

# A NEW APPROACH TO RENEWAL AND PRESENTATION OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE AS UNIQUE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

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*In recent years, a series of students' projects have been carried out at the Faculty of Architecture of Belgrade with aims at protection and investigation of possibilities or presentation of archaeological sites dating from the Roman period, in which Serbia is very rich, and their active inclusion in modern way of life and tourist programmes.*

*The project for the revitalisation of the Roman military camp Timacum Minus was one of them. It showed that the students' involvement in resolving complex issues of the presentation and revitalisation of archaeological remains was fruitful because numerous fresh ideas were obtained in numerous subjects. The focus was on a concept that significant cultural and historic areas with ancient remains were to be presented to both the domestic and foreign public in a modern manner and in interaction with the environment, the natural beauties of the landscape. The projects enable to promote an interactive relation with the historic area as a place where visitors, at various activities, meet with history, but also with a reflection of a modern era.*

**Keywords:** *environment, landscape, revitalisation, identity, authenticity*

## INTRODUCTION

Taking care of the landscape values, which is often a specific synthesis of natural and constructed elements, started in 18th century in travel accounts of European educated elite. However, only in the 1920s a term cultural landscape was introduced for the first time, which lead to differentiating areas in our natural environment, that have gained value through human action (Stovel, 2003). At the beginning of the third millennium, the European Landscape Convention (Florence, 2000) linked the cultural landscape with a need to establish a sustainable development based upon balanced and harmonized relations between social needs, industrial activities and the natural environment. On that occasion,

particularly emphasised was the significant role the natural environment had not only in ecological and living environment terms, but also in terms of cultural and social aspects. The landscape is a basic element of the living environment of the population, an expression of their common cultural and natural heritage and the foundation of their identity. (*European Conventions and Recommendations of Cultural Heritage, 2005*).

Considering that archaeological sites are a form of architectural heritage which is directly connected to its location and the natural surroundings, the primary goal of this research and the students' project presented in this paper is to examine the possibilities of reconstruction and revitalisation of the archeological site Timacum Minus, located in the village of Ravna near Kneževac. This is to be achieved by including this site in modern development of the whole area as a specific cultural landscape. Students' project was

inspired by the need to change our understanding of preservation and revitalisation of archeological sites in our country, which is mostly based on presentation of the conserved remains of structures as an individual historical and cultural object, without any interaction with its immediate and wider surroundings.

This students' project is directing the publics attention to a neglected archeological site that has not only considerable natural, cultural and historical value as a unique cultural landscape, but also has great potential for cultural tourism and development of traditional forms of work, like growing grapevine and making wine, which have been present there since the ancient times. It also stresses the need for greater inclusion of international cultural heritage charters and recommendations in the planning process for maintaining authenticity and traditional values of historical sites, their architectural and intangible heritage, as well as a modern understanding of the role and usage

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Figure 1: Badenweiler, Germany, Roman bath, shelter 2001

(photo U. Wulf-Rheidt)

of protected historical sites as a basic part of integral sustainable development of the region.

## CONTEMPORARY APPROACH TO PRESERVATION AND PRESENTATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Introduction of the term cultural landscape had its influence in changing the views on protection of archaeological sites and the presentation of the remains of structures within the sites. Erection of various protective structures – from provisional or permanent ones over the conserved remains of structures (Schmidt, 1988) – today is an obsolete form of protection and presentation because it interrupts integrity of the site and gets in the way of viewing its authenticity and entirety. Furthermore, it is considered that archaeological parks arrangement solely as tourist and recreational zones, where the conserved remains of structures are presented, or the remains of structure parts of particular style are exhibited in specially and newly erected buildings exhibiting stone fragments, sculptures and other items, does not help in having an insight into the real values and meanings of the site, its erstwhile appearance and understanding of the functions and meanings of the preserved structures.

Observing historic sites in their interaction with the environment has its influence on a change of the way we relate to areas with archaeological remains of structures,

particularly those outside the modern settlements. Those are the sites that can be characterised as cultural landscape, since there are manifested interaction and solid linkage between the traces of human activities and natural environment, of their natural features and traits which had an impact on people in a distant past to remain on one place, to settle there and build all sorts of structures. Archaeological sites can be classified as organically generated landscapes, as they came about out of social, economic, administrative or religious needs, and in their present form they exist as an expression of assimilation with the natural environment or as a response to it.

In types of cultural heritage, thus in archaeological sites, there are numerous problems initiated in the protection activities and through attempts to include them in modern way of life. One of the most important problems is the site authenticity preservation while undergoing protection and renewal interventions. According to the *Nara Document on Authenticity* (UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM, 1994), a historic site should be a true testimony of the culture and tradition it represents, and its authenticity is an expression of tangible and intangible aspects of a structure (Jukilehto, 2003). In the issue of archaeological sites, it was the insistence on the significance of the authenticity preservation of structure remains that had its influence in the past to make a presentation of the preserved building remains a primary goal, and restoration and ideal reconstruction to be just a secondary activity. But the modern times and a need for site revitalization and utilisation ask for a more active approach, meaning restoration or ideal reconstruction of structures, as well as building new structures on archaeological sites so that they could be utilised in a more active fashion. In partial or total restoration or reconstruction of structures, a new quality of the site „authenticity” is achieved, or better still, the presentation of its erstwhile appearance. The intangible aspect of authenticity linked to the substance of the site and the place and structure purpose is regenerated through modern presentation, thus trying to recall to life the lives of people, traditions, rituals, etc.

The issue of the site integrity preservation, the state a site has acquired up to the present day, is also manifested in archaeological sites in particular. Modern protection concept tries to preserve the visual, structural and functional

integrity of a site. Any activity in the historic area, even the smallest intervention for purposes of its presentation as a monument of culture, represents a new purpose and imposes numerous alterations in the spirit of modern times. Recommendation concerning *Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas* (UNESCO, 1976) advises us that every historic area and its surroundings should be considered in their totality as a coherent whole whose balance and specific nature depend on the fusion of the parts of which it is composed and which include human activities as much as the buildings, the spatial organization and the surroundings (Jukilehto, 2003). This is particularly important for archaeological sites, in which certain balance should be established between the condition they were found in and new up-to-date interventions in regard to their protection, presentation and utilisation in the modern times.



Figure 2: Pergamon, Turkey, Hellenistic-Roman peristyle building, shelter 2004

(photo: U. Wulf-Rheidt)

Modern approach to archaeological heritage, especially when regarded as integrated with its natural environment, should place human development as an aim of its protection and presentation, within the spirit of recommendation concerning *Safeguarding Cultural and Natural Heritage* (UNESCO, 1976), thus regarding it as one of the basic components of regional development plans and planning in general (Jukilehto, 2003). If the role which archaeological sites as elements of cultural landscape have in the frame of sustainable development of a region, where this development is based upon balanced and harmonised relations between the needs of minor and major social community, industrial activities and living environment, inclusion of the sites in modern life activities of communities could be made possible. In revitalising archaeological sites and in their inclusion in modern-age activities, an



interconnection of cultural and natural heritage could be made manifest, as the foundation of an identity of a place. In this way, via preservation and presentation of an interaction between a man and the nature in an area through centuries, an essential quality of an area is singled out, which defines the character and the meaning of a place. (Đokić et al., 2008, pp. 86-87.)

## INVESTIGATING POSSIBILITIES OF PROTECTION AND PRESENTATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES THROUGH EDUCATION AND STUDENTS' PROJECTS

Involving education in the process of protection of cultural and natural heritage is one of the prerequisites of its successful outcome. For that reason it is very important to actively involve the immediate social community, the members of the population of a particular area and their local authorities and get them acquainted with the values and potentials of historic areas and archaeological sites. As particularly important form of education is involvement of students of archaeology and architecture in workshops, who in the process of site investigations are to design various ways of presentation of the remains of structures on the site and their utilisation as an aspect of the area revitalisation (Felix Romuliana, 2007).

It was the need for education of the future builders, who will be, in their practice among other tasks, dealing with issues of archaeological site presentation, that became the basic reason for initiating work with students on complex projects at the School of Architecture of Belgrade (Kurtović-Folić, N., Roter-Blagojević, M., Jadrešin-Milić, R., 2006). In order to carry out projects of different character and needs, three ancient sites in southeast Serbia were picked out, all with specific problems of protection and presentation: a section of the necropolis of the ancient Naissus (Niš), a section of an ancient settlement with villas in Mediana nearby Naisus and the immediate area around an ancient fortification and settlement of Timacum Minus nearby Knjaževac.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For the revitalisation projects for the archaeological site of Mediana near Niš (2004-05) and the revitalisation projects for a Martyrium and a Basilica in Jagodin mala of Niš (2005-06) mentor was N. Kurtović-Folić. For the revitalisation projects for the archaeological site Timacum Minus nearby Knjaževac (2007-08) mentor was M. Roter-Blagojević.

The aim was getting the students acquainted with modern principles of and approaches to preservation, protection and revitalisation of cultural heritage and the need for associating education from the field of protection with a cultural dimension of safeguarding intangible heritage of a site along with its identity as an expression of both global and local influences. (Neuckermans, 2004)

### Natural and cultural values of the Roman military camp Timacum Minus near Knjaževac and the state of their protection and presentation

One of the most significant ancient cities in the central Balkan region is Naissus. The settlement was formed in the middle of a glen which was a crossroads of several important roads and was also quite suitable for agriculture and livestock farming. The position of the city at a crossroads, fertile land and favourable locations of mines along the slopes of the surrounding mountains offered good conditions for an economic development of the town and its important place in commercial activities. These natural advantages enabled a steady development of an ancient town, but also of other settlements in the Niš valley.

The town is believed to be the birthplace of the emperor Constantine the Great. Since the emperor and his successors often visited the town, it grew into an important Roman settlement with the imperial residency. *Naissus* was a significant stop on the old military road which connected the present day Arčar in Bulgaria (*Ratiaria*) and Lješ (*Lissus*) in Albania. To the north the road led to Belgrade (*Singidunum*) and to the east to Constantinople.

In the area of greater Niš many local roads were built (*viae vicinales*), whose directions have been confirmed by the arrangement of stops along the roads, remains of settlements and necropoleis. *Timacum Minus* was located in the Timok region, in the village of Ravna, where the remains of a military camp, civilian settlement and necropoleis have been discovered. It is thought to be the oldest Roman fortification in the Timok region, on the area of about 2 ha. The oldest remains of an earthen fortification with palisades and wooden square towers and a defence moat, date back to the mid 1st century A.D. In the mid 2nd century, a new stone fortification was built, and in the late 3rd century, the renovation of the existing ramparts was done and the square towers were built. The parts of the ramparts

and of one tower were reinforced anew in the mid 4th century and again in the second half of 4th century, when towers of rectangular plan were built, using the technique *opus mixtum*. The fortification was destroyed in a fire in 5th century (Petrović, 1986; Petrović, 1995).



Figure 3: Roman military camp Timacum Minus near Knjaževac

Inside the fortification, along the *via principalis*, a part of a building was discovered, a granary (*horreum*), dating from 4th century. In the fortification corner there are traces of a rotund structure which was probably a cistern or some other building serving for ore processing. The traces of a civilian settlement have been found on the south side of the fortification and most probably date from 2nd – 3rd century. There are baths (*thermae*) at the bank of the river Timok, built and utilised from 2nd to the late 4th century. The findings of architectural elements and a sacrificial altar suggest that there were temples within a settlement. At the outskirts of the settlement a necropolis has been discovered, dating from the second half of 4th century and first half of 5th century. Also, tombstones have been preserved, originating from another early Roman necropolis in the vicinity, where they were taken from and built into the fortification towers and ramparts.

The area of the Roman camp *Timacum Minus* today is under protection and archaeological investigations are being conducted on the remains of the fortification walls, the towers and the camp gates. Conservation works have been performed in accordance with the modern approaches, based upon a concept of protection and presentation of the remains in the state they have been discovered. With time, the remains that were presented on lower levels were being gradually covered with a debris. There are no information billboards on the site, which makes it unappealing and unintelligible for visitors.



Figure 4: Village of Ravna, archaeological and ethno complex

In the immediate vicinity of the ancient remains there is a village of Ravna where an archaeological and ethno complex has been established. It is situated in a courtyard of a village school dating from 1906, which represents a rare preserved example of a school building from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in this region. Today, the school building is used to house the researchers, archaeologists and ethnologists, but also as a workshop and a storage for keeping archaeological findings. Besides the school, there are two village cottages presented, which were brought from the area along the river Beli Timok, representing typical folk architecture from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are also presented some structures of industrial interest, a barn and a pot still for making brandy. In the 1920s, these old buildings were displaced and are made a museum area. A larger building houses the museum of wines that are traditionally made in this region. In the schoolyard, around an old well, a small area with early Roman tombstones and stone fragments was created.

Although this archaeological and ethno park of the village of Ravna has been included in a programme for tourists visiting the region of Stara Planina, there are few visitors and the area of the military camp is rather unappealing to tourists because of its appearance of a neglected site.

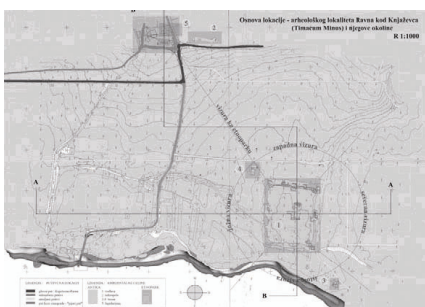


Figure 5: Village of Ravna, position of archaeological and ethno complex

### Methodology and the content of the work with students

Investigating the possibilities of revitalising and reviving protected historic places of a very rich past and significant cultural values, the student were confronted with important professional issues of integrating modern functions and typologies of structures into areas containing preserved remains of old structures, and with issues of finding a concept of their active utilisation under modern conditions. The aim was for the students to master the methodology necessary for proper understanding of the problems with regard to integrative protection of the architectural heritage and for providing sustainable solutions which are to enable safeguarding and revitalisation of the cultural and historic heritage not only as a bearer of a cultural identity, but as an important source of economic and social development of a country, as well (Prodanović, 1997)

Involvement of the students and professors of the School of Architecture of Belgrade, with the assistance of the architect of the Institute of Archaeology of Belgrade, in carrying out these projects, was also supported and made possible in collaboration with archaeologists from Knjaževac, which has created a valuable co-operation of education and scientific institutes with the local authorities for purposes of finding creative ideas and most suitable solutions for improvement of archaeological sites. The aim was to view the site area through the students' eyes and to investigate as many as possible different ideas of its future life, but without imposing too rigid institutional framing and restrictions.

For students it was opportunity to check up their creative abilities and a capability of respecting numerous mandatory restrictions imposed through principles of protection and the very character of the place, in order to produce modern, resourceful and innovative solutions. In the work on these projects, the students improved their education substantially, because, while working on the project and through contacts with their professors and other professionals, they mastered some specialised skills and knowledge, which is to be of great help to them in dealing with similar issues in their further practice.

In the first stage of project, the focus was on a through understanding of the place itself, its cultural and historic meaning and natural

values. A very detailed investigation was conducted of the existing documentation on the researched structures and the relevant literature on the culture, customs, ways of life and architecture of the investigated period. In addition, historic conditions were investigated, those when the historic places in question had originated, the presumed course of their development, architectural and construction characteristics of structures, building techniques, types of materials and ways of their utilisation, etc. The aims was to set a correlation of the architecture of structures discovered on the investigated sites and of those of the same purpose and significance discovered on other sites elsewhere in Europe. Such a method is important for creating a picture of universal values of the sites and structures, but also of particular values that the local characteristics yield (Pucar *et al.*, 1998)

At this stage of work, the students got acquainted with various methods and approaches in presentation of archaeological remains, which were being implemented on numerous other archaeological parks both in the world and in the immediate surroundings. The aim was for students to comprehend advantages and disadvantages of various methods – from the most minimal interventions, entailing only presentation of the conserved remains and anastylosis, up to the extensive works on partial or complete reconstructions of the assumed authentic architecture.

The work on comprehending the meaning, character and values of a site, as well as development, and revitalisation potentials, was extremely significant because it constituted a basis for further work and had an impact on investigating the most suitable approach to presentation and emphasising tangible and intangible values of a site, as well as understanding it in the interaction with its natural environment.

After thoroughly conducted analyses and valorisations, the next step was defining a protection concept for archaeological remains and arrangement of the site ensemble. In their group work on urban concept of the site ensemble, the students created a future presentation of the archaeological remains and a character of the area purpose. They analysed the arrangement, shapes and volume of newly built structures. Special attention was paid to arranging green, vegetation and common areas, traffic, pedestrian paths, small piazzas, benches, lighting, information billboards, etc.



The final purpose of these students' activities was an elaboration of certain area sections, as well as preliminary detailed designs of archaeological remains of old structures presentation or designing new modern structures for housing new contents. Depending on how they relate to historic heritage and natural qualities of the area, the students selected their own methods of protection of archaeological remains – conservation, restoration, ideal reconstructions or building protective structures. In newly designed structures, they had an opportunity to express their own approach to shaping them within a historic context, to selecting a structure and materials and to an appearance of the newly built structures.

### Students' approach to integration of archaeological remains into a cultural landscape

Although the issue of historic site treated in the students' project was quite difficult, the final outcome of the activity showed that they all students had similar views on the issue of revitalising archaeological sites and their integration into the modern course of life. A desire for changes and creative approach to the natural and architectural environment were common to all the offered designs.

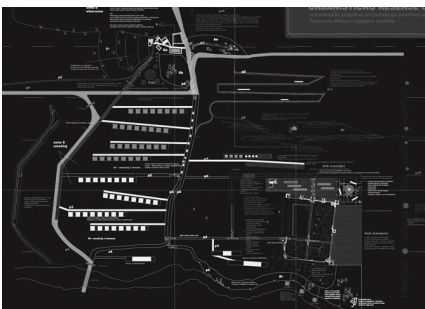


Figure 6: Student' project of revitalization of Village of Ravna, new structures situated between archaeological and ethno complex (design: J. Brajković and D. Vojinović)

The project carried out with the students had its particularities of presenting archaeological remains of a Roman military camp as part of a cultural landscape, connecting exquisite natural values of the area along the Beli Timok river banks and Stara Planina mountain with the tradition and ethnographic features of the life and activities of the people who lived there. The task of the students' projects was to revitalise the area around the present village of Ravna by means of connecting it with the remains of the Roman military camp and other

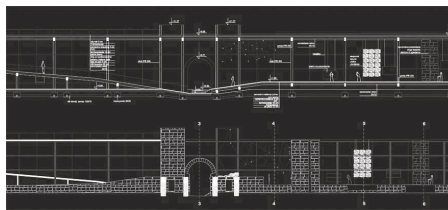


Figure 7: Student' project of the presenting archaeological remains of a Roman military camp (design: J. Brajković and D. Vojinović)

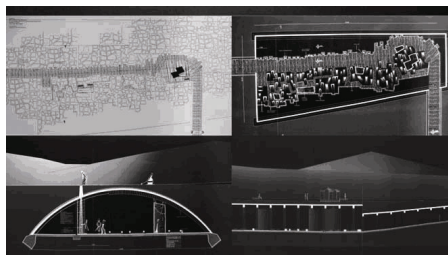


Figure 8: Student' projects of the presenting archaeological remains of a necropolis (design: J. Brajković and D. Vojinović)

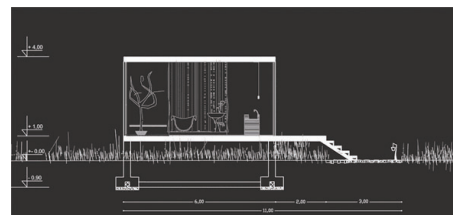
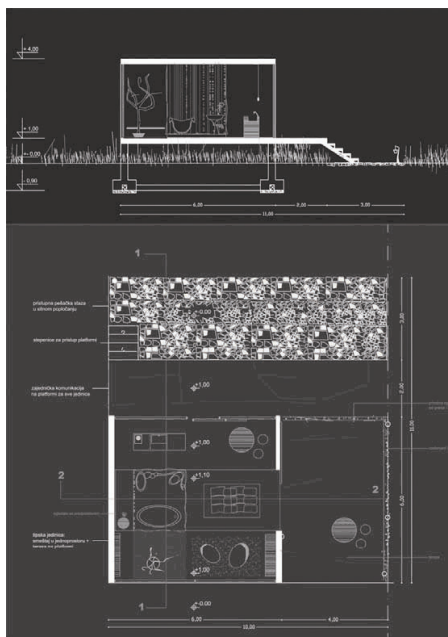


Figure 9 and 9 a: Student' projects of the new houses for tourists accommodation (design: J. Brajković and D. Vojinović)

ancient structures and with a newly established ethno park where the traditional village cottages had been moved to and presented.

The aim was not only to protect and present the historic remains dating from the times of antiquity, but to revitalise traditional features of the place through restoring a link between the structures built in the ancient times and those of modern ones. This would transform the place into a cultural, scientific ensemble of tourist interest, a future centre of cultural tourism of a broader area.

In their work, the students focused on reviving the tradition of growing grapevine and making wine, the activity that has been going on since the ancient times, which may contribute to an economic development by means of creating small private wineries. In addition, the favourable environmental conditions, the vicinity of the river and the presence of ancient baths inspired the students to propose revitalisation of the area through providing a recreational function and building a spa centre. In shaping the tourist facilities, they looked into a possibility of creating a reinterpretation of an ancient house with an atrium or traditional village cottages. A desire to preserve the natural values of the place and its rural character led the students to propose a minimum of interventions on conservation and partial restoration area of the military camp with a storehouse at its centre, which would help visitors understand an authentic look of the structures and their purpose.

### CONCLUSION

At archaeological sites, numerous problems are initiated in the protection activities and in attempts to include them in the modern way of life. The insistence on the significance of the authenticity of preservation of the structure remains had its influence in the past to make a presentation of the preserved building remains a primary goal, and restoration and ideal reconstruction to be just a secondary activity. But the modern times and a need for site revitalization and utilisation ask for a more active approach, meaning restoration or ideal reconstruction of structures, as well as building new structures at archaeological sites so that they could be utilised in a more active fashion. In revitalising archaeological sites and in their inclusion in modern-age activities, an interconnection of cultural and natural heritage could be made manifest, as the foundation of an identity of a place.

Observing historic sites in their interaction with the environment has its influence on a change of the way we relate to areas with archaeological remains of structures, particularly those outside the modern settlements. Erection of various protective structures – from provisional or permanent ones over the conserved remains of structures – today is an obsolete form of protection and presentation because it interrupts integrity of the site and gets in the way of viewing its authenticity and entirety. Furthermore, it is considered that archaeological parks arrangement solely as tourist and recreational zones – where the conserved remains of structures are presented, or the remains of structure parts of particular style are exhibited in specially and newly erected buildings exhibiting stone fragments, sculptures and other items – does not help in having an insight into the real values and meanings of the site, its erstwhile appearance and understanding of the functions and meanings of the preserved structures. Supporting an active role of the places with the preserved cultural heritage is an expression of a desire to make them active participants in the modern life, to bring to life their significance and the function of an initiator of economic, social and cultural development of the whole community.

The projects showed that the students' involvement on resolving complex issues of presentation and revitalisation of archaeological remains was fruitful because numerous fresh ideas were obtained in numerous subjects, and some of them have been accepted by the local authorities and their realisation has been arranged. The focus was on a concept that significant cultural and historic areas with ancient remains were to be presented to both the domestic and foreign public in a modern manner and in interaction with the environment, the natural beauties of the landscape. The projects also showed that an appealing presentation and active use of the remains of ancient structures, integrated in the modern way of life, would enable certain economic gains for a local community, which could be a source of means for the area maintenance, research and protection.

The whole concept promoted a necessity of co-operating between a local community and education and scientific institutions. At the same time, the idea encourages participation and training of the future professionals who, in their practice, are to encounter restoration and revitalisation of old structures or design new

ones within a protected area. Furthermore, the projects help develop the public awareness of the significance of safeguarding architectural heritage as an element of cultural identity and a source of inspiration and creativeness of the present and future generations. Thereby the programme of safeguarding and presenting archaeological heritage was significantly improved because it revealed a need for understanding the natural and cultural heritage as an important factor that defines the future politics of the region development planning.

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