

The Byzantine Studies are not very popular in our country; fortunately, even in deep *Sclavonia* among *pagani* one can attend interesting lectures or meetings on this topics. One of them took place at the Institute of History at the Jagiellonian University. Dr. Mihailo Popović from the Austrian Academy of Sciences arrived at Gołębia street by invitation of Prof. Dr. Maciej Salamon and Dr. Stachura. He came to speak about his field of research on the city of Ohrid in northern Macedonia and to present photographs of monuments (or its reconstructions) from the time of the Byzantine Empire.

Dr. Popović is a scientific co-worker of the project *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, which has the aim to conduct research on the historical geography of the Byzantine Empire: the cataloguing and protection – in cooperation with local historians and authorities – of Byzantine monuments and the determination of geographical names are essential for the researchers. Dr. Popović deals with northern Macedonia. Last autumn he made a scientific journey to the city of Ohrid, which is situated on the lake of the same name.



From the left: Dr. Popović, author of the paper, and Dr. Stachura, organizer of the meeting, speaking a few words of introduction.

The lecture was divided into two parts – a historical introduction and the presentation of monuments and their photographs. The city came into prominence after the Roman conquest, due to its location (on the *Via Egnatia*, connecting Byzantium / Constantinople with the port of Dyrrachium, which enabled the contact with Italy) it became a capital of the province of *Epirus Nova*. The city is also famous for the missionary activity of St. Clement, a student of St. Cyril. It played as well an essential role in the religious politics of the emperors – as

bishopric it was a counterweight to the Serbian church, which was especially used by the emperor Michael VIII, who aspired to rebuild the Empire weakened by the events of the Fourth Crusade.

In the second part of his lecture Dr. Popović presented briefly the preserved or reconstructed monuments of the old city of Ohrid: the city walls with three gates, the churches of hospitals – and what's interesting separated for men and women, the church of St. Sophia, St. John Kaneo, the mosque of sultan Mehmed, having been built on the ruins of the monastery, from which St. Clement conducted his mission, and finally the ruins of the ancient theatre and the citadel from the late Middle Ages, solicitously rebuilt in the 1990s. Unfortunately, not all of the 365 churches have survived, according to legend this was the number of churches the city possessed in order to be able to celebrate the mass in a different church on every day of the year ...



The most interesting part was the presentation of photographs of Ohrid's monuments ...

An important part of the lecture was the comparison between the condition of the buildings in the 1970s and the 1980s with the present-day status. Intriguing is the solicitude of reconstructions conducted mainly in the 1990s, at the times, when the Balkans were devoured by heavy war. It was rightly noticed during the discussion that these monuments play different roles in the life of the inhabitants – starting with religious functions, through strictly pragmatic ones (i. e. as auditorium for occasional meetings or concerts), finishing by expressing the pride of the local people concerning the rich history of the ancestors. There is no way to refuse their charm, although, unfortunately, reconstructions or renovations were

often carried out according to the inventiveness of artists and historians, instead of reliable sources.



... among which the most impressive is St. Sophia's church ...



... and the delightful church of St. John Kaneo located on a small peninsula, on the periphery of the city.

It is good that an opportunity exists at the University – at least once for a while – to take a part in such a lecture. It is a pity that neither the Chair of Byzantine Studies nor the Chair of Ancient History of the Jagiellonian University spoil Cracovians with such lectures and that the author had to be invited from abroad. Maybe setting up – planned since years – a Chair of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies at the Institute of Classical Philology will change it.

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