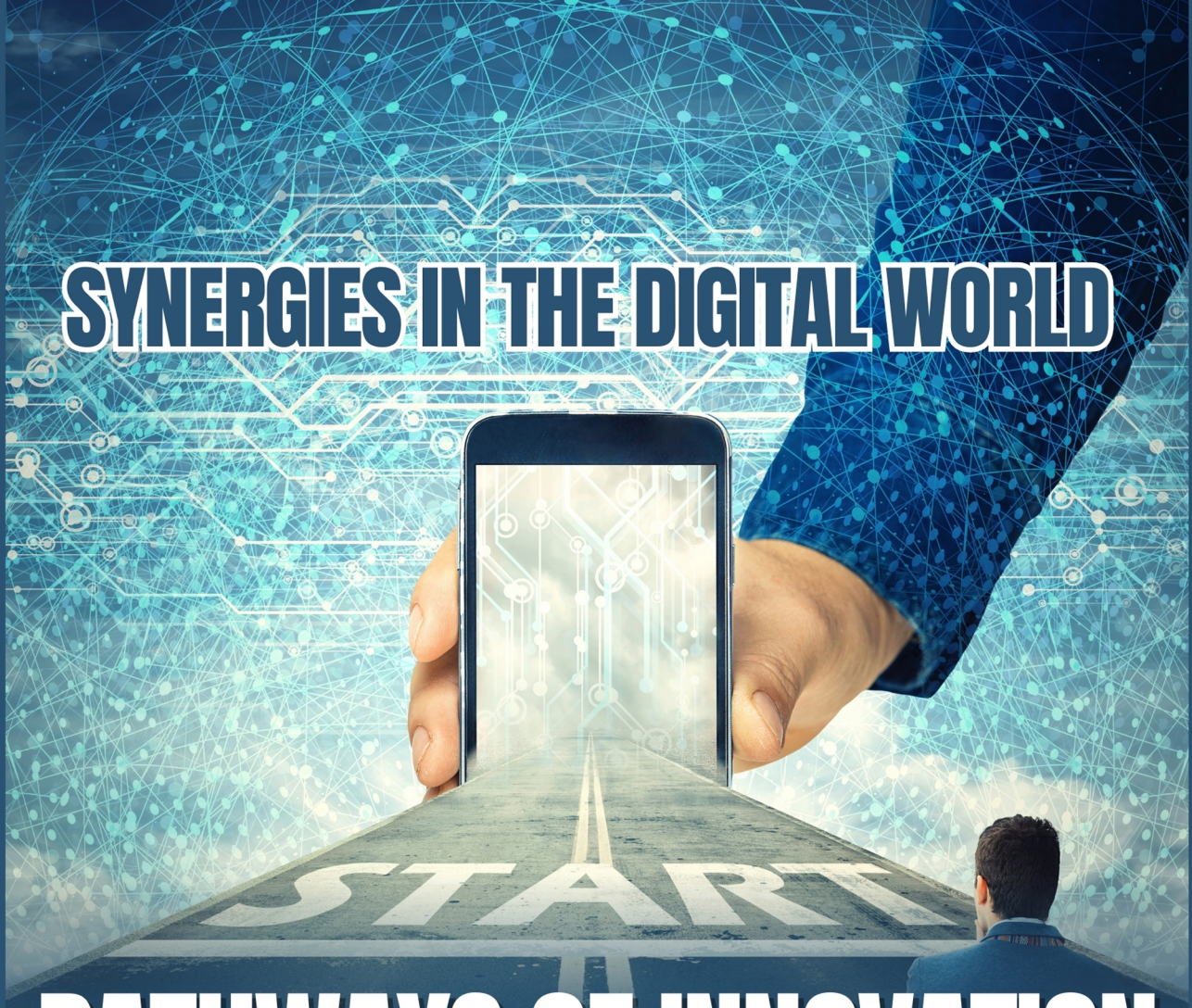
SYNERGIES IN THE DIGITAL WORLD



PATHWAYS OF INNOVATION

ЗА БУКВИТЕ
Зборникнех

ROUND TABLE

"SYNERGIES IN THE DIGITAL WORLD –
PATHWAYS OF INNOVATION"

14 – 18 April 2025
Doha, Qatar

ЗА БУКВИТЕ
О ПИСМЕНЕХЪ

The collection "Synergies in the Digital World – Pathways of Innovation", the result of a scientific symposium (round table), includes scientific work (papers, articles, scientific communications) that present various aspects related to international business, socialization of cultural heritage, cultural tourism, innovations, new technologies, aspects of national security in the context of globalization.

The authors bear full responsibility for the content of their papers and the opinions expressed therein, and this can in no way be taken as the position of the Bulgarian Science Fund or the Ministry of Education and Science.

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CONGRATULATORY ADDRESS

To the Esteemed Organizers of "Synergies in the Digital World – Pathways of Innovation" Round Table

Distinguished Organizers,
Dear Participants and Guests,
Esteemed Colleagues,

It is both an honour and a privilege to extend a warm welcome to you at this significant conference, which unites leading experts, experienced researchers, and enthusiasts in the domain of digital innovation. Your presence here underscores your dedication and commitment to the advancement and pioneering spirit within our community.

The conference offers a distinctive opportunity to engage in the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and experiences, as well as to establish new partnerships and collaborations. In this context, I believe that the conference will be a valuable academic platform for targeted subject discussions, as evidenced by the recently formed partnership between leading universities in Bulgaria and Qatar such as The University of Library Studies and Information Technologies (ULSIT) and Al Rayyan International University College (ARIU) in partnership with the University of Derby.

I am confident that in the forthcoming days, we will have the chance to attend inspiring presentations, participate in engaging discussions, and expand our horizons for both our professional and personal development.

It is of paramount importance to emphasize the significance of this conference within the context of innovation in the digital world and education. In the present-day environment, technology assumes a crucial role in transforming educational processes and methodologies. This conference will serve as a valuable platform to exchange the latest trends and best practices, regarding the utilization of digital tools and resources, thereby enhancing the quality of learning and adequately preparing our students for the challenges of the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all who have contributed to the organization of this event. Your diligent efforts and dedication have been instrumental in making this conference both possible and successful.

I wish all participants a productive and inspiring experience, filled with valuable ideas and memorable moments. May this conference serve as a source of inspiration and motivation for our future endeavours!

Respectfully,
Plamen Delev
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
of the Republic of Bulgaria to the State of Qatar

PAPERS

MILITARY MONUMENTS IN THE MODERN INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

Antoniy Stanimirov, Arsini Kolev
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Abstract: *This article examines the list of created monuments dedicated to the Balkan Wars in Southeastern Bulgaria and their implementation in the modern information system. Special attention is paid to the modern understanding and appreciation of the dedication of Bulgarian heroes to their lives in the name of the motherland. Information technologies offer great opportunities for the protection, preservation and promotion of cultural memory in the context of globalization and the spread of cultural memory. A general SWOT analysis of monuments in the region was also made and is specifically designed to study historical tourist routes, which, in turn, allows for their successful integration into modern society and as an educational model with teenagers.*
Keywords: *cultural heritage, war monuments, Balkan wars, tourist march, information technologies.*

INTRODUCTION

Military monuments are an important and valuable cultural resource. Modern information technologies offer great opportunities for creating a database, which, in turn, will help significantly to preserve historical memory, as, for example, in the representation of events related to wars and conflicts. It is often assumed that military monuments are part of the urban environment and cultural elements, but it is most common to pay attention to them in two cases-either during the celebration of historical memory or when they are vandalized. In particular, military monuments are present in the information environment, but in different forms. This form is multi-faceted, such as marking an anniversary from the Balkan War, making a report on military monuments dedicated to that war. This report is usually distributed via a television channel, radio or the most commonly used platform at the moment – online editions. This interaction is currently extremely important, because it is the only way to reach a wider range of people.

Why are military monuments important?

Military monuments are a tangible expression of the memory of nations. They present a wealth of physical evidence that fixes the memory of events directly related to cultural identity. The traditional mass understanding of military monuments is that they are built in order to perpetuate the memory of important historical events and personalities, as well as that ability to help create national unity and patriotism, but only in some cases. In this regard, it should be borne in mind that there are differences in how each person perceives and interprets and attaches great importance to these monuments. In the modern world, these monuments should not be left out of the global information environment. Digital technologies, social and online

platforms create the necessary parameters for military monuments to be fully integrated into the information environment. This need can be explained by the fact that society increasingly needs information that is available and can be transmitted online. (Cameron, F. & Kenderdine, S. (2007).

The perception of military monuments in the context of the modern information environment is a continuous process. Currently, digital technologies and online platforms on the Internet create the prerequisites for rethinking and transforming the image for military monuments. At first, monuments were only physical (material) objects that could be viewed exclusively on the spot. However, today, with the help of information technologies and rich color from various online sources of information-websites, social networks, virtual tours, mobile applications – almost unlimited opportunities are created for people from anywhere in the world to acquaint themselves with the history of these monuments, as well as participate in helping information integration through lengthy public discussions. (Lozano, J.& Brown, M.(2015).

A look at information tubes and the formulation of hypotheses

A very important aspect that can be marked as basic is the analysis of the collected information for monuments before it is transmitted. An event that occurs of information e.g. a collection of data, facts, stories, etc. needs to be carefully analyzed in order to accurately determine its meaning, as well as the meaning that it carries. It is important to note that the analysis is not only a description, and not a collection of data, but is an integral part of the process of information integration of military monuments in the context of modern information flow. The need is based on the fact that information systems still cannot do qualitative analysis, but to a person, since they work with information that is initially indicated to them, and this information must be updated constantly as well as the analysis of interpretation, about the importance of already created information. (Macdonald, S. (2013).

As a rule, each of us perceives information in our own way, strictly individual, so when information is sent through various information sources, it is necessary to observe the principle of objectivity. Because when preparing material that is based on the results of this research, whether it is an article or a report, the authors must observe the principle of objectivity. It is very important to be one with passion and self-forgetfulness. In this sense, information should be analyzed and interpreted correctly, rather than selectively or in accordance with the law. An important component is to present all the information, not just the one that suits the preliminary hypotheses. (Seitel, P. (2012).

Conditions for developing a hypothesis are created independently on the basis of objective analysis. In this case, with the topic of military monuments, many subjective factors are found to affect a person, which, unfortunately, create very serious difficulties, especially when it comes to their information integration. There are some serious subjective information flows, especially when it comes to monuments whose status is not a certain legal one. This is the reason why it is difficult to inter-

pret them, because a large flow of information causes confusion. We must take into account the fact that the dynamics with which the world is changing may negatively affect the way these monuments are perceived. (Smith 2006).

Specific examples can be provided, for example, with the United States of America and numerous actions to eliminate historical monuments that are directly related to robowaring. In this case, the tension over this issue seriously divides American society, and social networks play the role of a "conduit" into which subjective information is distributed, which ultimately contributes to the elimination of these monuments. Another example can be given with monuments from the countries of the former socialist camp. Changes after 1989. In Eastern Europe, I questioned whether these monuments are really directly related to the ideology of communism and socialism. And now this issue is exacerbating after the recent armed conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. In the case of many actions against these monuments, they have something in common –the monuments are used as a "protest tribune", even vandalism.

Bulgaria is also not an exception and is also part of this process. In Bulgaria, however, the topic is highly political in nature, and these political and social views differ greatly. Military monuments in Bulgaria are built as a result of wars and conflicts and can currently be affected in the process of delegitimization in the modern information environment. This happens, as a rule, when there are social and political unrest that can call into question their legitimacy. Unfortunately, these unproductive processes can be further inflamed as a result of media reflection to create and launch public campaigns to eliminate monuments or insist on revising their status. This storm can seriously endanger cultural heritage and can create additional and unnecessary social tensions between individual social groups.

For an objective interpretation of military monuments in the modern information environment, the following principles and values have to be observed:

- ▷Respect for all monuments, regardless of what historical period they reflect;
- ▷Respect for the opinions of all social groups that relate to them;
- ▷Non-discrimination in any form;
- ▷Providing opportunities for objective media coverage;
- ▷Capacity building (for example, through: campaigns, projects, promotion of public discussions);
- ▷Creating a platform for active inclusion in public life.

For the purposes of this study, a SWOT analysis was prepared and all the results obtained showed that military monuments can be and are extremely important to be included in the new information environment. The prerequisites are set out in the table.

Strengths 1. Historical significance of military monuments is an important element of cultural and historical heritage. Monuments are physical carriers of the memory of important historical events, including celebrities, personnel that are important for the history of the nation; 2. Educational function-Military monuments serve as sources of information and educational resources for future generations and are an important capital that helps form national identity and patriotism; 3.Tourist resource – Military monuments can serve as a source of information and educational resources for future generations. 4. National and international initiatives – in the modern information environment, they provide conditions for the global dissemination of information for monuments and can create platforms and initiatives that can be used for promotion, storage and conservation.	**Weaknesses** 1. Problems with supporting military monuments are related to the fact that many of them are exposed to natural conditions, and, unfortunately, a common problem is the lack of sufficient funds for their support and restoration; 2. Disputes related to symbols – Some military monuments can cause disputes because of the symbols they represent. 3. Incomplete or unbiased information – The public may be completely unaware of the world-historical significance and value of these monuments, what to use, for self-serving purposes and used in the context of political and social conditions that do not allow the use of these monuments in this regard. The public may always correspond to the official position;
Opportunities 1. Digitization and virtual tours-Digitization and the opportunities it offers create unlimited opportunities for creating virtual tours, applications, projects, etc., which creates new opportunities and prospects for global promotion and accessibility; 2. Introduction of new educational forms – Modern information technologies can be used to create educational programs that can be used in the following areas: video, mobile and Internet applications, and this increases the opportunity for young generations to engage more actively with the field of management; 3. Development in the context of globalization-Globalization shapes and creates issues related to human rights and aims to encourage international cooperation in the field of cultural heritage. Organizations such as UNESCO and ICOMOS are part of this process.	**Threats** 1. Distortion of historical facts – the modern information environment and the growing influence of social networks and platforms, significantly increase the risk of information manipulation. This may lead to distortion of historical facts and create misconceptions about the significance of the monuments; 2. Possible attacks and vandalism – Military monuments often become the target of vandalism and targeted attacks by various public groups or individuals who disagree with their symbolism and meaning. 3. Politically charged, military monuments easily turn into "tools/victims" of political machinations, as a rule, this is due to attempts to change their meaning in order to promote and form certain positions in the context of modern political confrontations;

Monitoring and evaluation

To determine whether war monuments can be integrated into a modern information environment, it is necessary to assess the progress made. The main tasks of monitoring are:

- ▷Provide a constant information flow of up-to-date information;
- ▷Providing systematic and periodic service updates (if the app is available).
- ▷Identification of possible potential problems that may arise;
- ▷Guarantee and ensure the active participation of all stakeholders, as well as creating opportunities for feedback;

Forecast

Military monuments will have an increasingly important place in the information environment, and will continue to be a debatable public topic subject to comprehensive interpretive analysis in an information environment that is also constantly undergoing change. This will create the right conditions for an ongoing debate that will focus mainly on their historical and social role, as well as the socially important topic of memory and traditions. This will affect the mood and political decisions regarding their management, storage, protection, meaning, even their existence will depend on these relations.

Military monuments as tourist resources in the modern information environment

In recent decades, tourism has changed so much that it is increasingly rare to understand tourism in the classical sense of traveling for the purpose of recreation or entertainment. Tourism is not only an industry, but also a cultural phenomenon that has managed to organize people from different parts of the world, giving them the opportunity to visit new places, meet new cultures, events and experiences. Today, we celebrate it as a means of preserving and popularizing cultural, historical and natural heritage. Among the main elements of lit tourism are tourist routes, for example, created and organized paths and excursions in cultural, historical, religious, natural and other tourist routes. When creating these routes, the focus is on the most valuable and interesting attractions in each locality or country. When planning such a route, analysis in advance is necessary what needs are created, that is, what its consequences will be. They can be designed for lovers of history, religious and cultural attractions, health and rural tourism, right down to specific culinary delights in a given region. An opportunity for an experience and a touch of a specific attraction, possibly using well-designed tourist routes that not only enrich your knowledge on tourists, but also a key role in preserving and promoting local traditions, culture and natural resources. It is important to note that tourist routes can also have economic significance, both attracting visitors and creating new opportunities for regional development.

An innovative cultural and historical route is often offered, through which every tourist can combine entertainment and education in their travels. The route in this article is associated with war monuments in the period 1909-1914, with an empha-

sis on the territory of Southwestern Bulgaria. It covers key places that preserve the memory of those fateful events and provides an opportunity for a deeper understanding of the historical significance of the Balkan War in Bulgaria.

Southwestern Bulgaria itself has a strategic geographical position. Key military operations and military operations during the Balkan Wars take place on its territory. The created monuments not only remind and symbolize the sacrifices and heroism of Bulgarian soldiers, but also have a mission to preserve our historical memory. The location of these monuments and important tourist destinations that create opportunities to explore history.

The tourist route that is offered includes visiting and exploring monuments located at significant historical and geographical points, for example, Sofia, Dupnitsa, Kyustendil, Blagoevgrad, Petrich and Sandanski. In each object, the tourist can discover a unique historical handwriting that is important for the reconstruction of our national identity during this period. The route takes four days, starting from the capital and passing through key regions such as Dupnica, Kyustendil, Blagoevgrad, Petrich and Sandanski. Here we make it a condition that the route between meals and free time is flexible and additionally recorded in relation to the amount of work and preferences of the group.

First day-Sofia: In the capital there are memorial plaques in honor of those who died in the Balkan War in almost all villages around the capital, and in some areas-Bistrica, Slatina, Volujak, Novi Iskir, Hostile, Pasarel, Knyazhevo, Gorna banja, Filipovci, Yana, Dobroslavci, Lower Crimea, Miroviane, Podhumer, Cepinci, Negovan and others.

Second day-Dupnitsa: Arrival in the city. Dupnitsa, where there is a monument in honor of the fallen soldiers from the region. With hotel accommodation in the city. Supper.

Dupnitsa: - Monument to the fallen in wars-Dupnitsa.

Third day – Kyustendil and Rila Monastery: Arrival in Kyustendil. Monuments in Kyustendil and Rila Monastery are associated with war victims and their role in strengthening national identity. A trip to Rila Monastery, along with its spiritual significance, provides a unique context for considering the relationship between religion, cultural and military history. With accommodation in the hotel part of the monastery. Supper.

Kyustendil: - Memorial plate in memory of those who fell in the Balkan wars.

Rila Monastery: - A memorial plaque in the courtyard of the Rila Monastery in memory of the fallen officers of the 35th Rila regiment. This was the last before the outbreak of the First World War in Bulgaria.

Day four-Blagoevgrad and Simitli: Arrival in the city. Dupnitsa, and in the afternoon – a tour in the city of Simitli, where monuments to fallen soldiers from the

region are located. With hotel accommodation in the city. Supper.

Blagoevgrad: Monument in honor of those killed in the Balkan War, and the liberation of Gorna Dzhumaya

Simitli: - Monument "100 years of Freedom" in Simitli, dedicated to the Balkan War and the liberation of Pirin Macedonia.

Day five-Sandanski and Petrich: Arrival in Sandanski, and in the afternoon – a tour of the city. Petric, which also has significant monuments that embody its role in the wars for the liberation of Macedonia and Southern Bulgaria. These monuments serve as an example of the local significance of events related to the Balkan Wars.

Petrich: - Monument "To those who Died for the Motherland", dedicated to the memory of those who died in the region during the Balkan Wars (1912-1913),World War I (1915-1918) and the Petrichki accident (1925). Later, plates for those killed during the second stage of World War II (1944-1945) were added.

– Historical Museum-Petrich. **In the museum you will meet the period of the Balkan Wars**, as well as specific events and personalities associated with the Petrich district.

Sandanski: - Monument to the fallen in Wars: Monument in honor of the fallen Bulgarian soldiers in the Balkan War (1912-1913), Inter-Union War (1913),World War I (1915-1918) and World War II (1942-1945), located in the central part of the city.

– Sandanski Archaeological Museum. In the museum you can find various exhibits related to the history of wars and the military heritage of the region.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, military monuments, as an important part of the national cultural heritage, play a key role in the modern information environment. They not only preserve historical memory and pay homage to the fallen, but also serve as symbols of memory. In the context of dynamically developing information technologies and information networks, these monuments undergo significant transformations in their representations and perceptions. In an era of high-tech information society, the idea of a clash of civilizations provides in social media new opportunities for the dissemination and popularization of information about military monuments. In the light of these changes, it is necessary to understand that military monuments, despite their material nature, are important symbols of memory. For their preservation and conservation, it is important to create appropriate policies that combine historical value with the new requirements of the digital age and the modern information environment. In this research, war monuments in the period 1909-1914 in Southwestern Bulgaria also represent not only a visit and an acquaintance, but also one educational trip to important historical events, an opportunity to better understand the cultural and historical heritage of the region. The tourist route is based on these monuments, which not only provides an opportunity to preserve our national memory, but also encourages us to have a more in-depth knowledge of the historical

processes that have shaped modern Bulgaria.

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