

“The City Tells a Story”
Lesson by: Magdalena Sajkova (Bitola, Macedonia)
Student project - Film narration English transcript

Here is the link to the student film, and below is the English translation of the narration:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6l2c2LR2Sj3TUJC0ThWX2hfRVITRElFM1pKcm5PSE1xbUt3/view>

My wondrous Bitola, oh how many peoples you have embraced, what stories you have ingrained in every building, quarter, street, and what fates you’ve sewn into your existence. Yes, our Roza and Beno, ours, perhaps the neighbors to my grandmother or her close friends, as once everyone was close and lived as one. In the city everyone respected each other’s religion, but everyone respected their friends and there existed no holiday that wasn’t celebrated together nor a coffee that was not sipped together nor a story that wasn’t told and everyone lived together.

Here stands, even today, the same old house of Roza and Beno, where my mother took singing lessons. She used to tell me about the old guitar teacher, who patiently tuned the strings and their sounds as if they were the dreams of happy, singing children. They used to run through the yard and greet the bust of Trajche Maglovski (the little partisan whose bust testifies for the once-present courage and desire for liberty), but not even they knew that in that same yard some other young Jews once had their own dreams. If only today Roza and Beno knew of this Bitola, of this quarter, of the freedom in which we live, the one they brought for us.

A little ways down, towards Shirok Sokak, here’s the house of the famed doctor Abravanel. Yes, the personal physician of Milton Manaki. Even he has gotten entangled in the city’s history, a city that could not build its own story without these people. Today the House of Public Health carries his name. Yet further down the road, in the maala (quarter) of the Kalderon family or that of Sara Aroesti, or the Chiflik maala, where, if you listen closely, you will hear the music of the little Jewish children, knocking on the door of every generous homeowner with their purses in hand on Friday afternoon, so that they may save up for the Sabbath.

I silently gaze towards the hill and end with the last building. I see that Bitola is unique, it isn’t a city, it’s a mosaic of people’s destinies, faiths and traditions, she is an unforgettable and everlasting existence, a living monument to those who were, who witnessed and remained as a testament to the future.

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