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DMWC Coffee Mornings

Embassies, international communities and organizations introduce their countries, cultures and activities. A monthly event open to everybody.

March Coffee Morning Thursday, 20 March, 2014, at 11 a.m. at DMWC premises



„Dobredojde“ Macedonia Welcome Centre has the great pleasure to invite its friends, as well as the members of the Serbian community in Macedonia, to the Serbian Coffee Morning. The event will be organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in Skopje and DMWC.

The event will be opened with a welcome speech of the Ambassador H.E. Dusanka Divjak-Tomic. During the Coffee Morning, the exhibition of paintings of Tanja Balac will be opened.

You would also have the opportunity to enjoy some Serbian specialties, good music and a presentation of timeless natural and historic beauties of Serbia - its mountains, villages, monasteries and, of course, its capital Belgrade - the city of the two rivers, the Sava and the Danube. Come and discover the beauty of Serbia!

April Coffee Morning Chinese Tea Thursday, 10 April, 2014, at 11 a.m. at DMWC premises



On April 10th, The Confucius Institute at Ss.Cyril and Methodius University will host a Chinese Tea Morning. Prof. Zhang Min, a teacher at the Confucius Institute, will perform the tea ceremony. Her performance will be followed by a presentation by prof. Deng, the Chinese Director of the Confucius Institute, who will speak about the significance of the Tea Culture in China, and Confucius Institute's mission in Macedonia.

May Coffee Morning Thursday, 29 May, 2014, at 11 a.m. at DMWC premises



May Coffee Morning will be hosted by the Greek Liaison Office in Skopje. Join us to enjoy Greek specialties and learn more about Greece as a travel destination.



Spring Agenda



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

Besides promoting Macedonia and its multicultural treasures, DMWC this spring continues its charitable activity for the benefit of vulnerable children. The traditional DMWC International Charity Bazaar this year will take place on Saturday, June 7.

This time the host of the event will be the **Municipality of Skopje**. We are currently looking at various possible outdoor locations for the Bazaar in the centre of town.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the **Honorary President of 2014 DMWC International Charity Bazaar is H.E. Dusanka Divjak - Tomic**, Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia in Macedonia.

This is the fourth time that DMWC will celebrate the **International Children's Day, June 1**, together with the international community and the school children of Skopje. There will be performances by various schools, an art workshop, and stands where embassies will sell their national products and promote their countries, lottery and other fun activities.

Our beneficiary this year will be Zlatan Sremec School for Children with Special Needs located in Kisela Voda, Skopje. The funds raised will be used to renovate and equip a creative workshop classroom where children with special needs will have opportunities to socialize and learn.

The Bazar is a unique opportunity for the embassies, the local government, schools, artists and NGOs to work together for a great cause.

On May 29 we will hold a pre-event, a sale of paintings at the NLB Tutunaska Banka. The visitors will have the opportunity to attend the exhibition of 30 renowned Macedonian artists. This event contributes to the promotion of Macedonian contemporary art while giving Macedonian artists the opportunity to contribute to our charity project. There will be more information on the 2014 Bazaar in the next issue of the Magazine.

In this issue, we mark the millennium of the battle of Belasica between Tsar Samuil and Byzantium Emperor Basil. You will have the opportunity to read about the rise to power and demise of Tsar Samuil, the charismatic ruler whose capital was Ohrid. You will also learn about the lost Diocese of Morodvis and the archeological site of Morobizdon. The customs and events connected to Easter, such as **Procka, Lent** and **Cetrse**, are described in the other articles of this issue. Our culture editorial focuses on Skopje's alternative cultural scene, and one of the articles introduces the background of Skopje Film Festival that has its roots in it.

In closing, I would like to express my gratitude to all the readers of our magazine. With every issue we are reaching more and more readers. We are thankful for your support and for spreading the word about DMWC. We are open to your suggestions of collaboration on cultural issues and charitable activities supporting vulnerable groups of Macedonian children.

Benefits of Yoga during Pregnancy



by **Irina
Georgieva**

Pregnancy is a most extraordinary time of a woman's life: dramatic hormonal and bodily changes week by week and even day by day can make her life pretty topsy-turvy. Yoga provides a calm sanctuary

where she can experience a peaceful, loving union with her body, discover her resolve, and delve into the practice of breath awareness. Yoga's primary gifts of increasing flexibility and decreasing tension are perfectly compatible with the needs of a pregnant woman. Yoga postures open and relax the pelvic area, improve muscle tone, and release back tension, while breathing and a meditation help enhance your experience of the life growing within you.

The following poses are helpful during pregnancy. Standing on hands and knees will help relieve tension in the back and strengthen back muscles, which aids labour. Because your pelvic floor supports an increased weight during pregnancy, squeezing the pelvic floor muscles (rectal and vaginal) to strengthen them should be done as often as possible, both on and off the mat.

1 Cat pose

This exercise brings great flexibility to the spine, including the cervical vertebrae, improves the circulation of the spinal fluid, and is a great warm up exercise.



For added benefits, at the end of the exhalation squeeze your buttock muscles for 1-2 seconds and then release as you inhale.

2. Balancing cat



The posture is challenging and requires concentration. It develops balance and focus, both important areas for pregnancy and childbirth. For a good diagonal stretch, practice slowly with deep breathing.

3. Ear to knee pose

Besides being a great lateral stretch, this pose opens up much-needed breathing room in the lungs. Avoid frontal stretching after the first trimester since it puts pressure on the abdomen and womb.

Be aware of any personal limitations when practicing yoga during pregnancy. Stop exercises that cause discomfort. After the first trimester avoid holding breath after inhaling, abdominal exercises, poses done lying on your stomach, and inverted poses. But throughout your pregnancy you can practice meditation and mindful walks in nature.



Cultural Ferment



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

The concept of this magazine is such that we always present to our readers the highest and the most widely appreciated achievements of Macedonian art and culture. And, of course, this is the right approach. We know that you first of all look to sample the best cultural picks. But, contrary to this tradition, today I want to write about another part of Macedonian culture – the independent initiatives, such as new cultural

centers and organizations, and alternative festivals and events. I would like to do it not merely for the sake of introducing diversity or striking the balance between accepted high art and the alternative scene, but because the last couple of years have seen a renewed ferment in the alternative cultural sphere, which had gone relative calm after the previous growth phase at the turn of the millennium. So, it is a pleasure to introduce the newest currents to our readers.

The existence of an independent cultural scene is the key to the vitality of a culture. Without alternative art with its many festivals and smaller events of unusual and experimental nature, the high culture tends to fossilize, and remain confined to anthologies, museums, and award cabinets. The highly appreciated art works of today embody the spirit and ideas of the previous decades. If we limit ourselves to appreciating only this art, and do not provide space for any alternatives, we will face a gap as soon as we understand that the *zeitgeist* has moved on. This worry is echoed in the surveys done by many culture scholars, who warn that, while commanding a considerable income from cultural tourism, many of the highly acclaimed European cultural capitals are dead cities lacking new contemporary cultural activities in their urban cores. To these researchers, fostering the new cultural energy existing beyond established

museums, galleries and city walls is a priority. So, the new EU funding mechanisms, such as Creative Europe are a vehicle for the rise of the new creative sector, rather than additional investment opportunities for entrepreneurs in the area of cultural tourism.

In Macedonia, I am glad to witness the success of the recent independent initiatives to establish new cultural spaces and new festivals run by NGOs, informal groups and distinguished individuals. One of the strongest brand new initiatives is the establishment of the so-called Autonomous Socio-Cultural Centre, by a group of young urban cultural activists for whom this is the first project of such a big scale. But this only adds to the enthusiasm with which they embarked on it, even painting the walls of the centre by themselves. They developed a fresh and interesting program with international elements with very limited funds but with great energy. Another initiative came from the veteran NGO Centre for Contemporary Arts which was the mover of independent visual arts life in the 1990s. When its foreign support dwindled, the Centre had to downsize and lost its premises. Today they are creating a new space, which would be an innovative mobile gallery made of containers. The acclaimed visual artist Nadica Prlja, having spent several years in London and shaken the European scene with her projects, is also returning to Skopje to establish her own gallery. At the same time, festivals like Frik, which is devoted to interdisciplinary urban art, and Fener, the magic lantern and puppet theatre festival, revitalise the cultural scene by introducing artists and art forms which are not part of the regular programming.

It is of vital importance to keep these initiatives growing. They are the motor of urban cultural development and represent the spirit of today. As a cultural trend they have already proven their potential. Let us be reminded that Busker Fest, contemporary open air circus event, as well as Panfiz, the pantomime festival, started as one-man initiatives, but their energy and passion made them obligatory points of passage on the cultural map of Skopje and the whole country.

Millennium of the Battle of Belasica



photos by Eva Hevesi

This year Macedonia, as well as the neighbouring Greece and Bulgaria will mark the 1000th anniversary of one of the most famous battles of the early Middle Ages, the Belasica Battle, which took place on 29th July, 1014. At the village of Kluc (Kleidon, in Greek) the armies of the Byzantine Emperor Basil II and Tsar Samuil clashed. The battle itself was not massive, but two aspects of it made it memorable. First, it became notorious for the fact that the winning Emperor blinded 14,000 prisoners, thus causing the death of his rival, who presumably died from a heart attack at the sight of his blinded army. Second, the death of Tsar Samuil left his kingdom without a strong leader, so that it completely surrendered to Basil only four years later, in 1018.

The invincible ruler from Prespa and Ohrid

The royal story of Tsar Samuil starts in 971. After the defeat of his father Nikola by the Byzantine Emperor John Tzimisces, Samuil alongside his three brothers David, Aaron and Moses was held hostage in Constantinople to secure vassal obedience. After John Tzimisces died in 971, the sons of Nikola, known as *cometopuli*, the young princes, rebelled. The new emperor, Basil II, was immediately embroiled in dynastic battles over the throne, which was used by the *cometopuli*, who spread the rebellion over much of the present day Western Bulgaria and the whole of Macedonia. But this was done with great loses. Two of the four brothers ruling in tetrarchy, David and Moses, perished in battle, while Aaron was killed by Samuil for plotting with the Byzantines. The whole family, except

Aaron's son Ivan Vladislav, who was saved on the insistence of Samuil's son Gavril Radomir, was massacred. Having remained alone on the throne, Samuil overran Thrace, Macedonia, the outskirts of Thessalonica, Thessaly, Hellas and the Peloponnese. He besieged and took many towns, including Larissa, the main city in the fertile plain of Thessaly. He successfully campaigned in the north conquering parts of Dalmatia, present day Montenegro, Serbia and even parts of Hungary. Samuil established his imperial seat in Prespa, and later when he proclaimed himself a tsar, winning the crown from the Roman Pope, he moved the capital of the kingdom to the Lake Ohrid. He established an independent Ohrid Patriarchy, which played a key role in maintaining his royal status.

Although the rivalry between the empires was even-handed, a decisive victory for Samuil was won in the Haemus passes in 986, when he crashed Basil's army that had besieged Sredec (present day Sofija), the crucial fortress in the middle of the Empire. When Basil wanted to lift the siege, he was attacked in the passes and his army was so heavily defeated that the emperor barely saved himself fleeing from the battle. His royal camp was captured and all his fortunes and insignia were taken by the winning Samuil.

Basil's defeat in Bulgaria precipitated new rebellions by his generals Sclerus and Phocas. Trapped in Constantinople, he was unable to contemplate action against Samuil. Several Byzantine senior military officials were eliminated and others, including the Dux of Thessalonica, were taken captives. Several local commanders and prominent townsmen in Byzantine-held territory conspired with Samuil.

As the need to curb the advance of Samuil became urgent, came the first big victory for Basil, when his general Nicephorus Uranus defeated Samuil at the flooded Spercheius River close to Thermopylae in 996. The Byzantines found a place to ford

and surprised the unprepared rival army. Samuil barely escaped captivity allegedly feigning death and then reaching his home by walking 400 kilometres on foot. This victory returned the initiative to Basil, who advanced in eastern Bulgaria, around Thessalonica and even as far as Vidin on the Middle Danube. On his return south in 1004 he raided Skopje and defeated Samuil using the same tactics as on the River Spercheius.

The battle at Belasica

Each of the two distinguished warriors and rulers who were in constant combat for more than forty years wanted to score a decisive victory. Being on the throne of the bigger and stronger Byzantine Empire, Basil II decided to take the military initiative and to stop Samuil's expansion in the Byzantine territories. He formed a large army with the goal of raiding into Samuil's territory and drawing out the army of his nemesis. Samuil's decision to face Basil II and the bulk of his army was prompted by the chain of defeats and invasions which had devastated the country, and by growing concerns among the nobility over his authority, which had been fatally weakened by Basil's successes.

Marching west, Basil sought to move through the Kluc Pass along the Struma. Anticipating that Byzantine army would use that pass, Samuil took precautions to bar it, fortifying the gorges with thick wooden walls. He built ditches all along the northern slopes of Belasica, and dotted with earthworks and walls the rugged terrain to south of Strumica Castle, where the road from the Byzantine stronghold of Thessalonica was the second possible entry point. Since the previous year Byzantine forces used the wide valley of the Strumica River to launch an attack into Samuil's territory, he positioned a strong guard to keep the passes to the valley safe. Basil repeatedly attacked the fortifications at Kluc, but all his attacks

failed while inflicting heavy losses on his army. Despite the casualties, Basil did not give up, and on the 29th of July, Nicephorus Xiphias, his most experienced commander, lead a column up and around the mountain to attack Samuil's soldiers from the rear. Descending from the rear, Xiphias trapped the army guarding the pass. Panic ensued, and Basil managed to breach the fortified wall and chased the defenders who attempted to flee westwards. Samuil and his son Gavril Radomir left the fortress of Strumica to aid their army, but lost the battle near the village of Mokrievo overwhelmed by the quickly advancing enemy who took advantage of the confusion caused by a surprise attack. Many soldiers were killed and many more were captured. Samuil barely escaped, only breaking free thanks to the bravery of his son, who took his father on his own horse to the safety of Prilep. Gavril Radomir returned back to continue the battle. After laying siege to Strumica, Basil ordered Thessaloniki governor Theophylactus Botaniates to destroy the fortress' southern ramparts. Botaniates accomplished the mission but on his way back to his city Radomir ambushed him and in the fighting he personally killed Botaniates with a spear. As a result of that, Basil was forced to abandon the siege and retreat. But before that he ordered the blinding of the prisoners, leaving every 100th person one eye so that they could lead the others home. Historians still argue whether the blinding was a revenge for losing his favourite nobleman Botaniates, or was aimed at crushing the rival army's morale, or to show his supreme authority, as the blinding was the usual punishment for rebellion against the empire. The records say that Samuil died of a heart attack in October facing the disaster of his blinded army.

The battle of Belasica had major political consequences. Although Samuil's son and successor, Gavril Radomir was a talented military leader, he was unable to restore the





power the kingdom had under his father. After weakening the kingdom through military campaigns, the emperor managed to isolate the young tsar diplomatically. Many of Samuil's former subordinates surrendered to the Byzantines. Embassies were exchanged even between Basil and Samuil's nephew Ivan Vladislav (the son of Aaron), who was eventually persuaded to murder Gavril Radomir in 1015. Yet, Basil continued to face a resistance, now led by Gavril's assassin, Ivan Vladislav. Basil responded with brutal force. He invaded Bulgaria, plundered western Macedonia, and once again blinded all his prisoners. Vladislav himself was eventually killed in 1018 in the battle outside the city of Dyrrachium (modern day Drac in Albania). This event finally persuaded the royal family and senior army commanders to surrender to the emperor. This surrender involved much public spectacle by which Basil celebrated his victory. He first journeyed through Macedonia receiving submissions and acclaim from his army. Then he went to Athens to give thanks at the Church of the Virgin (the Parthenon). Finally he returned to Constantinople, where he entered the city in triumph wearing the crown of victory (*toupha*) and displaying the human and material booty he had acquired from his Balkan conquest.

Most of the Samuil's territory was incorporated in the new administrative unit of Byzantine Empire, called Theme of Bulgaria, with Skopje as capital. Historians tell that Basil preferred to govern with a relatively light hand. Many fortifications were dismantled and the local population continued to be taxed in kind. Basil deprived the church founded by Samuil of its status as an independent patriarchate, but granted the Metropolitan of Ohrid an autocephalous position and control over several neighbouring bishoprics. The promotion of more Constantinople officials to local management and introduction of cash taxes were unpopular innovations introduced only after Basil's death.



The Blaze of Green and Blue Tiles

photo by Eva Hevesi

Skopje is a town of magnificent Ottoman heritage. The domes and high minarets dominate the old core of the town just as the high rise buildings mark

its modern part. The presence of this architecture is not accidental. For more than three centuries Skopje was one of the most important cities of the Ottoman conquerors in the region. In the period



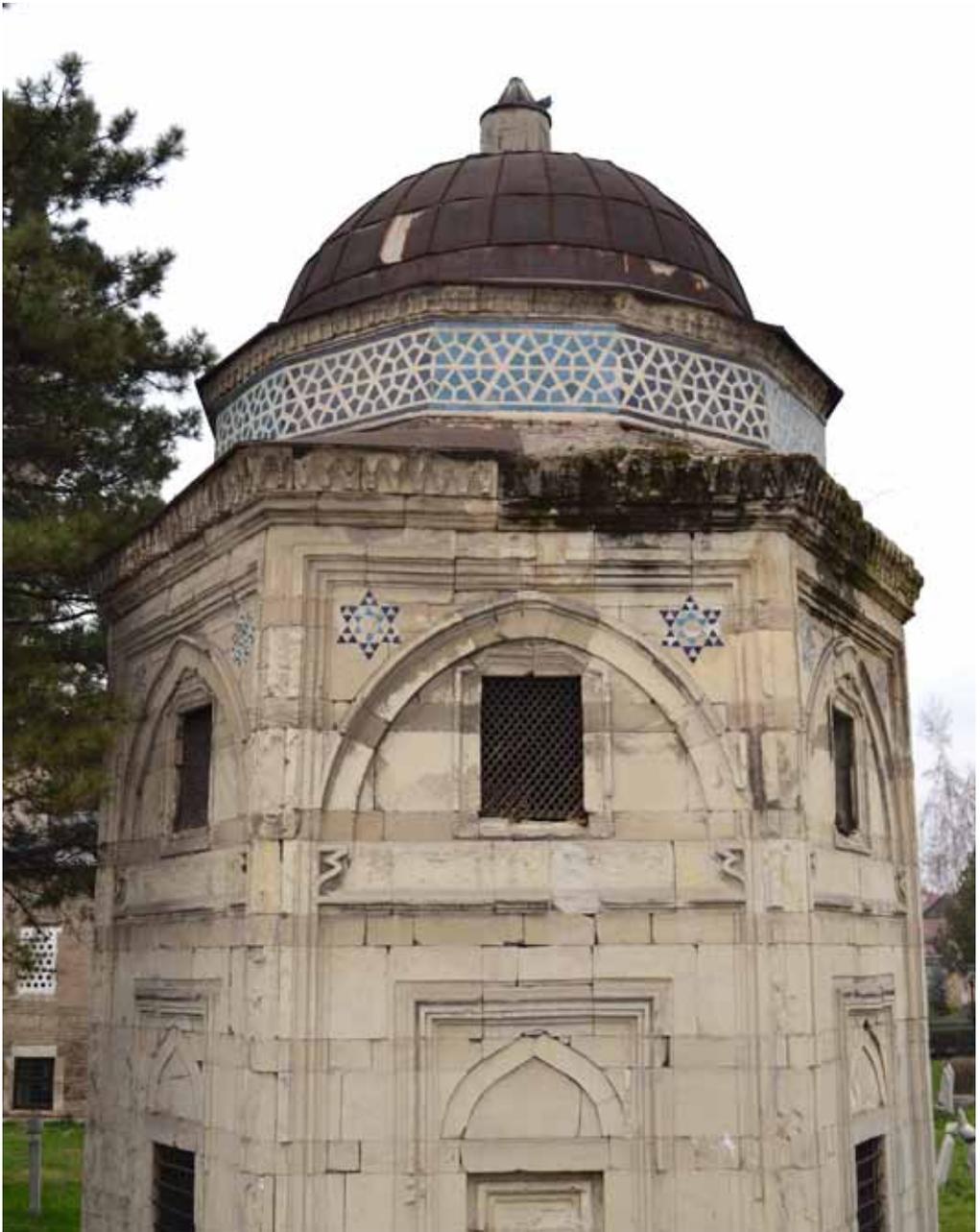
soon after the conquest of Skopje in 1392. The most noble and successful generals were based in Skopje, and the mosques, schools, public baths and inns they build shone as much as their military glory.

One such personality is Ishak-Bey, the second Ottoman commander of Skopje. He succeeded at the post and continued the work of his father Pasha Yiğit Bey, who was the conqueror and the first commander of Skopje, having taken it from the declining medieval Serbian Kingdom. Ishak-Bey restored the trade Skopje used to have in the old Serbian times, and reserved the privileges of the Ragusan (Dubrovnik) city-state. The Ragusans paid the taxes regularly, so there was money for the continuous investment in Skopje. Ishak-Bey left many public buildings as his legacy. Among them are the famous Suli-An, where the Jewish survivors of the Spanish *Reconquista* were sheltered and then stayed to trade; and the Bezisten (covered market) with its small lead cupolas. But his most precious testament is the mosque complex carrying his name erected in 1438. Alongside the mosque Ishak-Bey's endowment supported a *medresa* (religious school), an *imaret* (public kitchen), a *musafirhanne* (hospice), and a traditional *turbeh* (mausoleum). After his death, the books of Ishak-Bey were bequeathed to the *medresa*, thus creating one of the first Muslim libraries in Europe. The mosque is also known by its popular name, Pied Mosque (*Aladya*), which comes from the green and blue ceramic tiles which once dominated both the facade and the interior.

from 1392 to the 1500s it was the biggest city they possessed, wealthy and ideally located for planning further military actions. Later, after the conquest of Bosnia, Serbia and Hungary, it became part of the deep Empire, peaceful and ideal for development. This is why in 1689 when an Austrian military commander entered the city, he called it the Ottoman Prague for its beauty.

The most remarkable examples of the Ottoman heritage date back to the time

The time as well as natural and man-made catastrophes took a severe toll on the mosque. It was seriously damaged in 1689 when the Austrian general Pikolomini set the whole city on fire. The fire destroyed the coloured ceramic elements and the tambour. The two earthquakes, in 1555 and in 1963, resulted in serious



damage. In 1972 it was renovated and new faience tiles were added. According to a surviving inscription, the mosque was widened by Ishak-Bey's nephew, Mehmed in 1519.

Today the mosque has a more modest decor than in the time of its shining glory,

but remains of the original splendour can still be found. Some of the colourful tiles, which were mostly lost in 1689, can still be seen on the outer walls of the turbe behind the mosque. The mosque is a big, one-dome building with portals. The number of the smaller domes and portals

changed over time. The nave is covered by a semi-cylinder arch. It is closed by full walls from all the sides, while its arches rest on square stone columns. Along the side walls there are two stairs: one leads to the minaret, while the other to the roof of the mosque. The big wooden doors are carved with elaborate patterns.

The interior of the nave contains rich stalactite decoration, rosettes and floral motives. Especially significant are the surviving fragments of the decoration of the middle arch of the *mihrab* prayer niche.

The whole mosque is built from limestone. The windows and porches are also framed with stone. The interior is decorated by different reliefs and painting, while the walls end in a wreath and six-rayed star made of faience tiles. The minaret is thirty meters high. It was also built with carved stone with rich stalactite

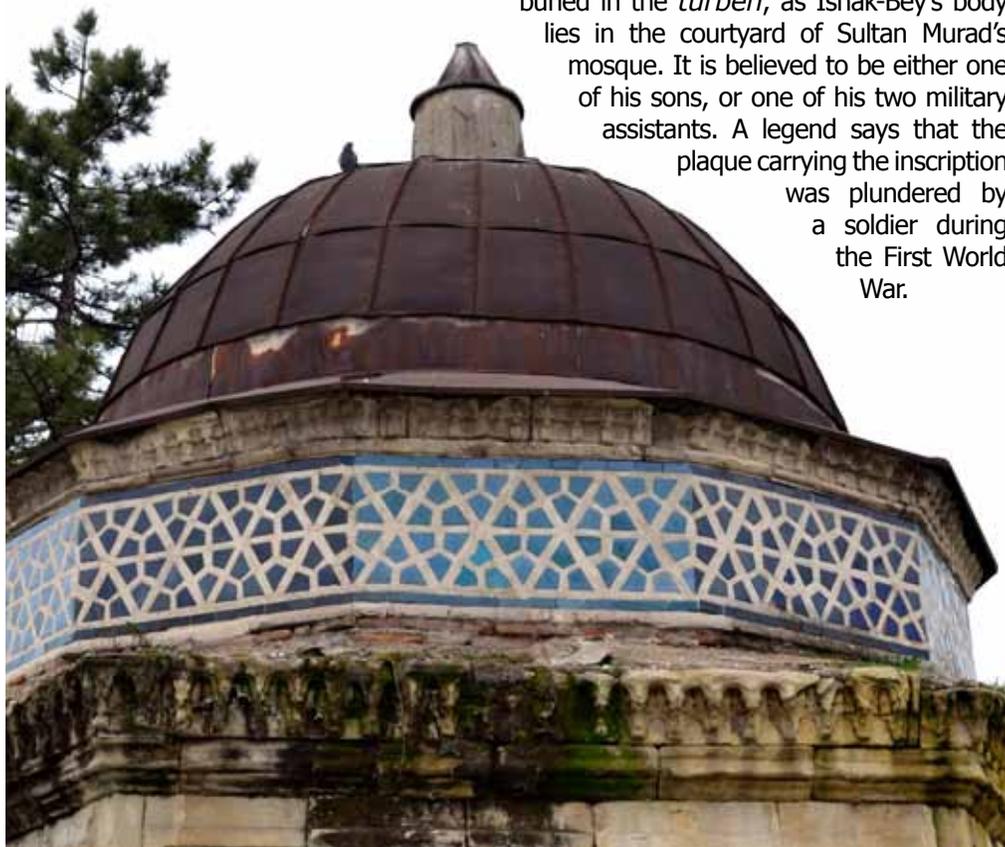
decoration and tiles.

The courtyard of the mosque contains an ablution fountain the central stone part of which is believed to be original. Around the mosque there are remains of gravestones, which are also considered part of the historical heritage of the city.

The *turbeh* is of a closed type, with a lead cupola built on a hexagonal base decorated with the same pied tiles and beautifully carved stones.

Back to history, the *medresa* is said to have had nine rooms, and it is believed to have been one of the most popular in Rumeli, the European part of the Ottoman Empire. Ishak Celebi, one of the most renowned medieval Ottoman poets, taught and lived here. The *medresa* was famous not only for the religious instruction but also for Islamic law, Persian and Arabic languages, philosophy and mathematics.

One of the biggest mysteries is who is buried in the *turbeh*, as Ishak-Bey's body lies in the courtyard of Sultan Murad's mosque. It is believed to be either one of his sons, or one of his two military assistants. A legend says that the plaque carrying the inscription was plundered by a soldier during the First World War.





Minerals at a Glance

Lava from Vesuvius, amethyst from Brazil, amazonite from Mariovo, and volcanic stone balls from Kratovo - these are just some of the highlights of the recently established mineralogy collection in the small town of Probistip in the Eastern part of Macedonia. It is a unique example of local cultural initiative and a remarkable way to boost the heritage of this extraordinary town. The collection is permanently exhibited in a big hall of the House of Culture in Probistip. Alongside the minerals, the exhibition features mining tools and equipment from different periods, including Roman diggers and a Saxon helmet. The collection has over 250 items and also contains old lamps, axes, leather bags and wooden casks. Especially impressive are the examples of barite, calcite and quartzite crystals from the nearby mine of Zletovo, excavated some forty years ago, at the level of 150 meters below the sea surface. The curator of the exhibition says these minerals are a rarity as they are hard to

find in this form. Paradoxically it is almost impossible to find them at a deeper level, so that the mine galleries spreading to over 350 meters below the sea level do not yield such finds.

Although created over the period of fifty years, this collection had been made accessible to the public for the first time. Owned by the state mining company, it was reserved for exclusive visitors, such as government officials and trade partners. The still active local mines such as Sasa and Dobrevno are rich in different crystals and minerals, and representatives of the House of Culture hope that this minerals collection will grow and become a museum. It is hoped that the success of this initiative will foster the establishing of similar exhibitions in other mining towns and municipalities.

Macedonia is rich in minerals. Most of them are of a volcanic origin, but some are formed by sedimentation or external influence. The crystals are usually found in the caves or other cracks within the rocks. The geological map of Macedonia

has already been created but many extraordinary minerals are still to be exploited. At the old minefield of Alsar near Kavadarci, thallium, one of the rarest minerals in the world, can be found. Although thallium containing mineral lorandite, was first discovered there in 1894, it is not mined, and has only captured the popular imagination for its connection to the sun due to the use of this mineral in the detection of solar neutrinos. Another rare mineral is macedonite, lead titanate, found in 1974 in Alinci, near Prilep. The pink Macedonian ruby is another rare and precious mineral found in Prilep mines.

Historically speaking, the town of Probistip and its surroundings belong to the Ancient Paieonian kingdom. The ancient Macedonian kingdom of Philip and Alexander also exploited the mines in the area. Later, the Romans established a mining settlement here as well. In the Middle Ages mining experts from Germany, the Saxons, also came to the area to advance the industry. But the story of modern Probistip is a unique testimony of the building enthusiasm of the socialist era. Although settlements existed on this site since antiquity, the modern town was planned there only after the Second World War and intensively built between 1950 and 1955, thus being the only modern mining settlement in this part of the world. It was built for exploiting the nearby lead and zinc mines. In its heyday the town had one of the highest local incomes in the whole Yugoslavia, which enabled the construction of contemporary apartments, hotels, sports facilities and the big cultural centre called the "House of Culture" which recently took the initiative to put up the mineralogical exhibit. The dissolution of Yugoslavia, and the so-called transition meant the end of the big enterprises and mining industry. Traditional markets collapsed, leaving many people without work. Depression and unemployment became the byword of the town. Twenty



years on, the industry is rising again, and the town is looking for new opportunities to put itself back on the cultural map. The rich history and heritage of Probistip have ample opportunities for raising its profile both locally and nationally.

Lenten Season

As Easter is the most important religious holiday for the majority of Macedonians, the forty days of Lent preceding the great holiday are the most challenging period of devotion for them. Although for many people with the modern life style it is close to impossible to observe the required diet and prayers for such a long period, the number of those who fast without a problem and according to the canon is growing. The meaning of the fast is to grow spiritually, to enter in a communion with God through prayer, good thoughts, righteous deeds and a proper way of life. The fast is the time when one prepares him or herself for living in the true state of life, before the fall of humankind from Eden. Lent, or the "Great Fast" (*Veliki post*), begins on Clean Monday, seven weeks before Easter and runs for six weeks. The fast includes the first six days of the Holy Week known in Macedonian as the "Week of Passion" and ends in the very early morning of Easter Sunday. The fast means abstinence from certain types of food, such as meat, eggs, dairy products, wine and oil. But besides dietary restrictions one has to devote him or herself to intensified prayer, confession, repentance, self-examination and almsgiving. The fast is strict but during some days fish, wine and oil are permitted. It is interesting that during Lent the liturgical weeks do not start from Sunday but from Monday in order to culminate in the greatest of all Sundays, the Easter Sunday. During Lent a special liturgical book known as the *Lenten Triodion* is used in the churches. Another feature of Lenten services is the increased



attention to the theme of death, which combines a contemplation of mortality and penitence with remembering the dead. Three Lent Saturdays are dedicated to the commemoration of the deceased. Since Lent is a moveable season, in different years, different feast days may fall within Lent. When this happens, the fast is relaxed for the day of the feast, for instance, to allow fish, and the Lenten message is combined with the celebration of the feast.

Liturgically, the period of the *Triodion* is divided into three sections: the Pre-Lenten period, the Great Forty Days, and the Holy Week. The Pre-Lenten period lasts for three weeks, and its aim is to prepare the faithful for the spiritual work they are to accomplish during the Great Fast. During the Cheese Fare Week, which falls on the last week before Lent, dairy products are

allowed on each day, even Wednesday and Friday which are normally observed as fast days throughout the year, though meat may no longer be eaten any day of the week. This week is concluded with the Sunday of Forgiveness, both because of the Gospel theme for the day and because it is the day on which everyone asks their neighbours for forgiveness thus identifying with Adam and Eve. The hangings and vestments in the church are changed to sombre colours to reflect the penitential mood, so that people can give forgiveness to each other and begin the Great Fast in the spirit of peace. The Sunday of Forgiveness, *Procka*, in Macedonian, is widely observed in Macedonia. It is a manifestation of sincere forgiveness among people and unconditional love following the example of Jesus Christ. On this day, the younger seek forgiveness from the older with the words "forgive me," and the older respond with "you are forgiven by me and by God".

Procka falls on the period traditionally seen as a transition between winter and spring. Long before Christianity people have marked this transition with various rituals involving masks and dressing up. Today a number of pre-Christian rituals are integrated into the Pre-Lenten period. There are ceremonial fires, predictions of the future, and saying good-bye to winter ways. Strumica and Prilep developed carnivals which have become international cultural events. In Strumica, the whole celebration has a special name, Trimery Days. One day before *Procka*, on Saturday each woman makes a pie to be shared with the neighbourhood kids. This day is called "The Kid Has Died for a Pie", and is probably associated with the idea of sharing as a precondition for wealth. The festival culminates in the Tuesday night carnival procession when groups with masks parade through the city. After the parade ends, masked people visit the houses of newly married

couples where they celebrate into the night. The symbolism of this carnival is full of eroticism. In the houses of the recently engaged couples masked people sing erotic, even vulgar, songs. However, the meals on the table are already suited for the fast. There are traditional meatless dishes, such as *sarma* with nuts and *zerde* or simple drinks like *boza*.

Trimery Days extend into Lent which starts on the Clean Monday and includes days when no food is allowed at all or just one meal is allowed during the weekend. The Clean Week ends with St. Theodore's Saturday devoted to a 4th-century martyr whose feast is marked by eating boiled wheat with honey and raisins.

The six weeks of strict fast end with the celebration of St Lazarus's Saturday, whose rising from the dead is understood as a foreshadowing of the resurrection of Jesus. The festive atmosphere of the biggest miracle is continued the next day, on Palm Sunday, which commemorates the entry of Jesus to Jerusalem, so that fish, wine and oil are permitted on the table.

The end of Palm Sunday is the end of the six weeks of Great Lent and also the start of the Holy Week, the last week before Easter. As each of the six weeks of the Great Lent have their liturgical themes, so each of the six days during the Holy Week has its own theme based on the Gospel. The Great Thursday is devoted to the Last Supper, and wine and oil are allowed, while the Great Friday is the day of the Passion, so no food is to be eaten on this day. The Great Saturday is the burial of Jesus but also the Harrowing of Hell, which means that the feelings of great sadness and joy from the coming resurrection are mixed. At midnight of the Great Saturday the resurrection of Christ is proclaimed, the fast is over, and people celebrate by crushing dyed eggs. Sunday is the great Easter holiday celebrated by a rich feast with roast lamb, grape leaves rolls, pies and baklavas.

Eternal Abode of the Hermit



Hidden in the colourful oak forest just above the town of Kriva Palanka and just off the picturesque road to Bulgaria, lies one of the most beautiful monasteries in the Balkans, Saint Joakim Osogovski. The visitor may wonder which is more inspiring: the town shaped by the curved path of the Kriva Reka (Curved River) or the monastery with its fine architecture and breathtaking views. The monastery is dedicated to the hermit and miracle worker Saint Joakim, a disciple of Saint Jovan of Rila.

The legend has it that in the 11th century the three hermits who would later be known as Joakim Osogovski, Prohor Pciniski and Gavril Lesnovski, followed in the footsteps of the first monk Jovan, who lived several decades earlier and spread monastic life and Christianity in what today is north-eastern Macedonia. Today the four monasteries dedicated to these saints lie within a circle with a radius of no more than 100 km, but are divided between three states - Macedonia, Bulgaria and Serbia. All four contribute to the rich spiritual life in the area and

constitute tremendously important shared cultural heritage.

According to another legend, after the Normans entered Macedonia in 1081 and took over Skopje and its surroundings, the hermit Joakim, who used to live in the plains, felt a need to look for a more remote dwelling. He found monastic solitude in a cave near Kriva Reka. There he lived a life of fast and prayers, and was honoured by the local people as a holy person. When he died in 1105, two hunters buried him near his cave. The monastery was founded on that spot later in the 12th century. Although there are no remains of the original building, archaeologists have traced its foundations. The hagiography of Joakim Osogovski dates the founding of the monastery to the reign of Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143-1180), when the priest Theodore became a monk, assumed the name Theophan, and founded the monastery devoted to one of the first Christian hermits from the area. The monastery bore the name Sarandopor of Byzantine origin referring to the many curves of the river.

The Church of the Holy Mother of God, the smaller church in today's monastery complex, got its present look in the 13th century. It is a small one-nave church with a cruciform base and a porch. This building is constructed in the well-known Byzantine manner of the time with rows of bricks and stones alternating with thick layers of mortar. The monastery has a rich history. Not only was it honoured by the local population, but also visited by many important medieval historical figures who believed in its miraculous powers. The historical chronicles record the visit of the Bulgarian Tsar Kaloyan (1196-1207). In the year 1330 the rising Serbian king Stefan Decanski came here to pray before the battles in Velbuzd (today's town of Kjustendil, in Bulgaria, just on the other side of the mountain) against Tsar Manuel Sisman. The Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II, visited the monastery in 1463 on his way to conquer Bosnia.

But this place of God has faced many tragedies, too. After the Ottomans conquered the area, the local population lost its economic power and could no longer support the monastery. The monks from Joakim Osogovski were forced to turn to Dubrovnik for assistance to maintain the monastery after their own funds were depleted. A century later, in 1586, when the monastery sustained a serious damage from an earthquake, Kjustendil Metropolitan Visarion turned as far as Moscow for help. After the rebuilding in the middle of the seventeenth century (1643), this monastery entered its most prosperous period. When in 1686 Archbishop Arsenie III from Veles came here, he was enthralled by the richness and beauty of the monastery. Having made an inventory of all the property, he laid a curse on anybody attempting to plunder it.

The heyday of the monastery did not last long. After the Karpos uprising of 1689

following the Austrian offensive against the Ottomans the monastery was put on fire by the authorities, as a retribution against the rebellious population. In the following centuries its renewal was repeatedly obstructed by the Ottoman authorities.

The later church in the complex was built in 1847 upon the initiative of Hadji Stefan Beglikcijata by Andrea Damjanov, the most famous builder in the Balkans at the time. Damjanov demonstrated an extraordinary understanding of the complex processes of design and construction. He created a monumental three-nave basilica with two rows of three pillars each, dividing the entire space into twelve domed sections representing the twelve Apostles. Of the twelve domes, five are raised higher to form a Greek cross on the roof. Three domes are concealed by the roof and are not visible from the outside. The interior of the church and the porch are painted by the skilful hands of four Macedonian painters. Dimitrij Andonov Papradiski has enriched canonical compositions including "The Sermon of St. Paul" with many local details such as clothing.

Today the thousand year old monastery is a parochial seat in the Diocese of Polog and Kumanovo. Its monastic quarters and a grand dining room, as well as other auxiliary buildings testify to a dynamic monastic life. The monastery is open to pilgrims, visitors, and tourists. Usually they come to venerate the miraculous relics of St. Joakim. The feast of the temple is on August 29th. It is interesting to mention that since the monastery didn't have one official *ktitor*, or donor, the people of Kriva Palanka proudly say that it was built and rebuilt through the efforts of many ordinary local persons. The monastery hosts various cultural events including the "St. Joakim Osogovski" International Art Colony, Summer School for Architecture, and Colony of the Association of Wood Carvers.

The Diocese of Morodvis



Being a country of rich history and vast cultural heritage, Macedonia does not readily reveal all of its past and has a lot of secret stories waiting to be discovered and told. One part of our forgotten past are the now extinct urban communities. Former seats of bishops and military commanders, they nurtured rich religious, cultural and economic life, but today they are awaiting their curious investigator, a local Indiana Jones, who will examine the traces of the old dioceses whose bishops were part of the most important Councils that determined the history of the Christian faith.

The first trace of those communities can be found in the surviving tradition of

Macedonian Orthodox Church to give its assistant bishops (vicar bishops, who do not have own diocese) titles of former eparchies. These titles lead us to the dioceses of Stobi, Heraclea, Veliqa and Polin. Another former diocese which at the moment is not associated with the title of a vicar bishop is Morodvis, which today is just a village in Zrnovci municipality at the foothills of Plackovica a few kilometres south of Kocani. The history of the lost diocese lies in the late antiquity archaeological site Morobizdon and the medieval Crkviste. The settlement was inhabited between the 5th and the 7th centuries and later abandoned. It was a rich Roman town in the fertile lands around the river of Bregalnica,

anđ an important point on the eastern roads. In the 9th century, the area was resettled by a Slavic population, and it was part of the Bregalnica region to which Christian missionaries attached a great importance. The hagiography tells us that St. Methodius, one of the creators of the Slavic alphabet, was an active missionary here together with his brother St. Cyril. It is believed that the first churches were built in the area by the Bulgarian commander Taridan, who received the order from the first baptized Bulgarian King Boris Mikhail to Christianize the region. In one of the churches near Bregalnica, the relics of fifteen early Christian martyrs from the neighbouring Tiberiopol (Strumica) were buried.

At the time of the Bulgarian rulers Simeon and Peter, Bregalnica Bishop was called *Morodviski*, that is 'of Morodvis'. During the reign of Tsar Samuil, Morobidzon, or Morodvis, became a bishopric centre, as part of the Samuil Ohrid Archbishopric. The eparchy possessed vast lands stretching across today's Osogovo and Malesevo mountains. Later, when the Byzantine Tsar Vasili II regained these lands, he kept the Archbishopric and its existing structure. The Byzantine historian Jovan Skilica writes in his *Short History* that representatives of Morodvis gave town keys to the Tsar in the year 1018. This is the first historical record of the bishopric. One year later, the Emperor issued an act confirming the existing territory of the bishopric with its lands, settlements and clergy. In the beginning of the 12th century Malesevo became the episcopacy seat of the Bregalnica region. This, however, did not affect the religious significance of Morodvis. In his *Theography* the 12th-century Arabic writer Idrizi mentions the densely populated town of Furumizdus (Morodvis) and its vineyards and fertile lands. In the 1260s the seat was again transferred to Morodvis. The spread of the Serbian Kingdom in the 13th and

14th centuries put an end to the life of the diocese of Morodvis. In different acts, Serbian kings take lands, pastures, vineyards and other properties from Morodvis and give it to the emerging monastic and church communities in the North: in Skopje, Prizren and Lipljan. In 1334 the ruler of the region, Despot Jovan Oliver built the St. Archangel Mikhail Monastery in Lesnovo, which very quickly became a new religious centre with a huge library and scriptorium, where many books were copied by dozens of monks. With the crowning of the Serbian King Dusan, his native Pec Archbishopric was promoted to a Patriarchy. This, in turn, demanded a new reorganization of the church structures. Thus, in 1347, the seat of the bishopric was moved from Morodvis to the emerging Zletovo. Later rulers, including Konstantin Dragas in 1381, gave the monastery a few properties, but it never regained its former glory.

As a result of the area's religious prominence, archaeological excavations reveal multiple remains of churches from different periods build almost one on top of the other. Fragments of at least four churches have been excavated since the 1980s: from the 5th, 11th, 13th and 16th centuries. The first church had marble *opus sectile* floors, decorated pillars and capitals. The superb church construction and decoration leads to the conclusion that it had a high profile. A tomb of an important person was found in its centre. Other remnants revealed carved stones and frescos. A smaller church was probably erected in the 13th century, on the foundations of an older one. A graveyard with 350 tombs with artefacts made of gold, bronze, bone, glass and textile was also discovered. The municipality has come forward with the initiative to continue the excavations and protect the site, so that it can become the focus of the development of cultural tourism, attract visitors and create new jobs in the area.

Cetrse Is on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

The celebration of the Feast of the Forty Martyrs popular among all the inhabitants of Stip has become the first Macedonian entry in the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The ceremony is locally known as *Cetrse*, which is how 'forty' is pronounced in the local dialect. This recognition from UNESCO comes ten years after the signing of the Declaration on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Many activities to protect and raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding this type of cultural diversity have taken place around the world during this period. Macedonia has two other candidates on the list awaiting the commission's decision in the near future: the two-voice singing, and the folk dance "Kopacka".

The celebration of the Feast of the Forty Martyrs takes place on the Isar hill, which itself is a protected archaeological site located on the western edge of Stip, where a medieval fortified town once stood. The rituals begin in the streets and squares, where participants of all ages, ethnicities and religions gather to start the slow hike up the Isar. The fact that their destination is the upper part of the fortified town testifies to the antiquity of the ceremony. The ritual is connected with the memory of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, but also connected with the first day of spring, the 22nd of March, and, thus, incorporates many pre-Christian beliefs. So, the actual scenario of the ceremony combines religious and folk motives. The first destination of the procession is the church on the hillside, where a tribute to the Venerable Martyrs of Sebaste is paid. After that the ascent begins. Every traditional part of the following ritual



is associated with the number 40. The participants greet 40 acquaintances and gather 40 pebbles. They take 40 flowers or 40 twigs from the almond trees that grow along the way. When they arrive to the top of the hill, 39 pebbles are thrown into the River Bregalnica, while a wish is being made. The 40th pebble is kept and taken home. It goes under the pillow to help the wish come true. The celebration continues with visits to the houses around the hill, while music bands and orchestras play all around the neighbourhood.

The ritual recounts the martyrdom of the legion of Roman soldiers, who in the year 320 were executed in the city of Sebaste (present day Sivas in Turkey). It is believed that the feast in their name was introduced very soon after their martyrdom by the Bishop Basil of

Caesarea in 380. The playing with the numbers 39 and one is connected with the actual deed, as given in Basil's eulogy. It says that the guard, who was supposed to watch over the freezing of the 39 soldiers



put in a cold lake over the night, threw off his garments and joined them. The frozen bodies were burnt next day but the relics were collected and distributed to many Christian communities, thus making their veneration wide spread. Macedonia is a country where the cult of the holy martyrs is preserved in many places. There are churches devoted to them in Ohrid and in Bansko near Strumica. One of the oldest icons devoted to the forty holy martyrs is kept in the Ohrid Gallery of Icons. The number 40 is also connected with the 40 days of Lent. Reflecting on the forty martyrs' persistence in faith is believed to help the faithful to endure the forty days of fast. The memory of the martyrdom inspired other Christian traditions as well. Macedonian Orthodox Church celebrates

the Forty Martyrs of Bitola. It is believed that they suffered when the Ottomans conquered the city in the late 14th century. As Bitola resisted the Ottomans, and the monks and clergy were the biggest supporters of the resistance, as soon as the city fell, the legend says, forty of them were burned alive in one of the churches.

The feast of the Forty Martyrs is celebrated widely in the whole country. The first collectors of folk heritage like Kuzman Sapkarev and the Molerov brothers recorded many variants of related customs, such as collecting forty snails, making forty rolls of sarma, or drinking 40 glasses in the memory of the martyrs. Very often the variants of the forty deeds depend on the local topography. If there is a river, then crabs are collected, if it is a hilly terrain, then 40 sticks or forty glasses of rakija, or, if a place is rather religious, then forty prayers are said. Very often, the holiday is connected with various prohibitions as it usually falls within Lent. The folk tradition has combined it with different pagan proscriptions. For example, it is not allowed to work on the day, nor to clean the house, nor cook a meal. Sometimes these bans were transformed into special prescribed actions, such as to eat garlic, or to hang hives over the door in order to be saved from maladies or evil forces.

The wealth of *Cetrse* traditions give a strong sense of identity and continuity to local residents. They bring together people across generations. And this celebration is becoming increasingly appealing to visitors from all over the country. The local government is committed to safeguarding the feast but also to transforming it into a major event in the cultural tourism calendar. So, recently they added new activities like folk and rock concerts, an art exhibition, graffiti painting and theatrical performances to enhance the attractiveness of *Cetrse* to visitors.

Festival of Film Fans

Skopje Film Festival is one of the older new cultural initiatives of our city. The festival started only in 1998 but it is one of Skopje's most credible and complex international events. The long-established festivals had gained their reputations during the socialist times, are connected with stable public institutions, or are supported by a strong sponsor. Skopje Film Festival was created by a bunch of young people who had organised a few concerts in the 1990s and who saw the absence of a film festival in Skopje as a gap to be filled. They decided to give the city with a considerable young urban population its first film event. The situation in film distribution and cinemas was so bad at the time that there was no other way for film buffs to see quality productions on the big screen. The most dedicated ones often went to Belgrade, Sofia or Thessaloniki to watch good movies. The festival founders wanted to change that.

As a grassroots initiative, Skopje Film Festival was confronted with every possible challenge, from lack of financial support to institutional rejection, but it gradually overcame all of them and grew into a respectable and high profile event. What has remained the same through the years and what has always given real support to the organisers, was the film fans, who always filled the festival's screening rooms to the last seat. On many occasions, there were not enough seats, and people occupied the stairs, the entrances and all the available spaces. At first the festival was connected with the Army Hall, but

when Millennium Cinema was renovated and got brand new equipment the festival moved there. The new location gave it a bit of glamour and a more formal appearance, but its audiences remained the same.

The festival usually features the latest European and independent American films. It has been the place to see the films by new and emerging directors like Daren Aronofsky and Michael Haneke, the controversial ones like the French Mathieu Cassovitz and Gaspar No  , or the radical experimentators like Peter Greenaway, who once was a special guest of the festival. The festival has featured many smaller or not well known national cinematographic traditions, such as Georgian, Iranian and Russian. The biggest



Iranian director and activist Yafar Panahi has also been a guest at the festival.

Thanks to the regular programme devoted to the regional cinematography, the fans have the chance to see the latest production coming from Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Romania. The festival was also the venue at which Macedonian audiences saw the first post-Hoxha Albanian films. As it grew, the festival became member of the European Film Festival Association, which enabled it to receive screening copies from other festivals, as well as to arrange different workshops, presentations and, more recently, even lectures for film professionals.

The festival comprises several programmes. The Documentary Programme carries the latest European films, but also presents regional and national documentaries. The Programme of Retrospectives featuring classic international artists and Macedonian film history has established a fruitful cooperation with the Cinemateque of Macedonia. The Gala Programme is devoted to the films that had gained awards at the major festivals, such as Berlin, Cannes, Venice or Sundance. The division of the films in different categories, programmes and sub-programmes allowing for different thematic and national presentations has

brought to Skopje, to the audiences' delight, Portuguese animated movies, German short films, and a Nordic Light session.

The festival was a training ground for a number of young entrepreneurial organizers and cultural managers who went on to work in different fields and established their own new organisations and festivals ranging from dance to experimental theatre. The festival gave space for the growth of the young film star Labina Mitevska as manager and producer and helped her become the best ambassador of Macedonian film abroad.

Over the turbulent years of social and political crises, the festival has faced many problems due to actual and perceived instability and broken connections. Some projections and guest star appearances were cancelled after the Kosovo crisis in 1999, then after the Macedonian conflict in 2001, and again after the assassination of Zoran Gjingjic in Belgrade in 2003. Yet, every March, Skopje Film Festival is a regular and much awaited event in the city's cultural calendar. And the fact that its 2013 poster won the Silver Award at the International Film Festival Poster Awards competition is another testimony of the overall quality of this event.



Forgotten Craft

By Jasmina Mazgalieva



Many women regularly visit well-known shops in remote corners of the Old Skopje Bazaar looking for cheap but beautiful imported silks. The silk available at the bazaar is of an excellent quality as the merchants have long traditions of trade with Turkey and other countries of Asia where silk is being produced. What the customers do not know is that in the past silk production was one of the most important occupations in Macedonia, and almost every family grew silkworm. Macedonian silk was an important trade article, and in the 19th century silk business contributed to the appearance of the rich class of Macedonian tradesmen who led the national awakening and were at the forefront of the forming of the modern national sentiment.

The method of cultivation of silkworm



and silk processing was a special secret skill which was carefully fostered and handed down from generation to generation. Now it is totally lost, although there are some grandmothers who remember how in their early childhood they were also included in the process of cultivation and manufacture. No doubt, they would be happy to witness an old craft revival initiative that would restore this craft, at least for the purposes of cultural tourism.

Silk is animal fibre produced by silkworm. There are two types of silkworm: wild and cultivated. Hair of the wild silkworm has a rough structure and is solid brown, as opposed to the yellow to gray thread of the cultivated variety. Wild silkworm lives and feeds on oak wood, and its natural environments are in India, China and Japan. Cultivated production blossomed in Macedonia primarily due to its relative simplicity. Between insemination and mature cocoon there is a period of approximately forty days, so that the silkworm afforded a relatively fast income to a family, while also allowing the cultivating families to be engaged in other activities, silk remaining a side business.

The processing of silk was women's work. Maybe because cultivating silkworm requires a lot of care. From egg to moth, their life span is only two months. During that period, they go through four stages



of development: egg, larva, cocoon and moth. The eggs are kept cold for about six days, and then soaked in hot water and air dried. From each egg a small white larva emerges eating countless times more mulberry leaves than its weight. During this phase the silk worm moults a few times. At the end of the month the larva stops eating, attaches to a piece of straw placed in front of it and begins spinning a cocoon, creating a long continuous fibre strand that we know as silk. The next 15 to 20 days the larvae sleep inside the cocoon. It was at this stage that the women's skilled work started. They used hot water to kill the pupae and degum the silk and separate the fibres to make them ready for spinning.

Silk production emerged in China and is a very old craft. The oldest silk sheets and pieces of clothing found date back several thousand years. The Chinese kept the secret of breeding silkworm, and the secret of manufacturing the fabric from its fibre, for over two millennia. Exporting live silkworms from China was considered a greatest crime. However, Chinese immigrants spread it all over Asia. But it did not go further, except by means of trade in finished goods. Caravans carrying silk regularly crossed India, Persia and Turkestan. Archaeologists found silk even on an Egyptian mummy.

The silk worm appeared in Macedonia when it was part of the Byzantine Empire. According to a legend, Justinian I, Byzantine Emperor (527-565), persuaded

two Persian soldiers who had lived for some time in China to return there and smuggle silkworm to Constantinople. They did it by concealing some worms in bamboo sticks. This happened around the year 550. But open silk production began only in the 16th century, as the secret of silk was jealously guarded for centuries, so that weaving and silk trade remained a royal monopoly. Best weaving workshops were housed in the palace complex in Constantinople, and the cloth produced there was used exclusively for royal garments and gifts to foreign dignitaries. Little by little, silk production spread and put down roots in many areas. In Italy Venetian merchants traded silk and encouraged its cultivation. By the 13th century Italian silk became an important part of national commerce.

In Macedonia, the south-eastern towns of Strumica, Valandovo and Gevgelija also became known for the production of silk. All pre-World-War-Two houses in the small town of Bogdanci are built to the same pattern perfectly adapted to practicing the once most widespread craft in this region: silkworm cultivation. Each house entrance faces south. In the front of the house there is a slightly elevated spacious porch open to all three sides. Behind the porch there are family rooms and one special large room called the 'house' for the cultivation of silkworm. The roof and ceiling over the porch and rooms are made in such a way that the 'house' has just the right ventilation needed for the worms. The whole town used to be surrounded by mulberry plantations resembling a floating green carpet. But in late April the plantations turned ochre because of the silkworm eating the leaves.

Yet, with the post-war industrialization this old craft was left to die with people cutting down the vast plantations. Today, if you pass through the region, you will see only few mulberry trees standing here and there as mute witnesses to the extinction of silk craft in Macedonia.



QSI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF SKOPJE

QSI Skopje will be hosting open house events in March and April for prospective families for the 2014-2015 school year. Families should contact the school to be included on the invitation list to these events. Families will be able to visit the school, observe classes, and students will be able to visit for a few days as well.

QSI Skopje is a unique school, with unique advantages. We offer:

- Small class sizes
- A rigorous academic schedule
- Activities that are customized to meet the needs of our students

Our students experience a level of attention that is seldom found in any school, and we are proud to be able to offer such an environment to our students to ensure their success.

The focus of the entire staff at QSI Skopje is to deliver outstanding instruction, a caring and welcoming school environment, and provide opportunities for our kids to have fun every day.





QSI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF SKOPJE





<http://www.worlddownsyndromeday.org/lots-of-socks>

LOTS OF SOCKS

21 March 2014



Down Syndrome International invites everyone across the world to **wear LOTS OF SOCKS on 21 March 2014** to raise awareness on World Down Syndrome Day.



We want to get people talking about Down Syndrome.

We can do this if we all wear socks...**BUT NOT JUST ANY SOCKS...** brightly coloured socks, long socks, printed socks, 1 sock...maybe even 3 socks for 3 chromosomes. If you don't normally wear socks then wear them. **AND WHY STOP AT SOCKS?** Wear clothing with the LOTS OF SOCKS, or other brightly coloured clothing if you like. The choice is yours, but we ask you to join us in wearing something which people will ask you about so that you can tell them all about WDSD. On 21 March 2014, wear LOTS OF SOCKS and invite all your friends, family and colleagues to do the same.



На 21ви март 2014, облечете шарени чорапи и поканете ги пријателите, колегите и семејството да го сторат истото и да учествуваат на сите наши настани



Во Ист Свет Живееме!

Programme

17 & 18 March,
Monday and Tuesday
12:00-17:00

Placing posters around town

19 March, Wednesday
11:00 - 11:45
16:30 - 18:00

Press Conference (Kinoteka)
Arts & Crafts

20 March, Thursday
12:00 - 12:30

Come one, Come all!!!
Support Walk
(from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy to City Square)
Get together on the Square

21 March, Friday
17:00 - 17:30

Come one, Come all!!!
Opening of the Film Festival and Photo Exhibition, Introducing our parton Iskra Veterova,
Certificates of Appreciation
Screening of films and videos
Debate (moderated by Živkica Kalenikova)

17:30 - 18:30
18:30 - 19:15

22 March, Saturday
17:00 - 18:50
18:50 - 19:15

Come one, Come all!!!
Screening of three films
Open Debate

Од 18 - 22 март ќе бидеме во Драмски театар пред претставите, дојдете посетете не



www.downsyndrome.mk

downsyndrome.mk@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Down-Syndrome-Center-Macedonia/584332424938124?ref=hl>

Swimming and Water polo Club

Orion



GOALS

- To increase the interest for the water sports, especially swimming and water polo between the children and youth;
- To introduce the children to the basics in swimming, water polo and the need for sport through fun, play and friendship;
- Creation and investment in young athletes as part of the Macedonian swimming and water polo team.
- Raising awareness of a healthy lifestyle, sport and active recreation;



TIME TABLE ON OLYMPIC SWIMMING-CENTER:

From Tuesday to Saturday from 18 pm and from 19 pm-swimming schools and training.

Wednesday and Friday from 20 pm and Sunday from 19 pm-swimming for adults.

WE REALIZE

- Swimming School for children from 4 - 16 years;
- Professional training for athletes in all categories;
- Swimming for adults- active recreation with coaching supervision;
- Water polo school- children/swimmers from 6-16 years;
- Traditional ORION international swimming meeting;
- Special program for working with children with disabilities;
- Summer and winter camps;
- Regular tips for leading a healthy lifestyle and a healthy diet;
- Additional organized recreation: hiking, mountaineering, cycling, summer and winter camps, visit to other sports (exchange with clubs) etc.

PROFESSIONAL TEAM

Teodora Raptis, Zorica Velkovska, Julija Vladimirova, Jane Karajosanosov and Filip Velkovski.

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Flora and Fauna of the Pelister National Park



Brown Bear -
Ursus Arctos

The flora of the National Park Pelister, with its abundance, diversity and colorfulness is one of the major values of the biological diversity on this mountain, and attracts the attention of the visitors and of those in love with one of the oldest and most beautiful national parks in Republic of Macedonia.

The distinguished German phytogeographer August Grisebach was the first botanist to visit this mountain in 1839 and describe several new indigenous species. In his well-known study *Spicilegium Florae Rumelicae et Bithynicae* (1843-44) he for the first time presented floristic data on Mount Pelister and, more generally, on the territory of Macedonia. Among



Pelister's Shaffron - *Chorus pelistericus*

Balkan Lynx - *Lynx lynx martino*

the indigenous species, of a particular significance is the Macedonian pine tree molika (*Pinus pence Grisebach*), which is key to the maintaining of biodiversity in the height range between 700 and 2200 metres, and which is the flora “trademark” of Pelister.

The population of the higher-order plants (i.e. excluding the mosses) of the Pelister National Park comprises over 1050 species. Most common are the blooming plants with more than 900 species, of which at least fifteen were scientifically described for the first time after being discovered on Pelister. *Alchemilla persiterica*, *Dianthus myrtinervius*, *Crocus pelistericus*, and *Sempervivium octopodes* are local endemic or subendemic species. This mountain is also a classic location for the foll

Mounatin violet - *Viola eximia*



Pelister Beetles - *Cychrus attenuatus*



Pelister Stonefly - *Nemoura peristeri*



Green buxbaumia - *Buxbaumia viridis*

owing plants: *Centaurea deustiformis*, *Festuca peristereae*, *Pedicularis orthantha*, *Pinus peuce*, *Ranunculus psilostachys*, *Scorzonera purpurea subsp. peristerica*, *Sedum erythraeum*, *Sempervivum marmoreum*, *Silene ventricosa*, *Viola velutina*, and *Viola orphanidis*.

The most striking feature of the Pelister fauna is its rich diversity. Regarding invertebrates, the small glacial lake *Malo Ezero* possesses an abundant population of the fairy shrimp (*Chirocephalus diaphanus carinatus*), a Balkan relict-endemic species. Present exclusively within the large glacial lake *Golemo Ezero*, the amphipod shrimp (*Niphragus pancici peristericus*) is a Pelister endemic taxon so far only recorded in this lake. The harpacticoid (*Arcticocampus macedonicus*), another Pelister endemic species, is present both in the *Golemo* and

Malo Lakes. Two relict-endemic ostracod species (*Iliodromus peristericus* and *Eucypris diebeli*) live in the spring waters at elevations between 1,600 and 2,200 m.

Other relict and endemic species include the Pelister Stonefly (*Nemoura peristeri*), the Pelister Myriapod (*Brachydesmus peristerensis*), several beetles (*Alpaeus macedonica*, *Cychrus attenuatus peristericus*, *Duvaliotes peristericus*, *Platyduvalius macedonicus*, *Trechus hajeki*), the Pelister Noctuid Moth (*Hadena clara macedonica*) and two small moths (*Scythris crypta* and *Scythris similis*). Among the fish species, there are the Pelagonian trout (*Salmo pelagonicus*) and Pelister trout (*Salmo peristericus*). Of the remaining vertebrate groups, there are 10 amphibian species, 15 lizard species, 91 bird species and 35 mammal species.



Vinka Sazdova was born on August 10th, 1956. She has graduated from the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sts Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. She has worked as a journalist for the culture desks of the daily newspapers *Vecer* and *Republika*. She has also worked in the publishing houses "Kultura" and "ZUMPRES".

Vinka Sazdova is the founder of "TRI Publishing Centre", where she works as the editor-in-chief.

She is the author of the novels *The Last Tea* (2009), *Fields of Wild Daffodils* (2011) and *Happiness Does Come Sometimes* (2013). *The Last Tea*, the excerpt from which we are publishing in this edition, was translated into English, Serbian, Croatian and Bulgarian, and is available from TRI bookstore in GTC.

In 2013 she received the *Most-Read Author Award* presented by the St. Clement of Ohrid National and University Library, Skopje.

Excerpt from the novel "The Last Tea"

Prologue

At a crossroads in my life, I destroyed my Indian diary in an attempt to do away with the past. As a matter of fact, I destroyed a lot of things then, come to think of it. Letters, notes, innumerable moments captured in words, in the empty spaces between the words. Yes, I can well remember how, elated by the new life bursting out before me, I had decided to do away with memories. I said to myself: All right, look ahead. One doesn't live off memories. Let all the ballast of the past go, get rid of it, of all the notions you have had of yourself and your own life.

Only much later did I realize that by getting rid of the ballast of memories I'd destroyed the most precious part of myself. I had cast into oblivion my quest

for the real me, I had given up my dreams, my longings, my comings and goings. And I wouldn't have remembered having destroyed the diary of my farthest spiritual journey had I not, one day many years later, suddenly realized after searching the same drawer for days, that it was not there. The notebook with its violet plastic cover was gone, the number of the flight that took me to India was gone, the messages from my loved ones were gone, as were the traces of tears smearing the writing on them.

"It's impossible," a part of me says. The part that is always hoping and believing in miracles and happy endings.

"It isn't," says the other me. The spiteful, ironic nihilist. And even adds, arrogantly, "Don't pretend you don't remember that you tossed it into the dustbin. I know very well that India was not a bright point in your life. How many people knew you'd

gone there? You hid it from everybody. And you hid the real motive for that Indian adventure even from yourself!"

And while the two of them were quarrelling, I was turning the house upside down. Looking for it over and over again. Not giving up. Hoping. But no, it was not there... not there.

"So, it wasn't supposed to be here," I say to myself several days later, as my despair and my hope began to fade. "Every why has got its because. If you'd found it, you'd just have read it through and that would've been that. You'd have locked it back in the drawer. As it is, you have a chance to bring that world back to life once more, within yourself. Let your memories fly out like a flock of swallows in the spring wind. What once was will be again. Only what no longer lives in our memories is truly lost."

And so... A month passed, then two, and the diary never emerged in the only place where I was looking for it: the third, lowest drawer of my desk. I decided to forget all about it. To forget India, and myself in that strange episode of my life.

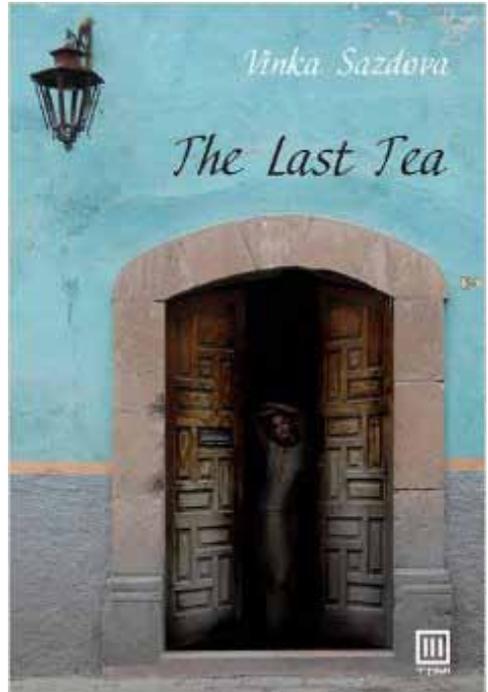
But nothing gets forgotten. Least of all what one wishes had never happened. Everything is remembered. All the words you've uttered, heard, failed to say. Everything you've seen and dreamed. Everything that's happened to you or that, for reasons known only to yourself, you have never given a chance to happen to you.

Just when I decided to forget all about it, my India began to surge out of me. Like uninvited guests the sights, sounds, and smells began to visit me. An entire story that I was not quite certain had happened then and there and in precisely that way. Had it really happened? I don't know, but I do know that it's truer than the truth. Than life, than death. Than love.

Death! Ah, yes! I left in order to come face to face with it. To grow to love it, just as I would grow to love a mysterious lover in the night. Silently, noiselessly, namelessly. And accepting it I fell in love with life.

* * *

I'm standing in front of the ashram, facing a big wooden gate inscribed with the message: Only truth exists. I knock. Nobody opens. And once again there's a



flock of beggars around me, pulling at my arms and clothes so powerfully I think they'll tear me apart. I sink into the din they make, into their grasping hands. They're like a pack of black ravens. Black, hungry, avaricious. Will this door never open? Will nobody save me? I don't know how to deal with so much despair around me and inside me.

Did I really have to come all this way to confirm to myself that my life is nothing but standing in front of closed doors?

* * *

Only one door has always been open to me. My grandma's door.

Every summer she meets me seated on the rocks under the old acacia. And I fall into the embrace of her arms and the scent of the blossoming tree.

Love flutters in the silence. Everything is always the same.

"Hello love," she says. "I've been waiting for you all day."

I sit beside her on the rocks and holding her dry, withered hand tell her the news of the city. While I speak she asks no questions. She silently takes

in each of my words. As if striving to fill the emptiness dug out in her by the absence of her loved ones. She listens to me carefully, so carefully that she seems to have stopped breathing, for fear she might break the silence around us.

"And you, grandma, how are you? What's new?" I ask her when I've finished

with the tales of the town.

"Oh, love, what news can there be at my age? The years have buried me. My body weighs me down, as if I was carrying a mountain on my back. Pain's easy, when it hurts I can stand it, I know it will pass somehow. But old age is the greatest painless pain. It's hard to stand.

From Reviews of *The Last Tea*

... the novel is exceptionally succulent, rich and attractive. Its abundance of points of reference and its resolution, its redolence, colours, sounds, sensations – literally bring India into your room. The novel has a strong referential potential and is a kind of neo-realism of an almost cinematographic or video type. It brings before your eyes the material poverty of India, but even more so the spiritual splendour of its philosophy and religions.

**Professor Venko Andonovski
Ph.D., writer and theoretician of
literature**

After reading Vinka Sazdova's novel *The Last Tea*, Confucius' saying, 'A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step,' might be paraphrased as: 'a journey to your inner world starts with a step towards the unknown'. Sazdova's novel is a fascinating work on discovering India as a country, culture and tradition, and also as an imaginary universe opening new horizons for spirituality. This journey takes the protagonist not only to the unknown, but also to the known and familiar

which has been forgotten and pushed aside – her past.

Goce Smilevski, writer

This is a novel where at times a single sentence is a big story that one stays with for a long time. For as long as it takes for it to connect with the personal story of the one reading it.

It is compassionate. Affectionate. Gentle and firm. Softness that speaks of rough aches and truths, showing how they can heal and transform themselves into serenity.

**Jagoda Mihajlovska-Georgieva,
writer**

At first sight a novel about an unexpected travel experience, a journey to India, *The Last Tea* is a book about a continuing and painful dialogue with oneself and one's multiplied faces. It is a novel about the quest for home and about the creation, the discovery of the home outside material and geographical determinants.

**Prof. Elizabeta Sheleva, Ph.D.,
literary critic**

Three Generations of Macedonian Painters



Ilija Penushliski



Miroslav Masin



Petar Mazev



Gligor Chemerski



Mensur Bojda

Opened in October 2007, GRAL was conceived as an elite gallery showcasing the works of the narrow circle of the best contemporary Macedonian painters. Alongside the works of the greats such as Nikola Martinovski, Lazar Licenoski, Dimitar Pandilov, Petar Mazev and Borislav Traikovski, we present the works of the masters at the pinnacle of their career, such as Gligor Cemerski and Ilco Penushliski.

Of the middle generation of artists, GRAL

presents Mirko Viusikj, Miro Masin, Zaneta Veljanovska – Zani, Emil Sulajkovski, Atanas Botev, and of the young generation here are Vlatko Simeonov, Mensur Bojda, Antoniot Arangelovic, Goce Trajkovski and Antonio Janevski.

While presenting the top artists from various generations, GRAL Gallery successfully presents all art disciplines: painting, sculpture, and graphic art. We are especially proud to present high quality reproductions of world art from



Rubens Korubin



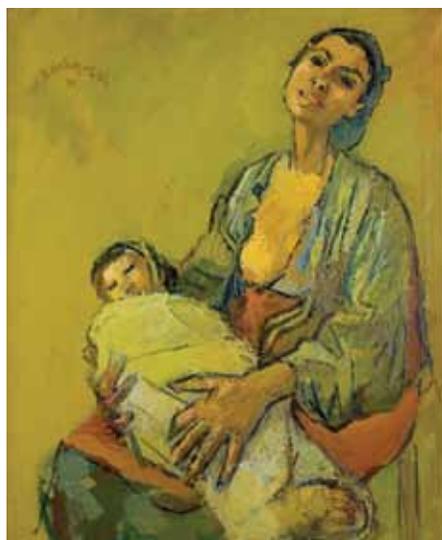
Vlatko Simeonov



Emil Shuljakovski



Zaneta Gelevska-Veljanoska



Nikola Martinoski

all eras. This collection was met with great interest of the art aficionados, and is therefore constantly enlarged and enriched. Professional artistic framing and restoration of paintings is another important part of our expertise completing the image of the GRAL Gallery as an art authority in the country.

Our latest group exhibition held in December 2013 – January 2014 was dedicated to Nikola Martinoski, Petar Mazev, Gligor Cemerski, Ilija Penusliski, Rubens Korubin, Miro Masin, Zani, Emil

Sulajkovski, Vlatko Simeonov and Mensur Bojda.

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