

ROMANIA

The state of Romanian heritage since Dr. Machat's report in *Heritage at Risk 2000* has remained the same, which is quite worrying. Indeed, the law #422 on the protection of historic monuments was only passed on 17 July 2001, after 11 years of discussion. In the following text, we shall expose the different destructive trends, many of which have led to irreversible damage.

Disused Monuments and Sites

Disused historic monuments and sites are no longer under the guardianship of municipalities and local police, as was the case with the law 661/1955, which was abolished in 1990 along with the 'socialist' legislation of 1974 to which Dr. Machat referred in the 2000 report. Without guardians or administrative supervision, this category of heritage property is now the prey of thieves who enrich themselves by selling-off materials taken from abandoned buildings or wood from rare or special trees that have fallen, without any recognition of their heritage value. Examples of such monuments in danger include:

- Abandoned villages whose inhabitants have left; in particular the Saxon villages in Transylvania but also remote Romanian villages in the hilly parts of the country.
- Antique or mediaeval ruins situated near villages or motorways – the destruction of the rural fortress of Saschiz, begun in the 1950s, to extract stones from the walls, is still going on. Even worse is the case of the quarrying of the Feldioara fortress, in the district of Brasov, built by the Teutonic Knights in 1225, now overlooking one of the main international roads in Romania. Only those forts situated in remote locations are spared from this destruction (such as the nobleman's citadel of Cande or Kendeffi, built on a rock near the Rau de Mori-Suseni hamlet, in the district of Hunedoara).
- Castles and manor houses all over the country, which were nationalised by the communist regime in 1948. As well as the main residence, most of these composed campuses of various buildings such as family chapels, gardens, orchards or other secondary buildings. After the moveable objects were looted, the lands and buildings were given to kolkhozes or co-operative collective farms, which destroyed the parks and gardens and used the buildings, without any maintenance, until they wore into ruins. The only ones to survive this process, although deprived of their decorative works, were those properties given to the Ministries of Health and Forest, which were particularly sensitive to the preservation of parks and gardens.
- After 1990, the abolition of co-operative farms led to the total abandonment of those nationalised buildings that had survived. They were exposed to looting and rapidly declined into a state of ruin, due to the quarrying of their material under the careless eyes of local authorities and police. Although there is no global statistic for such losses over the last 11 years, we can give a few examples observed recently:
 1. the castle of the Cantacuzino family in Cepelnita (district of Iasi), which had remained in good state until 1989 and of which only the rubbish-filled caves now remain;
 2. the manor of the Buzesti family in the village of Strejesti (district of Olt), built around 1600, which is the last remaining manor of the many owned by this family of landlords of the 15th and 16th centuries, and for which a restoration project has to be redone every 6 months to take into account the



Cepelnita, district of Iasi, the mansion of the Cantacuzino, state of 1998, destruction began in 1990



Strejesti, district of Olt, the Buzescu-Darvari mansion, side façade, state of 1999

Bontida, district of Cluj, castle of the Banffy family with Neo-Gothic additions, present state



progressive disappearance of the roods, beams and brick-work;

3. the Banffi castle in Bontida (district of Cluj), burnt in 1944, whose ruins were more or less protected until 1990, after which date the main roof of the residence, which had been restored by the Cluj municipality upon the request of the National Directorate of Historic Monuments, was dismantled to remove the beams, while the baroque figures of the main entrance and the marble troughs of the remarkable horse stables were mutilated, and many century-old trees were wounded.

Post-1990 Legislation

After 1990, the new agency responsible for the protection of historic monuments decided that the new list of monuments, prepared by regional staff and accepted without review by the Commission of Historic Monuments and Sites, should be promulgated at the same time as the new legislation regarding historic monuments. The repeated postponement of the adoption of the law resulted in the absence, over the last 11 years, of any legal means to sanction the demolition of a building listed by the Ministry of Culture. At long last, the law was promulgated on 17 July 2001 and published in the official Gazette on 24 July 2001 under #422 'Law regarding the Protection of Historic Monuments'. As an example, we will mention the house of the Cerkez family in Botosani, built in the 18th century and researched by E. Greceanu, author of this report, in the publication *L'ensemble historique de Botosani* (1981, p. 108–115). The house had retained all its original structure and features but it was acquired by a new owner – the rich son of a municipal councillor – who demolished it totally, despite the protest of the regional inspector of the Ministry of Culture, who had also informed national media and the ministries of Culture and of Public Works. The court action taken by the two ministries has been dragging on since 1997, without much success.

In addition to such an action on a former nationalised property – listed by the Commission of Historic Monuments – much more damage occurs within reserved areas where individual or corporate nouveaux riches are involved. Banks are building new facili-

ties without concern for the architecture or character of the surroundings. The most aggressive example is certainly that of Bancorex, built in the middle of the historic centre of Bucharest, on the site of an old hotel demolished after the 1977 earthquake. It is located in one of the most interesting streetscapes; built around 1900 on Calea Victoriei, a historic way in the city whose ground conceals considerable archaeological resources (for example, the foundations of the 18th-century St. John Monastery were found under the hotel).

Decentralisation

Unclear responsibilities, divided across too many administrative instances, have led to the absence of controls and sanctions. At the same time, we must take into account the high cost of projects, materials and work, as well as the excessive number of necessary authorisations, which make it impossible for owners on a low income or a pension, who are willing to maintain their older house in a respectful manner, to carry on maintenance, repair or conservation work. For lack of financial help, now hopefully provided by the recently adopted law, the cities' architectural landscapes are slowly eroding or disappearing. Under Communist Rule, peasants in the villages were forced to replace traditional materials by industrial substitutes; from the 1960s, they started to refuse to keep their traditional decorated wooden houses with their typical roofs and materials. After 1990 and the dissolution of controlling authority, the loss of vernacular architecture increased at an accelerated pace across the country. This provides some explanation for the absence of vernacular architecture from the new register of listed monuments (as mentioned last year by Dr. Machat), as those who produced the lists anticipated that such properties would have disappeared or lost their heritage value by the time the list became official.

We must hope that this long expected legislation, now in place, will provide the necessary response to the forces of destruction. The Romanian National Committee of ICOMOS is always willing to join forces with those institutions mentioned in the 2000 Report by Dr. Machat, having always appreciated the support given generously by the German National Committee of ICOMOS.

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Dwelling-type workers' houses in Resita and Anina, Caras Severin county (1864–1900). Deserted after 1989 by the former German inhabitants, they are now either abandoned or badly modified by the new owners.

Ironworks and thermo-electrical plant of Anina, Caraş Severin county (late 19th century), exceptional site of which only the energy transforming system is still working.





Bucharest's merchandise control point, built in 1900 by the Italian architect Giulio Magni, has been abandoned since the fire that seriously damaged it in 1992.

Case Study 1: Romanian Industrial Archaeology Heritage

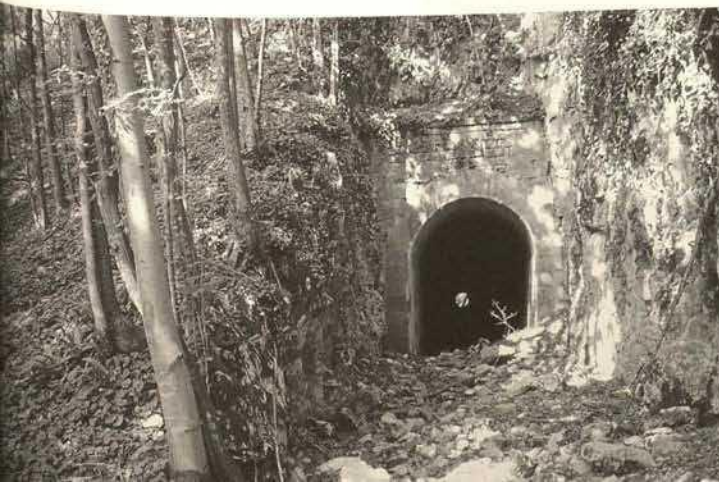
Romania still preserves important industrial heritage objects from the 17th–18th centuries. Some of the 19th-century examples can even operate today. After World War II, the communist regime confiscated but didn't destroy these assets, with the intention of using them for as long as possible, often with less than the minimum necessary maintenance works. Unfortunately, today also, there is no interest in preserving this type of heritage.

The poor economic situation of many industrial-building owners leads them to either abandon the heritage as being too expensive to maintain, or to 'renovate' it using low-cost destructive methods in order to make an immediate profit. Due to ignorance, inertia or lack of strategy, new buildings are preferred to old ones that are in need of more delicate restoration works, and old machines are destroyed in the name of renewing the production process. This attitude is even more dangerous for the big industrial sites divided by the rushed privatisation process from the beginning of the 1990s – the initial complexity of these sites will soon be impossible to read. Representing important areas in our cities and now being rather close to the city centres, these huge sites are seen as immense empty areas for urban development. Investors are attracted by the good location of the property, but are not willing to invest in reconvertng the old buildings, considering this a too complicated and uncomfortable process.

Beside all this, it is very difficult to get public support in fighting for these industrial objects. People are still not receptive to this subject: rather, they consider 'the factory' as a place of exploitation and they would find it difficult to accept these complexes as 'postcard' subjects, for example, in the same way as famous medieval churches...

There is also a lack of efficient legal protection. The official historical monuments list has important inaccuracies regarding the industrial heritage. The information is often limited to the denomination and address; so, for some lost objects, there is no inventory, no image and no survey. The most endangered sites and objects are the ones that are not listed, unprotected by the law. In addition, the law has not previously permitted adequate legal sanctions in the case of intentional destruction – generally there was a moderate fine representing a somewhat small expense to the investor involved.

Former forestry railway between Anina and Reșița, Caraș Severin county (1910), in continuous ruin (one of the last iron bridges was stolen last year) although it could be a beautiful tourist route in Anina Mountains.



Typical 18th-century house in Roșița Montana, on the demolishing list.



Today, the new heritage protection law (July 2001) allows the possibility of immediately listing a building, without any approval from its owner. The law sets both responsibilities and important facilities for the heritage owners and for those willing to invest in restoration works. It also sanctions severe punishment for intentionally damaging or destroying heritage (including imprisonment).

There is no national co-ordination of the concerns associated with the protection of industrial heritage, so there is a lack of a regular exchange of specific information, and of a clear national strategy; a Romanian TICCIH committee will start to operate only this autumn. However, the Romanian Ministry of Culture has started a program for the 'Salvation of the national industrial archaeological heritage'. The aims of the program are to begin a specific inventory, to identify the most endangered sites, to find viable solutions and partners in saving them, and to launch a press campaign to increase public understanding of these values.

Case Study 2: The Cultural Landscape of Roşia Montana village

The village of Roşia Montana is well known in Romanian and European history, because of the discovery of Roman mines containing important epigraphic and original mining material. The intensive exploitation of the gold mines, which was for centuries the only engine for the village economic and urban development, also influenced the evolution of the surrounding geographic area in creating a particular image of the landscape. Forty-two buildings,

including two churches, dated from the 18th-19th centuries are listed as historical monuments and the main square and a few streets as protected areas. The village, obviously very rich in the past, is a charming combination of town feature architecture, vernacular houses, and a natural and human-made landscape.

Unfortunately, the 'golden' years of the village are now over. After World War II, Romanian law didn't permit private exploitation of the underground. The gold became a State business and all the small family workshops disappeared (some traces can still be seen: artificial lakes, stone roads and walls, traces of some water canals...). The State Mining Company exploited the gold in surface works - destroying an entire hill, regardless of the archaeological value of the area. After 1989, the economic situation of the Mining Company and also of the inhabitants became worse. They are now either working for the State or unemployed. Many are leaving the village for towns where they can more easily earn a living.

The rich heritage and cultural landscape of Roşia Montana is endangered by both the lack of a program for its economic revitalisation (through cultural tourism or through developing other small production activities) and by the business plans of a powerful investor who wants, again, to exploit the gold resources. This last option will certainly improve the economy of the settlement in creating well-paid jobs for the inhabitants (at least for the next 20 years), but it will also destroy a very important part of the village and its landscape. The main square, one of the most important streets and one of the Roman mines will be preserved, a few buildings, including one church, will be relocated and the rest of the village will be demolished. Important archaeological research works are now in process, as well as an urban development project attempting to find some compromise solutions.

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The main square of Roşia Montana - some of the buildings are abandoned.