

Franciscan Monastery

Country or territory:
SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO
REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Name of organisation
compiling the information:
Provincial Institute for the
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Novi Sad

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<u>Name and address of building(s) or site:</u>	FRANCISCAN MONASTERY, Bač, Vojvodina
<u>Inventory reference number(s):</u>	R.No.670, from May 30 1951.
<u>Building type(s):</u>	Franciscan monastery
<u>Main date(s):</u>	13 th -18 th century
<u>Current use(s):</u>	Religious
<u>Significance:</u>	

General information

The cloister of a Franciscan monastery is located in the centre of Bač, organically framed in the landscape and mediaeval urban matrix, as a dominant element in its structure. It is comprised of a cloister church and bell tower, with one-storey wings of monastery buildings on the south, forming a distinctive yard space.

The Church of St. Mary's Ascension was built in the 13th century by the Templar knights order. In the beginning of the 14th century, it was transferred to the Franciscan order. It has a narrow mediaeval aisle with five-sided apses. During the baroque period, the church was enriched by a tall bell tower, standing near the apse. The monument is characterised by a variety of architectural styles. The oldest part, including the apse and tower, was shaped under the influence of early Romanic and early Gothic architecture. The interior, with high cross shaped arches, is enforced by Gothic stone ribs. The Mihrab niche in the south wall is an evidence of the period of Turkish occupation, when the church was turned into a mosque.

The Monastery (dormitories) was thoroughly restored during the 18th century, probably built on the foundations of an earlier building. On the ground floor, are common rooms (so called Franciscan room, laundry, kitchen, brewery, refectory). On the first floor are the dormitory rooms, the library and a small museum display.

The complex has the following significance:

Architectural – Due to the interchange of cultural layers from different periods, from the Middle Ages to the late Baroque;

Historical - The treasury and library of the Monastery maintain an archive of documents on the history of the region, which shed light on the life and work of the Franciscan order;

Social - as a religious and administrative centre over many centuries;

Cultural and educational - The influence of the Bač cloister is still felt in the catholic population of today's Bačka. In 1730-33, the Franciscans had established a University of Philosophy and in the 19th century they were teachers and religious teachers in public schools.

Religious - The church is Roman Catholic; believers visit it from a wider surrounding area.

Ethnic – The Slavic Roman Catholic population have gathered in the monastery through centuries, as reflected in the language of the liturgy (Šokci and Bunjevci).

Categories of significance:

Of outstanding national importance

Categories of ownership or interest:

The complex of the Franciscan monastery in Bač constitutes a unique cultural heritage resource in Serbia, as well as an important religious centre for the Roman Catholics in Bačka.

Documentation and bibliographic references:

Documentation

Technical documentation of the present condition:

- General map
- Ground floor, first floor and roof 1:100
- Cross-sections 1:100
- Elevations 1:100
- Carpentry and joinery in details
- Registries of old books and artwork
- Research documentation
- Black and white and color photo documentation of conservation and research works

Bibliography

- S. Jovanović, Franjevački samostan u Baču, Zbornik zaštite spomenika kulture XXII/XXIII, Beograd 1973.
- J. Sevdic, Lokaliteti fresaka u Vojvodini, Građa za proučavanje spomenika kulture Vojvodine I, Novi Sad 1957.
- Archives of Bač monastery
- Bacs Bodrog Vermegye, Budapest 1909.
- D. Sekulić, Drevni Bač, Split 1978.

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- A. Nagy, Povodom Čelebijinog opisa starog Bača, Bilten 4/5, Bač1976.
 - P. Cvekan, Franjevački samostan u Baču, Virovitica 1985.
 - O.M. Barbarić, Crtice za povijest Bač, građa

Condition:

Poor

Risk:

Condition risk:

Slow decay. The Bač Monastery was exposed for a long time to the negative effects of damp which affected building materials and moveable objects. The damp level increased further following the intervention of 1936, when the walls were varnished with tar coating.

Technical assessment and costing:

In 1956, the roof was repaired;
In 1958, electricity was introduced;
In 1965, the Provincial Institute carried out a survey;
In 1967, interventions on the tower;
In 1970, plumbing and sewer works;
In 1971-74, conservation and restoration works of facades and replacement of the roof cover

In 2003, the Provincial Institute funded some research on the remaining Gothic wall paintings. A worn cast was replaced and the interior of the church was painted, after the removal of the intervention of 1936. These works were financed by the local community and the management of the monastery (€ 3,000).

Planned works:

- Repairs and damp proofing, with pavement construction, which shall provide an opportunity for archaeological investigations;
- Continuation of research and presentation of old wall paintings and architecture, including relative technical and photo documentation;
- Technical documentation of the various phases of conservation and restoration works.

Ownership:

Franciscan order.

Occupation:

The Complex is in continuous use. Religious services are held in the church, while the Monastery receives tourists who can visit the treasury and other rooms.

Management:

Only two Franciscans live in the Monastery. Besides their normal duties, they maintain the large area of the Monastery. The local community, one of the most under-developed municipalities in Vojvodina, contributes within its limited capacity.

Summary:

The Complex of the Franciscan Monastery of Bač is a precious and unique cultural heritage resource in Serbia, due to its architectural, historical, social, cultural, educational, religious and ethnic importance. In its architectural and artistic features, the property shows an accumulation of different historical periods, from the Middle Age to late Baroque. It also testifies to the time of the Turkish occupation, when the church was turned into a mosque. A treasury with a rich library, a large number of artwork, suits and folklore attires, furniture, moveable material, are evidence of the important role of the Monastery as a centre where the Slavic Roman Catholic population gathered.

The Monastery was exposed for a long time to the negative effects of damp which affected building materials and moveable objects.

Planned works:

- Repairs and damp proofing, with pavement construction, which shall provide an opportunity for archaeological investigations;
- Continuation of research and presentation of old wall painting and architecture, including the relative technical and photo documentation;
- Technical documentation of the various phases of conservation and restoration works.

The local and religious community are aware of the importance and values of the Franciscan Monastery, as their own cultural heritage, but they lack the funding to undertake even simple maintenance, due to the great dimensions of the complex. An investment programme of interventions in South East Europe, including the monastery, would contribute to its preservation and presentation, and therefore to the development of cultural tourism and economic growth for the region.

The priority level of intervention is *medium*

Sign. and date:

Slavica Vujović

Novi Sad, March 5, 2004.