

MUSEUM ARCHITECTURE AS A TOOL FOR A SENSE OF IDENTITY IN SKOPJE

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Abstract

Museum architecture is significant in conveying a city's identity since it represents the historical, cultural, and social context in which it is located. It is a combination of interactive duality between the exchange of scenarios, which are situations where existing and potential resources, signs, and symbols are controlled, transferred, and transformed by the identities that individuals use as their agents, and interaction systems, which are defined by a more abstract notion that includes the joining of flows and transformations of resources across time and situation into a synthetic whole as a social system.

Examining the architectural aspects of museums in Skopje, this study offered insight into the city's identity, both past and present. Due to multiple political and ideological influences throughout the years, Skopje has been defined as a battleground for the remodeling of the city's identity. My approach to applying a critical analytical technique is also promising since it allows for a comprehensive evaluation of the available material, the identification of potential biases, and the development of well-supported conclusions. Overall, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of Skopje's identity as well as to a larger discussion of the function of museum architecture in the portrayal and formation of identity patterns in the city.

Keywords: Museum architecture, Skopje identity, re-reading city identity, identity pattern

1 Introduction

Museums are among the best places to see the interplay of cultural and architectural surroundings in the context of the identity phenomenon. This contact might be seen as an expression of identity. As a result of the technology used, a patterned network can now be seen throughout the museum. Burke and Stets (Identity Theory, 2009) argued in their examination of several sorts of interaction that the museum is a combination of interactive duality. The first kind of scenario is known as an 'exchanging scenario,' and it is described as situations in which resources, signs, and symbols, both existent and potential, are controlled, exchanged, and altered by identities using humans as their agents' (Ibid., p. 106). Interaction systems are the second type of social system, and they are distinguished by "a more abstract notion comprising the joining of flows and transformations of resources across time and situation into some synthetic whole as a social system whose limits may not always be visible" (Ibid., p. 106). The museum, according to Volker Kirchberg (Kirchberg, 2007, p. 124), can function as an active agent of the cultural-architectural identity phenomenon if it acts as a symbol, an integrating point, an activity, a tool in urban planning and urban design, or an image of the city. The museum may accomplish all of these duties. In retrospect, Johann Georg Sulzer, a German theologian and philosopher, coined the word "museum" to describe the process of collecting artwork in his 1771 book, "Allgemeine Theorie der schoenen Kuenste" (Naredi-Rainer, 2004, p. 14). "To contemplate anything intently for a while, forgetting what is going on around you" (Hornby, 2000, p. 837) is the ancient Greek phrase meaning "to contemplate anything intently for a while, forgetting what is going on around you". In Greek mythology, the muses are the nine daughters of Zeus and the Titaness Mnemosyne (Memory). They have been available to artists, inspiring them to produce works deserving of the highest acclaim (Britannica, 2018). The first stage in establishing muse shrines is to preserve creative and scientific achievements (Curl & Wilson, 2016, pp. 508-509). A multitude of categories have arisen as a result of the nature of museum work. ICOM defines a museum as "a non-profit, permanent institution open to the public that acquires, conserves, investigates, transmits, and shows the tangible and intangible

history of mankind and its environment for education, study, and enjoyment" (Sandahl, 2018). The Museum Service Act of 1977 defines a museum as "a governmental or private non-profit organization or institution created permanently for primarily educational purposes" (Hein, 2000, p. 3). By being open to the public, accessible, and inclusive, museums encourage diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate in a responsible, professional, and community-engaged manner, offering a variety of chances for education, enjoyment, contemplation, and information sharing. On August 24, 2022, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and Extraordinary General Assembly endorsed a revised museum definition proposal with 92.41% (477), 23 (22), and 17 (23). The amended definition from the ICOM Museum is as follows: "A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution that studies, collects, preserves, interprets, and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage." "By being open to the public, accessible, and inclusive, museums promote diversity and sustainability." "They communicate and operate in an ethical, professional, and community-based manner, providing diverse experiences for education, pleasure, reflection, and information exchange" (ICOM, 2023). Meanwhile, the idea of identity as a social phenomenon (Gazevic & Maudus, 1974) is a major issue for anybody who lives in a multiethnic society, including the Republic of North Macedonia (RNM). The government's inaction is exacerbating an already dire situation on many fronts, including social, cultural, and economic ones. As a direct result of the current crisis, both internal relations inside the state and foreign ties with nations in the area are under strain. Attempts by the state's several administrative divisions to develop a single identity are having a detrimental influence on the state's diverse social and cultural mosaic, which is a result of the state's creation. This consolidation takes into consideration every aspect of each government entity's functioning as well as the decision-making process. The majority of institutions are jeopardized in some way, shape, or form as a result of unethical behavior inside government agencies, which lowers such organizations' core goal of serving the public. Because museums play such an important role in the investigation, exhibition, and curation of a broad range of identities, they were among the first to confront the danger of being used for political-state purposes. Many cultural artefacts are shown in museums across the globe, even though doing so does not add to museum visitors' ontological, psychological or developmental well-being (Hein, 2000) (Sandahl, 2018). According to Bacheva (Бачева, Михајлова, & Богоевски, 2015), a lack of transparency regarding the presence of a multi-socio-cultural civilization leads to unethical museum practices, which lead to low visitor numbers and a negative reputation for the museums themselves. The spread of this illness across the RNM's museums raises the likelihood of urban metastases. The role of museums in preserving the state's identity, on the one hand, and Skopje's moniker as the "world bastard" (Мијалковиќ & Урбанек, 2011), on the other, is a double-edged sword. The term may seem to be a criticism of the city, but what it truly accomplishes is to describe the situation for the assimilation of the city's true identity. This may also be found in the architecture of the museums in this city.

2 Methods

Analyzing the museum, its cultural context, and physical shape generates a feeling of continuity, which can be observed in the formation of the museum's identity in the area of Skopje. The architecture and content of museums determine their identity, but the complex interplay between these characteristics and the cultural and social surroundings in which they exist must also be considered. These influences include the local community's history, values, and beliefs, as well as national and worldwide cultural changes as well as political, administrative, and economic changes. These aspects impact the construction of a framework for sensing Skopje's identity via museums through the examination of the origin of Skopje's identity, the placement of museums in the context of the city, their classification, and the formation and development of museums.

3 Museum Architecture and Identity in Skopje

3.1 *The genesis of Skopje's identity*

Skopje is the capital and largest city of the RNM. It may be found near the Vardar River in northern Bulgaria. Skopje's rich history reflects the city's exposure to a diverse range of cultures. The oldest documented documents from the RNM region date from 7000–3500 B.C. due to a lack of archaeological excavation or an inaccessible topography. While data for the first dwellings in Skopje is divided into two situations,

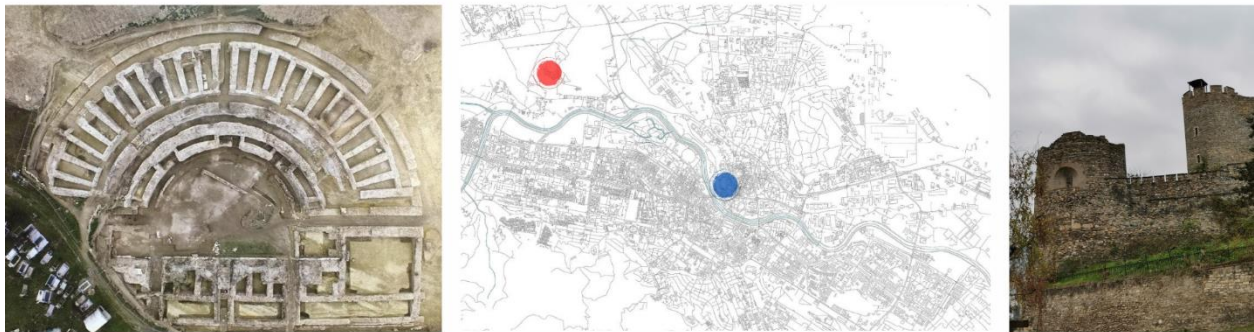


Figure 1- Location of the first scenario, Skopje fortress Kale, and location of the second scenario – Scupi

Based on Neolithic relics discovered at Skopje's fortress, Kale (Fig. 1), the first scenario contends that the land surrounding Skopje has been inhabited since 4000 BC. From the second century BC, Skopje was the capital of Daradnia (an Illyrian tribe whose descendants are Albanians (Mema, Shkupi, një histori ilire, 2016) (Mushat, 2002, p. 108). Details about life in this fortress are revealed through the original building layers that reach depths of up to 3 m, according to Apostol Keramidchiev's (Керамидчиев, 1967, p. 10) column in the daily newspaper "Nova Makedonija" on May 28, 1967, titled "The House of Skopje is a fortress, Kale, and not Scupi?" Skender Asani (Plani urbanistik i Kalesë së Shkupit gjatë shekullit XIX, sipas arkivit të Stambollit, 2012) claims that partial archaeological excavations in the Kale in 1953, 1967, and 2007–2011 unearthed evidence conclusively proving that this community dates from the Late Bronze Age, encompassing the extended prehistoric and mediaeval centuries (Illyrian, Byzantine, Bulgarian, Serbian, and Ottoman). The suspension of full study of the Kale stronghold is motivated by ideological and political considerations rather than economic considerations. The second scenario, Scupi (Fig. 1), is located at the crossroads of two major transversal Balkan routes, one connecting the Danube to the Aegean via the Moravian-Vardar valley and the other connecting the Adriatic to the Black Sea via a west-to-east route. The city quickly grew from a rural outpost to a bustling Roman metropolis, complete with civic and religious institutions tailored to the region's needs and culture (Јованова, 2008). The Scupi were converted into a military encampment when the Romans arrived on the eve of the first century AD. When an earthquake struck in 6 A.D., Emperor Justian I took advantage of the opportunity to build a shrine to Scupi (Pirraku, 1994, pp. 97-98). Aside from his efforts to restore Scupi, he is best known for his support of Great Constantine, the Illyrian Emperor of Rome. Skopje's indigenous inhabitants will spread their Christian faith to the region's other invaders, particularly the Slavs. Because Albanians are descended from the Illyrians, the first scenario sheds light on their legitimacy in this country as well as the identity of Skopje, and as a result, the stronghold is an unspoiled archaeological site. Out of fear, state political systems prevent this region from shaking,' so that it is not obvious that the people who lived here before the Albanians did are their ancestors. At the same time, this omission risks exposing any other truth that may be hidden within this fortress. Nonetheless, by ignoring this knowledge, we risk exposing any other buried facts in this stronghold. Only Scupi was recognized in publications and public opinion as crucial to Skopje's identity, not because of its strategic location, architectural value, or any other obvious truth, but because of its role in promoting Christianity, which fulfilled state ideology. As a result of the reconfiguration of state political systems, the people of RNM now believe that Albanians are only Muslims and Macedonian Slavs are only Eastern Orthodox Christians. And, in this opinion, whichever religion was first spread is autochthonous. It

may appear difficult to communicate such a thought, but it is all too common in our country. However, while completing an investment at the Scupi, Karposh site in early February 2023, a private investor discovered two ancient grave plaques with the inscription "Dardanus" (Mema, Pillaka Dardane e Shkupit. Çfarë fshihet? - Gjurmë Shqiptare, 2023). The discovery was made public by a citizen, not the state, who shared a photo of the two plaques on social media. When this information went viral on social media, the administration felt compelled to inform the public. The fate of these plates, however, ended at the warehouse of the "Kurshumli Ann" building, where the journalist Marin Mema's video recording confirms the loss of additional plates with the inscription "Dardanus" (Mema, KU U ZHDUKËN 7 PLLAKAT DARDANE NË MAQEDONI? - Gjurmë Shqiptare, 2023 a). Aside from the losses and data changes, the reckless abandonment of these artefacts is regrettable.

3.2 Location of Skopje's museums in comparison to the city's two identity scanners

Skopje's museum buildings are located in and around the downtown area, in line with the city's general plan (Fig. 2A). Most museums will be located on a higher level if the Vardar River is employed as a visual barrier (Fig. 2B). According to the findings of an axial examination of museum sites in the city, the short axis characterizes more museum places than the long axis (Fig. 2C).



A-Location of the museums

B-Skopje Museum's location in relation to the Vardar River

C- The placement of Skopje's museums is associated with their axial visibility.

D- Location of museums in Skopje in correlation with the city center

Figure 2- Location of Skopje's museums in comparison to the city

Skopje's museums have grown in importance as a consequence of the city's ongoing cultural and economic progress. A grid of regular geometric shapes (squares, circles, and rectangles) or any combination of these stable patterns is typically used to create museum buildings (Fig. 2 D). The identical arrangement may be observed before, during, and after the earthquake, but in completely different circumstances. Museum contextualism absorbs and returns to the built environment, modifying or improving the pre-existing character of the site. Given that the historic city shows social and cultural layers from the Dardanian era through the time of Bulgarian and Serbian control, the extant museums in this region are often adaptations of defunct buildings, with a strong emphasis on the Ottoman period. These museum constructions were meticulously built to blend in with their natural settings. Outside of Skopje's historical district, before the RNM, museum buildings were often communist or brutalist in design. However, museums erected after the RNM's establishment are utterly divorced from their original context, reflecting the state's total collapse.

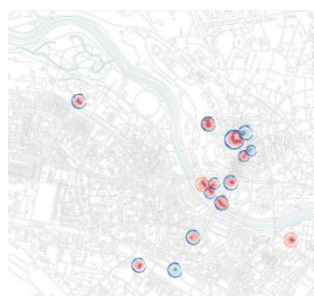
3.2 Categorization of museums in Skopje

There are two types of museums in Skopje, distinguished by their legal standing (Fig.3 A): National museums (the Museum of Contemporary Art (Skopje), Museum of Macedonia, The Macedonian Museum of Natural History, National Gallery (Daut pasha Hammam, Chifte Hammam, Mala Stanica and Memorial House of Lazar Lichenovski (It is in the process of documentation)), Numismatic museum of the National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia, Military Museum, Museum of National Struggle, Memorial

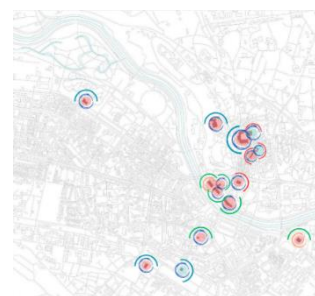
House of Mother Teresa, Archaeological Museum of the Republic of North Macedonia, Holocaust Memorial Centre of the Jewish of Macedonia and Museum of National Theatre), and Local museums (the Museum of the City of Skopje, the Museum of the Old Skopje Bazaar, the Memorial Museum of the PC of CPY for Macedonia, the Memorial Room of the 12th Macedonian Skopje Assault Brigade in the village of Kolicane, the Memorial Museum of the Illegal Weapons Workshop during the National Liberation War (1941–1944), and the Kurshumli Inn). According to the calcification of museum architecture, the buildings are categorized into (Fig. 3 B): building ((Museum of Contemporary Art (Skopje), Museum of Macedonia, The Macedonian Museum of Natural History, National Gallery (Daut pasha Hammam, Chifte Hammam, Mala Stanica and Museum of Lazar Lichenovski (It is in the process of documentation)), Museum of national Struggle, Memorial House of Mother Teresa, Archaeological Museum of the Republic of North Macedonia, Holocaust Memorial Centre of the Jewish of Macedonia, Museum of the City of Skopje, and Kurshumli Inn)), Museum room ((Numismatic Museum of the National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia, Military Museum, Museum of National Theatre, Museum of the Old Skopje Bazaar, Memorial Museum of PC of CPY for Macedonia, Memorial room of the 12th Macedonian Skopje Assault Brigade in the village of Kolicane, and Memorial Museum of the Illegal Weapons Workshop during the National Liberation War (1941–1944))).



A- Museums with National Institution status, and Museums with City Institution status



B- Building Museum, and Room museums



C- The historical buildings adapted in the museum, the existing buildings from the post-earthquake period, and the new buildings built after the formation of the state of Macedonia

Figure 3- Categorization of museums in Skopje

Museums are divided into a third category (shown in Fig. 3 C) based on the following criteria: The historical buildings adapted in the museum ((National Gallery (Daut pasha Hammam, Chifte Hammam, Mala Stanica and Museum of Lazar Lichenovski (It is in the process of documentation)), Museum of the City of Skopje, Museum of the Old Skopje Bazaar, Memorial Museum of PC of CPY for Macedonia, Memorial room of the 12th Macedonian Skopje Assault Brigade in the village of Kolicane, Memorial Museum of the Illegal Weapons Workshop during the National Liberation War (1941-1944), and Kurshumli Inn)), the existing buildings from the post-earthquake period ((Museum of Contemporary Art (Skopje), Museum of Macedonia, The Macedonian Museum of Natural History, Numismatic Museum of the National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia, and Military Museum)) and new buildings were built after the formation of the state of RNM ((Museum of national Struggle, Memorial House of Mother Teresa, Archeological Museum of the Republic of North Macedonia, and Holocaust Memorial Center of the Jewish of Macedonia and Museum of National Theater)).

3.3 Museum establishment and operation in Skopje

Skopje avoided extensive archaeological research to illustrate its genuine character by deferring the age of collecting for "musealia" (International Council of Museums, 2010, pp. 61-64) a social act until the institutionalization of churches. The origins of museums in Skopje and the region now served by the RNM can be traced back to the Middle Ages, when the "musealization" (Ibid., pp. 51-52) of individual structures

reflected the ethos of their invaders, eventually leading to the establishment of museums as distinct institutions (Миљковиќ, 1982).

3.3.1 *First phase: before the earthquake 1963*

The Commercial-Industrial Museum in Skopje first opened its doors in 1907, but it closed the following year (Ibid.). After a six-year delay, the Serbian invaders resorted to museum exhibitions to integrate the RNM, most notably in Skopje. Their ambitions resulted in the foundation of the National Museum of Skopje in 1914. The museums and artefacts studied, according to Zaharinka Bacheva, Branislava Mihajlova, and Krste Bogoeski, were promoted with a Serbian mask, with an emphasis on "that the task of institutions is to prove that Macedonia historically belongs to Serbia and that the Slavic-Macedonians are Serbs" (Бачева, Михајлова, & Богоевски, 2015, p. 7). The museums that arose during this period concentrated mostly on historical, archaeological, and anthropological research, under the notion that a falsehood given now would be recognized as fact in a few years. This method enabled the Kurshumli Inn to become the seat of the Museum of Southern Serbia (Миљковиќ, 1982), a historical and archaeological organization, in 1924. Over three years (1982–1983), the museum received new wing expansions focusing on biology, anthropology (anthropogeography), and religion (petroglyphs). Dr. Stanko Karaman's extensive research and collections during the age of fauna discovery in the province of Macedonia in 1926 were essential to the foundation of the RNM's Museum of Natural History (Природонаучен музеј на Македонија, 2001) (Fig. 4). Despite multiple relocations to less-than-ideal museum premises up until World War I, museum workers maintained their scholarly concentration. During World War I, the museum was integrated into the Imperial Natural History Museum of Sofia (Ibid., pp. 21–50). Due to the violence, the museum's treasures were evacuated to the countryside outside of Skopje, while some were moved to the museum in Sofia towards the end of the occupation (Миљковиќ, 1982). Even though the museums had been evacuated to different countries after the withdrawal of German and Bulgarian forces from the land where the RNM is presently situated, the research committee at the institution maintained its work (Desvallées & Mairesse, 2010). After WWII, the museum's many divisions started to release information, most notably the education and training department (Ibid.). Following the 1963 earthquake, the museum shifted its activities to three temporary barracks that were not code-compliant. As a result, Dr. Risto Grupchev supervised Trajko Dimitrov, the architect entrusted with planning and constructing the new museum building (Бачева, Михајлова, & Богоевски, 2015, pp. 28-31). The architect used the available area to create a museum that merges with the surrounding zoo and municipal park (Миљковиќ, 1982). The exhibition and gathering rooms have been expanded by two stories. A four-story administrative tower houses the museum's research facilities as well as some of its artefacts. The museum, zoo, and municipal park had been closed for some time as a consequence of institutional decentralization. The choice to divide entry prices between three distinct containers had a considerable impact on the number of visitors to the museum. The Serbian occupation used its religious authority to transform the church of "St. Mina" into a museum in 1934 (Миљковиќ, 1982) Because of its power, the church was able to seal its doors and reinterpret its artefacts and bibliographic materials, such as frescoes, books, icons, and clerical garb. The Serbs created and still oversee the National Museum of Skopje; therefore, it was only inevitable that the Bulgarian invaders would follow the same assimilation model. In 1941, the Museum of Southern Serbia gave its zoology collection to the Zoological Museum, which was overseen by the National Bank of Skopje (Ibid.). Many priceless artefacts were relocated from the Skopje Museum to the more prominent Sofia Museum. Skopje's National Museum reopened a year after World War II in 1945 with additional displays on the region's ethnography, archaeology, and medieval history. The SFRY government's Ministry of Culture resolved to reorganize the museums in 1949 (Бачева, Михајлова, & Богоевски, 2015), splitting the different parts of the major museums into separate organizations. The Ethnological Museum, Archaeological Museum, and Art Gallery became the National Museum.



Figure 4- Museum of Natural History of the RNM



Figure 5- Museum of the City of Skopje



Figure 6- Suli Inn

The Museum of the City of Skopje (Музеј на Град Скопје, 2011) was created in 1924 by the Kingdom of Serbia to preserve, analyze, and show artefacts from the city and its surroundings' rich cultural past. The museum's 1951 debut was made possible by the accumulation of materials from disciplines as varied as archaeology, history, art, ethnography, and architecture. Several mistakes occurred during the transportation of the museum's valuables, resulting in the loss or destruction of numerous precious pieces. This was done on purpose to ensure that the museum met the state's patriotic, political, and ideological criteria. It was planned to rehabilitate and adapt a substantial component of the railway station (МАРХ, n.d.) that partly survived the 1963 earthquake for the transfer of the Skopje City Museum in 1970 (Fig. 5). The commercial and high-rise residential buildings that surround it are threatening its structural integrity and causing aesthetic conflict in the urban landscape. Some interpret the strike as a symbol of Skopje's recovery after the 1963 earthquake, while others see it as a manifestation of the nation's multiethnic cleansing. From the viewpoint of today's architects, the same structure might represent either the persistence of architectural excellence or the neglect of the state. The 1,500 square metres of exhibition space (including temporary and permanent exhibitions, the latter of which was planned by Croatian architect Guka Kakuric), the 470 square meters of storage for museum artefacts, the 29 square meters of technical facilities (a photo-laboratory and a conservation and restoration laboratory), and the administrative departments are all in jeopardy (Музеј на Град Скопје, 2011, pp. 15-27). The Skopje City Museum also handles (Ibid.): The CPY Museum in Macedonia was demolished in 2007 when it was transferred to Chair, an Albanian-majority municipality, after municipal division. The Kolichan Cemetery in Skopje has many monuments, including one honoring the XIIth Macedonian Assault Brigade. During the National Liberation War, from 1941 to 1944, the Memorial Museum contained underground military manufacturing. In 1983, the Museum of the Old Skopje Bazaar was founded in the 15th-century Ottoman Suli Inn (Fig. 6). Following the 1963 earthquake, architect Mimoza Nestorova-Tomic rebuilt the Suli Inn based on Boris Chipan's plans. The administrative building's upper floors have hosted the Faculty of Fine Arts since its renovation in 1983, while the ground-floor museum showcases 900 artworks.

3.3.2 *Second phase: after the earthquake in 1963 until the independence of the state in 1991*

Under the slogan "Solidarity with Skopje," the United Nations and 35 other countries donated works of art from artists all over the world to help rebuild Skopje following the 1963 earthquake (HY Музеј на современата уметност (HY МСУ), 2014). In response to the need for housing, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje launched a request for architectural concepts in 1966. The Polish Architects Association (SARP) extended the invitation. The competition was won by the architectural team "The Tigers" (Wacaw Kyszewski, Jerzy Mokrski, and Wierzbicki) (Ibid.) with a proposal that utilized the democratic and egalitarian potential of urban and architectural creation. This structure, located at the valley's highest point, impresses with its enormous yet legible architecture made of white marble, rough concrete, glass, and aluminum, as well as its capacity to generate a great mood inside under a range of lighting circumstances. During the height of state nationalism (Fig. 7), a neutral design with a flexible spatial composition suited for a wide range of shows was built. The Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje strives to play a part in establishing the aesthetic and cultural framework in which it functions by recording, analyzing, and presenting all contemporary art techniques employed in the country and

throughout the globe. Following the terrible 1963 earthquake, the museum was opened to the public in 1970 to function as a focus of cultural understanding. After renovations, the Museum of Contemporary Art reopened in February 2014 (Ibid.). The organization is rounded out by departments such as research and documentation, education, instruction, and professional development; professional documentation; library and publications; conservation and restoration; research and development; painting, sculpture, graphics, and drawing; and architecture and design. The Musealia proudly shows over 5,000 pieces of art in its 5428 square meters of exhibition area. The Museum of Contemporary Art was left unmanaged by the government until 2017 because of the building's neutral purpose. The construction of the museum building by architect Mimoza Nestorova-Tomi in 1971 disrupted the organic composition of the urban pattern of the northern part of the old Skopje bazaar, which had previously been composed of sacred buildings such as the Kurshumli Inn, the hammam, the Kazanjiler Mosque, and the Bakrdziski Mesjid (Миљковиќ, 1982). The National Museum of Macedonia (Fig. 8) commissioned the building to house the country's previously separate museums (the Archaeological Museum of Macedonia, the Ethnological Museum of Macedonia, and the Museum of the National Liberation War of Macedonia, later renamed the Historical Museum of Macedonia). The museum's foundations were built on top of the ruins of two mosques, the Kazanjiler Mosque and the Bakrdziski Mesjid, which are currently inaccessible to visitors. The museum connects with the Kushrhumli Inn (Fig. 9) via the shared courtyard, with a dynamic shape formed by regular shapes and a modest visual environment (Сложена организација на здружен труд на Музејите на Македонија - Археолошки, Етнолошки и Историски музеј, 1979, pp. 7-8). The building has a total floor area of about 9560 m². The overall exhibit area was around 6,000 m². They were granted permission to rename the institution as the Museum of Macedonia (now the Museum of RNM) in 1984, enabling them to share administrative and laboratory services (photo, conservatory, etc.) while keeping separate bank accounts. Until 2002, organized exhibits were overseen by the departments of museum documentation, professional and technical affairs, museum presentation, marketing, marketing administrative affairs, special museum collections, a sub-department for general concerns, and general works (Бачева, Михајлова, & Богоевски, 2015). There was a clear link between the Kushumli Inn (Кумбараџи-Богоевиќ, 1998, pp. 156-160) and the Accra Museum of Architecture and Art (Асоциација на Архитектите на Македонија, 2011). After WWI, the building kept military supplies until it was turned into the Museum of Southern Serbia's Lapidarium. In 1955, the Kurshumli Inn hosted the inauguration of the Archaeological Museum of Macedonia's Lapidarium. This historical location has operated as a museum storage facility since the erection of the new museum building in 1976. The structure's acoustics were improved by restoration efforts, particularly following the 1963 earthquake, and it is now used as a summer cultural venue. The museum collection of Resen's House of Culture, "Dear Tozija", the museum collection of the "Iskra" Home Hospital in Kocani, the museum collection of the "25 May" House of Culture in Valandovo, the museum display from Gjorgji Pulevski's memorial room in the town of Galicnik, and the museum exhibit from the First Partisan Printing House's memorial chamber in Bituse are all under the direction of the Museum of RNM (Ibid. pp. 20–27). In 2013, the RNM administration ordered that the RNM archaeological money be unlawfully seized to create the RNM Archaeological Museum as a distinct organization and building, citing state significance and foreign threats as justifications. If the RNM Museum continues to operate and receive money at its present pace, it risks becoming a cultural corpse. Will departmental stealing at the museum become the norm? Could the state's and, in particular, the RNM's Ministry of Culture's utter lack of interest in making essential repairs to the museum's failing infrastructure be seen as karma coming full circle?



Figure 7- Museum of Contemporary Art



Figure 8- National Museum of Macedonia



Figure 9- Kurshumli Inn



Figure 10 - Daut Pasha Hammam



Figure 11- Cifte Hammam



Figure 12- Mala Stanica Multimedia Center

The Art Gallery (now the National Gallery of Macedonia) was established in 1984 to fulfil a long-held ambition of Macedonian artists. The Daut Pasha Hammam, Cifte Hammam, and Mala Stanica Multimedia Centre were all designed specifically to store their archives and displays (Бачева, Михајлова, & Богоевски, 2015). These works are part of the permanent collection of the National Museum of Art and have been shown here. The first construction may be seen at the beginning of the Skopje bazaar, the city's initial market. It was erected in the 15th century in the Ottoman Islamic architectural style and is now a museum. Daut Pasha Hammam's (Кумбараџи-Богоевиќ, 1998, pp. 176-182) hammam spaces, which were originally planned to be separate for men and women, are now linked via apertures in the main walls (Fig. 10). The remaining 900 square metres are used for administrative areas and minor museum artefacts. Pendentives support the 13 domes, and the sub-domed wreath has a charming pattern that fits the architecture. Because of the building's closeness to the gallery's present architecture, the Cifte Hammam (Ibid., pp. 169–175) (Fig. 11) was changed into the Art Gallery using the same adaptation approach. The structure is 1056 square metres in size and is situated in the middle of Skopje's mediaeval market. It is made up of square chambers that are covered with domes and ornamented with intricate stalactite pillars. Sunlight streams through tiny windows, skylights, and portholes in the domes to brighten the apartments. The freshly restored Mala Stanica Multimedia Centre (Fig. 12) is housed inside the walls of the National Gallery of Macedonia. The gallery, as well as the centre's multimedia presentations and administrative offices, are located here. During World Wars I and II, the building was built as part of a rail network linking Skopje, Ohrid, and Struga (Национална Галерија на Македонија, n.d.). The project included several train stations and other rail facilities. After Yugoslavia's disintegration, it became a cultural centre. However, in 2003, the RNM Ministry of Culture started work on renovating the National Gallery of Macedonia's multimedia centre. The structure originally welcomed guests in 2005. However, since these art gallery buildings function in line with RNM museum regulations, they strive to fulfil the legal criteria in an indirect way. This is an example of art gallery institution misuse, or simply, their activity serves to photograph political personalities, without whom no event can take place.

3.3.3 Third phase: from 1991 until now

Authorizing the construction of museums within various institutions that either purchase or have a fund of items to display is just one example of how the instability of institutional decentralization has been

exploited on multiple levels, supported by legislation that was also decentralized in terms of responsibility. This was used by the RNM's National Bank (Бачева, Михајлова, & Богоевски, 2015, p. 78). The RNM National Bank formally declared the collection a museum in 2001. In 2003, the RNM's permanent collection was renamed the "Specialized Numismatic Museum" (for reference, see Fig. 13). The museum institute's commercialization affected the concept of museum architecture and lowered the importance of museum care. Through art exhibitions, photographic documentation, and copies of documents verifying these events, the Jewish Holocaust Memorial Centre (Ibid., pp. 91–92) (Fig. 14) in RNM brought to life the lives of Jews in the Balkans, with a focus on Macedonia, their culture and tradition, and their persecution during and after World War II. The Denationalization Law of 2002 made it possible for Academician Ivan Dejanov's request to build the memorial center in Skopje's historic Jewish Quarter. The Military Museum was designated as a specialized national museum by the RNM Ministry of Culture in 2006, and the RNM Ministry of Defense did the same in 2015 (Ibid.). The museum's permanent display in the "Goce Delchev" barracks was opened to the public for the first time in 2006. The museum's physical and institutional activities were disrupted as a result of its relocation to the Museum of Macedonia. Significant investment for the presentation of his fund, where the fund, according to Zaharinka Bacheva, Branislava Mihajlova, and Krste Bogoeski (Ibid. pp. 79), relates to the field of Macedonian history, international missions and operations of the ARM, specialized collections of military aircraft, armored and combat vehicles, artillery, equipment, and other military specialties, including collections by General Mihailo Apostolski, raises questions about the amount, and before his political dictatorship was revealed, the administration of former prime minister Nikola Gruevski used museums to launder money and inspire fear among the public. According to the RNM government's decision in 2008, this psychological warfare was carried out by the Museum of the Macedonian War for Citizenship and Independence—Museum of the Macedonian Revolutionary Internal Organization—and the Museum of the Victims of the Communist Regime (Fig. 15) (Ibid.). The museum's exhibition component examines these issues via the lens of the Macedonian internal revolutionary organization, with a focus on the group's principal purpose in the battle for freedom and independence (Ibid., pp. 82–83). The second section focuses on the victims of communist rule in the newly constituted Macedonian state within the Yugoslav Federation after World War II. The violence shown during the 2011 inauguration festivities should serve as a warning to those who reject the former prime minister's regime. The museum's funding, architecture (both inside and out), and physiognomic choices of historical personalities all indicate vulgar supremacy. Due to popular outrage, the government decided to rename the museum the Macedonian Struggle Museum and remove several shows and installations that glorified violence in 2018. The museum's assets comprise 4554 square meters in block no. 1 on the street "Pjo Vojvoda bb," 1644 square meters in the same building's garage, and 860 square meters in block no. 1 on the street "11-ti Oktomvri bb".

The "Sacred Heart of Jesus" Catholic Church in Skopje was destroyed in an earthquake in 1963, and its foundations were used to build the Gonxhe Bojaxhiu (Mother Teresa) Memorial House (Бачева, Михајлова, & Богоевски, 2015, p. 84). By Article 27-a, paragraph 1, of the Law on Use and Disposal of State Real Estate ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia," Nos. 8/2005, 150/2007, 35/2011, and 166/2012), the RNM Government has decided to permanently grant a portion of the immovable property to the National Institution Mother Teresa Memorial House (Fig. 16) in Skopje. On March 13, 2013, the RNM Government issued a resolution transferring the immovable property and 288 transportable articles (75,192.07 euros) to the National Institution Memorial House Mother Teresa. During the ceremonial launch of its temporary display in 2009, it was criticized as a money-laundering and anti-value ploy (NI Memorial House of Mother Teresa, 2020). Both sides of the structure are accessible. From the side of the Army House, horticultural gardens, urban equipment, trees, and an outdoor amphitheater offer access to this spot. The roadside approach to "Makedonija" is marked with a Mother Teresa statue. The construction seems to be made up of two separate parts, one a three-story structure and the other a semi-open atrium. The building's synergy, according to the architect, Vangel Bozinoski (Ibid.), stems from the symbolic portrayal of her family members via diverse architectural aspects. At the same time, the sculptural pillar at the entryway honors her father. However, the suggested architectural design depicts Mother Teresa's spiritual development at various times. But, given the continuing ethnic and religious conflicts, does this structure

send out incendiary signals to the locals? Skopje's main road seeks to present the cross's most important aspects from the outside, to confuse the visitor's emotions. Albanians believe their cultural identity has suffered as a result of the cross's association with Slavic and Macedonian people. Most architects and members of society anticipated that Mother Teresa's building would represent her humanity rather than her religion or nationality. The decision to build the National Institution-Archaeological Museum of Macedonia on the banks of the Vardar in the heart of Skopje was approved by the Government of the RNM by Article 24 paragraph 1 of the Law on Culture ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 31/98, 49/03, 82/05, and 24/07) and Article 6 paragraph 2 of the Law on Museums ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" Nos. 31/98, 49/03, 82/05, and 24/07) and Article 6 paragraph 2 " Archeological relics of exceptional state significance are the primary focus of the museum's purpose (Бачева, Михајлова, & Богоевски, 2015, pp. 85-88), which includes their protection, study, collection, processing, and suitable exhibition. The State Archive, Constitutional Court, and Archaeological Museum (Fig. 17) were constructed using state-appropriated property and finances from the RNM's Ministry of Culture. The building was renovated before its construction on July 28, 2011, due to the need to change the City of Skopje's Detailed Urban Plan due to the building's non-compliance with the location and the lack of an entrance for the underground parking according to the architectural plan that began on December 31, 2008. Unfortunately, this is not the end of the construction humour. After making changes to the overall urban plan based on the basic architectural design for the aforementioned institution, the RNM administration returned to the Ministry of Transport and Communications for authorization. According to the same document, the State Archive, the Constitutional Court, and the Archaeological Museum are exempt from having to pay for land expansion or undertake an environmental impact assessment study since they would be located in a publicly run institution. The State Archive, the Constitutional Court, and the Archaeological Museum comprise the "meta-archive" (Мијалковиќ & Урбанек, 2011, p. 95). It is a reproduction of the Greek "Metroon" (Ibid., p. 95) and was created in the spirit of "national imagination" (Ibid., p. 99). The combining of the Archaeological Museum, the Constitutional Court, and the State Archive, according to Milan Mijalkovik and Katarina Urbanek, is an effort to symbolize "Macedonia's origin, past, intended present, and projected future" (Ibid., p. 93). The symbolic coherence of the Meta Archive is supported by the idea of the archive as the pure-origin creator, whose origin is validated by archaeological sources and whose origin is protected by the constitutional court. The merger of these three organizations is a significant step towards disproving the theory that Macedonia arose from Western civilization. The polystyrene structure's exterior is supposed to seem like it was constructed in the ancient Greek architectural style. The permanent and temporary exhibits at the museum conform to nationalist state ideology and will be shown on the first three floors of the museum's interior (Археолошки музеј на Република Северна Македонија, 2014). The Museum of the National Theatre of Macedonia (Fig. 18) was established in 2014 and is located at the theatre's present location. The rich collection of primary and secondary documents presently being processed from the museum's collection may help to better understand the history of the National Theatre of Macedonia (Ibid., p. 95). The new theatre was created by architect Jovan Stefanovski-Zhan, who also revealed a replica (Конески, 2022) of the earthquake-ravaged original from 1963. The functional composition of the building is poor, as is the construction quality.



Figure 13- Specialized Numismatic Museum



Figure 14- The Jewish Holocaust Memorial Center



Figure 15- Museum of the Macedonian War for Citizenship and Independence—Museum of the Macedonian Revolutionary Internal



Figure 16- Mother Teresa Memorial House



Figure 17- Archaeological Museum of Macedonia



Figure 18- The National Theater of Macedonia's Museum

4 Museums serve as a reflection of Skopje's identity

The identification of the RNM's nationalist political philosophy, the question of state identity and its importance for state expansion, speculations on the genesis of Skopje, and the placement of museums in this city are not coincidental. On the center's charge with social institutions, notably museums, where the purpose is to curate the state's identity according to political and social ideas, it sheds light on another debate: the abolition of one of Skopje's birth scenarios, the Kale scenario. This cultural absorption is also evident in State Statistical Office data for 2019 (State Statistical Office, 2019) and 2021 (Fig. 19), indicating that the law supports the lack of space required for museums and tourists. As of 2018, the state fund for exhibits was at 598,887, with 428,447 unaccounted for, 170,440 inventoried, and just 1.6% exposed (26615). Apart from the lack of administrative, research, and presentation processes, the data shows that the average exhibition space is 276 m², with 125 products shown throughout all displays. I also deal with 76.5 m² of repository surfaces and 31 m² of conservation and restoration labs. The number of public museums has decreased since the statistics from 2021, while the number of private museums has increased for the first time. However, the total number of people visiting museums has declined significantly. Between 2019 and 2021, the number of exhibits developed at the National Museum grew while the number of exhibits generated at the local museum fell. Furthermore, all museum exhibitions are expanding, whereas non-innovative displays are declining. Exhibit halls are expanding, while depots, labs, and other halls are contracting. Despite an increase in the number of displays, their overall size, as well as the space in warehouses and other locations, is decreasing. The overall size of conservation and restoration laboratories has increased, but only in local museums. Although the number of local archives has declined and the number of libraries and books has risen, the number of photographic libraries in all museums has remained steady.



Figure 19- Statistical data for museums in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2019 and 2021 in percentage

Conclusions

The reevaluation of museum buildings, the strategic position of museums within a city, and the political and ideological climate in which they are placed are all important factors to consider. These variables determine how museums perceive and reflect a city's identity, as well as its accessibility and connection to the local people, their function as agents of social change, their worldwide reputation, and their effect on tourism. Museums' relevance as cultural and educational institutions in society may be significantly increased by developing an understanding of the processes involved in this context. The worth of museum buildings, their location within a city, and the political and ideological milieu all have a significant impact on how people perceive and experience a city's identity via its museums. Their influence on how inhabitants see the natural parts of the city is described further below. The evaluation of historically significant museum buildings may cause a change in how citizens and tourists see the city. By transforming old buildings into museums, it is possible to foster a sense of local identity and historical continuity. If the museum takes advantage of the city's pre-existing infrastructure, visitors may feel a closer connection to the city and their involvement in its history. The buildings adopt the personality and way of life of the city in which they are situated. The site of a museum inside a city may have a considerable influence on how visitors view and interact with the city. Museums benefit from being positioned in areas with high foot traffic since it boosts their visibility to both residents and tourists. Museums placed in the same building as or adjacent to other cultural organizations and key sites benefit a city's overall liveliness and cultural identity. The museums, streetscapes, and public spaces that comprise a city's urban fabric can enhance visitors' entire museum experience and give them a better knowledge of the city's character. The capacity of a city's museums to set its history in context and express the spirit of the city to visitors is an important function given by museums. The organization highlights the city's artistic and cultural past through a range of exhibitions and events. The museum's collection, as well as the tales and artworks on display, represent the city's attempts to develop and promote its identity. A city's identity may be seen in a variety of ways, and curators' decisions, such as integrating a diverse range of voices and points of view, can aid in the development of a fuller and more nuanced image. Museums' historical, ideological, and political settings influence how a city's identity is seen. Political agendas or ideologies may impact the content shown at museums, which may reinforce or encourage visitors to develop critical judgments. Museums in authoritarian countries promote official government narratives, while museums in democratic countries may encourage tolerance, equality, and free expression. The present political climate, as well as the degree of intellectual freedom afforded to curators and other museum personnel, may influence how visitors to museums perceive the

city's identity. Visitors will likely feel more connected to a city if the museums foster community participation and explore key social issues. When museums regularly offer activities, seminars, and exhibitions that reflect the needs and interests of the people who live nearby, such museums convert into lively community centers that aid in the development of stronger neighborhoods. Museums contribute to a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of a city's identity by reflecting the city's rich cultural fabric and providing spaces for people who are underrepresented in the city's cultural environment. Finally, the revaluation of museum buildings, the strategic position of museums within a city, and the political and ideological milieu around them all have a significant influence on the idea of a city's identity as expressed via its museums. The attention that museums give to these components may impact the interpretation of the city's history and culture, the promotion of community involvement, and the creation of a nuanced understanding of the city's multifaceted character.

Acknowledgment

This research paper is elaborated as a reflection on the author's Ph.D. progress entitled: "Museums as generators of identity in Skopje", at the University of Ljubljana- Faculty of Architecture, Ljubljana, Slovenia. Supervised by: Prof. Dr Tadeja Zupančič.

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