

# VISITORS' CENTERS AT ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES IN SERBIA AS AN IMPUT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY

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*Tourism is over world in intensive development and provides considerable income in many countries. International organization for protection cultural heritage recommends that historical monuments and localities of cultural heritage have to be utilized as tourist destinations also. The presentation of cultural heritage should be realized very carefully, so as to avoid endangering their historical and artistic values. Building various types of "Visitors centers" at archeological sites is one of the most effective ways to present valuable heritage. In Serbia there are several archeological sites which are very interesting for cultural tourism, particularly Viminacijum, Sirmijum and Gamzigrad. The analysis of existing state at these localities has shown that a significant progress is made. There are plans for further development. However, the already built visitors centers, as well as those which are planned for future, are not based sufficiently on the principles accepted and recommended by world experts and international organizations. Therefore a lot has to be done to include our archeological sites and other valuable localities and monuments in an effective tourist offer. This will create conditions that the archeological sites and cultural heritage in Serbia represent a real input to provide an effective sustainable development of the whole country.*

*Key words: Archeological site, Cultural tourism, Visitors center, Sustainable development*

## INTRODUCTION

In the last decades tourism is over world in intensive development and provides considerable income in many countries. Beside that, the tourist destinations are more and more connected to historical monuments and localities of cultural heritage. Even in the famous Venice charter from 1964. it is underlined that it is necessary to pay more attention to istorical urban areas, particularly to those devastated in past times due to the wars, indstrial developments and other human activities, paritularly traffic [1]. It is advised that such areas may be restored for touristic and commerical purposes. Such restoration are in course in many countries. However, in order to provide more profits in short times, restorations often go out of control. Therefore it is necessary that all such activities in these areas, particularly related to tourism, are strictly monitored and controlled. Good examples in this sence are Greek and Italy.

It explains why all relevant factors dealing with protection of cultural heritage pay more atten-

tion to tourism. It is supported by a number of conventions and documents dealing with cultural heritage in Europe and adopted at various conferences, as well as the recommenndation Rec(2003)1, defined by Committy of Ministers in charge of cultural heritage of Europen Council in january 2003, under title „Promotion of tourism in order to improve cultural heritage as a factor of sustainable development“. This recommendation is based on previous activities in the European Council, such as Recommendation R(94)7 “General policy of sustainable tourism and tourism development which is in line with environment”, the Recommendation R(95)10 “The policy of sustainable tourism in protected areas”, the Recommendation 1133(1990) “European policy of tourism” and Recommendation 1148(1998) “The need to improve tourism in Central and East Europe” [2], as well as on declarations adopted on congresses of local and regional authorities on European historical cities. These recommendations propose to the members of European Union that in defining their policy of cultural tourist programs take care about necessary protec-

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tion of heritage and use cultural tourism to promote heritage and to develop control methods which will be support sustainable development and encourage people to exploit natural resources in a right way.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL SITES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The interest for landscapes started in the 18th century by authors which traveled around the world. An American geographer Carl Sauer gave a definition of a cultural site by words "a cultural landscape is shaped from a natural landscape by a cultural group" [3]. In such a way determined sites in our natural environment by human activities obtained cultural values.

In before mentioned Venice charter it was explained that the concept of a historical monument have to be understand broadly, which means not only building or construction but urban and rural environment as well, proving about certain civilization, historical development or events, also. The concept of a monumet place is also introduced and in the Convention of the Commitee for world cultural heritage from 1972, it is defined as a combined act of nature and man.

In the Convention on protection of architectural heritage of Europe (Granada, 1985) [4] localities are also defined as combined act of men and nature, meaning the areas which are partially arranged and sufficiently and homogenous to be defined topographically and which are of extreme historical, archeological, artistic, scientific, social or professional importance.

The Convention for the protection of the architectural heritage of Europe (Florence, 2000) linked a cultural landscape to the necessary sustainable development, based on balanced and harmonized relations between social needs, economy and environment. It is especially emphasized that landscape has an important role not only for environment, but for cultural and social aspects. It has to be understood as a significant potential for economy and as a "fundamental component of people environment, as a sign of equality of their common cultural and natural heritage and a basis of their identity" [4].

The preservation of authenticity is one of the most important problems in all activities related to protection of cultural heritage. It is clearly un-

derlined in the "Nara document of authenticity" (Nara, 1994) by a statement that a historical site should be a real testimony of culture and tradition which represents, and that its authenticity should be expressed in material and nonmaterial aspects [4].

Another important problem is preservation of integral site, meaning a position which a certain site got up to date. The identification of possible contemporary functions inside historical sites is of an extreme importance. It is also important to have a good knowledge of the historical site and building inside, which may have an impact on future site development. The "Recommendation on safeguarding and contemporary role of historic areas", adopted by UNESCO in 1976, advices us that: Each historic area and its environment should be considered in its totality, as a coherent entirety, which balance and specific nature depends on the conditions of the integral units, including not only human activities but buildings, site organization and environment as well.

The Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage, adopted by UNESCO in 1972, emphasizes that the target of protection and presentation has to become a factor of further development. Heritage is considered as a crucial factor of local and regional planning in general. The preparation and definition of corresponding policy of use and presentation of heritage should start with full knowledge and understanding of history and resource potentials, in order to achieve a balanced integration of all relevant factors. It is essential to provide a solution which sould preserve the importance and value of monuments in the history.

### **ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES VIMINACIJUM, SIRMIJUM AND GAMZIGRAD**

The archeological site Viminacijum is located near the mouth of river Mlava to Danube, at the today's Kostolac, some 12 km from the city Pozarevac. It was a largest urban settlement in the Upper Mesija and a significant military center. The Roman camp and city originated in the 1st century and lasted until the 7th century. The very first archeological investigation of this site started in the beginning of the 20th century, under the leadership of Mihailo Valtrovic and his assistant Miloje Vasic. These investigations were interrupted and continued from 70is, being active

still nowadays [5]. The most significant results are obtained after the year 2000, under the leadership of Miomir Korac from the Archeological Institute in Belgrade. In this period of time the modern methods and technologies were used (satellite and air recording, geophysical investigations). The remnants of the North door of Military camp, parts of Terms and Mausoleum with several tombs were uncovered. The remnants of two memories, triconhosne graves and the Rustic villa were found, as well as parts of a large settlement, and a 1000m of a Roman aqueduct. Today there are archeological investigation and uncovering of a large Amphitheater.

The presentation of the North door of Military camp, parts of uncovered Terms and Mausoleum started after the year 2000. The permanent protecting building realized with laminated wood was erected. Some new objects were built, as an entrance hall, souvenir shop, coffee bar and sanitary block with toilets. In last few years there are plans to build a Visitors' center, as a copy of the Rustic villa, and to present immaterial heritage [5].

The Rustic villa is a new building at the archeological site. This building or Viminacijum center has a multiple function, in commercial and scientific sense. It is a component of the complex, beside the roman settlement and military camp. The Viminacijum center is imagined as a place which enable gathering of business and intellectual elite in an ambient of old roman city and military camp. In other days it will be open to visitors and tourists. It means that the Center will have several levels: scientific and research, education, marketing, all in function to promote the Center as an attractive scientific and tourist loca-



Figure 1. Viminacium, Visitorscenter atrium

tion. It will be organized around seven atriums. It will have laboratories for scientific investigations, accommodation capacities and necessary economic and service part (Figure 1 and Figure 2).



Figure 2. Viminacium, Visitorscenter atrium

With such plans and programs the Center will contribute to improving cultural and economic situation in this region – Branicevo, and in particular to enrich tourist offer. Since the Viminacijum is located on an attractive place close to river Danube, there are already a number of arrangements with European ship operators, it is expected that some 70.000 tourist will visit this site in the year 2011. It will enable more employment on local and regional level and an important sustainable development [6].

The archeological site Sirmijum, today's Sremska Mitrovica, is an antic city built in the 1st century, on the mouth of river Bosut to river Sava, on the south hillsides of mountain Fruska Gora. The first sketches of Sirmijum are made by count Marsilio at the end of the 17th century. He noted in these drawings all that was visible from roman architecture at that time. However, the first serious investigations on this site started in 50s of the 20th century by Regional office for protection of cultural heritage in Novi Sad. Later, from the

1962. the investigations were taken over by the Archeological Institute, in cooperation with the Museum of Srem and the Institute for protection of cultural monuments in Sremska Mitrovica.

The most important building complex, the remnants of Residential Palace, was undercover in 1956. Since only a smaller part is undiscovered, it is not clear neither internal space organization, or the total dimensions were. Hippodrome, warehouses, corn depots are uncovered in the palace. A very important space complex is undercover in closeness – Villa Urbana, the area of public terms (Terms Litinie), public corn depot or Horeum. The remnants of Forum, craft and commercial complex, apartment's blocks and street collectors are also undiscovered [5].

In last several years a particular attention is paid to organization and presentation of a part of Imperial Palace. The remnants of the palace are covered by a permanent structure, opened for visitors in the 2009. This new building, beside the protection, has a function of a Visitors' center also. The center include a gallery for selling souvenirs and publications, wardrobe, coffee bar, official block for personal, depots and pantry, as well the rooms for custodians. Construction of the building is realized by laminated wood. Above archeological remnants there is a light steel construction, with trails for visitors, enabling full view of the site in the whole [7] (Figure3 and Figure 4).



Figure 3. Sirmijum, Visitors center

The archeological site Gamzigrad, a late antic imperial palace Romuliana, is built in the Eastern Serbia, in the valley of river Timok, some 11 km from city Zajecar. The first description and evaluation of the site is given by Baron Von Herder, in

his book Bergmanische Reise in Serbie im Jahre 1835. During the second half of the 19th century a known archeologist, traveler and writer Felix Kamnitz paid particular attention to this locality.



Figure 4. Sirmijum, Visitors center construction

Investigations of Gamzigrad started in the 1950. when Djurdje Boskovic made first layout of the fortress, indicating the most important buildings in its interior. Archeological investigations started by the National Museum in Zajecar, while excavating were organized by the Archeological Institute. The works on protection of the uncovered buildings were committed to the Yugoslav, or later to Republic Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments. The remnants of old and younger fortification were undiscovered. In the north part of the fortress remnants of a Church, Palace 1, Palace 2 and a big building with corridor were undiscovered, and in the south part remnants of a Church, Horeum, Tribunal and Thearme [7].

Similar to other archeological sites in Serbia, for Gamzigrad are in course designs of a new permanent building for protection and presentation of these valuable findings. The design of the Visitors' center is already finished. This new building will be in the wide zone of site protection, some 500 m from the fortress, enabling the complete look at archeological remnants. The complex is designed with separate functions located as separate buildings: space for visitors, lodging area for researchers and investigation and research center. Area for visitors has a large hall for guests, souvenir and publication shop, ticketing office, offices with library, rooms for security and technical staff and guides, multipurpose hall and sanitary block. The lodging area has twin beds rooms with bathrooms. The investigation and research center has laboratory with work-

ing areas, a hall for lectures and presentation, a workshop and a sanitary block. There are also

ten rooms for accommodation of researchers, dining room and studio (Figure 5).

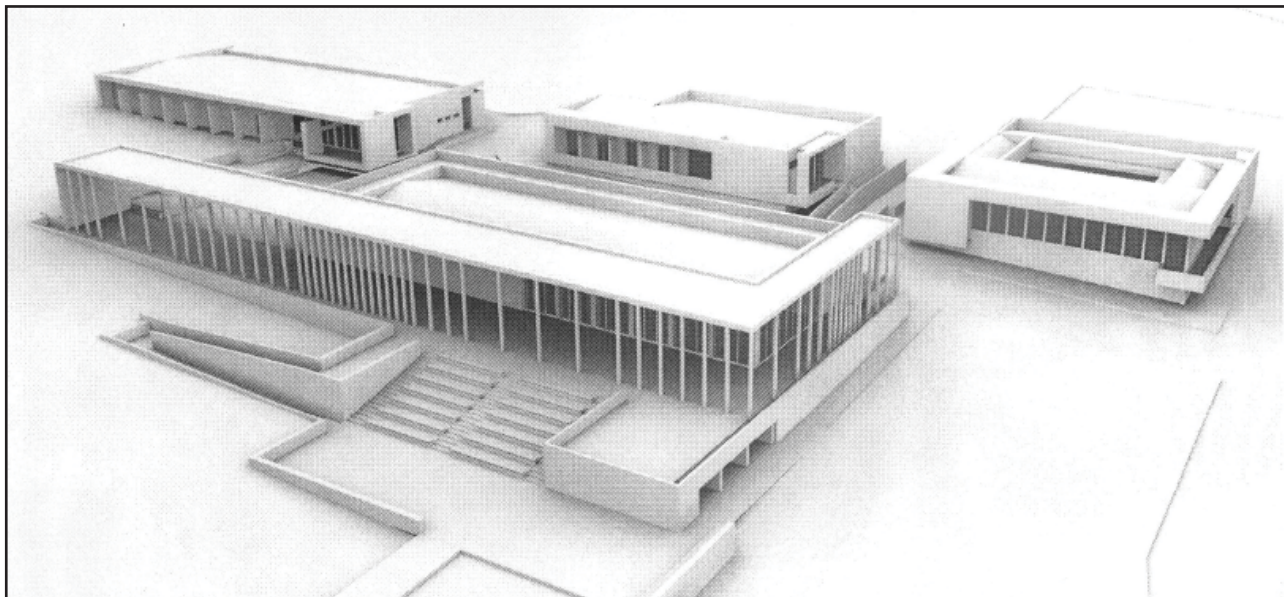


Figure 5. Gamzigrad, Visitors center project

## CONCLUSIONS

The international conventions and recommendations have important impact to the changes of perception and relation towards protection of archeological sites and presentation of remnants of buildings in these sites. It is very important because historical areas with remnants of archeological building are in essence cultural landscapes, particularly those outside today's urban areas, and may be characterized as cultural areas, in which the mutual and unbreakable connections between material remnants, as result of human activities, and natural environment is evident. It may explain what influenced people to stay in these areas in ancient times, to build their settlements and various buildings. Archeological sites may be considered as landscapes or organic nature, because they most often are results of certain social, administrative or religious needs. In today's form they represent a form of interconnection with environment, or as a response to natural environment.

The modern time and needs for revitalization and space utilization require a more active approach to the restoration or building redesigns, as well as erecting new buildings, enabling better utilization. Partial or total restoration, or redesign, so as to achieve previous look and authenticity, has also an educative importance, for understanding the importance of the position and purpose

of the space, tradition, rituals and similar, as well as its natural characteristics and values.

A problem of preservation of place integrity, the status which it obtained up to nowadays, is also very important for all archeological sites. Their protection and presentation represents therefore a very complex task, which have to include all actors in planning and managing. A certain balance has to be made between the present state and planned intervention in aim to protect and utilize the place. The construction of visitors centers should be realized with an adequate relation to the heritage, but with modern materials and designs, so as to provide effective protection and presentation. These centers should be included in contemporary life, using media and new IT technologies. They also have to enable an effective development of cultural tourism.

Archeological heritage in connection with natural environment is considered today as one of the basic components for all regional planning, and for society development in general. Therefore it is necessary to affirm the roles which they have as elements of cultural landscape and factors of sustainable society development, based on balanced and harmonic relations between the needs of smaller and larger social subjects, between industry, economy and environment. It means that archeological sites should be considered not only on regional, but particularly on

local level, with intention to improve the activities of local authorities. Similarly, an important role should have nongovernmental organizations.

It is worthwhile to underline that archeological sites described in this paper, which are the most important in Serbia have not based sufficiently on these principles. Therefore a lot has to be done to include these valuable sites and localities in an effective tourist offer and to create conditions that the archeological sites in Serbia represent a real input to provide an effective sustainable development of the whole country.

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