

Museumization of monuments as a means of protection, planning and management of cultural landscapes

"Landscape" means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors"- European Landscape Convention, Florence, 20.10.2000

Taking into consideration the abovementioned statement, for us it is indisputable that the approach according to which the issues of protection, examination, rehabilitation and popularization of cultural heritage are impossible to solve without a proper evaluation of historic sites. With each year these issues acquire new characteristics, come up with new standards and set new requirements for both the society and the state. Within the context of the abovementioned issues, the "winner" is the society and the state that implements comprehensive and conceptual programs directed towards the protection and modernization of cultural heritage. Another important component of success is the existence of a well developed network for presentation and popularization of the achieved results.

The modernization of cultural heritage is a multi-faceted field which aims to ensure the "introduction" of cultural (natural) heritage into the modern culture. Over the past few years within the framework of disciplines on preservation of cultural heritage different approaches have been dominant, starting from the examination of a specific (single) monument to a complex examination of landscapes and biosphere.

Regarding the possibilities of the integration (modernisation) of immovable properties of cultural heritage we consider it possible only if these properties will be museumized.

The researches related to these issues are very up-to-date because the actualization of cultural heritage is linked to the concept of the "museums under the open sky". From this perspective the museumized cultural objects can be classified into following categories:

1. Architectural and urban planning
2. Archeological
3. Monuments of science and technology
4. Landscapes

5. Environment

The archeological objects which are regarded as components of cultural landscape are subject to evaluation also, and primarily, as a result of the artistic interrelation of the natural environment and societies of the past. The other vital prerequisite for the drafting of the museumisation methodology is that it should be viewed as a unified system of events aimed at discovering, examination, revival and popularisation of archeological heritage. This, in its turn, requires taking into account the level of saturation of related resource of the chosen region, i.e. objects and historical-archeological sites subject to museumisation.

Nevertheless we still have up-to-date and urgent problems related to museumization of medieval towns in Armenia. Historical cultural heritage is museumized in so called “collection” or “ensemble” museums. During the 80-90’s was developed and nowadays becomes more popular the creation of the so-called “environmental” museums. As an international experience shows they have a valuable impact on the development of cultural tourism. Besides it is important to notice that “ensemble” or “environmental” museums can be brought to life as monumental museums, museums under the open sky, or eco museums.

We can definitely mention that there have been positive developments towards the evaluation and assessment of cultural heritage as a resource of sustainable development in Armenia over the past decade. Particularly, cultural heritage is being examined as a factor that plays a substantial role in the creation of national identity, the formation of civic society and social capital of the country and the preservation of cultural diversity. State cultural policy is implemented according to all accepted principles of the protection of cultural heritage.

Nowadays cultural landscapes are being considered as grounds for the development of regional systems of cultural heritage. These systems consist of special protected areas, historical towns, historical and cultural museum-reservation, and especially regional parks created from the combination of cultural and natural components.

In conclusion I would like to mention that a number of historical and cultural museum-reservation like “Garni”, “Gladzor University”, “Goshavank”, “Zorats qarer Settlement”, “Zvartnots”, “Metsamor”, “Lori Berd” and others are successfully supervised and protected by

the "Service for the protection of historical environment and cultural museum reservations" of the Ministry of culture of the Republic of Armenia.

Moreover, in 2011 the historical and cultural museum-reservation of Garni, won UNESCO Melina Mercouri International Prize for the Safeguarding and Management of Cultural Landscapes.

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