Ulpiana Justiniana Secunda, Gračanica

Description

The archaeological site of Ulpiana is situated about 10km southeast of Priština, near Gračanica. The settlement was inhabited since the 8th century B.C. Subsequently the Roman city of Ulpiana was built on that site and was first mentioned in ancient sources in the middle of the second century A.C., when it took the status of municipium. Later it became an imperial residence. After a catastrophic earthquake in 518 A.C., Emperor Justinian had the city reconstructed and called Justiniana Secunda. It was surrounded by defense walls and had a castrum of 400 x 400m nearby. In the late Antiquity, it became an important episcopal centre.

Archaeological excavations and research began in 1953, when four graves were found, and continued until 1987. By that time, important finds had been made, including fragments of walls and fortifications, an early Christian basilica (basilica Justiniana), the northern gate of the city and a cemetery. In 1973, conservation work of the mosaics started, which were found in the complex of basilica Justiniana. Large architectural remains were found when irrigation tubes were installed in the 1970ies. Great attention was attracted by the discovery of a prehistoric cemetery from the Iron Age and various sculptures of ceramics.

Present condition

The site is unprotected and openly accessible from the road. As no works have been going on for a long time, the state of neglect is alarming. Vegetation is growing rapidly and water is invading the site during spring when the snow melts. Two problems need to be addressed, i.e. the continuation of the excavations and the maintenance of this extraordinary archaeological site.

Recommended measures

The site should first be protected from further pilfering. This will include the posting of permanent guards. In a second phase the site should be cleaned, drained and carefully rehabilitated so that consolidation work can start. Only then will it be possible to continue the work that had been interrupted towards the end of the 1980ies. The exceptional continuity of the historic vestiges deserves that fresh impetus is given to this site, which is unique in Kosovo. Given the small number of trained archaeologists in Kosovo, it is desirable to obtain the cooperation of international specialists in the project so that they can train junior local experts on the spot. A medium-term project should be prepared by external experts, with a time-table and a precise work schedule.

Estimated costs

Cleaning, protecting and rehabilitating the site, revitalization of the research programme: €150,000.
Ulpiana Iustiniana Secunda, Gračanica (2003)
St. Jeremiah Church log-cabin, Gorazdevac, Pejë/Peć

Description

St. Jeremiah church log-cabin is the oldest church of that kind in the whole area and the only one in Kosovo and outside the main church log-cabin area. According to folk tradition it was built by Srbljac. Since this was the name of the inhabitants of the upper course of the Lim river, who settled in Metohija in 1737/1738, the church may have been built shortly after that period.

The church has modest dimensions (approx. 7.5x3.5m), with shallow foundations and simple architecture in the log house tradition, with log walls consisting of (slab-sawing) planks with traditional corner joints. It has a rectangular plan with a two-sided apse as the result of cutting two acute sides. The roof is low and covered by heavy and large stone slaps. The interior is divided into narthex, main church and the altar area. Partitions have been built in the same traditional log construction manner. The floor was initially made of irregular stone blocks, while the flat ceiling was made of boards. Two small openings are carved in the in the boards, one in the shape of a Greek cross, the other as a six-leaved rosette.

The church is located on the terrain of the cemetery of Gorazdevac village and according to the orthodox priest of the community it is out of function since 1936. Detailed restoration and conservation works have been carried out in 1968.

Present condition

The restoration and conservation works of 1968 seem to have been executed very professionally, although a conservation report or specific documentation is not available. All wooden parts of the building have been impregnated against funghi and other deteriorating agents so that the church is in a rather good condition. During the interventions of 1968 the foundations have been renewed, the floor level deepened, the complete structure of the log
construction repaired and some beams of the truss replaced. The partition between narthex and main church as well as the iconostasis icons and the other properties inside the altar area have been removed. Neither the board ceiling nor the partition has been reassembled; as a result the scale and the spatial impression of the interior have changed: besides the feeling of an “empty” church the room looks larger and higher.

The roofing is damaged and needs repair especially on the northern part, in the vicinity of huge trees. The damage is caused mainly by the heavy stone slabs that have already caused a deformation of the roof lath. Some of the slabs are dislocated and thus water infiltration into the roof lath produces even more damage.

St. Jeremiah log-cabin church, Gorazdevac (2003)

Recommended measures

The repair of the roofing – in the traditional craftsmen manner and as a part of normal maintenance work - is needed for the protection of this important monument of vernacular architecture.

Estimated costs

The costs for the repair of the roofing should not exceed € 3,000.
Memorial complex Kosovo Polje

Description

In the second half of the 14th century, the Ottoman forces penetrated into the central region of the Balkans along the main lines of communication and consolidated their conquest by a series of important battles. In 1389, the Serbian forces, led by Prince Lazar, suffered a crushing defeat at Kosovo Polje (field), about 10km west of today’s Pristina. Throughout Serbian history, this battle has been remembered as the end of the Serbian State, and commemorated in literature and popular traditional songs and poetry. In the battle, which lasted several days, thousands of warriors of both sides lost their lives. Both leaders, Sultan Murad I and Prince Lazar, were also killed on the site. In memory of Sultan Murad I, a mausoleum was built on the site (cf. p. 92). There is also another mausoleum, the Barjaktarevo Turbe, built in the honour of the sultan’s standard-bearer, who was also killed during the battle. In 1953, a memorial tower was built on the site to commemorate the Serbian victims. This tower is in turn remembered today as the place where Slobodan Milosevic launched his nationalist policy when commemorating the 600th anniversary of the battle in 1989.

The tower is about 25m high and stands on a platform, which is reached by a series of steps. It is built in dressed stone and is inspired by the shape of medieval towers with a decorative arrangement suggesting a crenelation of the top part. On the front of the tower is an arched niche with verses in Serb language from the national epic in bronze letters. Inside the tower is an open concrete staircase that leads to a platform at the top of the tower. From there, the whole battlefield can be seen; there are also explanations regarding historic details of the 1389 battle.

Present condition

The inscription has lost some of its letters. The bottom of the staircase and its railing is blown up, which makes it impossible to climb the tower.

Recommended measures

The monuments should be repaired and restored. The tower’s inscription should ideally be completed by an equally dignified text in Albanian language. The possibility should be studied to construct paths between the mausoleum and the tower, with panels explaining the historical details of the battle.

Estimated costs

Architectural documentation, structure assessment, diagnostic study and conservation works, landscaping: € 50,000
Kosovo Polje Memorial Tower (2003)
Kosovo Polje Memorial Tower, inscription with lost letters (2003)

Kosovo Polje Memorial Tower, destroyed staircase (2003)
Description

Located in the old city of Priština, in the neighbourhood surrounding the Sultan Fatih Mosque the Emin Giku house complex is one of the most valuable and also best-preserved examples of urban vernacular architecture in Kosovo. As the former (urban) residence of a rich family, the complex consists of three main buildings placed in two courtyards. The unit is surrounded by an outer wall with a monumental gate that gives to the first and outer courtyard with one of the three dwelling houses. This one and a half-storied house belong to the oldest part of the unit, which was presumably used as the traditional ‘guest house’. A second wall with a similar gate separates the larger inner courtyard with the two main houses, adjacent economy buildings being placed along the outer walls of the unit.

The left house is a two-story building with a ground floor in stone masonry, the first floor showing a protruding veranda–çardak in the traditional half-timber construction supported by wooden posts. The large window openings are protected by wooden grilles. The hipped roof covered by terracotta tiles has very large overhanging eaves to the two sides of the courtyard supported by oblique wooden beams fixed on the façade on the first floor level. The facades are lime washed. The house can be dated back to the second half of the 18th century and was probably built at the same time with the house in the outer court.

The house on the right is a two-story dwelling house from the second half of the 19th century with an L-shaped ground plan; the wings are accessible through a central staircase. The
building materials are traditional stone masonry for the base and plastered half-timber for both the two levels of the shorter wing towards the inner court and for the first floor of the main wing toward the older house. On the façade of the main building a bay window at the second level has to be mentioned. Both levels of the short wing are designed as verandas with large windows framed by oriental arches. The upper level is shortly protruding. The hipped roofs with shortly overhanging eaves are covered by terracotta tiles. The façades are lime washed.

**Present condition**

Restoration work at the whole complex of the Emin Giku house unit was underway during the visit of the mission, with the objective to transform the site into an ethnographic museum. The two gates and the façades of the houses have been finalized, and the older house at the left side of the inner court is already furnished and prepared as part of the ethnographical exhibition. All conservation and restoration interventions as well as the general museographic concept have been carried out professionally, with the assistance of the European Agency for Reconstruction.

**Recommended measures**

As the whole unit is meant to host an ethnological park documenting the traditional life of the inhabitants in the area, supplementary restoration work and equipment will be required. The costs are estimated to be about €50,000.

Emin Giku complex, Priština : inner court and gates restored (2003)