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RESEARCH POTENTIAL OF SKOPJE FORTRESS FOR OTTOMAN ARCHAEOLOGY

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Abstract: *Ottoman presence in the Balkans has influenced its life on different levels. Its existence is present in our heritage in various forms and elements of everyday life. Due to the political and ideological circumstances in the recent past, archaeology was not involved in the research of Ottoman past to the extent that it corresponds to the significance of the material remains. The idea that written sources contain sufficient information was the answer to the lack of Ottoman archaeology. In the recent decades, this view has changed and several steps were made as an impetus of the beginning of Ottoman archaeology in the Balkan region. These steps were made as a part of projects dealing with broader topics but enabled the researchers to access the archaeological remains from the Ottoman period and publish first systematic reviews of the pottery assemblages and architectural remains. The aim of this paper is to present the first steps that have been made at the Skopje fortress that reveal it as a precious source not only for the reconstruction and interpretation of the Ottoman period on the location itself, but also for the reconstruction of its role in the Ottoman society and in the wider region in that period.*

Key words: Ottoman archaeology, Skopje fortress, material culture, pottery analysis

Introduction – Ottoman archaeology in the Balkans in short

Centuries of the Ottoman presence in the Balkan region have vastly influenced its life on different levels. To the greater or minor extent, its existence is present in our heritage in various forms and elements of everyday life, such as architecture, culinary traditions, and language, to name just a few. Due to the political and ideological circumstances in the recent past, until the last decades, archaeology was not involved and has not developed in the research of Ottoman past. From the general point of view Ottoman period was perceived with negative connotations, which was silently accepted in the field of archaeology and led to the fact that it was not a peri-

od worth of systematic research, especially in the comparison with previous, more attractive and ideologically distant periods.¹

Archaeological research of the complex sites and remains throughout the Balkans, in most cases, confirming continuous or at least frequent use, from the prehistory to the present, revealed a great number of structures and small finds from the Ottoman period. Taken in consideration, that these cover a large time span of few centuries, by ignoring their existence and focusing publications and further research goals on the material culture, perceived as more “attractive” and “important” the great part of the history of many settlements was neglected and has taken the archaeology of the Ottoman past into oblivion until the recent decades. The research context developed a contradictory situation of Ottoman archaeology, on the one hand by its presence as a part of the field research and its material culture taking place in the museum depots, and on the other hand by its absence from the archaeological scientific research, specialisation and publication. At the same time, the research of the Ottoman heritage was included into research in the fields of art history, architecture, and history, where the absence of archaeological data created an unnecessary knowledge gap especially in the reconstruction and understanding of the everyday life and all the processes affiliated with it, such as production, trade or transfer of material and cultural influences. Besides the above mentioned, the idea that written sources contain sufficient information for the reconstruction of life during the Ottoman times was present as the answer and the argument to the lack or no effort from archaeologists on this topic and for the long-lasting nonexistence of the Ottoman archaeology.

In the recent decades, this view has changed and several steps were made as an impetus of the beginning of Ottoman archaeology in the Balkan region. These steps were made as a part of projects dealing with broader topics but enabled the researchers to access the archaeological remains from the Ottoman period and publish first systematic reviews, mainly of the pottery assemblages, underwater and architectural remains in Greece, Albania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia and Bosnia.² These steps also laid grounds for the more focused research plans and excavations, that have brought new information about the life during Ottoman times, showing the potential of archaeological research for the reconstruction and interpretation of this part of our past.³

¹ U. Baram, L. Carroll, 2000, 3-36; J. L. Bintliff, 2007, 222-236; F. Dikkaya, 2017, 295-311; P. Novaković, 2014; J. Vroom, 2003; J. Vroom, 2013, 79-110.

² C. Beltrame, S. Gelichi, I. Miholjek, 2014; V. Bikić, 2007, 515-522; V. Bikić, 1999, 145-154; V. Bikić, 2003; M. Guštin, V. Bikić, Z. Mileusnić, 2008; I. Miholjek, V. Zmaić Kralj, 2015; A. Petersen, 2015, 40; A. Petersen, *Ottoman* 2017, 17; A. K. Vionis, 2005, 172-185; A. K. Vionis, 2016, 353-384; Vroom, 1998, 131-164.

³ A. Petersen, *Introduction* 2017; J. Živković, V. Bikić, M. Georgakopoulou, 2017, 132-144.

First steps – International project as a “window of opportunity” for Ottoman archaeology

The complex study of Old Bar in Montenegro presents one of the reference works for research and development of the structure of the cities, social and economic processes, political relations and influence of many different aspects of everyday life along the Adriatic coast and in the Balkans, covering all the periods of the settlement, as documented in the archaeological record. Life in Old Bar ceased in 1878. After almost one hundred years, the town was revived thanks to research and restoration projects of Đurde Bošković who led large systematic architectural research and published the results in a comprehensive monograph⁴ that opened up the possibility for a scientific introduction to the past of Old Bar. Some of the architecture was completely destroyed by the earthquake in the year 1973. Later efforts were focused on the conservation of architecture of greater significance and potential, while most of the town was left to deterioration.

In 2004, on the initiative of the Heritage Museum in Bar, a group of researchers led by university professors from Venice (Sauro Gelichi), Innsbruck (Konrad Spindler) and Koper (Mitja Guštin), in collaboration with specialists for the Ottoman material culture (Vesna Bikić) joined the project that included research of Old Bar. The research was a part of the international project *The Heritage of Serenissima*, with the main focus on the material culture of the long-lasting Venetian presence. The first joint research of the town initiated the revision of its cultural-historical remains, focusing on the documentation of the architecture and revision of the previously excavated small finds, which included a large amount of finds from the Ottoman period.⁵ The project activities consisted of the archaeological excavation, topography, archaeology of masonry and revision of previously obtained archaeological material.⁶ It has also focused on the conservation of the finds. The project continued in succession during the following years, and the reports were published after every campaign, resulting in the sequence of new publications about Old Bar.⁷

The book *Ottoman times, The Story of Stari Bar*⁸ was the result of a wide revision of the archaeological inventory of Old Bar. The publication has opened a series of questions considering the life of a town during the long period of Ottoman administration. The questions are based on the research of the archaeological material collected during the construction and rebuilding, therefore the data that is usually

⁴ Đ. Bošković, 1962.

⁵ S. Gelichi, M. Guštin, 2005; M. Guštin, S. Gelichi, K. Spindler, 2006.

⁶ S. Gelichi, 2006, 55-82; 186-191; S. Gelichi, 2008, 83-96; M. Guštin, S. Gelichi, K. Spindler, 2006, 181-186.

⁷ M. Zagarčanin, 2004; S. Gelichi, M. Guštin, 2005; S. Gelichi, 2006; S. Gelichi, 2008; M. Guštin, V. Bikić, Z. Mileusnić, 2008; S. Gelichi, M. Zagarčanin, 2013.

⁸ M. Guštin, V. Bikić, Z. Mileusnić, 2008.

acquired by archaeological methods are missing. Considering the fact that at the time of publication other published referential sites or contexts were rare or scarce, materials from Old Bar was systematically presented with an aim to be useful for further research on that locality, as well as for other sites of a similar history and the questions of their structure, architecture, epigraphic monuments, the analysis of pottery and metal objects, etc. Topics dealing with the town of Old Bar present the starting point for the research of Balkan communities during the Ottoman period. The intention was to use the example of this town to show the lifestyle in one particular period, which has been poorly researched in the Balkan area. It gives an insight into the numerous and various finds which the spirit of the great Ottoman Empire has introduced to the town.

The step ahead was already reached in Old Bar by the excavation of the Ottoman house during the research campaigns from the year 2005 to 2007.⁹ By the contemporary methodological approach, the thorough research of the architectural structure used in the period prior to the introduction of Ottoman administration and as well in the Ottoman period was performed. Results of the research were published in the report that offers the insight into changes of a certain town's structure through the times and places its development into the development of the town as a whole. At the same time analysis of small finds with well-documented stratigraphy and well-interpreted sequence offer the first scientific argument for the interpretation of pottery use, production and trade and as the correction tool for the previously performed research of finds from non-stratified or not documented contexts.¹⁰ The archaeological research was accompanied by the analysis of an important aspect of town's economy during ottoman administration – the olive oil production which presents the step further in the research of town's economy and potential economic activities in interaction with its surrounding territories.¹¹

These new approaches and results are greatly appreciated since they present the establishment of the scientific research using contemporary research methodology of the Ottoman heritage in the Balkans. The material from Old Bar presents the basis for researching the Ottoman period. The set of changes determined in the period of Ottoman rule, together with the data from written documents and old photographs, are telling enough to serve as a guide, maybe even as encouragement for publishing the materials from other excavations in the region.

⁹ S. Gelichi, 2006; S. Gelichi, 2008; S. Gelichi, M. Zagarčanin, 2013.

¹⁰ S. Gelichi, 2006, 83-96; S. Gelichi, 2008, 16-32; 33-40.

¹¹ S. Gelichi, 2008, 93-100.

Skopje Fortress archaeological site¹²

The Skopje Fortress holds the most prominent position in the central area of the city of Skopje. It stands on the long ridge of sediment sandstone that stretches along the east bank of the Vardar, on its southern, most prominent part. It is a location where the vast number of archaeological and preservation archaeological interventions took place. The permanent and continuous damage and violations of the archaeological layers result in very complex stratigraphic sequence and demanding excavations.

Almost all cultural and political history of the city since prehistoric times up to the 1963 earthquake is related to it. It was inhabited as a settlement in the Eneolithic period and periodically in the periods of Bronze and Iron Age. The highest settlement intensity was recorded in Middle Ages when the fortress functioned as the Upper Town of medieval Skopje. Its uninterrupted development as an urban centre began approximately in the late 10th century. At least three settlements were consecutively built since then: the first between the 10th and 13th or 14th centuries, the second between the 14th and 17th centuries and the third between the 18th and 20th centuries.

The fortress was originally protected with high-quality masonry ramparts, which completely encircle the area, forming a unique fortification system built according to the highest standards and building techniques of the period. The numerous coins from the 10th and 11th centuries, burials on the interior side of the south rampart and small finds dating from the same period are suggesting a large military *castrum*.

Along the south rampart, remains of numerous wooden structures with waste pits, hearths, kilns and traces of metallurgical activity, warehouses and workshops, i.e. blacksmith shops have been discovered. Of special significance for this city was the south entrance to the fortress, with all the accompanying elements. It continued to be used and was repaired several times in the following centuries as the main entrance, both to the later mediaeval and early Ottoman fortress.

The cultural strata of the settlement from the 12th and 13th centuries, or from the time of the reign of the Comnenus dynasty, reflect the role of Skopje as a genuine centre of the wider Balkan region, as supported by numerous finds of lead seals, coins, remains of metallurgy and pottery manufacture, and other finds from daily life.

¹² The review of the archaeological field research and historical interpretation is based on the following publications: M. Hadji-Maneva, 2008. D. Mitrevski, 2008, 16-19; D. Mitrevski, 2010, 3-18; Z. Pavlov, 2009; *Skopska tvrđina*, 2007.

In the course of the 13th century, life in Skopje's Upper Town continued with the same intensity. The ramparts were reconstructed and surrounded an entirely new urban area, while the city was further fortified with surrounding walls and the so-called Lower Town (*suburbium*). A church with a cross-shaped interior and a necropolis around it was discovered on the highest and most dominant part of the Fortress, in the southeast part of the city. According to written records, other contemporary churches in the Fortress existed as well.

In 1391, Skopje was captured by the Ottomans resulting in the destructions of the city and the ramparts. Archaeological research revealed later renewal of the crown of the medieval wall and numerous foundations of stone buildings, warehouses, workshops and barracks, probably in use by the Ottoman military.

The southern gate was reconstructed for the new military needs. The two lateral towers were expanded and erected in the upper sections, and the space in between was closed with a new wall. A new passage was set, half-way narrowed with a threshold erected at about 2.50 m higher than the previous one. The street along the wall (*via sagularis*) was enclosed by wall-railing and a new main entrance street which leads straight to the top, to the higher parts, in the yet unexplored area of the terrain. The inventory in the discovered constructions from this time documents activities common for a fortress of this character.

The border of the Ottoman Empire was soon moved to the north and the Skopje Fortress lost its military-strategic significance, except for being a barracks area for a small military crew. In the north-eastern part of the fortress numerous pits dating from this period were found which were used for extracting clay, and later as waste pits filled with the waste from the workshops. Small finds comprise of items for domestic use, animal bones, broken iron tools, slag from metal melting, candlesticks, pottery production waste and decorative glazed tiles for fireplaces.

The sultans Bayezid I (1389-1402) and Mehmed II (1444-1481) are the first Ottoman rulers confirmed by numismatic evidence. The following centuries of Ottoman dominion show lack of coin circulation on the Skopje Fortress.

In the autumn of 1689, the Austrian army led by Piccolomini took over Skopje. The military report sent to the emperor in Vienna says that the Skopje Fortress was semi-demolished, poorly defended with 12 neglected towers and a weak defence trench (to the east). It took only 400 horsemen to conquer the fortress in one assault. This report is quite opposite of the poetic account left by Evliya Çelebi from the same period.¹⁵ The archaeological finds, discovered by means of archaeological research confirm the Piccolomini report.

¹⁵ E. Čelebi, 1979, 282-293.

An inscription built into the eastern wall dating from 1700, mentions a renewal of the Fortress, and archaeology also confirms it. In front of the front eastern and southern wall, the new surrounding wall, or fore-wall was built, with new towers and embrasures. On the western end of the surrounding wall a new entrance was made towards the river Vardar, as well as a new main access to the Fortress through a monumental ramp and a gate which led from the sub-city area – the Bazaar through the old eastern wall. Archaeological finds document a continuation of the military character of the Fortress. Near the south-eastern tower remains of blacksmiths were found and old guns, prepared for melting and reforging, many of them half melted. Frequent finds from this period are the numerous ceramic pipes.

Skopje Fortress – further development of Ottoman archaeology in the Balkans

The archaeological project at Skopje Fortress was part of the program of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski. The complete research of the archaeological levels was directly financed by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, under the coordination of Pasko Kuzman, Director of the Office for Cultural Heritage Protection.¹⁴

The archaeological project at the Skopje Fortress had two phases: the first phase (2007-2008) was entitled *Systematic Archaeological Excavation, Conservation and Rehabilitation of the South-West Fortification Wall and Towers on Skopje Fortress*. The second phase (2009) was entitled *Systematic Archaeological Excavation, Conservation and Rehabilitation of Skopje Fortress*.¹⁵ The successfully implemented field research resulted in a vast corpus of archaeological material from the Ottoman period. Architectural remains and abundant small finds have an extremely high interpretative value for the reconstruction of historical occurrences at a local level, as well as the framework of the common economic and social dynamics during the time of the Ottoman administration. The value of such a corpus is also in the contemporary archaeological research methods which enable analyses of the material from defined contexts.

Due to the extent and cultural-historical significance of the excavated material, there was a need to shape a special project which would enable a quality evaluation of the archaeological material and the presentation of the results of various interdisciplinary analyses in a final form through scientific monographs and public presentations of the results.

An opportunity to realize the evaluation of the heterogeneous material from the Ottoman period is through an international project, from September 2010 to June 2012, bringing together field researchers from the Department of Art History

¹⁴ D. Mitrevski, 2008, 16-19; M. Guštin, 2010, 33-38.

¹⁵ M. Guštin, 2010, 33-38.

and Archaeology of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Cyril and Methodius in Skopje, the Muzeot na grad Skopje, specialists from the Institute for Mediterranean Heritage of the Science and Research Centre Koper of the University of Primorska, and the Institute of Archaeology of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, as well as others.

The same group of researchers, which has worked in Montenegro, has visited the Skopje Fortress in 2010 and 2011. In collaboration with the Macedonian archaeologists, they have identified, catalogued and documented the Ottoman material remains, mostly small finds, acquired during the previous and ongoing archaeological excavations of the Skopje Fortress. As the basis for the future research goals, an introductory booklet was published, focusing on the research potential of the Skopje Fortress for the Ottoman Archaeology, and at the same time being an alert for the state of the research, referring to it as to heritage that is disappearing or no longer exists (in archaeological memory) by the title “Kale. The Fortress of Skopje. Vestiges of Ottoman times”.¹⁶ In the publication, an overview of the ceramic materials was presented.¹⁷

The Skopje Fortress has, like other strategically marked points on the Balkan Peninsula, a strong cultural horizon from the period of Ottoman rule, consisting of mostly ceramic vessels. The collected material is impressive in its number and variety. The wide array of ceramic vessels is customary for Ottoman fortresses, with the reasons for this being, in essence, economic. Firstly, these are consumer goods of a predominantly very low price, in contrast to e.g. copper vessels, which are also in everyday household use. The abundance of ceramic vessels is in any case connected to the number of soldiers and the length of stay of the Turkish military garrisons – obviously, for over 500 years, there was a continuous supply of new ceramic vessels to replace broken and damaged pieces.

When searching for characteristics of the ceramic ware an important guideline is the chronology of the Ottoman period on the Skopje Fortress spanning two periods - the Middle Ages and the Modern era. This has evidently influenced the overall style of the vessels through time. In the conquered Skopje the Ottomans found the Byzantine cultural milieu, which was not unknown to them. On the contrary, Byzantine heritage was in large part already built into the Ottoman arts and crafts, therefore, we do not notice a discontinuity in the technology or decoration.

Consequently, the ceramic ware from the first period of Ottoman rule - from the end of the 14th to the end of the 15th century - has strong characteristics of Balkan style based on Byzantine heritage. At the beginning of the 16th century occurs a

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ V. Bikić, Z. Mileusnić, 2010, 19-31.

change in the ceramic production, which becomes increasingly standardised, especially in the form and size of the vessels.¹⁸ This is at any rate connected to technological advancements in pottery production and the strong economic basis of the Ottoman Empire supporting the modernisation of this process. These changes are followed also by a simplification in the decoration, largely reduced to simple, almost schematic floral motifs. Therefore, the ceramic ware of this period, the 16th and 17th centuries, is fairly similar in all Balkan fortresses and towns, while still keeping certain particularities.¹⁹ It seems that the ceramic ware from the Skopje fortress is recognisable from a number of different water jugs and decoration painted in white water-thinned clay. The subsequent transformation of the vessels during the 18th and 19th centuries is not as conspicuous, as it follows the same general line, with perhaps the greatest change in the decoration and colour scale of the glazed ware - a predominance of brown and green painted linear motifs on a yellow background.

Most numerous among the ceramic kitchenware are pots, mostly of a medium volume with a handle. Judging by the burn marks, the pots were used to cook meals on an open fireplace. It is not difficult to imagine that people also ate from the same pots, with several soldiers spooning their meals from the pot at the same time. In this case, the pot would be a measure for porridge or broth for two to three soldiers. Aside from the pots, various water vessels were also found in kitchens. A supply of water used to wash the groceries and cook the meals, often also to clean the kitchen, was held in jugs and pitchers. Smaller vessels - pitchers and cups - could have been used for measuring amounts of water and oil.

The appearance and characteristics of ceramic tableware are best illustrated by bowls and jugs. Most vessels are for everyday use and are of a similar quality, mostly monochrome glazed. The bowls are predominantly hemispherical with the receptacle on a low foot. Special attention is drawn to a group of around 10 very similar vessels with a white coating and sporadic red painted bands for their number as well as for the doubts concerning their appearance. Namely, with regard to their expected purpose, they seem unfinished, like the protective surface glaze is missing. Very interesting are the various water vessels, which are also very numerous. We are under the impression that the water vessels, especially the jugs, were decorated more frequently than bowls, with simple linear white-painted motifs. Likewise, there is also one group of pitchers with a red coating on the exterior surface. Aside from the everyday ware, there are also some luxury vessels from the Ottoman contexts. They are characterised by their quality and the engraved (*sgraffito*) or multi-colour decoration. Similarly, there are some true artistic masterpieces made in the

¹⁸ V. Bikić, 2017, 207-216.

¹⁹ J. Vroom, 2000, 199-216; J. Vroom, 2003; V. Bikić, 2003, 161-164.

most prominent Ottoman pottery centre in Iznik, Anatolia. These pieces have a distinct floral, richly coloured decoration.²⁰

Numerous other finds also testify to the everyday life in Skopje Fortress, e.g. ceramic pipes, metal vessels, parts of weapons or bronze and silver coins, which give a good insight into the monetary politics of the period and the trade routes, through which these products, but also the ceramic ware, came to the Ottoman community in Skopje.

Conclusion

Everyday life leaves a rich trail in the archaeological record. Skopje Fortress, a fortress on a hill overlooking the town centre, is likewise a witness to life's longevity, with over 500 years under the Ottoman rule. Numerous structures of settlement buildings reflect the heterogeneous and ever new and different needs of their inhabitants, trying to adequately protect the area on the strategically positioned hilltop from the outside, while also, as well as possible, arrange and make good use of the interior. These aspirations and their realisation were preserved in a thick layer of the archaeological record as built constructions, mounds and pits in superposition or intersecting each other. In this way, at Skopje Fortress an increasingly complex stratigraphy was formed through the ages, which demands special attention from the archaeologist during excavation and documentation, and especially during comprehension and interpretation of the excavated site.

Such a complex stratigraphic situation also gives special character and weight of interpretation of everyday life in the fortress to work with the movable material. Closed contexts enable us to comprehend a palette of different finds describing the life in a certain period or even in a specific structure through their characteristics. However, there are also many serious problems to correctly defining and dating the material, as well as determining the reciprocal relations between the individual groups of objects, when dealing with layers made by filling or levelling. In any case, already a passing glance reveals that the work on the fragmented and numerous material from Skopje Fortress represents a great challenge and should be approached systematically and with a minutely structured methodology.

Apart from numerous structures, the long-lasting period of Ottoman rule left its trace also in the shape of numerous and varied movable finds of mostly ceramic and metal objects. Their detailed analysis can reflect everyday life on various social levels, e.g. the everyday life of an individual or a community, as well as understanding different aspects of life - the social, economic, military strategic, etc. A detail-

²⁰ e.g. N. Atasoy, J. Raby, 1989; J. Carswell, 1998; J. Živković, V. Bikić, M. Georgakopoulou, 2017, 132-144.

ed analysis together with the aforementioned systematic approach and structured methodology demands much time. Therefore, only very characteristic objects enabling a good general understanding of the life under the Ottoman rule were presented in the first publication, with the description of everyday life based on a review of characteristic groups of finds, like ceramic ware, especially vessels and pipes, and metal finds, with special emphasis on metal vessels, jewellery and coins.

Documented material culture, along with the still standing architecture presents a precious source not only for the reconstruction and interpretation of the Ottoman period on Skopje fortress but also for the reconstruction of its role in the Ottoman society and in the wider region in that period. Therefore, already completed archaeological excavation, documentation, primary analysis and publication have laid good grounds for the future systematic study of the Skopje Fortress with an aim of laying grounds for the archaeological specialization in the field of Ottoman archaeology in the country, which would be of a great importance for the archaeological science in the Balkan region. The research results should be reflected in a suitable promotion and presentation of this valuable archaeological material in the museum facilities in Skopje, enabling the public an insight into more than 500 years of the town's history. Therefore, cooperation between the project research working group and the team responsible for the public display is crucial for the quality of the museum installation.

Зринка МИЛЕУСНИЌ
Весна БИКИЌ

ИСТРАЖУВАЧКИОТ ПОТЕНЦИЈАЛ НА СКОПСКАТА ТВРДИНА ЗА ОСМАНЛИСКАТА АРХЕОЛОГИЈА

Резиме

Вековите на османлиско присуство во балканскиот регион во голема мерка влијаеле врз овдешниот живот на различни нивоа. Во поголема или помала мера, Османлиската империја оставила трагови врз нашето наследство во различни форми и елементи од секојдневниот живот. Едни од тие елементи се архитектурата, кулинарските традиции и јазикот. Поради политичките и идеолошките околности во блиското минато, археологијата не била вклучена во истражувањето на османлиското минато. Покрај споменатите причини, идејата дека пишаните извори содржат доволно информации за реконструкција на животот во османлиските времиња, била присутна како изговор за премал или никаков труд во областа на османлиската археологија. Во последниве неколку децении овој став се менува. Направени беа некои чекори како поттик за почеток на османлиската археологија во балканскиот регион. Овие чекори беа направени како дел од проектите кои се занимаваат со пошироки теми, но им овозможуваат на истражувачите да пристапат кон археолошките остатоци од османлискиот период и да ги објават резултатите на првите систематски прегледи, главно, од керамичките збирки и архитектонските остатоци. Овие чекори исто така поставија и основи за пофокусирани истражувачки планови и ископувања, кои донесоа нови информации за животот за време на Османлиската империја, покажувајќи го притоа големиот потенцијал на археолошките истражувања во процесот на реконструкција и интерпретација на овој, долго игнориран дел од нашето минато. Истата група истражувачи, кои работеа на овие први публикации, ја посетија Скопската тврдина во 2010 година и во соработка со македонските археолози ги идентификуваа, каталогизираа и документираа материјалните остатоци добиени за време на претходните, како и на тековните археолошки ископувања во Скопската тврдина. Исто така беше објавена и воведна брошура со фокус врз потенцијалот на анализа на керамиката. Документираната материјална култура и постоечката архитектура претставуваат драгоцен извор, не само за реконструкција и интерпретација на османлискиот период во Скопската тврдина, туку и за реконструкција на нејзината улога во османлиското општество и во поширокиот регион во тој период.

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