Socialization of Immovable Roman Archaeological Sites in Bulgaria

Stela Stefanova

Institute of Balkan Studies and Centre of Thracology – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Bulgaria

Abstract: *The archaeological cultural heritage and its inclusion in projects for the creation of tourist attractions, tourist products and marketing of the destinations are among the leading priorities in the field of tourism in Bulgaria. In this sense, the aim of the current paper is a review and analysis of the socialization of the immovable archaeological sites from the Roman period in the country. The socialization is considered from several aspects – exposure, preservation, presentation, provided services and organized events, accessibility, technical and ancillary infrastructure, advertisement. In each of them, the applied basic techniques and methods are studied and illustrated with specific examples of sites with national importance from the Roman period. In conclusion, more important problems and challenges related to the socialization are presented. Their resolution is of importance for the preservation of the immovable archaeological monuments and the sustainable development of tourism, based on archaeological heritage.*

Keywords: *Socialization; Exposure; Immovable Roman Archaeological Heritage; Cultural Tourism*

Социализация на недвижими археологически обекти от римската епоха в България

Стела Стефанова

Институт за балканистика с Център по тракология „Проф. Александър Фол", Българска Академия на науките, България

Резюме: *Археологическото културно наследство и включването му в проекти за създаване на туристически атракции, туристически продукти и маркетинг на дестинациите е сред водещите приоритети в областта на туризма в България. В този смисъл цел на настоящата статия е преглед и анализ на социализацията на недвижими археологически обекти от римската епоха в страната. Тя се разглежда в няколко аспекта – експониране, опазване, презентиране, предлагани услуги и организирани събития, достъпност, техническа и съпътстваща инфраструктура, реклама. При всеки един от тях се проследяват прилаганите основни техники и похвати, онагледени с конкретни примери на обекти от римската епоха с национално значение. В заключение са изведени по-важни проблеми и предизвикателства, свързани със социализацията. Тяхното решение е от значение за опазване на недвижимите археологически ценности и устойчивото развитие на туризма, основан на археологическо наследство.*

Ключови думи: *Социализация, експониране, недвижимо римско археологическо наследство, културен туризъм.*

Introduction

Among the exceptionally popular topics in the public domain, related to the country's cultural heritage, are those concerning the functions of the archaeological heritage, its integration into the contemporary environment and social life, as well as the possibilities of its inclusion in different tourist products. In this respect, several projects have been implemented in Bulgaria through various municipal and European programmes, directed towards the socialization of different immovable archaeological assets[1]. They are accompanied by activities related to conservation, restoration and exposure, which provoke serious public discussions concerning the quality and reasoning of their execution, the preservation of the authenticity and the protection of the archaeological structures. In this sense, the aim of the current study is a review and analysis of the socialization of the immovable archaeological assets from the Roman period, correlated with all the processes from their research to their physical presentation to society. Socialization is a necessary step for the integration of the cultural assets into the cultural landscape, as well as for their transformation into tourist sites. The analysis of the major methods, observed at different sites, also identifies the current tendencies in the presentation of different types of archaeological assets from the Roman period. Some problems resulting from the conducted activities also come up, as well as challenges to which solutions must be found. This will contribute to better preservation, exposure, presentation and understanding of the archaeological heritage, as well as to the sustainable development of tourism, based on archaeological heritage.

Socialization of the cultural heritage

In the Bulgarian-language dictionaries, the word "socialization" appears with two definitions – "the incorporation into environment, group, society" and "the transformation of private property into public property". However, it has not been legally defined as a term. More specifically, the socialization of the cultural heritage in Bulgaria is the subject of analysis in a number of scientific studies (Stanilov, 2008), (Andreeva, 2014), (Hadziangelov, 2018), (Vladimirova, 2019), (Debryune, 2019), (Zayachka, 2020), (Ivanov, 2020). Generally speaking, in the scientific literature the socialization of the immovable cultural assets is regarded as a process, which includes all the activities, through which their social engagement is achieved by means of their adaptation to the contemporary cultural environment. It is related above all to the preservation, presentation and popularization of the cultural heritage, which result from its conservation, restoration and adaptation. In particular for the immovable heritage, it concerns its suitability for the aims of cultural tourism (Debryune, 2019). According to Stanilov (2008) the socialization of the cultural assets constitutes their connection and integration with social life, including all the measures which make the cultural assets accessible to the whole society. In the context of

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[1] In the Cultural Heritage Act (2009) in Bulgaria the concept "cultural monument", used for movable and immovable material traces of human activity, is replaced by the concept "cultural value".

cultural tourism, the author puts forward and examines four conditions for socialization – access, regimes (regimes for studying, conservation and restoration and regimes for visiting), maintenance and control. Ivanov (2020) regards socialization as an important part of the presentation of the sites through activities related to designation, providing access, information and popularization, assisted through different resources. Concerning the immovable archaeological heritage and its socialization for the purposes of tourism based on cultural heritage, it is necessary to implement a number of activities oriented towards its preservation and presentation. Simultaneously, the traditional understanding of the conversion of an archaeological site into a tourist attraction, laid down in the development of many projects with such orientation in the country, is expressed in carrying out the following activities – conservation, restoration, exposure and socialization.

In the Cultural Heritage Act, the conservation and restoration of the cultural assets are defined as "a systematic process of activities intended to prevent their destruction, to stabilise their condition, as well as to facilitate their perception and evaluation, while preserving authenticity as much as possible" (Cultural Heritage Act, 2009: article 163). Their execution aims to limit the harmful effects of the environment on the structures, as well as total or partial restoration of their architectural and artistic appearance and their conservation. The preservation of the immovable cultural assets is also associated with their adaptation – "ensuring their proper use for contemporary purposes in accordance with the requirements of conservation and restoration methods" Cultural Heritage Act, Additional provisions, § 4(19). Precisely what intervention is acceptable and what should be understood by "contemporary purposes" is not sufficiently clear. Kandulkova (Kandulkova, 2007) regards the adaptation as tailoring the cultural assets to the contemporary sociocultural reality through their revitalisation or the restoration of their usability.

As a major aim of the exposure of the immovable cultural assets in "Decree № N-4 Concerning the conditions and rules for the presentation of the cultural assets" is enshrined "the presentation of their scientific and cultural value in the appropriate conditions after conducting conservation and restoration activities and their inclusion into the contemporary environment as a factor for the sustainable development of the territory" (Decree № 4… Article 23(1), 2014). The Decree regulates the exposure, designation, access and popularization of the cultural assets. At the same time, the major activities associated with the socialization of the cultural assets are provision of different types of access to them, as well as their presentation and popularization for the purposes of increasing society's knowledge about the significance of the cultural assets. Access to the cultural assets (physical and intellectual) without damaging or imperilling them, is regulated also by the Cultural Heritage Act.

The exposure and socialization of the archaeological monuments is associated with the so-called process of interpretation of the cultural heritage. The process reveals the nature of the cultural assets in an understandable and accessible for society way. According to The ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites, the interpretation process concerns the activities intended to raise public

awareness and to improve the understanding about the immovable cultural assets. These activities can include publications, public lectures and conferences, different artistic installations locally on the sites, as well as in remote places further away from them, the implementation of educational programmes, continuous studies and trainings, which incorporate assistance from the interpretation infrastructure in the form of "physical installations, facilities and areas at, or connected with a cultural heritage site that may be specifically utilised for the purposes of the interpretation and presentation including those supporting interpretation via new and existing technologies" (The ICOMOS..., 2008: 4).

The process of socialization transforms the discovered and studied archaeological structures into a significant element of the modern environment and culture of the society, which contributes directly to the development of tourism.

In this sense, the activities concerning the socialization of the archaeological heritage are commented also in a number of National Strategy documents. In the context of the interconnection environment - culture - tourism, the restoration and preservation of the cultural assets, in particular the archaeological sites are regarded as primary activities in the Strategic plan for the development of cultural tourism in Bulgaria from 2009. As a continuation of this topic, the sustainable development and management of the cultural resources are listed among the main priorities in the current Cultural Tourism Development Plan for the period 2020-2025 (Cultural Tourism …, 2019). The cultural assets are also commented upon in the National Concept for Spatial Development 2013-2025 (National Concept ..., 2012), with a focus on their conservation, active preservation, renovation and development of their potential. An emphasis on the cultural heritage of Bulgaria as an exceptionally important resource with an ever increasing role in the development of tourism in the country is placed also in the National Strategy for sustainable tourism development in Bulgaria for the period 2014-2030 (National Strategy …, 2017).

Socialization of the archaeological structures can be achieved in different ways, observing also the preservation of the cultural heritage – expositions with artefacts from the archaeological sites, events at the sites themselves, organization of scientific forums and publication of scientific studies from the archaeological excavations and research, projection of films, work with visitors, including organized talks, educational programmes, public lectures, distribution of scientific and popular science publications, inclusion of the sites into tourist products, etc.

For the purposes of the current study, socialization will be regarded as a process which includes different activities that guarantee the integration of the archaeological heritage into the contemporary environment, provide physical and intellectual access to it, present it to society and transform it into an element of vital importance for culture and social life.

Methods and data

For the purposes of the current study, the method of situational analysis is applied, which consists of four stages: Collection and processing of information concerning the socialization of the immovable archaeological monuments; Analysis of the systematised information according to a specially designed scheme; Identification of the major problems as a result of the conducted analysis; Outlining of the main challenges for the realization of the socialization.

The review of socialization is based on the analysis of its fundamental forms, methods and techniques, observed in 83 immovable archaeological sites with a high scientific and cultural value, which constitute also an important resource for the development of tourism in the country. Of them, 74 are categorized as being of "national importance" in the lists of the immovable cultural assets from all the regions of the country[2]. Some additional sites with local importance are also included from Northwestern and Southwestern Bulgaria as sites, present in previous research of the author, included sites that are the subjects of ongoing exavations and partially socialized sites (Stefanova, 2021a), (Stefanova, 2021b). All the observed sites are from the period from I to V AC. Taking into consideration the fact that they are multilayered, used during different time periods, not all of them can be defined solely as Roman, but all of them have a significant role also during the Roman period. Regarding their types and functions, the sites are especially diverse (fortresses, castles, road stations, ancient cities, public buildings, thermae, a stadium, a theatre, an amphitheatre, basilicas, an ancient villa, a ceramic centre, ancient tombs). The fortresses predominate, being 50 % of all the sites, followed by the ancient cities – 17 %. According to their location, those in an urban setting prevail over those located outside of populated areas. A total of 16 sites are with a status of archaeological reserves. As per the entrance requirements, the sites are divided into such with an entry fee (35) and such without an entry fee (48). The majority of the sites (65) appear in the Register of Tourist Attractions and a total of 16 are included in the National Movement "100 Tourist Sites of Bulgaria" (Tabl.1).

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[2] Register NKTS, http://ninkn.bg/Documents/categoryPreview/13 (visited 09.03.2022)

District	Socialized immovable archaeological sites from the Roman period		In total 83
	With entrance fee - 35	**Without entrance fee – 48**	
Blagoevgrad	1.Ancient city of Nicopolis ad Nestum, v. Garmen * 2.Early Byzantine building with mosaic, t. Sandanski 3.Early Byzantine building with mosaic floor, frescoes, Sandanski 4.Ancient city of Heraclea Sintica, v. Rupite	1.Late antique and medieval fortress in "St. Dimitar", t. Hadzhidimovo 2.St. Nikola Archaeological complex, t. Bansko** 3 Sitan kale fortress, t. Bansko** 4.Chukata fortress, v. Zelen dol** 5. Kalyata fortress, t. Yakoruda 6. Basilica, Mikrevo** 7Archaeological park at motorway Struma** 8.Late antique building in the village of Drenkovo** 9.Momina kula fortress, v. Kremen**	13
Burgas	1.Antcient termal complex and late antique and medieval fortress Aquae Calidae, t. Burgas 2.Ancient and medieval city of Deultum-Debelt, v. Debelt* 3. Ancient tomb, t. Pomorie	1.Late antique and medieval fortress, t. Ahtopol	4
Dobrich	1.Ancient and medieval fortress Kaliakra* 2.Prehistoric, ancient and medieval structures in Yailata*	——	2
Gabrovo	1.Late antique and medieval fortress Hotalich, t. Sevlievo	——	1
Haskovo	1.Roman villa Armira, t. Ivailovgrad	1.The sanctuary of the Nymphs, v. Kasnakovo	2
Kyustendil	——	1.Late antique and medieval fortress Hisarlaka, t. Kyustendil 2.Ancient and medieval city of Pautalia*, t. Kyustendil	2
Lovech	——	1.Roman castellum and road-side station Sostra, t. Troyan	1
Montana	——	1.Ancient and medieval fortress Kaleto, t. Montana 2.Ancient and medieval fortress Kaleto, t. Berkovitsa 3.Ancient fortress Almus, t. Lom	3
Pazardzhik	1.Late antique and medieval fortress Peristera, t. Peshtera	——	1
Pleven	——	1.Ancient fortress Dimum, t. Belene 2.Ancient city of Ulpia Oescus, v. Gigen* 3.The old fortress (Strogozia), t. Pleven	3

District	Socialized immovable archaeological sites from the Roman period		In total 83
	With entrance fee - 35	**Without entrance fee – 48**	
Plovdiv	1.Asen' s fortress, t. Asenovgrad 2.Early Christian basilica, The red church, t. Perushtitsa 3.Ancient theatre, t. Plovdiv 4.Bishop's basilica of Philippopol, t. Plovdiv 5.Small Early Christian basilica of Fhilippopol, t. Plovdiv 6.Late antique building Eirene /EIPHNH/, t. Plovdiv	1. Ancient stadium, t. Plovdiv 2.Forum, t. Plovdiv 3.Ancient t. Plovdiv * 4.Ancient city of Hissar, t. Hisarya * 5.Medieval fortress Ahievsko kale, v. Anevo	11
Razgrad	1.Ancient city of Abritus, t. Razgrad*	___	1
Ruse	1.Ancient fortress Sexaginta Prista, t. Ruse	___	1
Shumen	1.Historic district at Shumen fortress, t. Shumen 2. Prehistoric, ancient and medieval structures near Madara village	___	2
Silistra	1.Late antique tomb, t. Silistra	1.Ancient city of Durostorum-Drastar, t. Silistra 2.Ancient fortress Transmariscra, t. Tutrakan	3
Sliven	1.Late antique and medieval fortress Tuida, t. Sliven	___	1
Sofia – city	___	1.Ancient Serdica and Medieval Sredets, t. Sofia * 2.Archaeological complex Western gate of Serdica, t. Sofia 3. Saint Sofia church, t. Sofia 4. St. George Rotunda, t. Sofia	4
Sofia district	1.Acient fortress (Tsari Mali grad), v. Belchin 2.Late antique fortress at the Trayanovi vrata pass (Stenos), v. Dolna Vasilitsa	1.Shishmanovo kale fortress, v. Dospei 2.Ancient city of Germania, t. Sapareva banya	4
Stara Zagora	___	1.Ancient and medieval city Augusta Trayana-Vereya, t. Stara Zagora* 2.Ruins от southern gate of Augusta Trayana city, t. Stara Zagora 3.Late antique public building exposed in the Central post office, t. Stara Zagora 4. Ruins of ancient building with mosaic floor, t. Stara Zagora 5. Cardo maximus, t. Stara Zagora 6. Antique complex at the western gate of Augusta Trayana, t. Stara Zagora	6
Varna	1.Ancient village and late antique fortress at cape of St. Atanas island, t. Byala 2.Roman thermae of Odessos, t. Varna	1.Medieval fortress Provat - Ovech - Tash hissar, t. Provadia 2.Ancient city of Odessos*, t. Varna	4

District	Socialized immovable archaeological sites from the Roman period		In total 83
	With entrance fee - 35	**Without entrance fee – 48**	
Veliko Tarnovo	1.Ancient city of Nicopolis ad Istrum, v. Nikyup* 2.Ancient ceramic ceter, t. Pavlikeni 3.Ancient city of Novae, t. Svishtov *	——	3
Vidin	1.Belogradchik fortress, t. Belogradchik 2.Baba Vida fortress, t. Vidin	1.Roman fortress Castra Martis, t. Kula 2.Late antique road station at Anishte**, v. Granichak 3.Ancient city of Bononia, t. Vidin 4.Ancient city of Ratiaria, v. Archar	6
Vratsa	1.Ancient and medieval fortress Kaleto, t. Mezdra (Archeological Complex "Kaleto" - Mezdra)	1.Ancient fortress Augusta, v. Harlets* 2.Ancient and medieval fortress Gradishteto, t. Vratsa 3.Late antique fortress near Lilyache village**	4
Yambol	1.Ancient city of Kabyle, t. Kabile*	___	1

*Archaeological reserve; **Archaeological sites with local importance

Table 1. Socialized immovable archaeological sites from the Roman period in Bulgaria

The collected data for the analysis of the sites is based on personal observations of 65 of the sites and on different sources of information about the others (literature, strategic and normative documents, websites of archaeological sites, museums, municipalities and others).

The process of socialization of the Roman sites is analyzed in terms of 7 aspects – physical accessibility of the sites; exposure; practices for preservation of the sites; presentation of the sites; technical and ancillary infrastructure; offered services and organized events; publicity. They are thematically organized into three groups of activities, in which the current state of the sites is revealed in terms of their suitability for visits, the organization of tourist activities and their recognizability. In the first group, "Specialized intervention and infrastructural provision of the sites", the analyses are in terms of 5 aspects - accessibility of the sites; exposure; practices for preservation of the sites; presentation of the sites; technical and ancillary infrastructure. In the second and third groups, respectively, "Tourist services" and "Popularization of the sites", the aspects which are considered are offered services and organized events at the sites, as well as publicity of the individual sites.

Every aspect is reviewed and analyzed separately in its respective group, with specific examples of archaeological sites provided as well. The analyses are subordinated to the understanding of the necessity of protection and preservation of the cultural heritage and the concept for sustainable development of tourism. Thus, specific problems related to separate aspects of the socialization of the Roman immovable assets are identified. Based on the conducted review and the identified problems, challenges have also been outlined, for which a solution should be found in order for the optimal balance between cultural heritage and tourism in the country to be achieved.

Analysis of the socialization of the immovable archaeological sites

1. Specialized intervention and infrastructural provision of the sites

Accessibility of the sites

Accessibility is regarded, on the one hand, as transport provision to the sites, and, on the other hand, as infrastructure, providing access for visitors belonging to different social groups, including people with disabilities.

Transport accessibility of the sites is conventionally provided for by the utilization of available traffic routes. For sites located at a greater distance from the major roads and specified parking facilities, access is provided for by additionally built pedestrian routes or tourist paths with wooden parapets and stairs to the sites (Tsari Mali grad fortress, Archaeological complex "St. Nicola", Momina kula fortress near Kremen, Anevo kale fortress, Kalyata fortress near Yakoruda). They are appropriate places for walks and spending time in nature, which creates an opportunity for the practice of cultural tourism in combination with mountain, eco and velo tourism. At only one site – Tsari Mali Grad, given its location on an elevation which is perceived as difficult to access, a lift facility (a funicular) is mounted. However, at very few sites the necessary access facilities for disabled people, such as lifts, ramps, etc., are provided. Up to a certain level, the sites Tsari Mali Grad and Montana fortress are accessible for people with disabilities.

Exposure

An important condition for the implementation of restoration projects aiming the subsequent exposure of the archaeological structures is the consideration and respect for the original – The Venice Charter (1964). Another essential aspect is following the principle for clear differentiation of the contemporary additions to the original constructions and preserving thei authenticity. In recent years there has been an application of diverse techniques and methods of presentation of the archaeological structures whose implementation in varying degree corresponds to these principles, with results provoking polarised reactions and ambiguous responses by specialists and visitors.

Among the gentler methods used in the exposure process is the implementation of conservation activities for reinforcement of the ruins with minimal restoration intervention – as is the case with Nicopolis ad Istrum.

Conventionally and widely applied methods are the formation of an additional wall above the original construction, separated with a line from it, as well as a combination between the authentic archaeological remains and reconstructed parts of archaeological sites, such as defence towers, defence walls, gates and separate buildings.

A common practice is also the restoration, partial or total, of the defence walls, where in some cases the reconstruction exceeds the size of the original construction, as in the fortresses in Kyustendil, Peshtera, Kaleto Mezdra, Tsari Mali Grad. Another method, which can be defined as controversial, is the mounting of contemporary architectural elements, including glass, metal and other constructions, onto the antique establishments with the aim to increase the size of the site or to reinforce the structures (Episcopal basilica in Sandanski, tower in the ancient city of Abritus, ancient city of Novae, ancient city of Augusta Trayana, basilica The Red church near Perushtitsa). Another observed technique for exposing the archaeological sites or parts of them is under different types of buildings. The archaeological structures can be exposed in their entirety in modern buildings or facilities which cover the whole site. Paths, ramps and viewing terraces are built beside the ruins or passing above the archaeological structures – Bishop's basilica and Small Early Christian basilica in Plovdiv, villa Armira. Window exposures with exhibits from the sites are also organized and information boards are mounted. Another possibility is parts of the archaeological structures to be exposed in a modern building and other parts of the structures from the same site to be exposed in open space. Such is the case with Ancient cultural and communication complex "Serdica" in Sofia.

Another alternative for exposing archaeological structures is under the floor level of modern buildings, with built-in and glass elements where visitors can view the conserved archaeological structures. In this way, under the basilica "St. Sophia", in an area designated as the Archaeological level of the basilica, tombs of the eastern necropolis of the ancient city Serdica can be viewed and visited. Also, under a glass construction in front of the church, the tomb of Honorius is exposed. Another technique used is the construction of museum buildings "in situ" over the archaeological remains. Examples of the application of this technique are the Archeological museum in Sandanski, whose building is laid over the foundations of the ancient basilica "St. John" and the Regional Museum of History in Stara Zagora, which is built above the preserved remains of the central street "cardo maximus" of the ancient city Augusta Trayana. Archeological ruins can be exposed also on the territory of functioning modern buildings such as hotels, shopping centres, post offices and others. Examples of this practice include the exposure of the amphitheatre of Serdica in hotel "Arena di Serdica" in Sofia, an ancient tomb from the ancient city of Germania in hotel "Relaxa" in Sapareva Banya, parts of the ancient stadium of Philippopolis (Plovdiv) in the Excelsior Shopping Mall in Plovdiv, parts of the defence wall of Serdica in the Central Market Hall in Sofia, parts of the defence wall of Germania in the underground level of the Sanatorium in Sapareva Banya, the late antiquity mosaic in the souterrain of the Central Post in Stara Zagora.

Practices for preservation of the sites

The discussed practices for protection of the sites are of exceptional importance for the preservation of the archaeological structures. They are associated with the construction of protective and barrier facilities for the limitation of access to them, including the formation of pathways between and around the ruins themselves. Their effectiveness

depends on the mounting of appropriate protective infrastructure, consistent with the environment in which the sites are situated and with the possible risks.

The most frequently observed practices for preservation of the archaeological sites are associated in the first place with the building of fence structures, which enclose and secure the sites, the installation of video surveillance cameras and security alarm systems. These practices are implemented predominantly in sites with an entrance fee, and in some of them, security personnelle is also employed. The protection of the archaeological structures from natural forces is achieved by placing wood or metal protective covering constructions above the remains, and the protection from anthropogenic forces – by placing protective gratings, barriers and fences which aim to hinder access to the structures.

A conventional practice for the protection of archaeological remains and limitation of tourist pressure is the building of an alley network from different types of material (wood, metal, concrete, stone, plates, etc.) between the remains as a specified pathway for visitors, through which the separate parts of the archaeological sites are connected. Depending on the characteristics of the sectors, through which the path passes, the alleys can be integrated into the original archaeological remains or lifted above them. In addition to the alleys, ladders and ramps can be placed in some locations, as well as viewing terraces beside the remains. To ensure better visibility and observation of the remains by visitors, the alley constructions and terraces are often intentionally raised. When exposing height structures such as defence walls, towers and buildings, ladders, parapets and terraces of different materials are mounted.

Presentation of the sites

There can be observed several characteristic ways of presentation of the archaeological structures, which also use various interpreting infrastructure.

Among them are the presentation of historical and archaeological information through written descriptions, the utilization of different methods of visual reconstruction of the structures, the recreation of the culture of the historical period through thematic events, as well as the organization of expositions with artefacts from the sites.

Most prevalent is the use of information boards with text mainly about the history and architecture of the site. In some cases, the text is supplemented by pictures, graphic reconstructions, plans and schemes, maps, etc., for better illustration of the archaeological site and various parts of it. Generally speaking, the sites differ by the number of mounted information boards and by the amount of information provided by them. At a large part of the sites there is only one board and the information on it is exceptionally scarce and schematic. A good practice for providing information is by means of educational entertainment displays, as exemplified by the Sexaginta Prista fortress in Ruse, where through questions and answers, written on placards at different locations in the site, the knowledge of the visitors is increased in an entertaining for them way.

An effective and relatively easy to implement solution for presentation of the archaeological sites is the mounting of panels or photo boards with graphic reconstructions of sectors of the site behind the original archaeological remains, through which depth exposure is achieved (fortress at cape of St. Atanas island in Byala). Another method is the placement of models of the archaeological sites (Stenos fortress, the model is placed in the exhibition hall of the information centre, Archeological Complex "Kaleto" – Mezdra – placed in the exposition hall, Castra Martis fortress – in the exhibition hall, Villa Armira). Despite being more rarely implemented, both models of visualization contribute to easier and more thorough perception of the sites by visitors.

Another common method for presentation, observed at the archaeological sites, is the projection of short films, through which the history of the sites is presented (Sexaginta Prista fortress, Stenos fortress).

Currently, the implementation of modern technologies remains rather limited, including augmented and virtual reality, which can be found only at the thermae in Hassarya and the Bishop's basilica in Plovdiv.

As regards the presentation of the movable archaeological assets, found during the study of the sites, their incorporation into the overall presentation of the immovable sites can be realised in the open, in the place of their discovery, including under transparent installations (e.g. for mosaics, pithoi, remains of aqueducts, ovens), as well as in indoor expositions. With expositions of movable artefacts, organized indoors, several main models can be distinguished. The first is the construction of separate museum buildings in close proximity to the archaeological ruins, in which exhibits from the archaeological sites are shown (the ancient city of Deultum, the ancient city of Kabyle, the ancient city of Abritus). The second observed model is construction of exhibition or exposition halls or information centres on the site premises with expositions of artefacts, photo panels and information. Such facilities are built near the Kastra Martis fortress. Parts of the archaeological sites themselves can be designated as permanent or temporary exposition areas, as is the case with the exposition in one of the towers of the Tsari Mali grad fortress and the Peristera fortress. In a large part of the cities, where there are archaeological sites, city museums function as well, including archaeological museums, in which exhibits, found during the studies of the immovable sites, are on exposure.

Conducting festivals of the ancient way of life and culture can also be considered part of the presentation of the sites. They include the organization of historical re-enactments and demonstrations of battles and combat techniques, gladiator fights, traditional crafts, cuisines, games, and other everyday activities which in an attractive way reproduce the Roman period, the ancient lifestyle and culture, involving the visitors in the historical events and providing them with interesting experiences. Such festivals are organized on the premises of the ancient cities Nicopolis ad Istrum ("Nike – the game and the victory"), Novae ("Eagle on the Danube"), Abritus ("Ancient Abritus"), Kabyle ("Fair of tourism, entertainment and animation"), as well as on the Sexaginta Prista fortress ("Roman market at Sexaginta Prista"), Peristera fortress ("Peristera - fortress of faith"), Hotalich fortress ("Festival of historical heritage") and others.

The wider penetration of technologies and the greater opportunities which they offer, alongside the increase in time spent in virtual space, have an effect also on the ways of presenting the cultural heritage. As a result of this, the question of digitalization of the archaeological heritage is becoming ever more topical. Good examples in this respect are the Roman thermae in Varna (Stamatova, 2019), as well as the implemented in 2017 project for interactive visualization of the Roman cultural heritage in the cross-border region between Bulgaria and Romania. In the context of the project, the internet platform Roman Forts is created, through which access to descriptions, pictures, video and 3D models of the Danubian fortresses Dimun, Novae, Sexaginta Prista, Durostorum and the ancient city Abritus[3] is provided.

Technical and ancillary infrastructure

A mandatory part of the technical infrastructure at the sites with an entrance fee are the specified parking lots. There are also examples of sites, located in an urban area, which do not have specially built parking lots, and visitors can park freely near the sites. In some cases, the parking facilities can be improvised (Lilyache fortress). Another element of the technical infrastructure which is seen in a large part of the sites, especially those with an entrance fee and in an urban setting, is a lighting system.

Part of the ancillary infrastructure directly on the territory of the sites or in immediate proximity to them, are food service outlets and retail establishments, including for souvenirs, as well as childrens' corners and other attractions for the visitors, especially areas for rest, sport and entertainment. The presence of ancillary tourist infrastructure transforms the archaeological sites into social areas and places for leisure, which complements their scientific and educational function. In this aspect, Tsari Mali Grad strongly stands out as a site with a well-developed infrastructure with an opportunity for different activities for various age and social groups, which retains tourists and is one of the reasons for their repetitive visits to the site.

2. Tourist services

The provided services and organized events taking place on the sites themselves are of considerable importance for the functioning of the sites. They are associated both with the presentation of the sites and the provision of information and knowledge about them, and with their revitalization and social involvement.

At the archaeological sites with an entrance fee, some main types of services are usually provided. Among them are guided tours in Bulgarian, as well as in other languages at some of the sites, along with an opportunity for using an audio guide.

At some of the sites educational programmes and games for children and school groups take place in specially assigned halls or rooms (Sandanski). Different craftsman's

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[3] Roman forts,
https://www.romanforts.eu/bg/%D0%B0%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B8%D1%82%D1%83%D1%81-%D0%B3%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B8%D1%8F (visited 09.03.2022)

workshops are also organized (Ceramic centre Pavlikeni, Aquae Calidae fortress in Burgas).

Traditionally offered attractions at fortresses are the opportunity for disguising in the characteristic clothing of the period and archery (Archeological Complex "Kaleto" – Mezdra and others).

Other types of services which are gaining popularity in recent years are wedding rituals and photoshoots (Archeological Complex "Kaleto" – Mezdra, ancient city of Abritus, ancient city of Nicopolis ad Istrum).

Part of the inherited from Antiquity facilities retain and carry over their functions into the present, becoming a stage for contemporary events, which is evidence of their successful integration not only into the urban setting, but also into modern social life. Among larger-scale events, which are organized and held, are festivals, concerts, theatrical productions, spectacles, cultural events like the presentation of books, exhibitions, scientific seminars and others. Exceptional popularity gains the yearly festival "Opera of the Peaks", held at the Belogradchik Fortress. The concerts, organized in the ancient theatre in Plovdiv are also attractive. Concerts and musical events are also organized on the Peristera fortress, Hotalich fortress, Hisarlaka fortress in Kyustendil, roman thermae in Varna, Episcopal Basilica in Sandanski, antique building Eirene in Plovdiv, Small basilica in Plovdiv are settings for different cultural venues.

3. Popularization of the sites

The promotion of the sites is achieved through traditional mass media, internet and social media, as well as through different initiatives, connected with tourism.

Among the most commonly used means for gaining publicity for the sites is through advertisement clips of different sites (ancient city of Plovdiv, ancient city of Ratiaria) and broadcasts about tourism and cultural heritage in the media – television and radios, as well as through distribution of printed publications and placement of advertisement billboards and panels at different locations in the country.

Another applied method is the printing and distribution of advertisement materials like brochures, books, travel guides, cards, as well as the making of souvenirs, with the materials being sold also at the sites themselves.

Increasing in importance are the advertisement and popularization of the sites online. In this medium the prevailing information, including the circulating video clips, comes from the sharing of personal impressions by visitors and from travellers' tourist vlogs. An exceptionally small part of the sites have their own websites – ancient city of Abritus, Archeological Complex "Kaleto" – Mezdra, Aquea Calidae fortress, created as part of the implementation of projects for their socialization. Information for another part of the sites is provided on websites of local municipalities and museums. To the popularization of the sites contribute also the interviews and information given by the archaeologists who are studying them.

Of crucial importance for the popularization and accessibility of the archaeological assets to a wider circle of people is the targeted work on digitalization of the immovable cultural heritage. A traditional method of advertising the sites which stimulates their visiting rate is their inclusion into the National Movement "Discover Bulgaria" – 100 National Tourist Sites (Archeological Complex "Kaleto" – Mezdra, Baba Vida fortress, Belogradchik fortress, Hotalich fortress, Kaliakra fortress, Peristera fortress, Asenova fortress, Shumen fortress, Stenos fortress, Tsari Mali grad fortress, ancient city of Nicopolis ad Istrum, ancient city of Kabyle, Episcopal basilica in Sandanski, Roman thermae in Varna, villa Armira and ancient theatre in Plovdiv), as well as into the Register for tourist attractions.

The discussed above practices and methods in the seven separate aspects do not exhaust fully all the possibilities. A more thorough result can be looked for in a future analysis of the sites by categories – type, access regulations, location.

Identified problems related to the socialization

As a result of the analysis, a number of problems related to the socialization of the Roman immovable assets have been identified. They can be summarized and followed up from several viewpoints. Namely:

> ➢ **Problems related to the restoration and exposure:**

Non-compliance of the used materials for restoration with the original constructions and controversial decisions for adding volume to the reconstructions of the archaeological structures. This inevitably affects the attractiveness of the sites as well.

By building uniform appearance sites, the specific characteristics are not accentuated sufficiently, which additionally results in them losing their attractiveness. Transformed in this way into tourist attractions, they create a one-sided notion of the cultural heritage. Such practices are seen at the Stenos fortress, Tsari Mali grad fortress, Peristera fortress, Yailata fortress, Kaliakra fortress, Hotalich fortress (Ivanov, 2020), (Yordanova, 2015).

Insufficient visualization of the multilayered nature of the sites with predominating exposure and presentation of the upper archaeological layers.

In a certain sense, as a problem can be identified the presence of disputable decisions for restoration and exposure, which provoke serious discussions in the scientific community (Hadzhiangelov, 2015), (Cultural…2015), (Koleva, 2015). There emerge polarised opinions, accompanied by polarized discussions and an exchange of remarks in the media. One part of the specialists declares itself for the preservation of the authenticity of the immovable archaeological assets, adherence to and foundation on reliable scientific information when conducting restorations, and another part declares itself for the rebuilding of the sites with the aim of their better understanding and integration into tourist products and for more benefits to tourism. In many cases, there is an almost complete rebuilding of the sites, which has negative effects on the image of the cultural heritage,

casting doubt on the quality of the conducted activities, the preservation of the sites and their authenticity. Far too often, the result of the reconstructions is determined as "sham" (Leshtarska, 2014), (Georgieva, 2015), (Narandzic, 2018).

Unsatisfactory results from the implemented projects for exposure (financed by the national and municipal budgets and by European Union funds) which do not meet the set goals for transformation of the sites into profitable attractions with which to draw in tourists and to increase interest toward a certain region. Despite the investments in them, they do not bring enough advantages to the concerned parties and to the sites. Different omissions can be seen in the projects, their realization and the selection of sites (Strahilov, 2016), Marinov, Assenova and Dogramadjieva, 2017).

➤ **Problems related to the presentation**

Generally speaking, the presentation of the archaeological structures can be defined as insufficiently attractive. Namely:

At a large part of the sites the information boards are predominantly schematic, which does not provoke enough interest from the visitors. When lacking graphic reconstructions of the sites, the preserved archaeological structures become difficult to perceive.

The use of innovative approaches and technologies of visualization is limited, even though they are a good opportunity for increasing the attractiveness of the sites by making them more accessible and understandable to a wider circle of visitors. Different historical periods can be presented through them, and the virtual presentation itself can be achieved through different electronic devices.

In most cases, the account of the life and culture of the period is missing. The accent falls predominantly on the historical facts related to the site and its architecture. The experiences offered to the visitors are also limited.

The presentation of the sites with free entry is reduced to the mounting of a limited number of information boards with schematic information.

➤ **Problems related to the control, preservation, management and maintenance**

Decreased control (or lack thereof), poor organization of visits and inadequate pressure on the structures create preconditions for damage of the sites and violation of their integrity. Examples of such irregularities and contradictions with the necessity for protecting the structures with wider media and public response are the wedding ritual held on the mosaics at Villa Armira and the vandalism of the ancient forum of Augusta Trayana.

A significant problem is also the maintenance of the sites after their restoration and exposure. Because of lack of regular maintenance after completion of the project activities, the archaeological structures with free entry are exposed to a number of external factors (natural and anthropogenic), which lead to their deterioration and damage. As examples can be given the fortress in "St. Dimitar" near Hadzhidimovo, Lilyache fortress, ancient city

of Germania, Anevo fortress and others. This inevitably has a negative effect both on the preservation of their integrity and on their attractiveness to tourists.

The limited possibilities of the local authorities and the responsible institutions for management of the sites lead, on the one hand, to a negative effect on their protection and preservation, and, on the other hand, to the presence of abandoned, unmaintained and closed sites. Despite the realised activities for exposure and socialization, closed to visitors remain the late antique building at Drenkovo village and the Archaeological park at motorway Struma.

An especially serious problem is treasure-hunting, which is observed even at sites with archaeological reserve status, such as the archaeological site Augusta at Harlets village. Another emblematic site for long-standing and large-scale treasure-hunting activity in the country is the ancient city of Ratiaria.

> ➤ **Problems related to the popularization and publicity:**

Lack of specialized and targeted advertising of the sites of Roman archaeological heritage.

Absence of independent websites for the majority of the sites, which would provide current and accurate information about the visiting regulations and the offered services.

Despite the implemented projects and activities related to the exposure and socialization of the sites from the Roman period, there are currently few which have been imposed as recognisable tourist sites (as are the archaeological sites in Plovdiv, Hisarya and Sofia).

A considerable disadvantage is the lack of combined presentation and promotion of the sites from the Roman period in the country and their inclusion (or at least of the majority of them) into common products and routes, which would contribute to the popularization of more assets.

Challenges associated with the socialization of the sites

Based on the conducted review of the socialization of the Roman archaeological sites and the identified problems, five challenges come up for the concerned stakeholders (including scientists, local communities, museums, authorities, businesses) in finding the optimal balance between cultural heritage and tourism.

- ✓ Detailed study and analysis of the good and bad practices in restoration, exposure and presentation of the socialized Roman archaeological sites with a view to find the optimal solutions for improving the state of the sites already functioning as tourist attractions and the development of future such sites, while at the same time guaranteeing their stability throughout time.

- ✓ The utilization of innovative and interactive methods and techniques and the integration of new technologies for visualization as an important part of the

presentation of the sites, which are an appropriate means for strengthening the exposure qualities of the preserved archaeological remains, especially where the structures are conserved to a lesser degree.

✓ The development of an integrated tourist product on the basis of Roman archaeological heritage in Bulgaria, at the foundation of which lies the territorial and thematic integration of the sites, aiming the sustainable development of tourism through preservation of the heritage, stimulation of the archaeological studies, socialization of new sites and popularization of the Roman archaeological heritage.

✓ An opportunity for specialists from different fields to work together in the process of socialization of the sites and on the development of an integrated cultural-tourist product, based on the Roman archaeological heritage.

✓ In view of the increasing focus on virtual services, along with events, imposing restrictions on travelling and visiting the actual sites, the question of presenting the sites online through different methods of visualization becomes increasingly more topical. The digitalization of the heritage, in the context of European policies, is associated with the opportunity both for its preservation and for its popularization, while the access to the sites, be it through a computer or mobile phone, is becoming ever more effortless and widespread. Regardless of the different opinions on the positive and negative sides of virtual visits and tours of the sites, they are becoming a fine opportunity for making the sites accessible to a wider circle of people and stimulating curiosity and interest towards them.

The solving of the outlined challenges is a path towards improvement of the interconnection environment - cultural heritage - tourism while observing the protection and preservation of the cultural assets and their stability over time.

Conclusion

The successful integration of the cultural-historical and archaeological heritage into the contemporary environment, social and public life, is associated with the necessity of implementing a number of measures aimed at guaranteeing its preservation. At the same time, the perception of the sites as an important resource for tourism and the undertaking of activities aiming to transform them into tourist attractions requires their protection, public accessibility and adequate presentation to society. On account of the conducted review of the most common methods and practices for socialization of the immovable archaeological assets on the territory of the country, there come up some omissions and contentious points which need to be reconsidered. This would contribute both to their better integration into the contemporary environment and to their more rational utilization for the purposes of tourism, such as to guarantee their stability throughout time. Based on the analysis of the socialization and the provided examples of different sites, the conclusion can be made that

the possible correct approach to socialization is associated with the establishment of a connection between a number of more important activities. Among them are conservation and restoration activities in parts of the archaeological structures, the adaptation of the sites by providing access to them and building appropriate infrastructure, as well as the use of innovative techniques for exposure and socialization. Foremost in the realization of projects for exposure and socialization of the archaeological heritage should be the comprehension of its essence, specificity and multilayered nature, in order for the archaeological structures and cultural layers from different periods to be preserved and exposed as much as possible. The presentation of the archaeological sites should be carried out in the context of the environment in which they are created. At the same time, as part of the contemporary setting, they should be considered an important element of it and part of the potential for its development. To a large degree this potential is associated with the successful presentation of their cultural and scientific value to the general public and their transformation into poles of attraction for education, tourism and different cultural initiatives, which are an inseparable part of modern social life.

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Stela Stefanova

Institute of Balkan Studies and Centre of Thracology – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Bulgaria

🆔 0000-0002-6264-7139

stela.stefanova@balkanstudies.bg

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