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THE CANCELLATION OF THE CULTURAL MEMORY ON THE EXAMPLE OF DESTRUCTION AND NEGLECT OF THE MONUMENTS OF SERBIAN CULTURE IN 20th CENTURY¹

Summary

In this paper author used comparative and analytic-synthetic methods to present centuries-long process of destruction and neglect of the monuments of Serbian culture and Serbian cultural heritage. In introductory part of the paper the author presented chronology and geopolitical reasons for the creation and implementation of a long term agenda of the destruction of Serbian cultural heritage. In the central part of the paper the author described the destruction of Serbian cultural heritage in 20th century, giving special consideration to the destruction of the monuments, bombing of National museum and National library in Belgrade during the First and Second world wars, the plunder of Serbian archives and the deconstruction of Serbian antique and medieval towns, churches and archaeological sites, as well as the destruction of Serbian cultural heritage in Kosovo and Metohija (“Old Serbia”). In closing part of the paper the author presented the examples of the

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continuation of the destruction of Serbian cultural heritage in the 21st century in Belgrade and across Serbia.

Keywords: *reforms of Serbian letters, the reign of Ottoman Turks in Serbia, the reign of Phanariots in Serbia, destruction of Serbian cultural heritage, Kosovo and Metohija, Belgrade fortress*

INTRODUCTION OF SERBIAN HISTORY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Due to significant changes in geopolitical constellation of the world and Europe, which have lasted from the time of establishment of modern Serbia in nineteenth century to present day, the cultural memory of Serbian history in Serbia has undergone significant state interventions in terms of shaping and changing of unofficial and official historiographical narrative and Serbian cultural heritage in Serbian education system.

Despite centuries-long destruction, appropriation and neglect of various ancient Serbian manuscripts and artifacts that had occurred during colonial missions of various foreign invaders in the Balkan peninsula throughout history, a solid basis for recognizing of the origins and development of Serbian identity by analytic-synthetic method are primary historical sources such as the *Old Testament* (“The Genesis” 6.13–20; 10.2; 25.4; „Chronicles” 1.5; „Ezekiel” 38:6) and the Second Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to Timothy (2.Тим. 4. 10) and the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Romans in the *New Testament* (15.19) (Шуљагић 2023а, 60–62). Also, according to preserved medieval Serbian state charters, scripts, monuments and coats of arms both ancient and medieval Serbs were counting the time from the time of the Great Flood onwards (5508 B.C.), which explains the statement of historian Johann Ludwig Quandt regarding the origins and mythology of ancient Serbs connected to the Great Flood: “The Northern Caucaus is the *Urheimat* of ancient Slavs or Serbs - who are Sarmats - who are Serbs, including the Serbs - Slavs living on the Danube river banks, known by their various ethnonyms-synonyms” (Quandt 1868, 272; 277–279)

The use of various ethnonyms-synonyms for the Serbian people in the Balkan Peninsula as “Tribals, Rascians, Thracians, Pelasgs, Illyrians, Cimmerians, Dardans”, etc. was present in European historiography up to the beginning of 20th century (Шуљагић 2020, 71–339; Шуљагић

2023a, 60–64). In regard to the autochthonous origin and antiquity of the Serbian people in the Balkan peninsula it is also necessary to mention official state documents and historical chronicles of East Roman, Austrian and Russian empires in which the Serbs were called “ancient and glorious Illyrico-Rascian Serbian people” and even “descendents of the emperor Alexander the Great” (*Privileges of Emperors Leopold 1745; Грамоты русского царя Петра I от 03 марта 1711, 1772; Cyprian 1852, 35; 41–42; Appendini 1806*). Due to the antiquity of the Serbs in the Balkan Peninsula Constantinopolitan historians Georgios Kedrenos and Laonic Chalcocondylas defined the ancestors of modern Serbs as “the Serbs Illyrians” and “most ancient Serbs Tribals”, while the Austrian linguists used to call Serbian language the “Illyric language” (Kedrenos 1839, 526; Chalcocondylae Atheniensis 1650; Brlek 1987, 67).

Already in the period of the reign of Osman Turkish empire over the Balkan peninsula many artifacts, documents and other proofs of the antiquity of Serbian cultural heritage in this territory had been destroyed. In 15th century in case of Serbian Despot Stefan Lazarević’s library in the monastery Manasija it is considered that Osman Turks burnt and destroyed about 20.000 state documents, manuscripts and artifacts in the library (Поповић 1969, Корићанац 2006; Милетић 2018, 22–24). The collection book of the literature from the monestary library in Manasija was kept in Serbian National library in Belgrade, but during the Second World War this library was burnt down in the bombing by German aircraft forces in April 6 1941, with the rest of the literature scattered in the country and abroad on this occasion (Милетић 2018, 22).

During the period of the reign of the Osman Turks in the Balkan Peninsula the Russian and Austrian emperors used to issue official gramatas with the privileges for the Serbian people to the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchs as remaining leaders of the Serbian people in the Balkans. However the represenatives of Venice, Hungary and the Roman Catholic Church made the treaties with the Osman Turks, using the liasions of certain Hungarian nobles in Transylvania with the Osman Turks and the clergy and bankers of the Phanariotes (Papp 2004, 60–67; Graf 2017, 11). Having been deprived of previous military and economic power, the masses of Serbian peasants kept the remembrance of once glorious pre-Osman Serbian empire and its emperors, kings and famous heroes in the form of their traditional ethno songs, poems, artifacts, rituals and manners, such as, for example, holding traditional fairs with singing, dancing and playing of traditional ethno songs. The Serbs used to make uprisings against the Ottoman Turkish troops, but

not having had strong allies to support them these uprisings often ended tragically for local Serbian people. As there are no any monument related to him, contemporary generations of Serbian pupils and students very little know about one of the most important and tragic fighters for the liberation of the Serbs in the period of the Ottoman Turkish colonization, a Serbian peasant and insurgent Petar Karpos from the territory of Kumanovo in “Old Serbia”, who was ferociously murdered by a joint squad of Osman Turks and Crimean Tatars in Skopje in Serbian uprising in 1690 (Виторовић 1940, 10). For short term intervals the Serbs used to unite with the troops of the Austrian court on occasions of their local uprisings against the Osman Turks, which fueled the revenge of the Ottoman Turkish troops against the Serbs and triggered two exoduses of the Serbs from the region of Old Serbia (Kosovo and Metohija) to the north of the Balkan peninsula in 1690 and 1737.

However, one of very important issues related to the destruction and neglect of Serbian cultural heritage in contemporary Serbia is not only related to the destruction of the Serbian cultural heritage by the Ottoman Turks, but also by so-called “Phanariotes” who took over Serbian Orthodox Church after the two massive exoduses of Serbian people from the region of Kosovo and Metohija. Following these exoduses, from the opposite direction there started the immigration of the peasantry from eastern mountainous regions of contemporary Albania into Pec, Prizren and Pristina (Mikić 1988; Gaćinović 2019, 331; 333). Most importantly, on the place of exiled Serbian Patriarchs there came the Phanariotes – a circle of Greek and quasi-Greek Christian Orthodox clergy and quasi clergy, often associated with influential bankers and statesmen in the Osman Turkish empire, who on the surface were Greeks, but in reality consisted of many other nationalities, including a strong Italian element, half clerics and half merchants among them (Eliot 1908, 278). Many of them being geoeconomically oriented, they were connected with the merchants and politicians from the Austrian empire, Danubian principalities and many of them were awarded the rank of nobility (“dvorianstvo”) in the Russian empire, substituting Serbian schools with Greek schools, in which they taught Tzintzar language to local Serbian children, closing many monasteries and destroying many Serbian manuscripts, documents and artifacts (Костић 1928; Костић 1933; Koch 2018, 295–296; Philliou 2008, 665).

After the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the fall of medieval Serbian capital Smederevo in 1459, the Ottomans established the jurisdiction of Ottoman Constantinopolitan Patriarchy in eastern and southern

part of the Balkans along with Bulgaria, Moldavia and Wallachia, while Serbian Archdiocese in Ohrid remained the jurisdiction over the western part with Serbian lands and some orthodox colonies in Southern Italy, Sicily, Malta and Dalmatia. Very soon afterwards, the Constantinopolitan Phanariotes suppressed local bishops and took over their positions. The Phanariotes “sought to destroy the national consciousness of the Serbs and Vlachs, and forbade the celebration of the Name of Christ and Serbian saints, introducing the Greek language and customs mainly in the larger cities, where there were strong Greek-Tzintzar colonies” (Новаковић 237–238). Consequently the Phanariotes who replaced Serbian priests destroyed the Church Slavonic Liturgy and books, extorted large amounts of money from local people and “diffused Hellenic culture over areas in which it had never been known” (Temperley 1919, 163). They affected the shutdown of the Serbian Patriarchate of Peć in 1766 and the Ohrid Archbishopric in 1767, and these moves cemented the period of discontinuity of Serbian identity under the Ottoman and post-Ottoman colonial reign over the Serbian people in the Balkan Peninsula all the way until the revival of the Patriarchate of Pec in 1920 (Слијепчевић 1938, 250–307; Јовичић 1867, 357–359).

The Phanariotes were also an important link in preventing the connection and revival of pre-Ottoman East Roman and Slavic Christian Orthodox commonwealth when there appeared the opportunity for its revival in the 19th century – in the period when the power of the Ottoman Turkish empire started to decline in the Balkan-Black Sea region. In 1821, in the period of uprisings of local Balkan peoples against the Ottoman Turkish reign, the criminal act of hanging of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Grigory V, who had been opposed to secular inclining of Greek insurgents’ leaders, marked the end of the era of phanariotism in the Balkan Peninsula. The Phanariotes paved the way for democratic and secular politics of the Balkan insurgents’ leaders to create modern Balkan states and they successfully cemented commercial interests of Phanariote-connected merchants in the Black sea, Egeian sea and Balkan region, who were in turn connected with the merchants from London, Trieste, Venice, Vienna, Constantinople, etc. (Zallony, 1897; Eliot 1908, 278). Some Phanariote-connected Greekovlach – Tzintzars, such as Konstantin Rodofinikin, held important positions in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and were sent to the Balkans to negotiate about the destiny of local Serbs with the Ottoman Turks, the fact to which Serbian insurgents’ leader Djordje Petrovic “Karadjordje” was strongly opposed to and demanded that the Russian people be the

Russian envoys in the Balkans (Новаковић 2018, 24–29). According to the memories of the linguist Vuk Karadžić, in the period of Serbian uprisings, when he personally met Konstantin Rodofinikin and introduced himself to Rodofinikin as the author of *Србски рјечник* (“Serbian Dictionary”), Konstantin Rodofinikin ironically remarked that he wondered “what was the purpose of the Serbian dictionary” and added: “Perhaps such dictionary would be of use when the Serbs disappear as the people, so that somebody could find out what kind of the language these people used to use” (Караџић 1969, 76).

The Ottoman Porta granted independence from the Phanariones to the Serbian Orthodox Church by the Edict (*Hatisherif*) in 1830, although there still remained the Phanariotes in the Church (Новаковић 234–235).

THE CHANGES OF SERBIAN CULTURAL IDENTITY DURING THE 19TH CENTURY

In the midst of the formation of modern Balkan states and their positioning into European geopolitical interests, there was not the opportunity for the Serbian peoples, consisting largely of the masses of uneducated impoverished peasants and a small number of newly formed corrupted political and merchant nomenclature, to preserve or fully reconstruct Serbian cultural heritage from pre-Ottoman period of Serbian state. Quite opposite, not only the monuments of culture, but traditional Serbian calendar, letters and language were changed in the process, along with Serbian historiography being changed in official educational program of the state. The Serbs, other Slavic peoples and Greeks used to count the time by an old Thracian (Slavic, Serbian) calendar, which implied counting of the time from the time of the 5508 BC – the revival of human civilization after the Great Flood (*Old Testament*, “Genesis” 6.13-20). They used this calendar until pro-Western reforms of Russian emperor Peter the Great in 18th century in Russia and until pro-Western reforms of Serbian king Milan Obrenovic in the 19th century in Serbia, when it was changed into contemporary international standard counting of the time (*О писаним впрѣдъ Генваря с 1 числа 1700 года* 2010, 47–48; Стеванчевић 2012, 259–60; Шуљагић 2016). One of characteristics examples of the way the Serbs used to write the years and months could be found in medieval state documents and inscriptions in the churches and monasteries in the region of Kosovo and Metohija (“Old Serbia”), for example in the the inscription beyond the door of the Church of Holy Mother Odigitria in Musutiste near Prizren in Kosovo and Metohija,

before the attempt of its destroying by Albanian separatists in June 1999. According to the inscription in this church, the church was built in 6823 BC (that is, in 1315 AD) (Томовић 1974, 48; Ивановић 1984, 8–9; *Srbijadanas.net* 2014). However, despite the fact that many artifacts and documents with the ancient way of counting of the time have been destroyed or appropriated, still there are preserved the artifacts, documents and other proofs of the ancient counting of the time in Serbia. One specific example for this are traditional folk and ethno songs from the territory of Kosovo and Metohija mentioning the ancient counting of the time, which were collected and preserved by Milos Milojevic, Aljosa Arsenovic, Vladimir Bovan, Dragan Jacanovic and other Serbian anthropologists, ethnologists, theologians and historians (Шуљагић 2023а, 62).

The unity of pre-Ottoman Slavs and Greeks had been reflected in the person of Russian Tzar Ivan IV Vasiljevic, who was a descendent of the members of royal dynasties in Serbia, East Roman Empire, Bulgaria and Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Витезовић 2012, 20–21). During the reign of the Ottoman Turks in the Balkan Peninsula, the Tzar Ivan IV Vasiljevic actively helped the preservation of Serbian monasteries and Serbian cultural heritage (Грујић 1955, 54–56; 59; 62–64; 68). In order to prevent “the Russian expansion towards the Balkans” and also the revival of pre-Ottoman Slavic/Constantinopolitan commonwealth, in 1818 one of the Phanariot-connected politicians in Wallachia Alexandros Mavrokordatos asked the Austrian government to help them to create a Greek state “which could act as a bulwark against the Russian expansion southward” (Patrinelis 2001, 186). Approximately at the same period, in order to prevent the Serbs to re-establish pre-Ottoman Serbian state and cultural, political and other liasions with Russia, Slavic and neighbouring Christian Orthodox states, the manager of National Library of the Austrian court Bartholomeus Kopitar and an anthropologist and linguist Vuk Stefanovic Karadzic from Serbia officially replaced traditional Serbian letter and language with a simple version of the language. This reform, as later was confessed by Barthomoleus Kopitar, effectively prevented the Serbs to read their traditional liturgical, sacral and state documents and scripts and placed them closer to Croats who were the Roman Catholics in the Habsburg monarchy, simultaneously placing the Serbs closer to the idea of the establishment of a future state of Yugoslavia (Grčević 2009, 1–53). In accord with the plan of a historian August von Schlotzer “for extending Austrian empire to the Black sea and placing Slavic studies in this area under the patronate of Vienna”, Bartholomeus Kopitar planned to make all Slavs

use one and the same letters upon the protectorate of Austria (Thomson 1999, 201; Vidmar 2009, 275–276; 306; 307; 309). The linguist Vuk Karadzic, a self-confessed “member of the Uniate church”, was notorious for having sold numerous old Serbian books and manuscripts from the monasteries of the Serbian Orthodox Church and cultural institutions throughout the Balkan Peninsula (Grčević 2009; Милатовић 2019). Under the patronage of the Vienna court representative Bartholomeus Kopitar, Vuk Karadzic accomplished the linguistic reform of Serbian letters and language which distanced the Serbs from Russians and other Christian Orthodox peoples from pre-Ottoman Constantinopolitan and Slavic commonwealth and unified the Serbs with the Romanized Slavs from the Habsburg monarchy, in such way making the Serbs more ready for the use of Latin letters under the influence of “Vuk Karadzic and Austrian secret service” (Grčević 2009, 7, 37, 43). Due to the linguistic reform under the tutorship of Bartholomeus Kopitar and Vuk Karadzic traditional Serbian letters such as “ль, нь Ъ А Я Ю ї Ѡ Ѣ Ѥ Ѧ” were banned from the use (Златковић 2018, 392; Шуљагић 2020, 360–370). Before the reform of the linguist Vuk Karadzic the same letters from the Serbian old “bukvar” (dictionary) could be found, according to Mel Copeland, Valeriy Chudinov and other linguists and scholars, on the monuments in Gordion and Xanthos (ancient Sirbis) in ancient Anadolia, on the monument of Old Roman emperor Philip I “Aramean” in Damasc, Syria, on the artifacts of the East Roman emperor Justinian and in Serbian, Greek and Russian medieval manuscripts (Шуљагић 2020, 360–367). Therefore by the reform of the Serbian traditional language, letters and calendar the Austrian agents in the Balkan peninsula not only succeeded to prevent the revival of culturally and politically connected pre-Ottoman Slavic/Constantinopolitan commonwealth, but they also succeeded to cut off linguistic and historic links of the Serbian people with their own past and with other Slavic peoples. Before the reform of traditional Slavic calendar and letters in the period of the Russian emperor Peter the Great in the 18th century in Russia, and, on the other hand, before similar reform in times of the dynasties of Karadjordjevic and Obrenovic in 19th century in Serbia, the Slavs from Novgorod to the Balkan peninsula, the Serbs, Russian, Bulgarians, Vlachs, Moldavians and even medieval Greeks had been able to communicate among themselves without the translators - they had been able to read books of each other and they used to count the time by the one and same calendar (Супрун, Молдован, 2005, 38–39; Каменский 2010, 47–48; Cracraft 2009, 98–100; Oikonomos 1828; Стеванчевић 2012, 259–60).

In addition to this, current official historiographical narrative about the history of Serbia, which had been introduced in 1882 by the Decree of the Minister of Church and Education Affairs Stojan Novaković into the Serbian education program, was based on the book *History of Serbs* written by Austro-Hungarian viceroy in Bosnia and Herzegovina Benyamin Kalay. The book was published in 1882 by official State Publishing House of Serbia in Belgrade, only four years after an influential political event of the time – Berlin Congress took place (1878). In his book *History of Serbs* the Austro-Hungarian viceroy Benyamin Kalay claimed that “the Serbs and Croats settled in the Balkan peninsula in the first half of the seventh century amid the flurry of their vagrant lootings” and such unscientifically argued narrative has remained in force in official Serbian education system and historiography to this day. Before this political hypothesis of Benyamin Kalay the Serbs learnt about their antiquity in the Balkan Peninsula and territorial span of Serbian people’s land in regular schools on the basis of the sources of antique historians and geographers (Бошковић 1866). Archaeologists Petar Milošević and Djordje Janković and historian Milos Milojević were among Serbian scholars who proved the similarity of the culture of the Serbian people in first centuries in the Balkan peninsula with the Slavic culture from central and northern Slavic lands, and with their findings they also confirmed the preaching of first Christian apostles to local people in the Balkan peninsula, which simultaneously was in accord with the statements from medieval Serbian state documents and chronicles (*New Testament* “The Second Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to Timothy” (2.Tim. 4. 10) and “The Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Romans” (15.19); Стојановић 1927, 46, 53, 194; Милошевић 1995, 187–190; 198–199; Живановић 1988, 112–115. Јанковић 1977; Јанковић 2007, 140–141; 169; 218; Јанковић 2013; Ћирковић 1989, 83). The archaeologist Djordje Janković also proved the continuation of the jurisdiction of Serbian medieval Church and state over the territory of so-called “Old Serbia” since antique and early medieval times (Јанковић 1977; Јанковић 2007, 140–141; 169; 218; Јанковић 2013; Ћирковић 1989, 83). However, following his exposure of the attempts to hide the antiquity and continuity of Serbian cultural heritage and the jurisdiction of the Serbian Orthodox Church in “Old Serbia” and the Balkan peninsula in the field of historiography and archaeology, the archaeologist Djordje Janković was fired from the Department of Archaeology of the University of Belgrade with the explanation that he was “too nationally oriented” (Јанковић 2013; Вемић 2015, 11). This case was reminiscent to the case of famous historian

Radoslav Grujic who was fired from his post in the Belgrade University in 1945 after he had saved the relics of famous Serbian medieval saints, leaders and heroes – the emperor Stefan Dusan “the Mighty” Nemanjic, Lazar Hrebeljanovic who led Serbian army in the Battle on Kosovo field in 1389 and Despot - Duke and Saint Stefan Stiljanovic. The case of the professor Radoslav Grujic was rehabilitated only just in 2014, “although with the opposition to it by the representatives of the High Prosecutor’s Office in Belgrade” (Субашић 2014).

In 1881, only one year before the publishing of the Austro-Hungarian viceroy Benyamin Kalay’s book in Serbia, several Serbian politicians led by Duke Milan Obrenovic and Minister of Foreign Affairs Cedomilj Mijatovic had signed the *Secret Convention* with representatives of the Austro-Hungarian Court, without knowledge and permission of the Serbian people and Serbian Parliament regarding it. According to a historian Gale Stoke, the Duke Milan Obrenovic had to sign the *Secret Convention* because the Austro-Hungarian viceroy Benyamin Kalay openly threatened the Duke Obrenovic prior to the signing of the *Secret Convention* with the words that in case of the Duke’s refusal to sign this document the Austro-Hungarian monarchy planned to occupy Serbia (Stoke 1990, 191–192). According to the *Secret Convention* Serbia had to become a “satellite-state” of Austro-Hungary and so not very late after the *Secret Convention* had been signed, Serbian Minister of the Church and Education Affairs Stojan Novakovic deported Serbian Patriarch Mihailo to Bulgaria and established illegal Church hierarchy in Serbia, while the Duke Obrenovic and Minister Mijatovic were awarded the crown, medal and retirement income by the Austro-Hungarian emperor for having signed this document (Kalaji 1882, 9; Mijatovich 1917, 150–151; Јиричек 1952, 25; 45; 56–57; Раденић 1976, Калабић, 2009).

THE PROCESS OF DESTROYING SERBIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE 20th CENTURY

During the period of the establishment of modern Serbia and reforms of Serbian traditional language, letters, calendar, teology and geography, in general, in the process of shaping Serbian culture and science during the the 19th century were involved the linguists, historians and geographers who had connections with the Phanariote-related families, such as Vuk Karadzic, Dositej Obradovic, Sima Milutinovic and geographer Jovan Cvijic. The geographer Jovan Cvijic, in whose honour the

Geographical Society of Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences carries the name of Jovan Cvijic, at the beginning of the 20th century was involved in erasing of some very important original Serbian toponyms and replacing them with new toponyms that are used in Serbian geography up to these days. In case of the region of Old Serbia in 1907 the geographer Jovan Cvijic replaced the toponym “Trojanske planine” (“Troian montes”, as written by a Venetian cartographer Vincenzo Maria Coronelli in his 1690 map of the Balkans) with the toponym “Prokletije” (Coronelli 1689; Васовић, Касалица 1994, 8). The geographer Jovan Cvijic was the one who had researched and made the plan for the route for the exodus of Serbian Army through Montenegrin and Albanian mountains during the First World War which caused hundreds of thousands of lost human lives, the decision which still sparks discussions whether such plan and exodus operation was necessary at all. In addition to it, during the First World War the geographer Jovan Cvijic propagated the idea of the extermination of the Kingdom of Serbia and establishment of a new state Yugoslavia (Станковић 2015, 64–65). The cancellation of the cultural memory of Serbian medieval past in so-called “Old Serbia” region in the Balkan peninsula was also reflected in the change of older toponyms “Krstac” and “Carska, Car planina” (“Royal mountain”) to Sar mountain (Шар, Шарска планина) (Томовић 2003, 11–18). This mountain was famous in traditional Serbian ethno songs from Old Serbia in which there were mentioned the Drvenars, the members of the famous royal line Drvenari (Drvenarovics), who were ancestors of the members of famous medieval Serbian dynasty Nemanjić (Арсеновић 2008, 373).

Following the establishment of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia even the king (regent) Aleksandar Karadjordjevic himself destroyed a prehistoric castle Zrnovo near Belgrade in 1934 and then a sculptor Ivan Mestrovic made the monument “in the honour of an unknown hero” in the place of the destroyed castle in the style of the tomb of emperor Cyrus II of Persia (Дамјановић 2017).

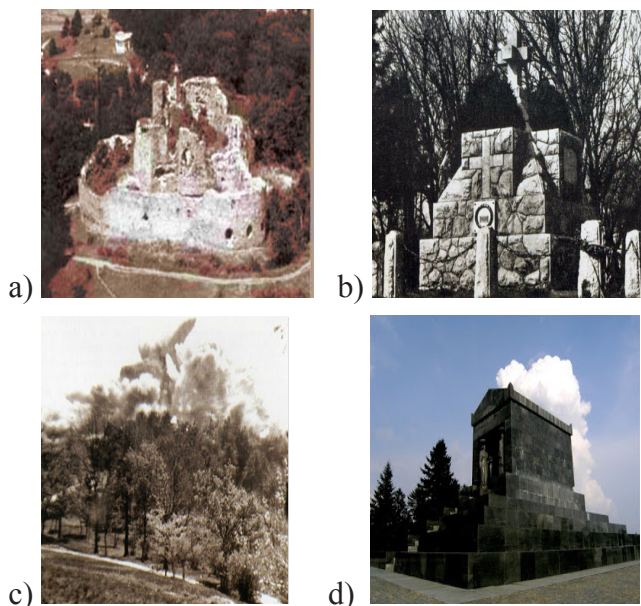


Photo: Radovan Damjanović, „Planina Avala: srednjovekovni utvrđeni grad Žrnov, zvan i Žrnovan, branik Beograda“¹ a) The castle Zrnov on the mountain Avala near Belgrade as it used to look like before its destruction, with the remains of prehistoric metal smelters inside of the castle b) The monument to a young Serbian soldier in the mountain Avala in 1930 before the destruction of the monument c) The destruction of the castle Zrnov and nearby monument to the Serbian soldier d) Contemporary monument in the mountain Avala built in the style of the tomb of Cyrus II of Persia, which substituted the destroyed castle Zrnov and monument to the Serbian soldier

The destroyed castle Zrnov near Belgrade was famous not only for its medieval prehistoric metal smelters, but also for having been the shelter to the leader of Serbian insurgents Karadjordje and his troops in the battles against the Ottoman Turks at the beginning of the 19th century. The monument to Karadjordje, which was installed in the Belgrade fortress Kalemegdan was destroyed in 1916 during Austrian occupation of Belgrade in the First World War and instead of this monument in 1930 there was installed “The Monument to France” made by a sculptor Ivan Mestrovic (Јевтовић 2001, 189).

¹ <http://serbiasos.blogspot.com/2012/10/planina-avala-srednjovekovni-utvreni.html>



a)



b)

a) Борозан 2012, 40: Opening of the monument to Karadjordje in Kalemegdan in 1913.

b) Monument to France which substituted the monument to Karadjordje in 1930.²

Back in 1882 an archaeologist and one of the managers of National museum Mihajlo Valtrović made official request that “the destruction of antiquities and their export from Serbia had to be banned” (Шуљагић 2020, 13). However, such process was continued in 20th century, in particular during the First and Second World wars. Regardless of the periods of the peace or war in the 20th century, many Serbian monasteries, libraries and cultural-historical monuments in Serbia were destroyed and many artifacts and documents which proved the antiquity, authenticity

² *wikipedia.org*: Monument to France which substituted the monument to Karadjordje in 1930

and originality of Serbian cultural heritage were destroyed, stolen and taken out from Serbia (Виријевић 2013а; Виријевић 2013б; sr.wikipedia.org „Мартовски погром 2004”). A diplomat, historian and archivist Vladislav Jovanovic Marambo described the destruction and robbery of Serbian cultural heritage during the Second World War in his book *Потрага за изгубљеним благом (The Search for Lost Treasure)* (Јовановић 2010).³ In this book Vladislav Jovanovic wrote about stealing of the archive of historic documents of the Kingdom of Serbia and driving it away from Serbia during the First and Second world wars, about the bombing of the National library on April 6 1941 in Belgrade and about driving out forty big train wagons with Serbian cultural heritage from Serbia during the Second World War, with attached accounts of it by the members of the Restitution Commission that worked on the reconstruction of looted funds of Serbian cultural treasures after the war (Шуљагић 2020, 14, 168). The libraries and archives of Serbian monasteries, which were preserved during the reign of the Ottoman Turkish empire in the Balkan peninsula, such as the archives in Visoki Decani, Manasija, Ravanica, Kaona and other monasteries in Serbia, during the attack of the troops of the Austro-Hungarian empire on Serbia during the First World War were burnt down (Шуљагић 2020, 14;). During the First World War the National museum was bombed, but an archaeologist Miloje Vasic and Serbian peasant Panta Urosevic succeeded to preserve a box with prehistoric figures and other artifacts from the National museum during their arduous crossing over the Albanian mountains in the exodus of Serbian people and army during the First World War (Шуљагић 2020, 13–14). On the other side, following the end of the First World War there were hidden or destroyed the collected works of one of most educated historians Miloš Milojević, who used the state archives of Beijing, Rome and Moscow in his research and spent several years walking through the region of Old Serbia collecting traditional ethno poems and artifacts which proved the antiquity of the Serbian people (Шуљагић 2020, 13–14). During the Second World War in the attack of German airforces on Belgrade on the Easter in April 6 1941, the German aircraft bombed the National library and on this occasion they destroyed more than 300000 books, 1300 medieval Serbian manuscripts, imperial, royal and church charters and documents, the collection

³ Although the script of this book was initially accepted by a representative of the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts in 1958, it was not published until the period 1974-1976 when it was firstly published in the *Matica Srpska Journal of Literature and Language* and eventually collected and published in the form of the book in 2010.

of Ottoman Turkish documents, old maps, engravings, original music compositions and many other documents and artifacts, including the catalogs with the lists of books and documents in the National library. German general Alexander Löhr who had commanded the bombing of Belgrade in 1941, later confessed that the bombing of the National library in Belgrade was one of primary official military goals of this bombing, because, in his words: “The National Library was the most important cultural institution that was keeping the code of Serbian identity and therefore with purpose it was hit by incendiary missiles, not by ordinary bombs” (Ристић 2019; Матовић 2016). The fact that, for example, one of preserved Serbian codes was the code of a monk Tah Marko written on the paper between 1370 and 1375, celebrating the founders and protectors of Serbian church and state Saint Simeon and Saint Sava, says about the significance and rich timely span of the documents which were kept in the National library in Belgrade (*Новосту* 2013).

Since the period of officially proclaimed “liberation” of the people in Yugoslavia in 1945, after thousands of local civilians had been killed or displaced by the new government of communists, in particular from the region of Kosovo and Metohija (Old Serbia), there also started the devastation of Serbian spiritual and cultural heritage regardless of one party system or multiparty systems in Serbia in power (УЗЗОППО 1945; Цветковић 2019; Виријевић 2013а, 101–102). Following the decades long reign of the communists in the 20th century and first decades of the 21st century, the Balkan peninsula was left with a significant amount of the destruction and neglect of Serbian antique and medieval towns, churches, monuments and archaeological sites by the way of building of hydroelectric power plants, highways or artificial lakes (Чанак-Медић 1970; Јевтовић 2001; Савић 2014; Шуљагић 2015а; Шуљагић 2015б; Милосављевић 2018). In latter half of the 20th century there were also destroyed or neglected many prehistoric archaeological sites in Serbia which were the proofs of autochthonous and millenium long identity of ancient Serbs Tribals on the Balkan Peninsula (Шуљагић 2020, 262–263). One of the most significant examples for this was the example of the construction of a hydroelectric power plant Djerdap and the storage lake upstream of the town of Kladovo on the Danube River. On this occasion a large part of a famous prehistoric archaeological site Lepenski Vir was submerged, although a certain number of artifacts from this site was preserved (Чанак-Медић 1970, 16). However, this accident not only destroyed material culture of this prehistoric site itself, but also it cut off traditional migrations of cod fish from the sturgeon family, which used to come from the Black and

Caspian seas to the Danube river, leaving large quantities of eggs in the shallows of the Danube river and going back, as a millennium-long symbol of fertility and birth for generations of local people and the source for counting time and mythology (Андрејић 2005, 74–75).

As for the status of Serbian historiography in the 20th century, in addition to Austro-Hungarian viceroy Benjamin Kalay's thesis about the Serbs not having been the autochthonous people on the Balkans, in 1948 there was established the Institute of Byzantology, although the term "Byzant" first time had been coined in 1555, never having been used before this year in question in the historiography. The founder of the Institute of Byzantology in Belgrade was a historian Georg Ostrogorsky, who from 1924 became associated with the field of "Byzantology" with his close friend historian and byzantologist, later German Nazi officer Percy Ernst Schramm (Prinzing 2020). The byzantologist Georg Ostrogorsky studied at the University of Heidelberg under the guidance of, among other professors, German archaeologist Ludwig Curtius (Damico, Zavadil 2014, 301–302). The archaeologist Ludwig Curtius was known for his statement that "cultural politics of the march to the East ("drag nacht Osten") by German archaeologists and architects was as equally effective as the march of Prussian technology and military troops to the East" (Marchand 1996, 92). The military and non-military ways of destroying or misinterpreting Serbian people's history were in accord with European geographers, historians, archaeologists, linguists, ministers of foreign affairs, politicians and generals August von Schlözer, Friedrich Naumann, Jacob von Falmerayer, Wilhelm von Tiersch, Ludwig Curtius, Friedrich von Metternich, Joseph Radetzky, Agenor Goluhovsky, Gyula Andrassy and Friedrich von Bock's plans for "expanding Austria to the Black Sea", "creating modern Greece as some sort of extended Bavarian state up to the Aegean Sea" or „the creation of modern states Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania under the Austro-Hungarian protectorate" (Храбак 1979, 167–168; Толева 2012; Шуљагић 2023б, 301–306, 308–310).

After the Second World War the destruction and neglect of Serbian cultural heritage in Serbia were explained by the need for spatial planning of the environment and the construction of various infrastructure facilities, or the local and state authorities argued that such moves were necessary to enable industrial progress and environmental protection (Шулягич 2014, 41–44; Савић 2014; Шуљагић 2015а; Шуљагић 2015б; *Новости онлине* 2018). In particular the destruction and neglect of the Serbian cultural heritage was reflected on the example of the destruction and neglect of the churches, monuments, documents and artifacts related

to the period of medieval Serbia under the reign of the dynasty of Nemanjics (Савић 2014). One of notorious, and still not very known, examples for this is the case of drowning of the court of medieval king Stefan Uros Nemanjic and his wife Jelena Nemanjic in the lake Gazivode in Kosovo and Metohia at the beginning of 1970s. In order to submerge the court of the king Stefan Uros Nemanjic with the churches and small villages and graves around it there were destroyed fourteen Serbian villages around the court complex and their inhabitants were moved out from the region and, following this, the artificial lake Gazivode was made in accord with the plan of the government of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (*Новости онлине* 2018). Out of his own enthusiastic concerns, a movie director and artist Dusan Jovovic made a documentary movie *Gazivode, putevima Jelene Anzujske* (“Gazivode, following the steps of the queen Jelena Anzujska”), with the expertise help of a historian Katarina Mitrovic and *Russian Geographical Society*. The elite Serbian and Russian divers and underwater archaeologists discovered the churches, the castle in which the queen Jelena used to have the school for young girls and the tower at the depth of 50 meters in the Gazivode Lake. The drowning of the court of king Stefan Uros Nemanjic in the lake Gazivode in Kosovo and Metohija had been only the vanguard for the destruction of Serbian cultural heritage which followed at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries in the same region, before, during and after the Northern Atlantic Alliance Organization’s aggression on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) in 1999. Also, among many other churches and monasteries with its surrounding villages, that have been drowned or destroyed by other methods during the 20th and 21st centuries, there are early Christian Church in Kladenciste near Bela Palanka and Church of Saint Michael near Valjevo (Шуљагић 2015а; Шуљагић 2015б).

On the surface the destruction of Serbian cultural heritage used to be explained only by the lack of capacity of the state institutions in charge of protection of cultural heritage. However, the destruction of Serbian cultural heritage on the territory of Serbia exposed itself as a long term plan with the objective of imposing long term consequences. In the words of an American politician Strob Talbott in his book *The Great Experiment: The Story of Ancient Empires, Modern States, and the Quest for a Global Nation*, in the Balkan peninsula there has been a long history of “making pseudo-states on its territory” (Talbot 2009, 312–320). Since 1999 the region of Kosovo and Metohija has been under the guard of international KFOR troops envisioned to be stationed there until the end of political negotiations between the

representatives of the Republic of Serbia and the separatists' government of a new state of so-called "Kosovo" under the patronage of the European Union. In a book of a cartographer Haji Ljubiša Gvoić *Srpska duhovna bastina na Kosovu i Metohiji (Serbian Spiritual Heritage in Kosovo and Metohija)* there are enlisted about 2000 toponyms, among there more than a thousand of the churches and monasteries of the Serbian Orthodox Church, along with the churchyards, Serbian soldiers' graves and other monuments which proved Serbian spiritual, material and cultural heritage in the region of Kosovo and Metohija, with the remark of its author that there have not been listed all toponyms of the Serbian heritage in the region (Гвоић 2015). The extermination of the Serbian cultural heritage and the exodus of the Serbs from this region was going on before, during and after the arrival of the KFOR troops, and it was blatant and obvious.

On the other side, the destruction and neglect of Serbian cultural heritage in the capital city of Belgrade has been implemented in gradual steps, mostly directed toward the destruction or neglect of the traces of early Christianity in the city of Belgrade and its surrounding. Such policy in the field of culture is understandable, because the image of Belgrade as one of the most important early Christian centers has not been fitted into the image of Belgrade as one of future world metropolises with multinational population and companies and possibly syncretic culture. In first centuries in Brestovik (Grocka municipality) in the vicinity of Belgrade in 314 there were buried Holy Christian martyrs Ermil and Stratonik, whose cult is very popular among Orthodox Christians. They were led from so-called "The Path of Tears" from the Belgrade fortress Kalemegdan to the bank of the river Danube and murdered there and on the basis of their biographies it is supposed that their bodies drown in the river Danube were later found and buried in Brestovik. There is an early Christian tomb in Brestovik that nor the majority of the citizens of Belgrade nor the tourists know about (Субашић 2012). Again in the period of the reign of the Ottoman Turks in 1814, from the vicinity of the Church of Saint Petka and Church Ruzica in the Belgrade fortress Kalemegdan there were led local Christian martyrs, among them Holy Abbot Paisiah and Holy Deacon Avakum, and murdered in the downtown of Belgrade. The Holy Deacon Avakum was famous for refusing to change his Orthodox Christian faith and become a Turk, even though he could have saved his own life if he did it. It is considered that he was murdered near a so-called Stambol gate which was the starting point of the road which lead from

Belgrade to Constantinople/Istanbul (Stambol). Such historically important gate used to be located in the space between the Republic Square and National Theatre in the central part of contemporary Belgrade and the only reminder of this are the board on the National theatre marking the place where the Stambol gate used to be and a stone monument dedicated to Holy Deacon Avakum in the fortress Kalemegdan, while young Serbian generations hardly know its location (Субашић 2012).



a)



б)



с)

- a) “Sveti Djakon Avakum”, Memorial to Deacon Avakum on Kalemegdan⁴
 b) “Стамбол капија” (Belgrade)⁵ c) The look of the Stambol gate in the 19th century

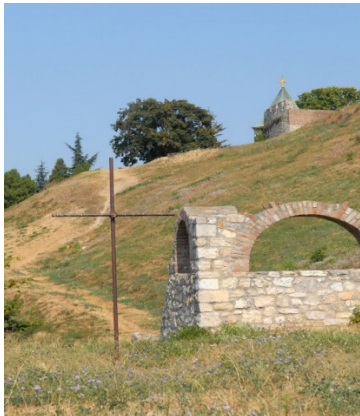
Among many Christian martyrs and heroes whose destiny was connected to the Belgrade fortress Kalemegdan there were also Serbian defenders of Belgrade in the First World War – the soldiers from the regiment of a famous mayor Dragutin Gavrilovic. However, local government of Belgrade has let a café bar to be built on Jaksiceva tower beyond the poorly marked ossuary tomb of these soldiers. This café bar has often been frequented by local politicians and it was reported that

⁴ “Sveti Djakon Avakum” [wikipedia.org](https://sr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sveti_Djakon_Avakum) Спомен-обележје јакону Авакуму на Калемегдану

⁵ [https://sr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Стамбол_капија_\(Београд\)](https://sr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Стамбол_капија_(Београд))

for years in the row the waste water from the café bar was leaking and destroying the ossuary tomb of these Serbian defenders of Belgrade in the First World War (Субашић 2012).

When in the 15th century Despot Stefan Lazarevic revived and restored Belgrade, he dedicated Belgrade to Пресвета Богородица (Holy Mother of God) and envisioned Belgrade as the town of successful trade, which could spread from the Belgrade fortress to the east of the town. For this purpose the Despot Stefan Lazarevic built up his court complex on the Belgrade fortress and it became famous for its churches, library and an attached vivid market fair located on the land beneath Belgrade fortress. However, nowadays the only memory of the famous court complex of Despot Stefan Lazarević are the remains of the foundation of the Church of Holy Mother of God that are neglected in the tourist offer in Belgrade (Николић 2018).



Photos: Пресвета Богородица Београдска, Source: Николић, *Новосту*, 2018.

On the other side, in Belgrade in which thousands of innocent civilians were murdered by the communist troops during the officially proclaimed liberation and establishment of the communist regime from 1944 to 1953, still there is no public monument dedicated to these murdered people, and instead of it there is offered a so-called “Red Belgrade – Communist Tour” to the tourists for the sightseeing of Belgrade (Цветковић 2019; *Serbia Tour Operator*). In accord with this, after the exodus of the Serbs from the territory of Kosovo and Metohija and the state ban on the return of these Serbs to their homes after the Second World War, the destruction of Serbian churches and monasteries and new serials of the exoduses of the Serbian people from Kosovo and Metohija were continued and reported for decades (Јевтић 1990; Виријевић 2013а, 106–109; Јевтић 1990).

After the aggression of the Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization on FR Yugoslavia (Serbia and Crna Gora) and the arrival of international KFOR/UNMIK forces in Kosovo and Metohija in 1999, the loss of human lives and destruction of Serbian spiritual and cultural heritage were continued, about which there exist the thousands of documents stored in the Committee for Kosovo and Metohija in the National Parliament in Serbia, as well as various books, documents and photographs (Бема 2018; Henry 2007; sr.wikipedia.org „Мартовски погром 2004; Виријевић Владан 2013а; *Kosovo online* 2020; Екипа *Вечерње новости*, Спалевић, 2007; Баранов, Замислов, 2007; Шуљагић 2022, 27–28). After the bombing of the FR Yugoslavia and the arrival of international KFOR/UNMIK troops in the territory of Kosovo and Metohija, there also followed a *coup d'état* in October 5th 2000 (so-called “the 5th October revolution”), which was organized and led by the members of services of foreign states in Serbia and abroad (Kroford 2010). Following the *coup d'état*, there followed the change of various political parties and almost complete loss of autarkic features of Serbian domestic economy, as well as the change in ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Serbian Orthodox Church (Youtube.com 2011; Јовановић 2010). It was in line with the warning of the French General Pierre Marie Gallois that the objective of the bombing in 1999 included “total occupation of the country”, which implied the occupation of political institutions as well (Youtube.com 2011)⁶. In June 5th 2022 contemporary Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church uncannically handed over the “tomoš on autocephaly”

⁶ Youtube.com. 2011. „French General Truth about NATO Bombing of Yugoslavia 1999“. July 21, 2011. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76p-YWG6rGE&ab_channel=cveti007

and the management of the churches and monasteries of the Pec Patriarchate of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian cultural heritage on the territory of today's Republic of North Macedonia to a relatively new "Macedonian Orthodox Church", which until that moment had been considered "a schismatic and non-canonical religious organization" by official definition of the Serbian Orthodox Church. In addition to this fact, on the territory of today's Republic of Northern Macedonia there already existed the official Autonomous Orthodox Ohrid Archbishopric of the Patriarchate of Pec of the Serbian Orthodox Church, whose liturgical and canonical unity with the Serbian Orthodox Church had been confirmed in May 2005 by the *Patriarchal and Parliamentary Tomos* of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Therefore with his "thomos" the contemporary Patriarch Porfirije uncanonically and illegally "gave away" an enormous Serbian traditional spiritual and cultural heritage for the management to a politically formed "schismatic and non-canonical religious organization", as the Serbian Orthodox Church officially defined the new "Macedonian Orthodox Church" (*Српска енциклопедија*, 2005; *Танјуг/B92*, 2013).

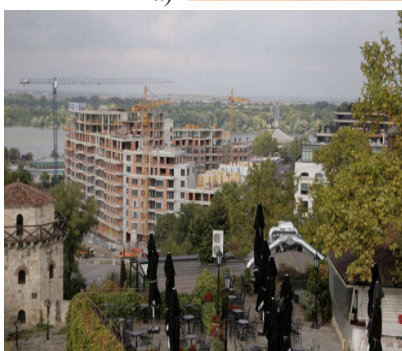
In the post-5th October revolution period there followed not only the inner crisis related to functioning of social, political and cultural institutions in Serbia, but also the change of traditional cultural events throughout the country. Characteric examples for that are the changes of traditional musical events and fairs that used to be organized by local population and their consequent transformation, or even creation of new globalized events in urban and rural regions. Characteristic examples for this is the change of traditional festival and competition of local ethno brass and trumpet bands in a small town Guca in Serbia *Сабор трубе* (The Fair of the Trumpets), into some sort of globalized festival of the sound of trumpets, with the visits of popular singers and bands from other genres of music to this festival. In this way this local traditional fair of the trumpets gradually started to lose the connection with its previous founding concept of preservation and promotion of local Serbian cultural music heritage. Other characteristic examples of inner destruction of traditional Serbian cultural events, manners and customs is the transformation of once famous fairs and markets of traditional craftsmanship and music in small towns across Serbia, that traditionally used to be held on sacral holidays, into some sort of neopagan entertainment and trade places which nowadays have not much connection with former traditional ethnographic and food and beverage presentation

of Serbian cultural heritage (Petrović 2012). In particular drastic case of the destruction and neglect of Serbian cultural heritage was the celebration of 600 years-anniversary since famous Despot Stefan Lazarevic had built up the monastery complex Manasija with a famous Church of Holy Trinity and medieval library inside of it. For the purpose of this important anniversary local non government and government organizations organized „global knightly tournament“ with the festival of foreign dances and games and even „children’s rock choir“ songs in the monastery complex („Just Out“ 2015).

In the post-5th October Serbia also the panorama of the Belgrade fortress and its surrounding on the confluence of the Danube and Sava rivers has been devastated by the site of newly built buildings, even skyscrapers in its vicinity.



a)



b)



c)

Litography of the siege of the Belgrade fortress by Ottoman Turks in 1521. Source: arhiv-beograda.org, wikipedia.org

Urbanization beyond historic Belgrade fortress. Photo: Miroslav Dragojevic, Source: Danas.rs

District “Belgrade Waterfront” on the river Sava in the vicinity of the Belgrade fortress. Source: wikipedia.org

The abovementioned examples of destruction and neglect of Serbian cultural heritage by both military and non-military methods within a centuries-long geopolitical process of the cancellation of the cultural memory in Serbia have encompassed a wide range of targeted spiritual and material elements of the cultural heritage – from the change of traditional letters, calendar and historiography, and the destruction or neglect of the churches, monuments and cultural institutions to the change of traditional cultural events, manners and customs. In first decades of the 21st century considerable long term cause-and-effect results of such long term process are the disrespect of human rights of local population to know and honour their own history and define the origins and (dis)continuity of Serbian cultural identity. Other negative consequences of this long term process, which has been continuous and has not depended on a political system in Serbia for the centuries in the row, has been the decline of Serbian population in the Balkan Peninsula and its incapability to defend existing cultural heritage inside of the country or to return the appropriated cultural heritage from abroad. On the other side, due to external geopolitical factors, there is evident an inclining of the representatives of modern Serbian institutions to impose undefinedness, neglect or distortion of traditional cultural identity of Serbian people in public cultural scene of Serbia. These problems are not likely to be changed without the change of general political climate with its attached institutional and educational background in Serbia and, most importantly, it is not possible to be changed without moral and political change of foreign past and current long term agenda of the destruction of Serbian cultural heritage and cultural memory in Serbia.

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ОТМЕНА КУЛЬТУРЫ ПАМЯТИ НА ПРИМЕРЕ РАЗРУШЕНИЯ И ЗАБЕГАНИЯ ПАМЯТНИКОВ СЕРБСКОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ В XX ВЕКЕ

Аннотация

В данной статье автор использовал сравнительные и аналитико-синтетические методы, чтобы представить многовековой процесс разрушения и запустения памятников сербской культуры и сербского культурного наследия. Во вступительной части статьи автор представил хронологию и геополитические причины создания и реализации долгосрочной программы уничтожения сербского культурного наследия. В центральной части статьи автор описал разрушение сербского культурного наследия в XX веке, уделив особое внимание разрушению памятников, бомбардировке Национального музея и Национальной библиотеки в Белграде во время Первой и Второй мировых войн, разграблению Сербские архивы и разрушение сербских античных и средневековых городов, церквей и археологических памятников, а также уничтожение сербского культурного наследия в Косово и Метохии («Старая Сербия»). В заключительной части статьи автор привел примеры продолжения разрушения сербского культурного наследия в XXI веке в Белграде и по всей Сербии.

Ключевые слова: *реформы сербской письменности, правление турок-османов в Сербии, правление фанариотов в Сербии, уничтожение сербского культурного наследия, Косово и Метохия, Белградская крепость.*