

Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	The millenary Benedictine monastery of Pannonhalma and its natural environment
<i>Location</i>	Commune of Pannonhalma, County of Győr-Moson-Sopron
<i>State Party</i>	Hungary
<i>Date</i>	16 October 1995

Justification by State Party

The monastery of the Benedictine Order at Pannonhalma, which gently dominates the Pannonian landscape, rich in natural treasures, is an original, integrated ensemble. The group of buildings, constructed over a thousand years, bear indelible witness both to the European, and at the same time profoundly Hungarian, destiny of this monastic community and to Hungarian history and culture.

The fact that the group of buildings form an assemblage from successive architectural periods and styles and that the history of their construction is still visible today gives them a unique quality. By exceptional good fortune, neither the ravages of history nor enthusiasm for reconstruction have completely destroyed the creations of earlier periods (as, for example, at Melk). **Criterion iii**

In accordance with the intentions of the founder prince, the monastery dedicated to St Martin of Tours became the eastern bridgehead of medieval European culture and at the same time the place from which the Christian Hungarian culture and state were launched. The first Hungarian school opened here, the first book was copied in the *scriptorium* of the monastery, and the first Hungarian words were set down on paper by a Benedictine monk describing the foundation of Tihany Abbey. Over the centuries the monastery played an increasingly important role in the dissemination of culture. In addition to the students of the theological academy, 360 young people studied within the monastery.

The religious places inscribed on the World Heritage List demonstrate that, as the end of the second millennium of the Christian era approaches, a spiritual community at the service of its neighbours continues to represent a specific value, no less than an outstanding landscape or a human creation. There are special links between Pannonhalma and the monasteries of Mont-Saint-Michel and Saint-Gall. Unlike them, Pannonhalma was never protected by a special geographical location and its walls were destroyed on several occasions. Each time, however, the monastery was reoccupied and, by surviving the dissolution of the monastic orders in the 1950s, it continues to represent a unique symbol of European culture and Hungarian identity. **Criterion vi**

Category of property

In terms of the categories of property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, the Benedictine monastery of Pannonhalma is a *group of buildings*. It may also be considered to be a *cultural landscape* as defined in paragraph 39 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.

History and Description*History*

The site of the present monastery has been settled since prehistoric times. When the monastery was created the area was occupied by Bavarian and Slav farmers, who came here in the wake of Charlemagne's armies.

Benedictine monks came in 996 from Italy and the Bohemian and German lands to this sacred mountain in the former Roman province of Pannonia. They came to the aid of Prince Géza and his son Stephen I, the first king of Hungary, in their efforts to humanize the Hungarians, who were terrorizing the settled peoples of Europe and pillaging and sacking the towns and monasteries of northern Italy, Bavaria, and Franconia. Bruno of Saint-Gall, St Wolfgang, Bishop of Regensburg, St Adalbert, Bishop of Prague, Bruno de Querfurt, and St Gerard of Venice were

among those who instructed the Hungarians settled on the eastern edge of Europe not only in the Christian faith but also in the European culture of the turn of the 10th century. Certain medieval sources claim that St Martin, Bishop of Tours and protector of the nascent monastic movement, was born here. It is of great historical and religious importance that the Benedictine monks founded their first house here, where St Martin was born.

The monastery set up here as the eastern bridgehead of medieval European culture retained that role for a thousand years, with only brief interruptions. It exercised an important cultural and juridical role in Hungary, and its abbots played a leading role in public life. The first monastery is known only from records, since it was burned down at the beginning of the 12th century. Reconstruction took place slowly, until Uros became Abbot (1207-43). He was assiduous in obtaining status for the monastery independent of the Hungarian hierarchy (*nullius in diocesis*) and in creating an integrated and prosperous unit out of the monastery's dispersed properties. He spent one and a half years in Italy for the IVth Lateran Council, when he took the opportunity to study constructions in progress there, and on his return spurred the builders on to complete their work. He was successful in repulsing the Mongol attack in 1241.

Many men and women were given hospitality and asylum at Pannonhalma over the centuries. Godefroy and his Crusaders stayed there on their way to the Holy Land. Throughout the Ottoman occupation (1526-1686) the monastery shielded many fugitives from persecution, as it did once again in 1944-45.

In 1472 the king took over the monastery for his own use and undertook an extensive renovation. The present cloister and other buildings with a religious function were built, despite the fact that there was only a handful of monks in residence. After the defeat of the Hungarian forces by Süleyman the Magnificent at Mohács in 1526, the monastery was fortified. However, monastic life became difficult; the monastery was badly damaged by fire and largely abandoned by the monks in 1575, and it was occupied by the Turks in 1594. The community returned in 1638, but it was not to recover until Mathias Pálffy became Abbot in 1683. The Baroque elements of the monastery, such as the refectory, were added in the 18th century during the Abbacy of Benedek Sajghó. Plans for the demolition of the entire enceinte in order to construct a monumental monastery came to nothing with the dissolution of 1786.

The "Enlightenment" of the 18th century had its impact on the monastic communities, which were judged according to their contribution to the State. Accordingly, Joseph II closed all the Benedictine houses in Hungary in 1786. Some of the monks continued their teaching work, whilst others moved into parish pastoral work. The Order was re-established in 1802, on condition that it undertook secondary education. In most cases the monks moved out into houses in neighbouring towns and the monastic buildings were turned over to education, but at Pannonhalma monastic life continued, with the school being incorporated into the monastery itself.

As the needs of society changed, the monks moved outside the confines of the monastery to serve the needs of their neighbours. During and after the Turkish occupation they were active in re-establishing villages and reorganizing agriculture as well as developing the ecclesiastical structure. From the 16th century onwards they acted as spiritual counsellors to the parishes on their lands, something which continued even after the nationalizations of 1950. Education was always one of their major preoccupations, both the training of postulants to the Order and higher education for existing members.

A new library was added at the beginning of the 19th century, and there was a major reconstruction of the cloister and church in 1868-76. A secondary school and students' house were added in 1939-41, the gift of the Italian Government of the period. At the present time there are 360 secondary students, taught by eleven Benedictine monks assisted by some thirty lay teachers. There are in all 68 monks at Pannonhalma, where other activities include a theological academy and an institution for old people.

Description

The area proposed for inscription on the World Heritage List covers 47.4 ha, and consists of the main group of monastic buildings, the Calvary and Chapel of Our Lady, the Millenary Monument, and the lands surrounding them.

The present *church*, the building of which began in 1224, is the third on the site; it contains remains of its predecessors. The elevated three-aisled choir, the oldest part of the building, overlies a similarly three-aisled crypt, probably an element of the earlier church on the site. The columns dividing the crypt have Early Gothic capitals reminiscent of the Cistercian style. The ogival vaulting is supported on consoles carved in the form of human heads. The existing red marble doors in Romanesque style date from 1699.

The nave aisle is formed of richly decorated columns, supporting sexpartite vaulting; again, some of the consoles are representations of human heads. The roof of the choir is decorated with stars, of late 15th century work. The chapels and the baptistry, with its Renaissance door and window frames, date from the same period. When the tower was built in the 19th century the western third of the church was demolished, providing a new

space of three bays that is not integrated with the rest of the construction. The tower has five levels, rising to a height of 55 m, and is one of the best known examples of Hungarian Neo-Classical architecture.

The main south door, known as the *Porta Speciosa*, is faced with red marble and flanked by five pairs of columns. It has undergone several transformations and reconstructions since it was originally built in the 13th century. This door gives access to the *Cloister*, a typical square Late Gothic ensemble built in 1486. The vaulting springs from consoles that are elaborately decorated with symbolic motifs. The doors and windows were given their present form in the 1880s. Sculptured stones from the Romanesque cloister were found during studies carried out in the 1960s, when the door leading into the medieval refectory, with small red marble columns, also came to light.

The large *Refectory*, the work of the Carmelite Martin Witwer in 1724-27, is an oblong two-storeyed hall. The facade is surmounted by a triangular pediment. The building contains a series of mural paintings by Antonio Fossati. The main *Monastery* consist of a group of buildings dating from the 13th-15th centuries that were originally single-storey but raised to two storeys in 1912, erected in part over the medieval cloister. They were considerably modified in the earlier 18th century: the vaulted corridor and the row of monastic cells on the east-west wing are exceptional examples of 18th century Hungarian monastic architecture. The *Library*, on four levels, was built in two stages between 1824 and 1835.

The *Chapel of Our Lady*, the building of which began in 1714, is situated at the top of the southern hill. It is single-aisled, 26 m by 10.9 m, rising to 5.58 m in the sanctuary. The nave is barrel-vaulted, and is joined to the sanctuary by a large triumphal arch. Its original Baroque interior was restored in Romantic style in 1865.

The *Millenary Monument* is one of seven erected to commemorate the thousandth anniversary of the conquest of Hungary in 896. It is located at the crest of the central hill, where it replaced the Calvary that is now located in front of the Chapel of Our Lady. It consist of a single block, constructed in brick and limestone. The stone portico is formed of a tympanum bearing a symbolic relief, supported on two pairs of Ionic columns. It was originally surmounted by a dome 26 m high on a high drum, but this had to be removed in 1937-38 because of its severe deterioration.

The principal elements of the area around the monastic complex are the forest and the botanical garden. The *forest*, on the eastern slopes of the Pannonhalma landscape, is largely the traditional oak forest of this region. It contains a number of rare and protected floral species and is the home for many song-birds. The flora of the *botanical garden* is composed of two groups: half forest trees and plants, of mixed age, and half hedgerow and park species, both native and exotic. Both the forest and the botanic garden are seen as illustrating the landscape value of the region as a whole and also to set off the aesthetic values of the man-made element represented by the buildings of the monastery.

Management and Protection

Legal status

The area covered by this nomination is protected in several ways:

- The immediate surroundings of the monastery are designated as a "Setting of an Historic Monument" (Decree No 10708/1968, jointly promulgated by the Ministries of Environment and Planning and of Culture and Education). This covers an area of 310 ha. Proposals involving changes in the present status are referred to the Municipality of Pannonhalma for adjudication, in consultation with the Historic Monuments Inspectorate.
- The monastery complex, the Calvary, the Chapel of Our Lady, and the Millenary Monument are protected individually as historic monuments under the provisions of Law No III/1964. The Historic Monuments Inspectorate must be consulted in connection with any works involving protected monuments.

Management

Ownership in the component parts of this nominated property is vested in different institutions and individuals: the Benedictine Abbey, the Hungarian State, the Municipality of Pannonhalma, and fourteen private citizens.

The designation of the "Setting of an Historic Monument" requires this to be taken into account in the commune's town planning programmes. A management plan is being prepared at the present time.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

Maintenance and conservation work have been carried out at Pannonhalma Monastery throughout its long history, apart from short periods of abandonment or occupation. The first major post-World War II activities concentrated on the Cloister and the south facade of the Church. Since the early 1960s a comprehensive reconstruction and restoration programme has been in progress, and has intensified as the millennial year, 1996, has come closer. All this work has been preceded by detailed scientific research, and the work has been carried out in the best tradition of Hungarian work on historic buildings.

Current work in progress includes cleaning of the external facades and reglazing of the windows in the Church, together with archaeological excavations in the interior; archaeological investigations and consequent restoration projects in the Cloister; renovation of the wings of the Monastery and the Library; work on the roof, tiles, and facade of the Millenary Monument; and renewal of the roof and tiles of the Chapel of Our Lady.

Authenticity

If authenticity in buildings that have remained in continuous use since their construction, undergoing many alterations resulting from damage, destruction, or changes in taste, is to be considered to be the totality of a linear series of interventions, the authenticity of the Pannonhalma monastic complex is very high. Restoration and reconstruction work in the second half of the 20th century has been conducted impeccably in accordance with modern conservation principles and practice.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

An ICOMOS expert mission visited Pannonhalma in February 1996.

Qualities

The Pannonhalma Monastery and its surroundings preserve to a high degree the spirit as well as the material appearance of a long-lasting monastic community. The Monastery has special symbolic significance by virtue of its role in the Christianization of central Europe, as well as for its endurance as an icon of Hungarian culture.

Comparative analysis

The nomination dossier rightly draws attention to the close links, both spiritually and historically, between the monasteries of Mont-Saint-Michel in France and Saint-Gall in Switzerland, both of which are already on the World Heritage List. Pannonhalma fits well into a progression from the foundation of the Benedictine Order in Italy by St Benedict of Nursia throughout Europe from the 9th century onwards. Pannonhalma is the main eastern outpost of that movement and as such may be deemed to rank alongside Mont-Saint-Michel and Saint-Gall as an equal in terms of its significance and its structure.

Recommendation

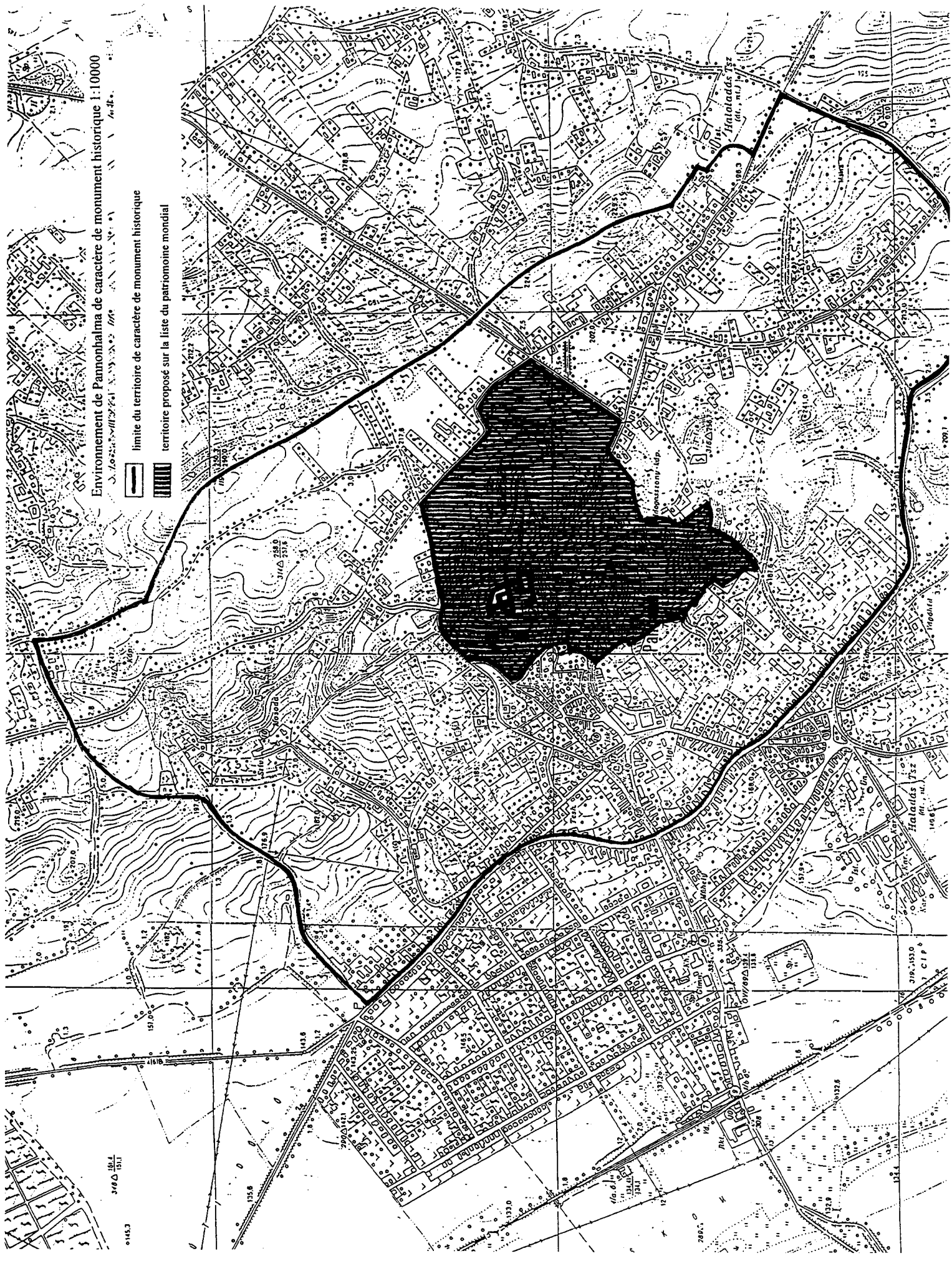
That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria iv and vi*:

The Monastery of Pannonhalma and its surroundings illustrate in an exceptional manner the structure and setting of an early Christian monastery that has evolved over a thousand years of continuous use. Its location and the early date of its foundation bear unique witness to the propagation and continuity of Christianity in central Europe.

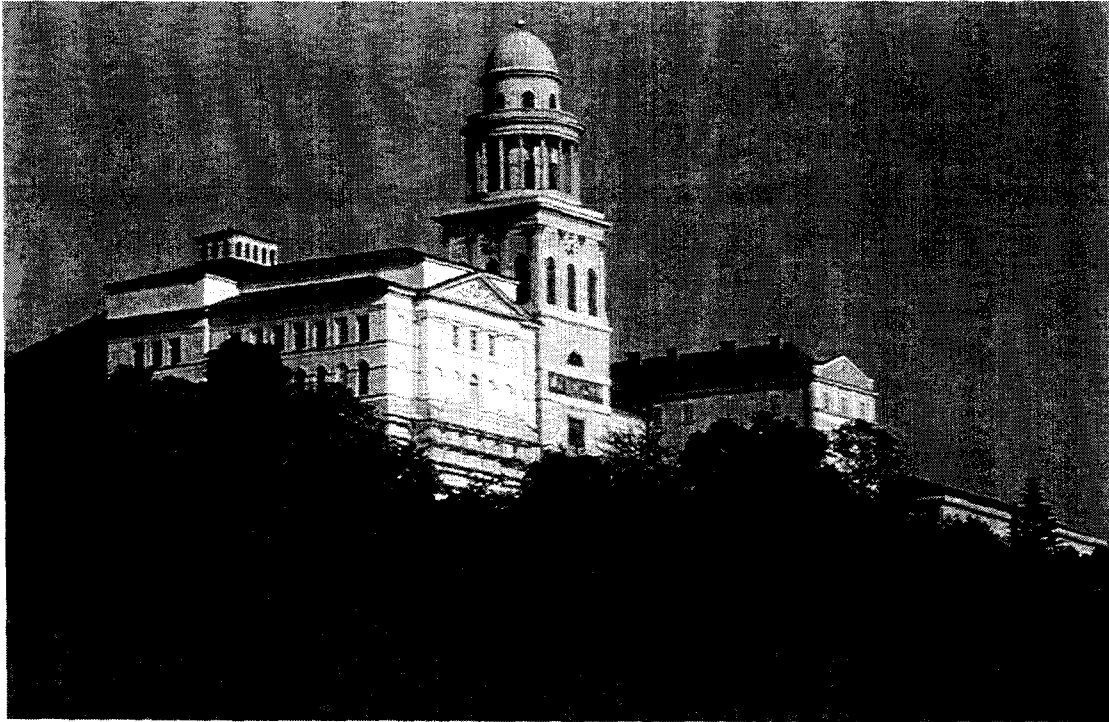
ICOMOS, October 1996

Environnement de Pannonhalma de caractère de monument historique 1:10000

- limite du territoire de caractère de monument historique
- ▨ territoire proposé sur la liste du patrimoine mondial



Pannonhalma : limites du bien proposé pour inscription
Pannonhalma : map showing the delimitation of the nominated property



Pannonhalma : la tour vue de l'ouest

Pannonhalma : the tower, from the west