

THE NATURAL MONUMENT “MARKOVI KULI” IN THE LIST OF UNESCO-YES OR NO

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ABSTRACT

Natural Monument called “Markovi Kuli” is located near the town of Prilep. It is composed of a number of striking various meso and micro denudacial relief forms of which a group of small rocky forms is noticeable, rock pillars, stone blocks and depression in “gneiss” rocks. In the Republic of Macedonia in the category of natural monuments the site was first announced in 1967, and reannounced in 2006. The natural monument “Markovi Kuli” to be a protected area of internationally recognized status within UNESCO, it should fulfill certain criteria of this organization. Due to the outstanding natural values and fulfilling some of the conditions and criteria of 24.06.2004, the natural monument “Markovi Kuli” is inscribed in the tentative list of UNESCO world natural heritage. Almost 12 years ago, but still no concrete answer further about the site what will be happening. In this paper the conditions and criteria will be analyzed as to restart the idea of the natural monument “Markovi Kuli” to be nominated and placed in the official list of UNESCO as a world natural heritage.

Keywords: Natural Monument “Markovi Kuli”, UNESCO, criteria, conditions

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was founded on 16 November, 1945 in London. Since 1958 the headquarters of the Organization in Paris. [11] UNESCO on 16 November 1972 adopted the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. The purpose of this Convention is to encourage the identification, protection and conservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world which is of great importance for all humanity. Also, to encourage countries around the world to sign the Convention to monitor activities all in purpose to raise public awareness of the protection of sites and nominate sites yet to be placed on the list of UNESCO[8]. The World Heritage List has 1,052 properties of which 814 are considered as cultural heritage, 203 are natural heritage, 35 are mixed heritage, 55 are in danger, 34 are transboundary and 2 sites are delisted. These sites are 165 States Parties of UNESCO [10]. There are currently 193 States Parties, but some of these states parties have not yet inscribed sites in the list of World Heritage.

On 30 April 1997 the Republic of Macedonia became a member state of UNESCO. As a “mixed” (natural and cultural) heritage in 1979 on the official list of World Heritage Sites the Ohrid region was placed. [10]. On the tentative list the archaeological and

astronomical site Kokino was placed in 2009, the cave Slatinski Izvor and the site Markovi Kuli in 2004 [9]. In this paper we put emphasis on the progress of the procedure the site "Markovi Kuli" to be placed on the official list of World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

BASIC FEATURES OF THE NATURAL MONUMENT "MARKOVI KULI"

The monument of nature called "Markovi Kuli" or granodiorite complex is located in the central part of Macedonia along the northeastern edge of the Pelagonija Valley, north of the town of Prilep. The north, northeast and east granite complex is surrounded by the mountain Babuna (1746 m), while the west and south Prilep Field and magmatic-metamorphic complex called Selechka Mountain (Studenica, 1664 m) [2]. The granite complex tectonic belongs to the Prilep anticline which covers about 65 km² [1] in the territory north of Prilep. The area consists of more impressive heaps connected in two parallel rows from north-northwest to south-southeast. Their altitude increases gradually from south to north [2]. As such the gromads called Markovi Kuli stand apart (945 m), Zelenik (993 m) and Zagradski Steni (1153 m) to the west, Kukul (980 m) to the east there are Glavica (1033 m) and Edinak (1303 m). The two rows are separated by the valley of Dabnichka River. In the northern parts they are connected to the highest peaks Zlatovrv (1422 m) and Lipa (1392 m) [2]. According to the geochronological trials the granodiorites near Prilep are considered to be of Hercynian age, i.e. about 300 million years ago [2]. The Prilep granodiorites are particularly interesting for scientists because of the geomorphological forms of appearance. The denudacial relief forms that are represented on the site had been mentioned since 1926 in the literature by J. Cvijic, but V.S. Radovanovic (1928) in his capital work thoroughly explained their occurrence in the granodiorite rocks. Many of these rocks have been influenced by the processes of physical and chemical decomposition which is the most important process to create denudacial relief forms of the site. The process of physical decomposition is like a result from large temperature fluctuations and freezing of the water in the cracks in the rocks which depend on the climatic conditions at the site, and as the most powerful agent of the chemical breakdown of the rocks are the surface waters in which dissolved coal acid and oxygen from the air can be found [2]. Through the granodiorite massif a certain amount of geomorphological forms in the shape of a cuboid, rounded cuboid (balls), layers, tops, tips, mushrooms and others stand out [1].

Denudacial relief forms can be segmented according to the origin (genetic), shape or look they have (morphographic) and the dimensions of the phenomenon (morphometric). The micro relief forms of "Markovi Kuli" can be separated into three main groups: a group of small rocky blocks, shapes on rock pillars and blocks and depression in "gneiss" rocks [6]. The first group of small rocky blocks encountered three different morphological types, formations of rock pillars and blocks, flocks of rock pillars and blocks, lone rock pillars and blocks [6]. The formations of rock pillars and blocks can be seen on the steep sides of the locality, mostly expressed in the area of the highest top called Zlatovrv. The groups of rock pillars and blocks occur on the slightly bent slopes, while the lone rock pillars and blocks occur in flattened fields and slightly bent valley sides. The second group of lone rock pillars and blocks have the form of "dagger" forms, flattened, headed, form of a mushroom, a bar, gearing and round [1]. The rock pillars and blocks occur in groups or as single solitary forms. The most interesting and most impressive is the rock pillar formation looking like an elephant at the foot of "Markovi Kuli" (945 m), and according to Radovanovic (1928) this rock pillar formation is called "the Saint" which has the shape

of a penguin. The third group are depression in “gneiss” rocks and those under the site of an outbreak are divided into micro relief forms built on a horizontal basis and as such appear in three transitional forms like “cups”, “footprints”, “boilers” and “troughs” and micro relief forms built on the vertical sides of the rock blocks such as “gneiss caves” and “gneiss holes”[6].



Figure 1. A rock pillar in a shape of an elephant or a bird

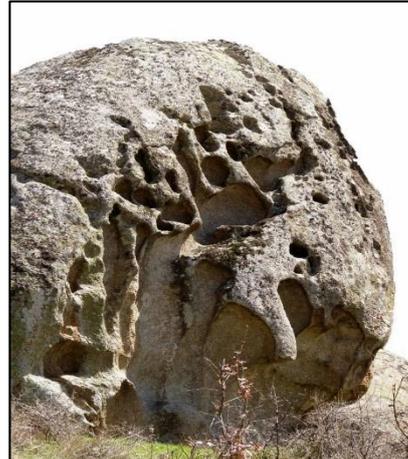


Figure 2. “The gneiss holes”

Photo: Kolchakovski



Figure 3. Part of the site “Markovi Kuli” with specific denudacial forms

Photo: Kolchakovski

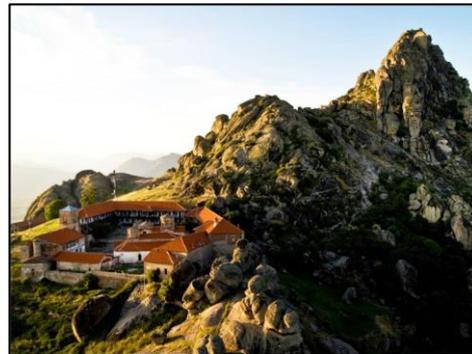


Figure 4. Treskavec Monastery on the site “Markovi Kuli”

<http://www.wikiwand.com/mk/Трескавец>

NOMINATION PROCESS

If a country wants the site located in its territory to be inscribed on the World Heritage list, it must have signed the World Heritage Convention and by that it promises to protect their natural and cultural heritage. The first step that the state will take is to make a “inventory” of its significant natural and cultural heritage, located within its borders. This “inventory” is also known as a tentative list. To prepare the tentative list and choosing the sites it is required from the State Party to prepare appropriate documentation and maps [8]. For the site to be on the tentative list it should first fill in the form in which will the name of the site, its geographic location and a brief description and justification of their outstanding universal value. The nomination is submitted to the World Heritage Center for examination and then sent to the appropriate advisory bodies for evaluation. The nomination for the site is being evaluated by two advisory bodies authorized by the World

Heritage Convention as follows: International Council on Museums and sites (ICOMOS) for cultural heritage sites and the International Union Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to sites of natural heritage. Third advisory body is the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) an intergovernmental organization which provides the Committee with expert advice on conservation of cultural sites and also for the training activities [8]. The Committee meets once a year, it is consisted of 21 member states and has the final decision on which sites are to be registered on the list of UNESCO World Heritage [5]. The sites to be included in the World Heritage List must have an outstanding universal value and have at least one of the ten criteria selected based on 6 criteria for cultural heritage and four criteria for natural heritage [8] which are applied together with comprehensive aspects: authenticity and / or integrity [5]. By adopting the revised Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention now there is a set of 10 criteria in total [8]. If a site meets the criteria for cultural and natural heritage, it will be classified as a site with "mixed" heritage. States parties have an obligation to prepare a report on the state of the site and its protection. States parties to the Convention are encouraged to ensure the participation of a wide variety of stakeholders, including site managers, local and regional governments, local communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other interested parties and partners in the identification, nomination and protection of World Heritage properties [5]. For the site to be nominated in the list of World Heritage should fill a form including the following: identification of the site, a description of the site, justification for registration, state of conservation, factors affecting the site protection and management, monitoring, documentation, contact information of the authorities and signed on behalf of the member state. The prepared documentation is submitted to the secretariat of UNESCO, and then forwarded to the appropriate advisory bodies for its assessment. Later on, the relevant advisory bodies submit their assessments and recommendations to the secretariat, i.e. the World Heritage Committee and the States Parties. The Committee reviews the nominations and makes decisions on the nominated sites to be on the list of UNESCO. Then they inform the member states whether the described site was inscribed in the list [5]. The process to become a World Heritage is generally a long and winding road since, besides that the site should be considered of *Universal Value to mankind* and meet the requirements set forth in the Convention, there are many other requirements to meet [4].

DISCUSSION

Because of the natural values of the site "Markovi Kuli" in 1967 a decision was made by the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments for it to be declared and protected in the category of monuments of nature. In 2003 UNESCO National Commission of the Republic of Macedonia suggested the site to be inscribed in the list of UNESCO World Heritage [1]. This proposal was accepted by the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and on 24 June 2004 the site was inscribed on the tentative list of UNESCO in the category of natural heritage according with the criteria VII, VIII, IX [9]. As natural heritage it refers to the outstanding physical, biological and geological formations, habitats of threatened species of animals and plants and areas with scientific, conservation or aesthetic value. [8]

According to the monumental and natural characteristics of the site not only it represents a rare occurrence in the Republic of Macedonia but overcomes the Balkan and European spaces. The "Markovi Kuli" site is protected nationally in the category of Natural

Monuments on 10 April, 2006. The monument is managed by the Public Scientific Institution Institute for Old Slavic Culture, Prilep [3] If we take into account the cultural monuments of the site, the monastery St. Archangel Michael, Treskavec monastery and the medieval towers that are on the site, it could be an addition in the category of "mixed" (cultural and natural) heritage. After the site "Markovi Kuli" entering the tentative list in 2004, it has passed the first stage of nomination. The further procedure for declaring the site is not included. The question is why and what next? In the Republic of Macedonia there is a locality that is written on the official list [10] and three sites on the tentative list of UNESCO [9]. Serbia has 11 sites on the tentative list [9], 4 sites on the official list and an endangered site [10]. Bulgaria has 16 sites on the tentative list [9] and 9 sites on the official list [10]. Greece has 14 sites on the tentative list [9] and 18 sites on the official list [10]. Albania has 5 sites of the tentative list [9] and two sites on the official list [10]. The Republic of Macedonia with its biodiversity and geological diversity and rare phenomena does not fall back from its neighbors, but very little has been done for their protection and promotion.

CONCLUSION

The site "Markovi Kuli" with its uniqueness represents an extraordinary natural phenomenon that transcends the borders of the Republic of Macedonia. Because of all that it attracts a lot of visitors. It has been demonstrated that once sites are placed on the list, they experience a significant increase in tourists. While this is welcome for firms offering tourist services, hotels and restaurants in particular, there is some concern that too many tourists may negatively affect the heritage sites [7]. The World Heritage Centre participates in the UNEP World Tourism Organization-UNESCO Tour Operators' and the World Heritage Alliance Initiative, which has attracted an increasing number of environmentally sensitive companies [8]. If the site is to be placed on the official list of UNESCO it will gain greater recognition, and it will contribute to increasing the economic development of the municipality and the state in general. Because of all those reasons the procedure should continue and Republic of Macedonia to get another site on the official list of UNESCO.

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