

ON THE CROSS-PATH OF CULTURAL IDEAS

MACEDONIA, THE BALKANS, SOUTHEAST EUROPE -
HERITAGE, MANAGEMENT, RESOURCES

*A collection of papers from the international conference
held in Ohrid in September 2019*

Edited by

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| 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

7	Foreword E. Dimitrova & I. T. Vesevska
9	Antique and Medieval Cultural Heritage in Macedonia during WW1 Based on German and Austrian Archival Evidence M. St. Popović & T. Filiposki
19	The ethnic diversity in Timarion's Journey D. Toševa
29	The National Gallery as a cultural hub M. Čankulovska-Mihajlovska
39	Three Symbolist Painters in the Skopje National Gallery Collection J. Jovanov
55	Strategic planning and building audience at the Gallery of Matica srpska from Novi Sad T. Palkovljević Bugarski & D. Korolija Crkvenjakov
63	Yugoslav cultural policy in Macedonia: the expression of the Macedonian national identity, 1945-1991 K. Penušliski
75	Building Socialist Art Together. Cultural Exchanges between Romania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria in the Aftermath of the Second World War I. Cărăbaș
85	Transdisciplinarity and transmediality as a possible model of protecting the moving cultural heritage A. Frangovska
99	Archaeological topography of the old towns and fortresses around Lake Ohrid V. Lilčić Adams

- 129 Reconstructing or deconstructing the space in time?
The case of Skopje fortress
I. T. Vesevska
- 137 Project Ancient Theatre Scupi 2013- 2017
A. Jakimovski
- 145 Macedonian cultural heritage as a part of the world's treasure –
towards the improvement of its management
T. Filipovska
- 159 On the Path from Kurbinovo to Pološko.
The picturesque Macedonian Genre and its Historic Destiny
E. Dimitrova
- 175 Management of Change of Heritage Sites in Macedonia
P. Velkov
- 185 Highlighting the value of architectural heritage.
The Example of St. George at Kurbinovo
H. Declomesnil
- 191 How to protect the archaeological heritage
from the heritage authorities?
M. Tutkovski & A. Aleksova
- 207 Information system DAGIS 4.0.
A software for the museums in the Republic of Macedonia
T. Spiridonov & S. Stoyanov

In September 2019, an international conference was organized by the Faculty of Philosophy entitled *On Cross-path of Cultural Ideas: Macedonia, the Balkans, Southeast Europe – heritage, management, resources* with forty participants from: Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Germany, Spain, Austria, France and Israel. The conference was mainly dedicated to the protection of cultural heritage and held in Ohrid, a world heritage site by UNESCO and one of only twenty eight sites that are part of UNESCO's map of cultural, as well as natural sites. The participants of the conference (professors and experts in the domains of protection and management of cultural heritage) have disclosed the latest results of their investigations, as well as methods of protection of the heritage in the spheres of: archeological sites (tangible and intangible heritage), sacral monuments (architectural ensembles, interior structures, fresco painting, icons and iconostases), monumental complexes (design and maintaining), museum exhibits (museum practice, curatorship, management of exhibitions), thus promoting the new principles, methods and technologies for preservation, protection (conservation and restoration techniques) and management of diversified components of historical, archeological, artistic and literary heritage. In that regard, the Organization committee of the Conference made an effort to design and publish this Collection of conference papers as a witness to the first ever organized academic event by the Faculty of Philosophy related to the scholarly horizon of cultural heritage and its contemporary maintenance. Although not all participants have sent their contribution due to the epidemic crisis and isolation restrictions, the majority of the speakers at the Conference have authorized papers dealing with: management of crucial archeological sites, identification of preservation issues within medieval religious monuments, detection of issues that need international protection experiences, impact of the current situation of desolated monuments on the investigation of their structural and aesthetic features, management of museums and galleries in regard to their activities for organization of exhibitions, new models and methods of management of museums and art galleries, modern technologies for revitalization of cultural heritage, as well as cultural traditions, ways and manners of adequate usage of cultural and artistic heritage in everyday's life, social concepts, cultural tourism, etc. The main quality of the published papers is their reference to the on-going issues and challenges in the sphere of protection and management of cultural heritage,

as well as the hazard of sidestepping the contemporary technologies essential for further preservation.

The organization and realization of the Conference, as well as the Collection of conference papers, is due to the efforts of the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, Professor Ratko Duev, PhD and his academic ideas for enhancement of the international cooperation of our institution. We appreciate the participation of the speakers who gave their contribution to the successful course of the conference; however, our gratitude is mostly reserved for our colleagues who sent their papers regardless of the difficult times which still do not give up.

The arrangement of the papers follows the order in which they were presented at the conference.

Elizabeta Dimitrova & Irena Teodora Vesevska

PROJECT ANCIENT THEATRE SCUPI 2013- 2017

Antonio JAKIMOVSKI

Faculty of Philosophy, Skopje

The project titled *Scupi Antique Theatre - Research, Protection, Conservation, Reconstruction and Presentation 2013-2017* is a capital project of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, coordinated by the Ministry of Culture and the Cultural Heritage Protection Office of the Republic of Macedonia. The project holders are the Faculty of Philosophy Skopje and the Museum of the City of Skopje.

The set goal of the project was the complete excavation and exploration of the theatre, its conservation, reconstruction and commissioning by 2017. A number of archaeologists from museum institutions in the Republic of Macedonia¹ were hired to carry out these researches successfully and more dynamically, graduated archaeologists, students from the Institute of Archaeology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje² and other experts such as architects, photographers, documentaries, conservationists for immovable and movable cultural heritage etc. Around 200 - 250 manual workers were hired for the rough field work and physical excavation as required.

The systematic archaeological researches were carried out according to a predetermined program, which due to the complexity of the task and the size of the theatre with the environment, were divided into several stages:

The first phase (June - October 2013) covered all the preparatory activities necessary to begin intensive systematic archaeological excavations to fully discover the theatre, as part of preparations for the next research phases

¹ Due to the scope of the project, archaeologists from the Archaeological Museum of Skopje, Prilep Institute and Museum, Strumica Institute and Museum, Gevgelija Institute and Museum, Štip Institute and Museum and many unemployed archaeologists were also involved in the project.

² During the project, three graduate theses related to different aspects of theatre research were defended.

that follow in 2014 and 2015.³ The first was the removal of vegetation from the entire area above the theatre and its surrounding area with an area of about 10,000 square meters. After complete removal of the vegetation, and the land of the previous excavations, the next phase was the commencement of non-destructive activities such as: aerial photography, geo-magnetic, geo-electrical and geo-radar exploration of a site area of about 22 500 m², which was intended to facilitate the following two phases.

The second phase (February - December 2014) focused on the systematic archaeological excavation of the entire theatre area and partly the immediate vicinity of approximately 10,000 m. In this excavation, the first stage was auditing and investigating the scene, which had previously been excavated on two occasions.⁴ In 2014 the excavations were designed to confirm or revise existing knowledge of dimensions, constructional architectural elements, timelines and the use of sections in the scene.⁵ The excavations confirmed some of the previous findings, the dimensions were more precisely determined, and new facts were discovered, especially with regard to the constructive elements. Complete technical and photographic documentation of the area has been prepared, which is the basis for developing a basic project plan for the preservation and restoration of the scene.

The third phase, due to the established dynamics, started at the beginning of January 2015 and continued without interruption until the end of December. In this final phase of the theatre's archaeological research, the auditorium and orchestra were completely excavated. In the course of these excavations, we have completely discovered the preserved architecture of the auditorium and completed the stratigraphy on an area occupied by the theatre. With this, we have fully completed this part of the project, and have also completed the technical and photo documentation that forms the basis for the next two phases (fourth and fifth).

During 2015, the "Basic Project for Conservation and Restoration of the Stage Theatre Building in Scupi" was developed and accepted.

The fourth phase began in November 2015, and during 2016, at the planned pace, the conservation work on the stage building was completed.

³ At the beginning of the project and direct archaeological excavations in 2013 were under the direction of Dr. Viktor Lilic Adams, and then the same year, continue under the leadership of Dr. Antonio Jakimovski.

⁴ During the period from 1935 to 1937, excavations were carried out under the leadership of N. Vulić, (results published in: Вулић Н., 1961, 3–23.; Vulić N., 1981, 37–43.) and later in 1959–60 by D. Rendić Miočević (results published in: Rendić-Miočević D., 1981, 45–52.

⁵ In previous excavations, the main outlines of buildings have been discovered: scaenae frons, central postcaenium and part of the Eastern lateral wing (basilica).

The fifth phase, according to the adopted dynamics, was planned and implemented during 2016 and 2017. Based on the results of the archaeological research, as well as the complete photo and technical documentation, the Skopje Conservation Center has made an existing and preliminary project for the conservation, restoration, reconstruction, revitalization and presentation of the auditorium in Scupi. Thus, by the end of 2017, the conservation of the existing state of the auditorium has been completed, thus completing the project "Ancient Theatre – Scupi, Research, Protection, Conservation, Preservation, Presentation, Restoration and Reconstruction 2013-2017".

At the end of the research in 2017, a book titled "Roman Theatre - Scupi" has been published which derives from the results and findings obtained from the archaeological research within the project: "*Ancient Theatre - Scupi, Research, protection, conservation, restoration, reconstruction and presentation 2013 - 2017*".⁶



Fig. 1. The Theatre before the excavations in 2013



Fig. 2. The Theatre near the end of the third excavation campaign in 2015

The publication is conceived as a collection of papers by (several) authors who, in the process of archaeological research, worked on a particular issue within the project, in order to present all aspects related to the architectural composition of the Roman theatre and the complex cultural stratigraphy of space.⁷

Along with these excavations, the archaeological artefacts were conserved, and by the end of the project we had conserved and restored and

⁶ Jakimovski A., et. all., Roman Theatre Scupi, Skopje 2017, 1-488.

⁷ The book is in Macedonian / English, by 13 authors, featuring 11 texts covering all aspects of research as well as stratigraphy of theatre space from 8/7 BC. to the 11th century.

ready for presentation, over 10,000 finds made of ceramics, metal, bone and glass, and about 3,300 coins.⁸



Fig. 3. The Theatre after the end of excavations and the conservation of the scene building in 2016

The archaeological excavations within this project almost completely reveal the size of the theatre⁹, thus confirming that it is the largest ancient object in the Republic of Macedonia. In addition, the timing of its construction, existence and end, as well as the stratigraphy of the space occupying the theatre, have been determined. Numerous archaeological and architectural sites and a large quantity of moving archaeological material have been discovered, which greatly enrich our knowledge of the prehistory, antiquity and the Middle Ages in the region of the Skopje region, the Republic of Macedonia, and even wider in the Balkans.

The Scupi theatre is the biggest antique building in the Republic of Macedonia.¹⁰ Its grandiose dimensions, and the architectural concept, in a unique way reflect the cultural level of the citizens and the urbanism of *Colo-*

⁸ Some of these items were exhibited at the closing annual exhibitions at the Archaeological Museum of Macedonia in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016, and an exhibition of research and material posters was also opened at the 2018 Museum of Sarajevo at the Zemajski Museum in commemoration of 135 years of existence at the museum.

⁹ Except for a small part of the north-western end of the theatre building which is located beneath the modern cemetery of the village Zlokukjani.

¹⁰ With its impressive dimensions, volume and capacity of about 9,000 spectators, this monumental architectural facility is the largest of the four preserved Roman theatres on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia (Stobi, Heraclea and Lychnidos).

nia Flavia Scupinorum.¹¹ In the course of the excavations, most of the remains of the theatre were discovered, except for a part of the scene building which lies under the modern cemetery of the village Zlokukjani. The theatre was built in one sequence, without subsequent intervention. By the architectural concept, the building belongs to the western Roman type of theatre, with semicircle auditorium built on a natural slope and partially supported by complex walls. The scene building and the orchestra have been placed in a levelled area, and the scene is associated with the auditorium through two arched corridors (*aditus maximi*). The *scaenae frons* had four porches with columns in three stories, and three entrances between the porches. Above the central entrance (*valva regia*), on the same level as the columns, there was a semicircular niche, and above the both side entrances (*hospitalia*) there were rectangular niches.



Fig. 4. The Theatre and its relation with the excavated buildings

According to the existing elements it may be concluded that the performances took place in the orchestra. The theatre had a multifunctional character, beside theatrical plays it was also used as a venue for gladiatorial combat and fights with animals. This is suggested by the lack of stage (*pulpitum*), the high orchestra podium and the rectangular pit of 3.20 meters in length, dug in the rock in the central part of the orchestra. The pit is connected with trenches that are parallel to the scene building. At the end of the usage of the theatre, the pit which was associated with the requirements of gladiator shows

¹¹ Jovanova L., 2008.; Jovanova L., 2015.; Лилчиќ Адамс В., 2019, 117-324. these three publications give a complete review on the history of the buildings seen through the prism of excavated ruins.

and fights with animals was filled with soil, and five stone blocks were laid on top. The blocks have a hole in the middle for vertical positioning of wooden posts, which again is connected with this type of fights.

The date of construction, function and the end of the theatre, can be provided by combining the information from archaeological evidence, historical circumstances and written sources. A coin found in the mortar of one of the walls is a bronze AS of the emperor Caligula, minted during the period between 37 and 41 AD, and it gives us a *post-quem* date for the construction.¹² According to architectural elements, namely the part of architectural elements that adorned the scene building, construction time can be dated to the first quarter of the 2nd century.¹³ This is further supported by historical data, i.e. the visit of the Roman emperor Hadrian of Scupi in the period between 121 and 125 AD. The final usage period of theatre is illustrated by numerous finds, especially a large number of coins, and also many deposits from the period when the theatre was out of use. According to written sources, the emperor Theodosius (*Flavius Theodosius*) visited Scupi on two occasions in 379 and 388 AD, when he issued two edicts, called *Scupis* and *Scopis*. Knowing that he was supporting Christianity and persecuted all other religions, we presume that the end of the theatre is during this period i.e. at the end of the 4th century.¹⁴

In the area of the theatre, five later phases were documented. Most likely, right after the theatre went out of use, the area was used as a burial site as suggested by five graves, dug in the bedrock and two more cenotaphs, dated in the early 5th century and possible connected with the cult of the Martyrs.¹⁵

The next phase is represented by Late Antique dwellings, confirmed by a large number of moveable finds and architectural remains, dated from the end of the 5th century all the way up to the beginning of the 7th century. Buildings from this period are found in multiple locations over the abandoned theatre area, and generally these are houses with one or more rooms. The houses are very rustic, built from crude stone and bricks bound with mud, in the so-called technique of drywall. The houses had fire places, kilns and pits for storage of food, and there were a large number of waste pits found.

¹² Miloševski V., Lilčić G., 2017, 419 – 470.

¹³ Лилчиќ В., 2001, Македонскиот камен за боговите, христијаните и за животот после животот, Том I, Скопје., This publication focuses on the marble decorations which covered the façade of the scene building.

¹⁴ Jakimovski A., 2017, 11-28.

¹⁵ Jakimovski A., 2017, 11-28.

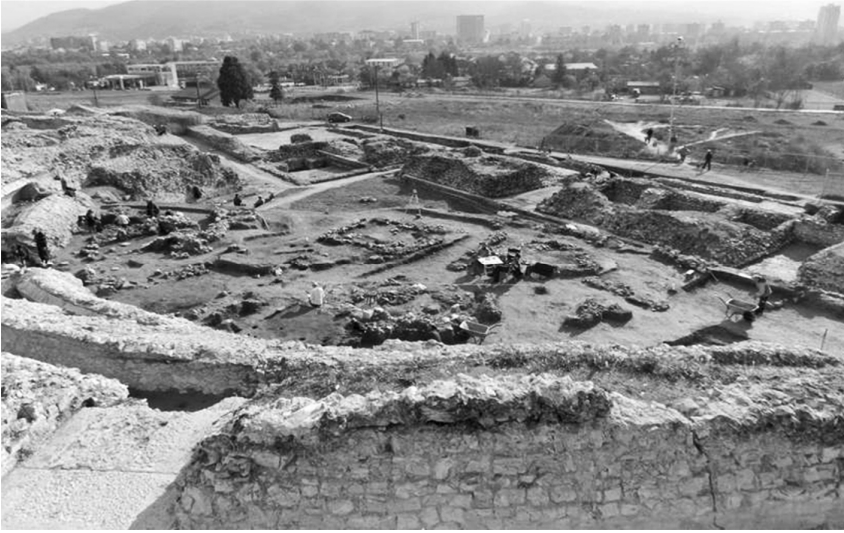


Fig. 5. Medieval settlement in the orchestra



Fig. 6. Detail of the medieval necropolis

Above the Late Antique houses, there was early medieval stratum found in the orchestra, dated in the 9th and 10th century according the finds. Except for numerous moveable archaeological finds, this horizon includes several extremely rustic houses.¹⁶

¹⁶ Tolevski I., 2017, 367 – 418. Jakimovski A., Tolevski I., 2016, 1-19.

After the abandonment of the settlement, the area was used as a burial ground from which we discovered more than 60 skeleton graves. According to the finds in the graves they can be dated to the period of X and XI century.¹⁷ With this stratum, ends the usage of the space above the theatre and its surrounding where the oldest discoveries are the two Iron Age graves, dated to the period of the 8th – 7th century BC.¹⁸

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¹⁷ Kuzmanovski I., 2017, 367 – 418.

¹⁸ Mitrevski D., 2017, 147 – 159.

Издавач Филозофски Факултет – Скопје
За издавачот проф. д-р Ратко ДУЕВ
Идејно решение и корица проф. д-р Ирена Теодора ВЕСЕВСКА
Техничка обработка Јована САВЕВСКА
Печати МАР-САЖ – Скопје



The publication is financially supported by the
Ministry of Culture of Republic of N. Macedonia

CIP - Каталогизација во публикација
Национална и универзитетска библиотека „Св. Климент Охридски“,
Скопје

930.85(497.7)(062)

930.85(497)(062)

ON the cross-path of cultural ideas : Macedonia, the Balkans, Southeast
Europe - heritage, management, resources : a collection of papers from the
international conference held in Ohrid in September 2019 / edited by
Elizabeta Dimitrova & Irena Teodora Vesevska. - Skopje : Faculty of
philosophy, 2020. - 217 стр. : илустр. ; 25 см

Фусноти кон текстот. - Библиографија кон трудовите

ISBN 978-608-238-179-4

а) Културно наследство - Македонија - Собири б) Културно наследство
- Балкан - Собири

COBISS.MK-ID 51316741

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