

Princeton University

Honors Faculty Members
Receiving Emeritus Status



May 2010

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colleagues in the departments of those honored.

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Faculty Members Receiving Emeritus Status

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Slobodan Ćurčić



Slobodan (“Danny”) Ćurčić is retiring this year from a long teaching career in Byzantine art and architectural studies that spans almost 50 years, 28 of which were spent at Princeton. During this time, he became one of the most prolific and influential scholars in his field, working on a wide range of topics within a large geographical framework—from the evaluation of late Roman and early Christian archaeological remains in Greece to the decorative programs of Byzantine-Norman churches on Sicily, and the architecture of fortresses, palaces, churches, and monastic complexes of the Byzantine Balkans.

Danny was born in 1940 in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (the former Yugoslavia), and grew up in Belgrade. He received his bachelor’s degree in architecture from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In 1975, he received his Ph.D. from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, with a dissertation on the Late Byzantine church at Gracanica. He was awarded the prize for the best dissertation dealing with an art-historical subject on Eastern Europe by the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council. After having taught for 11 years back at his alma mater in Illinois, Danny joined Princeton’s Department of Art and Archaeology in 1982 as a successor to Kurt Weitzmann, whose heritage as a specialist in the study of Byzantine icons he respected and complemented through his own research. Interested in interdisciplinary studies, Danny quickly connected with neighboring disciplines in a series of colloquia and exhibition projects that were realized in collaboration with colleagues from local and international academic institutions. Danny served as chair of the department between 1988–1990 and from 2006 on shouldered additional responsibilities as the director of the Program in Hellenic Studies. In the aftermath of the Balkan conflict of the early 1990s, Danny was appointed in 2005 to an

international experts committee on the Rehabilitation and Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage in Kosovo.

A testimony to his immense energy as a human being and as a scholar, Danny's last semester at Princeton coincided with two lifetime achievements of his scholarly career. It saw first the opening of the exhibition "Architecture as Icon," a project that explored the relationship between the representation and various levels of interpretation of architecture on or as ritual artifacts. After having spent many years in planning stages, its overwhelming success in the Princeton University Art Museum and before that in Thessaloniki, Greece, showed once more that his fresh approach to pertinent questions in the field illustrated by the beauty of artifacts could unite scholars and non-specialists in an unbroken admiration for Byzantine art. Right on the heels of the exhibition came the publication of Danny's new book, *Architecture of the Balkans*, a true magnum opus of grand scope that begins with the Diocletian period to end—not with the end of Constantinople—but with an in-depth discussion of the Ottoman contribution to the architecture of this region. Typical for many of Danny's contributions to the field, he stresses the synthetic aspects, common roots, and parallel strands of architecture in the Balkans, a region that is still reeling from political and cultural fragmentation and in which art has frequently been interpreted under aspects of national identity. In that sense this work is not only emblematic for Danny's lifelong intensive occupation with architectural history, urbanism, and the minutiae of plans and elevations, but a powerful, timely advocacy for the common and shared cultural heritage of a large portion of southeastern Europe that formed and forms a cultural landscape beyond existing borders and the succession of dynasties and states.