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UNESCO ARCHITECTURAL OBJECTS ON THE TERRITORY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

ABSTRACT Stereotypically, international society identifies the Republic of Macedonia as a former Yugoslavian area marked by the independence stigma during tragic events in the Balkans. Therefore, various scientific publications appear (particularly in the fields of international law, political science or international relations), concerning mainly the Greek-Macedonian conflict over the official name of the country. However, it is rather rare to find in Polish literature texts on remarkable cultural and architectural richness of this small but extremely important – for the Slavic-Orthodox culture – country. It is possible to observe, in Polish works, compilations on art history of South and West Slavs, but it does not extend its own scientific discipline, except the indication of necessary legal or political background. In the following discourse several considerations on culture and art objects on the territory of the modern Republic of Macedonia (FYROM official name) are presented. The text consists of three main parts with an emphasis that the last part possesses also an internal structure. Basic information concerning the main tasks and aims of UNESCO is presented in the first part of the work. The following part is concerned with the historical context of the city of Ohrid. Finally, the third part of the paper contains considerations on the architectonical objects of UNESCO located in the historical city of Ohrid. The analysis ends with final conclusions.

Key-words: UNESCO, architectural objects, historical objects, Macedonia, Balkan area, cultural, Slavic-Orthodox culture

INTRODUCTION

Stereotypically, the international community identifies the Republic of Macedonia as a former Yugoslavian area marked by the stigma of non-distant, tragic events in the Balkans. Therefore, numerous scientific publications (especially in the field of international law¹, political science or international relations) on Greek-Macedonian conflict related to the official name of the country began to appear. However, it is rather rare to find in Polish literature texts on extraordinary cultural and architectural richness of this small and significant – for the Slavic-Orthodox culture – country. In fact, it is possible to encounter in Polish literature studies concerned with art history and western South Slavs, but they do not go further than indicate the outline of necessary legal or political background. The main thesis of the present discourse aims at presenting an exceptional wealth of historical-cultural heritage of the Republic of Macedonia, with a particular attention paid to the city Ohrid, appreciated by UNESCO experts registering this architectural-urban object on the List of World Cultural Heritage. Above all, the author of the present study has focused his deliberations on presenting data about the reconstruction and renovation of the historic town of Ohrid.

The study includes discussion about the objects of art and culture on the territory of contemporary Republic of Macedonia (official name FYROM). The discourse consists of three major parts, while the last part also possesses own internal structure. The first fundamental part includes principal information about the main tasks and objectives of UNESCO. The second is concerned with the town of Ohrid itself in a historical context. UNESCO's architectural objects located within the historical town of Ohrid have been placed in the third part of the discussion. The third section contains descriptions of the most important archaeological discoveries in the city of Ohrid and its surroundings. The text finishes with substantial conclusions.

UNESCO – THE BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF THE ORGANIZATION

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was founded on 16 November 1945 on the virtue of a signed Constitutional Act. In the preamble of the document the creators underlined the unique rank of the agreement, stating that the guarantee of the peace in the world is no longer a balance of power but international cooperation.²

UNESCO is a multilateral organization, coordinating activities aiming at international collaboration in terms of development of culture, education, and science. The

¹ See more: R. Bierzanek, J. Symonides, *Prawo międzynarodowe publiczne*, Warszawa 2009, p. 398.

² See more: 'Konwencja w sprawie ochrony światowego dziedzictwa kulturalnego i naturalnego, przyjęta w Paryżu dnia 16 listopada 1972 r. przez Konferencję Generalną Organizacji Narodów Zjednoczonych dla Wychowania, Nauki i Kultury na jej siedemnastej sesji', *Dziennik Ustaw*, 76.32.190.

organization has constituted standards for international cooperation as a result of establishing international law in aforementioned areas, in order to mobilize international community to collaborate in terms of political activities, referred to as public diplomacy.³ Therefore, the organization is actively seeking to develop a culture of peace in the world, and is a promoter of dialogue between people and civilizations. The organization also supports the exchange of experience aimed at sustainable development, based on the assumption that the future generations will be able to use and enjoy the heritage – a contribution of contemporary human beings.⁴

Activation of governments and local communities to protect the idea of cultural and natural heritage, cooperation in the fields of science and education, and creation of the information society are among UNESCO's fundamental objectives. Protection of cultural heritage assumption is passed through negotiations between legislative acts and numerous programs to stimulate international cooperation in the field of culture. The Hague Convention⁵ and the Convention on the Protection of World Heritage⁶ are key instruments, creating policies in particular countries in respect of cultural heritage that shall be under special protection: especially during armed conflicts and military operations where the course of action may pose a real threat to the existence of these objects. Therefore, UNESCO created the prestigious World Heritage List where unique and exceptional objects are placed, both natural and being a result of the activities of prominent creators of art and culture.

In the field of culture, the organization pursues three strategic objectives: the development and implementation of legal norms, with particular emphasis on the protection of cultural heritage, cultural diversity and creation of dialogue between cultures and civilizations, based on the respect for human rights and democracy.

Reinforcing links between culture, and development through dissemination of good practices and exchange of experience, for example in the field of cultural policy. Sites inscribed on the World Heritage List are the common good of humanity. They are distinguished by "the highest common value" recognized within the meaning of the 1972 UNESCO Convention on the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.⁷

³ See more: 'Archived Content: Conduct of Public Diplomacy 2007 and later, including links to updated pages', Public Diplomacy Alumni Association, at <<http://publicdiplomacy.org/pages/index.php?page=archives-conduct-of-pd>>, 21 September 2013.

⁴ See more: 'About Us', UNESCO, at <<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/about-us/>>, 21 September 2013.

⁵ See more: 'The Hague conventions and declarations of 1899 and 1907, accompanied by tables of signatures, ratifications and adhesions of the various powers, and texts of reservations', at <<https://archive.org/details/hagueconventions00inteuoft>>, 21 September 2013.

⁶ 'Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage', UNESCO – WHC, at <<http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>>, 21 September 2013.

⁷ 'Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, The world Heritage Convention', UNESCO–WHC. 05/2, 2 February 2005, pp. 4-9, at <<http://whc.unesco.org/archive/opguide05-en.pdf>>, 21 October 2013.

Sites inscribed on the World Heritage List are the common good of humanity. They are distinguished by “the highest common value”, recognized within the meaning of the 1972 UNESCO Convention on the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.⁸

World Heritage is supposed to present cultural diversity and richness of nature in all regions of the world. Special care shall be assured to places classified as the World Heritage by the Countries-Parties of the Convention. The Parties are required to protect them from destruction and allow to remain unaltered as long as it is possible for the future generations. The Convention is an international agreement establishing obligations of Countries-Parties and constitutes an instrument of international cooperation.

The condition for a monument's entry on the UNESCO World Heritage List is to complete one or more of the criteria confirming uniqueness of the monument in the world scale. Places entered on the World Heritage List must comply with authenticity and integrity requirements, as defined in the ‘Operational Guidelines’ (Operational Guidelines)⁹ to the UNESCO Convention. In 2002, the World Heritage Committee adopted new rules to prepare the List. Currently, on the mentioned List there are 981 properties in 160 countries: 759 cultural, 193 natural, and 29 of a mixed character: cultural and natural. Equally important are the activities of UNESCO in the field of education, but due to limited scope of this study and a clearly defined title they will not be a subject of the analysis.

ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE OBJECTS IN THE TOWN OF OHRID – THE SELECTION

Generally speaking, the so-called “Macedonian issue” that since the nineteenth century until the present day remains one of the most complex and also the most difficult issues of international politics in the Balkan region, and the eternal apple of discord between Serbs, Bulgarians and Greeks, whose echoes are possible to be found in both politics and history of art and culture of Macedonia. That is why, each of the above nations assigns itself the authorship of the Macedonian monuments, especially monuments on the terri-

⁸ The basis of all activities related to the World Heritage Convention of UNESCO on the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. The text of the Convention was adopted at the 17th session of the General Conference of UNESCO in 1972 in Paris. After ratification by 20 states the Convention entered into force in 1975, the first session of the World Heritage Committee held in Paris in 1977 the Committee began the creation of the World Heritage List. According to Article 1 of the Convention of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage for cultural goods shall be: monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements and structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave and grouping, these items with exceptional universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; teams: the building of separate or that because of their architecture, their homogeneity or fusion with the landscape are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history; sites: works of man or the common works of man and nature, as well as the area, as well as archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological.

⁹ ‘Operational Guidelines...’, pp. 4-9.

tory of Ohrid (Bulgarians consider them to be Bulgarian, Serbs to be Serbian and Greeks to be Greek or Byzantine). This situation is explained to a large extent by the liquidity of the borders in the region, both these political, national, and ethnic minorities. The territory of the contemporary Macedonia is one of the trouble spots in international relations, and this fact has not changed over the millennia of south-eastern Europe.

The key to understand the diversity of Balkans, described above, is the history and interpretation of its historical legacy. In fact, in the early history of Macedonia, the country was within the Bulgarian borders and the country of Macedonian-Slav of tsar Samuil resulted from creation of Macedonian tribes of elders, and constituted a kind of first Bulgarian state's continuation. On the other hand, there was an evidence of the existence of a new, independent, and freestanding centre, both in political and cultural life, concentrated around the center of Ohrid and Prespan, disseminating its own creations to the whole Balkan Slavic.¹⁰

Art historians claim that the specific and particular original kind of Macedonian architecture and sacred art is owing to two historical facts. The first is creation of a great Slavic religious centre located by the lakes of Ohrid and Prespan by St. Climent and St. Naum, while the second is creation of Tsar Samuil's country, in the neighbourhood of the centre. The emergence of the two saints was not a matter of coincidence, since these territories ran along major routes between the Adriatic and Aegean Seas, the famous Via Egnatia (see above) connecting the shores of Italy through the peninsula of Thessaloniki, Constantinople and then Asia Minor, throughout the Middle East. Therefore, the described area contains priceless luxuries and monuments from the early prehistoric times, dating back to the time of myken heritage through all periods of ancient Greece, the legacy of Illyrian, Hellenistic, Roman domination, the Middle Ages to the modern times. It is not a coincidence that the Church started missionary activity among the Slavs of Byzantine in Macedonia, and the Slavonic language became the basis for translation of the Bible and the whole church liturgy, and thus became the canvas and the primary motive in contemporary sacred art and soaked Hellenistic and Byzantine traditions. However, the beginnings of church architecture, church-related activities of St. Climent and St. Naum in Ohrid¹¹, are not finally explained yet, as a result of archaeological research fragments of the Islamic imaret foundations' construction – "jamia" – were identified together with the church built by St. Climent and containing his tomb.

A small temple of a compact trykonch shape, where the larger cross-dome narthex was added, probably came from the times of tsar Samuil. Similar structures are possible to find in the close surrounding of the Lakes Ohrid and Prespan, and they are characterized by architectural features of the east, or a simplified form of a Byzantine dome over the square centre (see the example of St. German church by the Prespan Lake in the beginning of the eleventh century¹²). However, the most important and also the most

¹⁰ W. Molè, *Sztuka Słowian południowych*, Wrocław 1962, pp. 49-58.

¹¹ D. Koco, 'Umetnost u Makedoniji' in *Istorija naroda Jugoslavije*, Vol. 1, Beograd 1953, pp. 194-296, 488-492.

¹² M. Zloković, 'Stare crkve u oblastima Prespe i Ohrida', *Starinar*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1924/1925), pp. 116-120.

remarkable monument of the early architecture in Macedonia and simultaneously the most interesting religious building on the Balkan Peninsula is the Church of St. Sophia in Ohrid¹³ (originally it could be a cathedral from St. Climent's period).

IMPORTANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS IN OHRID

Antique theatre in Varos – Ohrid 1960-1962. First archaeological excavations performed by the National Museum of Ohrid. The building was constructed in the 2nd c. B.C. and later adjusted to the needs of the Roman society in the 2nd c. AD. (an arena for gladiators' fights has been constructed together with cages for wild animals). During these first excavations the famous miniature theatrical mask made of ivory has been found, among others.

Archaeological excavations in Imaret (Plaoshnik) 1964-1967-1971. An early Christian polyconic church was discovered (tetraconch), with remains of magnificent mosaic decorations on the floor. This monumental early Christian temple is located approximately 10 m. north of St. Climent's church "St. Panteleimon". The archaeological actions as well as the conservation and restoration works were performed by the National Museum – Ohrid and the Institute for preservation of cultural monuments – Ohrid.¹⁴

Preventive archaeological excavations of the site Zgrada fond II in Karabegomala (Ohrid plains) 1967. During the process, remains of the goddess Isis' temple were discovered, as well as two statues of the goddess: one dated the 3rd C. BC and the other from the Roman period (2nd c. AD). The explorations were performed by the Institute for preservation of cultural monuments – Ohrid

Charsija (Old Bazaar) – Ohrid 1975-1977. Preventive archaeological excavations were performed at four points. During the process the following were discovered: cultural layers from the iron age, Macedonian-Hellenic graves, antique furnace for baking bricks (opek). The explorations were performed by the Institute and Museum – Ohrid.¹⁵

Antique theater in Varos (Ohrid) 1977. Archaeological explorations in the western and northern parts of the auditorium. Several rows of stone seats were discovered in a small area. Archaeological excavations of the site Deboj (Ohrid) in 1978-1979. A large part of the central necropolis in Lychnidos was discovered, containing graves of the Macedonian-Hellenic period (3rd-2nd c. BC) and graves from the Roman period

¹³ F. Forlati, C. Brandi, Y. Froidevaux, 'Saint Sophia of Ochrida. Preservation and Restoration of the Building and its Frescoes. Report of the Unesco Mission of 1951', Unesco, 1953, pp. 1-27, at <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0000/000012/001235eo.pdf>>; R. Ljubinković, B. Cipan, Z. Blažii, *Konzervatorski radovi na crkvi sv. Sofije u Obridu*, Beograd 1955, p. 34, D. Bošković, *Osnovi srednjevekovne arhitekture*, Beograd 1947, p. 96; D. Koco, 'Crkvata Sveta Sofija vo Ohrid', *Godišen zbornik na Filozofski fakultet*, No. 2 (1949).

¹⁴ See more: The Archaeology Department at the Institute for Protection of the Monuments of Culture and Museum – Ohrid, at <<http://baleski.academia.edu/Departments/Archaeology>>, 3 May 2014.

¹⁵ See more: 'European Heritage Events', European Heritage Days, at <<http://europeanheritagedays.com>>.

(1st-3rd c. AD). On the western side of this area, remains of an early Christian three-nave basilica with mosaic floors in the narthex were discovered. The explorations were performed by the Institute and Museum – Ohrid.¹⁶

Antique theater in Varos (Ohrid) 1984-1985. Archaeological explorations in the western and northern part of the theatron (auditorium). The actions were performed by the Institute for preservation of cultural monuments and the National Museum – Ohrid with the assistance of brigadiers in working actions and the soldiers of the Ohrid garrison.¹⁷

Archaeological excavation of the site Kozluk (at the Ohrid exit leading to Struga) in 1983-1984. Parts of villa rustica were discovered, and also remains of thermae and rooms comprising the House of love that was a part of this roman villa dating the 4th c. Archaeological explorations of Neolithic site Dolno Trnovo in 1986. These explorations were part of the project “Neolith and Eneolith in Southwestern Macedonia”, implemented by the Institute and Museum – Ohrid, Institute, Museum and Gallery – Bitola, and Institute and Museum – Prilep. During the explorations remains of prehistoric (Neolithic) houses were discovered, along with numerous fragments of ceramic dishes, flint and stone tools.¹⁸

Archaeological explorations of the site Zlastrana¹⁹ near the village Gorno Sredorece (Debarca), Ohridsko, 1988. During the process, cultural layers of one of the oldest Neolithic settlements in Macedonia were discovered. The activities were performed by the Institute and Museum – Ohrid. Archaeological explorations of the site Kutlina near the village Velmej, Ohrid, 1990-1992. Remains of a neolithic settlement were discovered (copper age) with a significant archaeological movable material dating back that period. The activities were performed by the Institute and Museum – Ohrid.

Systematic archaeological excavations in the area of Ohrid's higher hill as part of the project “The urbanization of Lychnidos”.²⁰ During the process the vertical stratigraphy of the area around the citadel (Samuil's Fortress) and the ancient Macedonian grave of the site “Karagulevci”, located in immediate proximity west of the Antique theatre, were explored. The activities were coordinated by the Faculty of Philosophy – Ohrid, and the Institute and Museum – Ohrid.

Plaoshnik 1999-2002. Revisionist and systematic excavations of the area around the church of St. Climent Panteleimon, as part of the project “Renewal of the St. Climent's church ‘St. Panteleimon on Plaoshnik in Ohrid’”. Over 2000 graves dated 9th-15th century were discovered, and a complete monumental early Christian basilica with an atrium on the north side, a narthex with a mosaic floor in the western part, and a baptis-

¹⁶ See more: at <<http://www.seemosaics.org/about-project/conservation-institutions/>>.

¹⁷ ‘Antique theater in Varos (Ohrid)’, at <<http://www.ohrid.com.mk/archaeology/archaeology.asp?ID=381>>, 3 May 2014.

¹⁸ See more: ‘Sites and Attractions of Ohrid’, Macedonia Experience, at <<http://www.macedoniaexperience.com/about-macedonia/2012-01-26-18-01-04/sightseeing-in-ohrid>>, 3 May 2014.

¹⁹ ‘Archaeological explorations of the site Zlastrana’, at <<http://www.ohrid.com.mk/archaeology/archaeology.asp?ID=381>>, 3 May 2014.

²⁰ A. Serafimova, ‘The urbanization of Lychnidos’, Ohrid – World Heritage Site, at <http://www.academia.edu/1822781/Ohrid_-_World_Heritage_Site>, 3 May 2014.

tery with magnificent mosaic ornaments on the floor. St. Climent's church, located in the central part of the basilica, was restored over the same foundations and dedicated on August 11, 2002. The overall work was realized by the Institute for Preservation of Cultural Monuments and the National Museum – Ohrid.²¹

Antique theatre 1999-2001. In this period the most extensive archaeological excavations were performed, revealing complete theatron, the diazome, and most of the arena. Conservation and restoration were also executed, and the presentation was performed together with the opening of Ohrid summer festival 2001 and the spectacle "Macedonian Odyssey 2001" directed by Ivan Popovski. Several individual residential buildings were relocated in order to implement the mentioned project. The archaeological explorations gave valuable results: an epigraphic monument was discovered representing a basic display of the city Lychnidos' name, as well as 280 graves and grave constructions, remains of two churches – one in the south-western part, and the other in the north-eastern part of the site. The actions were performed by the Institute and Museum – Ohrid. The conservation project was developed by the Faculty of Architecture – Skopje. The illumination project was performed by the "Blakom" company – Skopje.²²

Samuil's fortress/citadel²³ 2000-2002. Extensive systematic archaeological explorations were performed on the citadel's area. Six water cisterns were discovered, numerous remains of buildings from the Macedonian-Hellenic, late antiquity, and early medieval period, as well as remains of Dzeladin bey's sarai in the southern half. At the same time conservation and restoration of ramparts and towers of the citadel were executed, and a larger part of the complex "Gorna Porta"²⁴ was also restored. The actions were performed by the Institute and Museum – Ohrid.

Gorna Porta Ohrid 2001-2002. Archaeological explorations in the area on the exterior and interior side, east of Gorna Porta, resulted in discovery of 145 graves and tombs with abundant grave goods dating to the archaic, Macedonian-Hellenic and Roman period. Here for the first time in Ohrid the oldest entombments were discovered (6th-4th c. BC) and in the grave N. 132 a golden mask was discovered, a golden glove, and some seventy other golden, silver, bronze, iron, ceramic and amber objects. The activities were realized as part of the project "Conservation and restoration of Samuil's fortress in Ohrid", performed by the Institute and Museum – Ohrid.²⁵

Deboj 2, 2001. Archaeological explorations in the area next to the northern rampart on the exterior side, on the interior side of the most exposed northern part of the for-

²¹ *Macedonian Archaeological News*, Vol. 2, No. 7 (2010), at <<http://ancientworldonline.blogspot.com/2009/12/open-access-journal-macedonian.html>>; 'Unrest Instead of Spiritual Serenity at Plaoshnik in Ohrid', Independent.mk, 5 June 2014, at <<http://www.independent.mk/articles/5778/Unrest+Instead+of+Spiritual+Serenity+at+Plaoshnik+in+Ohrid#sthash.NoGqRBXX.dpuf>>, 2 May 2014.

²² 'Antique theater', at <<http://www.ohrid.com.mk/archaeology/archaeology.asp?ID=381>>, 3 May 2014.

²³ *Macedonian Archaeological News*, Vol. 2, No. 7 (2010), at <<http://ancientworldonline.blogspot.com/2009/12/open-access-journal-macedonian.html>>, 2 May 2014.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

trese' suburban area, along the eastern rampart on the exterior side around the gate from the Turkish period, and south of Dolna Porta along the rampart on the interior side, in the eastern part of St. Mother of God Bolnicka's churchyard. During the process graves from the Roman and Medieval period with grave goods were discovered, as well as remains from Tashula's sarai (?), constructed by Dzeladin bey in the first half of the 19th c. (in the interior of the most exposed part of the fortress looking towards Deboj to the north). The activities were performed as a part of the "Conservation and restoration of Samuil's fortress in Ohrid" project, performed by the Institute and Museum – Ohrid.²⁶

Plaoshnik 2003-2005. Archaeological explorations west to the narthex of the monumental three-nave basilica, and accompanying explorations under the mosaic floors in the narthex and the baptistery. Conservation actions: lifting, cleaning, and placing a new base on the mosaic surface in the baptistery of the basilica, and also placing a preventive cover construction over the old one. The activities were performed by the NU Institute and Museum – Ohrid.

Samuil's fortress 2003-2005. Smaller archaeological explorations in one area of the citadel, as well as conservation and restoration of the central rampart which divides the citadel in two. The activities were performed by the NU Institute and Museum – Ohrid. Preventive archaeological explorations along the street "Tzar Samuil" and in the area south of St. Sophia. On "Tzar Samuil" street the following findings were evidenced: a base made of massive stone plaques near Dolna Porta, which probably was the base of the street and the gate dating to the 4th c., 1,15 m. lower than the one standing today (a project performed and financed by a German company aided the presentation of the stone base by placing a metal net); remains from an early Christian basilica were discovered near the churches Bolnicki; a rampart wall was discovered leading from the Robevci Museum to the Savinoci house in an oblique line; near the church St. Nikola Gerakomija a vaulted object (late antique tomb) was discovered; south of St. Sophia, on a small square in front of the Boevci's family houses, massive walls with frescoes and other marks were discovered, which indicates that the remains of the building with painted walls are actually parts of the archbishopric palace of the Ohrid Archbishopric. The finds are protected by a covering high-strength concrete plaque. The activities were performed by the Institute and Museum – Ohrid.²⁷

Church of "All Saints", 15th c. 2005. Accompanying archaeological excavations in the area surrounding the church. During the process graves were discovered, estimated to date not earlier than the 13th c. Also were discovered remains of an older church under the foundations of the church from the 15th c., built with stone and lime mortar. The apse of the old church has three supportive pillars discovered as eaves. The southern parts of the old church have been destroyed with the future construction of additional rooms of the church from the 15th c. built with stone and mud. The objective

²⁶ P. Kuman (ed.), *Analysis and Reform of Cultural Heritage Policies in South East Europe*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg 2008.

²⁷ 'NATO ASI, Ohrid 2014, Arithmetic of Hyperelliptic Curves, August 25 – September 5, 2014', NATO Advanced Study Institute Ohrid, 2014, at <nato.rist.org>, 3 April 2014.

of these excavations was to liberate the church from the piled soil acting as a source of moisture penetrating the interior and damaging the frescoes. The activities were performed by the Institute and Museum – Ohrid.²⁸

Vevcani, site Sredselo, 2005. During usual cultivation of the land remains of a sacral building and a necropolis were unexpectedly discovered. The archaeological exploration has brought to a conclusion that there is a monumental five-nave basilica with three apses in question, the construction of which started in 1895 (a plaque with an inscription was discovered, which had been placed along with the foundation stone), its construction was continued in the 20th c. (1927-1928), but in 1947 it was demolished and covered with soil. The activities were performed by the Institute and Museum – Ohrid. Excavations of the site “St. Chetirieset machenici (Forty martyrs)” by the street “Boro Shain”, south of the Alchevci’s house, 2005-2007. During the process cultural layers in the interior of the one-nave small church were discovered with the presence of medieval graves from the 13th c. and other mobile archaeological findings. The activities were performed by the NU Institute and Museum – Ohrid.²⁹

Plaoshnik 2007. Extensive systematical archaeological excavations in all areas of south, northwest and northeast of the renewed St. Climent’s church “St. Panteleimon” and the three-nave basilica surrounding it (1999-2002). These excavations are one of the phases of the mega-project “The renewal of St. Climent’s university on Plaoshnik in Ohrid”. The explorations revealed cultural layers of bronze age (ceramics with matt paintings), iron age (pits of ceramic fragments and so-called “Macedonian bronzes”), Macedonian-Hellenic and Roman period (numerous ceramic objects, marble plastics, bronze figurines of Daedalus, Dionysus, Zeus etc), late antique and early Byzantine period (ceramics, enamelled objects etc.), objects from the early middle ages, high middle ages, late middle ages, up to the first half of the 20th c. At the same time conservation activities have been undertaken upon the discovered mosaic surfaces in different places of the area. The activities are performed by the NU Institute and Museum – Ohrid, under supervision of PhD Vera Bitrakova Grozdanova and with the financial support of the Direction for Preservation of the Cultural Heritage, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia (provided by the Budget of the Republic of Macedonia for 2007, program 2B). This project is supervised by the Supervisory Board for the Renewal of St. Clement’s University.³⁰

SUMMARY

The presented above examples of architectural monuments in Macedonia represent only a selection of the most interesting and the most important sites of the area. That is

²⁸ ‘Church of “All Saints”’, at <<http://www.ohrid.com.mk/archaeology/archaeology.asp?ID=381>>, 5 May 2014.

²⁹ See more: <<http://www.ohrid.com.mk/archaeology/archaeology.asp?ID=381>>, 3 May 2014.

³⁰ See more: <<http://www.ohrid.com.mk/archaeology/archaeology.asp?ID=381>>, 5 May 2014.

why a rapidly growing number of tourists appreciates the beauty of the depicted region. According to the National Statistical Office of Macedonia, in the period from January to October 2013, compared to the same period of time in the previous year, the number of tourists increased by 6.1%, the number of domestic tourists decreased by 2.8%, and the number of foreign tourists increased by 14.1%. In the same time the number of overnight stays increased by 0.1%, the number of domestic tourists overnight stays decreased by 4.6%, while overseas tourists overnight stays increased by 8.2%.³¹

The legend says that in the medieval city of Ohrid there were 365 churches and for each of them one day of a year shall be dedicated. Ohrid seems to be a pearl of the Balkan culture and art, a place worth recommending even for the most experienced enthusiasts of medieval and Byzantine culture. Ohrid is also the cradle of Slavic Christianity and, as various sources quote, the beginning of the Slavic language in the form of Glagolitic and Cyrillic. Unfortunately, the “ordinary mortals” do not possess such knowledge, and it would be delightful if the value of such places was commemorated in the history books directed not only to the chosen inner circle of experts and connoisseurs of art. The text presents descriptions of only some of them, but even this short, architectural excursion into nearby Balkan regions shall at least encourage to visit this tiny country of Macedonia, haunted throughout centuries by political winds.

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