

Modern Conservation Research as Guidelines for Conservation Projects in Slovenia

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1. Abstract

Due to natural influences as well as the activity and development of human kind, the sensitivity and vulnerability of cultural heritage presents the essential problem, not only in conservation, but also in work and development of related basic conservation fields. They are directly and indirectly linked activity application or development of cultural heritage. In order to further analyse the present state in Slovenia; individual cases have to be researched. Also, the basic long-range problems have to be presented in the light long-range problem implementation and research of cultural heritage, which has to be preserved intact and authentic for the future generations.

2. INTRODUCTION

The characteristic coastal region borders with Italy and includes the entire Slovenian coast with its hinterland. The historical development of Slovenia is closely bonded with cultural hinterland of Venetian republic. It has ruled this territory for almost 500 years. Istria had similar historical and cultural development; today it is a part of Croatian territory. The important cultural and historical routes on Adriatic Sea should not be overlooked. In mediaeval ages they significantly contributed to spreading of new and advanced political, economical and cultural ideas, which were thus projected towards the continental Europe. Since I work in the region of Slovenian Istria or Primorska (Southwest part of Slovenia) which is relatively specific, it is difficult for me to present the same problem for the entire Slovenia.

Southern Primorska includes the coast with hinterland and three important historical cities: Koper, Izola and Piran. All three cities pride themselves with rich historical and old settlement continuity, marked by pre-historical settlements, as hill forts, Roman settlements and villae rusticae, as well as mediaeval fortified towns. In their basic characteristics, they have been preserved to this day. Koper, Izola and Piran represent important urbanistic monument of cultural heritage. Along with their historical monumental and cultural importance, they represent tourist sights as well.

3. FORMING THE MODERN CONSERVATION SERVICE

According to the modern doctrine of monumental preservation after the World War II. a state service was formed which was engaged with cultural heritage monument. The beginnings of cultural heritage projects reach back into the times of forming of state service in Austro-Hungarian Empire. The first experts and founders of the service in our region were art historians and students of »Vienna School« of conservation. Even today the service is founded as central state service, which has 7 regional offices in the State of Slovenia.

The laws concerning the natural and cultural heritage have been recently changed and added. A new law concerning the organisation of conservation and restoration state policy was passed in the year of 1999 within the Ministry of Culture. This law hasn't been implemented entirely, but it should be definitely put into effect by the end of the year 2001. In the same year a new law about the preservation of cultural heritage was passed. It divided the previously united state service for natural and cultural heritage into two independent

services, financed by two different ministries. The service for natural heritage belongs to Ministry of Space and Planning, and the service for cultural heritage in the Ministry of Culture. The novelty of this law is new division of cultural heritage, within which two categories have special importance: the monument of state importance and the monument of local importance. The law introduces The Central Registry of Cultural Heritage for the entire listed cultural heritage. The state service is organised as centralised Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Slovenia with headquarters in Ljubljana, and 7 Regional Offices (Celje, Ljubljana, Kranj, Maribor, Nova Gorica, Novo mesto and Piran) and within ministry Cultural Heritage Office of the Republic of Slovenia. Operational function and care of preparation and realisation of documentation, research and execution program of renewal and operational interventions is carried out by regional offices within their regions. Within unified state service Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Slovenia there is Restoration Centre of Republic of Slovenia, as independent unit which is occupied with restoration and covers the entire Slovenia.

Recording and evaluation of cultural heritage and providing legislation of cultural heritage, as well as including the regional planning and urbanistic projects, are important tasks of conservation service. Recording, evaluation and documentation of cultural heritage is carried out within the regular program of the service of regional offices, while more complex documentation and research within the special programs are approval is based on public official invitation and financed by the state.

Research in conservation is authorised by Regional Offices and Restoration Centre and carried out by specially qualified institutions. In practice, according to our experience, we often engage foreign institutions. In our Regional Office in Piran we have used research institutions from Italy for special non-destructive research (ground penetrating radar, thermography, endoscopy and others) for monuments since 1995. Our region is bilingual (Slovene and Italian are official languages) and therefore co-operation with Italians was much easier. For certain projects since 1995 we have systematically used modern non-destructive methods and techniques for certain national monuments. The results of our research were presented with demonstrations and presentations on international congresses and to colleagues of other Slovenian regional offices. Nevertheless, the use of non-destructive methods and techniques hasn't gained sufficient importance in Slovenia to this day. With the help of our experts several pilot projects were performed in the area of documenting of architectural heritage. Thus we tried to verify the possibilities of modern technologies and their further implementation in the area of conservation. We presented modern photogrammetric methods of recording and production of 3D models of different levels of treatment in the basic documentation and input of data for conservation research projects.

We have independently founded ICOMOS/SI (of Slovenia) and formed the National Committee after the year 1990, and only since then it can be more actively put into effect in the area of cultural heritage. As a non-government organisation it has several financial problems. In spite of them all of us members of ICOMOS/SI are aware of professional responsibility and of possibilities which we have in shaping of modern doctrine of international conventions and recommendations, and their implementation at home.

4. PRESENTATION OF CASE STUDIES

The three coast cities Koper, Izola and Piran within Regional Office in Piran have been preserved since their foundation since late antiquity or early medieval ages, in the time of turbulent migration of peoples, when inhabitants were searching for safe strategic positions in order to protect themselves. The historical source report that enclosed circular walls protected even the first settlements. In early medieval ages all the three cities experienced stormy history while quiet times began at the end of 13th century with Venetian domain. It lasted continuously for almost 500 years. Strong social, political and cultural influences of Venice were reflected on all areas of the life in the cities. Mostly Roman descendants inhabited the cities while Slaves inhabited the reach agrarian hinterland. All the three cities

have preserved their medieval character until today. It shows in the characteristic of the urbanistic foundation, with public buildings of Venetian domain, with church architecture in which earliest phases of Aquileian patriarchs can be identified, and with palaces as examples of the even more luxuries gothic, renaissance and baroque Venetian palaces.

4.1 PIRAN

Piran is the most interesting city, which was built on an oblong peninsula. The latest archaeological research had proved that its settlement continuity reaches back to pre-historical era. Outstandingly picturesque and the most characteristic medieval town is the most important tourist attraction as well. The city of Piran held extreme power and a special position in the history at the time of Venetian Republic, because it gained its wealth with production and merchandise of salt. The baroque church complex dedicated to S. George on the hill above the city, the birth town of the composer Giuseppe Tartini, public buildings and palaces are the most important monuments, preserved to this day and the most important tourist points of interest. After the World War II. several inhabitants of Italian origin left the city and moved. Bigger buildings are meant for tourism therefore the city is fully inhabited only in the summer season. The rest of the year it appears deserted. The city lives of the tourism almost entirely, and has no industry, which could endanger it. Nearby a spa developed at the end of 19th century, by the name of Portorož, which remains one of the leading tourist areas in Slovenia.

PIRAN – The Parish church of St. George

The baroque ecclesiastical complex of the parish church, baptistery and steeple stands on the summit of the height, which rises above the mediaeval town of Piran. It is located at the end of an oblong peninsula. Based on written sources, research into the available archive material and from the archaeological rescue trenches, there is no doubt that the buildings on the summit of the hill reach back into the Roman period. The historical research into the archive material on the ecclesiastical complex allows us to assert with certainty that a Romanesque basilica and baptistery existed in this place. They were followed later by a gothic church. As the baroque restoration of the church in the 17th century radically changed the fabric of the ecclesiastical complex, whilst perhaps also incorporating the architectural remains of structures from earlier phases of different stylistic periods, it was necessary to design a research programme in a way to minimise all the threats on the architectural elements. They might tell us more about the historical development of the ecclesiastical structure. The church was restored a century ago in the spirit of the historicist stylistic expression, which prevailed at that time. The present condition of this ecclesiastical monument demands fundamental static consolidation with anti-earthquake protection of the structure, the renewal of the plaster on the interior and the exterior and the restoration of the entire rich church furniture. The results derived from a well-prepared interdisciplinary-based research project can contribute to the best proposal and solution for the achievement of the final goal of our work, the presentation of the monument.

Conservation management cycle consists of collecting and surveying documentation and inventarization of monument, and of conservation research (destructive and non-destructive). They are the basement for conservation project. Meanwhile monitoring the research objectives and the effectiveness of different research methods represents the final stage of conservation management cycle.

A programme of urgent non-destructive research, such as endoscopic analysis of the load-bearing walls with ultrasound, the thermographic analysis of the entire church covering, the georadar survey of the hill and the church, as well as laboratory analyses, such as the filling out of the above analyses, was carried out in accordance with international guidelines and with modern technology and possibilities.

In this case, we were concerned with the range of non-destructive analyses for the first time, above all, because of the importance of the historic monument. A computer system, called KOINÉ, was developed as a continuation of the programme in above-mentioned research and contained the concurrent documentation of the state of the structure and of

interventions, as well as the use and storage of the data. The aid of non-destructive methods is essential for acquisition of new knowledge. However, the interdisciplinary continuation of the work in the context of the interpretation of the research can be conceived only with its continuing specialist work.

4.2 IZOLA

Izola has also been built on an island in the late antiquity for safety reasons. Its name, Izola, is derived from the Italian word ISOLA, which signifies an island. On the coast nearby, an earlier settlement was located in Simonov zaliv in the time of Roman State. Archaeological research discovered a big and strong villa rustica. Economically and politically the role of Izola was not very important, but the city preserved its medieval character until today. Its inhabitants were not as rich and wealthy; therefore Izola can be characterised as a fisherman's town. In 19th century Izola became a peninsula and in this time on the outskirts of the city the first fish factories were built.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH¹

In these days it is no longer possible to imagine archaeological excavation without modern documentation techniques. Not merely because the standards of archaeological projects are becoming increasingly demanding, linked as they are to an enormous database, but because time and money tend increasingly to be at the core of the problem. The application of photogrammetric recording of archaeological excavation has become an unwritten standard in Slovenia. With the development of new technology it has become a crucial factor in the documenting of cultural heritage.

Archaeological projects of protective nature today represent a complete conservation cycle. It begins with the various project-planning phases, the preliminary research programme, evaluation of archaeological potential and various stages of field work and post-excavation procedures. They end with a well-ordered archive of the operation, research, interpretation, publications and sometimes also presentation of the location. Every destructive encroachment on the archaeological heritage means a destruction of irretrievable information. Unless this is documented to a high standard, our historical roots will not be visible either on the ground or below it, either today or in the future.

Photogrammetry in the context of documenting the archaeological process of excavation is one of the techniques of data acquisition. It has successfully established itself in archaeology over the last hundred years. Over the course of the last century we can trace a range of suggestions as to how to document an archaeological site: from the air, from military balloons, wooden platforms, steel scaffolding, ladders, one-legged or two-legged stands, etc.

In archaeology we can use photogrammetric methods in various areas. The photogrammetric documentation of archaeological sites or the archaeological landscape is comparable, with architectural photography, while the use of photogrammetric documentation in the process of archaeological excavations represents a special problem. In the case of archaeological excavations it is a question of exhibiting and documenting irretrievable, rapidly changing information in the field, which took shape in a specific period of the past.

IZOLA – Simonov zaliv

Simonov zaliv ('Simon's Bay') near Izola: the Roman residential villa with its harbour lies just over a kilometre from the present-day Izola. Archaeological research in the area has

¹ Stokin, M.: Photogrammetry and Rescue Archaeology: Feasibility and Needs, *International Cooperation and Technology Transfer, ISPRS Workshop: Ljubljana, Slovenia – February 2-5, 2000*, International archives of photogrammetry and remote sensing, Part 6W8/2, Ljubljana, Slovenia: Institute of Geodesy, Cartography and Photogrammetry sensing, 2000, 260 – 263, also the chapters Izola – Simonov zaliv and Koper – Sermin are from the same article.

been proceeding on and off for more than a hundred years. The most recent systematic protective research ran from 1987-1992, because of the planned construction of hotels. University of Lund (Sweden) and our Institute in Piran led the research with external collaborators.

At the end of the 1980s we set the goal of developing, testing and operationally employing modern documentation procedures during archaeological excavation in Simonov zaliv. The focus of the research was also on the use of computers for the needs of documenting excavation, the related post-excavation work and the development of a photogrammetric method of documenting excavation in relation to digital video techniques. At that time they were still a novelty. The goal of the Simonov zaliv project was multi-layered even at the beginning. In addition to protective excavation the programme of work included also the conservation and presentation of archaeological remains. Because of them, the production of complete and modern documentation was essential, although lack of funds meant that not all the goals could be achieved.

4.3 KOPER

The most important historical city is no doubt Koper with its several names: Aegida, Justinopolis, Caput Histriae and Capodistria. These names prove that it was a politically and administratively important city on Istrian peninsula. Some historians mention the oldest settlement Aegida as the foundation of today's Koper. Nowadays, it can be found on location Sermina. At this time archaeological research of this location is still ongoing, since new fuel containers should be installed in the close vicinity. Koper was constructed on an island and enclosed by a wall, which ran on the border of the island. Giacomo Fino drew the oldest preserved map of the city in the year 1619. By the end of 19th century became a peninsula, although its medieval character has been preserved until today. The Port Koper presents the biggest problem of modern Koper. Since World War II. it has been developing and expanding to the very limit of his historical settlement and it interrupted the connection between the city and the sea. The Port Koper has expanded also into the neighbourhood of the city and thus radically changed and reshaped its landscape.

KOPER - Sermin

Whilst no large-scale excavations have been undertaken at either site, limited archaeological interventions in recent years indicate that there has been continuous occupation at Sermin from the Middle Bronze Age until the later Roman period, when the settlement appears to have declined. At Koper, in contrast, there have been no significant prehistoric finds, and very little evidence of early Roman occupation has been recorded. As the nature of the two settlements is the subject of continuing research, no definite conclusions can be made at this point. However, a possible hypothesis is, that the settlement (and the name Aegida) moved from Sermin to Koper in the late Roman period.

Current research indicates that land-use in the area of Sermin during the medieval period was probably confined to burial ground with one or two religious buildings. The area reverted primarily to rural activity. Koper, on the other hand, evolved into a significant medieval town and became the capital of Istria.

In the case of demanding multistrata archaeological sites, such as in the case of Sermin, we have managed, thanks mainly to having sufficient funds, in co-operation with the Institute of Geodesy and Photogrammetry in Ljubljana, to rationalise and optimise the whole photogrammetric process. The photography stage took place cyclically in 1998-99 and was done from a tall ladder, using a Rolleiflex 6006 photogrammetric camera. The mapping of the stereo pairs was done using an analytical instrument called the Adam Tec. Promap. All details were mapped and the photogrammetrically acquired data was arranged by labelled stratigraphic units, co-ordinated with the closed matrix of phases. From the edited digital data (AutoCAD r14) it is possible to draw individual details and stratigraphic complexes from various periods. Manipulation is fast and very important in the archaeological interpretation of the find. Another important advantage of this method of photogrammetric recording is the speed of data acquisition and instant processing.

Although we can achieve the best results through a combination of manual and photogrammetric documentation (Fras-Kosmatin, 1996, 23), we can expect photogrammetric documentation to prevail in large-scale urgent protective archaeological excavations in the future. There are too many problems associated with conventional manual measuring to allow us to consider using this method, too.

KOPER – Carmine rotunda/former baptistery

One of the most representative cultural monuments in Koper is the Baptistery of St. John the Baptist, later known as Rotunda Carmine. It is one of the oldest standing structures, a typical cultural monument from different art-historical periods. The area around the circumference of the Baptistery was the subject of archaeological trial trenching. After which, the later make-up layers were removed, so that the Baptistery was completely restored to its original height.

The building ranks as one of the town's oldest architectural monuments. It was a part of a former Romanesque church complex, which included a basilica with a crypt and baptistery. The church complex, built after the model of the basilica in Aquileia, was built by the Patriarchs of Aquileia while they were rulers of Koper. There, they also founded a diocese. Near the church stood the Patriarch's Palace, of which only the Patriarch's Tower survives today.

The Romanesque baptistery, which could originally have been built as a private chapel, has a circular ground plan. Experts do not agree on the date. The estimate ranges from the 10th to the 12th century. Still visible over the entrance portal is a plaque with an inscription bearing the information that the building was renovated in 1317. At this time the baptistery was thoroughly remodelled. The central scene of Christ Pantokrator has survived to the present day. The apse was removed and the window openings enlarged.

Agostino Brutti, Bishop of Koper, turned the medieval central building into a Baroque chapel. Thus, the upper part of the baptismal pool was removed and its lower part turned into a sepulchre. The Gothic openings were walled up and four large rectangular windows opened. A strong stucco frame, into which, a canvas of the Baptism in the Jordan was set. It was placed at the apex of the Gothic dome. It still displayed the image of Christ Pantokrator. The chapel retained its Baroque appearance until 1934, when Venetian architect Ferdinando Forlati began the restoration of the chapel of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in the spirit of the Athens Charter and the Italian doctrine (*Carta di restauro*), regarding the renovation of monuments.

The Rotunda Carmine has been documented by photogrammetric and geodetic methods. Therefore, we develop a methodology based on non-destructive research and documentation, which is effective and feasible in Slovenian conservation policy.

One of the basic tasks of the monument service is thorough documentation of the changing state and development of a monument. The basic documentation is formulated in accordance with the development of the conservation profession, general technical development and the use of the most modern technology.

The main function of the heritage preservation service lies in documentation. The purpose of presenting the state of preservation of a monument or heritage site is most often done in words and pictures. The documenting of architecture in the monument service involves two basic tasks. These are the production of architectural photographs of the condition of architecture, and the complementing of this architectural documentation with conservation research.

In our opinion, documentation of the monument is very important and very useful. However, only if it is the fruit of interdisciplinary work and a clear understanding of the final goal and the purpose, for which the documentation will be used. Advanced documentation can be used in numerous ways for technical and promotional purposes.

4.4 SOCERB - Socerb castle

The location of Socerb is in the region of Zgornji Kras (or Upper Karst), which ends with a precipitous rocky edge, and the region of Spodnji Kras (or Lower Karst), which expands over the rolling hills below that edge. Because of its favourable climatic and exceptional geographical and strategic position, the area was settled early on in history.

The cultural landscape consists of prehistoric, Roman and medieval settlements: ruins of a castle, with stalls and houses underneath the castle, the ruins of parish church of St. Socerb, medieval village, prehistoric hill-forts, graveyards from prehistoric and Roman period, and caves of "natural beauty" with prehistoric, Roman and early Christian finds.

Socerb castle represents the unique standing fortification situated on the natural cliffs, which was once a political border between the Venetian Republic and Habsburg Monarchy. It had an important strategic and political function during medieval period. The castle formed part of the Venetian domain for only half a century. Mostly, it belonged to Austria and its margraves who, whilst living in the castle, substantially increased their power. For this reason, the castle represented an important military fort with permanently resident troops. It controlled a major trading route leading from the sea to the inland province of Carniola. Nowadays, the castle become as a state owned property of national importance.

Below the castle, the village of Socerb is located. The castle and the village are connected by a path, parts of which are cut into shear rock. Underneath the castle courtyard, one finds a karstic cave, which can be accessed by a path leading below the cliffs. In addition, the castle courtyard is directly connected with the cave via a natural vertical shaft. The slopes between the village and the cliffs were once scattered with farm buildings, which belonged to the castle. In the immediate vicinity of the plateau in front of the castle's entrance, a church consecrated to St Socerb once stood. Near the castle the well-known cave of Sveta Jama (Sacred Cave) is located, which once served as a chapel or sanctuary.

Metrical documentation of the Castle of Socerb was made from the geodetic and photogrammetric measurements. The already existing digital surface 3D model of the castle, with its surrounding, was upgraded into the photo-realistic digital 3D model. For the relevant detail of the facades, digital ortophotos and digital photomosaics were made. There were metric and non-metric images used. Attributed-photographic database was made as the link between the photographic products and the corresponding descriptive contents. The photo-realistic model allows the castle to be shown in its natural form, because the visualisation and presentation of the castle is realistic and close to the human perception of it.

Our aim was to prepare a conservation program, which is feasible for different presentation solutions and options, having in mind the medieval castle and its cultural landscape. In the beginning of all conservation projects, the perfect documentation is essential. For this reason, we developed a special computer program for database and 3D visualization of the castle.

The condition of the castle is in the state of decline and for this reason we made a conservation project which provide the reinterpretation and reconstruction of the castle walls with modern designed architecture in its interior. On the other side, the management of the castle and its environs will play a central role in promoting the elite tourism, integrated with cultural landscape and open-air archaeological museum.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Cultural heritage is an important factor and carrier of economical, political and cultural development of Slovene Istria. In spite of all professional efforts of conservation policy in Slovenia, the importance and implementation of cultural heritage in this region and in entire Slovenia is a dependent element in modern society. Cultural heritage with its preservation and conservation is not viewed as special cultural value and has no importance in national identity. So far, it can not sustain itself with an adequate program and management. This statement proves that cultural heritage on different levels of education, from the youngest children up to highly specialised studies, is not sufficiently accentuated. Those individuals,

who are ready to invest into preservation, conservation and presentation of cultural heritage as sponsors or owners, are not financially stimulated.

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