

# ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES  
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES  
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS  
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

WORLD HERITAGE LIST

N° 389

## A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Studenica Monastery

Location : Serbia

State Party : Yugoslavia

Date : December 31, 1985

## B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria I, III, IV and VI.

## C) JUSTIFICATION

The monastery was built in the middle of a large clearing which is crossed by the Studenica River, after which it is named. It is surrounded by a circular wall roughly 115 meters in diameter outside of which remains the original environment. Beyond the farmland (15% of the protected zone) are superb forests where broad-leaved trees (oaks, linden trees, elms, ash, beeches and wild pear trees) and conifers (black and silver pines) grow on the slopes of three massifs which are 80% wooded.

It was in this remote place that in 1183 it was founded by Stefan Nemanja, the Great Joupan. He wanted to build a funeral church dedicated to the Virgin Mary. After abdicating in 1196 and withdrawing to become a monk on Mount Athos in 1197, his sons carried out his wish. The Church of the Virgin Mary was completed by Prince Vukan and his brothers who, in 1208-1209, had it decorated with the paintings of Greek artists.

Studenica was the necropolis of the Nemanjic dynasty and over the centuries it developed into one of the focal points of Serbian history. The monastery grew larger within its walls and refectories as well as the monks' living quarters were installed along the curve of the circular wall. As foundations increased more sanctuaries were created in the central area. Some tiny constructions were clustered together to the south of the original church : St. Nicholas (from ca. 1240), St. John and in the early 14th century, St. Anne and St. Joachim, the famous "King's Church", completed in 1314. At the same time votive chapels, oratories and hermitages were built in the mountains outside the walls.

The two principal monuments of Studenica, i.e. the Church of the Virgin Mary and the King's Church, are both in a very satisfactory state of conservation. This is true of the brickwork and the wall construction in marble of the main church. The upper courses of this marble, which was drawn from nearby quarries, has acquired a beautiful golden patina, but the wonderful precision of the Romanesque sculptors responsible for the west and south gates and the great east window has not been obliterated by time.

The monastery is a true museum of 13th-century Byzantine painting (frescoes in the naos and the sanctuary of the Virgin Mary in 1208-1209; frescoes of the southern chapel, in the same church, 1233-1234; frescoes of St. Nicholas, ca. 1230) and 14th-century Byzantine painting (King's Church frescoes, just after 1314). Moreover, the monastery contains important and significant painted ensembles from the so-called post-Byzantine period and more than one-hundred precious objects in the treasury.

ICOMOS recommends the inscription of Studenica Monastery and the protected zone of its surroundings on the basis of criteria I, III, IV and VI.

**Criterion I.** The King's Church houses the most beautiful murals painted by Michael and Eutybios. Not long after 1314 they painted a cycle of the Life of the Virgin Mary which is among the leading works of Byzantine art. After having worked at the Peribleptos of Ohrid and having painted a series of Serbian churches (those of the Virgin of Lievisa, of Zica, of Staro Nagoricino, of Gracanica, etc.) for King Milutin, these painters found the most perfect expression of their style in Studenica: density of forms and volumetric rendering of faces combined with astounding execution which, in terms of perfection, is very close to that of icons, with highlighting in bright colours, shadows and light executed a secco.

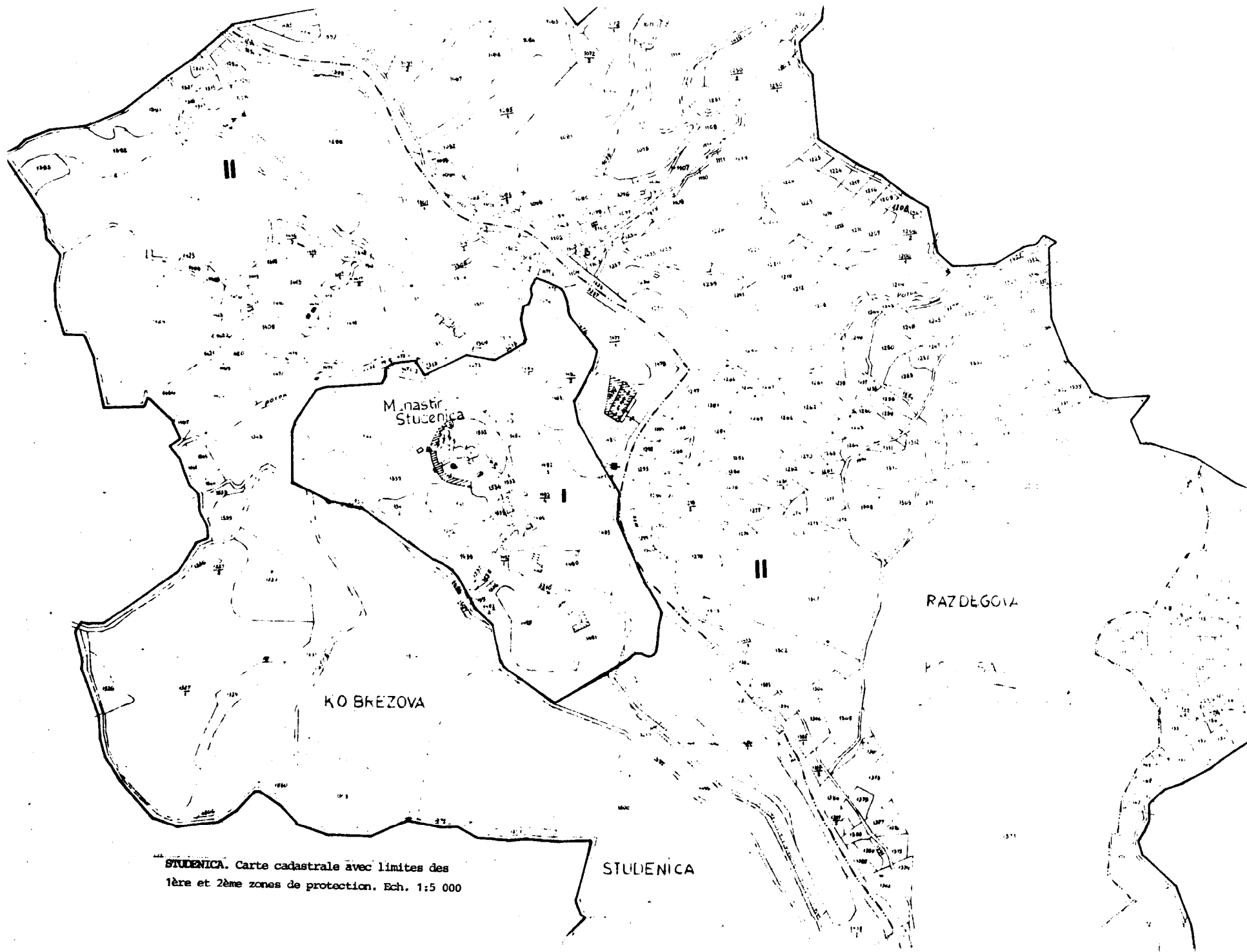
**Criterion II.** The primitive Church of the Virgin Mary served as a model for the churches of Rascie which constitute a special branch of the great Orthodox family. This royal funeral church was imitated in Banjska, Decani and the Holy Archangels of Prizren. The murals of the naos and the sanctuary, realised in 1208-1209, are among the first examples of the "monumental style" which emerged in various different regions after the capturing of Constantinople in 1205 by the Crusaders. These paintings, which are characterized by a new concept of space and a new expressiveness, are an essential milestone in the history not only of Byzantine art, but also of Western art. Cimabue, Duccio and Giotto were also a part of this current in the second half of the 13th century.

**Criterion IV.** Studenica is an outstanding example of a monastery of the Serbian Orthodox Church. It has had the good fortune of

conserving not only an array of exceptional monuments inside its circular wall, which has two fortified gates (churches, refectories, monks' quarters from the 13th to the 18th centuries), but also extremely significant surroundings. In the protected zone there is a host of churches and hermitages, the marble quarries from which the blocks for the Church of the Virgin Mary were drawn and the remains of a medieval settlement of quarrymen and stonecutters.

**Criterion VI.** Studenica is the high point of Serbian history. The monastery contains the remains of the first Serbian kings, the remains, the shroud and the coffin of Stefan Prvovencani. This is where St. Sava Nemanjic, the founder's youngest son, wrote the first literary work in the Serbian language and founded the Serbian Orthodox Church, which was separate from that of Byzantium. Up until the 19th century, Studenica remained the symbol of this culture, in somewhat the same way that Rila (included on the World Heritage List in 1983) was that of Bulgarian culture.

ICOMOS, April 1986.



STUDENICA. Carte cadastrale avec limites des 1ère et 2ème zones de protection. Ech. 1:5 000

STUDENICA



STUDENICA : St. Nicolas, Eglise du Roi et Eglise de la Vierge, vue du côté est (1983).



Eglise du Roi, Nativité de la Vierge (1985).