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ARCHIVAL RECORDS RELATED TO CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE CROATIAN MEMORIAL DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF THE HOMELAND WAR

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Abstract:

Amid war and occurring natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods, protecting and preserving cultural heritage as well as records related to it is of the most significant importance.

The Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia has recognized the importance of the preservation of national cultural heritage leading the project "E-culture – digitization of cultural heritage". The Croatian Memorial Documentation Centre of the Homeland War also aspires to join and participate in the project.

Besides records of the military and civil institutions related to the Homeland War, the Croatian Memorial Documentation Center of the Homeland War aims to include documents on broader areas of activities from the Homeland War and related to the War in its collections. Accordingly, one of the most important collections is the one with archives of records related to the Croatian cultural heritage in Homeland War.

The aim of the paper is to describe the quantity, characteristics and contents of the archive records related to the Croatian cultural heritage destroyed during the Homeland War in Croatia that is stored in the Croatian Memorial Documentation Center of the Homeland War.

Key words:

cultural heritage, cultural goods, archives, war damages, conservation records, Croatian Homeland War, Croatian Memorial Documentation Centre of the Homeland War

Izvlaček:

Arhivsko gradivo v Hrvaškem spominskem in dokumentacijskem centru domovinske vojne, ki je povezano s kulturno dediščino

Med vojno in naravnimi nesrečami, kot so potresi in poplave, je zaščita kulturne dediščine še posebej pomembna.

Ministrstvo za kulturo in medije Republike Hrvaške (dalje: RH) je prepoznalo pomembnost zaščite narodne ter evropske kulturne dediščine in skupaj s projektnimi partnerji zagnalo projekt »E-kultura – digitizacija kulturne dediščine«. Projekt sofinancira Evropski sklad za regijski razvoj. Tudi Hrvaški spominski in dokumentacijski center domovinske vojne želi pri tem projektu sodelovati.

Poleg gradiva o vojnih in civilnih ustanovah, povezanih z domovinsko vojno, želi Hrvaški spominski in dokumentacijski center domovinske vojne vključiti v projekt tudi dokumente s širšega področja aktivnosti med domovinsko vojno. Tako je ena izmed pomembnejših zbirk gradiva v Centru povezana s hrvaško kulturno dediščino med domovinsko vojno.

Cilj prispevka je podati količino, značilnosti in vsebino ohranjenega gradiva, povezanega s hrvaško kulturno dediščino, ki je bilo uničeno med domovinsko vojno.

Ključne besede:

kulturna dediščina, kulturne dobrine, arhiv, vojna škoda, zapisi o konserviranju, hrvaška domovinske vojna, Hrvaški spominski in dokumentacijski center domovinske vojne

1 Introduction

Preserving documentation related to cultural heritage is essential for successful preservation and conversation of cultural heritage. The importance of cultural heritage documentation becomes particularly evident during crises, such as wars and natural disasters because it has a significant role in protection and restoration of cultural goods. Various international organizations are dedicated to the protection and conservation of cultural goods.

The paper focuses on the importance of preserving documentation related to cultural heritage with the emphasis on the cultural heritage related documentation i. e. archival records kept in the Croatian Memorial Documentation Centre of the Homeland War.

The first chapter of the paper describes the importance of cultural heritage and related documentation as well as the role of international organizations in protection of cultural goods and documentation while the second chapter provides general information on dealing with the documentation related to the cultural heritage describing jurisdiction, laws, regulations and procedures. The third and central chapter describes the importance of digitization of archival records related to cultural heritage stored in the Croatian Memorial Documentation Centre of the Homeland War within the project “E–culture - Digitization of cultural heritage” launched in 2020 by the Ministry of Culture and Media.

2 The importance of preserving documentation related to cultural heritage

According to UNESCO, cultural heritage by definition “includes artefacts, monuments, a group of buildings and sites, museums that have a diversity of values including symbolic, historic, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological, scientific and social significance.” The cultural heritage “includes tangible heritage (movable, immobile

and underwater), *intangible cultural heritage (ICH) embedded into cultural and natural heritage artefacts, sites and monuments.*" It also covers industrial heritage and cave paintings (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009).

The Blue Shield International organization which is the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross, describes cultural heritage as "*the heritage we have inherited: our legacy, our memories, physical object and intangible beliefs and practices and so much more*" and it also states that either physical and non-physical heritage is "*an important part of who we are and that we identify with as, individuals and communities*" (Blue Shield International, s. d.).

As to say, the cultural heritage is a vital part of our identity and our culture. It gives us a sense of continuity and a connection to the common past, both on local and global levels. Apart from its historical and cultural importance, cultural heritage also has significant economic benefits due to tourism. Accordingly, referring to the European cultural heritage, on its official web page, the European Commission states that cultural heritage enriches individual lives of citizens and that it is a driving force for the cultural and creative sectors and that it has its role in creating and enhancing the social capital of Europe. It also emphasizes the important role of cultural heritage as a resource for economic growth, employment and social cohesion (European Commission, s. d.).

Considering the role and significance of cultural heritage, it is clear that its preservation and conservation is of the greatest importance. For successful preservation and/or conservation of cultural heritage the first step is to document it. Before taking action or intervention that could potentially alter the object, it is essential for any conservation project to comprehend the object and collect information about its physical state. There are a number of literatures and documents which deal with the importance of documentation of the cultural heritage such as the Burra Charter (Hassani, 2015, 207).

The Burra Charter is one of the most important international documents regarding cultural heritage. The Burra Charter was adopted by Australia ICOMOS¹, i. e. the Australian National Committee of ICOMOS on August 19, 1979 at the South Australian town Burra. Since its adoption it went through two minor revisions in 1981 and 1988 and more substantial changes were made in 1999. The last version was adopted by Australia ICOMOS in October 2013. The Burra Charter, as stated, provides guidance for the conservation and management of places of cultural significance and it is based on the knowledge and experience of Australia ICOMOS members (The Burra Charter, 2013). The Burra Charter refers to the documentation in Article 26. - *Applying the Burra Charter Process* in the chapter "Conservation Practice." The article states that "*work on a place should be preceded by studies to understand the place which should include analysis of physical, documentary, oral and other evidence, drawing on appropriate knowledge, skills and disciplines*" (Burra Charter, 2013, Article 26., 26.1, p. 12) and that "*written statements of cultural significance and policy for the place should be prepared, justified and accompanied by supporting evidence*" and "*incorporated into a management plan for the place*" (Burra Charter, 2013, Article 26., 26.2, p. 8). The Article 32 of the Burra Charter talks specifically about records related to the cultural heritage and states that "*the records associated with the conservation of a place should be placed in the permanent archive and made publicly available*" and it also advises that these records should be subjected to "*requirements of security and privacy*" and kept where it is culturally appropriate (Burra Charter, 2013, Article 32., 32.1, p. 9). In addition, it refers

¹ ICOMOS – International Council on monuments and sites is a non-governmental international organization dedicated to the conservation of the world's monuments and sites (<https://www.icomos.org/en>).

also to the records about the history of a place and advises the same procedure as for the records associated with conservation (Burra Charter, 2013, Article 32., 32.2, p. 9).

The importance of cultural heritage documentation is also evidenced by the fact that the ICOMOS has its Committee for Documentation of Cultural Heritage – CIPA which is one of the oldest ICOMOS' international scientific committees founded in 1968. CIPA originally stood for Comité International de la Photogrammétrie Architecturale but since its scope of activities is much broader, CIPA Heritage documentation was established. Now it is “*an international non-profit organization that endeavours to transfer technology from the measurement and visualization sciences to the disciplines of cultural heritage recording, conservation and documentation*” and “*acts as a bridge between the producers of heritage documentation and the users of this information*” (What is CIPA?, s. d.).

Another important international organization when it comes to cultural heritage protection is also ICCROM – an intergovernmental organization that works with its member states in promoting the conservation of all forms of cultural heritage. ICCROM has “*one of the world's leading conservation libraries with over 120,000 books, reports and specialized journals*” but it also has a collection of more than 200,000 images of sites and objects as well as testimonies of its activities in the field of conservation and restoration (What is ICCROM?, s. d.).

3 Cultural heritage related documentation in the Republic of Croatia – jurisdiction, regulations and organization

The body of jurisdiction for cultural heritage in Croatia as well as for the conservation of cultural properties is the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia. The Ministry is responsible for carrying out administrative duties and other responsibilities pertaining to cultural heritage, such as research, examination, monitoring, recording, filing and promotion (Cultural heritage, s. d.).

Within the Ministry there is the Directorate for the Conservation of Cultural Heritage and its eighteen regional conservation departments while in the capital city of Zagreb the body of jurisdiction is the Municipal Institute for the protection of Monuments of Culture and Nature. (National Policies on Monumental Heritage, s. d., p. 2). Besides these bodies, there is also Croatian Cultural Goods Council – an advisory body that works as a part of the Ministry of Culture and Media. The Council works in cooperation with the Croatian Museum Council and the Croatian Archival Council (ibid). The preservation and conservation of cultural heritage is regulated by the *Law on the Protection and Preservation of cultural goods* which ensures implementation of the directives of the European Union (*Zakon o zaštiti i očuvanju kulturnih dobara, pročišćeni tekst zakona, čl. 1., NN 152/14, 44/17, 62/20*). According to this law, all cultural goods are registered in the *Register of Cultural Property of the Republic of Croatia* kept by the Ministry of Culture and Media (*Zakon o zaštiti i očuvanju kulturnih dobara, pročišćeni tekst zakona, čl. 14, NN/ 90/18*). The Republic of Croatia, besides its own regulations, is a party to all the relevant international conventions in the area of the protection of cultural heritage (National Policies on Monumental Heritage, s. d., p. 5).

The Republic of Croatia and the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia have long recognized the importance and value of records related to cultural heritage. As it is stated on the official web page of the Ministry, documenting cultural heritage is an inevitable factor in the organized activity of the protection of the cultural heritage. The *Law on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Goods* prescribes that the body of jurisdiction must create documentation for every cultural good for its

protection and conservation. The Ministry of Culture and Media prescribes the necessary documentation and documentation standards for certain types of cultural goods, as well as the conditions, methods and procedures for its preservation and use (*Zakon o zaštiti i očuvanju kulturnih dobara, pročišćeni tekst zakona, čl. 51*).

For over two centuries, the conservation service in Croatia has generated valuable documentation on conservation, which is now in possession of the Ministry of Culture and Media (Dokumentacijske zbirke, s. d.). In the year 2015, the Ministry adopted the *Ordinance on the conditions, methods and procedures of storage and use of documentation*. The Ordinance has established conditions, manner and procedure for the storage and use of documentation kept in the internal organizational unit of the Ministry of Culture and Media whose scope is the protection of cultural heritage and in the conservation departments of the Ministry (Pravilnik o uvjetima, načinu i postupku čuvanja i korištenja dokumentacijske građe, *Narodne novine* 77/2015, 15 July 2015).

The conservation documentation stored in the Ministry of the Culture and Media is organized into documentation collections (Dokumentacijske zbirke, s. d.). The Central Documentation in the Field of Cultural Heritage (further: Central Documentation) contains the following units of the professional conservation documentation: Topographical collection, Thematic collection, Cards of basic records of cultural monuments, Decisions on registered and preventively protected cultural monuments, Collection of files and elaborations of protective works on cultural monuments and Collection of older (archival, authors note) materials (Središnja dokumentacija s područja kulturne baštine, s. d.).

Besides these collections, a valuable part of the Central Documentation is the *Planoteka* which is in a way the successor of the former State's commission for the Preservation of Arts and Historical Monuments in the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia founded in 1910. During the last century, extensive documentation was collected and created which became one of the most important and most valuable collections of plans – today's *Planoteka* of cultural heritage. Over time, *Planoteka's* fonds has significantly increased and expanded with materials that are not exclusively related to the monumental heritage such as legacies of the prominent Croatian architects. The important part of *Planoteka* is its extensive graphic collection with pieces of art of famous artists in the time span from the 16th to the 20th century. In the present day, *Planoteka* consists of several thematic sections: the regular one, which includes materials created by conservation-research works from the beginning of the 20th century, the legacies of architects and conservators, collection of old plans, collection of old cards and a graphic collection. Due to its cultural-historical value, some of the *Planoteka's* materials are listed in the Register of the Cultural Goods of the Republic of Croatia (*Planoteka Središnje dokumentacije za zaštitu kulturne baštine, s. d.*).

Following trends in the digitization of cultural heritage, in the year 2005 the Ministry of Culture launched the *National program of digitization of archival, library and museum materials*. The Program has provided the basis for the development of following related programs and projects for the digitization of archival, library and museum materials. Proposal of the national program was prepared by the experts from the archival, library and museum community at the initiative of the Ministry of Culture including two normative documents: *Guidelines for selecting materials for digitization* and *File formats for storage and use*, written in 2006. With the project "e-Culture - Digitization of cultural heritage" launched in 2020, the Ministry of Culture and Media has continued the further development of digitization of cultural heritage as well as the development of appropriate infrastructure. The previous guidelines from 2006 were used as a basis for creating new guidelines for the digitization of cultural heritage including the selection of materials; publication and use of materials; formats for display, formats for permanent storage,

metadata formats and, in addition, guidelines for digitization of materials protected by copyrights and a detailed description of metadata elements. (Smjernice za digitalizaciju kulturne baštine, 2020).

The project was co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund within the operational Program Competitiveness and Cohesion 2014–2020 and implemented by the Ministry of Culture in partnership with the Croatian National Archives, the Croatian Radio and Television, the Museum of Arts and Crafts and the National and University Library in Zagreb. As a result of the project, the central system for storage, access, aggregation and search of cultural heritage material was established and E-services were developed. Furthermore, a standardized approach to digitization of cultural heritage has been established and lastly, the capacity of archives, libraries and museums has been strengthened (7th Meeting of the Commission Expert Group on Digital Cultural Heritage and Europeana (DCHE), May 5, 2020).

Croatian Memorial Documentation Center of the Homeland War, as a specialized archives, is also included in the “e-Culture - Digitization of cultural heritage” project and in accordance with that, recently started with digitization of cultural heritage which will be discussed in the following chapter. One of the archival fonds that will be included in the mentioned project is an emerging fonds, created on the basis of documentation on destroyed cultural heritage in Croatia during the Homeland War.

4 Archival records related to cultural heritage in the Croatian Memorial Documentation Center of the Homeland War (HMDCDR) – description, arrangement, processing and digitization

One of the consequences of war and aggression on the Republic of Croatia, along with the occupation of its territory between 1991 and 1995, that is 1998 (when the remaining occupied territory was returned to the constitutional and legal system of the Republic of Croatia), was the destruction of its cultural heritage, sacral architecture in particular. Based on the data gathered during the war in Croatia (systematic and continuous inventory and assessment of war damages started by the end of 1993), especially after the liberating military operations Flash and Storm in May, that is August 1995, the Ministry of Culture and Media prepared the final report in 1999 on the inventory and assessment of war damages on immovable cultural monuments (Final report on the inventory and assessment of war damage on immovable cultural monuments, 1991-1999, HR-HDA-1640.2.2, 127).

That final report was based on documentation created after field situation inspection, when all buildings, slightly or severely damaged, were documented, noted down and photographed, followed by detailed descriptions and final reports for each and every damaged building and cultural monument (compliant to terminology of that period). With regard to this, it should be noted that during the Homeland War (and the aftermath period, till 1999), neither the Act on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Goods valid today, nor the terminology used in the aforementioned final report and the accompanying documents were in use. Instead, a term *cultural monument* had been in use for *the immovable cultural property*, pursuant to the old Act on Protection of cultural monuments dating from 1967 (Narodne novine, 7/67).

As of July 1991, i.e. from the beginning of the Homeland War, former Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments took measures defined by the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (Ukrainčik, Uršić, 24/1998 – 25/1999, p. 8). They assumed enhanced and remarkable protective measures, along with the acts of prevention in order to protect endangered

buildings, primarily sacral ones. Following the higher frequency and severity of damages inflicted to cultural property resulting from deliberate destruction and direct war actions, a record of all damages had soon started and reports had been compiled that were sent to individual ministries, the media, the Council of Europe and UNESCO (Ukrainčik, Uršić, 24/1998 – 25/1999, p. 8). According to those records/documents/documentation, damages on more than 4,000 different historic buildings had been reported during the Homeland War. Even a great part of constructions that, at those times, were not categorized as a part of cultural heritage, i.e. as immovable cultural property. Numerous churches and sacral buildings, as well as historical settlements, museums and their collections, archives buildings and fonds, libraries, monastery libraries and their fonds suffered devastation, damages and plundering (Ukrainčik, Uršić, 24/1998 – 25/1999, p. 9). Approximately 400 Roman Catholic churches and almost 200 smaller churches and chapels on the territory of the Republic of Croatia were damaged or demolished to the ground. A smaller number of sacral buildings belonging to other religious communities also suffered damages (Barunčić Pletikosić, 2017).

Documentation of the Special committee for inventory and assessment of war damage on cultural monuments that represented the basis for the final report was kept in a large number of binders, arranged in alphabetical order, by county in the Republic of Croatia, and was lend to the HMDCDR in the purpose of digitization. Thereafter, the archival material was cataloged and scanned, and a special archival fonds is in the process of creation.

Reports were divided into more than 100 files that include one or more reports on recorded damage to immovable cultural assets. Documentation contains individual reports of different counties and further on of different settlements and municipalities where the damaged buildings and monuments were located. These detailed reports include a concise list of war damages for each county, maps of historical urban units, identical forms with a list of damage and basic information on immovable cultural monuments, a form with registered damages, plans and sketches with damage section for each damaged part and numerous photo documentation for each building – monument. The reports also include a detailed description of buildings before the damage and a description of interventions performed during the damage repair. Some reports also contain cost estimates spent on the renovation. Given that the documentation also contains numerous image files (pictured facades, side walls, interior, numerous details of the interior of buildings, etc.), they are stored in TIFF (Tagged Image File Format), the recommended and standard format for storing image files according to the guidelines for digitization of cultural heritage (*Smjernice za digitalizaciju kulturne baštine*, 2020).

The purpose of digitization of the aforementioned fonds is to improve the availability of archival materials and protect the original documents using digital copies and also to create a new archival fonds within the HMDCDR. In that way, digitized documents will remain permanently stored in the HMDCDR as a specialized archives and also available to researchers and the entire public, which is also one of the main goals of the “E-culture project” (Projekt e-Kultura – “Digitalizacija kulturne baštine”, s. d.).

5 Conclusion

Cultural heritage is an important part of our identity and plays a significant role in our culture, history and economy. Preservation and conservation of cultural heritage are vital for its longevity, and the first step towards successful conservation is the documentation of the object.

The Burra Charter is one of the most important international documents that provides guidance for the conservation and management of places of cultural significance.

The importance of cultural heritage documentation is further highlighted by organizations such as CIPA and ICCROM, which work towards transferring technology from the measurement and visualization sciences to the disciplines of cultural heritage recording, conservation, and documentation.

The preservation and conservation of cultural heritage are regulated by the Law on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Goods, which mandates the creation of documentation for every cultural good for its protection and conservation.

Archival records containing data and detailed reports on the damaged and destroyed cultural heritage in Croatia during the Homeland War remain preserved in the digitalized archival fonds kept by The Croatian Memorial Documentation Center of the Homeland War.

The data included in the archival material is important not only for the research on the damaging of the cultural heritage, especially sacral architecture, but, generally speaking, it is a valuable source for the research on the modern Croatian history and art history.

Besides that, documentation related to cultural heritage is essential for preservation and conservation of cultural goods because it can provide a record of the cultural heritage, including its history as well as information about materials and techniques used in its construction. It also helps in conservation planning as it can provide information on the condition of the cultural heritage and causes for its destruction or deterioration. Lastly, the cultural heritage related documentation is of utmost importance in the crisis such as natural disasters or armed conflict as it can help to develop strategies for the protection of a cultural good and its restoration and it can also serve as evidence of committed war crimes.

Furthermore, through the “e-Culture” project, in which HMDCCR is involved, the documentation related to the destroyed cultural heritage will remain permanently stored and available to the entire public, fulfilling at the same time goals and purpose of digitization, as stated in the Guidelines for Digitization of Cultural Heritage (Ministry of Culture, 2020).

In conclusion, HMDCCR will at the same time enable the availability of that archival materials, protect the originals and establish a new archival fonds through digitization.

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POVZETEK

ARHIVSKO GRADIVO V HRVAŠKEM SPOMINSKEM IN DOKUMENTACIJSKEM CENTRU DOMOVINSKE VOJNE, KI JE POVEZANO S KULTURNO DEDIŠČINO

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Ministrstvo za kulturo in medije Republike Hrvaške (dalje: RH) je prepoznalo pomembnost zaščite narodne ter evropske kulturne dediščine in skupaj s projektnimi partnerji zagnalo projekt »E-kultura – digitizacija kulturne dediščine«. Projekt sofinancira Evropski sklad za regijski razvoj. Tudi Hrvaški spominski in dokumentacijski center domovinske vojne želi pri tem projektu sodelovati.

Hrvaška ima dobro vzpostavljen sistem pristojnosti, pravil in organizacije ohranjanja in konzervacije svoje kulturne dediščine, skupaj s tozadevno dokumentacijo. Hrvaška je prav tako zavezana spoštovati vse relevantne mednarodne konvencije na področju zaščite kulturne dediščine. Zaščita in konzervacija kulturne dediščine ureja Zakon o zaščiti in ohranitvi kulturnih dobrin, ki določa kreiranje dokumentacije za vsako kulturno dobro. Ministrstvo za kulturo in medije je predpisalo potrebno dokumentacijo in standarde za vsako vrsto kulturnih dobrin.

Poleg zapisov vojaških in civilnih institucij, ki so vezani na domovinsko vojno, želi Hrvaški spominski dokumentacijski center domovinske vojne, kot specializiran arhiv, v svoje zbirke vključiti dokumente, ki so vezani na širšo dejavnost iz časa domovinske vojne. Tako ena izmed pomembnejših zbirk vsebuje dokumente, ki se nanašajo na hrvaško kulturno dediščino v domovinski vojni.

Ministrstvo za kulturo in medije RH je posodilo Hrvaškemu spominskemu dokumentacijskemu centru domovinske vojne zbirko zapisov, ki se nanašajo na vojno škodo, obnovo in ohranjanje kulturne dediščine, z namenom, da se jih digitizira. Ta digitizirana zbirka je zdaj poseben arhivski fond, ki vsebuje predvsem zapise o vojni škodi na premičnih kulturnih spomenikih, pripravila pa jih je po terminologiji tistega časa Strokovna komisija za popis in oceno vojne škode Ministrstva za kulturo RH. Podatke so zbirali v obdobju 1995–1999. Na podlagi tega gradiva je bilo leta 1999 pripravljeno končno poročilo o vojni škodi na kulturnih spomenikih in kulturni dediščini. Namen digitizacije je izboljšati dostopnost arhivskega gradiva in zaščititi originalne dokumente s pomočjo digitalnih kopij, saj bodo le-te trajno shranjene in dostopne raziskovalcem ter širši javnosti, kar je tudi ena od ciljev projekta "E-kultura". Namen prispevka je opisati količino, značilnosti in vsebino arhivskih zapisov, ki se nanašajo na kulturno dediščino in se hranijo v Hrvaškem spominskem dokumentacijskem centru domovinske vojne, ter poudariti pomembnost digitizacije teh arhivskih zapisov. Poleg tega podaja prispevek tudi pomembnost arhivskega gradiva o kulturni dediščini na splošno.