

Serbian Medieval Monuments (Serbia and Montenegro)

No 724 bis

1. BASIC DATA

State Party: Serbia and Montenegro
Name of property: Serbian Medieval Monuments of Kosovo and Metohija
Location: Province of Kosovo and Metohija
Date received by the World Heritage Centre: 4 January 2005
Included in the Tentative List: 18 March 2002 (Gračanica Monastery) / 28 January 2005 (Patriarchate of Peć Monastery and Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša)
International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the nomination: No
Category of property:

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of several *sites*.

Brief description:

A group of three churches, the Patriarchate of Peć Monastery, Gračanica Monastery and the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša, mainly built in the 13th and 14th centuries reflect with Dečani Monastery the high points of the discrete Byzantine-Romanesque ecclesiastical culture that developed in the Balkans in the 13th century under the Nemanja dynasty, and which persisted until the 17th century. The churches contain significant manifestations of the Palaiologos Renaissance style of mural painting.

2. ACTIONS

Background: This nomination is a proposal for an extension of Dečani Monastery inscribed on the World Heritage List at the 28th session of the World Heritage Committee (Suzhou, 2004) on the basis of criteria ii and iv.

Date of the Technical Evaluation Mission: 21-28 September 2005

Dates of request for additional information and of receipt from State Party: None

Consultations: ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committee on Wall Paintings.

Literature: Many publications on Byzantine art and architecture including: *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* Edited by Helen C. Evans, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2004; Panić, D., & Babić, G., *Bogorodica Ljevisa*, 1975; Ćurčić, S., Gračanica, *King Milutin's Church and its Place in late Byzantine Architecture*, 1979; Djurić, V. J., Ćirković, S., & Korac, V., *Pečka patrijaršija*, 1990; ICOMOS Thematic

Study: *Les Monastères orthodoxes dans les Balkans*, (2003).

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report: 15 January 2006

3. THE PROPERTY

Description

The property consists of three churches, the Patriarchate of Peć Monastery, Gračanica Monastery and the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša, Prizren, as a serial nomination linked to the Dečani Monastery, inscribed in 2004.

The churches are presented with Dečani as representing the high points of the discrete ecclesiastical culture that developed in the Balkans in the 13th century under the Serbian Nemanjić dynasty (1166 – 1371), and persisted until the 17th century.

The three nominated properties and the Dečani monastery comprise a group with shared donors, builders or master painters as well as similar architectural principles and typologies. Together their buildings represent the development of art and architecture in the Balkans from the 13th to the 17th centuries and particularly the achievements of the 14th century.

Patriarchate of Peć Monastery

The Patriarchate of Peć Monastery consists of a group of four churches, on the outskirts of Peć at the entrance to the Rugovo gorge. Three of the churches, of the Holy Apostles, St Demetrius and the Holy Virgin, were built against each other and are interconnected with a shared narthex, giving the impression from above of one building with three domes, a unique architectural symbiosis. All the churches display an extensive series of wall paintings. Slightly separate is the fourth church or chapel of St Nicholas. The churches were originally part of a large monastic complex enclosed by a wall with five towers, but none of the early secular buildings survive.

The churches still preserve their picturesque setting. Around the churches and in caves in the Rugovo gorge, many smaller churches and hermitages developed: the name Peć, adopted later than the churches, comes from the Old Slavic *pest*, a cave. One of the remaining hermitages, Marko's cave, is included in the Buffer Zone.

The nominated area of 1.53ha covers the area enclosed by the monastic wall. The buffer zone of 99.80ha extends to the south over a portion of the Rugovo Gorge and to the north over the outskirts of the town of Peć. The Serbian Archbishopric was transferred to Peć in the late 13th century. The main construction of the churches, incorporating existing buildings, was in the second half of the 13th century, but building work continued until the end of the 16th century. Peć became the spiritual centre and mausoleum of Serb Patriarchs, and the place for the coronations of kings.

The monastery is now enclosed by a high wall with an entrance tower. The main church of the Holy Apostles was built in the third decade of the 13th century. Its layout conforms to the 13th century Ras school of Serbian

churches. Built of stone, it has no aisles, a transept and a dome.

Between 1316 and 1324 the church of St Demetrius was constructed to the north and adjoining the earlier church. It is slightly smaller and has similarly a single nave and dome but walls of alternating lines of stone and brick.

In 1328 the third church of the Holy Virgin of Hodegetria was built adjoining on the south side of the Holy Apostles, and at the same time a monumental narthex porch was built on the west side linking all three churches. The narthex has a barrel vault covering a central space and two aisles. Originally open on the west side with a series of elegant arcades, this was later filled in.

The similarity of construction of certain parts of the structure with the Dečani Monastery could imply that the builders of the Peć churches were master Dorde, and his brothers Nikola and Dobrosav, who worked on the Dečani Monastery.

By 1260, the Church of Holy Apostles was adorned with frescoes, preserved in the dome and altar space. These paintings reflect a mature phase of a plastic monumental style of painting for which no analogies have been discovered.

Half a century later the west side of the church of the Holy Virgin and the *narthex* were decorated with a series of frescoes in a new style, the so called Palaiologian Renaissance style of Byzantium (after the dynasty of that name). These frescoes, along with those in the churches in Gračanica and Prizren, came to play a decisive role in the development of art in the Balkans.

In the church of the Holy Apostles, on the ceiling are the cycle of the passion of Christ, on the south wall, portraits of members of the ruling Nemanjić dynasty and two grandiose half length portraits of St Nicholas and the Virgin Eleousa with Christ are on the west wall.

In the church of the Holy Virgin there are paintings in the dome, on vaults, on the upper walls and on the walls of the *diakonikon* and *prothesi*, as separate chapels of Christ, the Divine Liturgy, prophets, the Resurrection and the life of the Virgin. These differ from the formal 'classicism' of those in the *narthex* and for the first time in the choir holy warriors and holy monks were painted against each other – a pattern that was to persist in Serbian wall paintings.

Around 1345, in order to prepare the church for its new function as the seat of the Serbian Patriarchate, the church of St Demetrius had further paintings added including solemn portraits of Serbian rulers and Archbishops and figures of holy warriors and monks – the latter in a style that foreshadowed the more ornamental characteristics of the second half of the 14th century. Further frescoes were added in the 17th century by the Serbian painter Georgije Mitrofanovic.

Gračanica Monastery

Gračanica Monastery was one of the last monumental endowments of King Milutin (1282 – 1321). It was constructed in the second decade of the 14th century on the

ruins of an older 13th-century church of the Theotokos, which was in turn built on the ruins of a 6th-century early-Christian, three-naved basilica. Only the church remains from the original monastery complex, which was intended as the seat of the Lipljan bishops.

The nominated area of 1.22 ha consists of the monastery church and a rectangular area of grass surrounding it enclosed by a low wall. The buffer zone of 12.10 ha includes part of the village of the same name. The church has five domes, arranged in a sort of pyramid formation, and polychrome walls of alternating courses of grey stone and red bricks, with raised light mortar courses, in the so-called Byzantine 'cloisonné' system. The interior is richly decorated with further examples of Palaiologian Renaissance paintings.

The church is in two parts; the main church and a narthex added to the west façade. The central part of the church is a cross-in-square *naos* (nave). The *narthex* is a three aisled structure roofed with barrel vaults either side and a central blind *calotte* (low window-less dome).

The plan, spatial arrangement, decorative wall treatment and wall paintings together have made it an emblematic structure for Balkan architecture of the 14th century reflecting the spirit of the Byzantine tradition but slightly modified by western influence.

The interior paintings were carried out by painters from King Milutin's workshop headed by Michael Astrapa and Eutykhios from Thessaloniki who worked at the church for almost two decades, completing the work in 1321. They are fine examples of the Palaiologos Renaissance style and have been preserved almost in their entirety. In the altar, main dome and smaller domes are depictions of the Eucharist and Old Testament themes. On the upper part of walls numerous cycles show Great Feasts, Christ's Public Ministry, miracles, parables and the passion of Christ. Beneath these around the whole church are lines of saints and holy warriors. In the *narthex* passage the founder, King Milutin and his wife and ancestors are portrayed.

Paintings were added to the external *narthex* at two periods in the 16th century. These include a gallery of around 30 pictures of Serbian bishops painted by artists from local workshops.

Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša

The church sits on the banks of the river Bistrica in the centre of the town of Prizren.

The nominated area of 12.39ha includes the church and a small open area surrounding it. The buffer zone of 3.47ha covers part of the adjoining town of Prizren. The church has five domes over a cross in square plan. On the north, south and west sides, ambulatory aisles were added. There is a *narthex* on the west with three barrel vaults and beyond an *exonarthex* – an external vestibule. The plan is the starting point for a new architectural style in the Balkans, transitional between basilica and cross-domed styles, which culminated in the early 14th century at Gračanica.

The earliest phase of construction was in the first half of the 13th century. The walls are constructed of a mixture of tufa, brick and light mortar, as in Gračanica. The church

gained its present appearance after reconstruction in the early 14th century. The walls were painted by 1313. Inscriptions on the east façade record the founders as King Milutin and Bishop Damian of Prizren. The name of the architect was Nicholas.

All the walls, arches, vaults and domes were covered with paintings in the Palaiologos Renaissance style painted as at Gračanica by court painters of King Milutin, Michael Astrapa and probably also Eutychios from Thessaloniki. Only around 30% of these have survived. In the domes are images of Christ, above prophets, and evangelists in the dome drum and pendentives. In the *naos* are Great Feasts, the Resurrection, Christ's Ministry and scenes from the Passion of Christ. Standing figures around the walls include holy warriors and an unusually high number of female saints. In the *narthex* are very large figures of Serbian rulers from the Nemanjić dynasty; while in the *exonarthex* are remains of images of the last Judgment, St John the Baptist, the Tree of Jesse and the Struggle of Jacob.

History

The flowering of ecclesiastical culture in the area during the 13th century, was fostered by King Milutin (1282-1321) who as King of Serbia made Serbia the dominant power in the Balkans. Milutin was the most generous monastic benefactor of the dynasty, building as many as forty churches not only in Serbia but also in Jerusalem, Constantinople, Rome, Salonika, Macedonia, and on Mount Athos.

Slightly earlier, the first Nevanjić King Stefan (1166 - 1196), had founded Studenica Monastery, which became the necropolis of the dynasty. (It was inscribed in 1986 on the World Heritage List). And in 1219, the patriarch of Nicea had allowed the establishment of an independent Serbian archbishopric. State and Church joined together to develop a strong identity for Serbia – the first archbishop was from the ruling family. In 1346 an independent Serbian Patriarchate was established by King Dusan, with Peć becoming its centre.

Under Dusan's successor, Serbia became split into several states none of whom could offer resistance to the Turks. In 1389 at the Battle of Kosovo the Serbs lost a critical battle against the Turks, and many Serbs and the centre of their power moved north. In 1459 the capture of the Serbian capital by the Turks brought to an end the medieval Serbian State.

In 1557 with the permission of the Turks, the Patriarchate of Peć was restored. It then once again played a dominant role as a spiritual centre together with the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Monasteries of Mount Athos.

Some time before 1756, after Turkish re-conquest, the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša was turned into a mosque and substantial readjustments were made.

The Patriarchate was again abolished in 1766 when it became part of the Kingdom of Montenegro, and in 1912 was annexed to the Cetinje metropolity. After the liberation of Prizren from the Turks, the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša once again became a Christian place of workshop.

In 1918 the Serbian church was restored with the foundation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians. In spite of heavy conflict in the Balkan region in the past decades, Peć and Gračanica churches have kept alive their monastic function and remain spiritual centres. Gračanica and Peć Patriarchate monasteries were not damaged during the war in Kosovo, largely because of respect of local communities of all ethnic origins.

The function of the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša was disrupted after violence in March 2004. When sufficient safety is ensured, it is intended that the church will once again function as a place of worship.

Protection and Management

Legal provision:

The churches are owned by the Serbian Orthodox church. The Monastery of Gračanica and the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša are managed at the level of Ras-Prizren Eparchy. The Patriarchate of Peć Monastery is under the direct jurisdiction of Serbia patriarch.

The three monuments as well as Dečani Monastery are protected under the provisions of the Cultural Monuments and Natural Rarities Protection Law (FPRY Official Acts No81/46) and by the Cultural Property Law (Official Gazette of Serbia, No 71/94). The monuments are defined as Immobile Cultural Properties of Exceptional Importance (Official Gazette of Serbia, No25/90). This obliges the responsible institution to undertake technical measures to protect the monuments and prevent uncontrolled demolition, reconstruction, new building, sub-surface exploration, increase of the height of buildings, etc, within the defined protected zone.

The institutions ultimately responsible for the implementation of the legislation are the Institute for the Protection of the Cultural Monuments of Serbia and Montenegro, and The Ministry of Culture and Public Information of the Republic of Serbia.

The buffer zones do not currently afford the nominated churches specific protection.

Management structure:

The churches are run by the Serbian Orthodox Church as cultural and historic monuments. The Church is responsible for the functioning of the monastic life of the religious community, which is undoubtedly flourishing. Experts of the Republic's Institute for the Protection of the Cultural Monuments of Serbia and Montenegro are responsible for the technical aspects of preservation of the monasteries and church and for presenting them to the public.

Due to the specific political situation in the territory of Kosovo and Metohija, there are only provisional institutions of local government. UNMIK (United Nations Mission in Kosovo) has a Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport. This institution is in charge of the preservation and the management of the monuments. It is understood that the Ministry is working on a special law on the Cultural Heritage of Kosovo and Metohija to over-arch existing legislation.

Well thought out management plans were submitted with the nomination for all three properties. Their realization is hampered by the current political situation in Kosovo.

- Property level

The monasteries were places of pilgrimage and there used to be a constant flow of pilgrims. Today, in the aftermath of the recent conflict (1998-99) the existence of separate extremist groups is feared by the local population and visits can only be arranged with a KFOR/ UNMIK (United Nations Mission in Kosovo) escort.

Resources:

The nomination states that financing for protection of the churches is provided by the budget of the Republic of Serbia. The Serbian Orthodox Church, as legal owner of the nominated properties, also provides funding for protection and maintenance. A third source of financing is represented by sponsorships and donations. No figures are provided.

Justification of the Outstanding Universal Value by the State Party (summary)

The region of Kosovo and Metohija, the western part covered by monastic establishments (metochions) and hence its name, were the central part of Medieval Serbia. The four most significant monuments in this area are Peć, Gračanica, Dečani and the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša. Their histories intertwine and are closely connected to their founders, painters and builders. All four were commissioned by Serbian secular and church rulers.

All four churches demonstrated a distinct architectural style and are exceptionally rich reflections of the leading artistic trends in Medieval Serbia – not only their architecture but also their frescoes, icons, church furniture and the literary works stored in them.

Because of the progressive views of their wealthy patrons, the churches stand out both in Medieval Serbia and the whole Byzantine era, far surpassing the limitations of their local surroundings.

4. EVALUATION

Conservation

Peć

Conservation History:

Comprehensive repairs were carried out between 1931 and 1932. The entire lead roof was replaced in 1981.

The wall paintings have been subject to several interventions. The first conservation works on all the painted wall surfaces in the interior and on facades, were executed in the course of 1931 and 1932. Detailed works on protection of wall paintings were performed in 1955 – 1966 and 1981 – 1997.

State of conservation:

High humidity in the walls of the western part of the Church of the Holy Virgin and the southern part of the Narthex is cause for great concern.

The damaged wooden beams in the wall structures, and underneath the wall paintings, represent an additional problem, most pronounced in the south part of the altar space in the Church of the Holy Virgin. The mortar on wall surfaces without paintings on them are soiled and visibly damaged.

The tile roof of the entrance tower is in poor condition, as is the enclosing wall to the churchyard.

Experts of the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments of the Republic of Serbia and the Italian experts undertook a joint appraisal of the status of frescoes and pilot restoration in summer 2002. This revealed that overall the paintings are not in good condition – even those that have received attention, and that urgent work is needed to halt and reverse degradation. In some cases previous treatments are causing problems and need to be reversed.

The nomination dossier lists problems with paintings being covered with dust and soot, detachment of paintings from the mortar on the walls, cracks, swelling and in places disappearance of the painted surface through moisture and salt action. There are problems in all the four separate churches making up the Patriarchate of Peć.

A detailed condition survey of all the paintings is urgently needed together with a comprehensive assessment of the work that is required to stabilise the paintings.

Gračanica

Conservation history:

During the Serbian-Turkish wars of 1876-1878 and the Balkan wars of 1912-13 and World War I, Gračanica was exposed to attacks and looting. After 1918 and the creation of the new state, restoration work begun. In the fourth decade of the 20th century a new dormitory was constructed on the east side of the churchyard and two further buildings on the north and south sides. The original appearance of the *exonarthex* was restored (removing a belfry and re-opening arches).

State of conservation:

Structurally the church is said to be sound. The problems identified are comparatively minor.

Long periods of abandonment during armed conflicts over many centuries have led to water ingress in various places. Between 1971 and 1975 the majority of the structure was conserved. However in many places the wall paintings exhibit water damage. And as at Peć the paintings suffer from the effects of moisture, dirt and soot, and from cracks. The instability of the present political situation makes it difficult to monitor the church on a regular basis. A detailed condition survey of all the paintings is urgently needed.

Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša

Conservation history:

Some time before 1756, after Turkish re-conquest, the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša was turned into a mosque and substantial readjustments were made: apertures were

closed, a minaret added to the bell tower, and the walls plastered inside, and in order to gain a firm key the paintings were first 'nicked'.

In 1912 after the liberation of Prizren from the Turks the building once again became a Christian place of workshop.

The minaret was removed in 1923, and between 1950 and 1953 extensive restoration was carried out including removing plaster to reveal paintings.

State of conservation:

The condition of the church was good until March 2004. In that month a fire damaged wooden windows, doors and the roof. The lead roof of the west bay of the nave has been partly removed and the middle and east bay of the nave are covered with tin sheets which are in a poor condition. The church façade is heavily soiled by soot from the fire. The nomination states that the damages can be reversed, but there are no conservation reports either for the fabric or the wall paintings to support this statement.

Many of the wall paintings were revealed in the 1950s. Conservation work on most of the paintings continued from then until 1971. The problems noted in the 1950s are however still present although in a more complicated form. The recent fire damaged the structure of the building and with it the paintings. It is estimated that 10% have been lost and that 20% will need specialist restoration work, the remaining 70% will need cleaning to remove soot and dust. There is also damage from high humidity, and severe cracking both in the conserved and unconserved paintings. This has been exacerbated since the recent arson attack, from the consequent action of blocking windows and the poor state of the roof.

A detailed condition survey of all the paintings is urgently needed.

At the First UNESCO meeting of the Experts Committee on rehabilitation and safeguarding of the cultural Heritage in Kosovo that took place in Paris, on December 9, 2005, proposals for funding the conservation of this church (together with other monuments at Prizren and Kosovo), were made by Italy, Greece and the Czech Republic.

Protection and Management:

Day-to-day responsibility for the protection of the Peć and Gračanica lies with the Abbess Fevronija in Peć and the monasteries' nunnery. All involved seem fully aware of the significance of the monasteries and work within conservation precepts and are active in seeking advice. Moreover they are also exceptionally active in seeking donations for the maintenance of the monastery.

It is not clear who ensures daily protection of the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša. Access for representatives of the Serbian Church is only possible with an escort. Responsibility lies with the local Government and UNMIK, while the keys are kept by the German KFOR contingent at Prizren.

At present the monasteries of the Patriarchate of Peć, Dečani and Gračanica are being guarded by Kosovo Force (KFOR) forces: the monasteries of the Patriarchate of Peć and Dečani by Italian soldiers, and Gračanica by Swedish contingents KFOR. Only the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša is not guarded, being surrounded by a barbed-wire fence.

- Boundaries

The boundaries for all three properties are tightly drawn to include only the churches and their immediate surroundings. The large buffer zones cover the settings of the monuments and are closely related to their integrity. For the Patriarchate of Peć Monastery, as its picturesque setting is fundamental to its value, ICOMOS suggests that consideration should be given to extending the boundaries of the property to include more of the river setting.

What is not set out is how the buffer zones will be protected. The Monastery of the Patriarchate of Peć has to a great extent preserved its natural setting. To sustain this requires active control of the buffer zone to stop possible future construction work, road building etc. which might impact adversely on the setting.

Similar active management is needed at Gračanica, particularly in relation to traffic immediately around the Monastery, and at the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša, which is in the centre of the 'old quarter' of Prizren, and where control is needed on new buildings and traffic, through updating the town plan of Prizren, to protect the old quarter, which includes monuments of Ottoman architecture such as Sinan Pasha Mosque, and Hammam Mehmet Pasha

Risk analysis:

All three churches are to varying degrees at risk. The major risks arise from neglect, the impact of recent conflicts, and the lack of active management, as well as, in the case of the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša, the effects of the recent arson attack and lack of guards.

The current climate does not allow for effective management on a regular basis nor is it conducive to undertaking major restoration projects.

The settings of all three churches are also vulnerable. These have been detailed above.

Authenticity and integrity

Authenticity:

The churches of Gračanica and Peć Patriarchate have retained intact their 17th century appearance. Moreover in spite of heavy conflict and the vicissitudes of the Balkan region, the churches have kept alive their monastic function as well. Gračanica and Peć Patriarchate churches were not damaged during the recent war in Kosovo. Both are authentic.

The Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša has had a more complex history. Extensive work was carried out to it when it was turned into a mosque and then when that process was reversed (see above). Only 30% of the original wall paintings survived. This percentage has been further reduced by the recent fire which has inflicted considerable damage on the fabric and paintings.

The authenticity of the overall structure has been affected by these changes. However the changes can be said to reflect the history of the Balkans. Considering this church as part of the overall group of four churches (including Dečani.) this loss of authenticity can be accepted in the light of what remains.

Integrity:

As churches, Peć and Gračanica have retained their integrity. As monasteries they are not complete as most of the original ancillary buildings have not survived.

The setting of all three churches contributes to the integrity of the nominated areas. In the case of Peć, its picturesque landscape with a river on one side and a hill the other is still intact and contributes to the integrity of the church. At Gračanica the overall setting of the church as part of the town is a relationship that needs to be protected. At the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša, the wider surroundings are part of the city of Prizren which has grown round the church. The setting in the buffer zone needs protecting as part of the integrity of the church.

Comparative evaluation

Dečani monastery was inscribed on the World Heritage List to represent the final and most important development of the Ras School of ecclesiastical architecture. It was seen to be different in form from other Balkan churches in terms of its architecture, construction methods and its remarkable series of wall paintings.

The Dečani monastery is larger than any of the three nominated properties and more complete in terms of its surrounding buildings and contents. However its form and particularly its wall paintings do relate to the three nominated churches which may be seen as forerunners of its final glory.

In terms of architectural form, all three properties can be said to demonstrate what is called the Palaiologos Renaissance School which developed in the early 14th century across a wide centred on Byzantium, combining eastern orthodox and western Romanesque features, and to demonstrate a discrete Serbian version of this style. The three nominated churches together with Dečani contribute to the development of this style, as most of their early building work was undertaken before Dečani was begun in 1327. Only part of church at Peć, the Holy Virgin of Hodegetria was begun later in 1328.

The form of the church of the Virgin of Ljeviša shows the origin of the cross-in-square plan with five domes; Peć – with its three, linked, individual churches - demonstrates a unique and valuable manifestation of this style, while Gračanica, with its gradually ascending domes, can be seen to be the most accomplished architectural expression of this form.

Wall paintings in the three nominated churches also reflect the development of the Palaiologos Renaissance style in the Balkans from the early confident example in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Peć, to the rich repertoires displayed at the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša, the powerful synthesis of the language achieved at Gračanica and the final academic phase in the Church of St Demetrius at Peć, which is also seen at Dečani.

The collection of wall paintings in the three nominated churches add to an understanding of the development of the Balkan Palaiologos style, and at Gračanica and Peć are in themselves outstanding examples of its execution. Those at Gračanica in particular can be compared alongside those found in the church of the Holy Apostles

in Thessaloniki and in the Monastery of Protaton at Mount Athos, both inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1988.

Outstanding universal value

General statement:

The Patriarchate of Peć Monastery, the Gračanica Monastery and the church of the Virgin of Ljeviša have outstanding universal value for a combination of the following qualities:

The three churches:

- Reflect a high point in the development of the discrete Balkan Palaiologos Renaissance style, a fusion of eastern Orthodox Byzantine styles with western Romanesque influences, fostered by both the Serbian church and state at the height of its influence
- In architectural form, show the development of this style from the first appearance of the cross-in-square plan with five domes at Ljeviša, to its unique manifestation at Peć, with three separate churches united by a narthex, and its accomplished culmination at Gračanica
- Contain an impressive series of mural paintings in an almost complete form, reflecting the development of styles from the early confident examples in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Peć, to the rich repertoires displayed at the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša, the powerful synthesis of the language achieved at Gračanica and the final academic phase in the Church of St Demetrius at Peć, and which is also seen at Dečani. Overall these paintings demonstrate the height that was achieved in Balkan mural painting in the first half of the 14th century. Those at Gračanica display perhaps the highest achievements of this art.

Evaluation of criteria:

The three churches are nominated on the basis of criteria ii, iii, iv and vi:

Criterion ii: The three churches play a decisive role in the development of ecclesiastical building and mural painting in the Balkans between the 14th to the 16th centuries. They reflect a discrete Balkan Palaiologian Renaissance architectural style, a fusion of eastern Orthodox Byzantine with western Romanesque styles. In architectural form, they show the development of the cross-in-square plan with five domes which first appeared at Ljeviša, to its unique manifestation at Peć, with three separate churches united by a common narthex, and its accomplished culmination at Gračanica.

Their mural paintings reflect the development of styles from the early confident examples in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Peć, to the rich repertoires displayed at the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša, the powerful synthesis of the language achieved at Gračanica and the final academic phase in the Church of St Demetrius at Peć, and which is also seen at Dečani. ICOMOS considers that the extension meets this criterion.

Criterion iv: The three churches reflect the development the Palaiologian Renaissance style of architecture and mural decoration in the Balkans that in turn reflects a significant phase of history when the combined forces of church and state were harnessed to create a strong identity for Serbia, at the height of its powers in the 14th century, in line with its political orientations. ICOMOS considers that the extension meets this criterion.

Criterion iii: The wall paintings in the three churches are an exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition of the Palaiologian Renaissance of Byzantium. The frescoes of the Virgin of Ljeviša and Gračanica were commissioned by the Serbian King Milutin and painted by a group of court fresco painters including Michael Astrapa and Eutykhios from Thessaloniki. They show the height of the development of Balkan art from the first half of the 14th century, similar only to the church of the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki and the Monastery of Protaton at Mount Athos, while the paintings at the churches at Peć dating from around 1300 until 1673/4, are a powerful demonstration of the emergence of this style and its aftermath. ICOMOS considers that the extension meets this criterion.

Criterion vi: In the nomination this criterion is justified on the grounds that the churches are linked to wider achievements in iconography and literature in the Serbian State in the 13th and 14th centuries. While undoubtedly such creative expressions were important their links with what remains in the churches is not strong. ICOMOS considers that the extension does not meet this criterion.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

All three churches are to differing degrees extremely vulnerable and need urgent attention, initially in the form of detailed state of conservation reports on their murals, and on underlying problems with their fabric, as acknowledged in their management plans, and in the case of Ljeviša, on the impact of the recent fire on both fabric and murals. Without such reports, as a basis for monitoring, preventative conservation measures, and projects to reverse decline, the wall paintings are undoubtedly in great danger. ICOMOS therefore recommends that all three churches should be inscribed on the World Heritage list in Danger.

As the settings of all three churches are strongly related to their integrity, it is recommended that the State Party puts in place stronger protective regimes for the Buffer zones. ICOMOS further recommends that consideration should be given to extending the boundaries of the Patriarchate of Peć Monastery to include more of its riverside setting.

Although the Patriarchate of Peć and Gračanica are both guarded, Ljeviša is not. The State Party is requested to consider ways of putting in place appropriate guarding arrangements.

In the case of the Patriarchate of Peć and Gračanica, as churches are being nominated, rather than monastic complexes, it is suggested that the names of the two properties should be changed to Patriarchate of Peć Monastic Church and Gračanica Monastic Church.

ICOMOS recommends that the name of the overall World Heritage property for the four properties should become the Medieval Monuments of Kosovo and Metohija, and that for each property, the name of each individual monument should be appended – for instance the Medieval Monuments of Kosovo and Metohija: Patriarchate of Peć Monastic Church.

Recommendation with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the extension of the Dečani Monastery to include the Patriarchate of Peć Monastery, Gračanica Monastery and the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša, be approved on the basis of *criteria ii, iii and iv*:

Criterion ii: The Patriarchate of Peć Monastic Church, the Gračanica Monastic Church and the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša played a decisive role in the development of ecclesiastical building and mural painting in the Balkans between the 14th to the 16th centuries, in the discrete Balkan Palaiologian Renaissance architectural style, which reflects a fusion of eastern Orthodox Byzantine with western Romanesque styles.

Criterion iii: The wall paintings in the three churches are an exceptional testimony to the manifestations of the cultural tradition of the Palaiologian Renaissance of Byzantium in the Balkans. They show the height of the development of Balkan art from the first half of the 14th century in Gračanica and Ljeviša, similar only to the church of the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki and the Monastery of Protaton at Mount Athos, while the paintings at the churches at Peć, dating from around 1300 until 1673/4, are a powerful demonstration of the emergence of this style and its aftermath.

Criterion iv: The Patriarchate of Peć Monastic Church, the Gračanica Monastic Church and the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša reflect the development of a discrete Palaiologian Renaissance style of architecture and mural decoration in the Balkans in the 14th century, when the combined forces of Church and State were harnessed to create a strong identity for Serbia, in line with its political orientations.

ICOMOS recommends that the properties should also be inscribed immediately on the List of World Heritage in Danger in order to allow support to be engaged for urgent conservation reports and conservation work.

ICOMOS also recommends that, in the case of the Patriarchate of Peć and Gračanica, as churches are being nominated, rather than monastic complexes, the names of the two properties should be changed to Patriarchate of Peć Monastic Church and Gračanica Monastic Church.

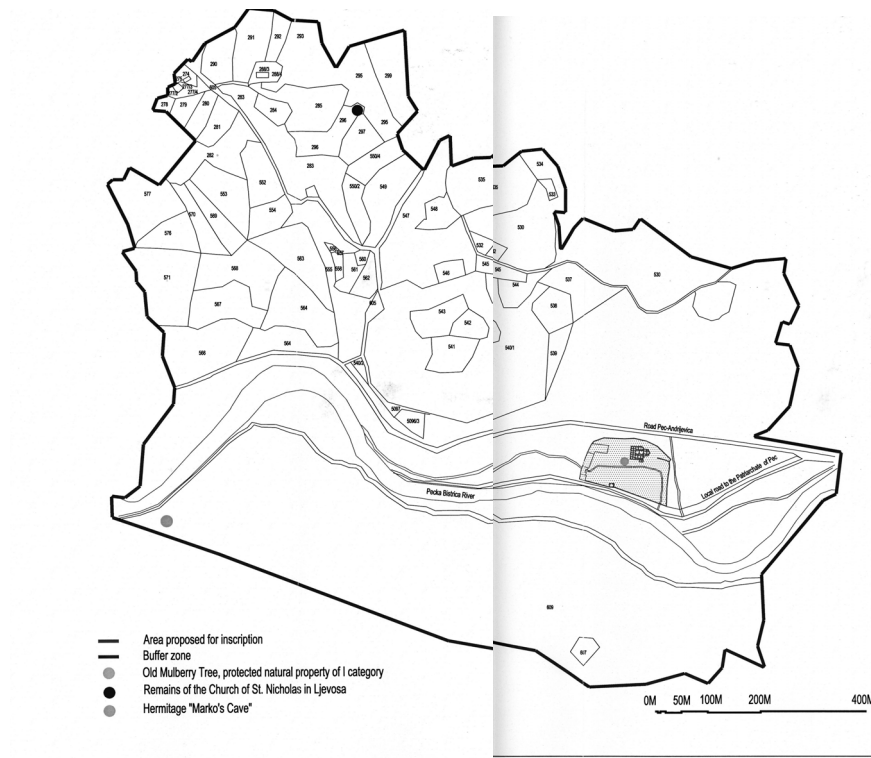
ICOMOS notes the changing of the name of the property which as extended becomes: “Medieval Monuments of Kosovo and Metohija”.

ICOMOS also recommends that the State Party put in place stronger protection for the buffer zones.

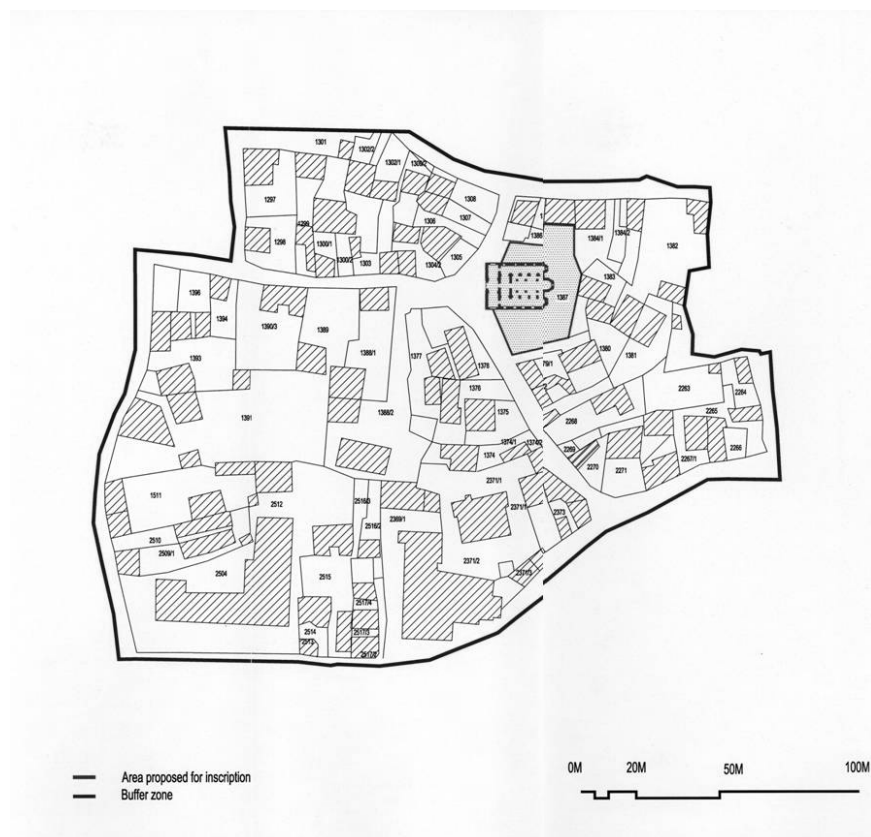
ICOMOS also recommends that the State Party give consideration to extending the boundaries of the Patriarchate of Peć Monastic Church to include more of its valley setting.

ICOMOS further requests the State Party to give consideration to putting in place appropriate guarding arrangements for the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša.

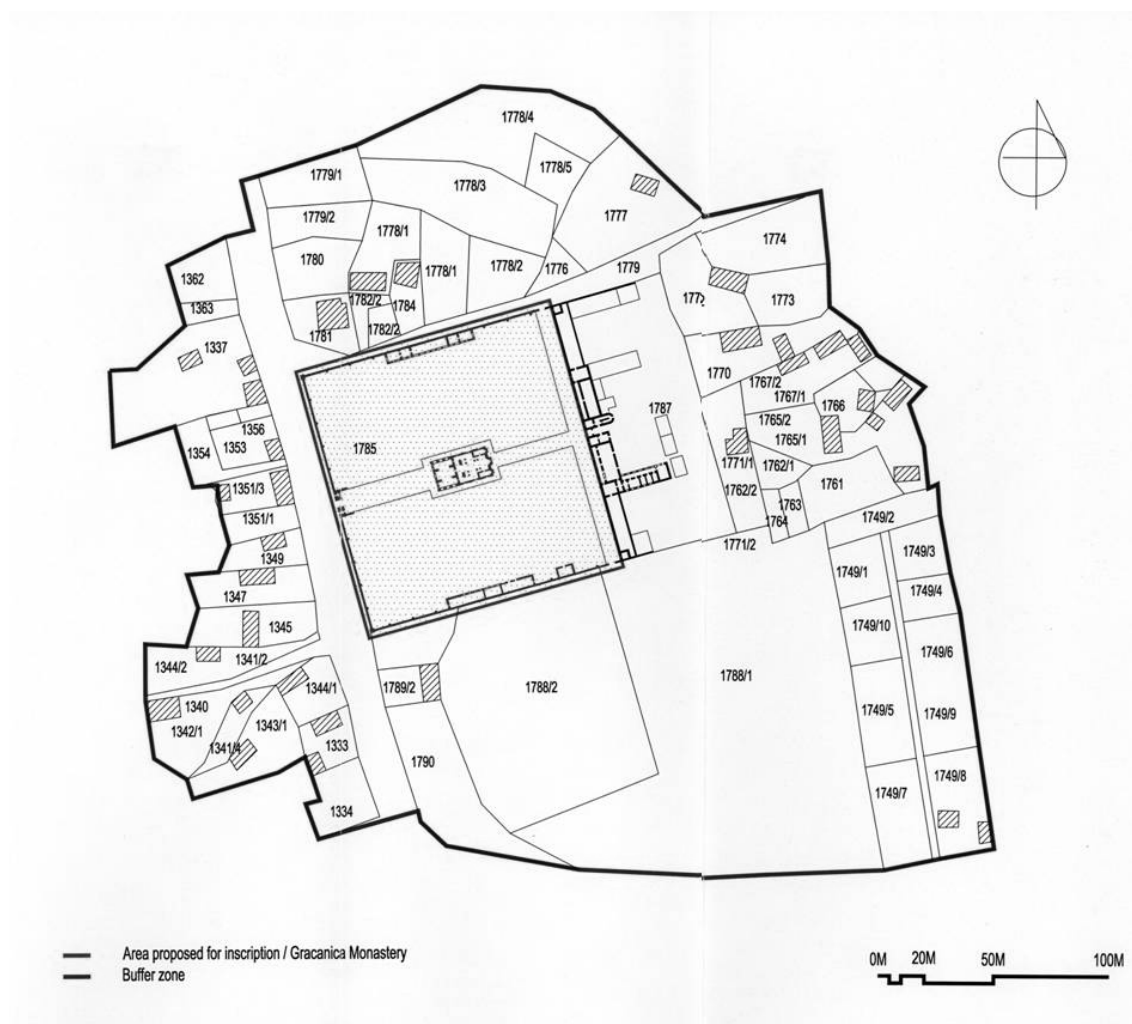
ICOMOS, April 2006



Map showing the boundaries of the Patriarchate of Peć Monastery



Map showing the boundaries of the Church of the Holy Virgin of Ljeviša



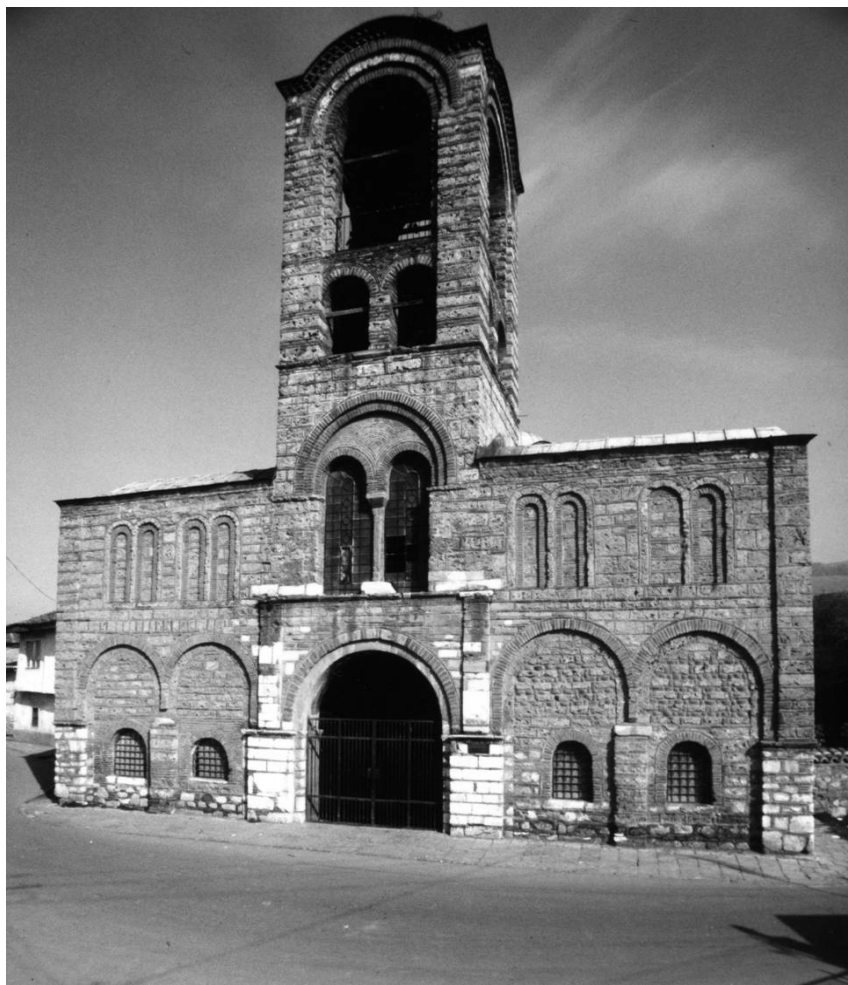
Map showing the boundaries of Gračanica Monastery



Patriarchate of Peć, Northeast view of the churches



Church of the Holy Apostles



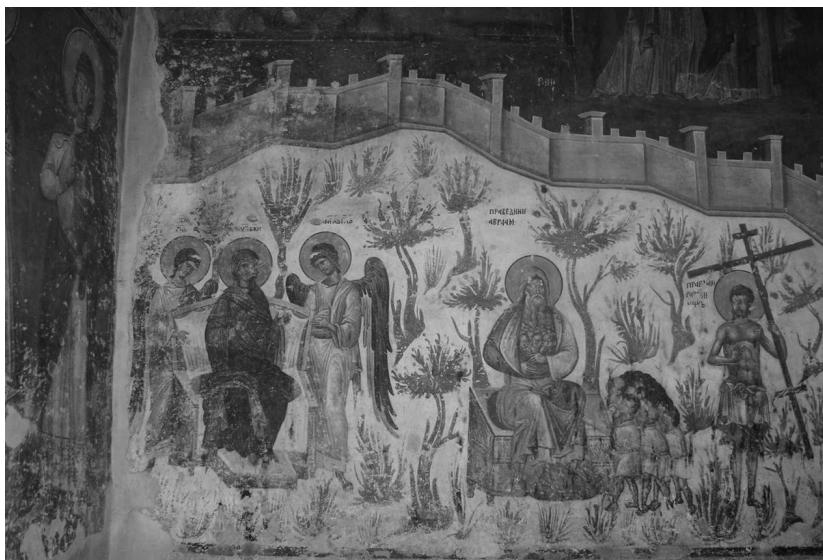
Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša



Officiating bishops



Gračanica Monastery, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin



The Last Judgment