Ne variatatem timeamus

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Cultural heritage is the treasury of any country as it reflects the previous civilisations that best prove their existence in the area. Republic of Macedonia has an immense cultural heritage dating as far back as from the neolith. Remnants of the cultural treasures of the previous generations inhabiting the area can be found on every piece of the Macedonian soil. There are mosaics, as well as artefacts which reflect the life of our ancestors. This treasure is very interesting from a scientific point of view, but it is also attractive to many people who make attempts to steal or destroy it. Therefore, the Law on Cultural Heritage has been passed in Macedonia in order to protect the cultural treasure of the country. The Law establishes the types, the categories, identification and protection instruments to safeguard the cultural heritage, the regime of protection and the use of the treasury, the rights and obligations of the holders and the limitation of the property rights over the cultural heritage of public interest, the organisation, the coordination and the surveillance, as well as the professional titles and other issues important for the integrity and the operation of the protection of the cultural treasures of the Republic of Macedonia.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The cultural heritage is protected according to its values, importance and degree of endangerment, regardless of the period, location and method of its creation, and of the civilisation that created it, of its present owner, regardless of whether it is of religious or secular character, of the confession it belongs to or whether it has been registered or not. The cultural heritage can be immovable or movable.

The immovable cultural heritage and the immovable goods are protected together with their immediate surroundings, by establishing of contact zones as in compliance with the above mentioned Law, whereas the movable heritage is protected either as a single good or as a collection.

Protection of the cultural heritage of the Republic of Macedonia

The cultural heritage is protected in several ways:

– By protection activities, depending on the type of the cultural heritage, by regulating the management and the expertise-related operations, in the function of the state, and
regulation of the rights and the obligations of the citizens and the legal entities regarding cultural heritage.

– By organizing a network of specialised services and permanent advisory and coordinative protective bodies, both on national and on local level;
– By establishing a national strategy of protection,
– Development of people’s consciousness about the importance of the cultural heritage and the dangers to which it is exposed, as well as the need to protect it,
– Establishment and advancement of a compatible information system and its connection with the specialised and general systems and networks on the national and international level,
– International assistance, cooperation and protection of the national cultural heritage,
– Stimulation of the Non-Governmental organisations and the private initiative in view of the protection and use of the cultural heritage,
– Inclusion of the protection of the cultural heritage in the environmental planning and nature protection projects;
– Efficient management of the risks to which the cultural heritage is exposed, especially regarding illegal excavations, smuggling, thefts, usurpation and other illegal actions, as well as the conditions where they are stored, handled, transported, exhibited etc.

The Law establishes the prohibitions as a regime of protection and use of the cultural heritage. Thus, it is not allowed to damage, destroy, usurp, hide, conceal, and misuse the cultural heritage. It is also forbidden to export the cultural heritage as well as to import stolen artefacts from other countries. There is also a ban to requisition, repression, attack and use of cultural heritage for military purposes.

The cultural heritage of the Republic of Macedonia is protected by the regulations from the Penal Code. It includes a Chapter entitled: **Criminal Acts Against Cultural Heritage and Natural Rarities**, including regulations about the type, the element of the crime and the amount of the fine. The notion of crime in this case is referred to damage and destruction of temporary protected goods, cultural heritage or natural rarities, usurpation, export, alienation of cultural heritage in state ownership. The Penal Code of the Republic of Macedonia also refers to the prohibition of the import of stolen cultural heritage, as well as destruction or concealment of unprocessed archive material.

The regulations of the Penal Code also establish the fee payable for theft, concealment, deprivation and damage of elements of the cultural treasure of the country.

The application of these regulations results in penal procedures not only as referring to transgressions committed by individual physical and legal entities, but also to organised and large-scale crime committed by many entities.

Article 12 of the Law on Cultural Heritage states the following:
(1) The term “monuments” refers to individual constructions, i.-e architectural buildings or parts or remaining thereof, including the elements and the structures of archaeological character, sculptures, paintings, or applied art works, and technology, permanently connected with one area, inscriptions, cave dwellings, tombstones, memorial constructions referring to important events and prominent individuals, other immovable goods of cultural and historical importance, together with the installations, the decorative elements and other movable objects permanently related to the construction itself or to its use (this includes the protection of mosaics).
(2) The notion of monuments also includes the constructions mainly and effectively intended for preservation and exposition of movable cultural heritage, as well as the special storage locations designed to harbour the cultural heritage in case of military activities.

**Important mosaics discovered in Macedonia**

**Heraclea Lyncestis**

The antique urban settlement of Heraclea Lyncestis is located in the immediate vicinity of today’s city of Bitola, at its East side. Situated in a valley, protected by the Baba Mountain and the river of Siva Voda at the south side, it was the location through which Via Egnatia, the most famous road in whole antiquity, passed as a connection between the Adriatic and the Aegean coast.
The constitution of this most important city of Ancient Macedonia is closely connected with the name of Philip II, King of Macedonia, in the middle of the IVth century BC.

The progress of Heraclea started in the Roman times. Thus, as a century-old city it had all the necessary buildings typical for an urban settlement of that kind: public thermal baths, a courthouse, a theatre, a square and other public buildings.

The most glorious period of the existence of the city was during Christianity when it became the seat of a bishopry. This is witnessed by the mentioning of bishops in their participation in religious gatherings. Heraclea acquired the physionomy of a typical Christian city, with all buildings typical for an urban agglomeration such as a small and a big Basilica, the Bishop’s residence, and the city tap constructed on the occasion of the 35-th anniversary of the reign of The Emperor Justinian the 1st.

The Heraclea bishops from the IVth to the VIth century are mentioned not only in the local, but also on the universal assemblies, sometimes even as the ones replacing the bishop of Thessaloniki. The intensity of urban life at Heraclea diminished by the end of the VIth century AD. The episcopal basilica was constructed in the first half of the IVth century, and existed until the first half of the Vth century AD. It is a three-nave basilica with an open porch, collonades, an exonarthex, a narthex, two northern annexes to the narthex (that had the role of a diaconicon and a proscomidia, i. e a chapel and an outer entrance hall) three southern annexes two of which arround the altar area and one to the west around the exonarthex (also called diaconicon) emphasise the monumental character of the building.

The floors of almost all rooms of this building are adorned with mosaics showing geometrical and floral motifs. The most important one is the mosaic in the narthex representing floral and animal motifs, depicting a symbolic presentation of Paradise on Earth. The mosaic dates from the end of the VIth century.
Stobi
Stobi is an antique city of which the urban section is distributed on three terraces, surrounded by walls and heading down towards the Crna River. The city is located on the point of confluence of the Crna into the river Vardar. It was the location where the main roadways passed connecting the frontal Danube regions and the Mediterranean countries, as far back as in the prehistoric period. It was along these roads that flew the cultural influences from the South to the North and vice versa. On the other hand, the Crna River was a natural connection of the central Macedonian areas with the Adriatic Sea. In the Roman period, an important road was constructed along the Crna River, connecting the city of Stobi and Via Egnatia at the city of Heraclea Lyncestis, near today's Bitola. Thus the city of Stobi occupied a very important strategic, military and trading position in the period of antiquity.

Upon the archeological excavations, floor mosaics were discovered in several buildings the city centre. The most prominent were the mosaics discovered in the Episcopal Basilica the small public bath and the Theodosian Palace.

Episcopal basilica
It is a church dating from early Christianity with a three-nave disposition, known as the basilica of bishop Philip from the beginning of the Vth century. The second construction stage took place towards the end of the Vth and the beginning of the VIth century. It was erected on an artificial terrace. The church features an atrium, a nartex and an exonartex with a double apsida harbouring a cript on the eastern side. The altar partition and the floor of the presbytery reveals two construction stages, performed in opus sectile. Two levels of the floor have been discovered also in the southern nave under which there was a large arched tomb of an episcop. The central nave is divided into square fields and covered in marble tiles of grey slate in which mosaic triangled are interpolated, which indicates a high-luxury arrangement. The nartex is divided into nine square fields six of which have been preserved. They are mosaics featuring geometric, floral and animal images. The premises to the south from the church also featured an upstairs mosaic floor.
The remaining of an old basilica, where the mosaic floor in the presbytery and in the central nave was however preserved was unearthed from the central nave of the Episcopal basilica. The central nave also features a mosaic script of antiquity letters in six rows and, to the west from it, there is a monogram of Christ in romboid pieces. The north wall of this basilica includes a picture in romboid forms separated by columns featuring IS HS confirming the identification of the Christian character of the construction. The old basilica dates from the end of the IVth century. The level of the baptistry and that of the old basilica are the same,
indicated the possibility that the baptistry was used in both the old and the new Episcopal basilica, built later.

**The baptistry of the Episcopal basilica**
South from the basilica there is a baptistry featuring unusually luxurious mosaics representing peacocks, marshland birds and deer drinking water from a big jug. In the center of the baptistry there is a piscina built in two phases, the second of which featured the use of a bid marble jug (cantaros) for christening. The remainings of frescoes in two layers were discovered on the walls of the baptistry. The older layer features images of saints and whole scenes in the niches.

![Figure 4](image)

**Theodosian Palace**
East from the Via Theodosia Street is one of the most luxurious houses so far unearthed in Stobi. It is supposed that this was the house where the Emperor Theodosius I stayed when he visited Stobi in the year of 388 AD. As the name of the owner of this house is unknown, the house has been named Theodosius' Palace, in memory of the visit by the Emperor. It has the plan of the Latin L-letter and it comes on three streets. The hall is surrounded by columns on the north and the west side. On the east side there is a pool with eight marble pedestals, decorated by spiral caneluras on which the statues were standing. The north and the south side of the garden features low platforms, possibly arranged as flower terraces. The garden floor is laid with marble tiles and the peristyle with mosaics.
The big apsidal room, the triclinium, located on a higher level of the south side, is laid with opus sectile tiles. The other rooms are also luxuriously adorned. These ornaments suggest that the palace was probably constructed in the IVth century. Some finishing elements can be dated in the early Vth century, whereas the building was in use in the whole course of the Vth century.

**Small bath**
The building is located between the Civil and the North Basilica, constructed according to the norms governing the late antiquity bath construction. The building features a changing room with a pool located in the apsidal space, as well as a double room with three apsides with hypocausta. The suspensions of the hypocaustes are made in round and cubic blicks. The atrium mosaic is one most important ones in Stobi. It depicts floral and animal motifs in a highly artistic way.

**Lihnidos**
The city developed on the shores of the Ohrid lake on a surface of approximately 40 hectares. It is known (partly from the scripts) that the town featured a theatre and other public buildings: an agora, a gymnasium, a bouleuterion, a civil basilica, temples. Unfortunately, due to the additional layers of the modern Ohrid city, these building have not yet been unearthed.
The city reached its peak in late antiquity. Several early-Christianity churches were built, the central and probably a cathedral one being the polyconal basilica at Imaret location, built in the second half of the Vth century.

![Image of St. Clement Church](image1)

**Figure 9 Plaoshnik, St. Clement Church**

The architectonic and construction remnants of the seven early Christianity churches of Lihnidos, confirm by themselves the active Christian organisation of the city, also known through the numerous priests – bishops: Zosimos and Dionissios, (Serdika Assembly in Serdika, 343 AD) the bishop Anatoniy (second assembly at Ephesus, 449 AD), bishop Laurentius, (from the letter of Pope Gelasius or the heir Asthanassius II, to Laurentius, end of the Vth century) who falls into disgrace of the Byantine Emperor Anastassios and was detained in the capital in 516 AD, to return to Lihnidos after seven years and to die there in his age of 80 years; the bishop Theodorides (signatory of the "Libellus" on March the 7th, 519 AD).

![Image of a polyconal church](image2)

**Figure 10 A polyconal church**

On picture 10 we can notice an earthly animal which is being guided by an organism unidentifiable for us – a flying snake which directs the animal towards a creature from outer space. It can be supposed that the author has seen this scenatio and transmitted it onto the mosaic.

Land animals and amphibians, surrounded by a “braid” demonstrating the DNA of the living world as well as all the accompanying elements: the all-seeing eye, the swastika, clovers representing the flora can be seen on the Picture 11.

All these Christian temples include remnants from decorative floor mosaics, most of them being preserved in the polyconal cathedral basilica at Imaret and its baptistery dating from
the IVth and the Vth century. They feature geometric, floral and animal motifs such as marshland birds, fish, crosses etc.

Figure 11 A polyconal church

Purpose

The basic purpose of this paper is to register and present the Macedonian antiquity mosaics, whereas the purposes of its legal protection are as follows:

– Preservation of the cultural heritage in its original form,
– Creation of as favourable conditions as possible for the survival of the cultural heritage and the preservation of the integrity of all data that it witnesses,
– Spreading of the knowledge about the values and the importance of the cultural heritage and of its role in the cultural identification,
– Presentation of the cultural heritage as per its intention and importance, so that it can meet the cultural, scientific, educational, religious, economic, tourist and other needs of the people and the society.

The operational purpose is taking actions in view of prevention of actions, incidents and influences aiming at damaging, destruction, scattering disappearance, degradation and illegal usurpation of the cultural heritage.

The ultimate purpose is to pass this cultural treasure on to the forthcoming generations.

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