

A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE: SUGGESTION FOR A DOCUMENTARY FILM. BUCHAREST STREETS NAMED AFTER LAWYERS

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ABSTRACT: *Countless future civil servants, students of the National School for Political Science and Public Administration, walk down the same sidewalk, unknowing, failing to orient themselves towards studying the history of the very communities they will serve, oblivious to their obligation to protect and bring out their material and immaterial heritage. Architectural heritage must be known and preserved by future public agents, who thereby build local identity, helping respect and defend the specific flavor of every neighborhood. This also goes for toponymic heritage. As shown in the two Reports, issued in 2008 (“Romania has failed to take efficient measures in order to conform with the provisions of international conventions they have signed and with the factor of public interest represented by cultural and natural heritage”) and 2009 by the Presidential Committee for heritage buildings, historic and natural landmark, the situation is grim. Public authorities have not yet considered compiling an explanatory index of Bucharest street names. The city’s toponymic heritage is nevertheless of great historical and spiritual importance. The present article focuses on a single thematic segment: Bucharest streets dedicated to famous lawyers. One could separate the toponymic material geographically, according to city districts, but we believe it is more relevant to talk about practicing lawyers on one hand, and historical figures who were mostly active in other fields but have a background of legal training on the other.*

KEYWORDS: *toponymic inventory, lawyers, historical figures, Bucharest streets, students, civil servants, NSPSA*

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Have we ever wondered, as we walked down the streets of Bucharest, what secrets are hidden behind the plaques marking old crossroads? Have we ever stopped to look for a meaning, a picturesque memory of the old buildings, shady gardens where flowers used to bloom, now all forgotten... Bucharest, the city of gardens, with Mateiu Caragiale’s Cișmigiu park, “where sadness found such a strong echo within my heart that it felt like the place was part of my very self”, but also seductive gardens, full of romance, like

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Rașca or Oteteleşanu. Bucharest with its eclectic old houses, starting out in Neo-Romanian style, going through Art Nouveau, cubism, 20's modernism, Art Deco and Bauhaus in utter freedom and harmony...

The sadness of a dying city – what a strong echo. I walk daily along Povernei street, past where Luchian used to live - the flower-loving painter who left us the famous canvas “Corner of Povernei street”. Oh, but how many crimes took place there, under the watchful eye of the City Hall! How many real estate mafiosi were able to carelessly pollute the city, raising their awkward glass and concrete cubes right in the core of the old city!

Countless future civil servants, students of the National School for Political Science and Public Administration, walk down the same sidewalk, unknowing, failing to orient themselves towards studying the history of the very communities they will serve, oblivious to their obligation to protect and bring out their material and immaterial heritage.

What if these students were to familiarize themselves with the instrument they call a “European cultural project”? Cultural projects are undertaken by important nations of the European Union; they are part of the dynamics of local development, making places more attractive, generating social cohesion and working as a factor of durable economic growth.

Architectural heritage must be known and preserved by future public agents, who thereby build local identity, helping respect and defend the specific flavor of every neighborhood. This also goes for toponymic heritage.

As shown in the two Reports, issued in 2008 (“Romania has failed to take efficient measures in order to conform with the provisions of international conventions they have signed and with the factor of public interest represented by cultural and natural heritage”) and 2009 by the Presidential Committee for heritage buildings, historic and natural landmark, the situation is grim.

“Natural and man-made landmarks of Romania are in a state of permanent aggression. Protection, conservation and enhancement are all at risk of becoming meaningless notions. Even though there are laws protecting these landmarks and heavy sanctions do exist against those who destroy our national heritage, even though a few experts are doing their best, protection and conservation initiatives cannot keep up with the pace of destruction. How can this dramatic situation be improved? The answers are: education, communication, responsibility. However, these all take time, and time is now the greatest enemy of our national heritage. Without quick, radical and unequivocal intervention, we will soon run out of sites to protect.”)

I must mention that public authorities have not yet considered compiling an explanatory index of Bucharest street names. The city's toponymic heritage is nevertheless of great historical and spiritual importance. The present article focuses on a single thematic segment: Bucharest streets dedicated to famous lawyers.

One could separate the toponymic material geographically, according to city districts, but we believe it is more relevant to talk about practicing lawyers on the one hand, and historical figures who were mostly active in other fields but have a background of legal training on the other.

A. Practitioners in the legal field

This category includes the great Nicolae Rosetti-Bălănescu, Constantin Bosianu, Aristide Pascal and Emilian Pake-Protopopescu, the latter representing a connection to the

other category, thanks to his important activity both in teaching and in civil service, being one of the greatest mayors Bucharest had at the end of the nineteenth century.

Nicolae Rosetti-Bălănescu Street, 1st district, bears the name of the Romanian minister of foreign affairs and finance between the 29th of August 1863 and the 29th of October 1865. Nicolae Rosetti-Bălănescu (1827-1884) elaborated, together with two other great lawyers – Alexandru Băicoianu and Constantin Hamangiu – the first Romanian treatise of civil law, consolidating Romanian doctrine and jurisprudence.

Constantin Bosianu Street, 4th district. Born on the 10th of February 1815 in Bucharest, Constantin Bosianu was an honorary member of the Romanian Academy and the country's prime minister between the 26th of January and the 14th of June, 1865. He was the first dean of Faculty of Law in Bucharest.

Aristide Pascal Street, 3rd district, reminds us of the lawyer born in Bucharest in 1824. After studying in Paris and receiving his doctoral degree in Law, he became president of Ilfov County Tribunal, lawyer and professor of civil law at Bucharest Faculty of Law, where he was active until 1894. He kept the title of honorary professor and became dean in 1896. He served, alternately, as a deputy and a senator in all ruling bodies from the Union of Romania until his death.

B. Great figures in other fields, whose background included legal education

The second category refers to famous people whose legal education was a starting point for their activity in areas such as politics, administration, publishing or arts.

Alexandru C. Constantinescu Street, 1st district, is dedicated to the great statesman born 1859 in Bucharest. Receiving his doctoral degree in Law while studying in Paris, he became a prominent member of the National Liberal Party, serving as a deputy (from 1901) and later as a senator. He also served numerous terms as minister (of the Interior, of Agriculture, of Industry and Commerce). A close partner of the famous liberal Ion I. C. Brătianu, Alexandru C. Constantinescu, while not at all lacking in intelligence and spirit, remained in collective memory as an unscrupulous politician. During his time he was often jokingly referred to as “Alecu Constantinescu-Porcu” (“the pig”). Although loyal to the Liberal Party until the end of his life, he was in cordial relations with several of their political adversaries, such as Take Ionescu or Nicolae Filipescu.

Constantin G. Stere Street, 1st district, bears the name of the great statesman, lawyer, scientist and writer born on the 1st of June 1865 in Cîrpești, Soroca county. For 40 years he pursued a successful career in publishing, as founder (1906) and head of the “*Viața românească*” paper. He was the second President of the National Council (April to November 1918), playing an important role in the Union of Bessarabia with Romania. He died on the 26th of June 1936 in Bucov, Prahova county, and was elected post-mortem to the Romanian Academy in 2010.

The name of *Corneliu Coposu* was attributed not only to a Bucharest boulevard in the 3rd district, but also to streets of Zalău, Cluj, Timișoara, Oradea. Born in Bobota, Sălaj county, on the 20th of May 1914, Corneliu Coposu led the National Christian-Democrat Peasants' Party between 1990 and 1995, serving as a senator in post-communist Romania. Under the communist regime he had been imprisoned for political reasons. In May 1995 he was granted the title of Officer of the Legion of Honor, the highest distinction awarded by the French Republic to foreign citizens. His death in 1995 generated a wave of popular sympathy toward the anti-communist political forces in Romania, contributing to the victory of the Democratic Convention in the general elections of 1996.

Gheorghe Costaforu Street, 2nd district, refers to one of the founders of Romanian Higher Education. Born in 1820 in Bucharest, obtaining his doctoral diploma from at the Sorbonne and furthering his education in Austria and Saxony, he militates toward the construction of the University of Bucharest in 1857. By decree of the ruler Alexandru Ioan Cuza, he becomes the first rector of the University of Bucharest in 1864. Between 1871 and 1873 he serves as Minister of Foreign Affairs, after which he is appointed diplomatic agent to Vienna. He was a member of the Liberal Party and is considered, along with Vasile Boerescu, one of the pioneers of penal law in Romania. He died on the 28th of November 1876 in Bucharest.

Grigore Gafencu Street, 1st district, is named so in honor of the great statesman, diplomat and journalist born 1892 in Bucharest. Having completed his legal studies with a doctoral degree at the University of Bucharest, he founds the newspaper “Timpul familiei”, which is distributed to several countries in a special French-language edition. At the age of 32 he is elected deputy in the Romanian Parliament and works as vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Maniu government of 1928. In 1938 he is appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs and tries to preserve the country’s neutrality, caught between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. After northern Transylvania is annexed by Hungary following the Dictate of Vienna and Bessarabia, northern Bucovina and Herța are taken over by the Soviets in 1940, Gafencu is sent to Moscow as Ambassador. After King Carol II appoints Ion Gîrtoiu to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Gafencu leaves Romania for Switzerland, settling in Geneva. As visiting professor to the Universities of Yale and New York, he initiates the “European movement”, aiming toward the federalization of European states including Romania. He participates in the founding of the “Free Europe Committee” and organizes the New York “Tuesday panels” together with American politician and leading statesmen in exile from Communist countries. Grigore Gafencu dies on the 30th of January 1957 in Paris.

Iancu Cavaler de Flondor Street, 2nd district, reminds us of the Romanian politician born 1865 in Storjineț, present-day Ukraine, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Iancu Flondor militated for the union of Bucovina with the Kingdom of Romania. Graduating from the University of Cernăuți, he obtains his doctoral degree in Law at the University of Vienna. On the 27th of October 1918 he presides over the Constituting Assembly who votes for Bucovina joining Romania. Iancu Flondor is elected President of the Romanian National Council. The peace treaty with Austria, signed December 1919 at Saint-Germain-en-Laye (France) mentions that Austria renounces its claims over the former Duchy of Bucovina in favor of Romania. On the 18th of December 1918, Iancu Flondor is appointed secretary of state in charge of the administration of Bucovina: he introduces the Romanian language into local teaching (Romanian schools are thereby founded in Cernăuți, Românești, Siret, Călinești), civil service, justice etc.; also, he employs clerks from among the local populace, insists on recovering deposits in Austrian banks, promotes Romanian press and the democratic development of public life and pleads in favor of the peasant class in matters of agricultural reform. He was an avid fighter for the profound integration of all minorities residing within Great Romania. He passes away on the 19th of October 1924 in Cernăuți.

Tache Ionescu Street, 1st district, is named so after the renowned statesman (October 13th 1858, Ploiești, Romania – June 21st 1922, Rome, Italy) who served in several Romanian cabinets after obtaining his doctorate in Law in Paris. One of his colleagues

there was Raymond Poincaré, future president of France. As an attorney, Tache Ionescu was famous for the eloquence of his speeches. His achievements during his first years in the conservative cabinet of Lascăr Catargiu propel him among the main figures of Romanian political life. In the year 1908 he founds the Conservative-Democratic Party, successfully, partly thanks to the support of famed author and playwright Ion Luca Caragiale. Tache Ionescu represents Romania in the Bucharest Peace Conference of 1913. Serving as Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1917 and 1918, as well as between 1920 and 1922, he supports the idea of joining the Entente forces during World War I. At the end of the war, Tache Ionescu presides over the National Committee during the Paris Peace Conference.

Mihail Kogălniceanu Boulevard, in the 5th district, is dedicated to the great liberal politician, lawyer and historian (1817-1891). He became Prime Minister in 1863 during the reign of Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza, and later minister of Foreign Affairs under Carol I. Earlier, as editor in chief of “Dacia Literară” and professor at the “Academia Mihăileană”, Kogălniceanu clashed with authorities due to his romantic-nationalist 1843 inaugural speech. He was the chief ideologist for the 1848 Revolution in Moldova, as author of the petition “Demands of the Moldovan National Party”. Following the Crimean War, prince Grigore Alexandru Ghica appointed him to elaborate a set of laws aiming to abolish Roma slavery. Along with Alecsandri, he edited the unionist journal “Steaua Dunării” and successfully promoted prince Cuza’s election to the throne. Kogălniceanu supported the elimination of boyar privileges and the secularization of monastery grounds. This ultimately led to the 1864 coup which Alexandru Ioan Cuza provoked in order to implement the controversial reforms. Later on Kogălniceanu also served as President of the Romanian Academy and emissary of Romania to France.

Iuliu Maniu Boulevard, 6th district, honors the Romanian politician born in 1873 in Bădăcin, close to Șimleul Silvaniei. After the completion of his legal studies in Cluj, Budapest and Vienna (where he received his doctoral degree in 1896) Maniu settles in Blaj where he works as a lawyer for the Romanian Church United with Rome. As a statesman, he is well known for serving multiple terms as Prime Minister, as well as for his activity as head of the National Peasants’ Party. After 1847 he was imprisoned for political reasons and died in Sighet prison on the 5th of February 1953.

Eftimie Murgu Street, 3rd district, reminds of the lawyer, politician and professor of philosophy who served as a deputy in the Hungarian revolutionary parliament during the events of 1848. Born in 1805 in Rudăria (Caraș-Severin), Eftimie Murgu completes his legal studies in Szegeed and Pest. Besides Romanian, he was fluent in Latin, Hungarian, German, Greek and Slavonic. As an opponent of Habsburg absolutism and an adept of the republican ideal, the Budapest lawyer fought for Romanian national unity and the disestablishment of feudal relations. For voting against the Habsburgs, he is arrested and sentenced to death for high treason. The sentence is commuted to four years of imprisonment in Josefstadt, Bohemia. He dies 1870, five years after completing his final work, “Of the Serbian Congress Memorandum”.

Moise Nicoară Street, 3rd district, is dedicated to a lawyer, professor, poet and activist for Transylvanian-Romanian rights. He was born in Gyula, Hungary, and studied Law in Pest and Bratislava between 1802 and 1806. Later, in Vienna, he learns Turkish hoping to become a diplomatic emissary to the Ottoman Empire or to Wallachia or Moldova. He fails to join the regular Austrian army, so he leaves for Bucharest, where he teaches Latin

and German in Caragea Vodă's school. In the year 1814 he moves to Istanbul, then once again to Vienna. He begins to militate for the naming of a Romanian orthodox bishop in Arad, together along with other prominent Romanians: Petru Maior, Aron Budai, Gheorghe Lazăr. 1838 is the year Moise Nicoară settles in Iași, where he completes the translation of the "Supplex Libellus Valachorum Transilvaniae". He spends the final years of his life blind and impoverished.

Alexandru Papiu-Ilarian Street, 3rd district, bears the name of one of the prominent figures of the 1848 Revolution, a lawyer, historian, linguist and statesman. Born 1827, Papiu Ilarian takes part in the Blaj National Assemblies of April and May 1848, after which he leaves for Vienna, and later Padua, to study Law. Between 1855 and 1858 Papiu-Ilarian teaches law and statistics in the Iași Faculty of Law. He was a member of the Bucharest Bar Association and the Romanian Academy. Between 1863 and 1864 he serves as Minister of Justice in the Kogălniceanu cabinet, being the first Romanian minister from Transylvania. His name is connected to important reforms such as the secularization of monastery possession.

Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu Street, 3rd district, is named after the lawyer, sociologist, economist and Communist politician born 1900 in Bacău. Together with Elek Koblos, he represented the Romanian Communist Party at the fourth congress of the Comintern in 1922. On his return, he was arrested and imprisoned in Jilava. Together with Emil Bodnăraș, he represents the Communists during their secret negotiations with the Liberals and Peasants' Party, with the aim of overthrowing the Ion Antonescu regime. He serves as a minister under the Sănătescu government after the 1944 coup d'état, representing Romania at the signing of the truce with the USSR and the 1947 Paris peace treaties. In 1946, at Cluj, he begins a speech with the words "Before being a Communist, I am a Romanian". He is accused of bourgeois nationalism and arrested in 1948, then executed in 1954. By order of Nicolae Ceaușescu, he is rehabilitated post-mortem in the year 1968.

Constantin Titel Petrescu Street, 6th district, is dedicated to the interbellic politician who led the Social-Democratic Party and tried to avoid its fusion with the Communists. Born in Craiova, Constantin Titel Petrescu studied Law and Philosophy at the University of Bucharest and served as a secretary of state in the 1944 Sănătescu cabinet. After the Social-Democrats decide to fuse with the Communist Party in 1945, Constantin Titel Petrescu founds the Independent Social-Democratic Party. He is also head of the democratic newspaper *Libertatea*. He is arrested on the 6th of May 1948 and imprisoned at Jilava and Sighet for seven years. He dies two years later, in 1957.

Gheorghe Pop de Băsești Street, 2nd district, reminds us of the Transylvanian Romanian politician who led the Romanian National Party of Transylvania between 1902 and 1918. Born 1835, he studied Law in Oradea and represented the Romanian bourgeoisie of Transylvania for 9 years in the Budapest Parliament. At the Sibiu conference of 1881, he proposed and achieved the union of all Romanian national parties in Hungarian territory under the Romanian National Party of Transylvania and Hungary. As a member of the "Memorandist" movement, he demands autonomy for Transylvania and additional rights for the Romanian population, hence he is sentenced to prison in 1894. He presides over the Alba Iulia National Assembly in 1918. After his death in 1919, Iuliu Maniu becomes head of the National Party.

Vasile Stroescu Street, 2nd district, bears the name of a great Bessarabian scholar, philanthropist and politician born 1845 in Trinca, Hotin county. He studies Law in

Moscow, Petersburg and Berlin, whilst also nurturing an interest in history, literature and agricultural science. He founds churches and hospitals and becomes a honorific member of the Romanian Academy and honorary president of the Moldovan National Party (1917). Later on he serves as president of the Romanian Parliament (1919) and senator until his death in Bucharest in 1926.

Nicolae Titulescu Boulevard, 1st district, is named so in honor of the great Romanian diplomat and statesman, born March 4th, 1882 in Craiova to the family of a lawyer. He studies Law in Paris and returns to Romania in 1905 as a professor at the Iași University, moving to Bucharest in 1907. He becomes a deputy for Tache Ionescu's Conservative-Democratic Party, after which he is appointed Minister of Finance in the Ion I. C. Brătianu cabinet. In the summer of 1918 he founds, together with Tache Ionescu, Octavian Goga, Traian Vuia and Constantin Mille, the National Romanian Committee in Paris, with the purpose of promoting the Romanian people's right to national unity. The Committee was acknowledged by the Allied governments as a plenipotentiary organ of the Romanian nation. Between 1928 and 1936, Titulescu serves multiple terms as Minister of Foreign Affairs. As president of the League of Nations, based in Geneva, he fights revisionism, helps preserve frontiers established through peace treaties and promotes good relations between smaller and larger states with the aim of preventing aggression. His sympathy towards the European left wing, especially during the Spanish civil war, was poorly received by the Romanian political class. In 1936, under pressure from the Legionnaires and external factors, King Carol II removes him from public office and sends him into exile. Titulescu moves to Switzerland, then France, concentrating his efforts on preserving peace, in anticipation of the Second World War. He dies 1941 in Cannes.

Alexandru Dimitrie Xenopol Street, 1st district, bears the name of a well-known historian, economist, paedagogist, sociologist and lawyer born in Iași on the 23rd of March 1847. After studying philosophy, law and history in his hometown, he obtains his doctoral degrees in Law (Berlin) and philosophy (Giessen). In 1893 he was elected a member of the Romanian Academy and becomes rector of the Iași University in 1898. Among other titles, he was an honorary member of the Brussels Society of Archeologists, the Academic Society of Cernăuți, a member of the International Sociology Institute and the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences in Paris, as well as vicepresident of the Paris Society for Sociology.

Duiliu Zamfirescu Street, 1st district, refers to a great Romanian writer, titular member and vicepresident of the Romanian Academy. Born 1858 in Plăinești (nowadays Dumbrăveni), Vrancea county, he completes his legal studies in Bucharest and serves as a magistrate in Hârșova and Târgoviște, then as an attorney and editor of "România liberă". In 1885 he joins the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, becoming secretary of legation to Rome until 1906. Duiliu Zamfirescu also served as Minister of Foreign Affairs under Averescu (March-June 1920). His literary production includes numerous works of poetry, short prose and plays, however his greatest contribution to Romanian culture are the novels of the "Comăneșteni" cycle (*Viața la țară*, *Tănase Scatiu*, *În război*, *Îndreptări*, *Anna*, *ceea ce nu se poate*).

Mihail Sebastian Street, 5th district, is named after a Jewish-Romanian novelist and playwright born in Brăila, who studied Law and Philosophy in Bucharest and worked as a barrister. Invited by Nae Ionescu to contribute to "Cuvântul" journal, he befriends Mircea Eliade. Antisemitic laws of 1940 forbid him to work as a lawyer and ban his plays.

Amongst his better-known novels are “Oraşul cu salcâmi” and “Accidental”. Successful plays by Sebastian include “Steaua fără nume”, “Jocul de-a vacanţa”, “Ultima oră”. He dies in a road accident in 1945, only a short time after fascism had been driven out of Romania.

Constantin Rădulescu-Motru Street, 4th sector, bears the name of a great philosopher born 1868 in Butoieşti, Mehedinţi county. He studies Law and Philosophy at the University of Bucharest, under such professors as Titu Maiorescu, Constantin Dumitrescu-Iaşi, Bogdan Petriceicu-Haşdeu, V. A. Urechia and Grigore Tocilescu. He obtains his doctoral degree in Philosophy in 1893 and founds “Studii filosofice” (Philosophical Studies) journal. Henri Bergson quoted Rădulescu-Motru’s doctoral thesis in his work “Introduction à la Métaphysique”. Later in his life, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru becomes manager of the National Theatre in Bucharest and president of the Romanian Academy.]

Iacob Negruzzi Street, 1st district, is named so after a well-known writer, playwright, literary critic, lawyer and politician born December 1842 in Iaşi. After completing his studies in Germany, he works as a professor in the Iaşi Faculty of Law, as well as a member and later president of the Romanian Academy. As a founding member of the “Junimea” society, he is head of “Convorbiri literare” journal for 28 years. He dies January 6th, 1932.

CONCLUSIONS

Whilst in America streets are commonly numbered, Europe customarily names all of its roadways, often commemorating prominent figures in the respective countries' cultural history. Europeans thus preserve their memories, given that, as late Academy member Florin Constantiniu stated, “national identity feeds also on historic remembrance”.

The traditions of old Europe are reflected in its toponymic heritage, a heritage that should be well known especially to students of Public Administration, future civil servants who are responsible of safeguarding the cultural heritage of towns and cities and of passing it on to future generations. As underlined by Academician Sabina Ispas: „there is a model of Romanian culture, a specific style which can coexist well with others, only we have to distinguish its meaning from its form. We must preserve the meaning, not necessarily the form, the archetype. Of greater importance in my culture is the meaning behind the archetype.”

In order to respect our identity, public administration should be rebuilt from a multidisciplinary cultural perspective: the history of human settlements, their architecture, toponymic heritage, elements of the history of the arts; all can help widen the field of perception for those who study and practice Public Administration.

When abroad, be it in Europe or anywhere in the world, we search for vestiges of the past. In the meantime, in our own home, cultural heritage is decomposing irreversibly due to ignorance, negligence, abandonment, lack of funding or, many times, simply for getting in the way of lucrative real estate transactions. Manors, palaces, houses, churches, citadels disappear from the landscape, giving way to empty plots of land that are more welcoming to new, more profitable, development. Unfortunately, this can only mean the loss of our own history and identity.

"Little Paris", as Bucharest was known between the two world wars, has its fair share of streets christened in honor of the people who marked the Romanian history: artists, writers, historians, soldiers, doctors, lawyers. One of the best ways to discover Bucharest is to stroll along its boulevards and narrow meandering streets, which always eventually lead you to an opening of a romantic square. For today's students, the civil servants of tomorrow, this cultural window towards history will lead to a new approach on the past of all our towns and cities, in an attempt to rehabilitate it and save what can still be saved.

Upper-level administrative education often fails to approach the field of cultural heritage. In Romanian public administration schools, the curriculum does not comprise subject matters such as "cultural heritage law", it fails to offer interdisciplinary perspectives towards the study of territorial cultural heritage. Little importance is offered to the "Regional Cultural Project" concept, applied for many years in Europe and often used at local administrative level to improve knowledge and preservation of cultural heritage.

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