

# MONTENEGRO

## Natural and Culturo-Historical Region of Kotor

### Brief description

In the middle Ages, this natural harbour on the Adriatic coast in Montenegro was an important artistic and commercial centre with its own famous schools of masonry and iconography. A large number of the monuments (including four Romanesque churches and the town walls) were seriously damaged by the 1979 earthquake but the town has been restored, largely with UNESCO's help.

### 1. Introduction

**Year(s) of Inscription** 1979

**Years of inscription on List in Danger 1979-2003**

**Agency responsible for site management**

- Member of the National Commission  
Address:  
e-mail:  
Website:

### 2. Statement of Significance

**Inscription Criteria** C (i), (ii), (iii), (iv)

#### Justification provided by the State Party

Due to its morphogenetic and morphological characteristics, the Gulf of Kotor, with its surrounding area, is unique in the Mediterranean. It is here that the coastal dinaric karst reaches its maximum altitude (Orjen, 1895 metres) and greatest width, which makes the region one of the few holokarstic zones in the world, with distinctive karstic morphology and hydrography.

A typical phenomenon of karstic hydrography is to be found in this territory; the largest amount of precipitations in Europe with, on the other hand, a lack of water in a comparatively small area, a characteristic which has not been previously observed on this continent.

Within an area of less than 20 kilometres as the crow flies, climatic differences ranging from Mediterranean to Alpine are to be found. This gives rise to the numerous rare and unique species of

flora previously mentioned: the equally rare and unique specimens of marine fauna to be found in the gulf's waters have also been referred to.

Kotor's exceptional importance lies mainly in the fact that by virtue of its culture and history it and the surrounding territory exerted a decisive influence over the development of the architecture, painting and craftsmanship of an entire geo-cultural zone. Through Kotor, Mediterranean culture spread over the Balkan territory, bringing about a successful assimilation and also the combination of Eastern and Western cultures. This does not only concern the inland area of Montenegro, which gravitated towards the maritime, commercial, cultural and artistic centre represented by Kotor and its surroundings, but is also true of the deeper hinterland - the Kosova, Serbia and even occasionally Macedonia. Thanks to the political and economic ties established and commercial or cultural expansion, this influence made itself directly felt with the building of monasteries and benevolent establishments for the making of sculptures and weapons as well as gold and silver objects made to order, for religious or profane purposes. From the beginning of the 9th century, in and around Kotor, we find architectural solutions of seminal importance for Europe, expressing in a new way a late flowering of classical tradition combined with early Byzantine influences, as well as forms and decoration typical of the Western cultural sphere (St. Tripun's rotunda, Church of St. Thomas in Prčanj and St. Peter's Abbey in Šuranj). Particularly important, however, is 12th and 13th century Romanesque art of which the major works are connected with the renowned architecture of Apulia. Kotor was mainly the centre through which the solutions of Romanesque architecture spread to the inland Balkans, particularly to the Raška territory, where a special school of masons, well known to-Byzantine scholars, was founded.

The Romanesque-Gothic style prevailing during the second half of the 13th century and throughout the 14th century, that adopted by the Franciscan mendicant and Dominican preaching orders, also penetrated to the Raška through the intermediary of the masters working in the coastal area. There is evidence of this in the Banjska, or, more particularly, in the monuments of Dečani, where we also find buildings designed by Friar Vita of Kotor himself. Sculptural decoration in the Serbian State may also be said to have first developed in the workshops along the coast. Here, too, the characteristic duality of expression prevails - Byzantine content moulded in Western form. Although the capitals, friezes, archivolt and consoles (ornamental brackets) are obviously not

the creations of the same workshop, they are nevertheless inspired by the same school and the same conception. This is the reason for the stylistic unity to be found in Kotor, Dečani, Sv. Arhandjelo near Prizren and even farther afield in Macedonia.

The same combination of styles and the extraordinary influence of Kotor apply also to painting; Kotor's school of painting was important from the latter part of the 13th century until the early 15th century. This symbiosis gives rise to particular variants in iconography which spread to distant inland areas via Kotor. Authentically Greek artists also worked in Kotor, rejecting the brutal manner of Komnen in favour of Palaeologos's narrative style and also influenced by a Catholic naturalism. Friar [?]ita brought to Dečani a colony of painters from Kotor and it has been estimated that at least a dozen of these painters worked there, abandoning the strict Byzantine, aesthetic ideal. Kotor's "pictores graeci" breathed new life into Dečani's art, with new tendencies coming from the East and the West, and they stand for something never previously achieved in our country. Painters from Kotor also worked in Sv. Arhandjelo near Prizren, and in Kotor itself the painted decoration of several churches was carried out by them (the Cathedral, St. Luke's, St. Nicholas', St. Bartholomew's). Kotor's artists were, moreover, among those who founded Dubrovnic's school of Gothic artists, where the names of Lovro Marin, Dobričević, Djuradj and Pave1 Bazilj, Georgij Grk, Bartolomej and Matko Junčić among others became renowned.

Lastly, Kotor is very important for its craftsmanship, particularly the work of the several dozen goldsmiths' and blacksmiths' workshops operating in the 14th and 15th centuries. The monumental Golden Pala, inside the Cathedral, is a brilliant example of the work of Kotor's goldsmiths, while the finest specimen of ironwork is the figure of the fencer of national epic, a historical character from the City Archives (Novacus spatarius).

To conclude, it may be said that in this region of great natural contrasts, the sense of creative assimilation of different cultural strata has been cultivated. Latin scholars of humanist poetry and those who represent the "bugarštica" (the traditional national epic) are to be found here side by side, for it must be emphasized that the region's authentic cultural traditions of old (national songs, customs and costumes) have never been obliterated.

#### **As provided in ICOMOS evaluation**

The Cultural-historical region of Kotor is considered to be of outstanding universal value by the quality

of its architecture, the successful integration of its cities to the gulf of Kotor and by its unique testimony of the exceptionally important role that it played in the radiance of the Mediterranean culture on the Balkan territory: the nomination meets the evaluation criteria (i,) (ii), (iii), and (iv).

Criterion (i): If in fact, many of the monuments of the cities of the gulf of Kotor (churches, palaces, military architecture) have a true architectural value, none of them can claim to be of outstanding universal value. It is their gathering on the gulf coast, their harmony with a privileged site, their insertion in a town-planning of great value that contributes to the real outstanding value of the nominated property.

Criterion (ii): Main bridge-heads of Venice on the South coast of the Adriatic, aristocratic cities of captains and ship-owners, Kotor and its neighbours were the heart of the region's creative movement for many centuries. Its art, goldsmith and architecture schools had a profound and durable influence on the arts of the Adriatic coast.

Criterion (iii): By the successful harmonization of these cities with the Gulf, by the quantity, the quality and the diversity of the monuments and the cultural properties, and especially by the exceptional authenticity of their conservation, the nominated property can effectively be considered as unique.

Criterion (iv): Kotor and Perast are the examples of a most characteristic and authentically preserved small cities town-planning, well adapted to its destination and enhanced by an architecture of great quality

#### **Committee Decision**

Session (1979): The Committee decided to enter in the World Heritage List the following 45 properties:

Following the recommendation of the Bureau, the Committee decided to enter this site in the List of World Heritage in Danger as requested by the State Party concerned.

- Statement of Significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site
- Proposal for text has not been made by State Party but it is requested
- Additional change proposed by State Party: the important historic strategic role of the site, especially during Serbian (1186-1371), Venetian (1420-1797) and Austro-Hungarian (1814-1918) domination

**Boundaries and Buffer Zone**

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: further work is needed in this area
- A new buffer zone was considered during UNESCO-ICOMOS Mission (March 2003) and should be proposed in the management plan, which is in process of elaboration

**Status of Authenticity/Integrity**

- World Heritage site values have been maintained, however issues regarding urbanisation pressures are foreseen

**3. Protection****Legislative and Administrative Arrangements**

- There is a special law for the protection of Natural and culturo-historical Region of Kotor, but not specific spatial planning and zoning
- There have been significant changes in ownership within the site including privatisation, more foreign ownership, for example, and a lack of traditional protective measures
- The protection arrangements are considered not sufficiently effective

**4. Management****Use of site/property**

- Urban centre, national park

**Management /Administrative Body**

- There is no steering group at this time, but this will be defined in the future management plan
- Site manager: there is not one at this time
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national; local
- The current management system is not sufficiently effective

**Actions proposed:**

- Changes to legislation (beginning of 2006)

**5. Management Plan**

- No management plan at this time, but one is in the preparation stages and foreseen to begin implementation 07/2006
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: not available

**6. Financial Resources****Financial situation**

- Budget sources: State budget (Ministry of Culture and Media); Kotor Municipality;

Institutional donations (museums, for example); private donations

- Bi-lateral: UNESCO Participation Programme (2002-2003, 2004-2005); Japanese Cultural Grassroots Donation; US Ambassador Fund; ICCROM training funds
- Insufficient

**7. Staffing Levels**

- Number of staff: 25

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

- Good: conservation
- average: management, promotion, interpretation, visitors management
- Bad: education

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

- Training and specialised expertise have been organised mostly off-site (ICCROM, Venice, Ferrara, Bologna)
- During last five years there has been a joint project with Archaeological Center NOVAE, Warsaw University, on the Roman site of Risan (part of WHS Kotor)
- In the next period on-site training should be improved. There are no training centers not only on-site, but even in all Montenegro. Kotor, as a WHS should be training centre for conservation for this region. Adequate programs for architectural heritage as well as for movable objects should be established at the University, and maybe in High schools as well

**9. Visitor Management**

- Visitor statistics: not available at this time
- Visitor facilities: facilities are modest, including a museum, guides, maps
- Visitor needs: accommodation and related facilities

**10. Scientific Studies**

- Studies related to the value of the site; archaeological surveys
- Studies of the value and protection of cultural heritage are useful for the process of urban planning and as guidelines for conservation

works. Results of those studies as well as archaeological surveys are important in the process of revitalisation of the protected area

### **11. Education, Information and Awareness Building**

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem used on some publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, local authorities
- Events: regular exhibitions
- Web site available: through the Kotor Municipality
- Local participation: no details available

### **12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)**

#### **Reactive monitoring reports**

- World Heritage Bureau sessions: 19th (1995)
- World Heritage Committee sessions: 19th (1995), 26th (2002); 27th (2003); 28th (2004); 29th (2005); 30th (2006)

#### **Conservation interventions**

- Conservation of cultural properties of old urban core of Kotor after earthquake; revitalisation of other urban and rural settlements; conservation of the most important monuments (Romanesque and other churches, palaces etc.); archaeological excavations in Kotor, Risan etc.
- Present state of conservation: good

#### **Threats and Risks to site**

- Development pressures, natural disasters, visitor/tourism pressures
- Specific issues: pressures from uncontrolled urbanisation; changes in ownership
- Emergency measures taken: preparation of the management plan is currently underway

### **13. Monitoring**

- No formal monitoring programme
- Measures planned: tentative plans at this stage include the development of key indicators

### **14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions**

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, social factors, management
- Strengths of management: conservation of the most prominent monuments; local awareness-raising
- Weaknesses of management: uncontrolled urbanisation; poor protection of the cultural landscape and smaller settlements; poor quality and planning of the new architecture in the protected area

#### **Future actions:**

- The management plan currently being prepared should be ready for implementation in July 2006