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PROJECT “INTEGRATING BULGARIA-GREECE CROSS-BORDER
SIGNIFICANCE HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL ASSETS INTO
ONE SUSTAINABLE THEMATIC TOURIST DESTINATION”



**CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CULTURAL
TOURISM IN THE CROSS-BORDER REGION
BULGARIA - GREECE**

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**SOUTH-WEST UNIVERSITY „NEOFIT RILSKI”
FACULTY OF ARTS**

**CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CULTURAL TOURISM IN THE
CROSS-BORDER REGION BULGARIA - GREECE**



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Blagoevgrad, 2019



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The overall objective of the project is the practical and mental preservation and rehabilitation of cross-border significance archeological and cultural assets in order to be designed and developed one sustainable cross-border tourist thematic destination. All actions are orientated towards the development of an approach which will contribute on managing and integrating cultural assets in the regions of Amphipoli and Blagoevgrad.

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SITE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE ANCIENT CITY OF AMPHIPOLIS

Konstantinos Papadopoulos, Elena Kountouri, Stavroula Papoti

Abstract: The archaeological site of the ancient city of Amphipolis is located near the delta of the river Strymonas in the regional unit of Serres (Central Macedonia, Greece). Due to the beauty of its natural landscape and because it includes the remnants of many impressive ancient structures (fortifications, wooden bridge, Gymnasium, villas, Christian basilicas, at al.) is considered one of the finest archaeological sites in Northern Greece, and attracts many visitors. In 2017 the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports developed a Master Plan for the site, consisting of three autonomous parts; the first two concern the archaeological documentation of the site's monuments and the measures for their protection, whereas the third deals with the management of the site. The third part of the Plan is presented in this paper synoptically. Its basic objective was to propose all the actions and works necessary for the maximization of the promotion of the archaeological site and the upgrading of its infrastructures. Special care was taken during its preparation in order for all the proposed interventions concerning the site's infrastructures not to have any negative effect on the preservation of its monuments.

Keywords: Management planning; heritage site; historical landscape; archaeological routes; visitor facilities

INTRODUCTION

The archaeological site of the ancient city of Amphipolis is located near the delta of the river Strymonas, in the regional unit of Serres (Central Macedonia, Greece). The site, due to the beauty of its natural landscape and because it includes the remains of many impressive ancient structures (fortifications, wooden bridge, Gymnasium, villas, Christian basilicas, at al.), is considered one of the finest archaeological sites in Northern Greece. Consequently, it attracts visitors even back from the 1990's when the first major excavations projects were completed and the site's archaeological museum was constructed. The recent impressive discoveries at the nearby Kasta tumulus have increased generally the interest of the public to Amphipolis, and consequently they have led to a significant increase of visitors at the cultural sites of the region.

Soon after the discoveries, the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports secured the funding of projects for both the Kasta monuments and the site of the ancient city. The project for the latter-mentioned site regards the construction of walking paths and various visitor facilities in the central part of the archaeological site. These works are already being carried out within the ongoing Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020, entitled *Integrating Bulgaria – Greece cross-border significance historical and archeological assets into one sustainable thematic tourist destination – BORDERLESS CULTURE* and funded by the European Union.

In order for these works to be the first in a series of new projects in a coherent and predetermined sequence, the Ministry developed, in 2017, a Master Plan for the ancient city of Amphipolis. The Plan was based on previous relative studies (Karadedos et al., 2008; Malama et al., 2016) and was drawn-up in three autonomous parts. The first part concerns the archaeological documentation of the site (Tolia-Christakou and Euthymiou, 2017); the second part regards the works that are necessary for the protection of the monuments of the archaeological site (Malama et al., 2017); whereas

the third part deals with the management of the site. The Master Plan for the ancient city of Amphipolis was approved by the Greek Minister of Culture and Sports in January of 2018, after a unanimously positive recommendation of the Central Archaeological Council of the Ministry.

In this paper the third part of the Master Plan is presented in a concise manner. Its basic objective was to propose all the actions and works necessary for the maximization of the promotion of the archaeological site and the upgrading of its infrastructures.

THE CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SITE

The importance of the archaeological site of ancient Amphipolis is due to a number of reasons which can be summarized as follows:

(a) First of all, the location of the site, which is close to the estuary of the river Strymonas and occupies a focal point of the network of roads connecting Macedonia with Thrace as well as the mainland of Central and Eastern Macedonia with the coasts and the adjacent island of Thassos (Fig. 1).

(b) The fact that numerous monuments exist in the wider area (outside from the fortification of ancient Amphipolis, but, in any case, very close to the archaeological site).

(c) The significant historical role played by this city for a very long time, from its establishment in the classical period (437 BC) to the early Christian period (7th century AD).

(d) The large number of monuments that have been unearthed, which are from all the historical periods that the city was important.

(e) The great importance of many of these monuments, due either to their historical aspects (fortifications) and architectural characteristics (basilicas), or to their scarcity (wooden bridge).

And (f) the fact that only a very small part of the ancient city has been excavated (although, as known from the location of its defensive walls, it was very extensive) and therefore potentially many other monuments will be revealed in the future.



Figure 1: Map showing part of Northern Greece, with Amphipolis highlighted

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

The archaeological site of Amphipolis faces several challenges which can be divided into two main categories:

(1) The difficulty of perceiving by the visitors the breadth of the ancient city and its cohesion. This is mainly due to the dispersion of the excavated monuments, the non-existence of some kind of interconnection of the monuments, and the existence of the modern settlement of the old Amphipolis within the walls of the ancient city.

(2) The problems of protection and conservation of the monuments, among which the most important are the following: (i) The deterioration of the weather-exposed remnants of ancient structures due to the lack of protective shelters. (ii) The destruction caused by the roots of trees and wild flora of the area, which are also altering the character of the historical landscape.

GENERAL PROPOSALS

Upgrading the ability of the visitors to perceive the large extent of the ancient city and the various correlations of its individual monuments

It is suggested the creation of a network of archaeological routes within the site. These routes must -in addition to making it easier for visitors to reach the various monuments, following predetermined paths- to highlight the feasible and urban fabric of the ancient city. That is, to show the adjoining road axes of the monuments (and their orientation), as well as to show that the monuments are part of a local sub-unit (e.g. the Acropolis or a neighborhood with buildings of common characteristics) and the general unity of the ancient city.

It is also proposed to create three-dimensional digital representations of the monuments, not individual but as units of the ancient city in its (known) whole. It would be very useful to include the geomorphology of the surrounding area in the representation of the city. The possibility of viewing these digital representations is proposed to be given in a specially designed room of the archaeological museum of Amphipolis, as well as, via internet or electronic installations, when visitors approach the various monuments of the city.

Highlighting the historical landscape

To highlight the natural landscape of the area and its relation to the history of the ancient city, it is proposed the creation of rest areas (with benches and tables) for the visitors, under light shelters, at selected sites (of many) of the archaeological site, which have a special natural beauty and a wide view of the surrounding area. Close to the rest areas, suitable signage will inform visitors of the most important historical events that took place in the area that they observe and how the morphology of this area influenced or caused the aforementioned events.

Promoting the relations of the ancient city with the other important monuments of the wider region

As above-mentioned, in the wider area of Amphipolis there are many other important archaeological sites and monuments. The historical relevance of these sites to the ancient city of Amphipolis is as close as their neighborhood. In order to highlight the relations between the archaeological sites of the wider region, it is proposed to

create a separate space in the archaeological museum of Amphipolis with exhibits and informative material on the latest proposal

New use of existing building infrastructure aiming to attract more visitors

Also within the framework of the Interreg Greece - Bulgaria 2014-2020 Programme, a conversion of the old Amphipolis School building into a Visitor Information Center has been planned. This building is very close to the core of the ancient city, and its transformation will most likely have positive results as a new tourist attraction. The use for similar purposes of other modern „emblematic” buildings of the area is recommended, such as the Railway Station buildings and the „carpentry” adjacent to the northern defensive wall of the ancient city.

Uncovering other parts of the ancient city

Finally, for the gradual revelation and promotion of other parts of the ancient city, it is proposed the preparation of a plan for carrying out new excavations and for making new land expropriations. The drawing up of this plan must be based on the optimal utilization of the municipal land, but above all with the primary aim of expanding the nuclei of the already discovered monuments.

PROPOSALS FOR IMMEDIATE WORKS

Creating archeological routes

The construction of a network of walking paths linking isolated monuments of the vast archaeological site is one of the most needed works for the upgrading of the spatial experience of the site’s visitors. To this end, detailed proposals were made, within the preparation of the Plan. Three separate archeological routes were designed (Fig. 2): the first close to the archeological museum (Figs 3), the second in the centre of the site (Christian Acropolis and nearby excavated monument, Figs 4, 5), and the third parallel to the northern fortification of the ancient city (Fig. 6). Furthermore, various visitor facilities, also proposed for construction, are pinpointed in the design drawings



Fig. 2: The proposed archaeological routes

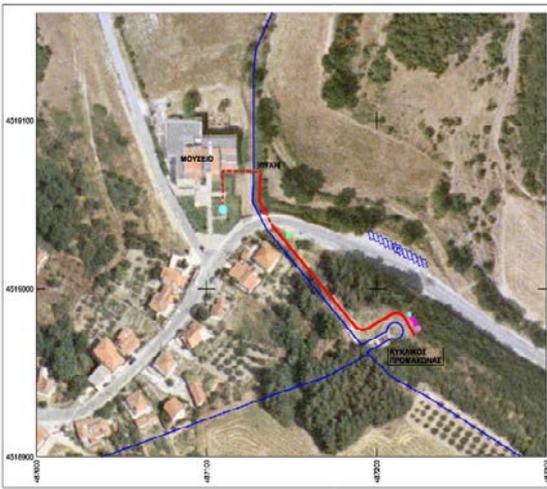


Fig 3: 1st walking path: Museum – Circular Bastion

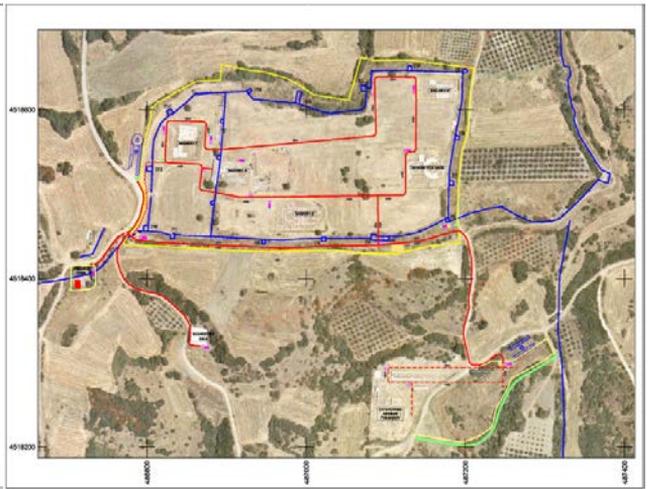


Figure 4: 2nd walking path: Villas – Christian Acropolis – Ancient Gymnasium

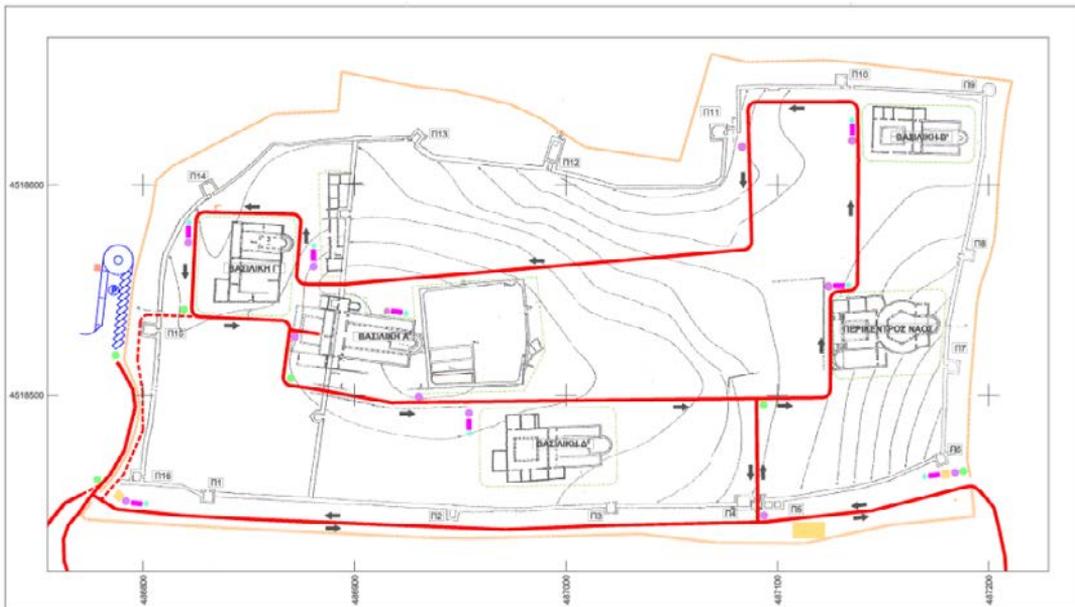


Fig. 5: The walking path at the Christian Acropolis

The routes will, not only, facilitate the visitors' approach to the monuments, but also will give emphasis to various significant characteristics of the ancient city (Fortification Gates, Roads, etc.) as well as to the idyllic natural environment.

It was also proposed for the walking paths to be made of a ground grid floor filled with crushed gravel dark hue, with prefabricated concrete curbs at the flanks. In this way, the paths will be very distinctive without being at all invasive. Moreover, if for new excavation (or other) purposes, there will be need for any alteration to the routes, this will be possible very easily and without significant cost due to the materials used for the paths.

Parking areas for coaches and private vehicles will also be constructed in appropriate positions, close to the start and ending of every archaeological route (Figs 3 - 6).

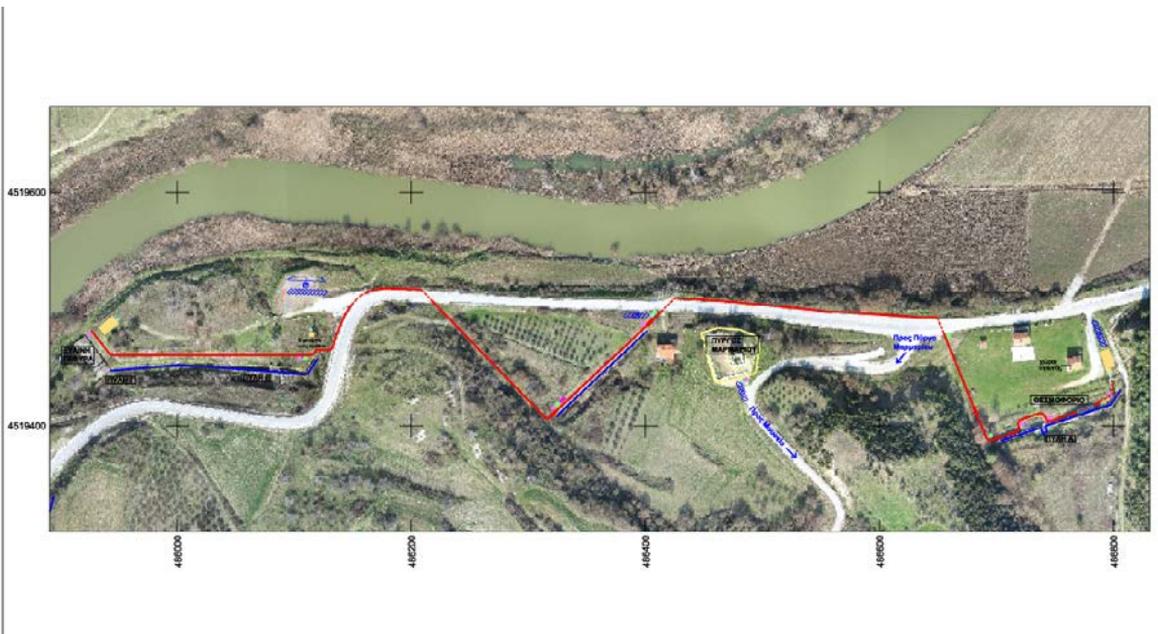


Fig. 6: 3rd walking path: Northern Fortification

Upgrading visitor facilities

In order for the, relatively old, existing infrastructures of the site to be upgraded, a separate study was carried out, which is presented elsewhere in this Compendium (Papadopoulos et al., 2019).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The management plan presented in this paper concerns one of the most important archaeological sites in northern Greece, that of the ancient city of Amphipolis.

The plan basic objective was to propose all the actions and works necessary for the maximization of the promotion of the site and the upgrading of its infrastructures. The ultimate aim of the plan is to contribute to the sustainable tourism development in the region.

Special care was taken during the preparation of the plan in order for all the proposed interventions concerning the site's infrastructures not to have any negative effect on the preservation of its monuments.

Many from the plan's proposals have already begun to be implemented, mostly in the central part of the archeological site (Christian Acropolis), and they are soon to be appropriately followed.

Acknowledgements: The authors are grateful to Demosthenes Svolopoulos, architect, head of the Directorate of Restoration of Ancient Monuments of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, for his useful advices concerning various proposals of the management plan for Amphipolis. The authors are also thankful to Maria Tsirakoglou, surveying engineer, staff member of the Department of Topographic and Cadastral Surveying and Geoinformatic Engineering of the Ministry, for her valuable help during the preparation of the drawings of the plan.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF THE ANCIENT CITY OF AMPHIPOLIS SITE AND VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Konstantinos Papadopoulos, Nikolaos Chatzidakis, Dimitria Malamidou

Abstract: The ancient city of Amphipolis, which is located close to the estuary of the Strymonas River, is one of the most popular archaeological destinations in Northern Greece. This is due to the many significant multi-period monuments that have been excavated there (ancient Gymnasium, hellenistic villas, byzantine basilicas, at al.), and also to the fact that the city is neighboring with other important heritage sites such as the remarkable Macedonian Tomb at the Kasta tumulus and the impressive Lion of Amphipolis. In 2017, the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports developed a Master Plan for the archaeological site of the ancient city of Amphipolis. One of the main objectives of the Plan is the upgrading of the site's infrastructures. That is why a relative study was carried out, as a continuation of the Plan, which is presented in this paper. The proposals of the study regard the forms and materials of various visitor facilities, such as walking paths, outdoor furnishings (benches, tables, trash receptacles), information signs, et al. The basic design aims of the study were for all the new infrastructures of the archeological site to be very durable but also aesthetically distinctive and subtle, therefore non-competitive to the surrounding antiquities and natural landscape.

Keywords: heritage site; architectural design; visitor facilities; walking paths; information signs

INTRODUCTION

The ancient city of Amphipolis was occupying a large area adjacent to the estuary of the Strymonas River, which is in the modern-day regional unit of Serres (Central Macedonia, Greece). This idyllic location, which was (and still is) on a focal point of the network of roads connecting Macedonia with Thrace, is also close to the Pangaion hills which in ancient times had vast forests (very useful for building ships) as well as rich gold and silver mines. Consequently, the city played an important historic role for many centuries. That is why many remarkable monuments from various periods of antiquity have been excavated at the archeological site of the ancient city (ancient Gymnasium, hellenistic and roman villas, byzantine basilicas, at al.).

The site hosts an archeological museum with many beautiful findings from the excavations in the ancient city, and also in its close vicinity there are many other important heritage sites such as the remarkable Macedonian Tomb at the Kasta tumulus and the impressive Lion of Amphipolis. For all the aforementioned reasons, Amphipolis is one of the most popular archaeological destinations in Northern Greece.

In 2017, the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports developed a Master Plan for the archaeological site of the ancient city of Amphipolis. One of the main objectives of this Plan was to propose all the actions and works necessary for the maximization of the promotion of the archaeological site and the upgrading of its infrastructures (Papadopoulos et al., 2019). That is why, following the approval of the Master Plan by the Greek Minister of Culture and Sports, a study was carried out aiming at the detailed design of the site's new infrastructures. The proposals of the study mostly regard the forms and materials of various visitor facilities, such as walking paths, outdoor furnishings (benches, tables, and trash receptacles), information signs, et al. This study is synoptically presented herein.

GENERAL CONCEPT

The basic objective of the study was to design infrastructures which are durable and able to meet the new demanding needs of the archeological site, and at the same aesthetically distinctive and subtle, therefore non-competitive to the surrounding antiquities and natural landscape. Therefore, one of the most important design decisions was the selection of the basic material for the new constructions.

For small constructions (signs, trash receptacles and steps), it was decided to use sandblasting stainless steel sheet. Stainless steel was considered the most suitable material as: (i) its high durability does not require maintenance of structures that are continuously exposed to weather conditions; (ii) it is not oxidized and therefore do not leak into the historical soil layers of its oxidation components; and (iii) it has a high but rather neutral aesthetic effect

For ramps and shelters it was decided to use galvanized beams which have similar properties but lower manufacturing costs. The buildings will be made of metal panels, with a look that resembles the stainless steel constructions, so that the whole intervention has similar characteristics.

Generally, the new constructions were designed to be quite simple and to have close to the minimum necessary dimensions.

DETAILED DESIGN PROPOSALS

Walking paths

Walking paths are proposed to be constructed in accordance with the specifications described in the approved Master Plan, i.e. ground grid floor filled with crushed gravel dark hue, bounded by prefabricated concrete curbs (Fig. 1a). Where the course of the path is parallel to the ground contours, an open drain should be constructed from the highest side. Where, in the course of paths, there are terrain slopes, it is proposed to construct stairs with riser from sandblasted stainless steel sheet (5mm) and floor similar to that of the paths (Fig.2a). The curbs will be placed at the sides of the steps.

Alternatively to the curb path, it is suggested that the routes that are in the vicinity of monuments (e.g. within Christian Acropolis) to be constructed without curbs (Fig.1b), so that the intervention will be even milder. At the various spots in the paths without curbs where stairs are needed, they are proposed to be constructed with sandblasting stainless steel boxes and floor similar to that of the paths (Fig. 2b).

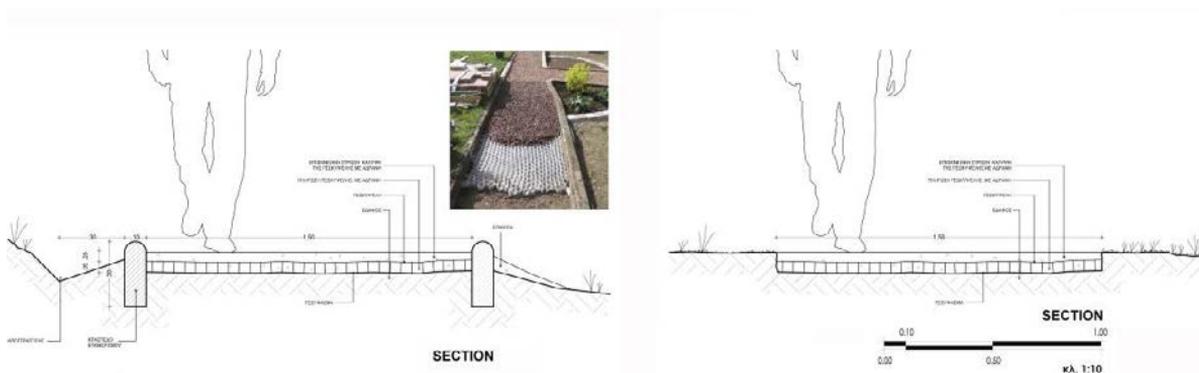


Fig. 1: Walking paths, a. With curbs, b. Without curbs.

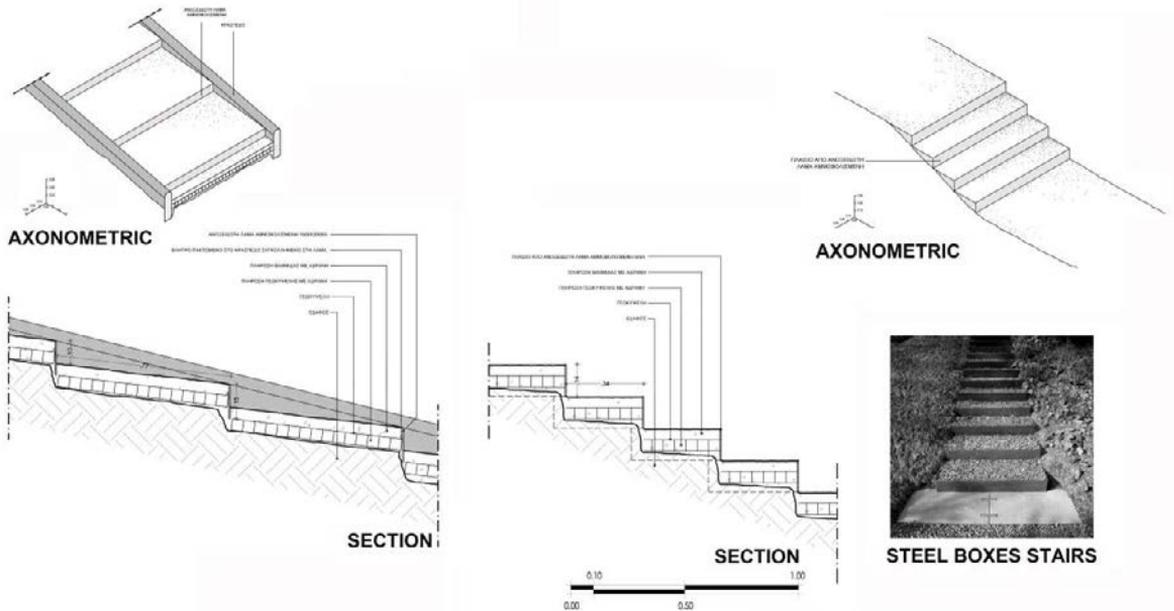


Fig. 2: Stairs, a. With curbs, b. Without curbs

Metal ramps

In the archaeological site there are areas where there is need for some kind of bridging (e.g. above gaps or friable walls). To cover this need, metal ramps will be constructed in these locations, the typical form of which is shown in Figure 3. The ramps will be consisted of a frame made of UPN and IPE galvanized beams which will hold galvanized floor grilles. Horizontal and vertical elements of the rail will be galvanized blades and rods. The construction will be based on individual foundations of reinforced concrete. The reason it is designed so, is that it is distinct from antiquities and secondly because the metal as mentioned will be used in new constructions.

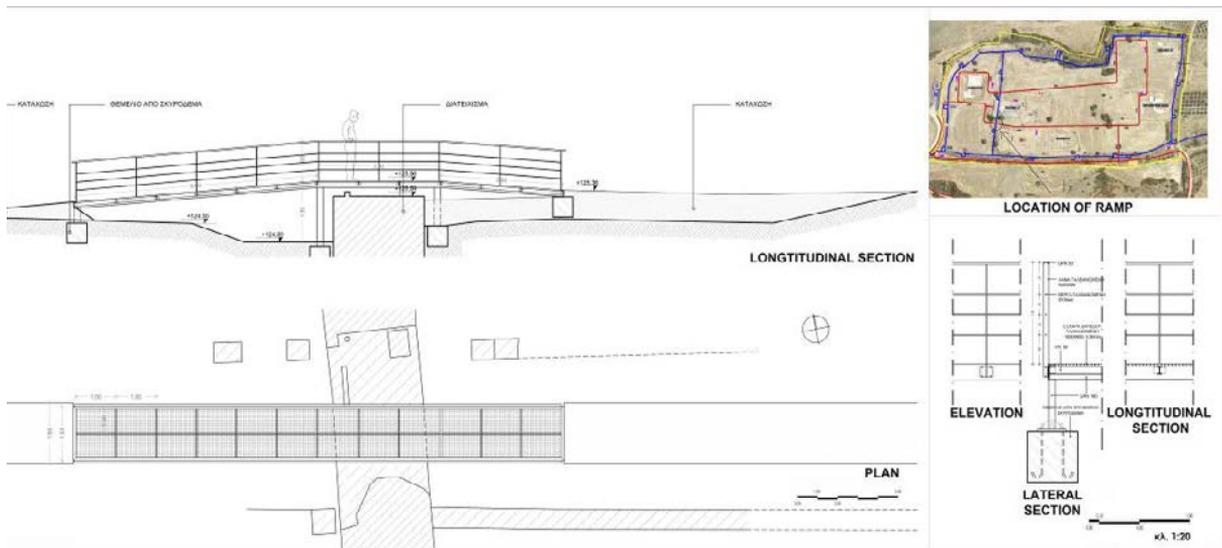


Fig. 3: Metal ramp

Information Signs

In order to inform visitors about the monuments as well as the routes that can be followed, it is proposed to construct three types of signage: (a) Entrance Signs; (b) Informative Signs; and (c) Directional Sign.

At the beginning of each route, an Entrance Sign, i.e. a large signboard with information about the visit area and the touring route (Fig.4a), will be placed. In each monument, informative signs will be placed, which will be constructed with a low height, in the podium type (Fig.4b). In order to inform the visitors about the direction of the walking paths, low Directional Signs (Fig.4c) with two sloping surfaces will be constructed, which will be laid on a base made of concrete similar to the benches.

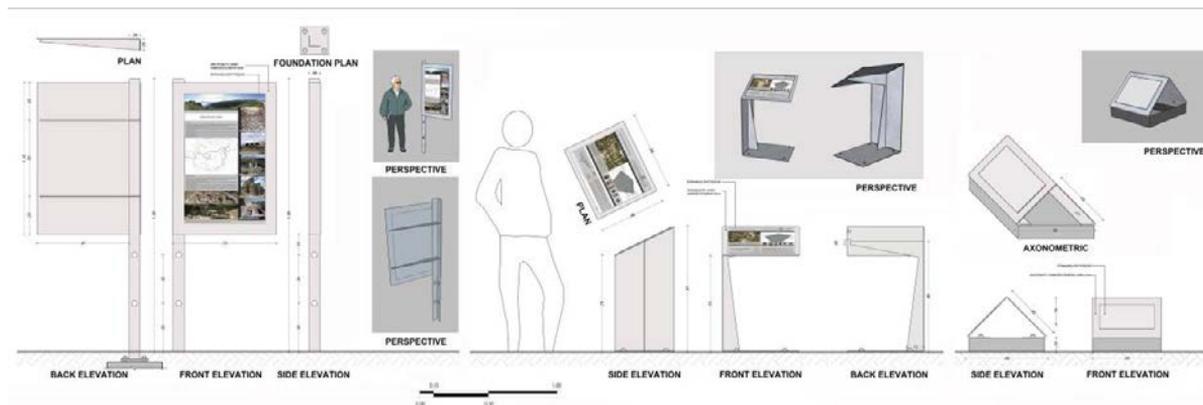


Fig. 4: Information Signs, a. Entrance Signs, b. Informative Signs, c. Directional Sign

All signs will be made of 5 mm sandblast stainless steel sheet, as this is the material of the proposal, while the printing surface will be formed from printable composite aluminum sheets.

In the courtyard of the museum is required the installation of an Information Sign that will inform the visitors of the routes that can be followed to visit the monuments of Amphipolis. It is proposed to build an elongated sign, in the form of the Monument Sign, which will be hung on a wall of the northern fence of the Museum, next to the main entrance, so that visitors can be informed even when the museum is closed.

Rest stations

For guests' rest, benches will be placed in the visiting area, along the routes, combined where possible under large trees of the site and their pleasant shade. The benches are proposed to be large blocks, made of concrete of such composition and processing, so as to resemble a shadowy natural stone (Fig.5a).

Where the use of trees is not possible, it is proposed to build metal shelters of simple form, made of galvanized beams of the HEB and IPE type (Fig.5b) and coating of metal insulated panels, metallic coloring.

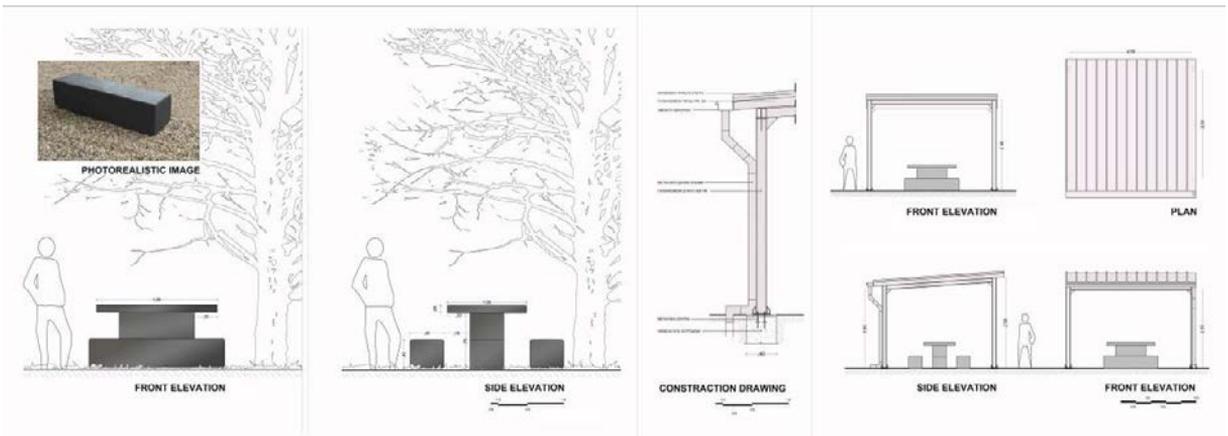


Fig. 5: Rest stations

Rope fencing around monuments

In order to prevent visitors from entering ruined monuments, rope fencing is proposed. It will be constructed with galvanized angles of height of 0.90 m, 0.05 m wide, with two holes on each side for the rope socket (Fig.6a). The sticks will be placed every 3-4 m. and will be laid on the ground on stable concrete bases. One side of the angle will be placed parallel to the outer wall of the monument and the perpendicular side will be placed externally. The top hole of the outer side will pass a weather-resistant 10mm thick rope.

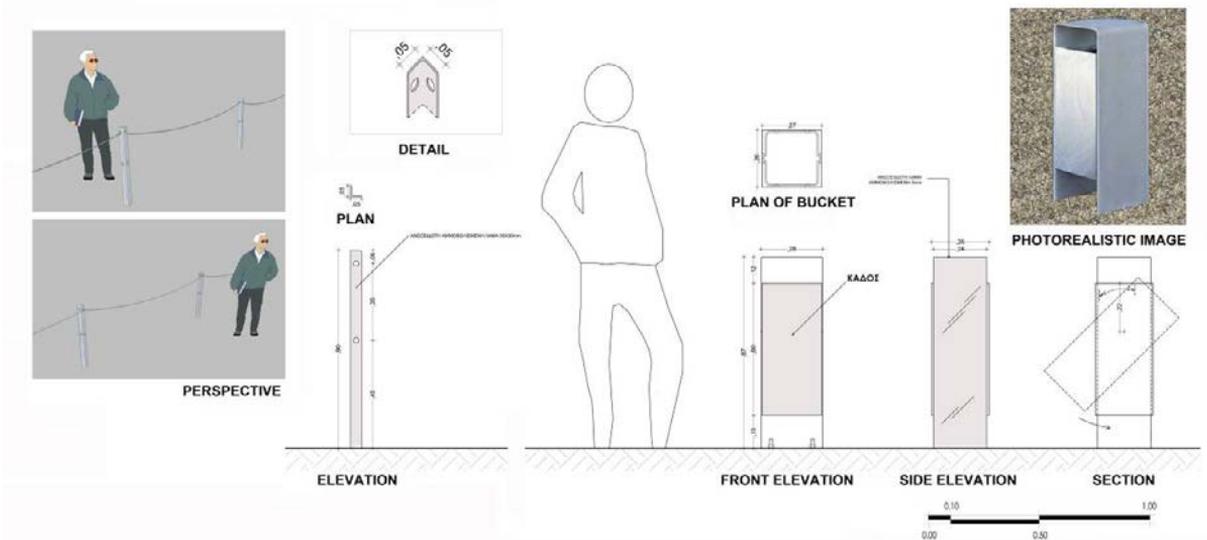


Fig. 6: Rope fencing and trash receptacles

Outdoor trash receptacles

Several trash receptacles will be placed in each archeological route. Trash receptacles, as well as all new structures, are proposed to be made of sandblasted stainless steel sheet (3mm) (Fig.6b). They consist of an outer U-shaped fixed part and the inner tilting bucket in which the plastic waste bag is fitted with two rotating U-shaped rods. Two small plates and a bar define the permissible bow rotation of the bucket. A pin placed in a suitable position in the lower part of the bin will help stabilize the bin.

Ticket booth – Guard post

A ticket booth, which will operate also as the Guard post, is proposed to be placed at the entrances of the various fenced areas of the archeological site. It will be of small size and its shape will be simple for not be a “nuisance” to the monuments. It will be made of a metal frame and its walls and roof of metal insulated panels (Fig.7a). The exterior surfaces will be colored similar to the sandblasted stainless steel elements proposed above (e.g. information signs).

The Ticket booth – Guard post features three retractable windows, one on each side and one door. On one of the sides, a box with metal grid walls will be constructed to accommodate an air conditioner unit. The box will be raised to protect the unit from moisture and underneath an auxiliary cabinet will be formed. The Ticket booth – Guard post will be based on a reinforced concrete base of a suitable composition and surface treatment to make the inert gray hue visible.

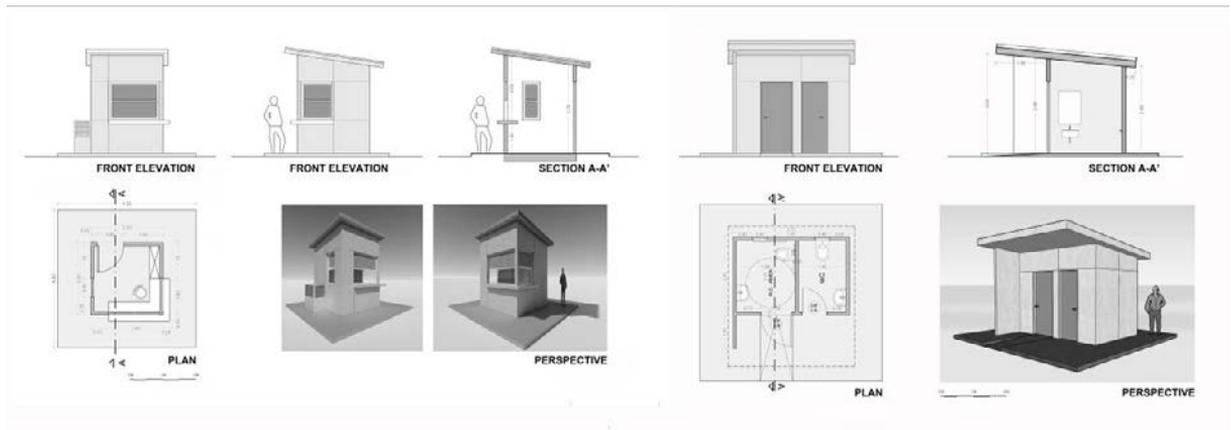


Fig. 7: Ticket booth – Guard post and Sanitary facilities

Sanitary facilities

Where it is required the existence of sanitary facilities is proposed to be placed in a distinguished position, away from monuments and near parking. Buildings are proposed to be built similar to Ticket - Guard Booth (Fig.7b). They should have at least one WC for people with disabilities who will also serve the needs of men’s WC and a simple WC that will serve the needs of women’s WCs.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper presents the study carried out for the design of the new infrastructures for the archeological site of the ancient city of Amphipolis. The study basic objectives are for the new infrastructures to meet the modern needs of an appropriately managed archeological site, and to be durable and also aesthetically distinctive and subtle, therefore non-competitive to the surrounding antiquities and natural landscape.

The implementation of the study has already begun in the central part of the archaeological site (Christian Acropolis), and is scheduled to be completed very soon, within the framework of the ongoing “Borderless Culture” Interreg Project.

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THE KASTA TUMULUS AND THE LION OF AMPHIPOLIS THE MONUMENTAL MACEDONIAN BURIAL COMPLEX

Katerina Peristeri

The Kasta Tumulus in Amphipolis is located on the edge of the ancient necropolis. There was initially an extensive necropolis in a low grove from the Iron Age and the Archaic Period where excavations were conducted by D. Lazaridis from 1964 to 1984.

The latest excavations from 2010 to 2015, carried out by Katerina Peristeri, Director of the Archaeological Service of Serres, have revealed a monumental Macedonian burial complex, one of its kind, dating back to the last quarter of the 4th century BC and consisting of:

a) a three-meter-high marble surrounding wall (peribolos), with a diameter of 497 meters and a perimeter of 158,40 meters; b) the monument of Lion and c) a complex Macedonian tomb.



During the period which the burial complex dates back to, after the death of Alexander the Great until the end of the 4th century BC, great historical events take place in Amphipolis. Famous generals of Alexander the Great, such as Nearchos, Hephaestion and Laomedes, are related to Amphipolis, while this is where Cassander exiles and kills Alexander the Great's legitimate wife Roxane and his son Alexander IV, in 311 BC.

A part of the surrounding wall (peribolos) was demolished during the Roman Era. A research in the area of Amphipolis to locate the lost marble architectural slabs led to the site of the monument of the Lion of Amphipolis, where marble architectural slabs from the surrounding wall were found, either scattered or embedded in the base of the Lion. This research connects the important surrounding wall of Kastan Tomb with the Lion of Amphipolis.



The material of the Lion's base was used as a barrage during the Roman Era and was found by the Greek Army in 1912, when the Strymonas bed was drained to build a modern bridge near its estuary. After 1917 the marble architectural slabs were assembled at the site of the modern bridge. A. Orlandos and P. Perdrizet were the first to study the material in the 1930s. In 1936, J. Roger and O. Broneer, who dated the Lion monument in the last quarter of the 4th century BC, continued its study and its restoration, in the place where it is today, with the construction of a conventional base. At the same time, Ulen Company identified new architectural slabs during the drainage of the Lake Kerkititis and transported the material 60 km away to the site of the new barrage of Lake Kerkini, in Lithotopos, where S. Miller, archaeologist, Director of

the American School, identified the material and returned it to this area in 1971. He himself correctly dated in the same period.

Our research has shown that the Lion of Amphipolis, which is now found on the right bank of the Strymon river, next to the modern bridge, is connected with the burial mark of the tumulus which is its foundation and is placed at its top according to the geometry of the monumental burial surrounding wall. The deposition of gravel found around the burial mark at the top of the Kastas Tomb indicates the existence of a large marble monument, which is no other than the Lion and its base. The Tumulus and the Lion are two monuments that “speak” to each other combining comparable architectural features and they both dated back to the last quarter of the 4th century BC.

In August 2014, the continuation of the excavation inside the surrounding wall brought to light a unique complex Macedonian tomb, 4.5m wide and 24m long with a 6-meter-high dome that covers the entire monument. The tomb contains four spaces separated from each other with three decorated partition walls. The spaces had been filled to the ceiling with a mixture of sand and earth. The first two partition walls have a protective wall in front of them.



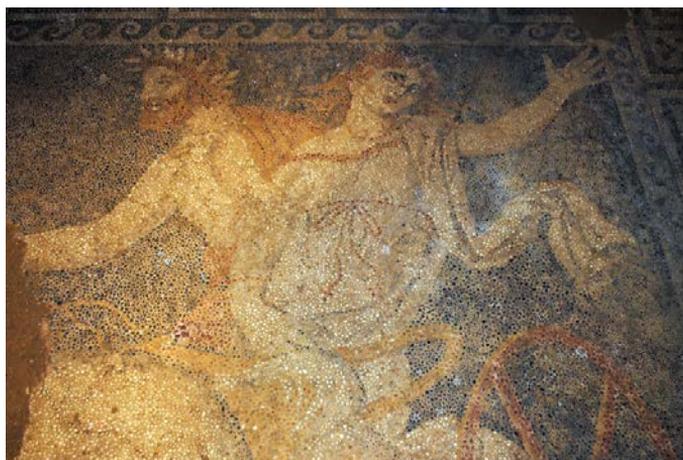
In the first space, with 16 steps leads from the height of the surrounding wall to the partition wall that has two sculpted headless Sphinxes face each other, made of Thassian marble, in the lintel. Parts of the marble wings as well as the integral head of the Eastern Sphinx were found inside. With the removal of the first wall that ex-

isted under the base of the Sphinx, the upper segment of a marble door-frame in imitation of an Ionic architrave was revealed. The entire facade of the tomb is a remarkably original composition for the corresponding architecture of the Macedonian tomb, of the last quarter of the 4th century BC, with decoration that mimics the wider marble surrounding wall. In front of the wall there is a pebbled floor with geometric decoration.



Six meters away from the first partition wall was revealed a second one. It has a marble decorated with rosettes, held up by two marble Caryatids of excellent workmanships, which stand on pedestals with Thassian marble. The hair of the Caryatids, which falls to their shoulders, is curled and tied back with a ribbon. They have red earrings and

they are wearing a sleeved himation. A second wall similar to the first was protecting them while there was a marbled floor in front of them.



A pebbled floor, 4.5 m wide and 3 m long, which stretched to the threshold of the marble door of the tomb, was discovered behind the Caryatids. Persephone's abduction by Hades is portrayed as a central representation and is surrounded by a decorative frame of double meander, squares and running spiral. The pebbles of the floor are white, black, yellow and red (the Macedonian four-colour technique of the 4th

century BC). The representation stands out for the excellent art of depicting the details of the characteristics of both the people and the horses, as well as for the harmony of colors.

To the north of the mosaic, a threshold with two marble shutters leads to the fourth space, the main burial chamber, which was found quite disturbed, where a large box-shaped tomb was revealed.



The „universal” Macedonian burial complex at Kastan (a. the monumental burial surrounding wall, b. the Lion, a symbol of bravery and c. the complex Macedonian tomb) was constructed by the architect Deinokrates, under Alexander the Great's order, with the largest quantity of imported marble from Thassos used in Macedonia in the last

quarter of the 4th century BC c. (325-300 BC)

Two construction engravings in honour of Hephaestion have been found on the monument (“Παρέλαβον Ηφαιστίωνος”), together with his monogram over the engravings and on the rosette in the tomb. Hephaestion, the great general and friend of Alexander the Great died in 324 (three hundred twenty four) BC. The lion, a symbol of bravery and strength, points to a remarkable person, and to a man rather than a woman.

Beyond the identity of the tomb’s occupant, the real strength of the Kasta tumulus and of Amphipolis is the uniqueness of this universal monument.

MEGALITHIC SANCTUARIES IN SOUTHWESTERN BULGARIA AND GREECE AS A SOURCE FOR CULTURAL TOURISM

Vassil Markov

Abstract: The paper focuses on the most important megalithic sanctuaries of southwestern Bulgaria, studied by the author “Tsarev peak” in the South Rila Mountain, “Popovo Lake” in Central Pirin Mountain, “Salakov beech” and “Kara Kaya” in Western Rodopes Mountains. The paper presents unique traditional folk healing practices of megalithic sanctuaries “Gradishteto” and “Skribina”, Gotse Delchev Region. The possible socialization of monuments and ritual practices and their inclusion in itineraries for cultural and cognitive tourism is also discussed. Indicated parallels surveyed megalithic monuments are observed by the author in Greece.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage, Sanctuaries, megaliths, tourism

The present survey is the result of the national scientific expedition “Thracian sanctuaries in the Western Rhodope Mountains, Rila Mountain and Pirin Mountain”. It has continued for eleven years. Field studies have been stream of the concentrated on the upper and central river Mesta. Both archaeological and ethnological research has been carried out. A remarkable concentration of important Thracian megalithic sanctuaries has been registered. Some of them have preserved archaeological artifacts as well as folk legends and rituals. They have been inherited from ancient myths and religious practices. Along with that they are a rich source for the development of cultural tourism in the region of Southwest Bulgaria.

The most impressive ancient Thracian megalithic sanctuary in South Rila is “Markov kamak” (“Marko’s stone”). It is located high near Tsarev peak, south of the Rila Monastery. The numerous rocks at the springs of the river Blagoevgradska Bistritsa are marked with dozens of rock-cut altars. The most sacred part of the sanctuary is the complex, comprised of a rock arch, a stone egg and rock mushrooms.



They are marked by altars cut on them. The rock altars are impressive, cut like human hands. They are on the vaulted stone of the megalithic arch. Next to it is the altar shaped like a giant human step. It is known in the local folk culture as “Krali Markova stapka” (“King Marko’s step”). Astronomical research has determined that it is a Thracian megalithic observatory. It was used to monitor the movement of the sun on the local horizon. The day of the summer solstice was determined with its help. The discovery of the “temple” feast of the sanctuary has allowed us to reconstruct part of the rituals. They included a ritual bath with „living water”, a ritual passage through the arch and rituals with sacred fire (Markov 2008: 177-179).

Fig.1.The rock arch from Tsarev peak

I believe that the signs and symbols from the researched sanctuary are a „record” of the Orphic myth of Creation. This is the myth about the birth of the glorious god Panes out of the cosmic egg (Батаклиев 1989: 6-7).

On the basis of the folk legends about Tsarev peak and Markov kamak, as well as on the archaeological sources, I deduce that the grandiose megalithic sanctuary “Markov kamak” on the top of Rila Mountain is royal. It was used to immortalize Thracian kings by incorporating them within the sacred marriage between the deified in Thrace Sun and the goddess Earth – Mother (Марков 2007: 178-179). In scale and significance the monument is comparable to the megalithic sanctuaries in Markovi kuli (Marko’s towers) and Zlatovrah, near Prilep in Macedonia.



Fig. 2. Popovo Lake. A view from the north, from the slope of Mangar Tepe Polezhan peak

Led by the remarkable concentration of Bulgarian folk legends, we explored Popov cirque in Central Pirin Mountain (Динчев 1993: 10-12). There we localized an enormous sacred territory. It can be approached through seven entrances. Five of them still bear the significant name „gate”. The “gates” mark the entrances through the outermost line of the circus. It is defined by some of the highest peaks in Pirin. These peaks are deified in the local legends as mythological characters. Those are legends in which ancient archetypes are found. This is the myth about the kidnapped Kore-Persephone by Hades. Traces from the myth about the battle between the God of storm and the antagonist are found (Марков 2002: 37-50). At four of the gates traces of religious practices were discovered. Those are rock cuts – altars, fragmented Thracian and Roman pottery.

The shore of Popovo Lake defines a second, inner circle. It was marked in Thracian antiquity by grand megalithic altar. It is situated on the eastern shore of the lake. The altar is a physical trace of the ancient religious rites that are associated with the lord of the mountain - the young Pirin dragon. Its home, according to legend, is Popovo Lake. The most sacred part is the island “Popova capa”. It is located in the center of the lake. All local demiurge legends are connected to it. Here our expedition has located traces of half-destroyed dolmen.

The information about a major pilgrimage movement towards the sacred territory of Popov cirque is of great interest (БНПП 1983: 119-120). This movement was

concentrated in the land of the Thracian satri. Today, the memory about it has faded. The cult of the mythological dragon is still alive in smaller, local centers, such as the peak Pilentseto (The Chick) and Lyaski peak in Southern Pirin. They were also explored by our expedition.



Fig. 3. Popovo Lake. The altar on the shore of Popovo Lake

The sanctuary is situated on a tourist trail. It connects Pirin hostel to Bezbog hostel. It is in National Park Pirin. It is suitable to be included in routes for cultural, cognitive, ecological and mountain tourism.

The Thracian megalithic sanctuary at Gradishteto is situated near the village of Dolno Dryanovo, Gotse Delchev region. It is crossed by the road connecting the town of Gotse Delchev to the village of Satovcha. The location of the sanctuary is great for visits and socialization. There are unique rock cuts. These are human heads, turtles and ducks. The megalithic arch is remarkable. It had astronomical functions in antiquity. It was used to determine the day of the spring and the autumn equinox (МЪГЛОВА, СТОЕВ, СТОЕВА, СТЕФАНОВ 2009: 1-12).

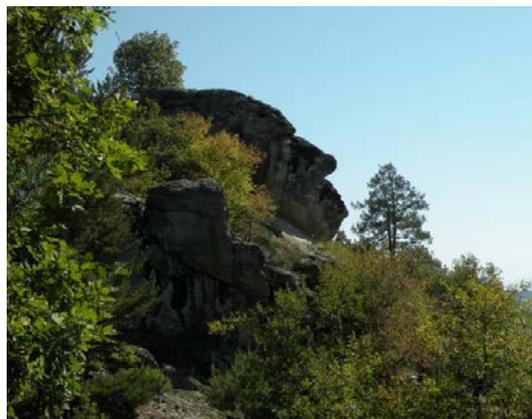


Fig. 4. Image of a human head from the rock sanctuary Gradishteto

During the field studies we identified the places of traditional cult hearths under Polejan peak. They are located in front of a grandiose stone throne. It is an ancient Thracian megalith oriented to the west. This is the direction of sunset and death. Around it more rock-cut altars have been found (Марков 2007: 48).

This is a remarkable Thracian royal sanctuary. It is connected to the cult of ancestors. It has left traces in the cultural memory of the Balkans. It has a round shape. There are traces of fire rituals. A cult of the mythological dragon is present – the folk **heir of the Thracian Dionysus. It may be the famous sanctuary of Dionysus Sabazios.** Herodotus reports that it is a possession of the Thracian satri. The Father of History claims that it is situated high in the snowy mountains (Hdt. VII, 111). That is the name the ancient Greeks gave to Pirin Mountain – Orbelos Mountain. The semantics of this word means snowy mountain.

The monument is unique because of the preserved folk healing practices. They were performed through a ritual passage. The ritual is performed by an elderly woman from the village of Dolno Dryanovo. Female sterility and other illnesses are treated. The ritual is performed early in the morning. Then the sun beams fall into the rock arch. Red thread is placed on the right supporting stone. It is equal to the height of the treated person. Then the treated person passes through the arch.

After that they leave their old coat on the rocks. They remain wearing only a new garment. In this way they leave their old ill nature. The treated person becomes a „new” healthy one. The cured leave coins at the holy place as a sign of gratitude (Марков 2005: 63-66). There are traces of ritual death and new birth in the rite. The ritual may have come from the Thracian ritual of immortalization. This is an Orphic ritual with which the Thracians were known in ancient world.

The region of Sidirokastro, Republic of Greece, is full of beautiful rock formations. Northeast of the town is the remarkable rock sanctuary „The Black Rock”. It was studied archaeologically by the famous Greek archaeologist Katerina Peristeri. It is situated in a small fault between the continental rocks, where a cult niche carved in the rock dominates. It is high in the northern part lit by the sun and can be accessed by steps carved in the rock ending with a three-level site. The steps are much destroyed.



There is an inscription „APOLLON”, part of the body of Apollo, a body of god Pan without head and other fragments of female statues of Nymphs. According to the archaeological finds, the sanctuary dates from the 2nd century AD until the 4th century AD (Peristeri 2012: 39-43).

On a lower level there were springs forming a small lake which no longer exists due to new drainage works in the area. In the depth of the fault there was a sacred cave, which after the destruction of the cult sanctuary in the 4th century AD was inhabited by shepherds in its present form. The Rock Sanctuary „Black Rock”, dedicated to Apollo, Nymphs and God Pan from the 2nd century AD, shows the connection of the location with pagan cults, which are also found in other regions of the Balkans.

Fig. 5. The Black Rock near Siderokastro. Rock niche.



In the eastern part of Sidirokastro, on the sheer cliffs in the region of St. Dimitrios and St. Zona church we find two cut monumental rock tombs. Their entrances are shaped like facades of antique temples, ending upstairs with a triangular gable. One of the tombs was later transformed into a Christian temple. Today it is included as part of the interior of the architectural church of St. Dimitrios and St. Zona. The burial room of the tomb serves as an altar of a modern Christian temple. The facade of another tomb is also shaped as a silhouette of an ancient temple. It is located directly north of the temple of St. Dimitrios and St. Zone. It is left unfinished in antiquity.

Fig. 6. A rock tomb near Siderokastro, turned into a church.

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SACRED PLACES AS A RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL TOURISM AND CULTURAL ROUTS IN SMALL LOCALITIES IN SOUTHWESTERN BULGARIA

Anton Genov

Summary: Using the phrase „sacred territory” in this text I intended to cover places that were worshiped in ancient times as well as those on which local people still celebrate their feasts and perform a number of rituals. I also tried to revile some ideas related to strange legends and superstitions the main aim of the text is to examine common cultural phenomenon when both versions coexist and when the new holy place is positioned on a more ancient cultural basis

Keywords: Cultural Heritage, Sanctuaries, Folklore, tourism

During conducting research in the territory of Southwestern Bulgaria an impressive presence of similar natural code was registered in the places described by the local population as rock sanctuaries and Christian holy places. They stand out with several important components:

- A river, spring or cave at the foot of the place (Markov 2009: 32-62);
- Selection of high grounds which present majestic views;
- Rocks of different shapes and sizes, which were extremely important in the ritual practices of the primitive societies. (Frazer 1989: 240-267).

This were the reasons for the sites to be identified as sacred, to be distinguished from the surrounding terrain as the center of the world and to suggest contemplation of the divine essence of nature (Eliade 1994: 20-27).

Struma and Mesta rivers with their beautiful gorges pass through the mountainous territory of southwestern Bulgaria and inclose between their valleys the alpine terrain of Pirin Mountain.

In all ancient cultures mountains are seen as a sacred space and place for communication with the gods (Gomez 2008: 97-104). Mountain is pictured as the center of the world, from where its creation starts (Eliade1994: 20-27).

That reveals the following mythological picture:

In the center is the sacred mountain- the Pirin Mount, seen as abode of the god of thunder. At the foot of the mountain, are the river gorges. Dozens of rocks on the river banks reveal views to the peaks that can be viewed as local religious centers presenting a smaller version of the sacred mountain. In this regard Eliade reached the conclusion, that people from pre-modern societies aspire to live as close as possible to the center of the world. They know that the Temple/Mounts are the real centers of the world and want their own home (territory) also to be located close to that.

Whole series of myths, symbols and rituals point out how difficult it is to reach the Center. On the other hand it becomes available to everyone via the sacred sanctuaries and its similarities exist in every community. The road that leads to the „Centre” is fraught with difficulties, but in the imagination of the population, every city, church, each residence is located in the center of the universe (Eliade1998: 51).

In this line of thoughts, it is appropriate to highlight the ethnographic evidence for massive pilgrimage movement and sacrifices in the area of Popovo Lake - Pirin.

There is evidence that it had the status of the holy land of Jerusalem. The rituals there were practiced until the end of XIX and beginning of XX century. As a reason of its disappearance of is seen the end of nomadic livestock (Markov2009: 158-159).

The sacred space of the local sanctuaries has proved more sustainable over time. There still could be seen evidence of practices and rituals connected with the health and the livelihoods of people in the region. These are areas traditional way of life, beliefs and habits, which enclosed in the isolation of the mountain community, have not undergone major changes since ancient times (Markov 2010: 62).

Recognized as sanctuaries in the tribal territory of traditional communities, Christianized sacral areas can provide invaluable information about the structure and ritual practices of the pagan temples in antiquity. Studies show that these sacral places have mostly: protective functions; health giving functions; functions related to the livelihood of the population and ensure fertility; functions associated with the cult of dead. Very often, these functions are intertwined and are interpreted according to the needs and understanding of local populations.

That is the reason much of the feasts along the Mesta and Rodopean slopes to be bound by the saints connected with herds. Along Struma River there are has saints protectors of the vineyards. One such place is the sanctuary of St. Trifon, placed above village Ilindentsi. It has the necessary outline and material evidence to be regarded as a successor of an ancient sanctuary. There are many interesting rituals practiced on it, like selecting the king of wine. It is also important to mention that the actual place of the ritual is a rock above the village. It completely covers the characteristics of sacral area described earlier, and the fact that on side can be found fragments of ancient pottery is an important proof.

Similar is the ruined church of St. Elijah in village Mechkul. It is also situated at the outskirts of Pirin Mountain and overlooks the picturesque Kresna Gorge. We can make a connection between the towering Mount Pirin, which name is associated with the ancient pagan god of thunder, and St. Elijah, who is also seen as a ruler of thunder and a protector, in that case of the vineyards. It is interesting to note, that the area near the churchyard is named „Cellars” because wine was produced, stored and traded there. It confirms a traditional local practice of winemaking. ¹

Opposite to the sanctuary of St. Elijah, on the other side of the Struma River, there is a rock called the „Maiden rock”. It is linked to the legend of a girl who wanted to escape from the Turkish invaders and jumped into the river.² There is a similar legend about a gorge of Mesta River in a locality named „Maiden Tower”, against which is the sanctuary worshiped by the Bulgarian-Muslims from the village Bukovo. Legends for „maiden stones” and gorges, are very common throughout the country. Undoubtedly they are remains of antique beliefs, which whisper for disappearance of mythological female person in an “underworld” kingdom.

Sacred places from the Western Rhodopes, almost without exception, reveal views to the peaks of Pirin. A similar picture is also revealed from places on the other side of the mountain, in the valley of Struma river, like Palatski peak, Krastilski peak Komatinski rocks etc.

¹ Inf. Hristo Dimitrov mayor of Mechkul and Senokos

² Inf. Hristo Dimitrov mayor of Mechkul and Senokos

There are spots where rituals are not performed, but they have an important role in local cosmological notions. Those places are bound, with legends associated with primordial mythological time. They are mostly impressive rocks formations, which stand out from the daily life of traditional man, but they represent his explanation of the origin of the world. For example there is a rock named Kupena (translated as pile), located on the river bank of the Mesta River, at the foot of the village Bukovo. The legend says that there was a haystack, collected by a woman with a baby. It was so long ago, when heaven and earth was not separated. The woman wondered what to do with the dirty nappies of the baby, and decided to throw them in the sky. This angered the God and he divided the sky from the ground, lifted it up high, and petrified the haystack of the woman. In this regard, Fraser explores many myths from various primitive societies, where a woman, or a woman and a child, try to reach the sky as a result of which, they turn to stone. The chapter in which it is mentioned, generally presents understanding of the vertical model of the world and the place that connects all three levels, which is mostly seen as a rock, tree or a combination of both. (Frazer 1989: 240-248).

This place is linked to the symbolism of the center in the minds of the people of Bukovo. (Eliade 1994: 20-27). It is another proof of how primordial sacred territory is imagined in the archaic thinking - as a rock protruding from the water.

Further evidence is found in the rock-cut complex Skumsale north of the town of Strelcha, where one of the central rocks is surrounded by water. The shape of the water-trench shows that it is artificial, possibly made with a ritual purpose, to achieve the familiar mythological combination- water, rock, peak. At the very top of the rock, after excavations were found materials from the Chalcolithic era (Gocev, Katzarov, Staneva 2016: 225-228).

The findings included numerous fragments of pottery, votive objects, large pieces of clay plaster, and traces of leveling the upper part of the rock via fillings of rubble. All this indicates that the place was used for ritual activities.

In all ancient societies rocks were worshiped and used as a place for sacrifice and communion with the gods.

In many of these rocks the ancient saw the gods themselves. In many of the shrines there are rocks resembling human faces, with a clearly standing out profile on the rock surface. Others show whole mythological stories that come to us via folk beliefs and legends for petrified weddings, like in the villages Osenovo and Banichan (Spasova 2010: 105-106).

Another rocks recognized as a petrified wedding is, the „Gostunska wedding” known also as Grashishka or Graishka rock. There are no rituals preserved and the legends about it are fading away but by location and shape it is a real sanctuary. That is evident from the archaeological materials found there, also from a complex system of cups and channels dug on the surface of the rock.

One of the most interesting cuts is an ellipse with a length of about 30 cm. When it is filled with rain water and reflecting the sun, it resembles an eye whose pupil is the solar disk. From both angles of this ellipse start channels that descend down the cliff. Another important thing on this object is the narrow slit in the eastern part of the rock. It resembles a high dark corridor oriented North-South. When one goes inside, the east

wall opens a window cut into the rock overlooking in easterly direction another sanctuary called „Mitrovica”. It is possible, at a certain day of the year the place to be used for ritual greetings of sunrise.

We know from numerous other sites that the rock sanctuaries bear the marks of the ancient astronomical knowledge. Another characteristic feature of them is their relation to mining and metallurgy. Citing Eliade, V. Fol considered the ores and minerals represented the fruit of the Great Goddess Mother Earth (Fol 2007: 108-109). This connection between ore, mining and sanctuaries is proved by researchers of the sanctuary of Mount „Babyashka Chuka”. It is one of the best studied sites of this type (Gocev, Tonkova 2004: 95-111). Thanks to artifacts found there it is possible to determine typical materials for that kind of places. This information helps to be recognized cult objects on unexplored territories.

The characteristics of such kind of place are recognized on the territory around the chapel of St. Mina, in the village Mechkul. The first things that imply the possibility it was an ancient sacred place are some impressive rock formations. On several of them can be found rock-carved cups. One of them is known as a footprint of the mythological person King Marko and the accumulated rain water in it is considered curative.³

Another interesting structure is the stone relief resembling a solar circle on the south wall of the rock near the old chapel. The old cemetery is also a sign of the sacred continuity. On the territory of the sanctuary, are plenty of antique ceramic fragments. On the slope towards the gorge can be found some fantastic rock formations with many walls between them. On top of one of the rocks stands a round stone. It forms a thriliton with its opening oriented northwest- southeast. Nearby is the so called „Big rock”, or „Bear Rock”. In the trenches beside it were found two pieces of loom weights, a large piece of molten ore and many pottery fragments. One of them has been deliberately smoothed to become circle (a clay token). These findings are typical characteristics of a cult object (Gocev, Tonkova 2004: 95-111).

At the foot of the cliff, is a cave named „Batalenova hole”, presumably it can be an ancient mine.⁴

All this, and the fact that the place is still referred as a sacred shows an accumulation of beliefs from antiquity. In this line of thinking it is interesting to mention the belief saying, that if you want to find a missing person you must sleep on the sanctuary and you will dream what happened with them.

Dream is one of the oldest prophetic practices (Gomez 2008: 196-199). Fraser describes a number of mantic and healing practices of ancient Greece, where the deity gives a dream of his devotee, and inspires healing (Frazer 1989: 240-248).

Such practices are known from many holy places in Bulgaria. Very often the dream shows where the temple needs to be placed. An example of this is the monastery of the Assumption in the village of Banichan (Spasova 2010: 104).

Similar is also the legend of the sanctuary „Kopana carkva” (excavated church) in the village of Dobarsko, where the altar is placed at the base of an ancient mound.

Dream is a way to legalize a sacred space. Very often people realize that the

³ Inf. Slavtcho Marinchev 70g. shepherd s.Mechkul

⁴ Inf. Slavtcho Marinchev 70g. shepherd s.Mechkul

place is sacred, but cannot define its holiness otherwise than by an inspiration of God. In this way, Fraser explains Jacob's Dream on the stone at Bethel, where a sanctuary existed long before the arrival of the Jews (Frazer 1989: 240-248).

The notion of stone, which was possessed by deities, or other powerful spirit, is not specific just for ancient Israel. In ancient times the Greeks worshiped rough stones, not statues. In Thessaly was worshiped a stone, on which they sacrificed victims and made libation with oil (Frazer 1989: 240-248).

After this clarification of the role of stones in ancient societies raises the question how they selected these sacred rocks which are sometimes discovered at the most amazing places. Fraser tells us how exactly this happens in a study about worshiping stones in the primitive societies of Melanesia. He says:

"Anyone can find a stone in which he sees something unusual and therefore associated with spirit... His neighbors understand that he has such a thing, and its growing wealth comes from there. Then they come to gain his help, and the best services of the spirit with which he is familiar. Over time some stones become more popular than others, raise and fund pilgrims, gifts, and so can form a whole sanctuary (Frazer 1989: 240-248). 'From this fact come the difficulties to classify such places. Valeria Fol notes: "...they will always be more than the ones sorted by number, the number will stay undetectable because many of them are strictly personal and are not marked by generally accepted criteria." (Fol 2007: 12)

In a sanctuary can be found stones with different functions. One of them can help for richness and fertility, others have healing properties.

Interesting is the question about the functions of the rock-cut cups. In science they are seen as altars for libation. In favor of this statement are reported Fraser's reports that in the highlands of Scotland there are stone carved bowls in which shepherds do libation with milk for the ghost keeper of the herds.

Some legends and healing practices say that many of the larger stone-cut cups serve to collect rainwater, on which miraculous properties are attributed.

Interesting is the combination between raw trilithons with rock-cut cups (altars) on the upper stone. It raises the hypothesis of a sacrificial libation of fluid, and anointing of one who passes under the stone. Such places are the sanctuary „Salakov buk" (Markov 2007: 302, Fig 28), arch in locality „Pirostiyata" near village Turia, and many others. Such an object exists on the sanctuary of St. Marina in the village of Senokos. The upper stone was probably collapsed by earthquake. Perhaps this has helped carved forms to stay in a very good condition. What makes it unique is the network of zigzag grooves, starting from two rock-cut cups and ending at the edge of the stone. Two similar stones with crossed network of channels are known to us from two stone sanctuaries in Strelcha. The unique in this case is that the form probably is a destroyed trilithon in combination with blocks for divination. It is also important that the place is connected with the cult of St. Marina, which is saturated with symbols characteristic of prehistoric deity seen as the Great Mother-Goddess.

In Bulgarian folklore saint Marina is also associated with healing waters springing from the ground. It is important to mention, the extraordinary wealth of thermal springs in the valleys of the Struma and Mesta.

In conclusion we can say that besides the magnificent scenery, valleys of Stru-

ma and Mesta are distinguished by large cultural and natural resources. This makes the area suitable for the development of different types of tourism. The first steps have already been made. The resources of some mineral springs are actively used. In the gorge of Struma are actively developing extreme sport practices and there are preserved traditions in winemaking. Even in the small towns like Senokos, Mechkul, Dabrava, Bachevo etc. local authority make a lot to protect and promote local traditions, customs, and cultural heritage. Mayors actively cooperate with representatives of science, NGOs and touristic associations.

However, much needs to be done to popularize all the beauty of this region. For now it is still a raw pearl and depends on us in what it will transform in the future-magnificent jewel or an empty shell.

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POTENTIAL PERSPECTIVES FOR CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN THE CROSS-BORDER AREA OF SOUTH-WEST BULGARIA AND NORTHERN GREECE

Mariya Stankova

Abstract: Tourism is often at the cutting edge of cultural exchange, providing the opportunity for insight into both the historical and contemporary life of destinations worldwide. Given its broad remit and international appeal, cultural tourism has developed to become a significant phenomenon in the travel and tourism industry. In connection with cultural tourism, opportunities for exploring the religious heritage are also revealed, where the cultural aspect intertwines with religious tourism. The development of cultural and/or religious tourism is attractive for both already developed tourist destinations, as well as for newly emerging. The rich cultural and religious heritage of the trans-border area of South-West Bulgaria and North Greece provides exciting experiences that should be translated to tourists, with which the satisfaction of visiting it as a cross-border destination will help to increase popularity and achieve better and sustainable economic performance.

Keywords: culture, religion, tourism development, digitalization

INTRODUCTION

In the tourism practice, there are a lot of definitions and interpretations on the terms cultural and religious tourism. In its combinations, they show up the undergone development of these forms of specialized tourism and outline their importance as social phenomenon.

Traditionally, the idea of *cultural tourism* is closely tied with the well-known big tour of Europe – an “obligatory and especially important tour of the continent for the general knowledge and education of the young English noblemen”. The big tour, writes Levi, is may be the most important surge in the British culture in 17-18 century and almost whole 19 century (Levy, 1968). It can be affirmed that the cultural tourism has undergone a quick development during the last twenty years, mainly under the influence of the tendency of a continuous diversification in the tourist demand and supply. For the time of the referred period this form of tourism imposed as a leading element of the short-term tourism trips, mainly to close destinations, without being an interest only for well-educated tourists. Which is resulting in the in the appearance of a separate market segment, with very well expressed characteristics, uniting a combination of subcategories (Hall & Roberts, 2001:15-16).

The subjective interpretation of the term *cultural tourism* allows after all the identification of a continuously increasing number of forms and tourism practices. Regarding this, in order to issue a maximum clear picture of the tourist consuming in connection to the cultural tourism, data can be taken from the investigation of ATLAS (Stankova, Filipova, Zirra & Munteanu, 2014:42-56).

The European association of tourism and education in the free time (ATLAS) works with a model for the visitors of the cultural attractions in destinations. Regarding the motivation for trips associated with cultural tourism, history and culture are defined as more significant factors, in comparison to the natural environment and climate. The history and culture are very important motives for undertaking a tourist trip for Danish, Swedish and German tourists. The tourists coming from Denmark,

Germany, Holland and Sweden have the most stable connection with culture. This fact may be due to a great interest to culture (or to a small part to the cultural inheritance - for other nationalities) in these countries, such as to be due to a relevant density of the historical cities and cultural monuments, which they have (Stankova, Filipova, Zirra & Munteanu, 2014:42-56).

As a whole, the countries from Western Europe with well-developed cultural centers have the potential to attract motivated „cultural and historical tourists”. It should be said that Italy and Greece are with higher results compared to the other Mediterranean destinations regarding this factor. In central and eastern Europe, the destinations of cultural tourism in the smaller countries are visited on first place because of cultural reasons, and these with more diverse products try to attract tourists, who seek business, work and shopping tourism.

Religious tourism, on the other hand, is highly difficult to be defined. There is no a unique definition. Broadly religious tourism includes pilgrimages and visits to specific religious events, as well as visits made to churches, cathedrals and shrines primarily for their cultural or historical (as opposed to religious) significance (Timothy & Olsen, 2006:1-285).

Religious tourism also includes staying at retreat houses (Shackley, 2004:67-75). Much of the analysis of religious travel has concentrated on pilgrimage, including classifications of sites, discussion about the travel patterns of religious tourists, or differentiation between pilgrim groups, as it is noted by Sizer (1999) or Fleischer (2000) (in Timothy & Olsen, 2006:1-285).

SOME REMARKS ABOUT THE SPECIFICITY OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM

Religious tourism is now well accepted as a niche market in tourism, but much academic discussion has also centred on whether pilgrimage constitutes a legitimate branch of tourism (McCannell, 1973:589-603) with much of the literature on pilgrimage concentrating on definition of the term. And, an acceptable definition for some authors is that ”a pilgrim is one who strives to obtain salvation of his/her soul through a physical journey in which *caritas*, love for God, and not *cupiditas*, love for material things, drives them” (Religious Tourism In The European Union: Resources And Trends⁵ in Stankova, Filipova, Zirra & Munteanu, 2014:42-56).

Specialists also speak of *Christian tourism*, a subcategory of religious tourism. Given the large number of believers of other religions and because it is not correct to limit in any way the possibility of developing different tourism products, it should be used, in everything that follows, the term religious tourism (Benea & Petroman, 2007).

It is worth noting also, that religious tourism on a global scale pilgrimage probably attracts 250 million people/year (Jackowski, 2000) and have recently attracted considerable interest from tourism planners and marketers who have realized their economic potential. Within Europe, religious tourism focused around urban centres, churches, cathedrals and monasteries as well as shrines and pilgrimage routes (Nolan & Nolan, 1989). Eade (1992:18-32) notes that tourists may also be moved by religious emotion as well as pilgrims, but these may not necessarily be “religious tourists. Ac-

⁵ Religious Tourism In The European Union: Resources And Trends, Release: Nov 7 2010 04:41, <http://www.hotelmule.com/management/html/86/n-3286.html> Retrieved (21.06.2014)

According to *Religious Tourism In The European Union: Resources And Trends* much of the recent interest in religious travel has come from the (belated) realization that such activities are of major economic importance⁶, although the undoubted relationship between religion and tourism has also received attention from articles including Bywater (1994), Vuconic (1996), Rinschede (1992), Coleman and Elsner (1991; 1995), Fernandes, McGettigan and Edwards (2003). Some source points that many writers that have provided overviews of the development of religious tourism, including Timothy and Olsen (1999; 2006), Russell (1999: 39-68), Bywater (1994:39-52), Nolan and Nolan (1989), Vukonic (1996), Rinschede, (1992:51-67), Coleman and Elsner (1995), Fernandes et al. (2003), as well as others, project a significant increase in religious tourism in the near future.

According to the results of the research conducted by a group of professors and lecturers from Romanian universities (in year 2010), 4 basic dimensions of experience within religious settlements starting from their mission and the destination of the journeys made by pilgrims could be identified: (a) Existential-religious elements; (b) Social-helpful elements; (c) Cultural-formative elements; (d) Emotional elements.

Besides the spiritual pull, the other motives than religious are “the beauty of places and of the monastery”, “curiosity”, “relaxation”, “cultural motivation”, “place visit”⁷. At the same time, according to Timothy and Boyd (2003) as a result of marketing programs and of the high interest in cultural tourism, religious sites are more and more visited by rather curiosity-driven visitors as compared to genuine pilgrims and this is the reason why they are promoted, adapted and comprised in products meant for tourism market.

DIGITALIZATION IN THE USE OF TOURISM

To the specialization of the sphere of cultural and religious tourism are orientated already famous tourist regions such as regions, for which the tourism is not typical for the urban and village environment. But because there is economic and social profit from the purposeful stimulation of the tourist activities, there is a danger of unification of attractiveness in the effort to attract more tourists. As a result, there is a danger of undermining and destruction of the relevant resources. In this regard, this paper presents as a good practice the opportunities and the potential of digitization of the material and non-material cultural and religious heritage, as a part of the author's experience in the realization of the CORECT project⁸.

Under the project ICT tools was developed with the aim to deploy a range of applications with a multiplying effect for the study, promotion and educational use of the religious cultural heritage. The tools (<http://corect.ipet.gr/index.php?lang=en>)

⁶ Religious Tourism In The European Union: Resources And Trends, Release: Nov 7 2010 04:41, <http://www.hotelmule.com/management/html/86/n-3286.html>. Retrieved (21.06.2014) in Stankova, M., M. Filipova, D. Zirra & A.-C. Munteanu (2014). Pathways of mind - in search of potential perspectives for cultural and religious tourism on the Balkans, *Journal of Science&Research* Vol. 1 (7), pp. 42-56.

⁷ Training needs and population wider attitude in Romania, file:///D:/Downloads/SWOT+religious+tourism+training+needs+in+Romania.pdf Retrieved (30.04.2019).

⁸ Common Religious Cultural Pathways project - known as the “CORECT” Project under its acronym in English, is financed under the European Territorial Cooperation Programme Greece-Bulgaria 2007-2013, <http://corectonline.eu/>; <http://fe.swu.bg/en/scientific-activity/eu-and-international-funded-projects/project-common-religious-cultural-pathways/>

function in favor of the of local populations, educational institutions, churches and dioceses, including scholars and other interested users, in a pursuit to process and disseminate the richness of this common shared heritage between South-West Bulgaria and Northern Greece. It has been designed to have its own lifecycle, enabling the interesting communities to record additional monuments and objects and gradually expand the collection of associated digital resources, creating a rich repository of resources and raising the awareness about the common religious cultural heritage of the region.

The CORECT Digital Recording Tool is supported by a map and timeline navigation application. It offers the opportunity to record, search and retrieve objects and monuments of religious heritage, associate digital resources to them (images, audio and video files, as well as 3D object representations) and make them accessible to a wide range of users.

The digital instrument can also be widely used to promote cultural and religious heritage in connection with tourism. For example, using the CORECT Digital Recording Tool for exploring the tourism potential of cultural and religious sites in the South-West Region of Bulgaria allows identification of 22 objects of cultural and religious importance. All of them are situated in the Nevrokop Diocese. Among them, there are undoubtedly 4 places that can be used as a starting point for the development of tourist activities for the popularization of the cultural and religious heritage, namely:

St. Trinity Church (in the Town of Bansko – fig.1) with its tower and characteristic bell ringing is one of the symbols of the Town of Bansko. The construction of the church was completed in 1835 and several decades later a big bell tower and a clock were built towards it.



Fig. 1. St. Trinity Church – view of the outside and interior⁹

St. Dimitar Church (fig. 2) was built in the XIX century in Teshovo village and has had its architectural and historical value as a monument since the epoch of the Renaissance. As it is typical for churches since this period it was built on a site of a pre-existing chapel.

⁹ Source: http://bansko.net/sveta_troitsa



Fig. 2. St. Dimitar Church – outside view and one of the most known icon¹⁰

Assumption of Mary Church in the Town of Bansko (fig. 3) is a nave that was built around the XVI-XVII century. There is an interesting approach which was undertaken during its building as well as the iconostasis representing a masterpiece of Renaissance wood carving. During the 50s of the last century the church was burnt.

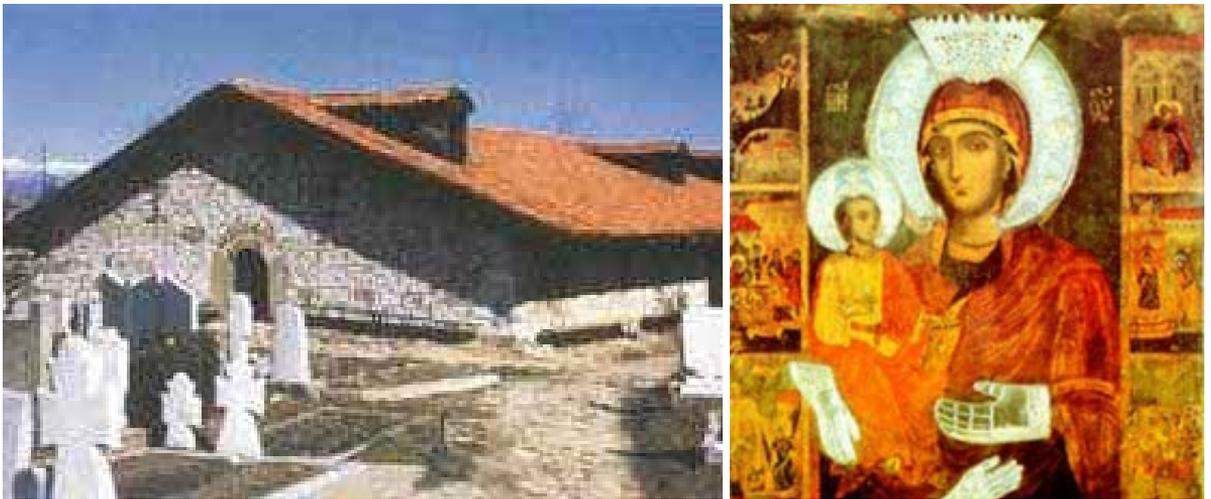


Fig. 3. Assumption of Mary Church – outside view and one of the most known icon¹¹

Birth of Mary Church (Rozhen Monastery, fig. 4) is located 6 kilometers away from the Town of Melnik and it is one of the most significant and interesting religious and cultural centers of the Republic of Bulgaria. There is no precise information about the time when it was founded but it is assumed that it existed as early as the XIII century. The earliest evidence of its existence with the current name dates back to the middle of the XVI century.

¹⁰ Source: <http://www.teshovo.eu/pagebg>

¹¹ Source: http://bansko.net/sveta_bogorodica; <http://www.bansko7.com>



Fig. 4. Birth of Mary Church (Rozhen Monastery) - view of the monastery and the iconostasis¹²

On the other side of the border, on the territory of Northern Greece, attention should be paid to the historic churches of the see of Neapolis and Stafroupolis. Among the beauties and richness of the religious heirloom in the region impression are made by several exceptional churches, presented here below:

Aghios Georgios of Asvestoxori (fig. 5): A very large three-aisled wooden-roofed basilica, initially without a narthex, with a loft and newer additions (1867, west - 1885 belfry, fully restored). It has a rich collection of icons and other utensils, and many liturgical books.



Fig. 5. Aghios Georgios - Interior¹³

Aghios Georgios of Hortiatis (fig. 6): A three-aisled basilica without a narthex of the early 19th century, a characteristic specimen of the post-Byzantine ecclesiastical architecture of this era. It hosts the Palaiologan icon of the Virgin Theotokos Odigitria, a series of important early post-Byzantine icons (16th -17th c.), a small collection of handwritten books and a large collection of despotic and portable icons of the first half of the 19th century, mainly by Koulakiotean painters.

¹² Source: <http://www.pravoslaviecto.com/manastiri/rozhen/index.htm>

¹³ Source: Asvestohori, St. George (Interior), http://corect.ipet.gr/index.php?option=com_chronoforms&chronofrom=psifiakoi_poroi&id_psifiakoi_poroi=169&action=show&lang=en



Fig. 6. Church of Aghios Georgios: The three Liturgies, paper manuscript, + 20 x 14.5 cm, 16th century (circa 1550), written by: Ioasaf deacon¹⁴

Aghios Dimitrios of Diavata (fig. 7): Built in the mid-19th century (circa 1852), it belongs to the prevalent type of the three-aisled basilica, and, despite the austerity and simplicity of its construction materials, it is the „jewel” of the ecclesiastical region of the See of Neapolis and Stavroupolis. It boasts an interesting collection of about ninety icons and as well as wooden equipment with painted decoration (iconostasis, pulpit, bishop’s throne).



Fig. 7. St. Demetrios - the iconostasis¹⁵

Aghios Athanasios of Evosmos (fig. 8): A three-aisled, wooden-roofed basilica, without a narthex, dating back to the second decade of the 19th century, it is a characteristic example of the „humble architecture” of the Christian villages in the plain of Thessaloniki.

¹⁴ Source: <http://www.corectonline.org/index.php/articles/19-the-historic-churches-of-the-see-of-neapolis-and-stafroupolis>

¹⁵ Source: http://corect.ipet.gr/digital_resources/171/CIMG4587.JPG



Fig. 8. Aghios Athanasios - - the iconostasis¹⁶

Given the benefits that tourism brings to a region, tourist destinations in Northern Greece and South-West Bulgaria should benefit from the shared cultural and religious heritage and achieve economic benefits alongside sustainable results in developing appropriate forms of tourism on this basis. Using an on-line tool like CORECT Digital Recording Tool further favors existing opportunities. And considering that attracting tourists suggests offering of reliable, clear and attractive information and the fact that tourists are increasingly using on-line sources to inform, makes the importance of this digital instrument even greater (Stankova, Vassenska & Dimitrov, 2018:99-117).

CONCLUSION

The development of cultural and/or religious tourism is attractive for both already developed tourist destinations, as well as for newly emerging. On the other hand, the significant online presence is critical for tourism businesses to continue to have access to the changing demand and global market. This is particularly important for the current and future market positioning in tourism, and must be considered as a starting point for destination strategic planning. The cross-border region of South-West Bulgaria and Northern Greece itself, reveals significant potential for sustainable tourism development on the basis of existing cultural and religious resources. The important thing is to capture the trend of modern orientation towards new types of tourism such as cultural and historical tourism, religious tourism, educational tourism or event attendance, while the destinations in the region take advantage of the possibilities of digitization.

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¹⁶ Source: https://www.airbnb.com/google_place_photo?photoreference

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Folk Customs in the Bulgarian-Greek Cross-Border Region as Cultural Tourism Resource

Dimitriya Spasova

Abstract In the traditional culture of the Balkans, the healing practices, performed by passing through a narrow place, occur in different variations. This report will consider only healing rituals involving squeezing through rock crevices or arches. Historically, this type of megaliths are often descendants of sacral rock complexes in the pagan antiquity, that have not completely lost their importance, but have preserved as holy places, serving the official religion or places, serving the local cult. Nowadays they still excite the imagination of locals and tourists.

Keywords: rock arches, traditional healing rituals, magical practices

An important part of the cultural heritage on the Balkans is the folklore offering numerous undeveloped resources for cultural tourism. Having that in mind, it allows year-round supply of tourist itineraries for the introduction and participation of tourists in rites, rituals, festive system and others, the folklore tourism's resources are yet to be given greater attention. Important part of the folklore heritage is the healing ritual performed by passing through a narrow stone arch or hole into the rock. These places are part of the megalithic sanctuaries, which still excite the imagination of locals and tourists.

In the traditional culture of the Balkans, the healing practices, performed by passing through a narrow place, occur in different variations, such as: squeezing through bushes – usually through rose hip sticks shaped like a circle; through the roots of trees located near churches, on the field or in the woods; through roots showing over the river, carved naturally by the water flow; through holes carved out in the field, etc.

This report will consider only healing rituals involving squeezing through rock crevices or arches. Historically, this type of megaliths are often descendants of sacral rock complexes in the pagan antiquity, that have not completely lost their importance, but have preserved as holy places, serving the official religion or places, serving the local cult. In many villages, the sacral rocks, for instance, are part of their sacred geography and mark the boundaries of the land or other border areas - mostly rivers, but also cemeteries and others (Markov 2007:9-10, Fol 2009)

Ethnographic records show that squeezing through a narrow place, as a healing ritual, is practiced in various diseases - from childhood diseases to conventionally incurable diseases in adults, such as- infertility, mental problems etc.. The traditional attitude towards the magical healing practices in general and especially those related to squeeze through rock arches is based on the belief that the world is not homogeneous. Places that are part of the cultivated space are safe and those, related to border and nature, are inhabited by invisible and malicious toward the common man creatures. Rock complexes, where healing rituals are performed, are seen as the local patrons, as the churches and the monasteries are. That is why when visiting them and when carrying out healing rituals, it requires the presence of a dedicated, i.e. a knowledgeable person, which is a local healer – a sorceress.

Without exploring in detail the image of the sorceress in the minds of the ordi-

nary man (Kasabova-Dincheva 2013:84-86, Goev 1983), I will mention that the popular attitude towards women, involved in magical practices, is dual. On the one hand, people have turned to them in times of despair with some hope for healing. On the other hand, these women stand on the border between nature and culture. They inhabit the human world, but contact with the unseen and unknown by the uninitiated person. Going through the ritual requires complete trust on the abilities of the sorceress. This ensures, on the one hand, the positive result of medical practice, but on the other, it has a protective purpose. The path through the arch, the actions performed on the sacred spot, and the returning commensurate with entering the unknown and very dangerous for the average person world.

The trust in the special powers of the healer is clearly visible from the data gathered in the village of *Kribul*, where such healing narrow place is located, which is popular in the area by the name - *Skribina*. Squeeze under the *Skribina* rock is performed by a woman who has an “*izim*”, i.e. she has received permission to heal by her predecessor and has been taught by her the intricacies of the healing rituals. Her predecessor in turn has passed forward the *izim*, after being bitten by a snake near the arch - a sure sign that the patron of the place, transformed in the shape of a snake, wants another healer. By the gathered data it is clear that the healing abilities are conveyed, i.e. they are kind of dedication.

The visit of the rock arch with curative intent is preceded by various forms of powwowing, which aims to set the most appropriate method of treatment. Powwowing is commonly performed with freshly laid egg. In the village of *Dolno Dryanovo* divination is performed with honey. There is an arch here, located in the *Gradishte* area, which is a popular tourist destination in the recent years.

Visiting the rock arch is usually done early in the morning. People say that the narrow place near *Gaytaninovo* must be visited before sunrise, so that when the sunrise occurs the magical healing shall be completed. The rock arch near *Gradishte*, by the village of *Dolno Dryanovo*, must be visited by the patient and the healer just before sunrise. As far as the squeezing spots near *Kribul* and *Zhizhevo* are concerned, there are no specific requirement regarding the time of magical healing practice, so they can be visited at any time of the day, but the old people advise that - „*after ikindiya (dusk) it is not nice to visit the rock*” (Markov 2007:237)

Among the mandatory requirements for the preparation and completion of the healing ritual, is the careful selection of the path to the arch and back. One path is chosen to go forward and another to go back. The aim, according to informants, is to avoid intersection. Thus path forms a symbolical circle, a completed transition from one state to another, i.e. from disease to health.

Visiting the rock arch is associated with certain ritual conduct. First of all, it is mandatory to observe ritual silence (Todorova 2013:79-80). It is required for both the healer and the remaining participants in the ritual. In the ethnographic recordings there is some evidence that the ritual silence should last from the beginning to the end of the ritual, i.e. immediately after leaving the home of the sick person or the sorceress' until the return. The informants explain this curious and filled with semantics requirement together with the early visit of the rock in the following way: one should select a time in which the probability to meet other people is minimal, because they should not greet

them and should not even look at them. This assimilates the traditional notion of human behavior in rituals that include stay in the afterlife.

Ritual silence is typical in cases where the ordinary man passes by the arch or close to it, outside the healing ritual. The reason is rooted in the belief that the place is guarded by a patron. It is common and not by chance for people to report that they have seen strange creatures around the squeezing spots. In *Kribul* for instance, where the belief in the healing power of the squeezing spot is extremely strong, local people have seen repeatedly a serpent of enormous size, wrapped around a stone, as its head had reached its tail. The interesting thing here is that the huge snake- patron of the rock is called to cure the patient, i.e. the real healer is the invisible patron (Markov 2007:237)

Again in *Skribina*, the sorceress practitioner in the recent past has seen two children about the age of 12 – a girl and a boy playing the pipe. When she asked them who they are and why they were there, they did not respond, which in turn was a sign for the woman that she should not insist and should better leave quietly. Her comment on what she had seen is the following: „Who were they, and why didn't these children utter a word to me? Where they the patrons of the rock?!” (Markov 2007:237). Extremely interesting and associated with the belief of places, guarded by patrons, is the myth of the discovering of *Zhizhevo*'s rock arch. The local sorceress received a dream (common in connection with the discovering of Christian holy places) in which she was advised where to lead the sick, how to help them squeeze through the narrow spot and what rituals to perform during the healing practice.

In connection with the notion of the squeezing spot as a patroned place, an interesting requirement should be noted of the so called “*haber*” (clue) giving. When the sorceress brings the patient to *Skribina* rock, right before she lead him into the sacred territory, she must „warn that there are people coming.” For this purpose, she approaches herself and throws three stones toward the rock. Then she stands by the rock, hitting with a stick the placed ladder and calls: “If you're sleeping, wake up, if you're away - come to give us cure”. If we ask her why she's doing that she replies: „I'm calling the patron who treats...” When she took a patients to the squeezing spot at *Zhizhevo*, right before she starts the healing ritual, the sorceresses must knock with a stone in order to give another clue (*haber*): „as if you go inside a house „. Only then she shall enter the arch and take out the ritual objects which are stored there.

The belief that the squeezing spots are patroned is one of the reasons for older informants to note that healing rituals, performed there, should not be discussed, but kept as a secret - a fact that is extremely curious and important for the analysis of this type of people's belief. Another significant reason, for keeping a secret, has to do with the fact that the patients usually suffers from a severe, otherwise untreatable, disease and in traditional folk believes the Diseases are snooping constantly and as soon as they hear their names they appear immediately and make the person, who has utter their name, sick. Therefore informants often add protective words: “*May God don't make us go there!*” Last but not least, the prohibition to talk about the magical squeezing spots is the desire to keep the secret of the magical rite from the uninitiated. There is another curious commandment, almost a spell, addressed to us the recorders - „*You've heard a lot, but you shall not tell around!!!*”

Another explicit ban requires that nothing shall be taken from the territory of

the healing rock. The reason is rooted in the belief that the disease which remains there will be passed to the offender and his family. Local memory uses a number of illustrative cases in this regard. A peasant from *Kribul* took clothes from *Skribina* rock to tie plants with them. His daughter touched them and immediately fell ill, and therefore the clothes were returned. Such is the history of a man who cut logs there for firewood.

Another important requirement to the traditional man should be noted- he must show a good attitude towards the rock. People's belief affirms that the irony is devastating and illustrates this by a number of stories about the disrespectful attitude of the locals, which resulted in making them, or their children, seriously ill. Respectful behavior is required from participants in the magical rite. They should take it seriously and follow it precisely and consistently. If any of them laughs, the desired positive result will not be achieved.

An important moment of the healing rituals, involving a magical rock for squeezing through, is the partial initiation of the patient in the ritual's secret by the healer. The initiation is partial because he understands only a few things about the ritual, what is expected by him, what symbolic actions will be performed, what are the signs, guiding every moment of the ritual practice.

The very ritual of the healing squeeze follows a particular sequence. An essential element is passing through the rock crevice or arch once or three times. The squeezing through the pierced rock near *Gaytaninovo* is performed only once in the presence of two adults, as one of them helps a child pass from the lower side, and the other takes him from the upper side. At *Skribina rock* and at the squeezing spot near *Zhizhevo*, the ritual is performed three times.

The squeezing is accompanied by a number of rites, which semantics indicate that its main goal is repeated - a transition is made at ritual level - from sickness to health.

A common rite, preceding the squeezing is related to measuring the height of the patient with a red thread. In *Skribina* the measurement is performed at the border of the sacred place, right before the patient has entered into it. The thread is tied by the healer at the foot of the stone - to the wooden railing or to the ladder that leads to the rock circle. At *Gradishte* the threads stand at the end of the arch, usually on the top of the rock (Markov 2007:211-212). At *Zhizhevo* the height is measured just before the squeeze. Another interesting and significant fact in this regard is that the healer has stored a ball of red threads inside the arch, where usually there is a natural niche. After some heavy rains and flooding, that washed the ball of threads away, she stopped using thread and replaced it with a magnet. The magnet itself has an interesting analogy with the magnetic field, typical for *Skribina* rock. (Stoev at ad. 2012:256-264) Measurement with red thread is spotted in many rites of the traditional culture of the Balkans. The main objective is to create a reified twin of the patient on the basis of the similarity in height - a symbol of his illness that will remain near the arch.

Squeezing through rock arches could include "ignition" of the sick - a practice that occurs frequently in magical healing. Interest in this regard represents the practice, performed at *Skribina rock* (Markov 2009:90-91). After the third and last squeezing through the rock opening is done, the healer forms around the patient a circle of oakum, which she ignites and thus burns him symbolically. Given the symbolism of the

magical healing, it is not accidental that similar important rituals of transition, involving fire, are carried out at weddings or death events (Grebearova 2009:188-211). The fire circle in all three cases represents one of the borders through which the people, involved in the ritual, must pass to walk the inexorable path from one state to another - from maidenhood to adulthood, from life to death or from sickness to health (Grebearova 1994). Similar to the ritual of *Ignition* is the metal circle in *Zhizhevo*, through which the sick squeeze, before passing through the stone arch.

Another interesting rite is observed in *Gaytaninovo*. The medical practice requires the use of a pottery, in which the healer pours water from three water sources in absolute silence. When the child passes through the hole on the rock, the pot breaks. The symbolism of the ritual again finds parallels in transitional rites of burial, as the archaic idea of the pot as an analogue of the human body, is applied (Naumov 2006:59-95). Accordingly, the breaking marks once again the symbolic death of the sickness.

Listing of transitional rituals accompanying by squeezing can continue, but I shall finish with the requirement to spread wheat, as it is performed at the *Skribina rock* after ignition. Sorceress notes that the goal is „*to feed the birds.*” There is again a parallel with wedding and funeral rituals (Vodeniharova 1999:370-405). In this regard, the grain shall be interpreted on the one hand as a bloodless sacrifice, and on the other as a seed, giving birth.

In all cases, at the end of the ritual treatment, patients remove their jackets and leave them near the squeezing stone and put on new ones. Due to the belief that garments are closely associated with the man, traditional folk belief perceives them as human substitute (Mihailova 1976:5-25; Decheva 2013:185). According to informants, thus the disease remains there, and the diseased leaves healthy. It is also believed that whoever takes his clothes, will carry the disease with them (Yankov 2003:57:58).

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CULTURAL ROUTES FOR EDUCATIONAL TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF THE REGION DRAMA, GREECE AND GOTSE DELTSEV, BULGARIA

Rouska Krasteva

Abstract: Tourism in the 21st century is a way of life for the modern man. In the globalized world tourism increasingly becomes a strong economic sector. International educational tourism is considered to be a highly evolving tourism market that brings benefits to a region of a particular cultural or natural heritage that attracts adolescents, students and in general learners with the main purpose of education. The present study aims to make a short historical review of the development of international educational tourism from the Antiquity till the Renaissans and a critical discussion on the characteristics of the movements for educational purpose during these centuries and the perceptions towards tourism and to give examples of cultural routes in the region Drama in Greece and Gotse Delchev.

Keywords: educational tourism, historical review, international tourism, education

INTRODUCTION

The development of alternative types of tourism led to a major change in the classification of the types of tourism starting from the last quarter of the 19th century to the beginning of the 21st century.

Taking into account the global development of tourism, the development of educational tourism is of great importance (Βαρβαρέσος, 40). Since ancient times, people thirsty for knowledge have traveled long distances for educational purposes. Historically, there are many examples of young people who have leaved their native places in order to enrich their education and gone to other cities like Babylon, Alexandria or to the famous schools of the state-cities in ancient Greece, like Athens.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Konstantinov Y. S.¹⁷ defines „tourism as a form of active recreation and additional education, useful for all children, for every learner, not only useful, it is necessary. In present time, when the school has been partially removed from the nurture of the growing generation, leaving only the function of education for itself, educational school-based tourism can help to eradicate this process”(Константинов 2017:10-13).

In Russia, Ivan Michailovich Greves¹⁸ is the founder of the excursion method in teaching history. He is the founder of the Petrograd Scientism and Research Excursion Institute (1921-1924). According to Greves, „the excursion is an important element of any educational course, a tool in school activity, a journey to a particular purpose, an educational journey.

„In addition to the historical excursions, adolescents have to go on excursions in modern world where they, through observation can study life. Using the excursion method in education there can be created „complete, strong personalities, capable knowingly, truly with love, self-sufficient and free to live related to nature and people, humanity and the world” (Экскурсии в культуру 1925:2-7).

¹⁷ Константинов Ю. С. – д-р на педагогическите науки, заслужил учител и пътешественик на Русия.

¹⁸ Иван Михайлович Гревс /1860-1941/- руски педагог, историк

Anitsiferov¹⁹, along with Greves, developed the foundations of urban educational tourism. Anitsiferov makes the following definition of the excursion: “firstly, excursion is work, and then it is joy and as every well-done work brings joy” (Анициферов 1923).

A. M. Vetitnev gives the following definition: „in children’s tourism, the users of the services are children aged seven to seventeen, traveling for recreation, treatment, rehabilitation, education and other services accompanied by specialized persons or parents” (Ветитнев 2012: 136).

Educational tourism is part of the academic formulations of alternative types of tourism in Greece as well. According to Sfakianakis, educational tourism suggests persistence in the tourist flow and prolongation of the season. This type of tourism helps the development of the local economy. A prerequisite is the creation of special tourist bases for the accommodation of this kind of public tourist flow in Greece. It is a primary task for institutions to fund programs for the relevant categories of tourists – pupils and students, whose economic opportunities are limited (Σφακιανάκης 2000).

The Canadian Tourism Organization gives the following definition for educational tourism „every trip can have an educational projection as much as it is realized for entertainment and even more when it is done for educational purposes.” The educational tourism is influenced by the economic, social, political and technological conditions of a country. Educational school tourism is a phenomenon of one-day visits or school trips inside the country, as well as trips abroad.

According to the author, educational tourism is an extension of the schools micro-society in the globalized macro-society. It can be seen as a significant type of tourism, which has a strong influence on the socio-political reality.

The educational cross-border tourism is the type of tourism, which brings together groups of young people from two or more countries, giving them the opportunity to meet out of the usual place of residents in order to make conversation, to search, to find about the way of living, the culture, the values, the history and the specific characteristics of the nations and the countries they have visited.

It is aimed at the most active part of the society – the adolescent. In a national aspect, it helps to build healthy, vitally capable, young people with highly civil and patriotic consciousness, as well as moral and intellectual abilities. Internationally, it creates a generation with a multinational identity, where intercultural dialog becomes a “manifest for the minimization of the impact of culture shock in tourism”.

Educational tourism is realized through tourist trips, organized by schools to national and international destinations with main features as follows:

1. At national level:

- Pedagogical and educational importance;
- Protection of the natural eco-system and connection with it;
- Preservation of the local and world cultural heritage;
- Building patriotism and civic consciousness;
- Socialization of the child’s personality;

¹⁹ Анициферов Николай Павлович/1889-1958/ руски историк, градовед, първият в Русия теоретик и практик на екскурзионната дейност, основоположник за изучаване на градската среда.

- Healthy effect;
- Changing school routine and reducing stress from the nowadays busy school program;
- Minimizing the problem of seasonality of tourism.

2. At international level:

- Learning foreign languages;
- Cross-border cooperation with the relevant age group as a prerequisite for peaceful cohabitation;
- Defeat prejudices.

The general educational effect of this type of tourism is manifested in the acquisition of geographic, ecological, historical and architectural knowledge” (Кръстева 2014:35).

HISTORICAL REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

During the Antiquity (VIII century BC - VI century AD)

People travelled since the antiquity long distances, without having the amenities of modern times (Dimitrov, Krasteva, Mirchova 2014:71) in order to enrich their education in every type of science – philosophy, mathematics, medicine, law etc. There are evidences that in the library of Ashurbanipal, found in Nineveh, there was a large medical section with thousands of clay tablets, where the medical procedures were described in special guides that contained information on hygiene rules when conducting operations, as well as on the use of alcohol as a disinfectant.

Another destination for educational tourism was Babylon, this ancient city located in the lower reaches of the Euphrates river and founded in 2500 BC, where the famous laws of king Hammurapi with a great number of codes proving the level of medicine can be found.

Egypt with the famous library or Alexandria was also an example of a well-known place for education. The so-called Ebers’ Papyrus of 1550 BC lists 450 diseases and about 700 medicaments mainly of plant origin was a magnet for many visitors.



Part of the Papyrus of Ebers²⁰

²⁰Source: Carpenter St. and Co, the Ebers Papyrus in <https://bxscience.edu/ourpages/auto/2008/11/10/43216077/egypt%20medicine.pdf> (accessed in 22.06.2018)

Frequent phenomena during this period are the trips for general education aimed acquainting with the ideas of a particular philosophical school, a particular philosopher or a particular culture and way of life of another people. Typical of this type of trips is **the long duration they have**, as well as the **movements from the main to adjacent destinations in order to enrich their knowledge**.

As examples can be shown: **Solon the Athenian** (639-559 BC) a legislator, poet and philosopher considered as one of the seven sages of ancient Greece who „as a young man began to engage in trade and to travel, but not only in order to earn money, but also to get to know the world and to acquire knowledge and experience” (Πλουτάρχου Βίοι, 1997:8); **Anaxagoras** (500-428 BC), an ancient Greek, pre-Socratic philosopher born in Ionia, goes to Athens for educational purposes, and remains there for 20 years where becomes a famous philosopher and astronomer (Καλογεράκος - Θανασάς 2000);

Zenon (488-430 BC) an ancient Greek, pre-socratic philosopher born in Eleia Italy traveled to Athens and remained for a few years where he developed his education to a philosophical level. Zenon’s paradoxes inspire many philosophers, mathematicians and physicists over the centuries to the present day (Βλαστος, Γρηγορης, 1974:301-318); **Democritus** (460-370 BC), an ancient Greek philosopher born in Abdera, Thrace, travels to Egypt, Persia, Babylon, Ionia and Athens with money from his father’s inheritance, and as he used to said, „I have touched much more places on the world in comparison with the people of my epoch, exploring distant places, getting to know many countries, talking to many people with knowledges.... „ (Kirk, Raven, Schofield 2006:271-287). He is the precursor of Aristotle with his encyclopedic mind;

Herodotus, the „father of history”, lived in the 4th century BC is one of the great travelers of the antiquity, believed to have visited almost all the famous destinations for the time. From his work „History” comes the information that he was on the Black Sea, Kolchida, the city of Olbia in Sardinia, Crimea, Sea of Azov, Persia, Middle East, Egypt, Southern Italy, Sicily and Cyrenaica.

He has been focused on traveling for education reasons, as the sources point out (*«θεωρίας εἵνεκεν»*) (Σπανάκου 2013:8-11), he acquaints himself with the peculiarities of different places, nations, monuments, cultures and customs. For all this, he takes notes using the „autopsy” method (*«η μέθοδος της αυτοψίας»*), - relying on his own observations of things, and not the words of others. For this purpose and if necessary he used the services of translators. Of course the trips at that time have lasted for a long time, have been difficult and not always the willing person to visit a destination has received the necessary permit for this purpose (Σπανάκου 2013: 8-11);

Aristotle (384-322 BC) an ancient Greek philosopher born in Stagira in the Chalkidiki peninsula and in the age of 18 went to Athens with educational aim – to continue its education at the famous for its time Academy of Plato. In Athens he has remained whole twenty years, where in the field of natural sciences he had studied anatomy, astronomy, geography, geology, embryology, zoology, meteorology and physics. In the field of philosophy he writes about government, aesthetics, ethics, economics, metaphysics, psychology, rhetoric and theology. After leaving Athens, he travels for educational purposes to Asia Minor and to the island of Lesbos, exploring local flora and fauna (Anagnostopoulos 2009). And in more recent times, the well-known Athens

School remains the center of human knowledge and is an attractive center for young people looking for exchange scientific knowledge.

Basileios the Great (a Saint for the Orthodox Church), born in 330 AD in Caesarea of Cappadocia (today Asia Minor), as a child, was sent by his parents to the best schools of Caesarea, Constantinople and Athens. In Athens especially, he studied philosophy, rhetoric, poetry, astronomy, and all secular sciences for fifteen years (Жития на Светиите 1991: 6-11);

Gregory the Theologian or the Nazianzen, born in 330 AD in Arriana, Cappadocia conquered by an ardent and irresistible inclination to science, he traveled to Alexandria and from there in 349 he went to Athens where he continued his education (Жития на Светиите 1991:6-11);

Claudius Galenus²¹ (129- 210 AD) - one of the great doctors during the antiquity born in a family of a wealthy Greek architect in Pergamum, had studied from young philosophy, medicine and natural sciences. To become a doctor he went to Corinth and then to Alexandria. Then he moved to Rome, where he initially practiced in a gladiator school, and later became a courtesy doctor to Mark Aurelius, and then to his son, Komod.

Asklepiad (Approximately 128-40 BC) - one of the most famous Roman doctors. He was born in Bithynia. After studying in Athens, he practiced for a while in Greece, and then moved to Rome, where he became famous. According to Asklepiad, a person who has a healthy and active lifestyle did not need the services of a doctor. Being personified by these ideas, he lived until he was old and died as a result of an unfortunate accident.

During the Middle Ages V-XIV century AD

In the Middle Ages, the power and influence of the Church over the population, which only promotes religious trips, is characteristic. Besides pilgrimage, these trips also had a cognitive and recreational character, and they gave prestige to those who were traveling (Кръстева 2018:24-25). The history of the Church is the most living testimony of a continuous pilgrimage. The journey of the apostles, and then of Christians for certain holidays, to Jerusalem and Palestine, Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy and other places related to the life and activity of Jesus Christ is established as an indispensable tradition in the life of the church 2000 years ago. Thus pilgrimage becomes an immutable and important part of the religious life of Christians, acquiring various cultural forms over the centuries. In their lives, young people often face such seeming simple but important questions as - Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going? What is the reason to exist? What is the real meaning of life? Is this the best way of life and behavior? The very act of pilgrimage is the action of the realized need for something new and better in our lives, for a positive change, it is a journey of faith in seeking the truth.

²¹ Galenus adhered to the teaching of Hippocrates. According Hippocrates the differences in human moods are due to the lack of balance between the four body fluids: blood, yellow bile, black bile and mucus. Galen developed farther this theory by supplementing it with the typology of human temperament. If the predominant fluid in someone's body is blood, then he is a sanguine, if it is yellow bile – choleric, if it is black bile – melancholic, if it is slime – phlegmatic.

Simeon the Great King of the First Bulgarian State from 878-888 had studied at the famous Magnaur School of the Byzantine Empire in Constantinople, where he received excellent education (Дринов 1876:374).

From 12th century, young people's travels have been motivated by education and the main destinations where the famous universities in France, Paris and Montpellier, Oxford in England, and Bologna and Florence in Italy. Going back to history, we find a great number of young people traveled hundreds of miles for educational purposes. Similar is as well as the journey of calfs in the 14th century with the aim to acquire professional education, which was a must for this period. European craftsmanship and guild structures with a duration of three to four years were mandatory.

During the Renaissance (XV-XVII century AD) and early modern age (1453 - 1918)

The search for new markets and new sea routes, which aren't controlled by the Ottoman Turks led to the discovery of new lands, developed the trade of exotic goods and many young people started to explore new cultures of travels to India, America, China and Japan.

In the Renaissance, with the weakening of the influence of the church, an increase in the quest of knowledge and an increased interest for antiquity, but with an attitude for innovation, trips are mostly aimed at acquiring knowledge and experience in destinations with a rich spiritual life and are concentrated in the European capitals and university cities, like the university of Oxford, Cambridge in England and Salamanca in Spain provide scholarships for journeys to Vienna, Florence and Paris. Queen Elizabeth I in England has officially supported trips as preparation for future diplomats (Кръстева 2018:26).

CULTURAL ROUTES FOR EDUCATIONAL TOURISM

Examples for cultural routes for educational tourism in the cross-border region Drama, Greece and Gotse Delchev, Bulgaria are the following:

1. Daily excursion with destinations: Drama, Hadzidimovo, Ognianovo, Garmen

10.0 - Departure from Drama

10.00 – Passing through the Bulgarian-Greek borders

11.00 – Arriving in Hadzidimovo – in the monastery of Saint George, a spiritual and religious center of South-western Bulgaria

13.00 – Ognianovo - well known spa center with 24 springs and temperature of water about 39-40 C°

14.00 – Lunch

15.00 - Arriving in Garmen, tour with the train and visit at the ancient roman city Nicopolis Ad Nestum, built in 106 A.D.

16.00 – Departure for Greece

17.00 – Passing the Greek-Bulgarian borders

19.00 – Arriving in Drama

2. Daily excursion with destinations: Drama, Gotse Deltsev, Garmen

8.00 - Departure from Drama

10.00 – Passing through the Bulgarian-Greek borders

11.00 – Arriving in Gotse Deltsev – Visiting the historical museum, the church Archangel Michail

13.00 – National park from 1932 with rare species of flora

14.00 – Lunch

15.00 - Garmen - tour with the train and visit at the ancient roman city Nicopolis Ad Nestum, built in 106 A.D.

16.00 – Departure for Greece

19.0 – Passing the Greek-Bulgarian borders

19.00 – Arriving in Drama

3. Daily excursion with destinations: Drama, Dolen, Delchevo, Popovi

Livadi

8.00 - Departure from Drama

10.00 – Passing through the Bulgarian-Greek borders

11.00 – Arriving in Dolen –Traditional settlement

12.00 - Delchevo

13.00 – Popovi Livadi - lunch

15.00 Departure for Greece

19.0 – Passing the Greek-Bulgarian borders

19.00 – Arriving in Drama

4. Daily excursion with destinations: Drama, Kovachevitsa, Leshten

8.00 - Departure from Drama

10.00 – Passing through the Bulgarian-Greek borders

12.00 – Arriving in Kovachevitsa –Traditional settlement

13.00 – Leshten - Lunch

15.00 Departure for Greece

19.0 – Passing the Greek-Bulgarian borders

19.00 – Arriving in Drama

5. Daily excursion with destinations: Drama, Gaitaninovo, Belite Skali

8.00 - Departure from Drama

10.00 – Passing through the Bulgarian-Greek borders

12.00 – Arriving in Gaitaninovo –Traditional settlement

13.00 – Belite Skali - Lunch

15.00 Departure for Greece

19.0 – Passing the Greek-Bulgarian borders

19.00 – Arriving in Drama

6. Daily excursion with destinations: Drama, Dobarsko, Belitsa

8.00 - Departure from Drama

10.00 – Passing through the Bulgarian-Greek borders

12.00 – Arriving in Dobarsko –The church of Saint Theodoroi

13.30 – Belitsa – the park of the dancing bears - Lunch 16.00 Departure for Greece

17.00 – Passing the Greek-Bulgarian borders

20.00 – Arriving in Drama

7. Daily excursion with destinations: Drama, Bansko, Dobrinishte

8.00 - Departure from Drama

10.00 – Passing through the Bulgarian-Greek borders

12.00 – Arriving in Bansko–Winter resort

14.00 – Dobrinishte - Lunch

15.00 Departure for Greece

17.00 – Passing the Greek-Bulgarian borders

19.00 – Arriving in Drama

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	Weaknesses
Close distance Knowledge of English language Good infrastructure Safe destinations	Economic cost Organization together with the school of the neighbor country
Opportunities	Threats
Get acquainted with the natural and cultural resources of the neighbor country Get close with the young people of the neighbor country Cultivate the strong friendship between the countries	Fear of parents Bad weather Strikes in the borders

CONCLUSION

According to the above historical review the author makes the conclusion that through the centuries educational tourism has created values and attitudes among young people on the way of their formation as personalities in a natural environment, close to the historical roots and the worldwide heritage. The discussed historical movements for educational purposes with great results, nowadays should serve as an inspiration and a necessity for all institutions that involve education. Education tourism has a rich resource to use and diverse initiatives to undertake in an international level. The joint effort for gaining cross-border friendly conscience should continue. Find the similar and different elements, with a view to future cross-border youth cooperation should be a priority, as well as to cultivate a strong spirit of friendship, understanding and unity with neighboring countries.

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THE MIRACULOUS ICONS OF MOTHER OF GOD AS A RESOURCE FOR RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF GREECE AND THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

Zhana Pencheva

Religious tourism is the first form of tourism, namely, the pilgrimage to sacred places. By imposing Christianity, pilgrimage expanded and depending on the material circumstances and spiritual needs of Christians, it was directed both to world Christian monuments in Jerusalem, Rome, Mount Athos, and to important national places - local holy cloisters.

Contemporary scientific literature lacks unified opinion on the nature, structure and forms of religious tourism (Костов 2000). Undeniable fact is that over the last thirty years it has found more and more supporters worldwide. Typically, tour companies organize trips to well-known churches and monasteries and they cover their entire cultural and historical sightseeing. Religious communities organize pilgrimage trips related to participation in certain holidays and rituals. The only difference in this type of trips is the motivation of the participants, namely: from cultural-cognitive tourism to pilgrimage for the purpose of taking part in religious rituals of the respective sacred place.

Today's tourist seeks a deeper understanding of his spiritual life and escape from the global modern world. One of the forms is the discovery of traditional religious roots by visiting well-established and lesser-known churches and monasteries. In an attempt to diversify the stereotypical tourist visits, I offer the opportunity for alternative religious tourism related to worship of miraculous icons in two monasteries and familiarizing with their history, temple holidays and accompanying rituals.

In recent years, religious tourism has been playing an important role in the economy of the Republic of Greece and the Republic of Bulgaria. More and more people from both countries look at old churches and monasteries. The trans-border region between Serres (Greece) and Blagoevgrad (Bulgaria) offers opportunities for pilgrimage and religious tourism through the monastery of the Holy Mary Eikosi-foinissa in the Pangaion mountain, monastery of St. John the Forerunner (Prodromos) near Serres in the Republic of Greece, and Rozhen monastery "Nativity of the Virgin" in the Republic of Bulgaria. They have preserved architectural monuments, medieval and Renaissance frescoes and icons, iconostasis, church plate and other objects of the applied arts.

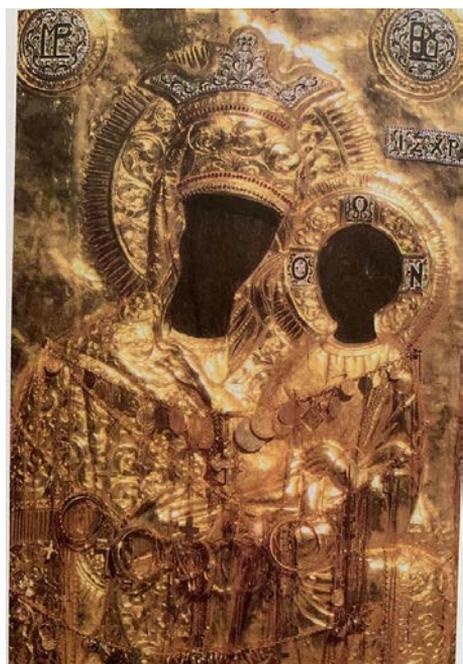


Fig. 1. Monastery of the Holy Mary Eikosifoinissa

Today the monastery of Holy Mary Eikosifoinissa in the Republic of Greece and the Rozhen Monastery in the Republic of Bulgaria are the main integrating religious centers in the regions of Serres and Blagoevgrad. The cult of the temple holiday and miraculous icons is the basis of intense pilgrimage trips of

Greeks and Bulgarians to these holy cloisters. In modern religious tourism there is still no emphasis on the role of miraculous icons preserved in churches and monasteries as a motivation for worship and visits to this type of destinations. Of particular interest in pilgrimage and religious tourism are the miraculous icons of the Mother of God in the monastery of Holy Mary Eikosifoinissa in the Pangaion mountain and Virgin Mary Portaitissa (Gatekeeper) in the Rozhen Monastery. The two icons are located in medieval spiritual cloisters which have played a decisive role in the spiritual life of Christians through the ages.

I will try to outline the two monasteries and the miraculous icons preserved in them, which can be used as a resource for active religious tourism.



According to various legends the monastery of the Holy Mary Eikosifoinissa in the Pangaion mountain was founded in the 5th or 6th centuries. Its founder is Saint German who received a dream of his pleasing of god activity. The second donor and founder of the monastery was the abdicated patriarch of Constantinople Dionysius I. During his time the monastery flourished and became known to the Orthodox population. The two great donors are depicted above the second gate of the monastery. The great renovation of the monastery happened in the nineteenth century when the main church was restored and the clock tower was erected (Ατσαλου 1995; Προβατάκη 1998) (Example. 1). The frescoes in the Katholicon (the main church) are of particular value. They are painted by Matthias Ioanou and his assistant - the monk Ananias.

Fig. 2. Monastery of the Holy Mary Eikosifoinissa – the miraculous icon

The greatest value - object of worship is the miraculous icon of Holy Mary Eikosifoinissa (Κυράτσου 2013). According to one of the legends, it is one of the icons drawn by Luke the Evangelist and blessed personally by the Mother of God (Example.2).



Fig. 3. Monastery of the Holy Mary Eikosifoinissa

According to another legend, it is not created by hand but by a miracle of a purple light (*Ikon finissou-sa-ikon finissa-ikosifinissa*), which gives her name. It is located a few meters east of the present monastery next to an old windmill. In this way, the icon itself chooses its place, which increases the sacredness of the holy cloister (Example. 3).

Today the miraculous icon of Holy Mary Eikosifoinissa is located in the great royal icons row of the temple iconostasis. Its gold revetment (*riza*) speaks about the special respect for the icon. The revetment (*riza*) covers the entire surface of the icon except for the faces of Virgin Mary and Child Jesus. This type of *riza* is typical for the works of Mount Athos (Пенчева 2015: 309). At present, the faces of Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ are hardly visible and look like dark spots on the golden *riza*.

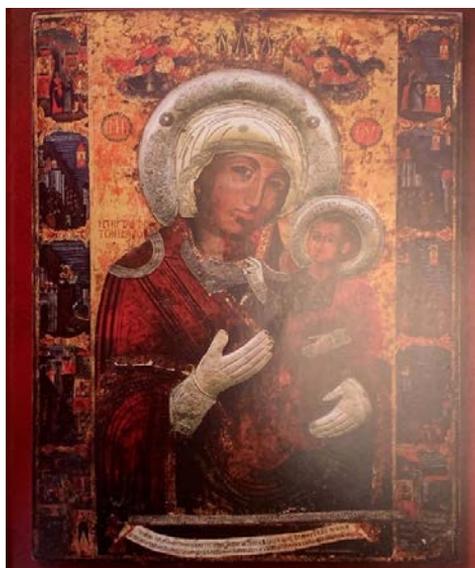


Rozhen monastery was founded in the beginning of the 13th century and is connected with the rule of Despot Alexi Slav. After a devastating fire in the second half of the 17th century the holy cloister fell into crisis. In 1761 the monastery was converted into a convent of the monastery of Iviron on Mount Athos. A restoration of the monastery began in the beginning of the 18th century with the financial support of the Melnik population (Ex. 4).

The miraculous icon of St. Virgin Mary is the monastery's main attraction for thousands of believers and tourists. According to the established practice, the Athos holy monastery gives a copy of its miraculous icon. In Orthodox tradition, copies of miraculous icons have the same miraculous power (Пенчева 2015: 302).

Fig. 4. Rozhen monastery “Nativity of the Virgin”– the monastery entrance with the scene “Nativity of the Virgin”

Thus, in 1790 Ignatius Redestim, a deputy-abbot of Iviron and abbot of the Rozhen Monastery, asked the icon-painter Jacob Iverski to paint a copy of the miraculous icon of the Iviron Virgin Mary Portaitissa (Gatekeeper) (Койнова 1980: 15,72, Бакалова 1990: 20, Геров 1993: 14) (Example. 5).



Such replicas were used in the taxidiot monks activities in nearby and distant lands. In the nineteenth century, it was typical of the copies of miraculous icons to be accompanied by separate small compositions representing the miracles performed by the icon. So, the image of St. Virgin Mary Portaitissa is surrounded by ten scenes of her life and her first miracles. This is an extremely important visualization through which the miracles of the icon are spread among a considerable number of believers. This practice is a characteristic of the icons replicas, produced during the Renaissance. Analogies can be made with the miraculous icons of Mother of God in the Troyan and the Arbanassy monastery (Пенчева 2015: 302-303).

Fig. 5. Rozhen monastery “Nativity of the Virgin”– the miraculous icon of Virgin Mary Portaitissa (Gatekeeper)

The miraculous icon of Mother of God is a replica of the famous icon of Portaitissa in the monastery of Iviron on Mount Athos (Пимен 1991: 270-272, Бакалова 1990: 19-20, Петев 2008: 27-33). The original miraculous icon of Virgin Mary Portaitissa (Gatekeeper) is painted by St. Luke. According to the legend, during a period of iconoclasm in Byzantium, a widow from the city of Nicaea, who deeply believed in God, threw the icon into the sea to save it from destruction. After nearly two centuries, it appeared in the sea in front of Mount Athos, and then stood over the gate of Iviron to protect the monastery, and thus received its name. Unlike the original icon, the copy painted for the Rozhen Monastery is surrounded by ten scenes representing the icon's miracles.

The temple feast of the Rozhen Monastery is the Nativity of St. Virgin Mary (Virgin Mary's Day) on September 8th. It is visited by the local population and hundreds of pilgrims. After the liturgy, a litany procession with the icon goes around the monastery temple and blessing of holy water takes place under the old monastery vine.

The two miraculous icons are united by the analogous way of accumulating sacredness. A tradition about them is preserved that they were painted by St. Evangelist Luke and were personally sanctified by the Virgin Mary. According to one of the legends, the icon of Holy Mary Eikosifoinissa is not created by hand – it has appeared by God's will. Here we observe even stronger sacralisation, which increases its miraculousness many times and is a condition for more pilgrimages. Secondly, both icons radiate blessed light. When the icon of Virgin Mary Portaitissa came to Mount Athos, a pillar of light appeared from it, which is part of the legend in the Iviron Monastery. Thirdly, both icons convey their thoughts and desires by appearing in dreams of pious monks.

Part of venerating the miraculous icons is making their revetment (*riza*) from a precious metal - usually silver with gilt and in rare cases gold (Пенчева 2015: 304). As we have already mentioned, the icon of Holy Mary Eikosifoinissa is covered with golden riza which is an indication of believing Christians' great honor. A special *kyvot* (a *proskynetarion*) was donated for the icon of the Virgin Mary Portaitissa in the Rozhen Monastery. Today it is situated in the chapel of Saints Cosmas and Damian "the silverless" or "unmercenaries". According to the preserved inscription, it was made in 1790 with the material help of the rich leather (tabash) craftsmen from the town of Melnik (Василиев 1964: 185, Койнова 1980: 125-126, Бакалова 1990: 19).

According to my research, a lot of icon and mural painting was done in the open galleries of a number of Orthodox monasteries during the Renaissance: the miraculous icons (Trojan and Rila Monastery in Bulgaria), the litany procession (Bachkovo Monastery in Bulgaria) or their mysterious finding (Monastery of Holy Mary Eikosifoinissa in Greece). A mural showing finding the miraculous icon is preserved in the northern gallery of the temple of the Holy Mary Eikosifoinissa monastery (Example 3). This visual image strongly influenced the Orthodox population during the Revival period and increased pilgrimage to the holy cloister. Part of worship is the donation of everlasting vigil lamps, lit in front of the miraculous icons. Legends and traditions about the miracles of the glorious icons of God's mother are preserved. Some of them are recorded in special books, and those who got cured often return to thank Mother of God (Κυράτσοу 2013).

In the traditional monastery culture, the connection of miraculous icons with the temple feast is extremely strong. Then God's blessing is the strongest and the pilgrims are the most numerous. The patron saint celebration includes an all-night vigil, festive liturgy, litany with the miraculous icon, water blessing. In a number of holy cloisters, including the Rozhen Monastery, a ritual temple sleep (overnight stay) is practiced on the eve of the patron saint celebration in order to communicate directly with the miraculous image (Пенчева 2015: 305).

The litany processions to the place where the miraculous icons were found are part of the preserved rituals during the temple feasts of the respective monasteries. This helps to increase the number of pilgrims to them and votive gifts that underlie their material prosperity. The litany processions go around a definite sacral place, which remains under the protection of Virgin Mary. This is an old tradition of enclosing a sacred place through holy objects, which has many analogues in Orthodox Christian culture (Пенчева 2015: 306) (Example 6).



Fig. 6. Rozhen monastery “Nativity of the Virgin”– part of the festive liturgy and blessing of holy water

A so-called healing tourism is developing in connection with worship of miraculous icons. Icons have an important social function and a number of believers associate them with overcoming of illnesses and mental sorrows. According to the pilgrims, both miraculous icons heal infertility and help people with mental and oncological problems. A lot of Christians visit the two monasteries and pray to the mother of God for their family's health.

In recent years, the cult of miraculous icons has grown immensely. The Media constantly covers the worship of various sacred images. Religious tourism connected with them plays an increasingly important role in the lives of the Orthodox population

in Greece and Bulgaria. The expanding knowledge and advertising can further encourage pilgrims and tourists towards the two Holy cloisters.

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THE TRANSLATED POETRY AND OTHER FORMS OF CULTURE, ELIMINATE THE BORDERS BETWEEN PEOPLE

Stelios Sarivasilis

With the opportunity it was given to me, I would like right from the beginning to exaggerate the conscious work produced by the teaching team of the South-west University „Neofit Rilski” of Blagoevgrad in order to record morals, customs, events, and in general the culture of the people of the two countries on either side of the border.

As it is known in the Pantheon of Olympus, there was God Hermes, who was the God of Commerce, “Ploutodotes Hermes” but also the God of letters and arts „The Logios Hermes”. To the Logios Hermes I will stand and add another attribute, that of the messenger of the Gods, that is, the conveyor of the views and ideas of the mythical Pantheon.

Let us now descend here to the cosmic Balkans and to see the bearer of ideas, who conveys them within a society of people who speak the same language, live with the same habits, the same customs, then there is no communication problem and if there is, it could be resolved through dialogue.

Written speech, either in prose or in moderation, that distinguished writers-creators serve, would not be able to travel and be transferred to the mind, heart and knowledge of other people who do not speak the same language, do not have the same morals and customs if the translational catalyst was not mediated, especially in literary creations.

This need of translation and consequently of the cultural acquaintance of the two nations through artistic discourse became an act with the publication of the Anthology of Neohellenic Poetry by **Stefan Gechev, who translated and edited this endeavor of the need for spiritual communication, beginning in 1960.**

СТЕФАН

ГЕЧЕВ

Моят гръцки приятел Одисеас
Елитис

...
Както казах, другият гост беше поетът Одисеас Елитис.

Познавах вече стиховете на този поет и го бях включил с части от неговата поема „Песен героична и траурна за загиналия лейтенант в Албания“. Харесаха ми неговите многоцветни и пълни с мъжествена емоционалност метафори, безспорно повлияни от най-добрия сюрреализъм, и заедно с това – толкова национално-гръцки. Собствено Елитис винаги твърдеше, че е сюрреалист. Ако това е съвсем вярно, тогава той е единственият сюрреалист на света, получил Нобелова премия. Затова бях почти щастлив, че имах възможност да се запозная и разговарям с този талантлив поет.

11

Fig. 1 Stefan Gechev, My Greek friend Odysseas Elytis

Despite the historical differences between the two nations, the writers always wanted to express each other's inner feelings and concerns through their literary texts, and here the translations from the one language to the other of these texts contributed greatly.

When I visited Bulgaria long time ago, I was very impressed by the fact that the schools had the name and sometimes also the busts of the writers, such as Christo Botev, Nicola Vaptsarov, Konstantin Velichkov and others, while in my country they had a number instead of a name, like 1st Gymnasium of Boys, 2nd, 3rd and so on. This became a reason for understanding how the North Neighbors gave the proper meaning to the messages of these writers and poets.

This was also an incentive to accept, to include and to receive such literary hospitality that was realized by the translation of my poetry into the Bulgarian language as well. This was a step towards the elimination of borders and distances, even of prejudices.

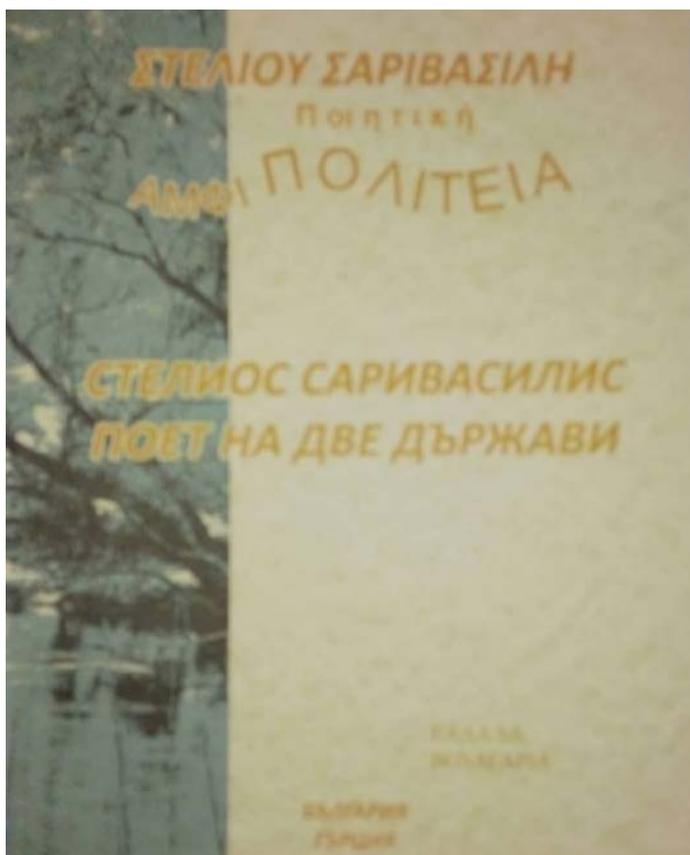


Fig. 2 Poetry by Stelios Sarivasilis, translated in Bulgarian language and prolonged by Prof. Dr. Stoina Poromanska

The transfer, through the translated literature, of the writers' ideas, opinions and feelings, helps to make Greeks and Bulgarians more acquainted with each other, to find the similarities and differences and to understand that acceptance, mutual respect, dialogue solves problems in the communities of the Balkans and Europe, all the more so given that literature is the main expression of a people's culture.

To this dialogue has also contributed my mediocrity, with the help of Prof. Dr

Stoyna Poromanska, a scholarly figure in the academic community with many distinctions, and Boris Jogov, who is the Secretary of the Delphic Council of Sofia, Velichea Simonova - Grozdeva, Professor at the University of Plovdiv „Paisii Hilendarsky”, Valentin Penzov, Composer and Artistic Director of Pirin folk festival, Dimitri Nikos, translator, the Hellenic Foundation for Culture of Sofia, and others whom I would like to thank publicly.

Erato and the other Muses, who have inspired the poets, dramaturgy, painting and all the fine arts, folklore, traditional acts and culinary habits, religious worship synergies and a large set of such expressions of life, when originally given, when adulterated with modernist tendencies and sometimes obscure for many, they state the characteristics of the people, their history, culture, and yet their peculiarity, which we must understand, understand and accept.

Through the scientific recording, following systematic research, through festivals, joint international or national and through other events that concerns the cultural route and especially in our case that starts from the springs of the Struma river and ends at the delta of Strymon, it is a vital coexistence system.

So, imagine Bistritsa, Stara, Belishka, Santanska Bistrtsa, Strumitsa, Belitsa, Aggitis and not to become tedious and many other tributaries contribute to create this ecosystem that the ancient Greeks theodized creating „God Strymon”. While the wisdom of nature has given the flora and fauna (aquatic, terrestrial and pterosea) the harmony and beauty of coexistence, I believe that the symbolism is understood.

The Creator built the planet we inhabit with different features per region, but without borders. The borders have been created by people in order some questionable personalities to be the leaders of the others (For me the personality of a person is what remains after the removal of any occupied position and the financial aspects of any elected person or other citizen).

Here I will also present my own selfish, participatory experience. In the prologue of a book that was translated, published and presented at the „New Bulgarian University”, the professor of the Modern Greek language Dr. Stoyna Poromanska, underlining the role of art that overlaps linguistic and cultural differences, points out that „a noble fire removes the borders between Greece and Bulgaria, the fire of the rhyme that littered the poetry of Stelios Sarivasilis.”

Finally in the same direction Dr. Maria Christova, a professor of South-west University “Neofit Rilski” of Blagoevgrad, with her interest and recently published work, offers her students selected texts of Modern Greek literature translated into Bulgarian, removing the borders of the country, turning them into a conceivable line.

When Tom Robbins said, „The poets are so important to our society, they remember our dreams on our behalf,” of course he did not know that they could enter borders in dreams, but how could happen this?

Culture is the blood of life in survival, in expression, in hope and ultimately in our path for a better tomorrow.

And finally, I would like to conclude with Elisaveta Bagriana.

ΕΛΙΣΑΒΕΤΑ ΜΠΑΓΚΡΙΑΝΑ (ЕЛИСАВЕТА БАГРЯНА)
(1893-1991)



Ἡ Ἐλισαβέτα Μπαγκριάνα (ψευδώνυμο τῆς Ἐλισαβέτας Μπέλτσεβα) γεννήθηκε στὴ Σόφια σὲ περιβάλλον διανοουμένων. Ἦδη ἀπὸ τὰ φοιτητικὰ τῆς χρόνια συμμετέχει στὸς πιὸ ἐλιτίστικους λογοτεχνικούς κύκλους καὶ δημοσιεύει ποιήματά της στὰ πιὸ ἐγκυρα λογοτεχνικά περιοδικά. Προκαλεῖ τὸν γενικὸ θαυμασμὸ μὲ τὸ κάλλος καὶ τὴν ἀρχοντιά της. Ἡ πρώτη ποιητικὴ τῆς συλλογὴ, *Ἡ αἰώνια καὶ ἀγία* (*Вечната и святата*), γίνεται δεκτὴ τὸ 1927 ὡς τὸ πιὸ σημαντικό λογοτεχνικὸ γεγονός, καὶ ἀναγνωρίζεται ἀμέσως ἡ μεγάλη της ἀξία. Ταυτόχρονα τὸ βιβλίο αὐτὸ ἀποτελεῖ καὶ φωτεινὴ βιογραφικὴ μαρτυρία γιὰ τὸ τραγικὸ τέλος τοῦ ἔρωτά της μὲ τὸν μεγάλο ιστορικὸ τῆς βουλγαρικῆς λογοτεχνίας Μπογιάν Πένεφ. Σὲ ὅλη τὴ διάρ-

κεια τῆς μακρᾶς καὶ καρποφόρας πορείας τῆς ἡ Μπαγκριάνα γράφει ποίηση – ἄλλες σημαντικὲς ποιητικὲς τῆς συλλογὲς εἶναι: *Καρδιά ἀνθρώπου* (*Сърце човешко*, 1936), *Ἀντιστίξεις* (*Κοητραπункти*, 1972) – καὶ παιδικὰ βιβλία, μεταφράζει λυρικούς ποιητὲς ἀπ' ὅλο τὸν κόσμον καὶ συνάπτει λογοτεχνικὲς φιλιές μὲ πολλοὺς ξένους ποιητὲς. Γίνεται τὸ βουλγαρικὸ σύμβολο τοῦ γυναικείου πόθου αὐτοπραγμάτωσης καὶ ἀνεξαρτησίας, χωρὶς ποτὲ νὰ φτάνει στὶς ἀκρότητες τοῦ ἐπιθετικοῦ φεμινισμοῦ. Οἱ τιμὲς πού τῆς ἀποδόθηκαν τὰ τελευταῖα χρόνια τῆς ζωῆς τῆς τὴν κατέστησαν ἀντικείμενο ἀπέραντης λατρείας.

ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΑ

Fig. 3: Biography of Elisaveta Bagriana, from the Anthology “Haimos, Anthology of Balkan poetry”

Elisaveta Bagriana is the symbol of passion and independence, quoting two poems from her poem „Elements” translated by Panos Spathogiannis, referring to the Persian Omar Kayam and Dionysus in Greek mythology and this is proof of contribution of translated poetry:

«Σταματάει κανεῖς τὸ βράσιμο τοῦ κρασιοῦ στα κρασοβάρελα σὲ ὑπόγεια, ἀνήλιαγα, ὅλο μούχλα καὶ βαριές οσμές που με γράμματα κυρρικὰ γράψαν «ἀσπρος οἶνος», «κόκκινο, οἱ παππούδες των παππούδων μου, τῆς γενιάς μου τα θεμέλια στη γενέθλιά μου πόλη; Δεν μπορείς νὰ μπεις ἐμπόδιο, εἶναι μάταιη ἡ προσπάθεια – εἶμαι ἀδερφή του Διονύσου, του ἀνέμου καὶ του χειμάρου καὶ διψῶ γιὰ τὸ ἀέραντο, γιὰ τὸ ἀπιαστο, τὴ χιμαῖρα κι ονειρεύομαι τὸ ἀπάτητο, τὸ στρατί, τὸ ἀδοκίμαστο – πὼς μπορείς νὰ μπεις ἐμπόδιο;»²²

²² Вечната и святата, 1927.

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