Artistic Lighting of an Architectural-and-Park Complex

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ABSTRACT
A research was carried out as well as artistic lightening of the unique cultural-and-historical and architectural park complex. It is an architectural composition and a combination of various religious motifs and mythological characters. There is a combination providing grounds to be perceived as a unity of religious teachings and the human kind. There is an artistic lightening ensemble put in place for each of the sites involved, which is in line with the specific and historical context of the complex. The designated wondrous spots in the architectural complex are sunken amidst amazing parks, terraces and gardens. The emphatic lightening of the historical sites is on the backdrop of the natural assets: the white cliffs of Balchik and the sea next to them, labyrinths of water canals and water mirrors, centenary trees, wild flowers, brooks, lulled old watermills and dry stone water fountains. The results obtained from the researches as well as the installed artistic lightening only emphasize the importance and the spirit of the cultural-and-historical heritage.

Keywords: artistic lightening, cultural-and-historical park complex, illumination, night lightening

1. INTRODUCTION
Any historical age with its rulers, sovereigns and men in power, recreates over the years of eternity its fantasies and energies, artistic sense and perception of scale and proportions through various artistic forms. Such is also the characteristics of the summer residence of the Romanian Queen Marie in the town of Balchik, Bulgaria, on the Black Sea coast.

2. ARCHITECTURAL PECULIARITIES
In 1998 the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria declared the Architectural-and-Park Complex (APC) „The Palace” in the town of Balchik a group architectural-and-construction monument of park and garden art with a category of national importance. Over the period 1924-1936 the Romanian Queen Marie built her summer residence. The architectural-and-artistic arrangement of the palace follows the spirit of the Romanticism, while applying some Christian and Oriental architectural-and-artistic motifs, as a result of the exotic Bahá’í Faith, professed by the Queen. Pursuant to its canons, she intertwined in a magnificent harmony dozens of cultures and influences into every single detail of her residence.
The latter was built under the design of the Italian architects Augustino and Amerigo, who, through the most suitable artistic forms, put into effect Queen’s ideas: preserving the natural assets, they built the residence, which organically fits into the terraced park composition of a landscape nature, characterized by the spared and further expanded vegetation and numerous supporting brick-walls, stone-faced alleys, stairs, small bridges and arching elements. The buildings successfully harmonize with the picturesque system of water canals and water mirrors, wells and waterfalls, and together with the decorative elements of the park composition (water fountains, sculptures, stone plastics, metal plastics and ceramics) they create an ensemble that is unique for Bulgaria.

The composition of the architectural-and-park complex is organized around three major structural elements:

- Queen Marie’s villa „The Quiet Nest” with its adjacent park and the servicing buildings and facilities;
- Prince Nicholas‘ villa, who was her son, and its adjacent park – („The Garden of Allah”) with the well „Gumus Bunar”;
- The pavilions for the guests of the royal court with their adjacent park.

All that creates a marvelous composition, illustrating the views of life of the Romanian Queen, where the most representative part of the Palace is Queen Marie’s villa, and its related „Bridge of Sighs“, „The Waterfall“, the Roman loggia – „Nympheme“ and the chapel „Stella Maria“, situated in a system of decorative pergolas, water mirrors and canals. The main emphasis in the composition of the „Palace“ is the modeled terrace-like territory of the most picturesque part of the residence.

The architectural-and-artistic objects of the “Palace” thus created, as well as its integrated interiors, create a permanent impact on the visitors. Light is successfully applied under the contemporary conditions in view of emphasizing the appearance of a particular place, without altering its physical state.

Light is leading the eyes; it directs the perception and focuses the attention on the details. The various spots can be fragmented and interpreted by the light, so that some areas are highlighted, or a link is created between the interior and exterior. The distribution of light and the degree of luminance have a decisive impact on the perception of the architecture.

The various intensity of the light creates hierarchy of perception and leads the eyes. The differentiation of the lighting effects renders contrast and highlights separate areas.

Light emphasizes various elements or surfaces and reveals both the form and the surface.

Colour stands for a considerable part of the visual perception. Colour is not visible without daylight or artificial lighting. The combination of lamps and filters provides a wide range of creative opportunities, allowing for the emphasis or modification via the colour light of the lighting effect of spaces and objects. The warm white, the neutral white and the white of the daylight all come from the white colour of light. The colour light comprises the whole visible spectrum.

White colour, when reflected by a coloured surface acquires the colour of that surface, turning into the prevailing coloured light of the whole environment. With coloured lighting of a coloured wall the effect may be enhanced, alienated or reversed.

The objective of the conducted research is, pursuant to an analysis, comparative assessment and the technical capacities of the lighting, to propose such artistic lighting that would emphasize the importance and the spirit of the cultural and artistic values of the “Palace” in Balchik.
3. ANALYSIS OF THE PARTICIPATING ELEMENTS

Queen Marie’s villa „The Quiet Nest” is an unusual combination of elements from different cultures, religions and nations (fig.1). The implemented lighting accentuates on the position in space of the minaret, the Christian dome, the doors with different shapes of woodcarving, verandas and stonewalls. Here is also one of the stone crosses, on which the beautifully carved sun and crescent are clearly outlined. The lighting is organically connected to the mystical characteristics and the deification attributed to Queen Marie by the people.

Central place in the architectural composition of the „Palace” occupy the villas „Guest House” (fig.2) and „Moara” (fig.3). Nowadays, villa “Guest House” is part of a hotel complex. One can hear from its rooms the song of the „Waterfall”, situated close to it, as well as the surf of the sea waves. The terrace “Three Watermills” has been formed on the ground floor with its specific interior. The used lighting outlines the spatial form of the villa and its location next to the waterfall, highlighting, at the same time, the stone facades and the specificity of its window apertures.

Villa „Moara” (fig.3), with its coziness, is functional under the present conditions as well, where its reception foyer hosts press-conferences and lectures during seminars. Its location within the complex is such that it provides open views of the waterfall, the sea and the villa „Quiet Nest”. That predetermines its important position and interest by the visitors.

The lighting is focused on the large arch-like wooden door with metal decoration, which is impressive with its exquisiteness. Just as all the other doors with woodcarving in the residence, it was also bought from an old castle in the Far East.

The main access and the entrance-and-reception
area of the residence is from the north through a specific portal – the sentinel’s house (fig.4). The implemented lighting accentuates on the large two-winged gate of the building, resembling a watch-tower, thus creating an additional effect of magnificence, eternity and austerity. An electric lantern over the entrance lights the way, with bulbs made like wax candles. Nowadays, its spacious premises are turned into a meeting room, designed for conferences and seminars. Right next to the sentinel’s house there is another beautiful building, reminding of a chapel, open from its three sides, fenced with exquisite metal bars (fig.4). It shelters one of the natural water sources „The Silver Well” (Gumus Bunar), well-known for its clear and cold water far back before the constructions here. Its part over the ground is shaped out of stone in the form of an analogion, while on the eastern wall there is an appliquéd polychromatic majolica, depicting „The Holy Mother of God” – Our Queen in Heaven, with the Infant Christ. The spotlight properly directed creates a halo-like radiance over the majolica, underlying its eternity, nobility, magnificence and compassion.

Here is also the so-called Roman loggia – nymphaeum (fig.5), which is a sanctuary of the nympha, revered as deities of the spring curative water. It recreates the famous Bethesda (The Home of Compassion) in Jerusalem. There are covered corridors, bordered by a Mauritanian style colonnade, built around the water mirror in the middle, which reflects the sky, as well as the stars and the moon at night. The implemented lighting creates one of the most romantic and moving nooks in the park complex, where, through light and its colour, the visitor is conveyed to the romantic age of the past centuries.

The Swiss florist Jules Jeannys turned the territory of the residence into a picturesque park. The earthenware jars brought from Morocco, the gravestones from Bessarabia, with Church-Slavonic inscriptions, and the marble thrones from Florence just add to the architectural-artistic composition, they embellish the flower beds and the characteristic nooks of the park.

Each of the gardens has an independent style, with a specific architectural or garden element. Quite unique is that those elements are not in the centre of their composition, but they just belong to them and are perceived as a part of a well-balanced spatial arrangement with an incorporated mystical predisposition. Both in the architecture of the constructions built, and in the garden landscaping there are elements borrowed from various styles – Byzantine, Mauritanian, Greek and Bulgarian.

The common thing between the garden spaces is that, according to their characteristics, they are restricted from the...
side of the land, and are open towards the sea, which is invariably present in their composition. The separate gardens are connected with steps, supporting stone-walls and hanging gardens, bound spatially and visually one to another, while the surrounding environment at the foreground, as well as in the background, unites them in one whole entity.

Fig.6 shows a typical view of one of the most beautiful gardens of the park complex, which is the crossing point of several crossroads – in one direction, towards the stepped terraces, soaring above the flower beds, and in the other, towards the entrance of the complex and the other residential villas. The statue of a young guardian warrior stands on a finely engraved stone column amidst tender rose bushes. It is a symbol of a remarkable wartime leader and strategist, statesman, patron and builder of churches and monasteries, which quietly guards the paths and alleys in the palace complex.

The garden element is predominantly formed by trees, which presence, in terms of lighting, is conveyed by green light. It accentuates the centenary trees’ crowns, and renders feelings of serenity and warmth. Alongside with them, their trunks and lower parts are lit with yellow and brown hues. Thus, the gardens serve as a spectacular backdrop of light for the illuminated buildings.

The emotional impact of the „Palace” would be incomplete without the „Bridge of Sighs” (fig.7) and the „Waterfall Garden” (fig.8).

The silhouette of the small stone bridge is built as a part of the main seaside walking alley in the complex. It divides and unites symbolically two worlds – one providing rest for the body, and the other filling one’s heart and soul. Perhaps, that is why it has been called the „Bridge of Sighs”. The lighting underneath the bridge, and the reflection in the water, create an amazingly magical scene and romanticism, and overwhelm the visitor. It opens a view to the beauty of the „Waterfall Garden”, where one can watch the waterfall, which drops vertically from 14 m height, surrounded by the overhanging branches of willows, poplar trees and lilacs blossoming in pink, as well as the mouth of the river, gently running into the sea.
The dashing water, corresponding to the divine melody, absorbed in its rhythm and heading towards the steep cliff, is in accord with the colour harmony of the employed lighting. The playful water stream can be followed by its light along its full length, where its foaming renders a feeling of dynamism to the observer. Here the murmur of the water and the playing of the colours from the artistic lighting on the falling water and the branches of the trees, create not only a romantic sense of the passing time, but also serve, through the illuminated river, running into the sea, for a connection with the infinity.

The lighting fittings are implemented by the company “Prisma” - Varna, which is specialized in architectural and artistic lighting, where the spotlights used are mainly of the type RZB: 721156.092; 721318.772; 721114.762 and 721091.782. The first two are spherical-symmetrical with halogen light, and the other two are non-symmetrical, with metal-halogen light.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The conducted research provides grounds for the following conclusions:
- The “Palace” is an architectural-and-artistic ensemble, combining in itself various architectural details, which bear the signs of various historical ages and religions, it combines gardens, bridges, paths, water cascades, stone terraces and walls, which are matched appropriately and create a long-lasting emotional impact;
- Through the architectural-and-artistic lighting of the nocturnal image of the complex, thus created, the visitors can connect themselves in a functional and direct way with the history, architecture and living of the “Palace”;
- The implemented artificial exterior façade, landscape and water lighting emphasizes the characteristic features of the various details in the architectural-and-park complex, and it further diversifies and intensifies the emotional perception of this unique historical park;
- Through a suitable proportion between the local spots of brightness of the illuminated objects (nuances and contrasts, lights and shadows, colour, etc.) there is a more serene, more lyrical and softer nocturnal portrayal achieved of the respective areas in the “Palace”, and vice-versa – appropriate contrast lighting is used for obtaining a more impressive, or even dramatic and mystical effect;
- Suitable interdependence and interrelation is implemented between the brightness and the colour contrast of the illuminated objects of historical and architectural importance, thereby recreating their appearance truthfully, and in line with the concept of their author, and the typical nature of the historical age.

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