

SERBIA

Studenica Monastery

Brief description

The Studenica Monastery was established in the late 12th century by Stefan Nemanja, founder of the medieval Serb state, shortly after his abdication. It is the largest and richest of Serbia's Orthodox monasteries. Its two principal monuments, the Church of the Virgin and the Church of the King, both built of white marble, enshrine priceless collections of 13th- and 14th-century Byzantine painting.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription 1986

Agency responsible for site management

- Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia
Radoslava Grujica 11
11118 Belgrade, Serbia

2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C (i), (ii), (iv), (vi)

Justification provided by the State Party

Le monastère de Studenica, avec tous les bâtiments qui en font partie à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur de son enceinte, est un ensemble artistique et historique de valeur multiple. Les raisons suivantes justifient sa candidature à l'inscription sur la liste du patrimoine mondial.

1 critère (iv) – L'église de la Vierge est la réalisation la plus ancienne et la plus représentative du style connu en architecture comme "Ecole de Rascie", apparu en Serbie vers la fin du XII^e siècle et qui a produit ses dernières œuvres remarquables vers le milieu du XIV^e siècle. Ce style est un phénomène unique, ayant à ses sources aussi bien des modèles byzantins (plan, structure et destination des espaces) que des modèles occidentaux (conception romane des formes extérieures et sculpture architecturale) et reflétant en même temps la situation spécifique et l'orientation politique de l'Etat serbe de son temps. L'église de la Vierge, la plus belle et la plus originale création de l'école de Rascie, est couverte au dehors de

marbre blanc et ses portails, ses fenêtres et ses consoles sont ornés de sculpture décorative dont la perfection atteint les sommets de l'art médiéval. Issue de l'antiquité classique et de la tradition artistique byzantine, elle est une symbiose harmonieuse de deux mondes artistiques et culturels, mais libérée de la hardiesse expressive de la stylisation de la sculpture occidentale. C'est ce qui la distingue de la sculpture contemporaine et assez proche des églises de l'Italie méridionale telles que Santa Maria Maggiore à Monte Sant'Angelo, San Leonardo et Santa Maria à Siponto etc.

2 critère (ii) - En tant que monument de l'école de Rascie, la Vierge de Studenica n'a pas été égalée en valeur, ni par sa conception architecturale, ni par sa sculpture décorative, aussi a-t-elle eu une influence remarquable sur le développement de l'art serbe et balkanique en général. Les églises médiévales les plus monumentales et les plus somptueuses, conçues comme églises funéraires royales, telles que Banjska, Dečani et les Sts.. Archanges de Prizren, ont été construites sur le modèle des conceptions architecturales et sculpturales de Studenica, mais elles ne l'ont pas dépassée ni par leur qualité artistique, ni par la beauté de leur traitement artisanal.

3 (critère III) - La première peinture murale de l'église de la Vierge (1208/1209) est d'importance primordiale pour le développement de l'art byzantin au XIII^e siècle. Les fresques du Studenica sont les premières œuvres conservées du nouveau style monumental. La simplicité, la dignité des personnages, la sobriété de leur expression et une certaine tendance vers l'abstrait et le transcendantal, sont des innovations que le peintre apporte au style déjà désuet de l'art des Comnènes à la fin du XII^e siècle, en créant des œuvres telles que la Crucifixion sur le mur occidental du naos, ou Jean le Miséricordieux du sanctuaire, qui atteignent les sommets de l'art européen de ce temps et de l'art byzantin entier. Peintes après la prise de Constantinople et la fondation de l'Empire Latin d'orient, dans des conditions historiques qui ont fait surgir la Serbie au premier plan des pays de la sphère byzantine capables de créer les conditions de la création artistique, elles sont unique en valeur. Le conservatisme et le provincialisme des œuvres qui leur sont contemporaines ne fait que rehausser encore le talent et la hardiesse des peintres d'origine grecque engagés par la cour de Serbie. Il n'y a que quelques rares œuvres qui leur sont analogues par le style - deux icônes dans l'église rupestre du monastère de St. Néophyte à Chypre, une figure dans une niche mortuaire à Ste.

Euphémie à Constantinople, les fresques de l'abside et les icônes de la chapelle de St. Jacques dans la monastère de Ste. Catherine au Mont Sinai et une icône de la Vierge à l'Enfant d'Ochrid.

4 critère (iv) - La peinture murale de l'Eglise du Roi (Sts. Joachim et Anne), exécutée immédiatement après 1314, est le chef d'œuvre des fameux peintres Michel et Eutychios, originaires de Salonique, qui après avoir orné de fresques l'église de la Vierge Périblepte d'Ochrid ont peint pour le roi Milutin une série d'églises en Serbie, notamment : la Vierge de Ljeviša, Žiča, St. Nikita, Staro Nagoričino et Gračanica. Par suite des petites dimensions de l'Eglise du Roi, les fresques y sont peintes de façon fort minutieuse, presque comme des icônes, et les figures de certains personnages et les scènes de la Nativité de la Vierge et de sa Présentation au Temple sont chef d'œuvre de tout l'art byzantin. L'art de Michel et Eutychios se rapproche le plus des meilleurs œuvres thessaliennes du style de la renaissance des Paléologues, telles que par exemple les fresques de Nicolas Orphānos à Salonique, Christ Sauveur de Veria et certaines fresques du monastère de Chilandar, attribuées à Georges Kalliergis.

5 critère (vi) - Le monastère de Studenica est en corrélation étroite avec les principaux personnages de l'histoire serbe médiévale. Edifiée comme église funéraire pour recevoir les restes du Grand Joupān Stefan Nemanja, fondateur de la dynastie des Nemanjić, l'Eglise de la Vierge a aussi servi de sépulture à ses descendants, princes et rois de Serbie. C'est à Studenica que s'est déroulée l'activité principale du fils cadet de Nemanja, l'archevêque Sava qui devint le saint national le plus vénéré et qui eut de grands mérites pour l'autonomie de l'Eglise serbe, le début de l'activité littéraire en langue nationale et l'essor de l'activité artistique. Le rôle de Studenica, en tant que centre culturel et spirituel le plus important de Serbie tout au long de son histoire, a été très grand notamment sous la domination ottomane, comme foyer du mouvement de libération.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

ICOMOS recommends the inscription of Studenica Monastery and the protected zone of its surroundings on the basis of criteria (i), (ii), (iv) and (v).

Criterion (I): The King's Church houses the most beautiful murals painted by Michael and Eutychios. 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 Ljevisa, of Zica, of Staro Nagoricino, of Gračanica, 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 Rascia 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 1204 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 Provcenani. 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.

Committee Decision

The Committee made no statement.

- Statement of Significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site
- Additional change proposed by State Party: changes are suggested for the Official Description of the site that gives further details about the two major monuments at the site

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: adequate

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- The Spatial Plan for National Park Golija (MAB Biosphere Reserve) which encompasses the monastery of Studenica as well, is in its final phase
- Decision on the buffer zone and the protection of the natural setting of Studenica Monastery was legally adopted in 1988
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

Actions taken:

- Preparation of the Spatial Plan for National Park Golija (MAB Biosphere Reserve) which encompasses the monastery of Studenica as well, is in its final phase
- Timeframe: 6-12 months

4. Management

Use of site/property

- National park, religious use, visitor attraction (free entrance)

Management /Administrative Body

- Steering group: legally constituted (1991); however, the activities of the Board for Studenica Monastery were interrupted by the economic crisis and war in former Yugoslavia. No plan for re-establishment of this Board exist at the moment.
- Site manager: full time with responsibilities in addition to another job
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: regional
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

Actions proposed: Create a 'Detailed Regulation Plan' (foreseen as a 6 month project)

5. Management Plan

- No management plan is being implemented
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: details not available

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- Budget sources: no core funding, but government funding comes through the Ministry of Culture. There are also some proceeds from the Serbian Orthodox Church
- WHF: has previously been accessed (amount and year not provided)
- Sufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: none

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- Good: conservation, interpretation, education
- Average: visitor management, management, promotion

8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques

- Conservators are educated off-site, in institutes for the protection of cultural monuments and museums
- Management techniques are only now being introduced in educational programmes, through seminars and workshops

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: not available
- Visitor facilities: museum shop, parking, interpretive panels, accommodation, restaurants

10. Scientific Studies

- Studies related to the value of the site, condition surveys, archaeological surveys

- The results of these studies are incorporated in publications, both scientific and tourist, that serve in promotion of the site
- The results of the study on the Church of the Virgin marble facades are applied to the conservation works that have been performed for several years

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An inadequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem is not currently used on publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local authorities
- Need for raising awareness: local community and business sector should be better informed on significance and benefits of the World Heritage site through the seminars, workshops, public discussions etc.
- Events: occasional exhibitions
- Web site available: www.studenica.org.yu
- There are currently no programmes to promote local participation

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- There were major conservation interventions on the facades of the Church of the Virgin (conservation of the marble slabs), on the 13th century frescoes (restoration of the north-eastern pendent), and on the exonarthex of the Church of the Virgin (reconstruction of the roof)
- The threat of building the dam on Studenica river has been reversed
- Present state of conservation: adequate

Threats and Risks to site

- Environmental pressure, number of inhabitants
- The idea of building the dam on Studenica river is still in question, even though it could change the micro-climate and endanger the frescoes and the WH site in general. As well water accumulation near the monastery is still a major threat
- Emergency measures taken: the proposed dam and water accumulation will be addressed

within the Spatial Plan of the National Park Golija

13. Monitoring

- No formal monitoring programme
- The key indicators for monitoring the site have been recognised but a formal monitoring programme doesn't exist
- The Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia plans to develop the systematic monitoring programme

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation
- Strengths of management: since inscription on the World Heritage List, conservation activities in Studenica Monastery have been the priority in budgetary funding
- Weaknesses of management: the traditional management, combined with conservation activities performed by the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments, is adequate but the managing of the natural setting is not completely satisfactory

Future actions:

- Preparation of the Detailed Regulation Plan, which will address the problems in managing the surroundings of the Studenica Monastery
- Suspension of the realisation of the project of building the dam on Studenica river without further impact studies