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PROTECTION AND SAFEKEEPING OF THE TESTAMENT OF TIME IN THE ARCHIVES DEPOSITORIES IN BITOLA

Abstract: This paper provides a chronological overview of the National Archives of RN Macedonia, Bitola Department, its operations, the organizational structure, the stored archive materials, and the vision for the future development of the archives.

Key words: archive, archive funds, protection, records.

History

On the 26th of May 1954, a decision was enacted to form the District Archives in Bitola. This date is considered as the day when the archives in Bitola was founded.

In 1954, the Archives began working only with two employees, without proper facilities and without a sufficient budget. The employees arranged, processed, and published the archived materials carefully and tirelessly. They organized exhibitions and modestly started to print the first editions of the Archives.

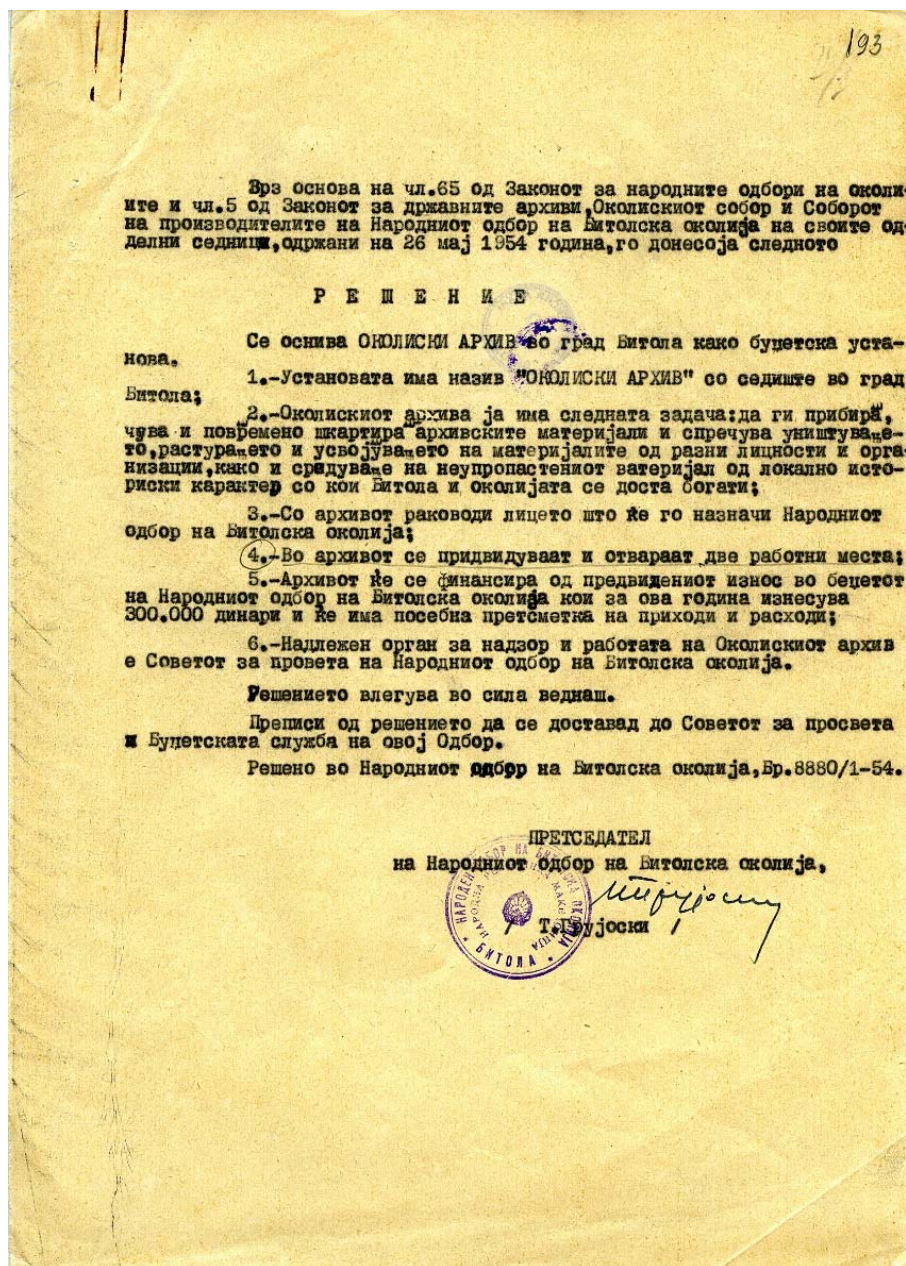


Figure 1: The Establishment Decision



Figure 2: One of the editions of the archives

After the archives changed four locations, finally it settled in the new archives building constructed in 1979, where it works and provides its services even today.

The Law on Archive Materials from 1990 transformed the Archives of Macedonia and it became the single administrative organization composed of the nine historical inter-municipal archives that functioned on the territory of SR Macedonia, including the Bitola Historical Archives.

Thus, the Bitola Archives ceased to exist as a legal entity and became a department in the National Archives of SR Macedonia.

Operation of the Archives – activities and tasks

The Bitola department has many responsibilities and tasks including:

- Oversight and control of the holders of public and private archived materials and providing technical assistance with respect to protection of

the public and private archived and documented materials, to the holders of such materials;

- Receiving and permanently storing the public archived materials, as well as private archived materials, of significance for the history of the Macedonian People;
- Arranging and processing the archived materials;
- Protection of the archived materials in the Archives and its digitalization, conservation, and restoration;
- Organization of the service that provides information, accessibility, and utilization of the archived materials and the library;
- Issuing, publishing, and presentation of the archived materials.

This means that, according to the organization setup and structure, the National Archives of RN Macedonia is an institution that protects and safeguards the entirety of the written materials about the Macedonian history. The branch office in Bitola is responsible for the municipalities of Bitola, Demir Hisar, Mogila, Novaci, and Resen. Basically, the department performs all of the functions stipulated in the Law on Archived Materials.

Organizational and functional setup

A. Oversight department

The department oversees the archives operation of the archived materials holders and the office and archives operations of the private archived materials holders. On average the oversight department makes about a hundred visits per year and it prepares minutes of the visit stipulating the findings.

B. Department of Records and Protection of the Archived Materials of the holders

A priority and a standing task of the Department of Records, Protection and Technical Oversight of the holders is the protection and safekeeping of the archived materials of the holders, taking the materials to the depositories of BO – Bitola in its original, complete, selected and arranged condition with a description and an inventory of the material.

C. Department for Arrangement and Processing of the Archived Material

The process of arranging and processing of the archived materials is performed in stages. The data from the annual reports of the Department of Arrangement and Processing between 2007 and 2012 suggest that 57 funds have been arranged and processed with 82,445 archiving units and 1,606 books, which leads to the conclusion that the department arranges 9,5 funds per year with 13,741 archiving units and 268 books. A scientific and information publication has been prepared for each of these funds.

D. Department for Protection and Records of the Archived Material in the Archives – DEPOSITORY

The protection of the archived material in the Archives entails the following activities:

- Receiving the archived materials, as well as registration, placement, and safeguarding of the materials in the premises of the depository,
- Issuing of the materials to arrangement and processing,
- Issuing of the materials to third parties for use, presentation, and publication,
- Technical and technological protection of the materials, including the provision of proper microclimate conditions of the deposition, dusting, and disinfection.

The Bitola office has separate depository facilities on 4 floors with a total surface area of 797m², and the archived materials sit on metal and other racks, metal crates, metal and wooden closets, metal drawers for storing of photographs etc.

E. Department for Information, Utilization and Publication of Archived Materials

The employees of the Archive also present the archive materials before the broader scientific, cultural, and other communities in order to provide them with an understanding of the archived funds in the depositories of this Archives. In addition to providing scientific and research information to the citizens, the Archives also provides data related to legal and property relations, as well as data which the people can use to effectuate their rights related to their working tenures, etc.

Archived funds

A lot of significant materials were created in Bitola, starting from the 7th century until today. Until 2014, the Archives has received 968 funds and 27 collections with approximately 7,568 archiving boxes and 11,525 archiving books taking 912.12 meters of shelf space.

The archived funds are divided into:

- A – Archived funds;
- B – Family and personal collections;
- C – Collections;
- D – Photocopies of foreign archived materials.

The archived funds can also be subdivided by the time crated, as follows:

21. Archiving funds until 1918

- Birth, marriage, and deceased persons registries from the parishes in and around Bitola, translated or written in Serbian and Macedonian;
- The Greek – Pelagonia archdiocese - Bitola;
- Archives funds from 1918 to 1941.

Some of the more significant funds from this period are:

- Mayors of the municipality of Bitola;
- The French school St. Vincent - Bitola;
- Birth, marriage, and deceased persons registries in the Bitola area written in the Serbian language;
- Agriculture court - Bitola;
- District and Sharia court – Bitola;
- Attorneys, merchants;
- Photographer Milton Manaki.

22. Archives funds from 1941 to 1945;
23. City municipality Bitola;
24. Bitola tax administration;
25. National liberation village boards;
26. Archived funds from 1945 from the territories of the municipality of Bitola, Resen, Demir Hisar, Novaci, and Mogila;
27. Electricity distribution – Bitola;
28. Factories for textile, leather, confectionary, food industry;
29. Agricultural cooperatives, agricultural combined factories;
30. Construction companies, AD Transkop – Bitola, Zhas – Bitola, PTT transportation – Bitola, Macedonian Telecommunications - Bitola;
31. Wholesale and retail companies, hotels, and restaurants;
32. Handcrafting companies;
33. Primary and secondary schools, faculties, libraries, National Theater, city circus, city cinemas, radio Bitola;
34. Community national boards (1945-1952);
35. Assemblies of the municipalities Bitola, Resen, Demir Hisar (1963-1991);
36. Judicial authorities – courts, prosecution offices, attorney offices;
37. Primary registries from municipalities and villages from 1946 to 1969;
38. Archives funds from 1991 – Republic of Macedonia;
39. Municipal companies that continued as joint stock companies;
40. All organizations, courts, municipal authorities, public enterprises;
21. Collection of paper banknotes, newspapers, stamps and seals, maps and plans, plaques, photographs, Turkish documents, merchant's and handcrafter's notebooks, apothecaries.



Photograph 3: Brothers Manaki's camera and equipment and the crates with the negatives

Our vision for the future entails greater publication of the archived materials in order to bring a part of history closer to our fellow citizens, and we especially aspire to reach out youngest population, the students in schools and at universities so that they might get a clearer picture about our past. Therefore, in 2015 we organized an open archives day. Finally, by way of concluding we can say that, in the future, we will devote a lot of attention to the digitalization of the archived materials. We tirelessly work on researching the materials important for the history of our city, currently held by different individuals and we do hope that we would further enrich our depositories with valuable materials.