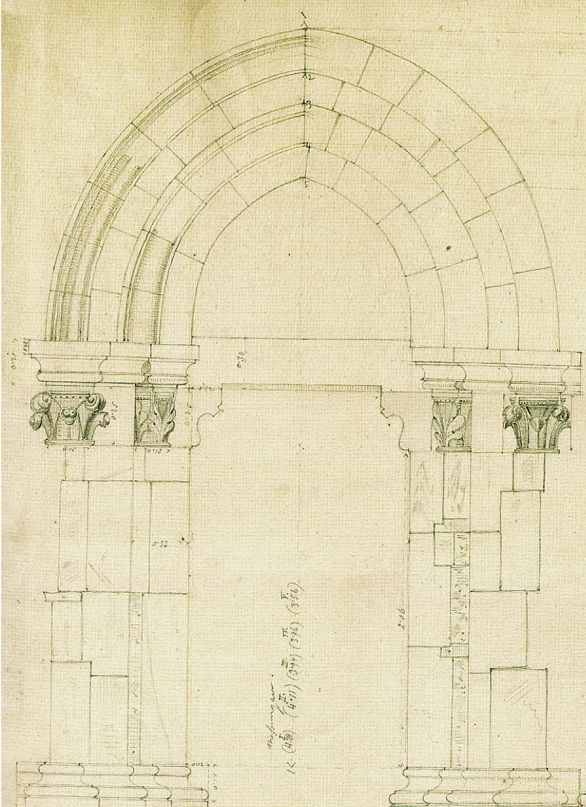
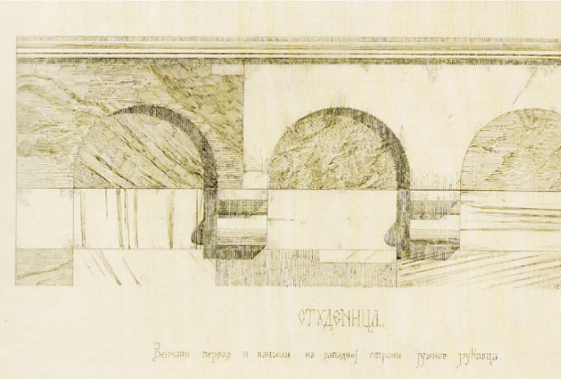
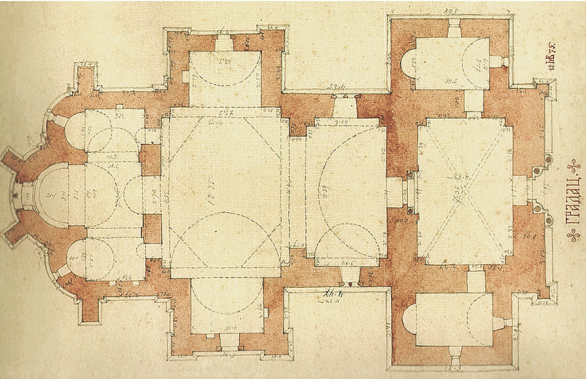
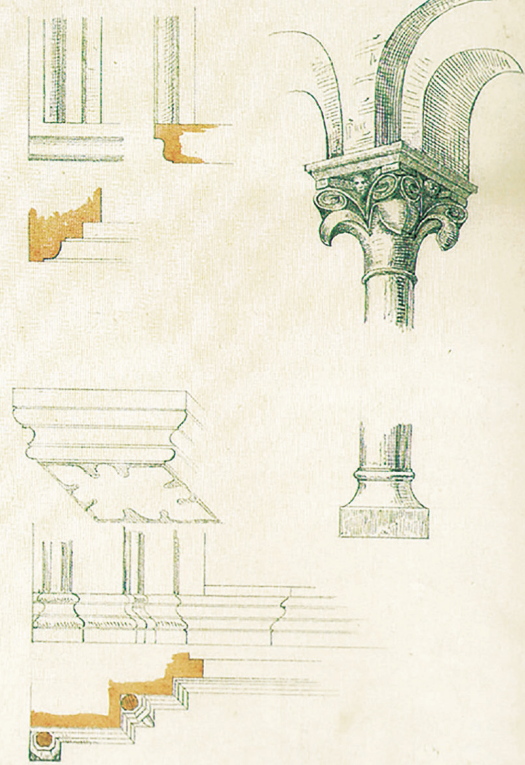
40 CC-79/CONF.003/13; <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/1979/cc-79-conf003-13e.pdf>, 13 (accessed August 2023).

41 CC-86/CONF.001/11, <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/1986/cc-86-conf001-11e.pdf>, 8 (accessed August 2023).

42 The March pogrom claimed several dozen lives, several hundred people were wounded, more than four thousand Serbs and other non-Albanians were banished, more than 800 of their homes were set on fire, and 35 Orthodox temples and cultural monuments were destroyed or severely damaged. <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/kosovo-metohija/19988> (accessed August 06, 2023). Kosovo and Metohija: The March Pogrom, March 17–19, 2004 (ed.) B. Jokić, Belgrade 2004; Kosovo. Orthodox Heritage and Contemporary Catastrophe, (ed.) A. Lidov, Moscow 2017.

43 Medieval Monuments in Kosovo (Serbia), <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/724/> (accessed August 2023).

Fig. 4



Documentation of the Serbian Medieval Monuments

(Valtrović & Milutinović documents I – filed records 1871–1884, Belgrade 2006)

and Their Ruins.⁴⁴ The Decree on the Protection of Ancient Monuments became the first general act on the protection of cultural heritage in Serbia and was one of the first modern general legal acts on monuments in the 19th century Europe. Two and a half decades later, in 1870, the first official list of protected monuments was compiled and published – 152 sites, including old towns, monasteries, churches and cemeteries.

The specific spiritual-historical context of using the past for religious-political purposes was close to the European ideological national currents of that era. The fact that the first Serbian researchers drew attention to the universal values of art and a broad overview of the history of sacred architecture in the understanding and research of the national heritage, determined the initial activities in the protection and restoration of this valuable heritage.⁴⁵

One of the most significant projects, which was started in 1871, was related to the description and recording of old churches and monasteries in the then Principality of Serbia, which was led by architects educated in Germany, Mihailo Valtrović and Dragutin Milutinović. The knowledge and skills acquired during their stay abroad had an impact on the choice of methods in the study and documentation of the cultural heritage of the Middle Ages.⁴⁶ Introduction of scientific terminology and methodological procedures in the study of Serbian medieval history, art and architecture began in 1877, with compiling thorough material on the Studenica Monastery. Its study was the model for numerous, comprehensive studies of medieval heritage carried out during the 20th century. This undertaking lasted 13 years, after which a register of documentation for more than 40 monuments was formed. It was also the first cataloged list and description of old monasteries and churches in Serbia (fig. 4).

In the early 20th century, visits to Serbia and frequent stays of Gabriel Millet,⁴⁷ professor at the department for the study of Byzantine and Christian archeology at the Practical School of Advanced Studies in Paris, marked an important step forward in the evaluation of medieval heritage. His interest in the study of architecture created under Byzantine influences was extremely important for determining the value of Serbian medieval heritage. Its origin was reflected in a specific synthesis of two cultural traditions – Western and Byzantine. Writing and publishing the monograph “*L’ancien art serbe. Les églises (1919)*” had a strong impact on versatile research of Serbian medieval architecture and art, which belonged to the corpus of European culture.⁴⁸ Thanks to Millet, Serbian medieval architectural and artistic achievements

44 The Decree was published in the Serbian Gazette, No. 14, for 11 years, February 16, 1884.

45 Lj. Đurković Jakšić, *Obnavljanje Studenice i prenos iz Kalenića moštiju svetog kralja Stefana Prvovenčanog 1839. godine*, in: *Osam vekova Studenice*, Zbornik radova SANU, Belgrade 1986, 275–305.

46 M. Valtrović, D. Milutinović, *Dokumenti I – terenska građa 1871–1884; Dokumenti II – terenska građa 1872–1904*, (ed.) T. Damjanović, Belgrade 2006–2008.

47 D. Preradović, *Gabriel Millet (1867–1953): Esquisse de sa carrière scientifique*, in: *Gabriel Millet et l’étude de l’architecture médiévale Serbe*, (eds.) D. Preradović, M. Marković, Belgrade 2021, 55.

48 O. Špehar, *L’ancien art serbe. Les églises et les modalités de sa réception dans l’historiographie locale*, in: *Gabriel Millet et l’étude de l’architecture médiévale Serbe*, (eds.) D. Preradović, M. Marković, Belgrade 2021, 207.

found their place in the framework of the general history of art, culture and civilization of the Middle Ages.⁴⁹

Only after the Second World War, with the formation of the new state entity FNR Yugoslavia, did institutionalized work on the study, research and protection of cultural heritage develop. Despite the ruling communist regime, in Serbia, full attention was still focused on the most valuable Serbian medieval sacred architecture. Numerous church buildings from the medieval period were valorized immediately after the end of the war, and from 1946 they received the status of cultural monuments, as well as the obligation of the state to take care of them.⁵⁰ In the same year, the first joint (Yugoslav) Law on the Protection of Cultural Monuments and Natural Rarities was adopted. The unique service for the protection and scientific study of cultural monuments was formed by the establishment of the Federal Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Belgrade in 1950, the same year that Yugoslavia became a member of UNESCO. It grew into the Yugoslav Institute in 1963. Under its auspices, the *golden age* of scientific study began, as well as of the entire activity of the service for the protection of cultural monuments in the whole of Yugoslavia.

A special stage in the conservation practice of the Serbian sacral heritage was the planned search for the architectural remains of the medieval monastic units. Systematic archaeological research brought numerous findings about the complex chronology of the construction of Serbian medieval monastery architecture, understood in a wider urban sense.⁵¹ The presentation of the archaeological remains highlighted the choice of the site for construction within a specific natural environment, which then structured a distinctive monastic landscape.⁵² Emphasizing the natural properties of the area resulted in the recognition and then protection of the wider cultural and historic space.⁵³

This concept of understanding heritage is indicated in the Charter on European Architectural Heritage from 1975, and then in the Amsterdam Charter, which was adopted by the Council of Europe. Both charters placed conservation in the broader context of historic urban areas, highlighting the concept of integrative conservation, whose methodology experts from these areas soon incorporated into their conservation practices. On the other hand, the Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural Heritage clearly indicated the locations where the works *created by man or man and nature together* were preserved, using the term *site*. (Art. 1)

49 I. Stevović, *Gabrijel Mije, Umetnost i komunikacija: Plovidbom protiv razdaljine* u: *L'ancien art serbe. Les églises*, Belgrade 2007, 8–15.

50 Valtrović, Milutinović, *op. cit.*

51 Popović-Mojsilović, *Krst u krugu: arhitektura manastira u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji*, Belgrade 1994.

52 N. Debljović Ristić, *Manastir Sopoćani, u sprezi kulturnog, duhovnog i prirodnog nasleđa*, *Glasnik Društva konzervatora Srbije* 40 (2016) 106.

53 N. Debljović Ristić, *Medieval Sacred Heritage Principles and Procedures in Architectural Conservation*, *Glasnik Društva konzervatora Srbije* 39 (2015) 290–301.

Stari Ras and Sopoćani

Among the first medieval religious complexes where archaeological research, history, architecture and art studies were conducted in a planned and organized manner, then complex conservation and restoration works were carried out, were the monuments concentrated in the area of the former Serbian medieval state of Raška. It is marked by fortified cities, palaces of rulers, church seats, medieval endowments of Serbian rulers, but also Roman and early Byzantine monuments of varying degrees of preservation, as well as significant monuments of Islamic architecture and oriental construction within the city of Novi Pazar, which is located in the center of the region.⁵⁴ The most important Serbian medieval monuments are the Church of Saints Peter and Paul (9th century), the old bishopric in Ras,⁵⁵ the Đurđevi Stupovi Monastery, the endowment of Stefan Nemanja (12th century),⁵⁶ the Sopoćani Monastery, the endowments of King Uroš the First Nemanjić (13th century)⁵⁷ and the medieval fortress Ras (12th century) with Trgovište.⁵⁸ The expansion of knowledge about the outstanding cultural and geographical importance with the identification of the wider natural and spatial environment around the 4 most significant monuments, made it possible to define the boundaries of this spatial-cultural-historical complex of “Stari Ras with Sopoćani“, which was placed under the protection of the state in 1978.⁵⁹ The nomination of this historic area fulfilled the conditions for the inscription on the World Heritage List in 1979 (fig. 5).⁶⁰

The complex semiotics of this spatial scope enabled the demonstration of several exceptional universal values. In the documentation of the nomination dossier, there is an explanation stating that the area of Stari Ras was defined as the seat of Serbian rulers from the 10th–13th century, in which decisive events took place for the establishment and consolidation of an independent state, which was accompanied by economic strengthening, intensive development of trade, mining, arts and crafts. At the same time, the monuments were claimed to testify to the earliest original forms of artistic expression in Serbian culture created under the patronage of Serbian rulers, creating a unique model of expression, despite the influences of Byzantine art.⁶¹

54 M. Nešković, *Stari Ras sa Sopoćanima, istraživanja i zaštita*, Saopštenja 43 (2011) 137–160; P. Špehar, N. Debljović Ristić, O. Špehar, *Stari (Old) Ras and Sopoćani: Challenges and Opportunities in Managing UNESCO Cultural Heritage*, Internacional Scientific Conference, Polska, September 20–22, Zamość 2017 *Analecta Archaeologica Ressoviensia* 13, Rzeszów 2018, 135–154. DOI:10.15584/anarres.2018.13.7.

55 M. Marković, D. Vojvodić, *Crkva Svetih apostola Petra i Pavla u Rasu*, Novi Sad 2021.

56 J. Nešković, *Đurđevi Stupovi u Starom Rasu. Postanak arhitekture crkve Sv. Đorđa i stvaranje raškog tipa spomenika u arhitekturi srednjovekovne Srbije*, Kraljevo 1984; D. Vojvodić, M. Marković, *Đurđevi Stupovi in Ras*, Belgrade 2023.

57 O. Kandić, *Sopoćani – istorija i arhitektura manastira*, Belgrade 2016.

58 M. Popović, *Stari grad Ras*, Belgrade 1987.

59 The Act on the protection of cultural properties adopted in 1977 introduced a category of a spatial cultural historic complex. The area of Stari Ras and Sopoćani was scheduled as a spatial cultural historic complex by a decision of the Novi Pazar Municipality (Municipality Official Gazette, No. 51/3/78).

60 Stari Ras and Sopoćani, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/96> (accessed August 2023).

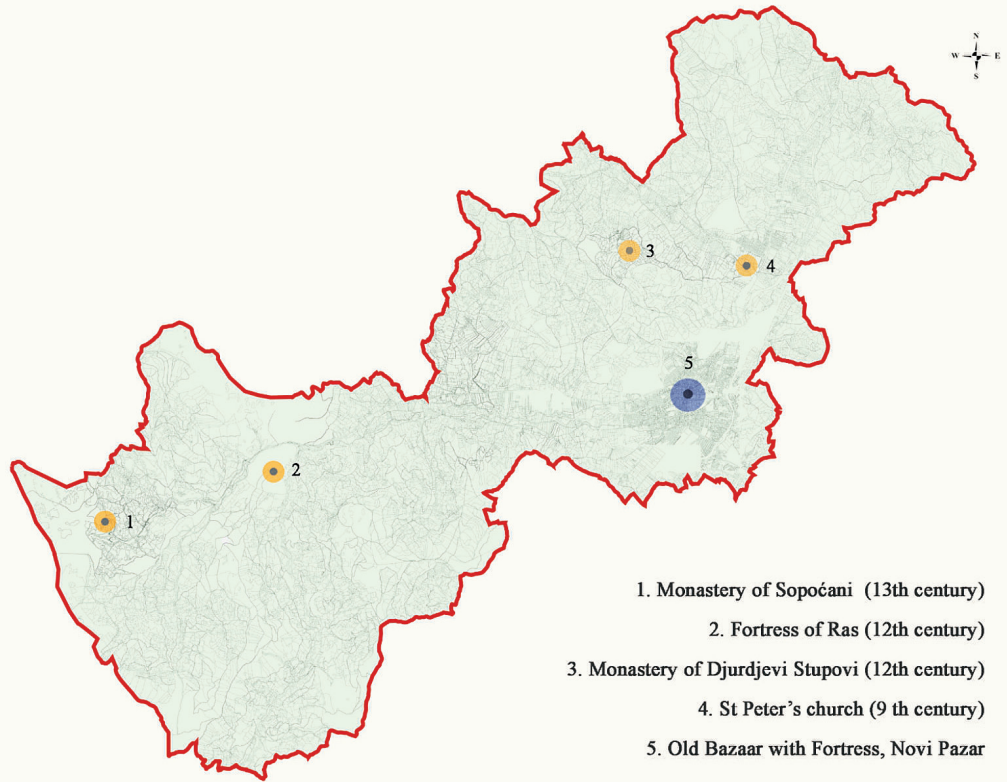
61 Listed according to the World Heritage Committee's Nomination Documentation, Nešković, *op. cit.* 138.

STARI RAS AND SOPOČANI

Fig. 5

Stari (Old) Ras and Sopoćani UNESCO World Heritage

(Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia, design by N. D. Ristić)



1. Monastery of Sopoćani (13th century)

2. Fortress of Ras (12th century)

3. Monastery of Djurdjevi Stupovi (12th century)

4. St Peter's church (9th century)

5. Old Bazaar with Fortress, Novi Pazar

Sopoćani Monastery (13th century)

(© N. D. Ristić)

Fortress of Ras (12th century)

(<https://www.panacomp.net/stari-ras-stara-srbija/>)



Đurđevi Stupovi Monastery (12th century)

(Đurđevi Stupovi Monastery)

St Peter's Church (9th century)

(© N. D. Ristić)



Old Bazaar with Fortress, Novi Pazar

(Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia)



At the time of inscription, the focus was primarily on the Serbian medieval heritage, but the influence of the Convention contributed to a more complex consideration of the whole. Inscription on the List of “Stari Ras and Sopoćani” also meant international confirmation of previously established methodological procedures and conservation principles applied to these monuments, based to a large extent on the principle of “minimum interventions“. The assumed obligations and responsibilities indicated by the implementation of the ratified Convention caused the creation and adoption of the first long-term program (plan) in the history of the protection of the monumental heritage in Serbia – “The Program of research, protection, arrangement and use of the Stari Ras with Sopoćani complex for the period from 1984 to 1990” for which a special Committee (protected area commission) was formed for Stari Ras.⁶² Ambitiously conceived, this Program included not only historical artistic, archaeological, ethnological, anthropological research, but also reconnaissance of the entire area with identified numerous archeological sites, Christian places of worship in the Raška river basin, from the era of Turkish domination,⁶³ as well as more intensive research and presentation of urban heritage of Novi Pazar – Old Bazaar with the Novi Pazar fortress and other monuments of the Ottoman period.⁶⁴

The authentic historical urban space of the Old Bazaar required an integrative approach, and in addition to the urban structure and the specific architecture of trade and craft shops, efforts were made to preserve authentic crafts and traditional activities, which were passed down from generation to generation.⁶⁵

The inclusion of numerous institutions and the local population, not only institutions for the protection of cultural monuments, was noted as an important aspect of the implementation of the Program. The development of spatial and urban plans for this area was initiated, which clearly showed the state’s intentions at the time that the ratified Convention with other charters and recommendations was applied to the greatest extent possible.⁶⁶ The role and application of the Convention in the first three decades in this area shows that it contained all the strategic components that largely ensured the preservation of the authenticity and integrity of the protected area of Stari Ras and Sopoćani, taking into account both the natural and intangible components of the cultural heritage until 1992.

Turbulent changes took place in the 1990s – war events, the disintegration of SFR Yugoslavia, and introduction of sanctions in 1992.⁶⁷ The termination of contact with the World Heritage Centre, as well as the spontaneous termination of the Committee for

62 J. Sekulić, *Putevi savremene zaštite Starog Rasa sa Sopoćanima*, Saopštenja 17 (1985) 252, M. Nešković, *op. cit.* 146–147.

63 N. Debljović Ristić, V. Vidosavljević, *Pitanja vrednovanja i stanje konzervacije kulturnog nasleđa u slivu reke Raške*, Glasnik Društva konzervatora Srbije 38 (2014) 207–214.

64 S. Kesić Ristić, *World Heritage in Serbia-Stari Ras and Sopoćani*, *Modern Conservation* 3 (2015) 97.

65 J. Nešković, *Stara čaršija u Novom Pazaru, Zaštita i revitalizacija*, Belgrade – Kraljevo 1988

66 J. Sekulić, *Putevi savremene zaštite Starog Rasa sa Sopoćanima*, Saopštenja 17 (1985) 251–270.

67 The embargo on Serbia was introduced by the United Nations Security Council, with resolution 575.

Stari Ras, a very difficult economic situation, affected the years' long discontinuation of conservation activities, which left lasting consequences on numerous cultural assets in Serbia. Cross-border conflicts, international isolation, economic crisis and overall weakening of the state on the one hand and intensive desecularization of society on the other, had an unstoppable impact on conservation practice, and the activities of institutions was reduced to the limits of formal sustainability.

Only after the end of the wars and the lifting of sanctions, with the arrival of the new millennium, were new initiatives launched in the territory of the Republic of Serbia to achieve communication with international institutions. An urgent assessment of the state of the monuments, especially the historical complex of Stari Ras and Sopoćani, showed the significant changes suffered by this area "jeopardized" by the uncontrolled suburbanization of the city of Novi Pazar. Serbian medieval monasteries, despite the status that their name previously ensured a place on the World Heritage List, found themselves isolated within the protected area. The physical, cultural and spiritual vulnerability of the Christian population, which was suddenly emigrating and pushed to the outskirts of the city, was evident.

The need for the restoration of liturgical life in one of the most important medieval endowments of Stefan Nemanja, the Đurđevi Stupovi Monastery, which was burned and demolished several times in its history, should have indicated the return to the religious roots of the entire society, but also the strengthening of cultural, religious and national identity. Monastery settlements previously investigated by archaeologists had the potential to consider the construction of individual monastery buildings, over the remains that were losing their properties due to lack of maintenance.⁶⁸

Its revitalization was followed by the development of a project for the reconstruction of buildings intended for existential functions (in 2002). The project provided for a careful selection of methodological procedures applied in the restoration of the temple.⁶⁹ The restoration of monastic life and the restoration of the spiritual seat of the Serbian people gave rise to the increasing interest of visitors from all over Serbia and abroad, which affected the viability of the monastery. On the other hand, the demands for expanding the capacity for accommodating guests and the complete renovation of the temple⁷⁰ resulted in warnings coming from experts about the threat to outstanding universal value.

The restoration of the Đurđevi Stupovi Monastery generated demands for erection of buildings, dwellings for the monks within other archeologically explored medieval areas, among which was the Sopoćani Monastery.⁷¹ The Republic of Serbia requested a monitoring mission for Stari Ras and Sopoćani on two occasions, in 2004, and then

68 N. Debljović Ristić, *Spatial Features Meaning Reaffirmation Process of the 12th and 13th Century Serbian Medieval Monasteries*, Communication 48 (2011) 167.

69 *Ibid.* 83–85.

70 *Predlog za nastavak radova na celovitoj obnovi crkve Sv. Đorđa*, Ministarstvo kulture i informisanja Vlade Republike Srbije (accessed February 2020).

71 N. Debljović Ristić, *Reviews of the Conservation Approaches in Interpretation of the Medieval Monasteries' Architecture in Serbia*, Modern Conservation 1 (2013) 87–96.

in 2009, in order to establish to what extent the state of authenticity and integrity of the entire area of Stari Ras had been damaged.

Pronounced spatial and urban changes in the area led to warning recommendations of the advisory mission, which indicated the necessity of creating a Management Plan for this area.⁷² Soon after, a workshop was organized for the development of management plans for World Heritage in Belgrade in 2010, led by ICOMOS expert Todor Krstev. In the same year, the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia formed a team for the development of the Management Plan of Stari Ras and Sopoćani. The activities related to its implementation and an attempt to include the local community in its definition, resulted in requests for changing the name of this area, in the name that would include Islamic monuments, as well.⁷³ Another attempt to bring the importance of world heritage closer to the local community and point out the role of the management plan as a useful management instrument was realized by organizing a workshop at the municipality of Novi Pazar.⁷⁴ In addition to the recommendations and conclusions reached on that occasion, the Management Plan for Stari Ras and Sopoćani has never been completed nor adopted to this day, and further uncontrolled urbanization has largely changed the character of the Levantine town.

The situation even worsened with the development and implementation of the *Spatial Plan of the Special Purpose Area "Stari Ras and Sopoćani"*, which changed the boundaries of the plan in relation to the cultural property – the urban area of Novi Pazar was excluded, which made the earlier application of the Convention meaningless.⁷⁵

Despite the many conservation and restoration works that were carried out after the year 2000 on each individual monument, the burning question remains how to preserve this historic area? It is necessary to exert influence on promotion and implementation of balanced planning, the strong engagement of various actors in the regeneration of the historic area, the acceptance of the challenge of preserving the fragile and non-renewable heritage resource that can be a powerful driver for development.⁷⁶ It is paradoxical that the idea of preserving the territory from the time of inscription in 1979 is to be reduced to the preservation of the immediate environment of only four monuments. Heritage protection institutions, unable to face and deal with numerous problems, propose the concept of boundary changes in which only four medieval monuments would be nominated anew through the concept of serial nomination.

72 A. Prepis, *Izveštaj savetodavne misije za Stari Ras sa Sopoćanima*, November 23–27 (2009) 39–46 (M. Đorđević, certified translation from English, 18/27 of April 28, 2010).

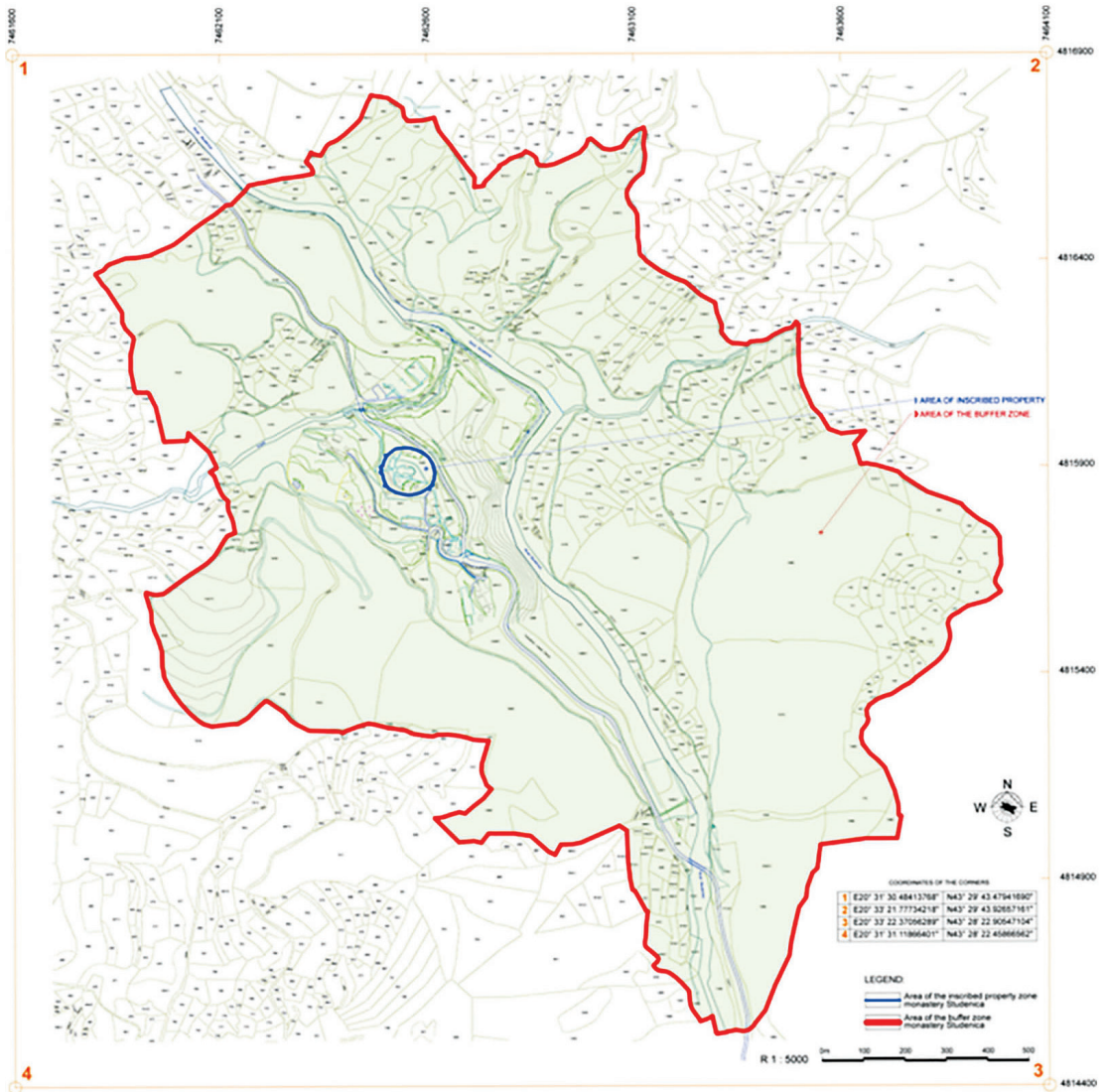
73 The local community, which had only 2% of the Serbian population in the center of Novi Pazar, did not see any interest in the world heritage in its territory, thus further work on the development of the management plan was impossible.

74 The workshop was held on March 25–27 (2014) in which all important local institutions and non-governmental organizations participated.

75 M. Nešković, *op. cit.* 152–153.

76 The Paris Declaration (2011) https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Charters/GA2011_Declaration_de_Paris_EN_20120109.pdf.

Fig. 6



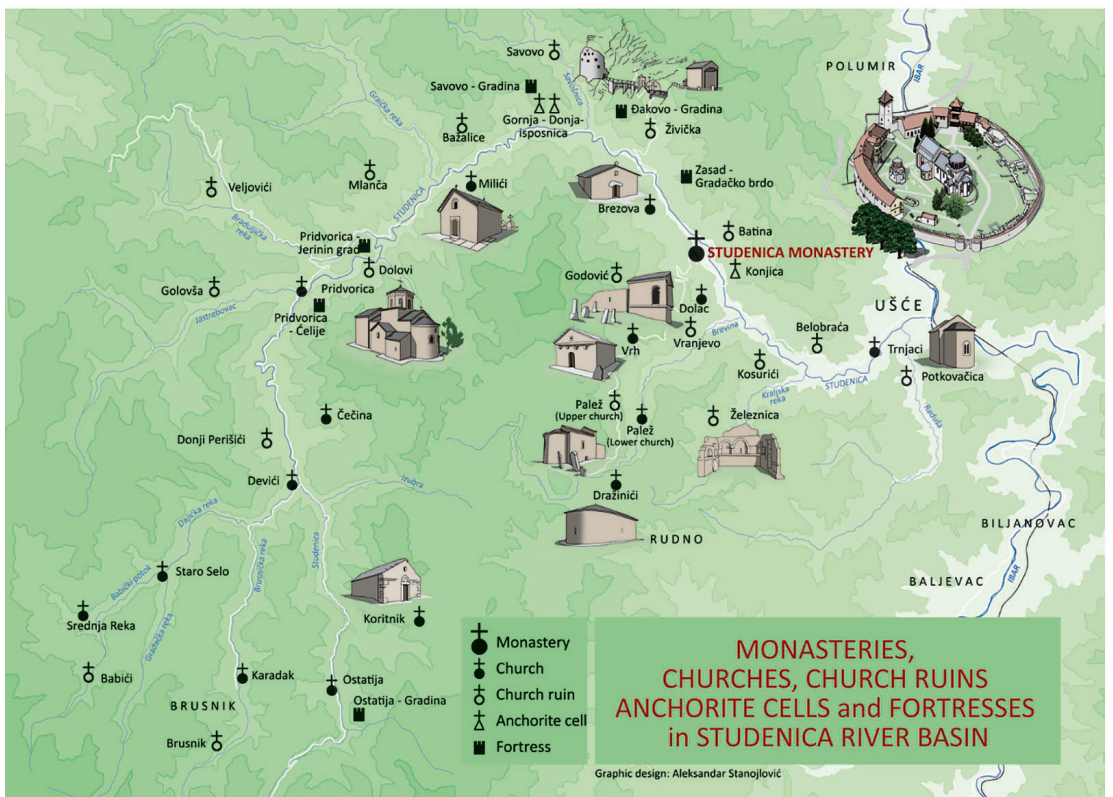
Studenica Monastery
UNESCO
World Heritage
The Boundaries of
the Immediate and
Natural Surroundings
of the Studenica
Monastery, 1988.

(https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/389/multiple=1&unique_number=449)

C 389 - Studenica monastery

Cultural Landscape
of the Studenica
Monastery

(©Aleksandar
Stanojlović)



The re-actualization of the valuation and preservation of the territory and the heritage in it lies in the hands of the entire community.⁷⁷ Xi'an Declaration on The Conservation of The Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas⁷⁸ confirms that only a wider environment that is an integral part of the cultural heritage contributes to the value and preservation of the unique character of the territory and preservation of its integrity.

Studenica Monastery

The identification and understanding of the significance of the wider territorial scope around the medieval monuments also impacted the inscription of the Studenica Monastery on the UNESCO List of World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1986.⁷⁹ Connecting geographically to the cultural and historic area of the old Raška state through the mountain area of Golija, it shows a certain tendency of Serbia towards the so-called “thematic framework” of the inscription on the List, which expands the spectrum of universal values of the medieval heritage.

Bearing in mind the confirmed criteria (*i, ii, iv, vi*) on which basis this property was inscribed on the List, a special role in further conservation and protection policies after the inscription had the satisfaction of the criterion *iv*. According to this criterion, the exceptional universal value of the Studenica monastery is characterized, among other things, by the uniqueness of *an example of a monastery of the Serbian Orthodox Church that developed and preserved its structures from the 13th to the 18th century, with an extremely significant environment rich in hermitages, churches and quarries.*⁸⁰ Two years after the inscription, the borders of the immediate surroundings and the natural environment of the monastery were determined (fig. 6).

The natural environment of the monastery is connected to the area of the Studenica river basin. In accordance with the development of the discipline of conservation, the first decades of institutionalized protection of this monastery complex had a pronounced monumental approach in understanding and interpreting its art of architecture.⁸¹ Extensive research and conservation-restoration work within the monastery began in the early 1960s. As a unique monastic settlement, the Studenica Monastery was inscribed on the list of national cultural monuments of outstanding value in 1979.⁸² In the early 1990s, a reconnaissance of this area was carried out, when a catalogue was

77 J. Jokiletho, *Historic Urban Landscape: Territory as a Cultural Expression*, *Modern Conservation* 6 (2018) 20–21.

78 Xi'an Declaration (2012), <https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Charters/xian-declaration.pdf>.

79 Monastery Studenica, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/389/>.

80 ICOMOS Evaluation N°389, <https://whc.unesco.org/document/153348>, S. Kesić Ristić, *World Heritage – Studenica Monastery*, *Modern Conservation* 4 (2016) 128–130.

81 N. Debljović Ristić, *Srednjovekovno sakralno nasleđe -Principi i postupci u arhitektonskoj konzervaciji*, *Glasnik Društva konzervatora Srbije* 39 (2015) 290–301.

82 Studenica Monastery was the model by which Serbian monasteries were built until the end of the reign of the Nemanjić dynasty. S. Popović-Mojsilović, *Krst u krugu: arhitektura manastira u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji*, Belgrade 1994, 131.

made of 30 identified churches, a large number of old cemeteries, several hermitages, valuable testimonies of vernacular architecture and traces of former fortifications.⁸³

During the 1990s, very difficult social and economic circumstances affected all the scarce investments of the state in cultural heritage. In the Studenica Monastery, a multidisciplinary project of conservation and restoration of the marble façades of the Church of the Virgin was started only in the late 1990s. As part of its implementation, the origin and types of marble were re-examined, the identification of the quarry from which the marble was extracted for the creation of the masterpiece of Serbian medieval architecture, the Church of the Virgin in Studenica.⁸⁴ Research, archeology and conservation-restoration works were carried out on the entire complex, on the architecture and fresco paintings of the Church of the Virgin and other smaller churches.⁸⁵

Along the Studenica river basin, thanks to the continuity of life and the importance of the monastic community of the Studenica Monastery,⁸⁶ an active religious life developed. Its evolutionary process can be seen through numerous single-nave village churches, the continuity of construction of which can be traced from the 13th century until the end of the 17th century.⁸⁷ Old cemeteries with unparalleled tombstones in marble were created next to churches, and some rural settlements developed next to marble and slate fields.⁸⁸ There are several quarry sites, and the largest and most productive among them are the Godović quarry, Stari majdan (The Old Quarry) and Sečina. It is believed that the largest amount of marble used in the construction of the Church of the Virgin was extracted from these sites.⁸⁹ The tradition of stone quarrying has been present here for centuries. Since ancient times, this area has been known for its stonemasonry and the production of widely known marble tombstones, which were exported in caravans to distant regions.⁹⁰ The proximity of the marble quarry in the surroundings of the Studenica Monastery testifies to the interaction between man and nature. Found landforms, rock massifs, soil composition in the place chosen for the construction of the monastery, had an influence on the selection of the area and location, as well as on the architectural

83 S. Đurić, S. Pejić, B. Krstanović, S. Temerinski, *Spomenici u slivu Studenice - opis i stanje*, Saopštenja 22–23 (1990–1991) 182–225.

84 S. Barišić, *Konzervatorsko-restauratorski radovi na mermernim fasadama i skulptoralnoj dekoraciji na Bogorodičinoj crkvi u Manastiru Studenici*, in: Proceedings from the workshop held on April 19, 2012 in Studenica, (ed.) Branka Šekarić, ICOMOS 2012, 1–8.

85 M. Popović, *Manastir Studenica: Arheološka otkrića*, Belgrade 2015, 99–104.

86 The monastic way of life has remained unchanged to the present day according to the Typikon of St. Sava from the 13th century. V. Saint Sava, *The Studenica Typikon*, (eds.) M. Anđelković, T. Rakićević, Studenica 2018.

87 R. Stanić, *Spomenici graditeljstva od XIII do XVII veka u okolini Studenice*, in: Blago manastira Studenice, (ed.) V. J. Đurić, 251–268.

88 S. Đurić, S. Pejić, B. Krstanović, S. Temerinski, *Spomenici u slivu Studenice - opis i stanje*, Saopštenja 22–23 (1990–1991) 182, with a presentation of earlier reconnaissance and published research.

89 V. Simić, *Rezanje mermerna u Studenici i Čemernom*, Glasnik etnografskog muzeja 19 (1956) 274.

90 N. Debljović-Ristić, N. Šekularac, D. Mijović, J. Šekularac, *Studenica Marble: Significance, Use, Conservation*, Sustainability 11 (2019) 10–12.

concept of shaping and building the monastery settlement, and especially the Church of the Virgin.⁹¹

The specificity of the cultural context had its influence on the preservation of traditional forms of life, and the area along the Studenica river basin was recognized as an exceptional material confirmation of the natural and cultural, tangible and intangible cooperation and the long duration of life over the centuries. In recent decades, conservation activities have focused on the life and improvement of the monastery's contents, its sustainability, planning and management of the entire territory, in which the center of gravity is still the Studenica Monastery (fig. 6).⁹²

A Special Purpose Spatial Plan for the Studenica Monastery was developed for this area, valorized as a cultural landscape.⁹³ Within the limits of the spatial coverage of the Plan, "common works of nature and man" were determined, where the emphasis was on human history, the continuity of cultural and religious traditions, social values and aspirations of a nation to preserve its own identity through difficult times in its history.⁹⁴ This planning document envisages an integrative approach to the protection and preservation of the rich cultural and historical heritage, based on improving the interaction between cultural, spiritual and natural heritage.

According to its distinctive characteristics, the cultural landscape of the Studenica Monastery belongs to the category of "organically developed landscapes",⁹⁵ which, in this case, arises as a result of historical, social, economic and religious needs. The area around the monastery belongs to a living heritage with a preserved active social and religious role in our modern society, closely connected with tradition, in which the evolutionary process continues, without disturbing the values acquired in the past. This approach was also influenced by the fact that part of the territory around the Studenica Monastery belongs to the biosphere reserve "Golija-Studenica", that is, to the UNESCO world network of nature reserves "Man and the Biosphere" (MAB),⁹⁶ but also to the "Golija Nature Park", a natural asset of outstanding value.⁹⁷ A regional approach to planning enabled identification of common value systems for cultural,

91 M. Popović, *Manastir Studenica: Arheološka otkrića*, Belgrade 2015, 31.

92 N. Debljović Ristić, *Studenica Monastery, from Cultural and Historic Monument Conservation to Landscape Management*, *Modern Conservation* 8/9 (2021) 101–116.

93 *Prostorni plan područja posebne namene manastira Studenica*, „Službeni glasnik RS“, broj 2 od 15. januara 2020. B. Šekarić, *Koncept kulturnog pejzaža u kontekstu očuvanja kulturnog i prirodnog nasleđa*, u *Kulturni pejzaž - savremeni pristup zaštiti kulturnog i prirodnog nasleđa na Balkanu*, ECPD, Beograd 2008, 246–262.

94 The Special Purpose Spatial Plan for the Studenica Monastery includes a study titled: *Protection Zones, Protection Measures, Conditions for Safeguarding and Using Cultural Heritage with the Identification and Preservation of the Cultural Landscape*, by a team of authors: Nevena Debljović Ristić, PhD and Sanja Kesić Ristić, Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia, Belgrade (December 2018).

95 Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* 2021, para. 47-47 bis.

96 Man and Biosphere, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/man-and-biosphere-programme/>.

97 Golija-Studenica Biosphere Reserve, <https://www.zzps.rs/wp/rezervoati-biosfere/>.

Fig. 7



Studenica Monastery

(Studenica monastery, ©V. Zarić)

spiritual and natural heritage.⁹⁸ The cultural landscape as a form of heritage that is recognized internationally⁹⁹ and nationally,¹⁰⁰ has become a paradigm for controlled development and sustainability through traditional knowledge and practices. For these reasons, the Management Plan for the Studenica Monastery was drawn up soon after.¹⁰¹ It envisaged strategic directions for the preservation, use and management of the cultural landscape in the Studenica river basin. Unfortunately, this Plan has not yet been implemented as an operational instrument for the management of the area, although a Risk Management Plan¹⁰² was drawn up and adopted along with it. Their role is to jointly contribute to the development processes of the area, with a special focus on ways of using and controlling dynamic changes in the space. Developing implementation activities should be the key to the future implementation of the Management Plan, in order to be able to actively monitor the results and review the management policies of the cultural landscape in the Studenica river basin (fig. 7).

Despite the complex circumstances in which the World Heritage Convention was implemented in Serbia for the past half a century, following contemporary trends in the conservation discipline, it is possible to see the efforts of institutions and individuals in charge of the world heritage to fight for the preservation of exceptional universal values, in which man and “living” heritage have special significance.

* * *

However, it must not be forgotten that the corpus of the medieval heritage of the Serbian Nemanjić dynasty and church leaders includes endowments in Kosovo and Metohija, as well. As an inseparable area of the spiritual and cultural development of the Serbian people, this territory directly spatially and historically rests on the previously mentioned medieval monuments from the List, making a solid proof of the continuity of the Serbian cultural tradition.¹⁰³ The inscription of the Dečani Monastery in 2004,

98 N. Debljović Ristić, *Srednjovekovni manastiri mesta stapanja kulture i predela*, in: *Kulturni pejzaž – savremeni pristup zaštiti kulturnog i prirodnog nasleđa na Balkanu*, Belgrade 2008, 227–238; N. Debljović Ristić, *Manastir Sopoćani – u sprezi kulturnog, duhovnog i prirodnog nasleđa*, *Glasnik Društva konzervatora Srbije* 40 (2016) 106–112.

99 By revising the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (1994) which refer to paragraphs 36–42, the Convention became the first international legal act to recognize the cultural landscape (paragraph 37)

100 The Republic of Serbia has been a signatory of the *European Spatial Development Perspective (1999) and European Landscape Convention (2000)* since 2007. Cultural landscape as a special form of heritage appears for the first time in the Law on Cultural Heritage (Official Gazette No. 129 from December 28, 2021) Article 15.

101 The Management Plan for the Studenica Monastery (2018–2020) was drawn up under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia.

102 *The Disaster Risk Assessment for the Serbian Orthodox Monastery Studenica* was drawn up in 2019, and the *Protection and Rescue Plan* was made in 2020 by the Development and Innovation Center in cooperation with Maja Đorđević, MSc and Nevena Debljović Ristić, PhD. Both plans were made within the framework of the UNESCO participation program – Disaster Risk Management in the Field of Cultural Heritage.

103 *Serbian Artistic Heritage in Kosovo and Metohija. Identity, significance, vulnerability* (eds.) M. Marković, D. Vojvodić, Belgrade 2017 (catalogue of the exhibition).

which was joined in 2006 by the Church of the Holy Virgin of Ljeviša, Gračanica Monastery and the Peć Patriarchate on the list of world heritage in danger, led to the serial nomination of four monuments and the unification of their names.¹⁰⁴ Omission of designation (*Serbian*) Medieval Monuments in Kosovo (*and Metohija*), which implies the heritage of the Serbian people, speaks of strong political influences and attempts to revise the identity and history of a nation. In this very sensitive multi-ethnic area, the Serbian people today live in enclaves under foreign administration. The fulfillment of Serbia's obligations regarding the preservation, protection and management of Serbian monuments on the List of World Heritage in Danger has been stayed from the time of their entry until today. The implementation of the Convention, by the state that has undertaken to take care of it, is completely impossible. Are there legitimate instruments that can allow Serbia to protect and preserve the integrity of its most valuable heritage? Unfortunately, the answers depend on political decisions, before which the Convention on the Protection of World Heritage remains powerless.

CONCLUSION

In the last half a century, the implementation of the Convention, along with numerous international documents and charters, has had a significant role in creating and improving policies for the protection and preservation of cultural heritage on an international, as well as a national level. Following the formation of the first institutions for strengthening cooperation among the peoples of the world, the reasons and events that influenced the construction of UNESCO, whose action in the field of cultural heritage care led to the definition and entry into force of the Convention and the formation of the World Heritage List, shows the gradual development of conditions for its unchanging and current existence, but also the impossibility of its implementation in certain complex conditions.

The unique and grandiose undertaking of saving the Abu Simbel monument complex brought together and connected many peoples of the world. Yugoslavia was among the first countries to join UNESCO, and among the first to accept participation and financially support this action. Looking back on those times shows its active role and worthy contribution in implementing the policy of peaceful coexistence and cooperation among nations in saving the cultural treasures of the world. Yugoslavia also participated in the establishing the advisory bodies, it was among the first countries to ratify the Convention and inscribe its most valuable cultural heritage assets of on the List, just one year after the first inscriptions.

By reviewing all the events and recalling the first decades of application of the Convention, it was shown how strong its role was in developing the doctrine of protection and conservation of cultural heritage in Yugoslavia, with special reference to the first two inscriptions from Serbia on the World Heritage List. The wars and collapse

104 A. Davidov Temerinski, *Serbian Monuments in Kosovo and Metohija Inscribed on the List World Heritage in Danger*, *Modern Conservation* 3 (2015) 141–146.

of this powerful state creation left lasting consequences on the cultural heritage inscribed on the List. Political decisions, sanctions, exclusion of Serbia from the United Nations, termination of cooperation with the World Heritage Committee testify to the collapse of a very well-founded and implemented conservation mission of integrative conservation based on the postulates of the Convention. The new millennium, the desecularization of society, urban development, but also the increasingly intensive advising towards the cultural heritage potentials in the context of sustainable development, opened the way to the valorization of cultural and natural heritage through new, wider horizons. The introduction of a cultural landscape, the importance of cultural heritage for society, the role of man, cultural and spiritual interaction with nature, represent important determinants that contribute to a more open understanding of heritage preservation in a broader territorial sense for future times, while on the other hand, the implementation of the Convention to Serbian medieval heritage in Kosovo and Metohija is completely undermined.

Preserving the integrity and credibility of the Convention and the List of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, as well as the List of World Cultural Heritage in Danger, requires impartial decision-making in accordance with the highest ethical standards. Contradiction causes “*political ambitions*”, while the entire heritage of the world is in danger from the impact of globalization, unimaginable speed of technological changes, unstoppable climate changes, which is most strongly reflected in the wars that have become an everyday phenomenon.

Nevertheless, 50 years after the adoption of the Convention, the number of countries that have ratified it is 193, out of 195 UNESCO member countries. The World Heritage List includes 1154 sites in 167 countries that are considered irreplaceable parts of the natural, architectural or artistic heritage of the world, illustrating the development and history of human civilization. These facts indicate humanity’s awareness that heritage is unrepeatable and valuable in all its diversity and that it is necessary to undertake all possible measures for its preservation, protection and conservation.

In a different, unclear and diverse way, we feel responsibility in relation to the heritage of the world and the heritage that is an inseparable part of our identities. How to proceed? It seems that the whole world is once again facing the same question that, due to the scourge of the Second World War, united the peoples of the world: *Is it possible to maintain peace through economic and political agreements between the countries of the world, or is it necessary to re-direct all efforts towards education development programs, sciences and cultures that would enable permanent international intellectual exchange with the goal of cohesion among the peoples of the world?*

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ПРОЦЕС ПРОМЕНА У РАЗУМЕВАЊУ СВЕТСКЕ БАШТИНЕ ИЗМЕЂУ МЕЂУНАРОДНОГ И НАЦИОНАЛНОГ КОНТЕКСТА

Један од најутицајнијих међународних споразума, Конвенција о заштити светске културне и природне баштине, пуних 50 година сведочи о мисији интернационалне комуникације и значају међународне сарадње на изградњи снажних веза са прошлошћу различитих култура и народа света, али и о тежњама да се путем конзервације и управљања културном и природном баштином, ублаже драматичне промене које неретко турбулентно утичу на ресурс културне и природне баштине у свету.

Овај рад тежи да укаже на важне кораке којима се градила међународна сарадња и активности које су довеле до формирања УНЕСКО-а, потом и до усвајања Конвенције о заштити светске културне и природне баштине, чији је утицај постепено унапређивао политике заштите и конзервације културног и природног наслеђа како на интернационалном, тако и на националном плану.

Остварење чврсте међународне сарадње у области конзервације културне баштине на овим просторима омогућила је значајна позиција коју је имала некадашња Југославија. Као равноправна чланица, Федеративна Народна Република Југославија приступила је УНЕСКО-у још 1950. године, када је формирана и прва Комисија за сарадњу са УНЕСКО-м. О њеном значајном међународном угледу говори и чињеница да је била и међу државама оснивачима ICCROM-а, а потом и ICOMOS-а.

Потреба да се од пропадања заштите највредија светска архитектонска и уметничка сведочанства, дошла је до пуног изражаја 1959. године, када су воде реке Нил изазване изградњом високе асуанске бране претиле да поплавама потопае чак 23 храма - изузетно културно, историјско, архитектонско и уметничко наслеђе најраније велике цивилизације света. УНЕСКО је окупио међународну групу стручњака који су саставили листе приоритета за спасавање споменика. Прва кампања је обухватила радове на проспекцији, документовању и археолошким ископавањима и трајала је од марта 1960. до децембра 1962. године, са учешћем 25 држава, међу којима се налазила и Социјалистичка Федеративна Република Југославија. У периоду од октобра 1963. године до маја 1964. године, послат је стручни тим из Југославије чији задатак је био спасавање, зидних слика са четири хришћанска локалитета. Поред сликара конзерватора стручни тим су чиниле и архитекте које су спровеле архитектонска снимања више храмова.

Исказана солидарност бројних земаља света и заједничка одговорност за спречавање ненадокнадивог осиромашења света у културном и етичком погледу обезбедила је посебан углед UNESCO-у, која се показала активном у заштити угрожене културне баштне света у каснијим кампањама.

Подстакнут великим кампањама UNESCO је припремао нацрт Конвенције као први међународни правни инструмент, који би омогућио заштиту културне баштине света. На генералној Конференцији UNESCO -а, 16. новембра 1972. године у Паризу, усвојена је *the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*. Конвенција је ступила на снагу 1975. године када ју је ратификовало двадесет држава међу којима и СФРЈ. Под окриљем Конвенције и њених смерница одвијао се процес који је мењао разумевање вредности и карактера културног наслеђа.

Прве номинације за упис на Листу светске баштине догодиле су се 1978. године са укупно 12 добара. Већ наредне 1979. године међу номинацијама из 23 земље, СФР Југославија уписала је шест добара из четири социјалистичке републике, међу којима је из Србије уписано историјско подручје „Стари Рас са Сопоћанима.“ Са територије СР Србије док је још била у саставу СФРЈ, на Листу светске баштине, уписан је и манастир Студеница. 1986. године. Богатство српског средњовековног наслеђа остало је у фокусу и након распада СФР Југославије. Манастир Дечани првобитно је уписан је 2004. године, да би услед „мартовског погрома“ били прикључени црква Богородице Љевишке у Призрену, манастир Грачаница и манастир Пећке Патријаршије на Листу у опасности, 2006. године, исказујући њихову изразиту угроженост.

У време првих уписа фокус је био усмерен на српско средњовековно наслеђе. Утицај Конвенције допринио је сложенијем разматрању прве уписане целине „Стари Рас са Сопоћанима“. Преузете одговорности на које је обавезивала примена ратификоване Конвенције, утицала је да се усвоји први дугорочни програм у историји заштите споменичког наслеђа у Србији којим су остварени бројни вредни научни и стручни резултати. Ратна збивања 90-их година, распад СФРЈугославије, увођење санкција 1992. године, довео је до прекида сарадње са Центром за светску баштину, што је оставило је трајне последице на културним добрима у Србији. Изразите просторне и урбанистичке промене на подручју Старог Раса са Сопоћанима утицале су на стање очуваности целине. Потреба за обновом духовног живота и захтева за обновом манастира Ђурђеви Ступови, утицала је на спровођење поступака обнове манастирске архитектуре. Стање аутентичности и интегритета доведени су у питање приликом обнове Ђурђеви Ступова са једне стране, али и предности по питању управљања и унапређења нематеријалних вредности са друге стране. Просторно планирање је показало немоћ спрам неконтролисаних развојних процеса и тешкоће при управљању историјским подручјем што захтева корените промене.

Специфичност природног и културног контекста око манастира Суденице утицала је на очување традиционалних облика живота, те је предео уз слив реке Студенице препознат као својеврсна материјална потврда природног и

културног, материјалног и нематеријалног садејства и дугог трајања живота током векова, што је утицало на могућност идентификовања културног предела и израду важних планских докумената.

И поред сложених прилика у којима се одвијала примена Конвенције о светској баштини на просторима Србије претходних пола века, могуће је сагледати напоре институција и појединаца задужених за светско наслеђе, пратећи савремене тенденције у конзерваторској дисциплини за очување изузетних универзалних вредности, у коме човек и „живо“ наслеђе имају посебан значај.