

"BIBLICAL MACEDONIA" - TOURIST CHALLENGE

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Abstract

The term Macedonia is one of the oldest historical terms. Macedonia is a rare country in the world whose name has been continuously mentioned for more than two millennia. Confirmation of this is the Holy Scripture - Bible, the most important holy book of Christianity.

The paper will present integral excerpts from the New Testament, that is, from the travels of St. Paul the Apostle in Macedonia and the mention of the name Macedonia, Macedonian, Macedonian land and other formulations. The aim of the paper is the analysis of the mentions and presentation of Macedonia with an identity and image, and the promotion of a new tourist product "Biblical Macedonia" as a challenge to develop it into a tourist brand.

Keywords: Bible - Holy Scripture, Macedonia, Macedonian, Macedonian country

JEL Classification: Z32 Tourism and Development; Z39 Tourism: Other

INTRODUCTION

Macedonia is a biblical country. The Bible or Holy Scripture (created 1600 years, from 1500 BC - 100 AD) spiritual and historical heritage of Jews and Christians, "All Scripture is given by God" says the Apostle Paul (II Epistle to Timothy 3, 16). The idea that the Bible is God-given means that St. A letter reached man as a finished product. Theologians agree that she has a divine-human character, that is, "...the holy men of God spoke enlightened by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter's Epistle 1,21).

The Bible is composed of 66 books, of which 39 are in the Old Testament and 27 are in the New Testament. In the extended (Orthodox and Catholic) Bible, there are 11 additional books in the Old Testament, the so-called Deuterocanonical, ie. Apocryphal books, while in the New Testament, the number of books is the same in the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant editions of the Bible, and the apocryphal gospels and epistles are not accepted by any Christians.

The New Testament is the central written testimony of Christianity, in which the main person represented is Jesus Christ. The New Testament contains 27 books, and is divided into six basic works: gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John), beginnings of the Christian church (Acts of the Apostles), letters to specific churches (from Rom. to 2 Thess.), pastoral letters (from 1 Tim. to Heb.), council letters (from James to Jude) and a prophetic book (Revelation).

The New Testament was written in koine language (this language was also called Alexandrian, Hellenic, Macedonian, Patristic, and Common or Biblical), which was widely spoken at that time, even though Jesus and His disciples spoke Aramaic.

The main theme of the New Testament is Jesus Christ (the promised messiah from the Old Testament), and our goal is research and analysis of the mention of Macedonia and the Macedonians in the New Testament, the journey of St. Paul the Apostle through Macedonia and its presentation as a tourist product.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Materials used in the research are the book of Holy Scripture - Bible, (Holy Scripture - Bible, 2017), literature (Dictionary of the Holy Scriptures (Bible dictionary), 2011; Atanasov, 1995; Grozdanovski, 2007; Grozdanovski, 2014; Grozdanovski, 2017; Pavlovska & Niciforovic & Kocesvki, 2011; Karkalashv, 2004; Kornakov & Kajdamov, 2000; Strategy, 2021; Dimitrov, 2022) and web pages. Valuable data was obtained from all of them for analysis and promotion of Biblical Macedonia as a tourist brand with characteristic religious content.

RESULTS

In the New Testament of the Holy Scriptures (the Bible), the name Macedonia is mentioned 21 times, Macedonian 1 time, Macedonians 3 times and Macedonian churches 1 time or a total of 30 times, of which 4 times in a subtitle and 26 times in 23 verses, in 7 parts. (Holy Scripture - Bible, 2017)

Attached is the entire text from the New Testament where Macedonia is mentioned:

1. Acts of the Apostles: 13 times of which 10 times in 9 verses and plus 3 times in a subtitle, p. 163,166-168; (Acts Ap.: 16:9; 16:10; 16:12; 18:5; 19:21; 19:22; 19:29; 20:1; 20:3;

Acts of the Apostles:

- 16:9 And a night vision appeared to Paul: a Macedonian stood before him and prayed to him, saying: "Come to Macedonia - help us!"
- 16:10 And when he saw the vision, we immediately asked to go further to Macedonia, concluding that God called us to preach the Gospel to them.
- 16:12 and from there to Philippi, a Roman colony and the first city in that part of Macedonia. In we stayed in that city for several days.
- 18:5 And when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was stirred up in the spirit to testify zealously to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah.
- 19:21 When this was done, Paul made up his mind in his spirit, passing through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying: "As soon as I am there, I must also see Rome."
- 19:22 And he sent to Macedonia two of his assistants, Timoteja and Erasta, and he himself remained for some time in Asia.
- 19:29 "Gaia and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's companions..."
- 20:1 When the noise subsided, Paul called the disciples, counseled them; he said goodbye to them and left to go to Macedonia.
- 20:3 He stayed there for three months. Because the Jews conspired against him, when wanted to sail to Syria, he decided to return via Macedonia.

2. Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans: 1 time in 1 verse, 15:26, p.218;

The Romans:

- 15:26 for Macedonia and Achaia decided to gather together some help for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

3. First Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians: 2 times in 1 verse, 15:5, 1:16, p.234;

1 Corinthians:

- 16:5 I will come to you after passing through Macedonia, because I am passing through Macedonia;
- 1:16 And through you I will go to Macedonia, and from Macedonia I will come to you again"

4. Second Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians: 9 times of which 1 time in a subtitle and 8 times in 7 verses 1:16, 2:13, 7:5, 8:1, 9:2, 9:4 and 11: 9, p. 236,239-242;

2 Corinthians:

- 1:16 and through you to pass to Macedonia, and from Macedonia again yes I come to you, and you send me to Judea.
- 2:13 I had no peace in my spirit, because I did not find my brother Titus, and therefore after all I forgave them, I went to Macedonia.
- 7:5 For, since we came to Macedonia, our body had no peace; but we were in trouble everywhere; outside fighting, inside fear.
- 8:1 I inform you, brothers, about God's grace given to the churches in Macedonia;
- 9:2 "I boast to you before the Macedonians that Achaia..."
- 9:4 "So if Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared..."
- 11:9 because the brothers who came from Macedonia gave for my needs. And I was careful in everything, and I will be careful not to be a burden to you.

5. Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians: 1 time in 1 verse, 4:15 p.260;

Philippians:

- 4:15 And you, Philippians, know that at the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church was with me in giving and receiving, except only you.

6. First Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians: 3 times in 3 verses, 1:7, 1:8 and 4:10, p.266 and 268;

1 Thessalonians:

- 1:7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.
- 1:8 Because, from you the word of the Lord was proclaimed not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has expanded in every place, so that there is no need for us to we are talking something.
- 4:10 and you do that to all the brothers in all of Macedonia. But please again brothers, do it even more

7. First Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Timothy: 1 time in 1 verse, 1:3, p. 273).

1 Timothy:

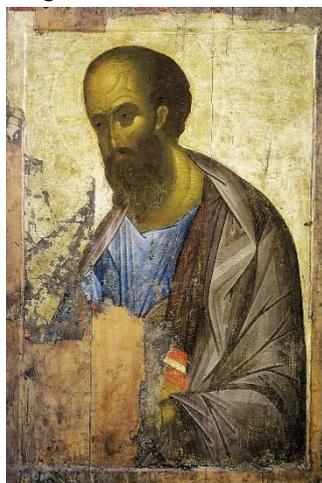
- 1:3 As I begged you, when I went to Macedonia, to stay in Ephesus, so that you command some not to teach otherwise.

DISCUSSION

In the New Testament, apart from Macedonia, no other name of today's neighbors is mentioned, which means that the name Macedonia and Macedonians is capitalized.

And that's why we Macedonians are under constant pressure from our neighbors, because they want to take away the name Macedonia and Macedonians.

The name Macedonia and Macedonians are biblical names, they are "alpha and omega - beginning and end", first and last, almighty and most important, and it will be so as long as man and the world exist.



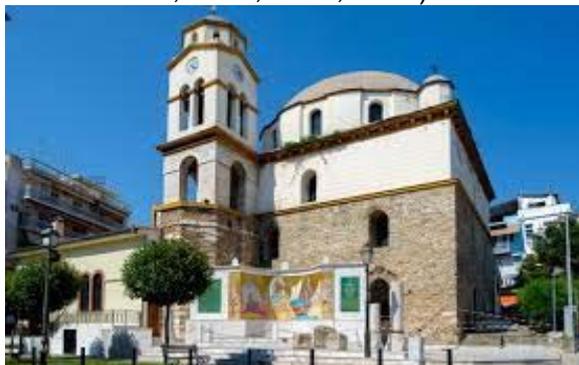
Picture 1: Saint Paul the Apostle

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_the_Apostle

Apostle Paul was in Macedonia four times. First trip in 49 or 50. During the second missionary journey, in the year 50 or 51, he established the churches in Philippi, Thessalonica and Bere (Acts 16:9; 17:14). In his third missionary journey in 57, visiting the same places a second time. Together with Luke, he traveled Macedonia, preaching the Gospel through all the Macedonian cities as far as Illyricum and the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea. At that time, in Macedonia, he wrote and sent the Second Epistle to the Corinthians (Acts 20.1; 2. Cor. 2, 12:13; 2. Cor. 7:5; 9; Rom. 15; 19; Acts: 2). 3. In the year 58, he passed through Macedonia for the third time, returning to Jerusalem and visited the cities in reverse order: Ber, Thessalonica, Philippi (Acts 20:3-6). 4. And the fourth time, when he wrote and sent the First Epistle to Timothy from Macedonia, in 64/65 (1 Tim. 1:3). (Dictionary of the Holy Scriptures (Bible dictionary), 2011, Grozdanovski, 2007, 2017)

The Luke, Timothy, Silas and Tychicus accompanied him on those trips, who themselves, independently of the holy apostle Paul, worked on the Christianization of the people in these areas. Apostle Andrew also preached throughout Macedonia, who installed Apostle Urban as the first bishop in Macedonia. Apostle Silvan was the first bishop of Thessalonica, and Epaphroditus in Adria or Adriakia (border area with Thrace). Of the disciples, Aristar and Secundus were originally from Thessalonica, Epaphroditus was from Philippi, and Gaius was from Dober (Dervia), which was probably located between Strumica

and Valandovo. (Dictionary of the Holy Scriptures (Bible dictionary), 2011; Atanasov, 1995; Grozdanovski, 2007, 2014, 2017)



Picture 2 and 3: Church of St. Nikola and monument 2000 years of Christianity. The place where the apostle Paul set foot in Macedonia - Europe. <https://www.google.com/search?q=Church+in+Kavala>

The first trip to Macedonia was to the village of Rahce, a village in Kavala municipality, Kavala circle, Aegean Macedonia. Paul spoke before the gathered women, after which he met Lydia and baptized her. Lydia - was the first Christian in Europe, baptized by Apostle Paul. It was the cornerstone of the Church in Philippi near the present-day village of Rahce, Kavalsko in Aegean Macedonia. It happened in the year 51 or 52 at the beginning of the second missionary journey of the holy Apostle Paul (51-54 AD), which is described in the Acts of the Holy Apostles. The church in Philippi was the first European church founded by the apostle Paul. The Holy Apostle will say: The Macedonian Christians, willingly, with love and generous mercy, materially helped the work of the Lord God.

The city of Philippi (place of Seljani, Kavalsko, Aegean Macedonia) then had 2000 people. Apostle Paul probably visited the city in 49 and 50. Paul founded his first Christian community and preached Christianity for the first time on European soil. Paul was accompanied by Silas, Timothy, and possibly Luke. (Atanasov, 1995; Grozdanovski, 2007, 2014, 2017)

Picture 4: The Wrecking of Lydia, Marie Ellenider, 1861.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lydia_of_Thyatira

Saint Lydia is the cornerstone of the Church in Philippi. She is the first person who was baptized by the apostle Paul on European soil and is therefore celebrated as the first Christian woman - European. The baptism took place in the creek near the present-day village of Madjar Chiflik, later renamed Linija in her honor.



St. Lydia is a Macedonian saint, the first Christian in Europe. She was a rich and pious woman, married in the city of Philippi, and she came from an Asia Minor province, from the city of Thyatira, which was a Macedonian colony. Lydia was a seller of porphyry, a precious red fabric made in Asia that Europeans used for their rich clothing. The city of Thyatira was famous for dyeing its fabrics with the natural red dyes of porphyry. Lydia traded in porphyry (red dye) which was used for noble clothing, because there were military veterans in Philippi, and the city was rich. Her husband is not mentioned so it is assumed that she is a widow. It is

thought that she was a proselyte, but she respected God, so she abandoned polytheism and was baptized, along with her close relatives.

In chapter 16 of the Acts of the Holy Apostles, the violation of Lydia is described as follows: "And a God-fearing woman from the city of Thyatira, named Lydia, who sold scarlet cloth, listened; and the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what Paul was saying. And when she and her household were baptized, she asked us and said: "If you have recognized me as faithful to the Lord, then enter my house and stay in it!" And she forced us. (Acts 15:15-1)

When the Gospel reached Europe, it was not men who met it, but women, because they were the first to appear before the apostles. Apostle Paul actively involved women in missionary work and evangelization in the early Christian church. According to beliefs, Saint Lydia was hospitable and offered the apostles to live in her home. After the departure of the Apostle Paul with the companions, it is assumed that the Apostle Paul with the companions, it is assumed that the Apostle Luke stayed in Lydia's house. The house became the first Christian temple in Europe, following the example of the house of Mary the mother in Jerusalem. Besides Lydia, the Bible also mentions Euodia and Syntychia, as well as the men Epaphroditus and Clement. (Dictionary of the Holy Scriptures (Bible dictionary), 2011; Atanasov, 1995; Grozdanovski, 2007, 2014, 2017)

After the baptism, Saint Lydia asked the apostles to recognize her as faithful in the Lord, which they did, knowing her faith, modesty and piety.

St. Lydia was hospitable, so she offered the holy apostles to live in her home, so St. Apostle Luke will testify to that, and they finally accept, thus confirming that she is worthy for them to be in her home. After the departure of the Apostle Paul with his companions, it is assumed that the Apostle Luke stayed in Lydia's house. The house became the first Christian temple in Europe, following the example of the house of Mary, the mother of the evangelist Mark in Jerusalem. Lidija is the first Christian woman in the first Christian church in Europe - the church in Philippi, Macedonia. Apostle Paul only received gifts from this church for his missionary activity, because he knew that they were given from hearts full of love. This church becomes an example for the establishment of other churches in Macedonia and Hellas. It is considered that Lydia is the founder of the church in Thyatira, which is one of the seven churches in Asia, about which Saint John speaks in the Revelation. Eleven years after leaving Philippi, before the end of the first captivity in Rome (63-64), the apostle Paul writes an epistle to the Philippians, with a lot of love and personal memories: "God is my witness how much I love you all with the love of Jesus Christ and so, my beloved and much-desired brothers, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord, beloved." (Dictionary of the Holy Scriptures (Bible dictionary), 2011; Atanasov, 1995; Grozdanovski, 2007, 2014, 2017)

The masters of some of the baptized were not satisfied with the fact that their servants were baptized and because they would lose part of their income through this, they started a campaign in the city against the missionaries and Paul and Silas were imprisoned. After the strange earthquake that happened, the gates of the prison collapsed, but even so, Paul and Silas did not escape, after which a large part of the prisoners were converted. After this event, they continued their travels first to Berea and then to Athens. (Atanasov, 1995; Grozdanovski, 2007, 2014, 2017)

Picture 5: Today's memorial baptistry at the place where it is believed that the Apostle Paul baptized Lydia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lydia_of_Thyatira

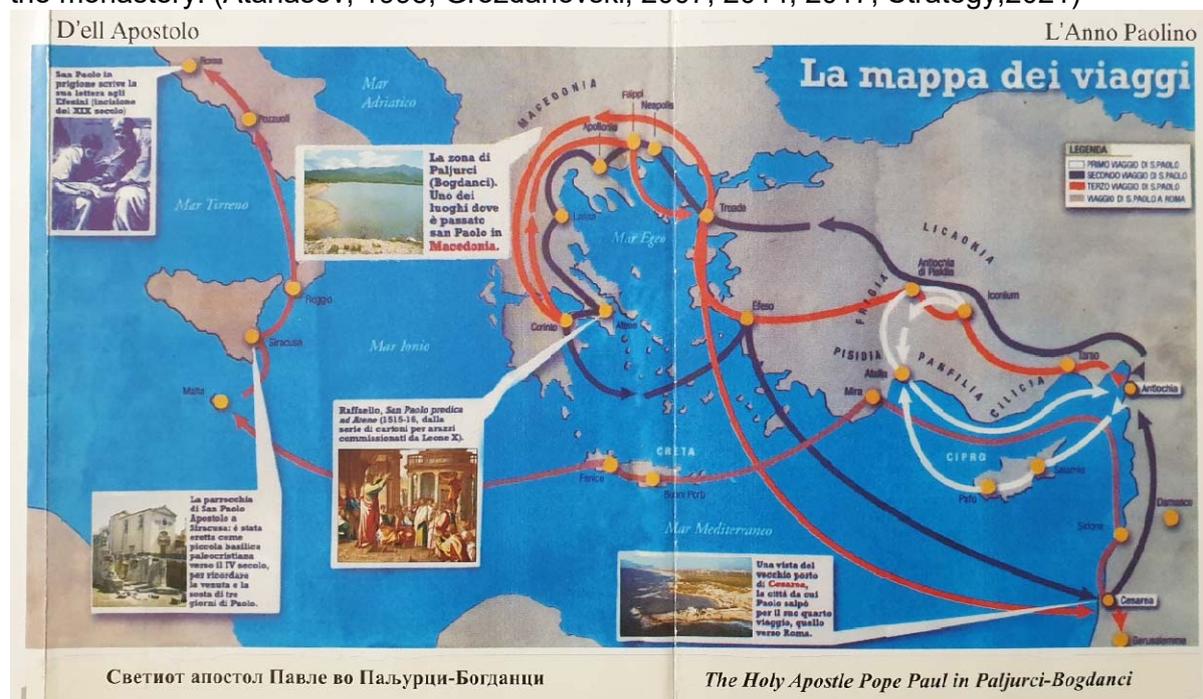


After leaving the apostle Luke in Philippi, the apostle Paul went to Thessalonica with Silas and Timothy. It happened in the spring of the year 50 along the Via Egnatia road. There they began to preach the gospel in Jason's house, in his weaving shop, in private homes.

In the year 51, the apostles Paul, Silas and Timothy left Thessalonica and went to Ber, where Sosipater Pirov became the first companion of the apostle Paul (Acts 20:4). Leaving Silas and Timothy in Berea, the holy apostle Paul decided to leave Macedonia and, by sea, went to Athens (Acts 17:15).

(Holy Scripture - Bible, 2017; Dictionary of the Holy Scriptures (Bible dictionary), 2011; Atanasov, 1995; Grozdanovski, 2007, 2014, 2017)

In Macedonia, there is a legend that Saint Paul the Apostle with his companions, in addition to the cities of Philippi, Thessaloniki and Ber, also visited the settlements: Ser, Drama, Petrich (Heracleia Sintika), Strumica, Valandovo, Bogdanci, Dojran, and other small settlements. There is also a legend that every place he visited and preached was called "Paul's place" - one such was the village of Palurci or Pavlerci, which is named after the Apostle Paul. Later, a monastery "Apostol Pavle" was built in his honor near the village. The village does not exist today and has been completely displaced since 1924 and there are no remains of the monastery. (Atanasov, 1995; Grozdanovski, 2007, 2014, 2017; Strategy, 2021)



Picture 6: The Travels of the Apostole Paul and Hoslu Apostole Pope Paul in Paljurci - Bogdanci

<https://www.google.com/search?q=Dell+Apostolo+Paolo%2C+la+mappa+dei+viaggi>

Macedonia has been a Christian country for two millennia. This tradition is mirrored through the presence of over 2350 churches (2300 Orthodox churches, chapels and monasteries and 50 Catholic churches¹). The importance of Macedonia for Christianity is also seen through the practice, that is, the construction of churches dedicated to the first European missionaries, the Holy Apostles Paul and Luke, and to the first Christian in Europe, St. Lydia of Macedonia. Thus, today there are a total of 5 churches dedicated to St. Paul the Apostle in RS Macedonia, then 1 church dedicated to St. Apostle and Evangelist Luke and 2 churches dedicated to St. Lydia the Macedonian - the first Christian and the first female Christian in Europe. These eight churches symbolize the beginning of Christianity in Macedonia and Europe. Here we would add 42 more churches and monasteries dedicated to the two apostles Saints Peter and Paul.

Today, there are a total of 53 churches and monasteries in RS Macedonia (42 churches and 8 monasteries, of which 2 have guest houses) that bear the name of Saint Paul the Apostle (5), Saint Peter the Apostle (3) and together Saint Apostles Peter and Paul (42), Saint Lydia (2) and Saint Luke the Apostle and Evangelist (1). (See: Table 1.)

Table 1: Temples - churches and monasteries that bear the name of St. Apostle Paul, St. Apostle Peter, St. Apostles Peter and Paul², St. Apostle and Evangelist Luke³ and Saint Lydia⁴ by settlements in the northern part of Macedonia⁵

S n	DIOCESE	VISITOR	PARISH	Type and name of the temple	Place (settlement)
1.	SKOPSKA DIOCESE	Northern Skopje Archieral	/	Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Gorche Petrov
2				Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Jurumleri
3.				Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Ajvatoks
4.		South Skopje Archieral	/	Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Gorno Lisice
5.				Church	Pakoshevo

¹ It means the northern part of Macedonia. That is, from 2019, the Republic of North Macedonia.

² Days when the two apostles are celebrated are: St. Apostle Peter is celebrated on June 29 (old style) or July 12 (new style), this day is also known as "Petrovden". Saint Peter the Apostle is celebrated the following day, June 30 (old style) or July 13 (new style) and is known as "Paul's Day" but also as "Council of 12 Apostles". Denovi.mk Orthodox calendar: <https://denovi.mk/>

³ Saint Luke the Apostle is celebrated on October 18 (old style) or October 31 (new style). On the other hand, a church dedicated to Saint Timothy the Apostle has not been built in Macedonia. Saint Timothy the Apostle is celebrated on January 22 (old style) or February 4 (new style). Also, there is no church dedicated to Saint Silas the Apostle who is celebrated on July 30 (old style) or August 12 (new style). Denovi.mk Orthodox calendar: <https://denovi.mk/> Saints Luke, Timothy and Silas are the three apostles who accompanied Saint Paul in his missionary journeys throughout Macedonia. There is another church dedicated to Saint Luke the Apostle and Evangelist in the village of Vrejt in Aegean Macedonia and in the city of Kavala, Greece.

⁴ Saint Lydia of Macedonia is celebrated on March 27 (old style) or April 9 (new style) Denovi.mk Orthodox calendar: <https://denovi.mk/> There is another church dedicated to St. Lydia the Macedonian in Philippi (near Kavala), R. Greece.

⁵ Since 2019, the Republic of North Macedonia has been added to the name of the Republic of Macedonia. In this text, we will also mention only the terms Bogoslovec, Bogdanci, Bogomila, Monastery and Church. All of them speak in favor of the biblical importance of the Macedonian language, the Macedonian and Macedonia as an absolute divine truth given by God.

				St. Apostles Peter and Paul		
6.	PRESPANSKO PELAGONISKA DIOCESE	Bitola Archieral	/	Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Bitola	
7.				Church of St. Lydia	Bitola	
8.			Bistrichka		Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Zabeni
9.			Lisolajska		Monastery St. Apostle Peter and Paul (with dormitory for monks)	Crnevec
10.			Novachka		Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Dolno Gorno Aglarci
11.			Dobrishevo - Dedebalchka		Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Radobor
12.		Archieral of Prilep	Vitolishte		Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Zivojno
13.			/		Monastery St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Dunje
14.			Varoshka		Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Varos, Prilep
15.			/		Monastery St. Apostles Peter	Resen
16.			/		Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Podmocani
17.		Archieral of Resen	/		Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Ljubojno
18.			/		Cave Church of St. Peter and Paul	Konjsko
19.			/		Monastery St. Apostles Peter	Big City (island)
20.			Krushevo - Demirhisar Archieral	/		Monastery of St. Peter and Paul (with lodgings)
21.	/			Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Sveta	
22.	BREGALNICKA DIOCESE	Stip Archieral	Sveti Nikole	Church of St. Apostle Paul	Ercelija	
23.				Church of St. Lydia of Macedonia	Sveti Nikole	
24.		Kochan Archieral	Kocanska		Church St. Peter and Paul	Pribacevo

25			Vinichka	Chapel of St. Apostle Paul	Vinica	
26				Church of St. Apostle and Evangelist Luke	Vinica	
27	DEBARSKO - KICHEVSKA DIOCESE	Archieral of Brod	Manastirechka	Church of St. Peter and Paul	Lupuste	
28				Church of St. Peter and Paul	Zvecan	
29				Church of St. Peter and Paul	Blizansko	
30				Church of St. Peter and Paul	Bitovo	
31		Debar Archieral	Debarsko - Rekanska paris	Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Tresonce	
32				Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Galicnik	
33		Kichevo Archieral	Fourth Kichevska	Central parish church of St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Kicevo	
34				Church of St. Peter and Paul	Srbjani	
35				Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Tajmiste	
36		Archieral of Struga	Third Stuska	Monastery church St. Peter and Paul	Kalista	
37		/	Vevcanska	Monastery church St. Peter and Paul	Vevcani	
38		Ohrid - Archieral	Belchishka	Church of St. Peter (under construction)	Lesani	
39				Koselska	Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Kosel
40				Velmejska	Monastery of St. Apostles Peter and Paul (with lodgings)	Brezani
41				Godivska	Church of St. Peter and Paul	Vrbjani
42		TETOVSKO-GOSTIVARSKA DIOCESE	Archieral of Gostivar	/	Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Dolna Banica
43				/	Church of St. Peter and Paul	Brodec
44				/	Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Zelena Reka
45		KUMANOVS KO-OSOGOVSKA	Krivopalnechko Archieral	/	Apostle Paul Church	Гиновци

4 6	POVARDAR SKA DIOCESE	Archieral vicarage of Veles		Church of St. Apostle Paul (under construction)	Градско
4 7			Izvor Parish	Church of St. Peter and Paul	Smilkovci
4 8			Bogomila Parish	Church of St. Peter and Paul	Papradiste
4 9	STRUMICHK A DIOCESE	/	/	Church St. Apostles Peter and Paul	Saraj
5 0				Church of St. Peter and Paul	Ratevo
5 1				Church of St. Peter and Paul	Pehcevo
5 2	CATHOLIC CHURCH	Apostolic Exarch	Gevgelija - Bogdan region	Church of St. Peter and Paul	Gevgelija
5 3				Church of St. Paul⁶ (no remains)	Paljurci (displaced)

Source: Jelena Pavlovska, Natasa Nikiforović, Ognen Kocevski, (2011); Strategy for the development of religious tourism and support of active monasteries (2021); Dimitrov, Nikola (2022). Compiled NVD.

CONCLUSION

The presented data is a solid basis for "Biblical Macedonia" as a tourist challenge with a religious sign. In the context of this, we propose a new tourist idea, which must be promoted and applied by tour operators, travel agencies and other stakeholders for the popularization of religious tourism not only in RS Macedonia, but also familiarization with religious objects in neighboring countries. Namely, along the path of Saint Paul the Apostle in Macedonia is a good opportunity for a new tourist content "Biblical Macedonia", as a regional religious circular tourist trail or route.

Tourists will have the opportunity to visit several churches, monasteries and places through a several-day tourist trip, namely: departing from Strumica, visiting the Orthodox church "St. 15 Martyrs of Tiberiopolis, and Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Strumica; Church of St. Ilija and the Partenie Zografski monastery complex in Dojran; Catholic Church of St. Cyril and Methodius and Orthodox Church of St. Atanasij in Bogdanci and Paljurtsi artificial lake built on the site of the former Paljurtsi village. Today, near the lake, there is a chapel built "Mother of God the Comforter" (*About the village of Paljurtsi or the Turkish village of Pavlertsi, there is a legend that the name comes from the Apostle Pavle, who when he came to preach Christianity, called every place he visited "Paul's place". Later, in his honor, the Apostle Pavle monastery was built near the village. The village does not exist and has been completely displaced since 1924*), at the end there is a visit to the churches of Saint Spas, Saint Cyril and Methodius and the Catholic church of Saint Peter and Paul in Gevgelija, where we spend the night (in RS Macedonia). The next day we continue to Greece and along the way we visit the famous places: churches of St. Theodore Tyrone and St. Nicholas in Sir; St. Panteleimon, St. Sophia in Drama; Holy Catholic church Saint Paul Cathedral and Church of St. Nikola (the place where the Apostle Paul set foot in Macedonia - Europe. In 2000, a monument was built at this place) and Holy monasteru of Apostle Silas, Holy shrine-baptistry of Sent Lydia of Thyatira and the church of St. Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Kavala, sightseeing and overnight stay in Kavala (in Greece); and the third day

⁶ Holy Catholic church Saint Paul Cathedral in Kavala

continues with a visit to: Church of St. Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Petrich, Heraclea Sintika locality, and Complex "Vandja" - Rupite, sightseeing and overnight stay in Petrich (in the Republic of Bulgaria).

The tourist-religious route can also be in other directions: Kavala - Petrich - Gevgelija; then Petrich - Kavala - Gevgelija; Strumica - Gevgelija - Petrich - Kavala, etc. We appreciate that this offer is a solid basis for the beginning of the realization of the Touristic - religious idea "Biblical Macedonia" as a real tourist challenge.

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