

## The site of “Mrdaja” – Star Dojran, having a touristic function in The Republic of Macedonia

Tanja Angelkova Petkova, Faculty of Tourism and Business logistic, Gevgelija; University of Goce Delcev - Shtip, Republic of Macedonia

e-mail: [tanja.angelkova@ugd.edu.mk](mailto:tanja.angelkova@ugd.edu.mk)

Nikola V. Dimitrov, Faculty of Tourism and Business logistic, Gevgelija; University of Goce Delcev - Shtip, Republic of Macedonia

e-mail: [nikola.dimitrov@ugd.edu.mk](mailto:nikola.dimitrov@ugd.edu.mk)

Aleksandar Karakabakov, National institution Museum of Gevgelija; Republic of Macedonia, e-mail: [a.karakabakov@yahoo.com](mailto:a.karakabakov@yahoo.com)

### Abstract.

The subject of this research is a ceramic material from the site of "Mrdaja" in Star Dojran, Republic of Macedonia. The material is protective and systematic archaeological research work at this site from 2012 and 2013. By observing the ceramic material, according to a predetermined program, the research will cover a thematic description, a technique analysis (roasting technology and baking stages and a technique of shaping and processing ceramics), analyzing and detecting the causes of the condition (type and degree of impaired), visual (under magnifying glass or microscope) and physical and chemical analysis of samples and making digital photo documentation. The purpose of the conservation research is the preparation of a project for the conservation and restoration of ceramic material. The research works will enable the determination, precision of the chronology, obtaining new data and a clearer picture of the material from this important site and until now the only pile settlement on the shores of Dojran Lake.

**Keywords:** Cultural Heritage, Conservation, Restoration, Tourism, Tourist Destination.

### Introduction

In 2012, at the location of the autocamp of "Mrdaja", owned by the Ministry of defense of the Republic of Macedonia, during the excavation of earthworks, the remains of a cultural heritage were discovered. With the undertaken protective archaeological researches, which continued in 2013, it was concluded that in fact it is a pile settlement from the late Bronze Age, the first of its kind on the shore of Lake Dojran. With these researches, a number of findings of ceramics, bronze, stone, flint and bone were discovered.

In addition to the damage and fragmentation of ceramics, it has been found that many of the fragments have close interconnected stylistic features and belong to the same or similar vessels in shape and size. A more precise description of their shape and dimensions will be made possible during the implementation of conservation and restoration.

This project will cover ceramic items that, with conservation and restoration and their full processing, will provide a clearer and complete picture of this important site as well as the cultural period as a whole. In the future, by valorizing it, it would be a tourist destination that would enable tourists and visitors to get an extraordinary opportunity to experience time travel. However, there is a cultural heritage that we should proudly show to the world, because it also has its own beauty, history, and story. Maybe we should only update our story in the function of cultural tourism!

### Types of cultural heritage for the needs of tourism

This paper will cover the classification of cultural heritage in terms of cultural tourism, in order to obtain a basic picture of the different categories of cultural heritage, i.e. we will analyze and compare several archaeological sites in the country and abroad that are engines in cultural tourism, for the purpose at mapping the cultural heritage in the municipality of Dojran which will be the target of tourist valorization.

Culture is one of the valid instruments of cooperation and is a coupling force for the development of tourism. The historical - cultural heritage and tourist values in a region are an important prerequisite for the development of cultural tourism. The place of cultural tourism is especially important because if we want our country to become a cultural and tourist destination, we must affirm the cultural treasures that the Republic of Macedonia possesses.

At a conference held in Paris, attended by UNESCO member states from 17<sup>th</sup> October to 21<sup>st</sup> November 1972, a decision was made to consider cultural heritage (UNESCO):

Places: Human's actions or a combination of works of nature and human, and areas including archaeological sites that is of exceptional universal value from a historical, ethnographic or anthropological point of view.

At the same meeting, each member state to this Convention recognizes that it has a duty to provide identification, valorization, legal protection, reserved protection zones, conservation, presentation and transfer of future generations of cultural and natural heritage referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 and are its territory, belong primarily to that state. (UNESCO).

We can say that regardless of whether the classification of cultural heritage is international or national, it is based on a number of characteristics that they possess and according to which the different types of cultures, as well as the various goals and needs, according to which special organizational schemes for appropriate treatment and availability of information are prepared.

Whether the cultural heritage can be transferred or not, it can be divided into **movable** and **immovable**. (According to Article 3 of the Law on Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Macedonia).

**Movable cultural heritage** includes mainly objects that are characterized by smaller dimensions and are not an integral part of the immovable cultural heritage. That is precisely the reason that allows them to be transferred from one place to another, from the place where they will be found to the place where they will be. In a new context, which is called museological, they are further treated as objects of the museum.

Because of the nature of the movable cultural heritage that can be transferred from one place to another, through museums it can be protected as individually good or as a collection and be a subject to tourist popularization and promotion.

Unlike movable objects of heritage that are characterized by their portability and ability to transfer from one place to another, **the immovable cultural heritage** (represented by cultural monuments) is opposite to them tied to the ground, therefore the spatial component plays a completely different role .

The space for immovable heritage is a permanent location on which it is located, unlike movable objects, for which space is the only place on which the inheritance is stored for a certain period of time. It is precisely the intolerance of the immovable cultural heritage that enables it to be protected and be subject to tourist valorization. It cannot be transferred to another space, thus enabling data protection for its origin, while at the same time it can perform a certain function.

The protection of the immovable cultural heritage is accomplished by its obligatory inclusion in the spatial and urban plans and in the plans and programs for protection of the environment and nature, as well as with its treatment as a factor of sustainable economic and social development, especially in the direction of the development of cultural tourism, housing, specific occupations and education.

Whether it's movable or immovable, the primary goal of immediate protection is to preserve the cultural heritage in its original state. "Direct protection" means the procedures or methods of conservation, restoration, reconstruction, rehabilitation, adaptation, prevention and any other kind of direct intervention of protected goods undertaken in the public interest.

With the preparation of the project for conservation and restoration of ceramic material, the research works will enable the determination, precise chronology, obtaining new data and a clearer picture of the material from this important site and thus the only pile settlement on the shores of Dojran Lake.

In addition to this first pile of settlements on the shores of Dojran Lake, several such pile-up settlements in Macedonia were discovered on the shore of the Ohrid Lake: the Bay of Bones, the site Ploca Michovgrad, near the village of Peshtani, the sites: the Bay of Bombs and the Bay of Pigs near the village of Trpeica, the site Penelopa in the city of Ohrid, the site Usta of the Drim in Struga and the site Vrbnjak near the village of Kalishte, Struga.

In the neighborhood, in the Republic of Albania, the same pile settlement on the lake Malich near Korcha and in the Republic of Greece was discovered near the village of Dupyak on the Kostur Lake.

On the localities of the Bay of Bones on the shores of Ohrid Lake in Macedonia and the village of Dupyak on the shore of the Kostur Lake in the Republic of Greece, reconstructions of several dwellings in the pile settlements were made with an appropriate inventory of them which represent a tourist attraction for visual experience of the manner and conditions of living of inhabitants of these pile-dwelling settlements in the bronze period. With the continuation of archaeological research at the site of Mrdaja and obtaining satisfactory exploration surfaces, it is possible in the future that such a reconstruction of the pile-dwelling should be done on the shores of Dojran Lake, which would extend the tourist offer of the city of Dojran.

Valorization, i.e. evaluation, is included in the basic factors of social life. Cultural heritage is an important component in the development of tourism and it should be a subject to a special regime of protection if we want to realize tourist valorization of cultural resources. Namely, the cultural values in the tourist offer of a certain space should be understood not only as objects of the past with a special regime of protection, but also as places where tourists should be welcomed and where they will feel comfortable. From this comes the importance of the

valorization of cultural values for which it is necessary to conduct extensive research, present and promote the real values.

The process of valorization is nevertheless the most important precondition for the successful incorporation of the pile settlement on the Shore of Dojran Lake in the tourist offer complex. In order to successfully incorporate the cultural heritage in the tourist offer, it is necessary to develop and adopt modern methods of valorization from the aspect of its proper integration into the tourist offer of the municipality of Dojran and the region.

Incorporation of cultural heritage goes through four phases:

- 1. Precise determination of the subject of analysis;**
- 2. Phase of scientific valorization;**
- 3. Stage of potential tourist value;**
- 4. Tourist valorization process.**

In the first phase, **precisely determining the subject of analysis**, the most significant part in this phase is the inventory, collection and classification of the entire documentation for the object. This procedure is carried out by specialized protection institutes, but other experts can be engaged as needed.

Second phase, **scientific valorization of the monument of culture**. The basic axioms of scientific valorization are: professional expertise, recognition of the integral values of the pile-up settlement in its entirety and in all layers of its development, including today's; and the general value or complex perception of a series of individual values - utilitarian, aesthetic, cultural - historical values, values of old age and rarity, originality, educational, space - ambient, material and other values. The results obtained from the scientific valorization of the monument of culture are crossed with certain criteria important for its use for tourist activities:

- The location of the settlement itself, in wider spatial constellations, in relation to an already existing, established or envisaged tourist region, zone or place, equipped with tourist equipment (hotels, restaurants, etc.);
- Access, infrastructure connectivity, tourist equipment and settlements;
- Distance from the tourist market / global tourist demand, with two alternatives - international value of the building, the complex or the historical core; and buildings with more modest values that do not have an independent attractive tourist force;
- Restrictive or negative factors, inadequate functions in the immediate environment that disturb the environment; economically degraded immediate surroundings; imbalance in the demographic and social structure of the environment; disturbed ecological balance; near military facilities, etc.

Third stage, **potential tourist value of the monument of culture**. Social valorization is an attitude and an obligation that the social community accepts for the protection of areas and objects with cultural heritage. Verification, in fact, means determining measures and activities, declaring a category of an object, extending protection measures, varying degrees of intervention, etc.

The fourth phase, a **process of tourist valorization of cultural heritage**, consists of time and space alignment of: the absolute tourist value of the cultural monument; an integral tourist offer at the place and region; predicted targeted tourist demand towards the cultural monument. It is undisputed that culture is an important part in the attractiveness and competitiveness of the tourist destination (Dimitrov, 2010).

By obtaining satisfactory exploration surfaces, the collection and classification of the entire documentation for the pile settlement on the shores of Lake Dojran is proceeding to a complete reconstruction or method of authentic renewal of the protected good that is largely destroyed or whose structural and other parts are dilapidated in form and appearance they had.

Revitalization is a procedure and method of returning life to the monuments and old buildings in the composition of the memorial units, either by retaining or restoring the original or some of the former functions, either by giving a new function that is consistent with their nature and meaning and the nature of the environment in which they are located.

Such a procedure is a factor of sustainable economic and social development, especially in the direction of the development of cultural tourism, specific occupations and education, mutually important both for the tourist and cultural sector.

Creating effective co-operation between the tourism and cultural sectors is also a challenge, primarily as a result of their different goals. Namely, the goals of the tourism sector are primarily commercial motives, while the cultural sector often has non-profit goals. We can conclude that tourism and culture are becoming more closely connected, their role in the attractiveness of a particular region and increasing its competitiveness becomes more and more clear. Culture in all its forms is becoming more prominent in the offer and promotion of the tourist destination in a large number of countries.

**Preparation and establishment of the project program for ceramic material from the site of "Mrdaja",  
Star Dojran**

Out of the activities undertaken under the Conservation research program, an assessment was made of the scope of conservation interventions. The established destructiveness, perceived from the sealed state of ceramics, requires urgent stabilization of the material. According to the obtained results, the basic guidelines for further conservation and restoration efforts on the ceramic material are determined. Further activities will be carried out on the basis of conservation principles, using appropriate materials, stabilization, interventions using reversible materials, non-destructive methods and techniques for non-infringement of the authenticity of the items themselves. During the conservation process, only the necessary reverse (reversible) interventions should be performed, which must not adversely affect the future of the subject. The ultimate goal is the appropriate presentation of the exhibits.

The way and methods for the processing of ceramic material with the stated interventions are determined:

1. Conservation of ceramics (cleaning, selection, consolidation and gluing);
2. Restoration of ceramics – recompressing;
3. Reconstruction.

### **Research results**

The discovered ceramic material from these two research campaigns is quite fragmented, with delusions and damage caused by the environment in which they were found, that is, bottom of the lake, where the water from the wet soil acted destructively on the ceramics and capillary structure of its structure. The discovered forms that can be identified in this degree of preservation as well as fragmented vessels are confirmed by the already famous repertoire of ceramic vessels typical of the late Bronze Age and the beginning of the transition period.

They are represented by glasses of different sizes and vertical handles that overhang the mouth of the vessel, glasses with sloping neck, cups with one or two vertical handles, amphorae with larger dimensions and vertical or horizontal stomach handles from the dishes, matt painted and monochrome horseradish goblets, parts of pitos and larger packaging's, double dishes, puranoes and more. The bowls of the vessels largely overlap or are flat with the mouth and are circular or elliptical / rectangular cross-section. They are placed on a flat and ring-shaped or conical bottom. The dishes are handmade mostly of poorly cleansed clay. The decorating of the dishes is done with matt staining, engraving with or without anchoring and plastic accessories, and as ornaments are found hanging triangles, hatched and full, zigzag lines and more.

### **Analysis of the state of the ceramics in the site of "Mrdaja"**

On the surface of the ceramics, a small amount of soil and sand deposits can be detected. The entire ceramic material is fragmented in smaller or larger groups. This mechanical damage to objects is a consequence of their weak toughness. Also, there are visible irregularities in the manufacture, which are unfavorable to the strength of the objects. The clay mass itself is not purified, it contains a large amount of admixtures, which further exacerbates the degradation of the structure itself. The objects are baked at an insufficient temperature, resulting in insufficient strength of ceramics.

Hydroscope of ceramics additionally causes mechanical damage in the form of cracking, separation and decomposition. Visible changes in the upper surface layers of ceramics, which are separated, degraded, and with a tendency to peel at certain places. The water from the wet soil on the very site where the ceramics originated, acted distressively on the ceramics and capillary structure of its structure.

The water itself from the earth contains soluble salts, which objects were standing in the ground in their interior. They crystallized in the pores (on the inside) and on the surface. In this way, under the influence of moisture the surface was clouded (dissolving ions) and the formation of surface deposits of calcium carbonate. Calcium carbonate occurs in the form of grains in the structure of ceramics as a result of poorly grounded and prepared clay (when the object is made). During the baking of the subject, calcium carbonate crossed into calcium oxide. After baking it absorbed moisture, increased its volume and formed in calcium hydroxide. Those salts have sprung to the surface in the form of crystals that have broken the surface and pigments. The ceramic material does not detect any damage and deformation from high temperatures.

### **Conclusion**

With the help of this paper, more general and special features are identified that define this ceramic material as a moving and pile-dwelling settlement on the shores of Dojran Lake as a real cultural good of general interest. Ceramic material is the most abundant finding in archaeological research because of its use and purpose in everyday life, as utilitarian items and of course in the making of cult plastic to meet the spiritual and religious needs of the population. After conservation and restoration interventions, objects such as museum exhibits will

be appropriately placed in the museum's depot. The material that is the subject of these researches, together with other material with the same or similar stylistic features, as a separate group, will be presented in the gallery in the future. A thematic exhibition and traveling exhibitions in the country and abroad can be realized. They will also be subject to professional and scientific processing with their appropriate publication and presentation of various scientific symposia and seminars.

Museum exhibits are movable objects or documents with archaeological, historical, ethnological, sociological, natural science, artistic, technical and other value. By presenting museum material to the public, the items themselves clarify the cultural and historical past, the natural, commercial and economic values of one area, as well as the spirit and "sensation" of the artistic achievements of the prehistoric population of this site. They, together with immovable cultural remains, provide data on the culture, the way of life for a society, its development and achievements. It can be freely stated that they themselves have an educational function.

Museum exhibits through museums are available to the wider public of both domestic and foreign tourists. By presenting and popularizing the exhibits themselves or publishing them, each individual can become acquainted with the cultural heritage and artistic wealth of certain people.

With the regime of revival of the pile settlement from the Bronze Age on the shore of Lake Dojran, the original, historical, urban and architectural artistic and aesthetic values will be preserved and will be provided for purpose-oriented training of the facility for use and input of new contents in accordance with the contemporary needs of the economic, tourist, cultural and other activities in the region of the municipality of Dojran.

#### **References:**

1. Dimitrov, N. (2010) Cultural Heritage University of "Goce Delchev" - Shtip: Authorized script, p.104-106;
2. Rujak, Z. (2014), Proceedings, Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments and Museum - Strumica, Preliminary results from the archaeological research of the palafite settlement in the Dojran Lake at the site of Mardaja from the transition period between the Bronze and the Iron Age, p. 27-39;
3. From the Documentary Department at the National Institution Museum of Gevgelija;
4. Photo gallery of systematic archaeological research at the site of Mrdaja, Star Dojran (2012, 2013). Taken on December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Available at <http://www.muzejgevgelija.mk/istrazuvanja.htm>
5. Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia(2005) Law on protection of cultural heritage.Available at:  
[http://www.kultura.gov.mk/documents/Zakon\\_za\\_zastita\\_na\\_kulturnoto\\_nasledstvo.pdf](http://www.kultura.gov.mk/documents/Zakon_za_zastita_na_kulturnoto_nasledstvo.pdf)
6. UNESCO(1972) Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.Available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>
7. Tourist info about Bay of bones, Ohrid. Available at:  
<http://travel2macedonia.com.mk/tourist-attraction/bay-of-bones-museum-ohrid>
8. Lake pile settlement on the Kostur Lake, R. Greece. Available at:  
<http://www.unet.com.mk/ancient-macedonians-part2/spomenici8.htm>