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## **THE IMPORTANCE OF DIGITIZED DOCUMENTATION IN HERITAGE PRESERVATION WORKS**

I read a story that Professor Ciborowsky taught at the Faculty of Architecture in Warsaw, before the WW2. As a prerequisite for graduation he asked of his students to make drawings of an old house in Warsaw and submit them to the Faculty. Based on this documentation Warsaw was later fully reconstructed after the destruction it had suffered during the war. This indicates that an efficient method was found to compile and replenish documentation.

Our way of unifying and completing documentation on the cultural monuments can be seen through digitization of the existing material.

The preservation work on the complex heritage sites is significantly different from work on the single heritage item such as a building, a church, an icon or a book.

For example, the preservation work in Hilandar monastery included:

- architectural protection and restoration of churches and living quarters,
- conservation and preservation of the wall paintings and icons,
- itemising and conservation of the library and archives,
- valuable items in everyday use, etc...

All of the mentioned items were subject of various researches, conservation, stocktaking, which were carried out by experts from various fields and various organizations. All important Serbian cultural institutions and individuals took part in it.

Each of the units that worked on conservation and restoration of Hilandar created its own documentation: plans, sketches, photographs, microfilms, inventories etc. After decades of work on numerous objects and items (churches and living quarters - lodgings, frescoes and icons, books...), volumes of documentation have been collected.<sup>1</sup>

The following institutions that were involved in conservation and restoration of Hilandar now keep the large part of this documentation: Serbian National Library, National Museum, Serbian Archive, Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia, Ethnographic museum of Serbia, Museum of Applied Arts, Museum of Serbian Orthodox Church, Institute for History of Art of Faculty of Philosophy, Committee of Hilandar of Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, etc...

However a part of documentation is still kept by individuals who were either hired by the monastery or by different organizations. Although the Institute for the

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<sup>1</sup> Until now, only independent projects used new technologies: The interactive computer-based presentation of Hilandar's church, made by William Tomas Hostetter, Jr, and 360-degrees images of Hilandar, created in a project by Auckland University's school of architecture.

Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia is the only institution working on protection of architectural heritage, considerable number of plans and photographs related to Hilandar monastery is missing.<sup>2</sup>

The existence and accessibility of the documentation are of great importance in the situations when the heritage sites are damaged.

After the recent devastating fire in Hilandar monastery, the detailed state report, the investigation in the possible causes of the fire, the evaluation of the damage as well as the restoration works are now urgently needed.

The future works on restoration of Hilandar monastery clearly show the need for digitization of the complete existing documentation.

The general reasons are:

- The protection from the damage and deterioration for documentation kept on materials prone to deterioration,
- The conversion to a format that facilitates efficient scientific and professional use, processing and multimedia presentation.

The particular reasons are:

- To unify the complete documentation for the use of all the organizations taking part in protection and studying of Hilandar monastery (thus creating "Digital Hilandar's Room")
- The verification of the completeness and quality of the documentation. (It was only after the fire in Hilandar monastery that it became apparent that some of the institutions involved in preservation do not have the technical documentation of high quality they were supposed to have),
- The opportunity to consolidate all the available documentation that may not be widely available otherwise.

Technically the digitization would be organised in following stages:

- Each of the institutions would scan their existing documentation in accordance with the recommendations of National Center for Digitization and would make inventory,
- The copy of the unified documentation would then be exchanged between the interested parties under the guidance or management by Ministry of Culture,
- The additions and the use of the digitized documentation would be in accordance with the agreement of the institutions involved. The institutions would be able to publish scientifically or multimedially prepared and processed parts of that documentation, either individually or as a part of collaboration.

Another example shows the problems of the preservation of the heritage sites which can be solved by digitization. The plan archiving on optical discs the documentation on the cultural heritage sites in Kosovo and Metohia was made in 1998. That plan envisaged that all documentation: texts, drawings, sketches, photographs be scanned and archived on optical discs in three Institutes for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Pristina and Prizren. The plan was not executed and only in 2002-2003 part of the existing documentation kept in Institute in Belgrade got scanned. Consequently part of the documentation on heritage sites in Kosovo and Metohia is now

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<sup>2</sup> For example, the original documentation of thirty year's work on church and living quarters in Hilandar was sent over to Princeton University. The Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia does not have a copy of this documentation.

missing. Many of these sites have been damaged or completely destroyed since 1999. Therefore it is not possible to generate documentation any longer.

The digitization is currently the only way of collecting, maintaining, completing and saving the documents used in the preservation and presentation of the heritage sites. The contemporary data processing and data storage can also be the way of addressing the challenges that are not necessarily technical. It will also enable the cooperation and coordination of all institutions and organizations involved in protection of the complex heritage sites.

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#### **ЗНАЧАЈ ДИГИТАЛИЗАЦИЈЕ ДОКУМЕНТАЦИЈЕ ЗА РАДОВЕ НА ЗАШТИТИ СПОМЕНИКА КУЛТУРЕ**

Радови на реконструкцији и рестаурацији споменичке баштине су веома сложени и у великој мери зависе од квалитетне документације постојећег стања и предвиђених радова. Такође, после изведених радова је потребно оставити и податке о примењеним мерама и материјалима. Искуство које је српска служба заштите имала са Хиландаром и споменицима на Косову и Метохији показује да дигитализација, која ће значити и прикупљање, допуњавање, обједињавање постојећих планова, фотографија, инвентара непокретних и покретних предмета, постају неопходни и неодложни.