

## **REVIEW**

by Prof. Dr. Desislava Lyubomirova Boshnakova

Professor in professional field 3.5. "Public Communications and Information Sciences"

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of

the dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field:

5.7. "Architecture, Construction, and Geodesy"

Doctoral program: "Theory and History of Architecture"

Doctoral candidate: Hector Vokshi

Form of study: independent preparation

New Bulgarian University (NBU) - Sofia

Master's Faculty, Department of Architecture;

Thesis: "Ancestral Puebloan Dwellings (Anasazi Buildings)"

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Eng. Arch. Penyo Stolarov

### **PROCEDURE**

In my capacity as a member of the scientific jury, appointed by Order No. 3-RK-294 of 10.07.2024 of the Rector of the New Bulgarian University, on the basis of Art. 14. para. 3 of the Ordinance on the development of the academic staff of the NBU and the decision of the Faculty Council of the Master's Faculty from meeting No. 11/07.07 2024 and the decision of the first meeting of the NBU, this review was prepared.

### **BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL DATA ON THE DOCTORAL STUDENT**

Hector Vokshi completed his secondary education at "Sami Frasheri" High School, Pristina, Kosovo (2003-2007).

Hector Vokshi received a BA in Architecture (2007-2012) from the University of Pristina at the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture and a MA in Art History and Architectural Criticism (2012-2015). He also has a certificate as an expert in energy efficiency, passive houses, sustainable ecological design and green architecture (2015-2018).

Since 2015, he has been a teacher at AAB College in Kosovo and leads courses in the fields of history of art and architecture, graphic design, visual arts, interior and industrial design, energy efficiency, etc.

There is a clear interest in the preservation of the cultural and historical heritage and there are a number of participations in various specialized formats on the subject in the period 2013-2022.

In the period 2012-2016, he gained practical experience as part of the teams of Porcelanosa Group (Skopje, North Macedonia), Hans Groe and Knauf (Pristina, Kosovo).

## **GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTATION**

The dissertation contains an Introduction, seven chapters and conclusions and recommendations, bibliography and references. The volume of the dissertation is 144 pages, contains illustrative material, and a list of the used literature is attached.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Not even an architect by education, it immediately strikes me that the peer-reviewed dissertation is by no means a classical development in the field of architecture. At the same time, the present dissertation makes a necessary and in-depth study of the culture and heritage of a people about which very few know. One of the reasons may be that part of this people has disappeared and the surviving part has gone through many influences and changes over the years.

They say that every new is a well-forgotten old. If we accept this thought as true, then the doctoral student's interests in the field of preservation of cultural and historical heritage and in the field of energy efficiency, passive houses, sustainable ecological design and green architecture somehow logically lead to the present dissertation.

Such studies are both timely and necessary, because they provide subsequent researchers with systematized cultural-historical data for a given region and ethnic group. What's more, having a well-structured Pueblo database can be a prerequisite for future discoveries.

The work can also be extremely useful to teachers in the field of education and art.

In his dissertation, "Ancestral Pueblo Dwellings (Anasazi Buildings)," the author summarizes available information on history, cultural customs, architectural styles, construction approaches, construction techniques, and more. of the Pueblo ancestors.

The introduction is extremely short, however, it answers the questions about: subject, purpose, research questions, methodology of the work. The motivation for choosing the topic is in the abstract.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

In his dissertation, the doctoral student stated his purpose clearly as follows: "The main purpose of this proposal is to discover the creation of distinctive living structures among other Native American peoples, although all other tribes and related clans were only capable of creating seasonal moving structures (houses, hogans, huts, wigwams and igloos)", which is indicated on p. 1.

## **SUBJECT**

The subject of the scientific research in the dissertation are the types of buildings and the specifics of their realization and development in the context of the long historical period of the existence of the Anasazi, their Pueblo successors until today. Part of the research focuses on materials, construction techniques, and characteristic Pueblo architectural elements and style.

## **METHODS**

In his dissertation, while collecting and analyzing data from a wide variety of sources, the doctoral student uses an empirical-analytical and comparative approach. The methodology of the work is clearly defined in the introduction - p. 2.

## **SCOPE**

The dissertation focuses on the study of the ancient Pueblo Indian tribes that inhabited the area of present-day southeastern Utah, northeastern Arizona, northwestern New Mexico, and southwestern Colorado in the period 200 BC-1500 AD and the influence of their architectural and cultural traditions on today.

## **CHAPTER I – Theoretical and Critical Aspect of Anasazi Buildings**

It is a logical choice for the doctoral student to introduce the reader to the material, which he does with the first chapter, which is devoted to the definition of the Anasazi Indian tribes, so that the reader can understand the reason for the interest in the subject. The chapter is again extremely short - two pages, which logically leads us to the recommendation that this part should not be separated into a separate independent chapter, but should be combined with the next one.

## **CHAPTER II - Ancestral Puebloans**

This is the chapter that is extremely interesting to non-professionals, because it tells about the way of life of the Pueblo ancestors. And when we know that "archaeologists continue to debate when this distinct culture appeared" (p. 5) the content becomes even more important. In this chapter, the doctoral student has systematized data about the Pueblo ancestors from a variety of sources and presented their history in a fascinating way.

A chapter ends without a summary paragraph that would make it more complete.

### **CHAPTER III - Anasazi Buildings - The ancient puebloan dwellings**

This is the chapter in which the doctoral student sets the basic parameters of his research on the subject of the peculiarities of ancestral Pueblo architecture. In the focus of attention are the few ancient settlements preserved to this day.

The analysis covers the Great Northern Trail, Mesa Verde National Park (Colorado), Cliff Palace, Taos Pueblo (New Mexico), Chaco National Cultural Park, and Bandelier National Park and Monument (New Mexico). The identified sites provide the doctoral student with the basis for analysis of both the cultural and architectural culture of the Ancestral Pueblo. The analysis is complemented by illustrations that support easier understanding.

I accept the PhD student's limitation of only having the available data, but nevertheless these objects could be presented in a similar way and in a similar volume. As with the previous chapters, there is no comparative analysis and/or summary of the content in this chapter. Having a summary based on the comparison would only add value to the dissertation.

### **CHAPTER IV - The Anasazi Way of living**

Chapter four begins with the furniture the Anasazi used, continues with their pottery, jewelry, and basketry, moves through religion, agriculture, and the watershed system.

Certainly these aspects of Ancestral Pueblo heritage are important to research and add tremendous value to the work of a doctoral student.

### **CHAPTER V – Anasazi Inventions**

In this chapter we are introduced to roads and trails, kivas, chaco roads, signal towers, trade routes, mochi stairs, and Anasazi astronomical knowledge. Surely the doctoral student has an answer to the question "Why is this chapter separate and not part of the previous one?", but from the point of view of the open-minded reader, the two chapters would quite logically be combined into one.

### **CHAPTER VI - The Main Impact of the Ancestral Puebloan Dwellings to the Contemporary Architectural Style**

Even with its very name, this chapter predetermines to be a summary of the information analyzed so far. Logically, in relation to the interests of the doctoral student himself, the focus is on the value of cultural heritage, what we can borrow from the Pueblo ancestors for the sustainability and environmental friendliness of architectural objects needed today.

It is at the beginning of this chapter that some of the main benefits of the study for contemporary architecture are laid out.

## **CHAPTER VII - Anasazi Influence in Popular Culture (Comic books, Movies, and TV series)**

At the very beginning of his dissertation, the doctoral student states that for him this dissertation is a childhood dream. In practice, chapter seven is one page of text and eleven pages of illustrations.

Personally, I miss the PhD student's analysis of the relationship between these illustrations and the thesis topic. Especially since it is precisely in them that his interests in the history of art and architecture, graphic design and visual arts are intertwined.

## **CONTRIBUTIONS**

Based on the dissertation submitted to me for review, I can say that it has the following scientific and scientific-applied contributions:

- The PhD student has managed to collect, analyze and synthesize a huge amount of information about the heritage of the ancient Pueblo tribes.
- The PhD student was able to determine the distinctive characteristics of the ancestral Pueblo culture.
- The PhD student was able to discover the influence of the ancestral Pueblo culture on modern architecture and popular culture (comics and movies).

Whether one works in the field of architecture or, like me, in the field of communications, this dissertation very succinctly presents the history and influence of an ancient culture on our present. The dissertation will certainly be useful to educators and students who are tempted by the influence of our ancestors on today's world.

## **EVALUATION OF PUBLICATIONS**

Publications are not explicitly listed in the abstract. I am convinced that after diving into the sea of information about the Pueblo ancestors, the doctoral student could develop a more serious publication activity.

## **ABSTRACT**

The abstract is basically prepared according to the requirements, but it is too long - 66 pages. It does not categorically state the scientific contributions of the dissertation work.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Coming from a different professional background, I can say that a clean structure of three parts plus an introduction, conclusion and appendices seems to me cleaner and would be more suitable for this dissertation.

It should be noted that regardless of the language barrier, which is one of the reasons why the text in Bulgarian sounds "strange" in places, there are some technical notes that are not related to the language.

- By standard, every citation from an online source must also contain the date of visit to the corresponding page. This is not noted throughout the dissertation.

- Chapter three begins directly with a list, without making it clear what this list is about and what its relation is to the topic of the dissertation.

- There are citations that indicate what they are, but not the source from which they were taken - example citation 31 p. 23 in the Bulgarian version and p. 21 in the English version.

- In both the English and Bulgarian versions of the dissertation, the bibliography is not presented according to the requirements and the sources are not arranged alphabetically.

Notwithstanding these remarks, I believe that the present dissertation on "Ancestral Pueblo Dwellings (Anasazi Buildings)" is a testament to the need for in-depth research into the life and culture of our ancestors, as well as a study of their techniques in order to they still apply today, when we need more sustainable buildings, more efficient buildings and better buildings more than ever. No doubt Hector Vokshi should be satisfied that he managed to combine his childhood dream and his interests as an adult. The dissertation very clearly shows the diverse interests of the PhD student and his ability to find the intersection where many do not see it.

## **Conclusion**

This dissertation meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the regulations to it and the normative documents of the New Bulgarian University.

From all the materials provided, it is absolutely clear that the doctoral student has the necessary theoretical knowledge, professional skills and deep interest in the main topic of his dissertation. This will certainly motivate him for future research on the subject.

Regardless of the comments made, I give a positive evaluation of the conducted research, as presented in the reviewed dissertation titled 'Ancestral Puebloan Dwellings (Anasazi Buildings),' the accompanying abstract, the achieved results, and contributions. I recommend to the esteemed scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree of 'Doctor' to Hector Vokshi in the professional field 5.7 'Architecture, Construction, and Geodesy,' doctoral program Theory and History of Architecture.

Prepared the review:

05.09.2024

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