



THE PROGRAMME

OF PROTECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF COMMON CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CULTURAL MONUMENTS IN THE CROSS-BORDER REGION

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The programme of protection and maintenance of common cultural heritage and cultural monuments in the cross-border region of Montana - Pirot

-in the form of proposal-

The programme of protection and maintenance of common cultural heritage and cultural monuments in the cross-border region of Montana – Pirot in the form of a proposal has a task to systematize all collected sources and to issue recommendations for further study and protection, based on the known and identified tangible and intangible characteristics of Serbian history and culture in the region of Montana in Bulgaria as well as the Bulgarian history and culture in the Pirot region in Serbia.

As culture and history often push the boundaries between the states and the nations, it is very difficult to accurately determine the material traces of Serbian culture and history in the region of Montana as well as the material characteristics of Bulgarian culture in Pirot.

Research conducted as part of the project *The Evaluation of cultural heritage of the cross-border region of Montana-Pirot* (no. 2007CB16IPO006-2011-2-243), which is implemented under the Second Call of IPA CBC Programme of Bulgaria-Serbia has shown that, up to now, there are no known material traces and remains of Serbian culture in the Bulgarian area of Montana, but there are a number of characteristics of the Serbian cultural heritage of the intangible type.

On the other hand, the Bulgarian cultural heritage of the material type is present in Pirot, as well as movable cultural heritage in the area of Pirot, of Serbian origin, which, unfortunately, was not identified in the target area of Montana, but in the wider area.

This knowledge was crucial for perceiving the proposed programme for the preservation of historical monuments and cultural heritage on a broader level,



because, in this case, it is impossible to limit the access only to the mentioned areas of Pirot and Montana.

This programme will provide an analysis of cultural resources in the region, which, until now, have not been the subject of frequent discussion and analysis or they have not been represented in the cross-border projects in the perceived degree, which will ultimately result in a joint initiative for the protection of cultural heritage and material characteristics of the cross-border region of Bulgaria - Serbia.

The Serbs and Bulgarians

There are no two nations and two countries that are more similar to one another than the Serbs and the Bulgarians and Serbia and Bulgaria.

Countries are similar in size (Bulgaria has 7,265 million inhabitants and Serbia has 7,164 million) with the cities of almost identical size, similar ethnic structures (ethnic majority in Serbia are Serbs, 83% of the population, similar to Bulgaria, where the ethnic majority are Bulgarians, 84% of the population), similar economic strength (GDP per capita in Bulgaria was over \$7,000 in 2011 and approximately 6,200 in Serbia) and so on.

Nations are also very similar. However, in general, there are more Serbs than Bulgarians in the Balkans (7.5 million versus 6.1 million), but both nations have similar demographic indicators: they are among the 10 nations with the oldest population in the world - in Europe perhaps only Baltic people and Ukrainians and Moldovans can be compared with Serbs and Bulgarians by negative population growth. Both are Slavic people, who have the same Orthodox religion, belong to the same Byzantine historical cultural sphere, the languages are basically mutually intelligible, the cuisines and customs are similar, etc.



According to the division of Slavs by regional and linguistic similarities into three groups (south, east and west Slavs), Serbs and Bulgarians belong to the same group of south Slavs. Linguistic closeness between the Serbs and the Bulgarians is particularly expressed, so the differences are much less than, for example, the differences between the north and south German dialects. Both peoples belong to the nations in which family ties are kept. They preserved a sense of importance of tribal and lineage affiliation for a long time, which was influenced by the fact that all people from one lineage celebrated the same patron saint.

Bearing in mind the obvious similarity between the neighboring states and nations, which has its roots primarily in the distant and recent history, it is necessary to mention that there are some identified (and more or less studied) cultural features of Serbs and Bulgarians from the territory of Pirot and Montana which connect the two nations even closer.

Serbian cultural heritage in Montana

Cultural heritage of the municipality of Montana are numerous objects of immovable cultural heritage - ancient castles and sites, medieval sites (the necropolis in the village Živovci, medieval fortress on the top of Stovci in the village Smoljanovci, etc.), monasteries (Klisurski Monastery of St. Cyril and Methodius, Lopušanski monastery between Montana and Berkovica, the medieval church of St. Forty martyrs in the village Lipen, the church of St.



George in Vršec etc.) as well as stone crosses (obroci) which can be seen in Serbia, too. The greatest number of obroci are protected in the village Belotinci.

When it comes to the intangible cultural heritage, kilim-making stands out, which is also one of the links between the two nations and two cities, Pirot and Montana.

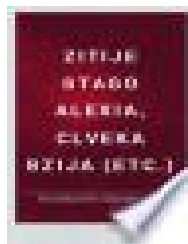
The medieval history of the Serbian state did not "reach" to the border areas of Montana, and the conducted research confirmed the fact that there is no material Serbian cultural characteristics.

History confirms that in the 19th century, when Bulgaria experienced a great revival, Serbian culture in intangible form had some impact and left significant traces among Bulgarians.

Although it is difficult and almost impossible to specifically examine the area of Montana in terms of identification of historic monuments and traces of Serbian culture in this narrow space, it is evident that there are very significant tangible and intangible monuments of Serbian culture in the territory of Bulgaria.

Therefore, the subsequent analysis of the protection program will be focused on the Serbian intangible cultural heritage in the Montana area in Bulgaria, because the research as well as current sources have shown that such heritage exists.

Serbian monuments in the form of the cultural heritage can be conceptualized through the role of individual people of Serbian origin who had a strong influence on the development of education and culture in general on the territory of Bulgaria.



✓ Konstantin Ognjanović

One of the first secular teachers in Bulgaria, and thereby in the area of Montana, was a Serb from Pančevo, Konstantin Ognjanović. He was born in 1798 and died in 1858.

In 1824, he opened a school in Vraca. He wrote several very important books for Bulgarian education, among which the most important is "Житіє Св. Алексея человека Божія."

Ognjanović established the first Cyrillic printing press in Constantinople, which served the purpose of expanding and strengthening of Bulgarian and general Slavic culture in the Ottoman Empire. This information is very important because it shows the contribution of this Serb to the education of Bulgarian people.

Some of Ognjanović's books are in libraries in Montana or nearby cities.

✓ Branislav Nušić

In the 20th century, a significant mark not only on Serbian, but also on Bulgarian culture was left by the most famous Serbian playwright, Branislav Nušić. Branislav Nušić was born on October 8, 1864 in Belgrade, as Alkibijad Nuša in a cincar merchant family. His parents were Đorđe and Ljubica.



He graduated from the Faculty of Law in Belgrade in 1884. During his studies, he spent a year in Graz.

Nušić fought in the Serbo-Bulgarian War in 1885, while serving regular military service. He will be remembered as a top comedigrapher who described all shortcomings of society in which he lived in his works. Two central themes, the forces that drive his characters, are power and money. "Narodni poslanik" (The Parliamentarian), "Sumnjivo lice" (A Suspect Individual), "Pokojnik" (The deceased) and "Gospođa ministarka" (The Cabinet Minister's Wife) are just some of the most famous works of Branislav Nušić.

The comedy "Ožalošćena porodica" (The Bereaved Family) is on the regular repertory in theatres in Serbia, as well as in Europe. This comedy, directed by the French, toured throughout Europe and in Bulgaria in 2013.

Besides comedies, which are still performed on the stages of Bulgarian theatres, his best known works, Rhetoric and Autobiography, had a great number of editions and were a part of education of many generations in Bulgaria, and thereby, in Montana.

Bulgarian cultural heritage in the region of Pirot



Significant Bulgarian cultural heritage is located in Pirot. This heritage can be categorized into two equally important groups - immovable and movable cultural heritage.

Regarding immovable cultural heritage, special emphasis is on the church of St. Nicholas in the village Staničenje and the church dedicated to the Virgin in the village of Donja Kamenica.

✓ The Holy Virgin Church in Donja Kamenica

The Holy Virgin Church is located in the village of Donja Kamenica near Knjaževac, in east Serbia, and it was built in the first half of the fourteenth century. The church is located 15km southeast of Knjaževac, on the old military road that led from Pirot to Vidin (Bulgaria). The building itself is relatively small, but it has a very interesting architecture whose harmonious proportions create the impression of monumentality.

Very little is known about this church. Maybe it was the anonymity that saved this temple. Conservation work on the frescoes and architecture of the church were completed in 1958, and today, it is under the protection of the Republic of Serbia, as a cultural monument of great importance.



No one knows exactly who the founder was, as the opinions of historians are conflicting, but it is assumed that it was a Bulgarian nobleman, Despot



Michael, the son of Tsar Michael Shishman (1323 - 1330). He is portrayed there as the focal figure along with a series of portraits of nobles. Despot Michael and Anna, probably close to the ruling elite, are presented in lavish clothes decorated with pearls. Her portrait is one of the most beautiful in our medieval fresco painting.

The temple dedicated to the Holy Virgin is of the unique architecture and painting. The founder had the highest respected for the Holy Mother of God and he dedicated this temple to her. On the walls, there are frescoes of Joachim and Ana, birth of the Virgin, and other events in the life of the Virgin to the Assumption. The artist devoted a large portion of the available wall area to the secret supper - last supper that Jesus shared with his friends, the apostles, before his suffering.

When it comes to the architectural style, the church is a combination of Romanesque, Gothic and Moravian architecture.

The temple was built by farmers and builders of small stones, sand and river stones collected from the Timok, of tufa from a nearby cave. The facade is decorated with bricks and ceramics, imaginatively and discreetly. Patrons are presented at least twice. In the southern part two men are shown, probably brothers, with a boy in a prayer position. In the western part of the church is the founder with his wife, daughter and son.

The church was inactive for centuries. In recent times, there is liturgical service in the church during major holidays.

✓ The Church of St. Petka (St. Nicholas) in Staničenje

The oldest church in Ponišavlje is the church of St. Nicholas, later (and still) the church of St. Petka, that is, St. Paraskeva in Staničenje. The church was painted in 1331/1332. The exact time of the completion of the decoration of the church is known thanks to the preserved year at the end of the founder's inscription. The year of the completion of the fresco painting is at the same time



the very beginning of the reign of one of the most important Bulgarian rulers - Ivan (Alexander) Asen (1331-1371). Peculiarity of the founder's inscription in Staničenje lies in the fact that, together with the name of the Bulgarian Tsar Ivan, the name of Vidin master Belaur is also mentioned. According to the founder's inscription, the names of the founders of the temple are: Arsenije, Jefimija and Konstantin.

The Church of St. Nicholas was built as a manor foundation and a funerary temple. It was built of crushed sandstone and limestone. It is small in size (8.9 x 5.1m) and without enough light because there is no dome and there are only a few windows. The light in the church comes from candles and sanctuary lamps. There are ten portraits painted on the walls. Among them, we can distinguish between Konstantin and Jefimija, who, at the time of the painting of the church, were either dead or had already become a monk and a nun.

What is noticeable is that there aren't many paintings of the Virgin on the walls of the church, who is otherwise given great importance in fresco painting. Everything is subordinated to Saint Nicholas who was apparently a patron saint of the family and to whom the church in Staničenje was dedicated in the first place.

There are two legends about how the name of the church changed from St. Nicholas to St. Petka.

The first legend dates from 1398 and speaks of Princess Milica, who was engaged in diplomatic activity. That same year, together with Jefimija, she visited the sultan Bayezid to represent the interests of her son Stefan. On that occasion, he brokered the transfer of the relics of St. Petka from Vidin to Belgrade. According to the legend, the relics stayed overnight in the church of St. Nicholas in Staničenje – and hence the change of name of the church. After that, the relics were placed in the chapel of St. Petka at Kalemegdan and today, they are in the Romanian city Iasi.

The second legend is more a historical fact. On 25th March, 1796, according to the old calendar, on the feast of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Mother of God,

when there were a lot of villagers in and around the church, Turkish Kardzhali attacked and killed a lot of people. Since then, the church did not open its door for the next twenty years. Upon re-opening, the name of the church was changed to St. Petka.



In recent years, the church slava has been St. Petka Paraskeva and it is celebrated every year on August 8.

The Church of St. Nicholas was declared cultural heritage and it has been under the state protection since 1967.

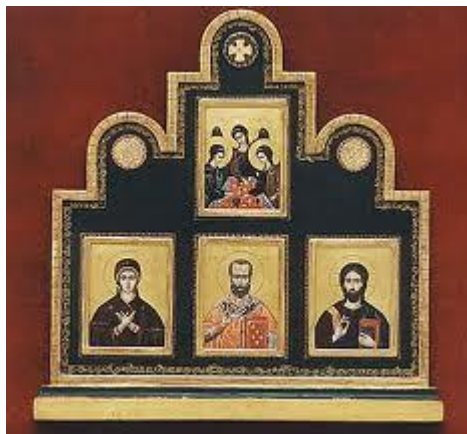
Common cultural heritage

✓ Home iconostases

As Pirot was linked by trade with the cities and regions of west Bulgaria during the Ottoman rule, the people, goods, habits and tastes mixed a lot. Master builders of houses and churches, zoographers, icon painters, woodcarvers, came to Pirot on business. The most common was Somokov art school. Somokov was nearby and the woodcarvers from this place had already gained a good reputation in the production of church furniture, so people from Pirot used to hire them in the decoration of local churches.

Wood carved iconostases which were created in Pirot are the work of Bulgarian woodcarving. Iconostasis is a panel or recess in a wall (alcove) in which the home icon is kept. Home iconostasis is a reduced replica of the great church iconostases. They have a carved frame or mounting with symmetrically arranged floral motifs. The cross takes the central place on the iconostasis.

During the nineteenth century, houses in Pirot began to have home iconostases. Town houses had clearly separate private and public rooms and specially designed prayer area, which was crucial for the religious identity of the owner. Making home altars in separate rooms was taken from west Bulgaria.



The famous travel writer, Felix Kanitz, on one of his trips in Pirot in 1871, described the beauty of the town house in which he was staying - built-in partitions and doors decorated with carving, saying that it was "a beautiful specimen of Bulgarian artistic carving for which the lovers of oriental comfort would readily give a great sum of money."

In 2014, the Museum of Ponišavlje published another very valuable monograph on home iconostases in Pirot. Most details about the home iconostases can be found in Bulgarian literature.

✓ Orthodox religion and ritual practice

It can be said that the Orthodox religion is the soul of Serbian and Bulgarian people, their faith and their sense of history. Orthodoxy has the spirit of preserved antiquity, but also, a deep belief in the resurrection of Christ and his future second coming. In both nations the church had and has great significance. The church represents a collection of believers for prayers addressing God. The church is also a holy place, a building designed for the church assembly of the church and religious service.

During religious services, in churches (both Bulgarian and Serbian) people stand peacefully facing the altar, to the east - where the glorious coming of Christ is expected from. From the altar, the priest brings a holy chalice from which the believers take communion (Christ body and blood). Orthodox believers in the church venerate (kiss) the icons, because, in that way, they kiss those who are represented in them and those who are mysteriously present through them.



The Church accompanies all stages of life - from birth to death - with prayers and rituals. Liturgies are served on Sundays and holidays, in the morning. The beginning of the liturgy is announced by church bells, which had practical significance in the past, when people did not measure time with clocks. It takes a little over an hour and consists of several parts which symbolically represent the most important moments of Christ's ministry of salvation. The supreme moment of a liturgy is holy communion, and its general meaning is the expression of gratitude to God and devoting a person's life to his rule and protection.

In the celebration of slavas there are some differences. Serbs celebrate krsna slava (the patron saint) -as well as the Bulgarians around the Timok- that is, they honour the saint on whose day their ancestors received the sacrament of Holy Baptism – that's where the name itself (krsna slava) comes from. Also, when something important happened in the family (healing, birth of children, rescue from the hands of enemies) the family would start celebrating the day of the saint when the event occurred as the patron saint. Bulgarians celebrate name days, that is, the saint they were named after. Traditions regarding celebrating slavas are somewhat different.



Both nations, Serbs and Bulgarians, and especially the two cities, Pirot and Montana, who cultivate friendly relations and foster cross-border cooperation, officially celebrate their city slavas.

Celebrating the city slava (feast) in Pirot was restored in 2000, after a period of stagnation. A procession through the city was organized for the first time in 2000 and the current Serbian Patriarch and then Bishop Irinej of Niš was at the forefront of the procession. The city feast is celebrated on every August 28th (or on 15th of August, according to the Julian calendar) on the feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God, popularly known as the Assumption (Velika Gospojina). The feast commemorates the death of the Virgin, and according to tradition, the day when she ascended into heaven and surrendered her soul into the hands of the Savior.



The holiday is celebrated by the solemn liturgy, on which all people pray for peace and prosperity, in the eponymous church of the Dormition of the Mother of God in Tijabara. After the liturgy, there is a procession through the town, led by the Bishop of Niš (in the last 5 years, Bishop of Niš is Mr. Jovan). The procession traditionally ends in front of the town hall, that is, the Municipal building, where the



slava cake is cut and an appropriate cultural - artistic program is organized. Bishop gives a short speech, permeated with quotations from the Gospels, to the gathered people.

There are more and more participants on the city slava every year. Starting from the believers and residents, through municipal authorities, public companies, sports clubs, to guests from the Serbian Republic, Niš, Belgrade and other cities, and of course from Bulgaria: Pernik, Montana and Sofia.

The town of Montana cherishes tradition and celebrates the Holy Trinity as the city feast, popularly known as Pentecost. The first procession went through the city in the early 20th century, but the celebration was subsequently canceled.

Since 1993, on the initiative of citizens, the celebration of the city slava has been revived. Every year on this day singers, actors, artists, and many visitors of the twin cities of the municipality of Montana come to attend and enjoy the national games, art and joy with the citizens.

In both nations, a special role in family relations has a person who is not related by blood to anyone in the family - the godparent. The godparent is the protector of the family, and godparenthood is a spiritual kinship. This custom is known to all Slavs and originates from pre-Christian times. Through the church godparenthood is rooted in godparenthood of St. John the Baptist - Christ's godfather. There are beliefs and rules related to godparents: it can't be refused, there can be no marriages with the godparents' family because there is already a kinship (spiritual), the godfather takes care of the spiritual development of his godsons or goddaughters as if he was their father, etc. There should be only one godparent on all the important events in life –the wedding, the baptism, when naming a child, at home slava etc.



✓ Monastery of St. Jovan Bogoslov

The monastery of St. Jovan Bogoslov is situated in the valley of the river Jerma, about 25 km south of Pirot. The monastery is one of the few medieval church buildings where the tradition of Nemanjić is permeated with the Byzantine spirit. It

has been a testimony of the force of united Orthodoxy through the centuries until the present day.

Construction of the monastery began in the second half of the fourteenth century, and its founder was Konstantin Dejanović. His daughter Jelena, a Byzantine empress, was credited for the completion of the construction of the monastery. Konstantin was a Ćustendil despot and had the title "mister" because he ruled that region. The names of the founders can be found on the inscription on the leather manuscript from 1408, which is in the Louvre. Also, another proof is the inscription on the icon that was taken away from the monastery and is kept in Sofia (on which figures of the Virgin and St. Jovan Bogoslov are represented), which says, "Elena, the empress to Christ God."

This icon is known in international circles of byzantologists and art experts as the double-sided icon of the Virgin Katafigi. It presents the Miracle in the Latomski monastery (mosaic from the aspide of the Church of Christ Látom in Thessaloniki) on one side and already metioned figures of the Virgin and St. Jovan Bogoslov on the other. It is kept in the crypt of the church of St. Alexander Nevsky in Sofia.



The famous Pomenik (memorial) of Bulgarian emperors and empresses with monastery abbots and monks comes from this monastery. Pomenik dates from the XVI century with additions in the seventeenth century. The only ruler who is present on the frescoes besides Konstantin is the founder of the Serbian Nemanjić dynasty - St. Simeon Mirotočivi and his youngest son St. Sava. The names of Konstantin and Jelena are written in Pomenik as the founders of this holy place and it was pointed out that they were of Bulgarian origin. Konstantin

Jiriček also wrote about Pomenik in 1880 and 1884 (he was Minister of Education in the Bulgarian government for a while), who marked Konstantin, the founder of the monastery, as one of the "South Slavic princes." He expressed doubts about the validity of the data in the Pomenik - "Konstantin and Jelena were added in the Pomenik because local tradition saw them as the founders of the monastery."

The Monastery of St. Jovan Bogoslov has been under state protection since 1949 and it has also been on the UNESCO World Heritage list since 1979, as a monument of special importance.

✓ Bishop Kiril Živković

Kiril Živković was born in Pirot, in the village Temska, in 1730 and died on 12th August 1807. He was a priest and a monk, the caretaker of the monastery



Grgeteg and bishop of Pakrac. As bishop (1786 - 1807), he particularly worked on improving culture, education of local Serbs, and especially on the development of theology in Pakrac. He founded the Bishop library.

His work "Selected words" is hand written and contains a translation of some of the Russian church writings and represents a mix of literary Church Slavonic language and the vernacular language spoken in Pirot and the surrounding areas. This language, according to linguists, is a transitional language and has the features of both Serbian and Bulgarian dialects of the central Balkans.

✓ Konstantin Jovanović

The architect Konstantin A. Jovanović (1849-1923) belonged to the generation which was educated at the prestigious European centres and which, at the turn of two centuries, with their architectural handwriting, altered the oriental physiognomy of Belgrade. He was born in Vienna, as the oldest child of Anastas Jovanović, a lithographer and photographer, and later superintendent of the Serbian royal court of Prince Mihailo Obrenović. From early childhood he was in European political and cultural elite circles. He grew up in a house where Njegoš, Prince Danilo, the Obrenoviés, the Karadjordjeviés, European nobles and others used to come as guests, but also to have their portraits made. He finished his studies in architecture in Zurich in 1870. He spent most of his life in his

hometown, where he worked as an independent architect. He designed a number of public and private buildings in Belgrade.

In 1885, Konstantin Jovanović designed his first building in Belgrade – the house of the lawyer Marko Stojanović at 53-55 Knez Mihailova street and the house of Dragomir Radulović at 12 Vuk Karadžić street.

The most important Jovanović's project in Belgrade is the National Bank in Kralja Petra street, which was built in two stages. Among other significant buildings in Belgrade are the building of Nikola Spasić at 33 Knez Mihailova street, the project for the temple of Saint Sava, etc.



The building of the National Assembly - the Parliament, the symbol of Bulgarian sovereignty was built just in a year. In February 1884, by the decision of the Government of Petko Karavelov, Konstantin Jovanović, the famous Viennese architect of Serbian origin, was chosen for the project. It was built in Neo-Renaissance architectural style and later, on two occasions, it was rebuilt on the north. The building of the National Assembly has the leading role in the composition of homonymous square. The First Sofia High School for Boys building was also constructed to his design.

✓ Siniša Paunović

He was born in Čačak in 1903 and died in Belgrade in 1995. He was the first journalist of "Politics" from Čačak, where he worked from 1926 to 1971. As a journalist he travelled all over Europe, Africa and to parts of Asia, as testified by his popular travel books. In addition to journalism, Paunović wrote poetry, fiction, essays, did translations, was a passionate collector, wrote the books "Srbija koje nema", "Rade Drainac – pesnik i boem," "Pisci izbliza", as well as manuscripts about Andrić, Veljko Petrović, Isidora Sekulić.... which remained unpublished. He translated books "Bajo Ganjo" by Alek Konstantinov, „Pod igom" by Ivan Vazov, „Septembar" by Geo Milev, and others from Bulgarian. Part of his legacy in Bulgarian language is in the library in Dimitovgrad.

✓ Troyan Monastery

✓

Troyan monastery is dedicated to the Ascension of the Holy Virgin, and is located on the northern slopes of the Stara Planina mountain range, about 5km south of the town Troyan. The monastery was founded around 1600 by two monks - hermits of Mount Athos. Later, according to the legend, a monk Vlaško, coming from Mount Athos, decided to stay there temporary and he took with him the miraculous icon of the Virgin Troyeruchitsa (the three hands). The icon is a



copy of the miraculous icon of the monastery of Hilandar from the fourteenth century. Each time the monk wanted to continue his journey, somehow, the icon kept him in the monastery. Therefore, his relics forever remained in the monastery.

Troyan monastery is above all known for the works of Zahari Zograf (1810 - 1853), who painted the exterior and the interior of the main church and which was the work of rare value at that time. Zahari is one of the most important Bulgarian Renaissance icon painters. He belonged to the Samokov art school whose founder was his father - Hristo Dimitrov. Zahari Zograf introduced new elements in the church painting - modernized the evangelical scene, his characters were spiritually pure, radiant with inner nobility. Troyan monastery is decorated with, perhaps, his best works in the religious painting - the composition of the Judgement Day and the Wheel of life, as well as representations of Bulgarian and Russian saints. In addition, he painted secular portraits of all the monks in the monastery, which was very unusual and avant-garde for that time.

His most famous works are the icons in the church "St. Constantine and Elena" in Plovdiv, in the church of the Theotokos in Koprivshtitsa, in Plakovski and Donjobešpviški monasteries. His frescoes are still decorating Bachkovo monastery (the chapel and the church of "St. Nicholas"), the church in Rila monastery and in Transfiguration monastery.

Borders were no barriers for this artist's work. His work was also on the altar of the church in Leskovac, but, after a lot of destruction, there is no trace of the magnificent altar.



- ✓ Serbian King Milutin



King Milutin was the founder and builder of more churches and monasteries than all Nemanjićs before him. He built and rebuilt 42 churches in Serbia, but he also built temples on Mount Athos, in Thessaloniki, Sofia, Jerusalem and Constantinople. He built cities, summer houses, especially in Kosovo, issued money and opened mines. He built hospitals, improved large monastic manors as economic resources, opened schools.

King Milutin died in 1321 and, shortly after his death (in 1324) he was proclaimed a saint.



According to the official version, Milutin's body was shortly buried (1321-1389) in Banská monastery which he had built as his mausoleum. Since it is Milutin's burial church, it stands out (by its equipment and the wealth of decoration) from

his others foundation. In 1389, his body was transferred from Banská to Trepča, to protect it from the Turks, who were destroying all Serbian churches, and then, after the fall of the Serbian despotate, due to the plague, his relics were taken from the village of Trepča to the monastery of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Bulgaria.



Metropolitan Siluan transferred the relics around 1460. After a few relocations, the relics are now in St. Nedelya Church (Holy Sunday Church) in Sophia, as the church became bishop's residence in the eighteenth century. The relics of King Milutin suffered fires, disasters, earthquakes, rebel strikes and Turks, as well as unprecedented brutal communist terrorist action in 1925, when they blew up the church of St. Nedelya and killed more than 190 people.

Popularity of King Milutin's relics in Bulgaria dates back to the Middle Ages. He is revered by other Slavic peoples, primarily Russians. Bulgarian historians claim that the first request for the return of the relics of King Milutin in the restored Patriarchate of Pec was filed by the Russian Tsar Ivan the Terrible, who was attached to Serbian tradition due to the fact that after the death of his parents, he was raised by his grandmother (Ana Jakšić - married Glinska) who came from a Serbian noble family.

In Bulgaria, the Holy King Milutin is considered the patron of Sofia. St. Nedelya Church, in which the relics of King Milutin are kept, is known under a different name, as the Church of the Holy King (or King's Church), in Milutin's honor. According to hagiographies, miracles started to happen just two years after his death.

On every October 28th, the priests take out his relics from the case with utmost respect and bring them to the altar where the vigil is held. The relics get new clothes for the occasion and the white cloth on which they lay the previous year is cut into small pieces and given to people for health and healing the sick. Bulgarian Church and all the believers have a high respect for King Milutin. His relics are placed in a beautiful carved and painted shrine to the right of the iconostasis. The head and right arm of king Milutin are missing, which indicates how much power has been ascribed to them. Even today, Bulgarian believers

leave notes with messages for their deceased next to Milutin's shrine.

In 2006, Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church approved the return of part of the relics of St. King Milutin to Serbia, by giving a small relic in return.



Unfortunately, it has not been done to this day, much to the dismay of Serbian believers.

- ✓ The kilim-making - Pirot and Chiprovtsi (district of Montana)



Many historians believe that Chiprovtsi is responsible for the development of carpeting in Pirot, although there are opinions that Pirot is the originator of this traditional craft.

Except in Chiprovtsi, carpets were woven in Samokov, and then the craft was transferred from Chiprovtsi to Kopilovci, Zhelezna and Martinovo. According to some sources, the production of carpets in Chiprovtsi ceased in the period between the two world wars and persian carpets were made in Samokov.

Kilim-making in Pirot has a long tradition, over 400 years old. There are records from that period which show that there were four thousand houses and four thousand kilim makers. Today, unfortunately, there are only thirty.

The Pirot kilim has a strictly defined way of making and protected geographical indication of origin. It is made from the sheep wool from the Pirot region which enables durability of over 100 years. Patterns are colorful, with very imaginative names, some of which are in the Pirot dialect - "gugutće na direci"



(turtledoves on poles), svekrvin jezik (mother-in-law's tongue), razbacani đulovi (scattered guelder roses), venci (wreaths) etc. In the period from 1869 to 1940, the Pirot kilim was requested and precious commodity, it reached the highest technical and aesthetic values, wealth of patterns, colors and designs. It represented a status symbol, adorned the palaces of the Obrenović and later Karađorđević dynasty.

Bulgaria takes steps to include the Chiprovtsi carpet in the UNESCO World Heritage list by 2020. Given the fact that this is a product made of pure wool, dyed with natural colours, of exquisite beauty and durability and exceptional quality, it started to reactivate and promote the development of carpets whose roots are precisely in Chiprovtsi. For the purpose of promotion, this year, on May 2nd the first Festival of Carpets was organized in Chiprovtsi.

✓ Language

The oldest and most valuable feature of the Pirot area is the language. Due to the specificity which is reflected in originality and expressiveness, it is considered one of the most important cultural features of the region. Although there are differences in speech in the regions of Pirot and Montana, we can surely say that people on both sides of the border easily communicate and understand each other.

Vernacular language in the Pirot region from the eighteenth century has been preserved in the manuscript book "Selected words" which was written in the monastery Temska by an abbot, monk Kiril, in 1764. The subtitle of the book says "*На прости язълкъ болгарски*" (in simple Bulgarian). Pirot speech structurally belongs to the shtokavian dialect but has developed some other characteristics and preserved archaic features.

In the study *Dialects of east and south Serbia*, published in 1905, Aleksandar Belić presented the results of the tests, which were, among other things, conducted in Pirot, and several surrounding villages. Belić said that the basis of speech in the Pirot region (as in all Prizren - Timok dialect group) is undoubtedly



Serbian and shtokavian, and that there are clear differences in comparison with the Bulgarian language.

But, despite that, the speech is precisely that basic link between people in the cross-border region of Serbia -Bulgaria. Easy communication has resulted in mutual closeness, organized visits and other common manifestations of Bulgarians and Serbs in the Pirot-Montana areas. Finally, the two towns became twin cities, which once again shows the decade-long closeness, similarities and cooperation.

✓ Folk dance

Folk dance in Serbia and Bulgaria is extremely rich and varied. The typical folk dance is with small steps, easy movements and fine, balanced shaking legs and shoulders. Braids and shouts, with obligatory smile on their faces are characteristic for girls, while men often use squats and grip by the belt during dancing.



Folk dances in two quarter tact, with small steps, are typical for the region of Montana.

Popular kolas ("hora") are: Dojčovo kolo, Pajduško kolo, Jelenino kolo, Dunavsko kolo, Čičovo kolo, Srbo-veseljaško kolo, Sitno vlaško kolo, etc.



In Serbia, especially in Pirot, there is no celebration and merriment without the kolo. The kolo used to be played in front of the church, on the battlefield, at weddings and other popular celebrations and events. It symbolized awareness of people with common ideals, the same desires and belonging to the same nation.

One of the kolas which is popular in villages, in the sense that older parishioners can play it and which resists oblivion is "Elena" or Jelena's kolo. There is a noticeable similarity and familiarity in the folk dance of both nations. Differences do exist in terms of melody, rhythm and singing. Many musicologists consider the variety of tunes, mixed rhythms, polyphonic singing and the degree of stylization to be more complex and more sophisticated in Bulgarian folk dance.

The National Fair of Bulgarian Folklore Art has been held in the town of Koprivshtitsa since 1965. Every fifth year during summer, this region becomes the centre of national joy. Ensembles from all ethnographic regions of Bulgaria take part in the festival in Koprivshtitsa.

The International Folklore Festival, which brings together artists from all over the world, is held in Pirot every year. Almost every year, folk ensembles from Bulgaria are among the guests of the festival.

Bulgarian folk costume impresses with its richness and diversity. This is not only because of the fact that it originates from different places and traditions, but also because it contains the characteristics of lineages and tribes - the Thracians, Slavs, Proto-Bulgarians, who participated in the creation of the Bulgarian people, that is, the characteristics of what remained from the ancient times and was transmitted and modified through centuries.

Characteristic colours of the Bulgarian folk costumes are white, red and black. In the mind of the people, white is associated with purity and innocence, with sacred and noble. Red is the color of blood, the sun and life, masculinity, and black is associated with ancient beliefs and the cult of the Virgin Mary, earth and fertility. Harmony of patterns makes magic of the costumes - embroidery and decorations; the glitter of silver threads, coins, sequins and beads that adorn the clothes: unusual shapes made from braids and ribbons.



Women's costumes get their final look with head decorations. In the traditional Bulgarian culture, girls do not cover their hair, as a sign of their freedom. Their hair is woven into a variety of braids and decorated with floral garlands, decorative ribbons, coins. Married women cover their hair with woven and embroidered hats and scarves in colours compatible with the rest of the costume. Gentle sounds can be heard from the costumes, because women's jewelry –

necklaces around their foreheads, the decorations on hats, chains, bracelets, necklaces ... jingle with every move, step, dance ...

Serbian folk costumes are also authentic, with large regional differences. One characteristic of the Serbian national costume is that it is made of natural materials (hemp, flax and cotton) and often spun cloth- woolen cloth. Linen shirt in the form of a straight-cut tunic with sleeves is an essential part of both male and female costumes. Perfect embroidery is placed on visible parts of the shirt - the sleeves, collar, chest and on the edge of the shirt.

Opanak is a type of traditional footwear used in medieval Serbia. The characteristics of opanci are: they are made of leather without a lot of braids or shoelaces, they are durable, with a pointed top which ends on fingers. Even today opanci represent common footwear among agricultural population in Serbia.

✓ Traditional products and food

Bulgarian cuisine is determined by its rich and well-preserved cultural heritage. Bulgarian cuisine is extremely diverse, thanks to the warm climate and favorable conditions for the cultivation of cereals, vegetables and fruit. Bulgarians use ingredients and spices in the unique Bulgarian way. Most Bulgarian dishes are baked in the oven, steamed or prepared in the form of a soup or broth. Frying is not a common way of preparing food in the Bulgarian cuisine, but grilling - especially of different types of meat, is.

The most popular food in Bulgaria is yogurt, which gives its residents longevity and vitality. Yogurt is the main dairy product which is served with almost every meal in Bulgaria. Bulgarians begin to drink yogurt with three months of life, and yogurt mixed with water and ice cubes is one of the most favorite drinks in



the summer. Green cheese from the village of Cherni Vit is the unique product of Bulgaria, which is the only traditional cheese in the mold in the Balkans. This is a unique product and the pride of the region Lovech and Bulgaria.

An outstanding specialty is Bulgarian banica (a kind of pie). It's hard to imagine any Bulgarian celebration without the traditional banica. In Bulgarian town Razlog delicious home banica is highly respected and, in the name of that, "Banica fest" is organized, where women with decades long experience in preparing banica share their secret recipes and show how they roll the dough.



In Serbia, the situation is similar. Indispensable food on the Serbian table is cheese - sheep, goat, cow or mixed. So called kashkaval, a specific type of cheese from the Pirot region, is high-quality and certified cheese with geographical origin. Pirot kashkaval is widely known and accepted product that is considered to be culinary specialty in the whole world.

Also, the food that is often eaten as the main meal (breakfast or dinner) or as a starter (for lunch) is banica or gibanica. It is very similar to the Bulgarian banica. Popularity of pies and banica has led to establishing a festival, Days of banica in a nearby small town, Bela Palanka (Pirot District), where the local women compete in preparing the most delicious banica. Women from Vratsa in Bulgaria also take part in the competition.



Recommendations in the context of protection of cultural heritage:

The field of protection of cultural heritage in Serbia is regulated by the Law on Cultural Property (Official Gazette of RS 72/94). The Republic of Serbia is also a signatory to key international conventions that regulate the field of preservation of cultural heritage, but only a few of them were ratified by the National Assembly, which is a prerequisite for their entry into force.

In the municipality of **Montana**, having in mind that the system of heritage protection in Bulgaria is somewhat different from the system in Serbia (in Bulgaria, local museums perform activities which are in Serbia performed by institutes for the protection of monuments), and that the objects of cultural heritage are classified into two groups (heritage of national and heritage of local importance), should be noted that there are 34 objects which are protected as heritage of national importance.

Analyzing cultural monuments in Montana and Pirot inevitably leads to the conclusion that there are many similarities which represent a good basis for the



initiative of their protection on the national, local and cross-border level.

Mihailov's house is the oldest architectural monument in Montana with the exhibition "Village and city life from the late 19th and early 20th century". This place is specially dedicated to Hrist Mihailov.

The "little Rista" house, a monument of culture, built according to the project created by the architect Jovan Krunić, is one of the finest examples of oriental architecture which is quite in accordance with the principles of modern architecture. The house was built in two years and it was completed in 1848. On 14.9.1953, the house of the Hristić family (R. bureau no. 844-468) was declared cultural heritage, and on 29. 3. 1979, by the decision of the Assembly of the Republic of Serbia and the decision of the Assembly of RZK published in the

Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia no. 14/79, it was declared a cultural monument of great importance.

Today, the Museum of "Ponišavlje" is located in the house.

Precisely on this example we can see the possibility of joint initiatives and efforts, in order to enable certain cultural sites to receive the "status" of special, not only in terms of protecting the material characteristics but also the tradition that is connected to these objects and their history.

Different forms of intangible cultural heritage are usually used as a way to "recognize" the city (eg. speech, customs) and not as characteristics that deserve a more serious approach. It is evident that various associations, which, in achieving their objectives, are oriented towards a promotion of cultural heritage of the city through the organization of events and exhibitions, in fact, represent a link between the traditional (original) and cost effective. In the context of Pirot, this primarily means the necessity to include this segment of cultural heritage in the strategic plans of local economic development.



Problems in Montana are similar to those in Pirot and they are related to the preservation of heritage in terms of lack of recognition of heritage as a development resource, and the lack of a local strategy for the preservation of heritage. The limited local and national budgets lead to the lack of genuine and quality projects in the field of cultural and historical heritage, which is reflected in the fact that the municipalities allocate very little money for projects of preservation of cultural and historical heritage.

Bearing in mind what has been mentioned above, implementation of projects of culture and protection of cultural heritage in the cross-border region is very possible and achievable within the EU funds, especially IPA cross-border programme.

Unlike Pirot, where only funds from programmes with Bulgaria are currently available, Montana may find its chance for cultural heritage projects in a programme with Romania, too.

The programme of cultural heritage protection should be integrated into the cross-border projects, because it is a good way of raising this initiative on a higher level.

What should be added is the necessity of involving all users of monuments and symbols of culture (stakeholders) in the territory of Pirot and Montana in the programmes and projects of cultural heritage, because, in this way, problems of heritage conservation are viewed from several aspects.



Special role should be given to relevant institutions in the area of cultural heritage protection (Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Niš and the Museum in Montana).

It is also necessary to develop management strategic plans for the key objects that are under the protection in order to consolidate planning, conservation, research, presentation and the use of immovable cultural property. The aim of this initiative is reflected primarily in the creation of strategic foundations for the sustainable development of the site / cultural goods in the next period in the context of international principles and conventions, taking into account the local context. The main objective of the management plan is to provide sustainable development of cultural goods and contribute to community development through promotion of the values of cultural and natural heritage.

When it comes to cultural heritage in the region of Pirot and Montana, special emphasis should be placed on research, presentation, and economic use of kilim-making and intangible heritage related to stone crosses. This includes unique handicrafts, customs, songs, dances, food, folk legends and traditions which can all together, well designed and presented, be transformed into economic benefit

within the ethno-tourism. In this way, intangible heritage would be preserved and, at the same time, it would bring some income to local communities.

Intangible characteristics such as tradition of folk dance, gastronomy, religion and orthodox objects should be considered from the same point of view. All this brings nations together and provides a slightly different aspect of perceiving the importance of common cultural heritage.

A special opportunity for cultural and historical heritage should be sought in an organized approach of cultural institutions of two cities, nongovernmental



institutions, associations in the formation of clusters in culture because it would provide a much easier market access and cultural property would (apart from its primary value) also obtain its economic verification.

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