



# Macedonia Welcome Centre

m a g a z i n e

Edition 14 ● June 2013



# Dojran Lake



# Ecole Française Internationale de Skopje

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L'école française internationale de Skopje est une école privée gérée par une ONG-APEF (association des parents d'élèves). L'école est homologuée et est fait partie de la grande famille des écoles françaises à l'étranger. Le programme de l'école est celui du Ministère de l'éducation nationale de France. Chaque année, l'équipe se dynamise autour d'un projet d'école: "Éducation à la citoyenneté-comment devenir citoyen du monde", habilité par l'Inspectrice de l'Éducation Nationale.

L'école existe depuis 1999 et accueille des élèves de toutes nationalités ainsi des enfants natifs de Macédoine. Les classes sont à effectif réduit, une prise en compte des rythmes de l'enfant, un enseignement différencié y est dispensé et des outils informatiques innovants sont des supports pour les apprentissages de la langue française.

Les langues vivantes sont pratiquées: anglais et macédonien. Chaque langue enseignée est dispensée par un professionnel d'enseignement natif. Notre école offre une école maternelle et une école élémentaire.

Nos locaux se situent dans un environnement calme à Karpos 4 et correspondent aux normes scolaires: salle de sport, bibliothèque, salles de classe pour chaque cours, restaurant scolaire, cour de récréation avec des jeux.

L'école est soutenue par le Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et l'Ambassade de France à Skopje.

Les activités sont visibles sur les deux sites:

[www.efis.mk](http://www.efis.mk) et [www.gradinka.com.mk](http://www.gradinka.com.mk)

La Directrice de l'École française internationale peut être contactée et une visite des lieux vous sera proposée.  
tel: ++38923083321/bkrakutovska@efis.mk

The French International School of Skopje (EFIS - Ecole française internationale de Skopje) is a private school run by an NGO-APEF (Association of Parents). The school is homologous and is part of the family of French schools abroad. The program of the school is that of the Ministry of National Education of France. Each year, the team works on a school project: "Education for citizenship, how to become a citizen of the world" authorized by the Inspector of National Education.

The school has existed since 1999 and welcomes students of all nationalities as well as native children of Macedonia. The size of the classes is reduced laying a foundation for a positive learning environment for our students. The professional teaching staff takes into account the child's learning pace and the teaching methods are adapted to all learning styles. Innovative IT tools are used for learning of the French language.

English and Macedonian are taught as well by professional native speakers. There is both a nursery and an elementary school in our facility.

Our school is located in quiet surroundings in Karpos 4 and complies to the standards: there is a gym, a library, classrooms for each class, a canteen, and a school yard equipped with outdoor toys.

The school is supported by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy of France in Skopje.

The activities of the school are visible on both sites: [www.efis.mk](http://www.efis.mk) and [www.gradinka.com.mk](http://www.gradinka.com.mk)

You can contact the school principal and arrange a visit of the French International School at [bkrakutovska@efis.mk](mailto:bkrakutovska@efis.mk). /tel.: + 38923083321

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# Dobredoje Macedonia Welcome Centre 2013 International Charity Bazaar

**Honorary President H.E. Dr. Robert Kirnag, Ambassador of Slovakia in Macedonia**  
**8 June 2013, Saturday, from 16:00 to 20:00**  
**Skopje City Mall, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, food court area**

16:00	Opening ceremony
16:00 – 19:00	Embassies will promote and sell products from their countries
16:30 – 18:30	Performances by Skopje schoolchildren
17:00 – 20:00	Tree of Happiness Art Workshop for pupils of international schools and children with Down syndrome with Zaneta Gelevska-Veljanovska
17:30 – 18:00	Lottery prizes will be drawn. Winning numbers will be published at: <a href="http://www.dmwc.org.mk">www.dmwc.org.mk</a>
18:30	Jazz and wine
20:00	Closing of the Bazaar

## Art Exhibition and Sale

**Pre-Bazaar Event**  
**29 May, Wednesday at 19:00**  
**NLB Tutunska Banka Gallery (1 Vodnianska street)**

Art Exhibition and Sale of works donated by prominent Macedonian artists. Buy paintings and contribute to the Bazaar Charity Fund!

# COME ONE COME ALL!

The proceeds will finance activities of the Down Syndrome Centre

Join us for these exciting activities, celebrate with us 1 June – International Children's Day and help enrich the life of the Down syndrome children in Macedonia!



# In the Spirit of Charity



by Emilija Miladinova  
Avramcheva  
**President of**  
**"Dobredojde" Macedonia**  
**Welcome Centre**

*Dobredojde* Macedonia Welcome Centre from its inception has been promoting Macedonia, its culture and values, among the foreigners living in Macedonia. At the same time, through our regular events we have been enabling foreigners to promote their countries and cultures in Macedonia. Our Centre actually functions as a link between cultures, and through our activities we stimulate intercultural dialogue.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of May, the World Day for Cultural Diversity, for Dialogue and Development, DMWC and the Bulgarian Culture and Information Centre in Skopje in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria organised an exhibition of the most prominent contemporary Bulgarian artists "Looking at the Bulgarian Fine Arts".

As a socially responsible NGO, DMWC is involved in a number of charitable causes. This year we will for the third time join in the international celebrations of the International Children's Day, the 1<sup>st</sup> of June. On June 8 at the Skopje City Mall, DMWC together with most of the embassies in Macedonia will hold the International Charity Bazaar. As it is becoming a tradition, slowly but surely, DMWC is establishing itself as an active player on the Macedonian charity scene.

We are grateful to all the embassies which

have unselfishly gotten involved in the Bazaar, devoting their time to this charitable mission, and to these Macedonian companies for getting involved in the organisation of the 2013 DMWC International Charity Bazaar, especially our general sponsors: Skopje City Mall, Re-Medika Hospital, Acibadem Sistina Clinical Hospital.

The Honorary President of the Bazaar is H.E. Dr. Robert Kirnag, Ambassador of Slovakia, a very well-know diplomat both among foreigners and Macedonians. We would like to extend to him our enormous gratitude for leading this event.

As part of the 2013 Bazaar programme, the traditional Children's Art Workshop led by Zaneta Gelevska-Veljanovska will create the *Tree of Happiness*. It will be a joint project of students from the international schools and children with Down syndrome. With this project DMWC is aiming to raise awareness of the existence of children with special needs who are currently a marginalized and neglected group in Macedonia, and to call attention to the pressing need to better integrate them into society.

Summer in Macedonia is usually hot. We therefore usually refresh ourselves by the lakes and in the mountains. In this issue you will find some interesting texts about Dojran, Prespa, Radozda and Struga which you may visit during vacations or even on week-ends. If you are travelling abroad, we wish you a nice holiday and look forward to seeing you in September. To all those who will be leaving Macedonia this summer we wish good luck and lots of happiness at your next duty station, wherever it may be. Hope to see you again soon.

# Meditation in Daily Life



by **Irina  
Georgieva**

**M**any people think of the meditative state as being rather otherworldly. They imagine it as something that can only be achieved if they divorce themselves completely from the daily life.

In fact, regular meditation practice requires that we weave it into our daily life. We can turn mundane chores into a form of meditation by practising *mindfulness*, or focussing all our thoughts on them; we can experience a sense of spiritual enlightenment through appreciating the beauty of everything around us; we can use meditative practices when trying to engage with and understand our emotions; and we can introduce meditative elements into the ways in which we relate to others. Here are some examples.

- Use the time you spend in the bath or shower each day to relax and enjoy the present moment.
- While eating, focus all your attention on what you are doing.
- When you take a walk in nature, focus your whole mind and all of your senses on the experience, noticing the beauty of everything you pass. Plants teach us how to just be.

## **Key elements of meditation**

There are many ways in which you can bring meditation into every aspect your day-to-day life.

- Focus your mind and body entirely on what you are doing at this moment, letting distractions pass you by.
- Live in the present moment as much as you can.

- Try to perceive the beauty and worth in everything you do, no matter how mundane the task.

- Learn to use your senses to the full.
- Develop self-awareness, and work with the interplay between your emotional and physical self. For example, notice how certain breathing practices and positions of the body affect your mental state.

## **How are you feeling?**

As a way of linking the physical and the non-physical, it is important to get into the habit of consciously taking stock of what your senses are telling your mind. This makes it much easier to monitor your emotions, as they arise, because you can feel them through your senses. In fact, there is no other way to put the finger on how you are *feeling*. For every emotion there is a corresponding physical sensation: we “see red” when angry, our legs “turn to jelly” when we are frightened, sadness makes the heart “ache” or we are “in the dark” when confused.

Once you learn to recognize how you are actually feeling, you can avoid reacting negatively to everyday situations. Whenever you notice a negative feeling arising, pause for an instant (proverbial counting to ten), relax and visualize the positive, opposite feeling. You can then respond to the situation in a positive manner, thus bringing what you have learned through the regular practice of meditation into your daily life.



# The World Has neither Head, nor Tail



**by Robert  
Alagjovzovski**  
cultural manager,  
literary critic

I have just read the latest novel by Lidija Dimkowska, one of the best Macedonian young authors, whose poetry we have already introduced to our readers. (If the author of a dozen books and over 40 years of age should still be classified as young!) *Spare Life* is a long and important book, for which Dimkowska received the Best Novel award from the Writers' Association.

Notable for its autobiographical moments and rich narrative, the book contains a few metaphorical expressions that would, in my opinion, become part of the national wisdom. One is: "the world is as stinky as a caught trout". And another one, which has inspired these lines, is: "the world has neither head, nor tail". It is the same everywhere. I found this statement striking as so far we have been under the influence of various political theories and political geographies of domination. They always represented the world as oriented toward or dominated by some centre. So the world has been Greek-centred, Roman-centred, Vatican-dominated, France and Britain-oriented, bipolar, US-dominated, multi-polar etc. This hierarchical thinking has long shaped the destinies of nations and peoples. The real problem with it is that when some nation is placed on the subordinated or peripheral side of this centralised world, that nation is automatically devalued. Then, the whole history, the whole destiny of a country is regarded as false and unimportant, and wasted. Dominated by this way of thinking, people live

with a feeling that they are wasting their life, that there is no future for whole generations and that the doors to a better life are closed. And the idea of good life is associated with the socio-political history and collective experience of the privileged club of nations, to which the devalued areas and civilizations aspire.

I have a feeling that nowadays Macedonia and the whole Balkan region are caught in the trap of hierarchical thinking when we speak about the so-called European integration, the aspiration of the region, including Macedonia, to become part of NATO and the EU. I have noticed that even my own thinking has been stereotyped and based on this western-centrism. I regard myself as a pro-European and I often use this vocabulary as a mantra suspending my critical thinking.

Of course, I would not opt for the other side of the binary thinking. I would not re-position myself as a Euro-sceptic, proponent of the return to the roots or re-orientation towards an alternative centre, be it BRICS, China, Middle Asia, ex-Byzantium or a Pan-Slavic Commonwealth.

In my view, the real challenge to the political philosophers and the strategists of the country's future would be to conceptualize a political narrative that would give a sense of direction and orientation, while avoiding the binary and stereotyped logic of the First and Third Worlds, of EU and non-EU countries, of North and South, of Old and New Europe. I would like to see a narrative that would go beyond the bastardisation of the post-communist heritage and that would give an explanation of and re-think both the past and the future of the country – a narrative that would give a real value to lands and their peoples without the sense of degradation, feeling of guilt, inferiority and incapability, a narrative that would inspire the nations to move forward in this rather complicated world.

# The Barren Island



**M**acedonia is a landlocked country. Its waters consist of three big natural lakes, dozens of artificial lakes and a few bigger rivers.

These waters create some extraordinary landscapes, the most rare of which are the islands. There are only two dozen of them, the majority being rather small. Two islands were formed when land was flooded and the artificial lakes Tikves and Kalimanci were created. The biggest natural island is on the Prespa Lake. It is called Big Town (*Golem grad*), the Island of Snakes and the Island of St. Peter. All these names refer to the island's rich history, which, having in mind its present depopulation, adds to its mystical attractiveness. The island today is totally uninhabited, but it was done on purpose in order to preserve its rich cultural heritage, its unique natural beauty and ecosystem. The number of visitors to the island has been increasing in the past couple of years, but due to difficult access and lack of a developed tourist programme it remains an undiscovered spot for many.

An ellipse 750 meters long and 450 meters wide, the island lies two kilometres away from the shore close to the village of Konsko. It is surrounded by rocky cliffs, 20 to 30 metres high, making it accessible only

from two points where the rocks form small bays. The special landscape, the abundance of water and its southern location enabled the island to develop a unique micro climate. Researchers found there a few tree species that rarely grow in the Balkans but are common in the Middle East. Another tree found on the island, *celtis glabra*, grows only in the Caucasus, thousands of kilometres away from Prespa. Some of these trees, like *juniperus excelsa*, are slow growing and the biggest of them are almost a thousand years old. Flowers of the southern Mediterranean also dominate on the island. The warm climate made the island home to swans and pelicans. The swans living in groups of four to eight birds give a special grace to the place. Pelicans can be found here at Prespa in abundant beives of hundreds migrating every year from April to October. The pelican presence has allowed the cormorants to settle here too. These two species of birds make an unusual fishing alliance. While pelicans' instinct locates the fish, diving cormorants force it to come up to the surface where they become easy prey for the big pelicans. Ducks, geese, rabbits and many other small animals dwell on the island as well. There are also two kinds of snakes - the poisonous *poskok* viper and the harmless *belouska*



grass snake. Although their number is rather big and they can be seen all over the island, they are not considered as a big treat to visitors. The colonies of hedgehogs and mongooses introduced in the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century did not exterminate the snakes. This unique habitat was declared a nature preservation centre and placed under a strict protection.

However, the ruins on the top of the island plateau reveal millennia long history of human settlement on the island, which ceased only about a hundred years ago. The ongoing archaeological and archival research has proved that the island was populated since the Neolithic times. Burials excavated on the island were identified as belonging to the ancient Macedonian tribes of Oresti. Among other archaeological findings are a Roman necropolis and an early Christian basilica with fragments of floor mosaic dating back to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. There is written evidence that twelve churches had been built all over the island, and the ruins of six have been discovered. One medieval church was built on the foundation of a Roman water cistern. Rich monastic life took place on the island between the 10<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. The best preserved churches are those dedicated to St. Peter and St. Dimitrij. In their vicinity graveyards were also found. St. Peter's Church dates back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century and is noteworthy for the frescoes on the south façade depicting the siege of Constantinople and

flight to Egypt, which according to Cvetan Grozdanov, archaeologist and member of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, are rarely seen on the Balkans. Next to the church there are the ruins of the *konak* where monks used to live. Historical records reveal that the last island dwellers were Macedonian revolutionaries taking part in the 1903 Ilinden Uprising who fled there from Ottoman patrols.

Excavations revealed golden, silver and bronze jewellery and coins, including some from Venetian Republic but no weapons. It proves that the island was used more for spiritual than any other purpose. The oldest writing found on the island is an image of a Florentine cross encircled with Glagolitic alphabet. Dating back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the times of St Clement, it is one of the oldest findings in the whole region.

The most distinguished period of the island's history is the 10<sup>th</sup> century when the Macedonian Tsar Samoil had his summer residence built on the island. Difficult access made it ideal for retreat, and Samoil used to rest there, especially after long military campaigns. But it also sheltered many people when Byzantine armies attacked the region. According to a legend, the Byzantine military even wanted to block the streams that carry water out of the lake in order to increase of the water level and flood the island. Luckily, such a disastrous scenario was never realised.

# The Hidden Gem of Ohrid

The fishermen's village of Radozda is one of the most exciting places on the Ohrid shores. Nested on the edge of the Macedonian land, just 2 kilometers away from Cafasan, the Macedonian-Albanian border crossing, this small village has a millennium-long history, traditions, cultural heritage and cuisine that many well-known tourist centres would envy. The village, like a hidden Ohrid, pearl reveals itself only after one leaves behind the last populated area of the Struga Riviera, hotel complex Biser and the villa area of Elen Kamen. Here the narrow asphalt road takes a dive from Jablanica mountain ridge down the cliffs. The nature is astonishing. Mountain pine woods are laced with small well-tended vineyards. In the turbulent past the cliffs protected the village from unwanted visitors. But in the modern times they just give it the aura of mystery and arouse the visitor's curiosity. And you will not be disappointed: the village has quite a different feel from the more crowded fishermen's settlements in the eastern part of the lake coast, such as Trpejca and Pestani. With a smaller number of visitors, it gives one a gorgeous feeling of serenity, disturbed only by the voices of kids bathing

in the lake. There are many huge trees around the village, some a few centuries old. The smell of grilled fish mixes with that of the burning candles from the nearby churches. The villagers are hospitable but have never been known to importunately tout their services. There are restaurants serving Ohrid fish caught by local fishermen just, few hours earlier, in the deep night or early dawn. As the restaurants are family owned and the food is served and prepared by the local staff trained at Ohrid tourism schools, in the menus there are plenty of traditional dishes, especially fish soups, fresh salads made from the tomatoes and lettuces growing in the surrounding gardens, the famous *gjomleze* pie and *makalo* garlic dip. Of course, there is also the Ohrid trout and carp, *belvica* and *plasica*, cooked or grilled according to the lore of generations of anonymous village chefs. The village used to live off the rich harvest of fish, but in modern times that did not suffice. So in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries many of the inhabitants migrated to northern Europe and across the oceans, to America and Australia, in search of a better life. Those who kept the ties with their homeland have built strikingly large



houses in the village. Master builders have built them into the old 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture, so that now they are suitable for welcoming tourists.

But apart from natural beauty and excellent local food the village has an unusually rich heritage and a long record of its existence. Remains of an old road can be found all over the place. Archaeologists believe that the old Roman route *Via Ignatia* from the Adriatic Sea to the Eastern Roman capital of Constantinople passed through the village. Historians suggest that it was the narrow fertile strip of land between the mountain Jablanica and the lake that made people settle there. Hardworking peasants built terraces suitable for small-scale agriculture thus adding the necessary land-grown products to their fish-based diet. The old village was established ten centuries ago. In the time of the mighty Serbian Tsar Stefan Dusan the village was listed as Radobuzda in a chart dating back to 1342-1345. A detailed 1583 census document of the Ohrid region created under the new rulers, the Ottomans, only slightly changed its name to Radohozda. Another version of the name of Radoozd was found in a letter of Branislav Nusic, famous Serbian playwright and administrator in Macedonia, while the Austro-Hungarian military maps called it

Radoliozda. The inhabitants are proud of the name of their village. They say in the local dialect it means 'birth'. And it is connected with the unique geography of the place. Being located in the westernmost part of the lake, the first rays of the morning sun, coming from above the top of the eastern mountain of Galicica appear in Radozda, announcing the birth of a new day with a magical glow of yellow and gold on the transparent waters.

A natural cave above the village contains a church dedicated to Saint Archangel Michael, the commander of the Army of Angels. The church dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Only one but extraordinary composition is preserved from that time, the Cana Miracle. The anonymous artist has painted characters glowing with inner faith, a significant addition to the existing canon. However, the rest of the paintings are only one century younger. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century the church was completely repainted by masters of the famous Ohrid school of fresco-painters. In the turmoil of the First and the Second World Wars the cave church acquired a new function: it became a shelter for the local population hiding from artillery shelling when the front passed through the area.

Radozda keeps up several long-standing traditions which make the village special and worth visiting at particular times throughout the year. Thus, for Easter, Radozda is crowded by inhabitants and their guests. Traditional exchange of dyed eggs and ceremonial prayers takes place in all the village's seven churches. The next big celebration is *Ilinden*, St. Elijah's Day, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August when people gather in the Church of St. Elija for the big national holiday. Radozda's patron saint day is the feast of the Assumption of Virgin Mary on 28 August when all the doors and gates open to visitors from the entire Struga and Ohrid regions.





## The Miraculous Lake

By Robert Alagjozovski

**W**hen in 2002 Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski opened the new water level regulation system for the Dojran Lake, he called it a political miracle. At that time everyone was sceptical that a complex system for increasing the water level which involved diverting rivers and building channels would save the drying lake and avert the ecological catastrophe that had been in the making since 1988. Yet, the lake miraculously recovered. Since then it has continued to surprise. The latest miracle is the spectacularly big number of visitors which flow to the lake shores during the summer. It is unprecedented and cannot be explained by a straightforward economic logic. Because at the same time the much bigger, trendier and generally nicer Ohrid Lake experiences a downward spiral of tourist visits, and the

equally cheap but much bigger Prespa lake is almost deserted. Why people from the eastern part of Macedonia are so connected to Dojran and why they choose it as their ultimate tourist destination should be subjected to a serious analysis. In this text we will just describe the phenomenon and introduce some information about the lake.

Dojran Lake is the smallest, but also the richest in fish and the warmest in Macedonia, due to the depth of only a dozen metres. The abundance of fish pulls in crowds of fishermen all year round. The photos with hundreds of boats on the tiny surface that recently appeared in the media brought to mind scenes from ancient warfare films, such as the Greek invasion of the Trojan coast from *Troy*. But during the fishermen's invasion everyone is happy. There is so much fish that even the most unskilled fishermen can hope to fill their bags with *karas* (crucian) and



*crvenoperka* (rudd) or some other local fish variety. This abundance of fish was recorded even in the ancient times. 2500 years ago the Greek historian Herodotus described the tribe of Paeonians who lived in lake settlements accessible only by boat. The records say the lake was so rich in fish that you only needed to dip a pail in its waters to catch a dozen. To this day the ancient way of fishing with *mantra* traps and cormorants has survived in Dojran, and huts built on the water are still to be found in the shallow waters of the lake.

Like Ohrid, Dojran has a gorgeous mountain range above it, the famous Mountain of Belasica, where one of the most famous medieval battles was fought in 1014. Belasica offers a spectacular view and fresh breezes in the rather hot climate. Yet, because of the warm climate the snow, even on the peaks, melts as early as April. Dojran has a rich history. It has always been at the crossroads of trade routes and many caravans passed by its shores. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

the small lake became a horrid battlefield. European armies fought here during World War I, and graveyards of French, British, Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian soldiers are to be found around the lake. Few of the local people survived the war, and many migrated to other towns. Nowadays, the scars of the devastating wars have been turned into tourist sites, museums and historical routes thanks to EU cross-border cooperation funds. The partition of Macedonia and the new international border across the lake led to a heavy Yugoslav military presence, and security fences can still be seen in many places. The fall of communism and diplomatic problems with Greece undermined regional development. Yet, at the time of Greek financial crisis lower prices and gambling facilities attract many Greeks from the other side of the border and give a boost to the local economy.

Due to increasing use of water for irrigation Dojran was on the verge of an ecological catastrophe and almost ran dry in the 1990s. The water withdrew leaving the coastal infrastructure looking like a horrible desert. The lake turned into a dangerous marsh. The whole ecosystem was endangered. But even at that time local inhabitants saw an opportunity in the looming disaster. During the lowering of the water level the lake became famous for its healing mud which formed due to the fast decay of algae, plankton and other water micro-organisms. People with skin and rheumatic problems filled the empty hotels and camp sites giving the resort a new image. But due to the government's effective intervention the lake was saved and now its waters are filling the lake bed again. The return of tourists gave a stimulus to the local government to invest in the coastal infrastructure and restoring the image of the area as a Mediterranean heaven at the doorstep of the Mediterranean Sea.

# Skopje's Ancient Predecessor



Skopje is one of the few cities which have its ancient foundations visible on their outskirts. One can explore Scupi, Skopje's precursor, by visiting the wonderful archaeological site located on the so-called Zajcev rid (Rabbit Hill) only a few miles away from the current city centre. Many findings from the site, including the lapidarium of ancient gravestones, columns, epigraphs and the sarcophagi have been transferred to Skopje City Museum. Scupi sarcophagi can also be seen in front of the museum. But still, the atmosphere of the archaeological dig, its location and the newly excavated areas give a special feeling, quite different from a museum visit. One of the most monumental buildings, the splendid aqueduct, testifying to the highly sophisticated and technically advanced urban life of Scupi is still there, having stood for more than two millennia

Although there are remnants as old as the Neolithic age in the surroundings of Skopje, the city of Scupi is considered to have been founded in the second century

BC as a Roman military camp. Its position, square shape and fortification elements confirm the hypothesis that the city had grown up from a *castrum*. According to the historical records, the 5<sup>th</sup> Macedonian and the 4<sup>th</sup> Scythian Legions were stationed here in the times of Tiberius. Archaeological findings revealed that an older Dardanian settlement existed here before the *castrum*. After the Romans stabilized their power in Macedonia, Scupi (under its full name *Colonia Flavia Aelia*) became a colony for veteran legionnaires. The legions of Crassus and, later, at the time of Domitian, veterans of *Legio IIV Claudia* inhabited the city. Scupi served as a base for the military campaigns further north, and especially for conquering the neighbouring region of Dardania. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century it briefly served as headquarters of Emperor Theodosius. The name 'Scupi' is believed to have been derived from the Greek *episcopos* (watcher, observer) and is related to the city's position on the elevation from which the whole valley of Skopje could be observed. Scupi was



part of and at some point the capital of the Moesia Superior province. Not only was Scupi strategically important for northward expansion, but it also lay at the intersection of important Roman routes. *Via Aksia*, roughly followed by today's E-75 highway, stretched from Kosovo through the canyon of Kacanik and then through Scupi passing the Vardar (Aksios was its ancient name) and continued along the Skopje valley to important ancient sites Taor, Bader, *Castrum Presidium*, fortress of Kozel, Kefalon Castle and then towards Stobi. Another road led from Scupi to Pautalia, along today's Corridor 8. The third road went towards Lihnidos.

According to archaeological evidence, the city flourished between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, when a civil basilica, a complex of baths (*thermae*) and a town villa were built. Remains of a Roman theatre and an early Christian basilica were also found in Scupi. A paved avenue and a 1.7-meter tall statue of Venus were discovered in recent excavations. The theatre dates back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. It is assumed to have been built for Emperor Hadrian when he was visiting Balkans cities. The theatre had the best decoration for its time with the signs *Colonia Scupi Aelia* carved on

the seats. It was the largest and the most beautiful of ancient theatres in Macedonian cities. Unlike the theatre in Stobi, it was used only for theatrical performances because its design was not suitable for gladiator fights. During his stays in Scupi, Theodosius issued two emperor's edicts. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century Scupi became an episcopal seat, and eventually even the throne of the archbishop was moved there. Skopje bishops and, later, archbishops took part in ecumenical councils which were supreme religious events of the time: Bishop Dacius participated in the Nikea Council in 325 and Paregorius – in Serdica/Sofia Council in 343. The high ecclesiastic status of Scupi was matched by a grand basilica built in the urban core. Recently explored by archaeologists, it was found to have had three magnificent apses on its eastern side and floor mosaics. Different types of pavement techniques were employed in it. The basilica was built with tiles and stone, a technique that would become dominant in Byzantium.

Scupi was several times ravaged by barbarians - in 269 by the Goths, at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century – by the Ostrogoths, and at the beginning of 6<sup>th</sup> century – by the Huns. But the life of the town was ended abruptly in 518 by a disastrous earthquake that rased the city. The earthquake was mentioned in *Marcellinus Comes Chronicle*. Later, with the arrival of the Slavs, a settlement was built on the nearby hill, at the present position of Skopje, and it is believed that the newcomers used the Roman stones and marbles to raise the new town. However, in the next few centuries no significant urban life developed there.

There is however an alternative and more glorious theory of the continuation of Scupi – not as a rural Slavic settlement, but as the famous city Justiniana Prima, founded by Justinian I, who reigned over the Eastern Roman Empire in 527-565. This theory is connected with the name

of the celebrated archaeologist Arthur Evans who had done some fieldwork in Skopje area, and is very popular with Skopje legend-mongers. According to them, Justinian, who remembered the glory of the city of Scupi, in the vicinity of which he was born, decided to rebuild it after the catastrophic earthquake. The connection between Scupi and Justiniana Prima is based on the assumption that the village of Taor located near Skopje is Tauresium, Justinian's birthplace, and on the description of Justiniana Prima by Procopius that matches Skopje's fortress (Kale), the Old Bazaar and the aqueduct which still are landmarks of Skopje:

*He therefore built a wall of small compass about this place in the form of a square,*

*placing a tower at each corner, and caused it to be called, as it actually is, Tetrapyrgia. And close by this place he built a very notable city which he named Justiniana Prima, thus paying a debt of gratitude to the home that fostered him. In that place also he constructed an aqueduct and so caused the city to be abundantly supplied with ever-running water. And many other enterprises were carried out by the founder of this city - works of great size and worthy of especial note. For to enumerate the churches is not easy, and it is impossible to tell in words of the lodgings for magistrates, the great stoas, the fine marketplaces, the fountains, the streets, the baths, the shops. In brief, the city is both great and populous and blessed in every way.*

## First Kumanovo Photographers



**M**acedonia pays tribute to the work of the legendary Manaki Brothers, Milton and Yanaki, who lived in Bitola, and who were

the first cinematographers on the Balkans with an annual film festival. But other Macedonian towns also remember their first camera men, those who took photos of our ancestors, recording the traces



tell. Some say that his greatest distinction is to have been the first Esperantist on the Balkans, but this is the topic for another article.

The second important photographer is Sigfrid Miladinov, Malinski's nephew and one-time apprentice. However, Miladinov left behind an even greater collection of photographs than his uncle. Many of them depict the rich social strata of Kumanovo, and

of their lives on the yellowing pieces of paper, which we all so jealously hide in the old photo albums. In Kumanovo, which was one of the most important towns in Macedonia at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the work of two photographers captured the private life of the city dwellers as well as events of its political history and of the wars which shook Macedonian soil almost continuously in the first decades of the century.

The first Kumanovo photographer is Georgi Malinski, whose unique personality impressed itself on the town. Born in 1878, he was educated in Vienna and then lived for some time in Paris. After this secular pilgrimage to the world's brightest cities, he finally moved to his home town, working there as a photographer and photo reporter for a Belgrade newspaper, but also as a merchant and bank agent. His "Studio Mars" operated continuously from 1903 to 1951 and has captured many places that vanished in the later development. His portraits of Kumanovo residents are priceless, as are the shots of the oldest places around town, now present only in the stories and jokes the older people

beyond the photographic, they have an ethnological value. His images of the city capturing the armies operating on the Kumanovo territory during the Balkan wars and the First World War are unique in showcasing the widespread suffering as well as the magnitude of the military machines.

Miladinov is also important in the Macedonian cinematography as the author of the first colour documentary film. The film was shot in 1947 and called "Galicnik". He captured, with great talent and knowledge of the event, the nowadays famous Galicka svadba (the Wedding of Galicnik) foreshadowing the popularity it would attain later.



# The Cult of the Sun in Macedonian Traditions

by Jasmina Mazgalieva



**S**un has a special meaning in Macedonian culture. Because of the sunny climate this central star around which everything revolves has centre stage among the country's symbols. Macedonian flags, both the ancient and the modern ones, contain a representation of the sun with rays. Throughout history, different deities and gods have been associated with the sun. Perun, the supreme God of pagan Slavs, was also the sun god. According to the ancient lore, the sun is a microcosm of the human soul. The daily rise of the sun represents eternal rebirth. Sun gods appear in many ancient myths. Sun temples from different eras are to be found across the planet. Observing the sun was part of many ancient ceremonies and rituals. One of the oldest megalithic observatories

ranked fourth by its importance by NASA was the one constructed in the Bronze Age in Kokino, just a few kilometres from Kumanovo. Kokino is the site where the ancient Macedonian people developed a special calendar that described the movement of the sun and stars. It is believed that Kokino was used as a solar observatory for predicting annual equinox and solstice.

Ethnographically speaking, Macedonians have preserved many beliefs associated with the cult of the sun. According to some, Sun has mother, brother and sister. The father is not mentioned as these myths originate in the period of matriarchy when the status of the mother was supreme. Sun wants to marry his sister moon and an earth girl. In another folk tale there are three suns and the snake that eats two of them.



Many holidays and ceremonies in Macedonia have solar symbolism. The Day of St. Ivan (John) or *Ivanden*, while not the most important holiday in the Macedonian Christian calendar, is most interesting because many customs and beliefs from the old Slavic mythology intertwine with the celebration of the birthday of the Holy John the Baptist. *Ivanden* is celebrated on 7th July. In the folk tradition this holiday is connected with the summer solstice. Its astronomical opposite is Christmas Day, one of the shortest days of the year around the time of winter solstice. *Ivanden* is one of the hottest days of the year. Maybe because of the rather dry summers and frequent draughts threatening the vegetation, the majority of *Ivanden* rituals involve plants and belief in their magical powers. During the night before the feast of *Ivanden* people collect fern. It is then placed under the pillow on which one sleeps in the hope that it will bring good health. Early next morning fern branches are placed into wreaths and left in the gardens, again, to protect people from diseases, natural disasters and other accidents. Similarly, the night before the feast women pick the

flower called *ivan* and place it into the trunks where clothes and linen are stored in order to protect them from moths.

*Ivanden* custom called *tajane* has survived in Prilep, Bitola and Krusevo. According to this custom, on the eve of the holiday boys and girls gather herbs, use them to decorate a pot and pour water into it from three different springs. One of them, aged 10-12 years, holds the pot on the head. He is called "the damned one", and the other children go around him singing traditional songs to save him from damnation. If the weather on *Ivanden* is very dry and there is a perceived risk of drought, then *dodola* rituals connected with the ancient goddess of rain of the same name are performed by young girls asking for rain.



## There Are Many Similarities between Slovakia and Macedonia



**Your Excellency, you are one of the most active ambassadors in Macedonia, you speak excellent Macedonian and are already known as a big friend of the country. Apart from your high professionalism, what inspires you to maintain such a good relationship with the country and its people?**

I find great inspiration in the positive response to our activities from the Macedonian people. As the smallest embassy in town, we would not be able to achieve so much without the support of our Macedonian friends. So, we inspire them and they inspire us in return.

There are many similarities between Slovakia and Macedonia. Two small countries, two nations with rich culture and history, connected - throughout the centuries - by the common cultural tradition going back to Cyril and Methodius. The languages are very close, and the mindset

is compatible. We can easily understand each other without an interpreter.

Also, many Macedonian people, businessmen and politicians alike, keep telling me that they see Slovakia as an example of successful economic and social transformation, integration, as a champion in attracting foreign investment. As a success story, it is a motivation for their own country.

You are right, speaking Macedonian makes the communication at all levels much easier, and through communication you come to a better understanding. I would even say that we do not merely understand the present complex situation in Macedonia, but we even feel its atmosphere, grasp the spirit of the time. With this empathy in mind and heart, we are in a better position to support Macedonia in achieving its aspirations. We have been through this phase of transformation, reforms and accession

process. And it had not always been without challenges. In some aspects, it is a *déjà vu* for us. We are interested in your stability, security, and prosperity. We wish you success. Do it your own way. We are ready to help you.

**Did you anticipate that you would carry out your mission in Macedonia in such an open and active way?**

Yes, that is my way of diplomatic conduct – active and open. I see it as my mission to find as many new friends for Slovakia as possible. That is how I translate the diplomatic expression “friendly relations which, so fortunately, exist between our two countries”. The reality in Macedonia, however, exceeded my expectations in this respect.

**In your public speeches and in your activities you always put a strong accent on two things important for a country’s prosperity: education and economy. Does this reflect the success story of Slovakia? What can Macedonia learn from Slovak experience in these areas?**

Education and economy are two sides of the same coin. Knowledge is strength and power, as the slogan of the Macedonian government goes. I could not agree more. Education is, by far, the best investment in the future economic capacity of your country. Economic success will be determined by the knowledge, skills and innovation. You must invest in education if you want to remain competitive.

**Bratislava has recently become a top tourist destination. What is the key to this success?**

Yes, indeed, Bratislava holds true to its poetic nickname: the Beauty on the Danube. The old town and the castle have been restored, and new development projects with hotels, business and shopping centres, restaurants and promenades are mushrooming on the banks of the Danube River.

Bratislava takes advantage of its excellent location, just 50 km from Vienna and close to Budapest and Prague. It is easily accessible. You can visit it by plane from two airports (Bratislava and Vienna’s Schwechatt airport), conveniently by car or bus through the highway system, by train, and even by boat. Bratislava is a gateway to Slovakia, to its mountains and historic towns, to its spas, but also to the whole Central European region. There are no controls on 90 percent of the Slovak border. Since January 2009, we use euro in Slovakia. It all makes it easier for tourists to visit and enjoy our country. I would especially recommend visiting Kosice in eastern Slovakia, which is a European Cultural Capital 2013.

**Which assets can Skopje use for its international promotion and for attracting more tourists and other visitors?**

Skopje does not need to change in order to attract more foreign tourists and visitors. It has its own beauty, its own identity, which should be preserved. There are many attractive places in Skopje and its vicinity. In the old town - *stara carsija* – you feel as if the time, magically, stopped one and a half centuries ago. Then, there are the churches and monasteries – St. Spas, St. Pantelejmon. There is hiking to the Millennium Cross, a trip to Matka Canyon. Afterwards reward yourself with rich Macedonian food in one of Skopje’s many fine restaurants.

But of course, the biggest asset of Skopje is its people – open, friendly, and hospitable. You should stay as you are. Do not change.

**What are your impressions of Macedonia’s community of foreign diplomats and businessmen? How do they see our country? Do you have any suggestions as to how we as a country can become more hospitable**

**and more open to foreign guests and, in the longer term, attract more development boosting foreign investment?**

I think that foreign diplomats and businessmen feel welcome and comfortable in Macedonia. They are respected and often enjoy a higher quality of life here than in their own countries. Macedonia offers plenty of opportunities for tourism and entertainment. For their children, there are very good international schools in Skopje. And yes, traditional Macedonian cuisine is excellent.

Regarding the investment environment, the functioning of the regulatory system should improve. There is a lot of unnecessary bureaucracy here. Public tenders must be transparent. The functioning of the judiciary, enforcement of contracts, payment discipline – these are also areas, to name just the most obvious ones, which need to be improved. Also, the capital is a very shy game. It looks for safe, stable and fairly predictable environment. The membership in NATO and the EU is a general insurance policy for any foreign investor.

**Can you share your impressions of Macedonia and its people? What are the things, the places and the customs that appeal to you? If you maintain informal friendly relations with Macedonians, what do you find most interesting in these relationships?**

I admire Macedonian sense of solidarity, humbleness, friendliness, modesty, and readiness to help. The families of three generations, for example, stick together in good and bad. This is something very precious, you should keep it.

**What about people's behaviour, mentality and work habits could be improved?**

**Have you ever come across**

**prejudices against or wrong perceptions of Macedonia? How did you react to them?**

As I said, be yourself, proudly Macedonian. Do not try to imitate others.

Prejudices appear when people do not have enough information. Therefore, the way to work on the image of the country is to provide information. Promote yourself, tell your story.

**You are the Chair of the 2013 DMWC Charity bazaar. How do you feel about this role? Can you comment on the decision to donate all the funds raised by this year's Bazaar events to the Macedonian Charity Fund for Children with Down Syndrome?**

I am honoured to be the Honorary Chairman of the 2013 DMWC Charity Bazaar. The unanimous decision of all the stakeholders to donate all the proceeds from the charity bazaar to the Macedonian Down Syndrome Centre shows our dedication to this noble cause. We have many supporters and donors who share our sense of social responsibility. It is simply the right thing to do. We invite the Macedonian public and the international community to join us on 8 June at the Skopje City Mall. Let's share. Let's have fun together.

**How do you see the role of Dobredojde Macedonia Welcome Centre in Macedonia's international community and wider society?**

*Dobredojde* Macedonia Welcome Centre is a unique voluntary organization here in Macedonia. It brings Macedonian people and the international community closer. It offers many interesting ways for the promotion of our countries, people, art and customs. I am proud to be a supporter of DMWC right from its launch.



Ζα Καρπιοι  
κοι το σακαλι



## Opening of the New QSI Building

On Monday April 15th, guests and students gathered around the back gate of the new QSI campus to officially open the new building. Dr. Wade, Ambassador Wohlers and Mr. Tower stood just outside, with red and yellow scissors in hand, to cut through the red ribbon spanning the width of the gate.

Immediately following the ceremony, Mr. Tower, QSI Skopje Principal, called the American Ambassador, Paul Wohlers, to the front. Mr. Wohlers gave a brief speech, mentioning that "the US Embassy is happy to support QSI Skopje," giving thanks to parents, students and teachers, and welcoming the incoming director, Mr. Robert Hinman.

After Ambassador Wohlers stepped down, the newly re-elected mayor of Karpos, Stevce Jakimovski, came to the microphone and welcomed QSI to the municipality of Karpos and congratulated the school on its success.

Then Dr. Wade, outgoing regional supervisor of QSI Skopje, talked about Mr. Tower's vision and what QSI was doing to support that vision. She spoke in glowing terms about Mr. Tower's legacy.



Following Dr. Wade's speech, Mr. Tower concluded the ceremony by giving a small statement of his own, speaking about his satisfaction in the school's accomplishments thus far, both, in the move to the new school and in making a good transition for students and teachers.

As the speakers left the microphone, guests moved to the soccer field, where the Cvetan Dimov Cultural Performing Society performed Macedonian folk songs and dances, much to the enjoyment of the audience. When the singing and dancing came to an end, the guests finally entered the new QSI building. Everything was perfectly arranged. Refreshments were set in the gym, and students offered tours to the guests, walking them into every room in the new facility.



# QSI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF SKOPJE

Quality Schools International is a private non-profit organization with headquarters in Ljubljana, Slovenia. QSI operates 39 schools in 27 different countries. The first school was founded in 1971 in Sanaa, Yemen. QSI International School of Skopje began in 1996 and offers an American style curriculum to the children of parents of many nationalities that come to Skopje for a limited stay. Some students are permanent residents, citizens of Macedonia.



We practice a "Performance-Based" model of education. Our medium of instruction is English and our teachers are native English speakers from the United States and Canada. We admit students anytime, and we are presently accepting prospective new students. Our school offers a preschool, elementary, and secondary curriculum.



The school recently purchased a new facility in the Municipality of Karposh and will be moving into this facility in 2013. We are presently accepting new students for the 2013-14 school year. For more information and to obtain an application you may email the school at [skopje@qsi.org](mailto:skopje@qsi.org) or call 389-2-3051-844. You can check out the school's weekly events and activities by looking at the school's web page and newsletters at <http://skopje.qsischool.org/index.html> or stop by the school and visit with the Director. Check with us and come and see the students share what they are learning at our Community Time, held twice each month.

## QSI International School of Skopje is...

- Licensed as a Private High School with the Macedonian Ministry of Education
- Supported by the US State Department Office of Overseas Schools.
- Accredited by Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA)
- Affiliated with the Central and Eastern European Schools Association (CEESA).



**Success for ALL! Success Breeds Success!**

[www.qsi.org](http://www.qsi.org)

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# New Travel Offerings and Unique Routes in Macedonia

By Chris Deliso



Over the years, people have often asked me: "So what is *your* favorite place in Macedonia? Of course, it's a very difficult (if not impossible) question to answer regarding a country that has so much to offer. The best I can do is to reply by nominating various locales that have had a certain meaning or association with an experience or idea for me.

What I find a more helpful and useful way of addressing the issue, especially for newcomers and people who have not had a chance to explore Macedonia fully, is to suggest some interesting routes. A large part of the work in travel writing is logistics-oriented, and I take pleasure when able to say that yes, you *can* get there from here, or in devising a solution to a logistical problem that might have seemed insurmountable.

At the same time, Macedonia is slowly but surely developing its tourism offerings, which is happening later than in certain other countries in the area but which may actually be a blessing in disguise - take Bulgaria, for example, which fell victim to rampant overdevelopment when the sudden but short-lived foreign interest in the country

took place prior to EU accession. Macedonia has not yet attracted such interest and fortunately this has kept many of its wilder parts still wild.

## In with the new

The interesting thing about Macedonian tourism options these days is that they are much more flexible than before, thanks to the arrival of budget airlines like Pegasus and Wizz, and are also tailored to people with specific ambitions. So you can now get from, say, Istanbul or Venice to Skopje on your own initiative and combine travel options in ways that were not previously feasible for most people. And you also have organized groups of, say, European speleologists, determined to find out just how deep Macedonia's seemingly bottomless caves really are. And we have already heard about the new developments of 'spa tourism' in Berovo made in the past year or two.

Another example I encountered earlier this year – and am keeping in mind for the upcoming winter – is the off-piste skiing possibilities at Popova Sapka near Tetovo. Macedonia is characterized by small but

dedicated groups of enthusiasts across a range of activities and skiing is no exception. You can now rent a Snow Cat (that big, tank-like yellow machine that flattens the snow at ski resorts) along with 10 or so persons including a guide, and get way up into the open country of Sapka, far above the organized ski resort. The conditions and terrain make for world-class off-piste skiing, and the area's sudden bouts of thick fog make for a bit of danger and adventure.

The best thing about it? The price is only 200 euros per day, which means that when divided up among your group, it equals for each person basically the price of a lift ticket at the regular resort. And I have heard from those organizing such things that savvy British and Scandinavian skiers have already been drawn to Macedonia for this kind of action - the most daring of them, equipped with parachutes for the highest jumps!

## Unique Routes

Along with new offerings, Macedonia's long-established routes can be tackled in a variety of creative ways. Here are some that I have recommended to friends and interested travelers.

### *Wine and Warfare*

The scattered remnants of Macedonia's heritage as a battle front in the Balkan Wars and two World Wars lives on in tales of buried French gold and cognac, as well as (the more usually encountered) rusty battle helmets and shell casings. The place to go is Mariovo, the rugged border badlands where occasionally a long-lost grenade goes off in the woods due to the intense summer heat. For this trip it's best to go with a local hunter or guide in a Lada Niva, not some new and comfortable 4X4, to experience the jarring thrill of plowing through jungle and small rivers where freshwater crabs scuttle under rocks. Starting points are Bitola (for Bitolsko Mariovo, near Mt Kajmakalan) or Prilep (for

Prilepsko Mariovo).

If you are more interested in a leisurely summer sojourn, you can't go wrong with a trip across Macedonia's Tikves wine region, in which numerous excellent wineries large and small are clustered. Ideally, this trip can involve a trip along meandering Lake Tikves. Local fishermen will take you out for the afternoon for very reasonable prices, and you can watch the hawks and eagles swirl while seeing the Byzantine-style frescoes of Serbian medieval Tsar Stefan Dusan and his wife in the small church down the far bank of the lake.

Tikves Winery is the Balkans' biggest, while Disan Hills in the tiny village of Dolni Disan south of Negotino makes superlative reds. And the well-known Popova Kula near Demir Hisar produces many excellent wines, and has the most sophisticated lodgings available in the wine country. It's also on the road to Gevgelija and Greece, putting you on the beach in under two hours.

### *Tip of the Day*

Speaking of Demir Kapija, I have just been told by an archaeologist friend that excavations are to begin (*poleka, poleka* of course, this being Macedonia) on the remnants of a Byzantine castle that once stood guard over the magnificent 'Iron Gates' (as the name of the town translates from Turkish). Apparently, few have been up there since a foreign scholar went up with a donkey carrying the supplies in the 1930s. Almost a century later, you still need the donkeys to get to the inaccessible location - a whimsical note that expresses one of the great things about Macedonia: its changelessness.

Some find this vexing, but I have come to enjoy it. And who knows what they will find up there? We can only imagine. But I'm sure that sometime in our lifetime this too will be an accessible landmark for everyone, another symbol of Macedonia's fascinating past and present to be enjoyed.

## Crna Arapina: the Mythical Other

The figure of the Black Arab or *Crna Arapina* is one of the central characters in Macedonian folklore denoting the other. It testifies to the country's rich oral culture and its long-standing connection with the Mediterranean Basin. While this figure in Macedonia had taken on local colours through references to particular historical personalities, its preservation in the oral tradition is also grounded in many historical and mythical events. Its very name, *Crna Arapina*, has survived in its archaic form, blatantly irregular and hard to accommodate within the modern language rules.

The Black Arab is the legendary counterpart of the medieval Macedonian heroes Krale Marko and Bolen Dojcin (Young King Marko and Sick Knight Dojcin). A notorious Ottoman Army commander, the Black Arab is synonymous with all the troubles brought on by the Ottoman conquest of the medieval southern Slavic Christian lands. He is a ruthless conqueror, slaughterer of heroic defenders, enslaver of unprotected women and children and cruel winner in single combat. He is portrayed as a complete antithesis to the local culture, ethics and behaviour. Besides his different skin colour and hair style and the strange clothes he wears, he also possesses the strongest horses, exotic pets and weapons with magical powers unknown to local warriors. He has enormous strength which combined with his unscrupulous and cowardly cunning makes him an undefeatable anti-hero and a deadly threat to the local community.

Having examined this figure throughout the centuries, researchers have concluded that although the image of the Black Arab had evolved through disparate cultural experiences, his acts and character traits were amalgamated in such a way that he gradually became a more daring and complex figure than some of the national heroes.

Scholars relate the first appearance of the Black Arab in the Byzantium-dominated Mediterranean culture to the Byzantine-Arab conflict between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Abbasid dynasty had black flags, and their epic stories, which are believed to have migrated and to have been told amongst the enemy nations, featured such black heroes as Antara and Abdul Wahab. Arab invasion of Byzantine colonies in Sicily gave rise to the narrative of a kidnapped woman to be later saved by a hero. This is a common motif in Italian, Albanian and Southern Slavic folklore. Among the Slavs who had just settled in the Balkans, on Byzantium territory, the religious and cultural influence of the Christian world meshed with their native pagan imagery. The figure of the Arab can be traced to this historical encounter. He was black, three-headed, like the God of the Dead in Slavic mythology, and a sorcerer. In legends he took the place of the dragon who demanded from the local population a number of young maids each week, or who inhabited the woods, caves and important thoroughfares thus barring the local communities from happiness and prosperity. In some legends he attacks the wedding column returning from the neighbouring village and takes the bride. Behind this motive folklorists reveal a very old layer of folk memory dating back to the time when the in-group marriage was replaced by marriage outside the closed blood-tied community.

The 12<sup>th</sup>-century crusades and other clashes with the Arabs influenced their image in medieval literature which circulated alongside and mixed with the southern Slavic folklore. The association of the Black Arab with evil was reinforced after the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans. The fictional character of the Black Arab was projected onto real historical persons who overcame local heroes. Thus the Black Arab became an Ottoman commander, the



most notorious and evil of all the enemies, often acting behind the back of supreme Ottoman rulers. He was identified with the invading Ottomans and became the focus of negative imagery building on pre-existing cultural motifs, even though Arabs were a minority in the Ottoman Army. Familiar plots, such as kidnapping the young bride or sister, demanding young women as tax or enslaving children, were populated with new historical counterparts, such as King Marko or the Knight Dojcin. And as the white has to win over the black, the living over the dead, sun and summer over ice and winter, these medieval Slavic knights had to win over the Black Arab and liberate their sisters, brides and enslaved populations. The epic characters often differed from their historical protagonists in significant respects. The Black Arab challenged King Marko to commit heroic acts overcoming his weaknesses. In the case of the Sick Knight Dojcin his weakness is even inscribed in his name. Despite the malady he manages to find the strength and to rescue the maiden from the hands of the evil Black Arab.

The other regional and historical incarnations of the Black Arab include the Albanian Bajloz and Southern Italian Maor; in some areas he was known as Gipsy. During the revival of the Macedonian epic literature in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Black Arab turned into Arnaut, the Albanian

Muslim who disturbed the peaceful rural Christian population, so that the *Kapidans*, the armed guards in Ottoman service, took on the role of the epic heroes responsible for winning over the cruel gangs.

At the same time, on the other side of the spectrum, there is another, far less evil, representation of the Black Arab. In the oral literature collected during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Arab is the trickster, the helper of the weak, a rather naïve and honest character. This oral tradition has been developed in a multicultural setting of the Ottoman Empire and under the influence of the big Arab and Persian literature, especially the *1001 Nights* cycle. In these stories, set in Prilep, Istanbul (Stambol), or in Thessaloniki (Solun), folklorists find popular motives from the influential eastern literatures. These are narratives in which the poorest and the weakest win over stronger evil-minded brothers or neighbours by means of the magical tools provided by the Arab, or the Arab helps the honest underdog win against cheating competitors.

The rich heritage of the representations of the Black Arab live on in the modern Macedonian art and literature. The epic contemporary poets like Radovan Pavlovski, Bogomil Gjuzel and Ante Popovski have all used the character of the Arab in their poems.

# The Deepness of the Drum

By Robert Alagjovzovski

The drum is one of the most important instruments in the Macedonian tradition. It is so deeply rooted in the past that it has left a marked imprint on contemporary culture. Summer is the ultimate season for drummers. It is a traditional time for wedding parties traditionally scheduled for the time when all relatives are around, as well as for many other kinds of festivities such as fairs, carnivals and religious feasts. Due the survival of traditional *oro* dances and rituals such as pehliван wrestling, the roles of the drummer and his instrument are not only part of the folk tradition and cultural heritage, but also, as Nikos Causidis puts it, part of the national identity. This identity includes the drum, the drummer and the dancer in traditional costume united in a deep harmony, as shown in the sculpture dedicated to *Teskoto*, a typical drum-based *oro*, erected in Skopje's central Macedonia Street. The drum and the music of *Teskoto* have inspired poets, like the bard Blaze Koneski who dedicated an epic poem to it, filmmakers and artists, not to mention numerous musicians. Drum plays a central role in compositions of Bodan Arsovski and Dragan Dautovski and of bands such as *Synthesis* and *Mizar*. Garabet Tavitian, the best Macedonian jazz drummer, has made an outstanding international career with this, unusual to the contemporary music industry, instrument. Even in the counter-culture, the band *PMG*, referred to *Teskoto*, translated as "the hard one", and the weight it carries in Macedonian culture, when they mockingly named their album *Peskoto*, the gay one.

What are the main characteristics of this instrument which has left such a strong imprint on the Macedonian culture? It is a percussion instrument that belongs to the membranophone group in the classification used by ethnomusicologists. Its body is made



of walnut or chestnut wood that is boiled until soft and pliable and then shaped into a cylinder. On either side of the wooden cylinder an animal skin is stretched, the sides having different diameters, so that different sounds could be produced. The upper skin is thicker and is made of cow skin, while the lower skin is from goat or lamb. The upper side is beaten with a heavier wooden stick made of walnut to produce deeper sounds, and the thinner skin is beaten by a thin cornelian cherry stick to give higher tones. Typically, the faster beat is carried by the thinner stick, and the slower beat – with the heavier stick.

Although it has deep roots in the Macedonian tradition, the drum is a multicultural instrument shared by the different Balkans cultures which may perceive one another as antagonistic in several issues of religion, ethnicity, language, origin, history and values. This poses the question of the origin of the drum. Some identify it with the Persian-Arab world introduced to the Balkans by the Ottomans; others regard it as Ancient Greek heritage transferred via the Byzantine culture; and still others consider the drum to be a Gaelic-Roman influence. As for Macedonia, the Ottoman background has been the most accepted view. But the art historians' more recent analysis of the fresco-painting throughout the country revealed an older presence of this instrument in the local culture. The oldest churches like St. George in Staro Nagoricane or the Lesново Monastery dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries contain images of drums at least one hundred years prior to the Ottoman conquest. But these findings are challenged by those who insist that the Oriental influences occurred long before Ottoman political and administrative power was established. Other researchers analyzing archaeological data from Bosnia and Bulgaria associate the drum with the appearance of the dualistic Christian *bogumil* movement. Yet, the researcher Nikos Causidis upholds a different theory of

the appearance of the drum and its spread in the Indo-European region. He identifies the birth of the drum with the shamanistic ritual practices across the continent. He maintains that the drum has been one of the shamans' tools used for reaching ecstatic state and communicating with other worlds. Moreover, the drum was made with "divine materials" coming from sacred trees and animals. The constant or slowly accelerating beat of the drum is the basis of the whole ritual of the mystic epiphany. Born out of this practice, the drum entered the different religions on the Indo-European space and has remained in use up to the present day.

Causidis made other interesting ethnological connections while exploring the tradition of drumming in Macedonia. In the past drummers were mainly selected from among the Roma people. Motives and beliefs beyond their presumed talent for rhythm, music and ecstatic behaviour justified this choice. It was part of the deep-rooted belief that members of the dark-skinned race had better connections and open channels of communication with the chthonic world, with the supernatural and demonic forces. For the same reason the Roma people were trusted with the blacksmith's craft related, on alchemic grounds, to transforming the nature of metals and offering new products of a strange nature. Thus the spiritual belief was matched by the physical characteristics of the people imitating the black sooth of the metallurgic process itself. Moreover Roma have traditionally been sorcerers, fortune tellers and alternative medicine healers, which points to their shamanic connections. Causidis finds that the figures of the blacksmith and the drummer are always dark, dyed with black coal during traditional carnivals throughout Macedonia. He concludes that while in the old world the roles of the priest, the drummer and the blacksmith were united in one personality, after the demise of the pantheistic world view, these vocations were divided among different individuals, and only the yearning to reconstitute them to one person and one ethnic group reminds us of the old world.

The Drum, the Shaman and the *Teskoto*  
*Teskoto*, the hard one, is considered to be

one of the most beautiful but also most difficult Macedonian folk dances. It is protected by UNESCO and is considered a true artistic masterpiece. It is a male dance with the musical support of drum and pipes. It begins with free movements of the dancers who then join hands and start slow, perfectly synchronized and emotionally laden movements. The basic element of the dance is the lifting of the leg bent at the knee and tapping on the ground. The culmination is reached when the lead dancer climbs up on the drum and performs the same movements in a total symbiosis with the instrument and the drummer. After this moment the beat fastens and dancers free their hands and start individual, although still synchronized, movements: jumps, kneeling and rotations. In essence, the dance relates the farewell moments of the Macedonians who were leaving their country to work abroad. *Teskoto* was danced at the outskirts of villages where people said their farewells to their beloved ones before embarking on the road to the unknown hard work abroad. The dance emerged in the Mijak region in the villages of Galicnik, Gari and Lazaropole but then spread throughout the country. However, analyzing the morphology of the dance and the symbolical aspects of the movements, Causidis, again, connects it with shamanistic practice. It is a dance of a ritual initiation, of the communication with the upper world, and a moment of epiphany emanated in the symbiotic culmination of the dance. The lifting of the leg in the dance symbolises the strife to redeem the eternal hardship of living. Even the origins of the dance in a region with strong emigration reveals to Causidis a shamanic connection: he sees a parallel between the separation at going abroad to a better but strange world, which is a compulsory element of *pecalba*, earning money abroad, and the shamanic separation from the existing world to go up to higher levels of consciousness.

(The text is based on Nikos Causidis, "The Drum: Historical Examination of Mythical and Symbolic Meaning of the Drum in Macedonia," in: *Proceedings of the 40<sup>th</sup> International Seminar on Macedonian Language, Literature and Culture*, Skopje: University of Sts Cyril and Methodius, 2008, in Macedonian.)

# The Serpent in Macedonian Folklore

By Jasmina Mazgalieva



**T**he serpent is, for sure, summer animal number one in Macedonia. It can still be seen all over the country, especially when summer heat makes people leave their homes and go to the woods and mountains. There, in less urbanized areas, in rural and natural heavens, the serpent reigns supreme. Visiting mysterious areas of southern Macedonia, such as the unexplored valleys of Mariovo, or secluded monastic dwellings in Pelagonia, ancient ruins down the River Vardar, or the old baths in Strumica, one is certain to come across snakes, including the poisonous *poskok* viper. Under the threshold of the old rural houses in the villages of our grandparents, where we often go in the summer, we can find the keeper of the family roots, the big

*smok*. The waters of the lakes and rivers are the realm of non-poisonous snakes of different types, however unpleasant it may be when they touch your legs or back when you are swimming. The swift *belouska* often crosses your path when you hike in the mountains.

Due to this, sometimes frightening, omnipresence of snakes, the serpent is a very common animal in Macedonian folklore and there is an abundance of archaic beliefs related to it. The snake of the popular beliefs is a superior creature with many divine attributes. It holds up the land and supports the order of the universe. According to its creation myth, the serpent was created when the tail of a horse was dropped in the water. The king of the snakes wears a crown with precious stones. Snakes are masters of ruined

cities and dilapidated buildings where they guard buried treasures. The one who digs up the treasure turns into a snake.

Snake is the patron of the house bringing happiness and prosperity. No snake protector means no luck in the house. According to folk belief, it is not good to kill a snake. The one who commits such a crime must expect the worst to happen to him or her. There is also a ban on reporting the spotting of a house snake at the risk of immediately turning blind.

It is believed that the snake lives below the house, under the doorstep, and that it gets out of the house through the chimney. This is why these two parts of the house entered the folk tradition as important places in which various rituals take place. Further examination of the folklore material connects this status of the doorstep of the house to an older pagan practice to bury the departed people under the doorstep. It was also related to another set of beliefs about the soul of the deceased incarnating in the snake that holds the soul of the ancestors, and therefore is worshipped as the protector of the house.

At the same time, the fear of snake bite gave rise to different protection rituals. As in the case of vampires elsewhere in Europe, in Gevgelija region people believed that the smell of garlic would make the snakes flee and rubbed garlic under their armpits while working in the fields. According to another belief snakes cannot stand tobacco smoke, and those who smoke are protected from snake bites. In Skopje region, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March people do not work in order to safeguard themselves against snakes. In some places burning straw is used for protection from the snakes. The most popular day to perform protection rituals against snake bites is May 14<sup>th</sup>, the day of the Prophet Jeremiah. On this day the children sing special songs to a loud clang of pots and other containers:

*Run away, run  
away foul  
Here comes  
Jeremiah  
Jeremiah  
with St. Atanas  
With iron stick  
Will coil up  
your entrails.*

Yet another facet of the popular perceptions of the snake is its healing power. As masters of sources, rivers or lakes, they are believed to give to them curative properties. The Christian feast of Annunciation celebrated on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April is in a number of areas associated with the awakening of snakes from their winter hibernation, revealing remnants of the old cult of snakes beneath the newer Christian customs. On this day the villagers gather in front of snake holes and leave there various towels, shirts, belts, hats and other items of clothing. They believe that if a snake passes through their things they would be in good health throughout the year. It is also believed that snakes don't bite on this special day bearing the epithet "sweet" in Macedonian, as they are as good as the day itself on which the good news of Christ's birth was announced.



# The Yeast Elixir

**M**acedonia is one of the few countries that can offer a traditional refreshing non-alcoholic beverage, a soft drink with a popularity equalling today's global fame of Coca-Cola or Pepsi, but reached without the modern marketing and sales techniques. It is the soft drink with a strange name: *boza*, probably of Turkish-Persian origin. The pursuit of *boza* is a real Indiana Jones adventure and can serve as an initiation into the local culture. Not only the name is strange, but the look as well. It has a yellowish earthy colour and a thickness resembling muddy water, rather than a refreshing drink. At the first taste it may provoke more of a dislike, even disgust, than satisfaction and excitement. A newcomer is surprised not only by the enthusiasm with which the locals are drinking it from large beer-glasses on the spot, but also by how they take off with full two-litre plastic bottles for the whole family.

In Skopje, the most famous shop making and selling *boza* is called *Apce*, which means "pill." The store was founded in 1934. People called it *apce*, as a kind of joke about its healing effects, believing that drinking *boza* is a panacea for all diseases. So, in 1940 the owner renamed his shop *Apce*, and today no one even remembers the original name. Popular beliefs are often later proved by scientific data. So, *boza* today is recommended for helping to regulate blood pressure, reduce headaches; it is also beneficial for pregnant and breastfeeding women because it stimulates mother's milk.

*Boza* can be found in many pastry shops around the country. Of course, in

every place the locals know where the best one is produced and never miss the opportunity to buy it when passing through that neighbourhood or town. The traditional artisans of *boza* are the local Muslims, be it Albanians, Macedonians, Bosnians, or Turks. They developed their businesses and shops all over Yugoslavia, and even today, they are adding an oriental nuance to the modern westernised towns.

People who prepare this drink are called *bozadzii*. The recipe is hundreds of years old, and it is believed to have spread in Macedonia after it became part of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, apart from Macedonia, this drink can be found in other countries in the Balkans, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Serbia, Turkey, Bulgaria and Montenegro - all those which were under Ottoman rule. In Macedonia *boza* has a taste somewhat different from its original version: it is much lighter and sweeter.



*Boza* preparation is a lengthy process demanding mastery and great finesse. It is made of water, flour, yeast, and sugar, but these are just the ingredients. Every master of the drink has his own secret. It is known that first it is baked and then boiled in a pot at 300 - 400 degrees. Fermentation lasts for about 60 hours, and only after that is it ready for consumers. The rest is magic.

The first production of fermented grains mixed with flour is recorded by the population living in Anatolia and Mesopotamia in the 9<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> millennium BC.

Xenophon mentions that the locals kept a cool drink in ceramic pots buried in the ground. In Sumerian texts this drink was referred to as "fermented millet." In the 10<sup>th</sup> century it was named *boza* and began to be used as a common drink among the peoples living in Central Asia and Turkey. Later the beverage spread over the Caucasus and the Balkans. The heyday of *boza* was during Ottoman times when making and selling it became one of the main trades in the cities. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century *boza* was drunk almost everywhere. There was even the so-called *tartar boza* mixed with

opium, which was prohibited by Sultan Selim II. During the reign of Mehmed IV in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, together with the ban on alcoholic beverages, *boza* became a forbidden drink as well, and all stores that sold *boza* were closed.

The famous writer and traveller Evliya Çelebi noted that in Istanbul at that time there were over 300 shops selling *boza*. It was the preferred drink of the famous army of janissaries. Due to the low percentage of alcohol it contained it could never cause drunkenness; therefore it was tolerated by the Turkish army and served as a warming drink to boost the troops.

The key to the popularity of *boza* in the past when modern soft drinks were unknown was the refreshing effect of the drink. After hard work people were cooling themselves with the pleasant and fortifying *boza*. The drink was a favourite among both adults and children. The seller of that drink with an apron, tin bucket and pot was a common sight on all city streets in Macedonia in the past. The vendors walked through the narrow streets, calling people to try their elixir with the words, "Come on people, taste my sweet and cold drink!" or, in Macedonian, "*Ledena, medena!*" This phrase featured in the first Macedonian drama text from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in which the words of the *boza* seller are used as a leitmotif, and the hard decisions to be made are contrasted with the freshness of the drink. *Boza* has also found its way into some customs in Macedonia. For example, in Trimeri, recently engaged young couples drink only *boza* believing that it gives prosperity and health to the newly formed family. The prevalence and popularity of *boza* in this part of the world was so big that in Bulgaria there is a monument dedicated to one of the most popular *boza* makers, Radomir the *bozadzija*.



# No Place Like Struga

By Robert Alagjovski



**S**truga Poetry Evenings (*Struski večeri na poezijata*) is one of the most prestigious poetry festivals in the world. In 52 years this event has attracted more than 4,000 poets, translators, essayists and critics from 95 countries. When the festival started in 1962 with a series of readings by Macedonian poets in honour of the founders of contemporary Macedonian poetry brothers Konstantin and Dimitar Miladinov, no one expected the festival to become so famous. Last year we introduced this event to our readers, and in this issue we will look at it from a different angle and present some rather less known facts and anecdotes.

Every year the festival opens with a reading of the famous lines from Konstantin Miladinov's "Longing for the South" (*T'ga za jug*) poem. The opening reading is an accolade bestowed on the best Macedonian theatre actors. Every year there is an unofficial competition among them for this honour. The different interpretations of the famous poem alone, from classic to more

innovative, can form an anthology reflecting not only individual styles of each actor but also the changing poetics of the past five decades.

In 1963 many poets from all over Yugoslavia joined the festival. The arrival of nationally famous poets attracted the attention of the media. Participants remember long debates on aesthetic and political issues of the time that took place in local grill restaurants. *Pleskavica* and kebabs were equally appreciated by both sides of the modernists vs. realists debates and reconciled champions of opposing views on the danger to public morality from anarchist-liberal poets and on the question of artistic autonomy.

The very setting of the festival was so stimulating that many creative ideas emerged on the spot. After one long evening of conversing, a group of poets decided to move their table into the water. They continued their discussions while the cold evening water was cooling their arguments. Thus emerged the idea to have

poetry readings on small boats by the shore. Although immediately appealing, this idea caused many technical problems, but since then many artistic directors of the festival used the boats with appropriate sound equipment as a setting of the readings.

By 1966 the festival had turned into an international poetry event and the Golden Wreath international poetry award was established. This prestigious award is given to a world-famous living poet for his oeuvre. Four winners of the Golden Wreath have also won Nobel Prizes for Literature. Some brilliant choices have enhanced the prestige of the festival and the jury. Selectors with the capital "S" say they had a nose to sniff out a laureate that would later be recognised on the world scale. The easier option was to pick someone who had already gained the most prestigious prize in the world. Thus, Pablo Neruda became the Nobel laureate in 1971 and went on to receive the Golden Wreath a year later. In 1973 and 1975, Italy's Eugenio Montale won the same two awards, but in the reverse order. The 1987 Nobel Prize winner, Joseph Brodsky, won the Golden Wreath in 1991. Ireland's Seamus Heaney was honoured at Struga in 2001, after receiving the Nobel Prize in 1995.

But the Struga jury has also been known to choose poets whose work, was never officially recognized on the international level. The beatnik poet Allen Ginsberg who was awarded the Golden Wreath in 1986 was surely one of the most influential voices of his time, although his poetic work was not always appreciated by peers. The arrival of Allen Ginsberg was a big highlight of that year's festival. His every step was followed by the Yugoslav avant-garde. To the bewilderment of the local population he came to Struga with his male partner and they did not refrain from holding hands and displaying affection in public.

Another unexpected move by a laureate was observed in 1971 when W. H. Auden received the Golden Wreath wearing his carpet slippers. The US poet W. S. Merwin,

who noted the anecdote became Golden Wreath winner in 2005. He is the author of the most poignant observation: "Nowhere in the world have I seen a deeper and more unquestioned and natural love for poetry, both as literature and as the current of imagination, feeling, and compassion within us than I have seen here in Macedonia." Indeed, strange as it may seem, there is an overwhelming acceptance of the poetry festival by the local population. The festival is famous for the spectacular events that attract residents to come out in huge numbers and greet the poets. On the count of popular appreciation, Struga has clearly prevailed over neighbouring Ohrid. But the well-known local rivalry has created two equally competitive and excellent international arts festivals: Struga Poetry Evenings and Ohrid Summer.

A boat trip across the Ohrid Lake and a visit to St. Naum Monastery is also part of the established Struga programme. The traditional picnic with lots of wine is keenly remembered by all participants. It is also remembered by the boat captains who have to demonstrate exceptional skills in order to bring the boat rocked by inspired and tipsy poets roaming on deck back into the Ohrid marina safely and without casualties.

20<sup>th</sup>-century politics, particularly the cold-war division into political and military blocks and the role of Tito's Yugoslavia in this divided world, also boosted international interest for the festival. For poets of the eastern bloc it was a place of freedom and inspiration. And for western poets it was a place of communist exotic, but also an insight into the non-allied, neither totally free nor fully controlled, artistic expression. The fall of the Communist system, following the split of Yugoslavia was a great threat to the festival. But not only did the festival survive the double menace but it also played an important reconciliatory role by promoting peaceful politics and strengthening the international recognition of the new independent country. In the times of

the Balkan wars, political and economic embargos and closed borders poets continued to gather in this peaceful corner of the crisis-stricken region. Participating in the festival, poets from countries involved in all kinds of hostilities sent out messages of peace and togetherness. Greek poets were welcomed in Struga and received awards at the height of the political dispute between Macedonia and Greece. Such an award would not fail to raise the question of whether it was actually given on artistic merit or with a political agenda. While posing a legitimate question, such a challenge also underscores the spirit of good will prevalent at Struga Poetry Evenings

An even more serious challenge to the festival came from the inter-ethnic disputes in Macedonia. In 2004 for the first time the festival had to leave Struga and to be held in Skopje due to the tensions in Struga caused by the new municipal borders

which disturbed the fragile multi-ethnic balance. In response to this challenge the festival was made bilingual with a stronger accent on the local rather than international multilingualism.

At present one of the biggest threats to the festival are the local vandals who destroy bronze statues of laureates and trees growing in the Park of Poetry where each year the recipient of the Golden Wreath plants a tree.

The organizers say they are committed to further developing and modernizing the festival and enriching its programme despite all the difficulties of this period affecting the cultural scene in general. One of the latest curiosities of the festival is the person of its director. For years this prestigious role was given to an eminent poet or, at least, a critic. Since last year the festival is led by the ambitious young literary theorist Mite Stéfoski.

## Have Your Cake and Eat It!

There will be an exhibition of some of Kelly's cake designs on Thursday 13th June from 7 to 9 p.m, at the premises



of DMWC. There will also be a selection of traditional English style cakes and cookies for sale

Kelly Stanton is a trained chef and confectioner, specializing in designing and creating unusual wedding and celebration cakes, as well as desserts, cupcakes and cookies. She prides herself in sourcing only the finest quality ingredients and uses traditional methods to produce mouthwatering and innovative creations.

More information and tickets are available to buy from Kelly (kellystanton@



hotmail.co.uk), or from Dobredojsde Macedonia Welcome Centre.

# Exhibition of Bulgarian Painters



From 21<sup>st</sup> May to 1<sup>st</sup> June DMWC hosted an exhibition of prominent Bulgarian artists organised in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Culture and Information Centre. The exhibition was opened by H. E. Mr. Ivan Petkov, Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to the Republic of Macedonia. The exhibition presented contemporary Bulgarian painting represented by Svetlin



Roussev, Stanislav Pamukchiev, Milko Bozhkov, Lyuben Genov, Ivaylo Mirchev, Dimitar Cholakov, Roman Kissiov, Neli Dimitrova, Atanas Atanasov and Aglika Gaitanikova through the prism of a private collector's eye. The paintings were on loan from the collection of Mr. Klime Korobar, President of IKON, Skopje, and a well-known collector.

# CHECKUP



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