

ACADEMIC REVIEW

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of the materials submitted under the procedure for acquiring PhD degree of M Arch Hektor Vokshi as a doctoral student in the Department of Architecture of New Bulgarian University, Master's Faculty, in the doctoral program "Theory and History of Architecture" in professional direction 5.7. Architecture, construction and geodesy, with scientific supervisor Prof. M Arch Penio Stolarov, PhD

M Arch Hektor Vokshi was enrolled in doctoral studies by the Rector of the NBU in 2019 and was dismissed with the right of defense by the Rector of the NBU in 2024. This review is written according to Order 3-ПК-294/10.07.2024 of the Rector of the NBU concerning the determination of the Scientific Jury as part of the procedure.

When reviewing M Arch Vokshi's dissertation in its entirety, especially as specific fragments from specific pages with their added numbers (and not file numbers), this review should clarify that, for the stated purpose, it uses the Bulgarian version of the dissertation text.

1. Brief biographical data

M Arch Hector Vokshi is of Kosovar nationality and completed his secondary and higher education degrees in Pristina. He graduated in 2012 with a bachelor's degree in architecture, specializing in historical-architectural orientation. He received his master's degree in architecture in 2015, majoring in "History of Art and Architectural Criticism". According to his resume, he also graduated with a Master of Arts in 2018. As a doctoral student in an independent form of education at the NBU, he has been working with Prof. Stolarov since 2019. In its professional part, the autobiography of M Arch Vokshi does not indicate specific architectural projects or realizations. However, it lists several acquired professional and educational certificates, primarily related to conserving and restoring architectural heritage sites.

2. General description of the materials presented in the procedure

M Arch Hektor Vokshi participates in the procedure with the following:

- dissertation titled "Ancestral Puebloan Dwellings" – both in Bulgarian and in English;
- Abstract for the dissertation work – both in Bulgarian and in English.

3. General characteristics of the applicant's activity

3.1. Educational and pedagogical activity

According to Voksi's autobiography, measurable, reliable, and satisfactory data are provided for his educational and pedagogical activity. He is a teacher/lecturer at the AAB College in Pristina; a quick reference on the Internet and specifically on the page of the College shows that as part of the team there, he leads courses on ecological architecture and sustainable design, as well as on analyzing and modelling of acoustic spaces. At the end of his dissertation work (p. 134), M Arch Vokshi specifies that he works as a full-time professor in the Faculty of Fine Arts and the Faculty of Architecture of AAB in the Department of Arts/Architecture and Interior Design. The comment on the educational and pedagogical activity affecting Vokshi's dissertation work is relatively positive and supported as a motivational factor for students – following the example of Marshall McLuhan, the use of phenomena from mass culture as a modern manifestation of registered principles from a historical, cultural and architectural matter (p. 80; p. 120-132).

3.2. Evaluation of dissertation publications

M Arch Vokshi has not provided any scientific publications in recognized scientific or academic media, which is a requirement of the legal framework in Bulgaria, according to which the required number of points for scientometrics amounts to 30 points in indicator 8 and Group of indicators Г for area 5 and PD 5.7, indicated in PPZRASRB. A quick search of the Academia.edu and ResearchGate arrays turns up Vokshi's texts, which, however, do not offer attributes proving an official form of scientific publication, reviewing or referencing in scientific editions of journals, collective volumes or participations and reports from scientific conferences. The framework cited above offers alternatives and compensations for similar deficiencies related to the realizations of projects from architecture and design. M Arch Vokshi has not provided data for similar objects either.

3.3. Contributions (scientific, scientific applied, applied)

In the text of the dissertation, there are no listed and formulated contributions, nor is there a thesis. The questions indicated as hypotheses from item 3 of the Introduction of the Work (p. XII-XIII) are formulated questions with the meaning and weight of tasks on the dissertation. There needs to be systematized, consistent answers for them. On the other hand, registering universal and somewhat obvious phenomena could also be considered a conditional dissertation contribution. The commentary of the present opinion in this line of thought is twofold:

- first, the doctoral work provides extensive descriptive information about the pueblos of a rather general nature, collected and systematized according to specific object characteristics; from this point of view, this first contribution of the work appears to be rather informative-cultural, anthropological and descriptive-phenomenological, and only after that, in some conditional detail, also theoretical-architectural;
- secondly, the doctoral work provides a catalogue of acceptance at epidermal manifestations levels of the pueblos' culture in the following directions: the appearance of modern attraction public buildings—which in this case also includes the typology of hotels—and narrative presence in contemporary American mass culture.

4. Significance of the research problem

Page V of the work attempts to prove the necessity of the research problem. However, the attempt in question is provoked instead by the author's romantic interest – left unexplained. Public interest in the subject is evident but not stated. Even as sustainable, ecological, and justified concerning the conditions of the environment and use of the sun, the culture and structure of the

settlements and the dwellings of the Pueblos themselves do not prove a one-way linear cause-and-effect relationship with the equivalent of the mentioned concepts of current architecture. In this sense, to claim that Pueblo dwellings are the unequivocal primary source and root cause of sustainable architecture methods is not severe. The significance of the study has another value – it is related to the historical and cultural aspects, and hence also to the architectural validation of the American nation, which is relatively young. The significant mechanism is to inject mythology into the little remaining architectural heritage of the past regardless of its qualities, which returns an already validated "washed" sense and understanding of historical and cultural validating authenticity. This technique may seem false and illegitimate from the point of view of historical or cultural objectivity. However, it has been proven to work in specific places, such as the Balkan Peninsula, America, and Dubai. In this sense, the study of M Arch Vokshi is entirely up-to-date and relevant..

5. Justification of the goals and objectives, compliance of the selected research methodology with the set goals and objectives

The present opinion finds that the goals and tasks of the work are skillfully selected, and the methodology of gathering the information is also applied punctually and with a certain amount of conditional form of blind faith, which brings its advantages. Unfortunately, the work fails to take the next step – the step of analyzing the recorded phenomena both in the past and in the present. The collected catalogue is in dire need of a personal author's comment, personal conclusions, or discovery theses that have not been expressed until now. In this line of thought, it is indicative and essential to note that although it is colossal in volume, the literature used by M Arch Vokshi as a bibliography for the dissertation is, to a minimal extent, scientific and, to an even smaller extent, architectural-theoretical.

6. Recommendations and critical notes

The text is considerable in volume. Its strength lies in its descriptive collection. As far as it is present, the theoretical-historical component of the work relies primarily on the historical phenomenological-descriptive approach. The doctoral work is punctual enough to collect all information about the pueblos in its most everyday form – the work is not only about the initial form of road and transport network among the pueblos, and not only about their urban planning system and their cities themselves – buildings or fortress-cities, not only for the relation of the dwellings to the ritual units together with the square-section towers (p. XIV), but also about the life and religion of the Pueblos in general. However, the work is conglomerative in its nature. It encloses a popular rather than a scientific quality, as it largely lacks an analytical unifying notion. The work offers a wealth of information about the Pueblos in general but relatively rarely says what this information signifies and does not say what it stands for as a sign of its specific manifestations. The work needs to theorize the matter of pueblos habitation and residence. However, there are intentions to do so (referred to as public spaces located in the indeterminate fabric between terraced dwellings and kivas – p. 97). The work must shift towards a more scientific essence, significantly enhancing its academic value and the importance of academic contribution. The crucial step of drawing parallels between the culture and architecture of the pueblos is missing, for which the more general analogy could be made between the domestic-cultural architectural system of the pueblos on the one hand and the yet corresponding system on the other already well-studied world culture and civilization from Antiquity on the other hand. Such a method would contribute to overflowing, conditionally speaking, analytical knowledge. An example is Arnheim's theoretical study in his "The Dynamics of



Architectural Form" regarding Greek vessels for receiving, storing and pouring out precious liquids such as oils, perfume and wine.

However, M Arch Vokshi is present with something particular, which, in the present opinion, has a unique scientific potential in structuralist terms. It is the morphological additivity of rectangular residential, still profane premises on the one hand and circular cylindrical sacral ones on the other. This morphological phenomenon is a unique feature of the urban building structures of the pueblos and is of great importance in understanding the cultural and architectural aspects of the pueblos. Along with the rest of the notes on the work mentioned above, well-intentioned advice is sent to the author, M Arch Vokshi, to pay more analytical severe attention to this morphological phenomenon – thanks to the possible publication of a book based on the dissertation work..

7. Conclusion

Given the above and despite the criticisms, it is proposed that M Arch Hektor Vokshi be awarded the educational and scientific PhD degree in professional field 5.7 Architecture, Construction and Geodesy in the doctoral program "Theory and History of Architecture."

05.09.2024

Member of the Scientific Jury:

(Assoc. Prof. M Arch Panayot Savov, PhD)