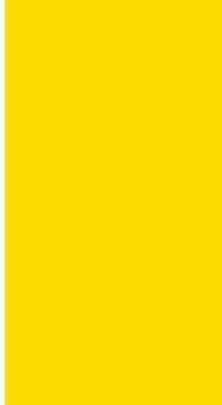




Soroptimist  International of Europe

tour program



EDUCATE

EMPOWER

ENABLE

The colors of Macedonia

Struga – City of Poetry – the home of the first SI Club



Struga, straddles the northern tip of the Ohrid lake and is a captivating destination in its own right. Situated near the famous Roman Via Egnatia, Struga was known in antiquity by the name of Ehalon, meaning ‘eel.’

One of the most remarkable tales from Ohrid lore is about this slippery creature. Following its mystifying internal intuition, the Ohrid Eel travels thousands of kilometers from its birthplace in the Sargasso Sea, through the Mediterranean, and up through the Crn Drim River that empties into Lake Ohrid. After lurking about for years in the murky depths of the lake, the eel suddenly gets the desire to consummate its life’s mission- by returning to the distant Caribbean, where it mates and dies.

If there is something poetic about the sad fate of the eccentric Ohrid eel, then Struga is the right place for contemplating it. Long venerated by Macedonians as a place of literary inspiration, Struga is the site each year of an International Festival of Poetry dedicated to the memory of the 19th century poet Konstantin Miladinov. He captured the area’s beauty and place in the Macedonian heart in his poem, “Longing for the South:” (which is the name of the most famous Macedonian red wine as well).

Struga today is a popular summer getaway, interspersed with alleyways and shops where products are still crafted by hand. The town has many churches, the oldest dating from the 12th century, and wood-frame houses characteristic of 18th and 19th century Macedonian architecture.



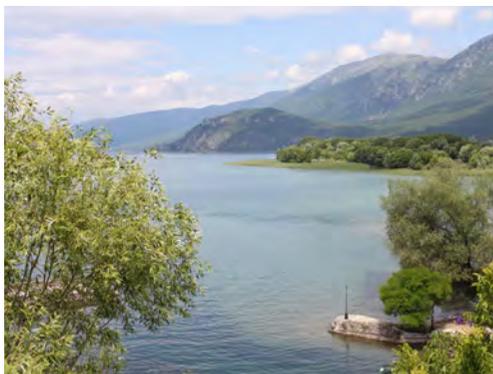
Monastery and Springs of St. Naum

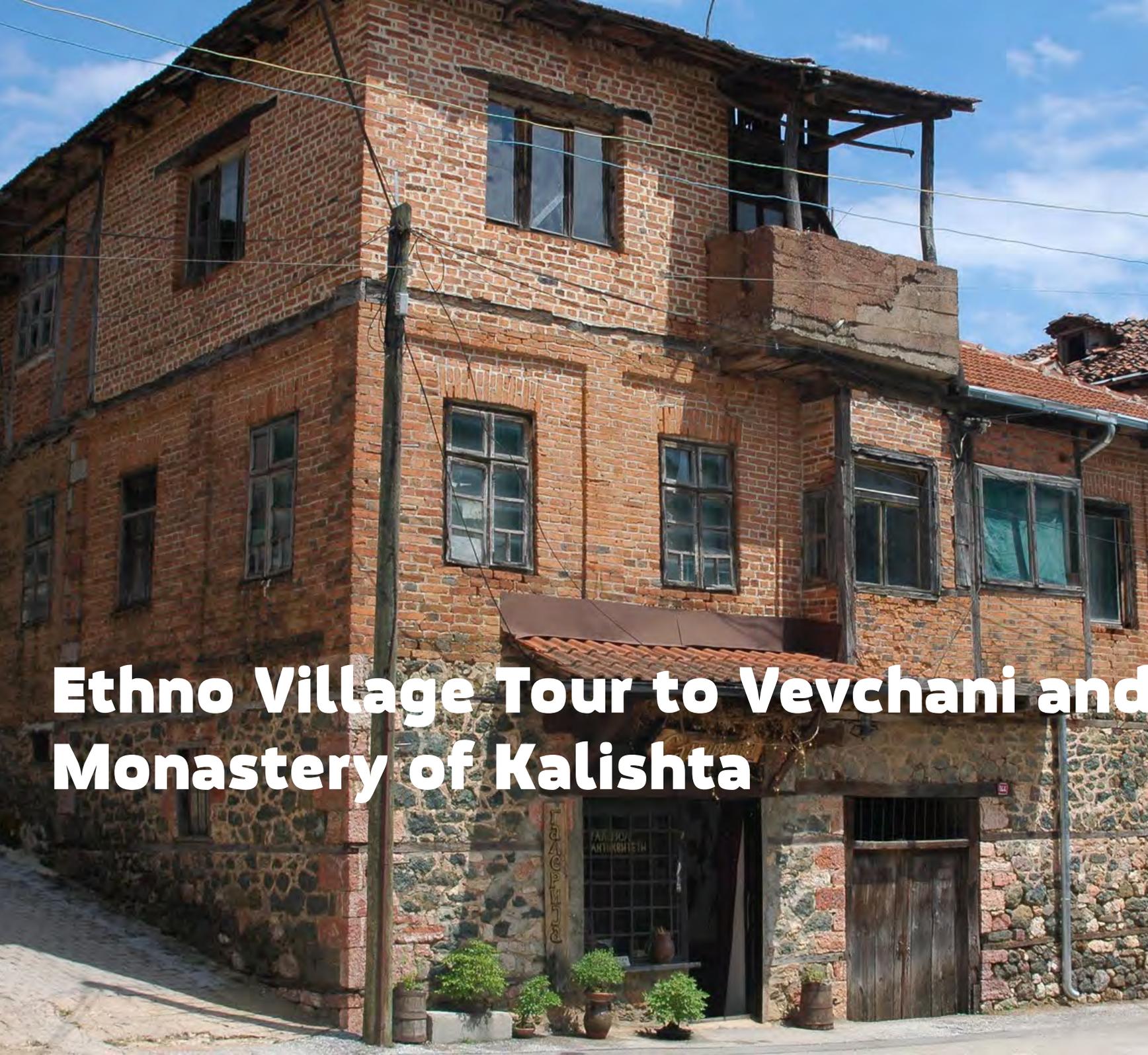
– the Miracle Maker 9TH CENTURY



Are you searching for a mystical religious experience? Or is your dream about visiting a sacred place of great value to your spiritual convictions? In this tour we can make your dream come true. We are starting with the visit to the Bay of Bones – prehistoric settlement from Bronze Age XII BC. The area around St. Naum's monastery is among the most beautiful along the shore of Lake Ohrid.

The magnificent greenery, the two romantic little isles (one is covered with thick forest, with many birds nesting there), surrounded by the Crn Drim river springs, the spacious sand beach, the monastery itself, and the panorama from the hill it is located on - all of these make it one of the most attractive picnic spots. The peace and harmony that radiates from these holy places will easily make you connect with your spiritual higher self.

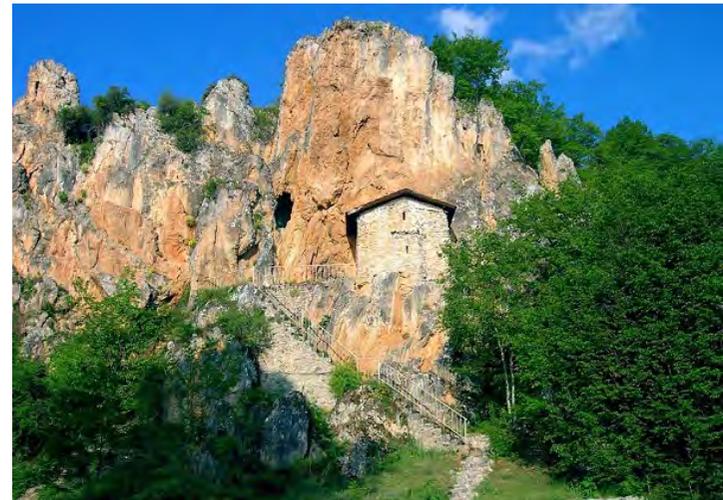




Ethno Village Tour to Vevchani and Monastery of Kalishta



Do you feel stressed and hectic in your everyday life? Would you like to wash away all anxiety and stress? Visit old cave churches from the 14th century, lively village, magnificent springs, have a meal in a traditional restaurant. Finally you can enjoy a sunset meditation, with time to tap into the pure energies and unique colours of the magical lake and surrounding nature that will stay with you forever. In this tour we shall visit Cave church from 14 c., Monastery Kalishta, Vevchani Springs located at 936 m above sea level - a monument of nature, attractive all year round; have a tour in the village Vevchani and have traditional lunch in local restaurant.



Ohrid – the city of UNESCO





The city of the immortal Ohrid is the sublime lakeside point that for many represents the culmination of the Macedonian experience, a kingdom of light and water, a repository of ancient ruins from Macedonia's earlier kingdoms.

The uniqueness of Lake Ohrid and the city's historical architecture has been attested by UNESCO, honoring it with an official designation as one of the few places on the cultural institution's list "World Inheritance".

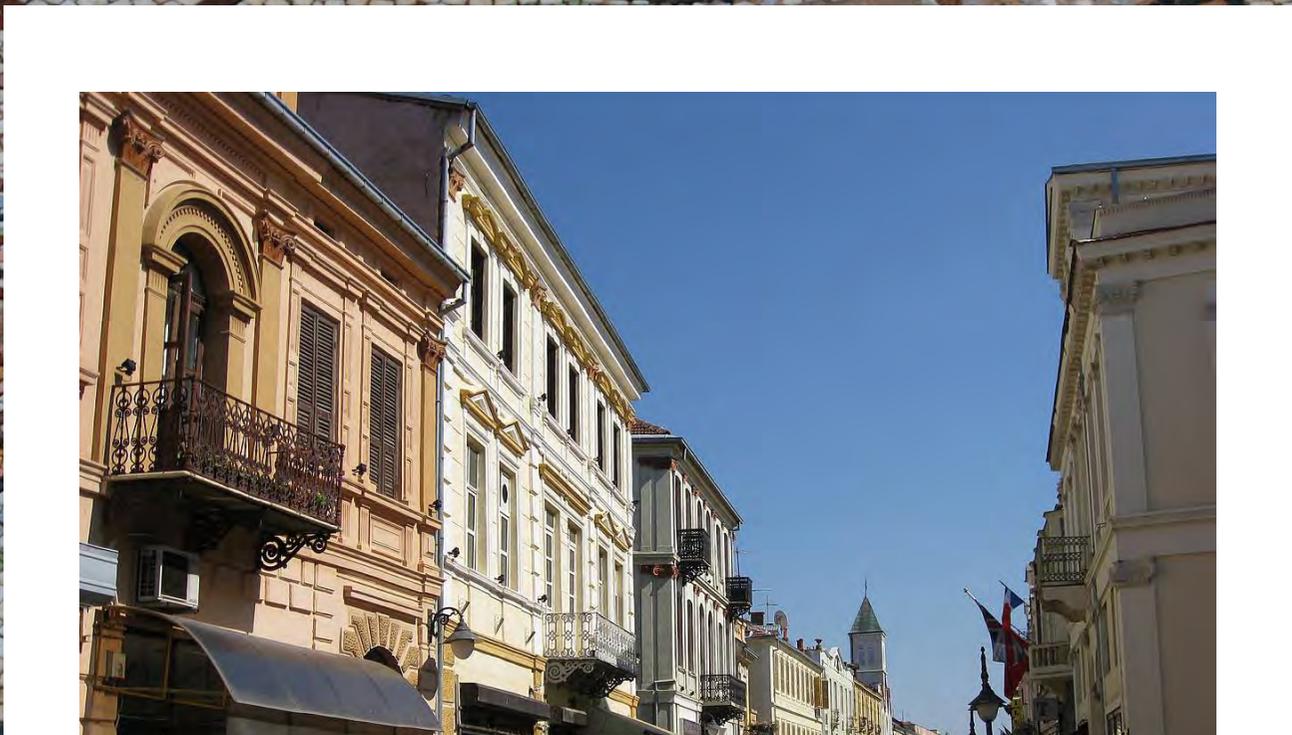
Archaeological finds indicate that Ohrid is one of the oldest human settlements in all of Europe. The Lake itself is over three million years old. Ohrid town is first mentioned in Greek documents from 353 B.C, when it was known as Lychnidos or "the city of light."

Apart from its ancient theater (which is still in use today), the ancient Lychnidos boasted a classical agora, gymnasium, civil basilicas and temples to the Gods of Greek Antiquity. When under Roman rule it developed more of the typical Roman architectural traits, and became an important transit point on the Via Egnatia trade route that bisected the Balkans. The town as we know it today was built mostly between the 7th and the 19th century.

During the Byzantine period, Ohrid became a significant cultural and economic center serving as an Episcopal center of the Orthodox Church and as the site of the first Slavic university run by St. Clement and St. Naum at the end of the 9th century. At the beginning of the 11th century, Ohrid briefly became the capital of Macedonia's greatest medieval ruler, Samuel, whose fortress still presides over the city today.

During Ottoman times Ohrid remained the seat of the autocephalous Ohrid archiepiscopacy until 1726. During its Byzantine apogee, the town was renowned for its 365 churches and monasteries. These and a large number of sacral edifices have been preserved and make up a large part of Ohrid's rich medieval past. Today, one of the city's museums has a collection of Byzantine and post-Byzantine icons, most of which were painted between 11th and 14th century. Art historians consider this collection as one of the most important in the world, along with those of the Tretiakov Gallery in Moscow and Mt. Athos in Greece.

Bitola – the city of Consuls and Ancient city Heraclea





Macedonia's second biggest city Bitola is a grand old town that still bears the marks of its turn-of-the-century importance being a center for diplomacy. At the same time it exemplifies the country's time-honored coffee culture where people take regular day breaks and head off to one of the numerous Bitola cafés chat and catch-up.

The many cafés lining the city's pedestrian main street (the Shirok Sokak) provide endless see-and-be-seen opportunities for Bitola's fashionable youth. The stately old architecture of Bitola goes back to more than a century ago when the town was a center for international diplomats to the Ottoman administration, superseding Skopje and becoming known far and wide as the "city of the consuls." Even today, some of the faded elegance of that bygone time can be seen in the neoclassical facades of downtown buildings; old gentlemen would converse in Bitola's parks, all dressed up in their finest Sunday suits wearing hats.

Having a population of 125,000 residents, Bitola has all the characteristics of modern life: hotels, cultural events, and nightlife.

At the same time, its proud and patriotic people are devoted to passing on the Macedonian cultural heritage. In addition to the celebrated Bitola Theater, the city has over 500 traditional songs dedicated to it.



St. John the Baptist

11TH CENTURY



St. Jovan Bigorski is a 19th century monastery standing on the slopes of Debar's Mt. Bistra, above the banks of the River Radika. While relatively new, St. Jovan was constructed over the remains of an older church dating from 1021.

Built on a steep slope surrounded by dense woods and rocky hills, St. Jovan is reminiscent of the cliff top monasteries of Mt. Athos in Greece.

Since the monastery is dedicated to St. Jovan the Baptist, worshippers believe that icons with his image are blessed with a miraculous healing power.

The monastery has a small silver coffin containing alleged relics of St. Jovan. The monastery complex includes a dining room and an old monastic dormitory, tower, charnel house and two fountains overflowing with fresh mountain water.

15TH CENTURY

Tetovo - the Painted Mosque



Visit the Painted Mosque – it was built in 1495 in early Constantinopolitan style. Especially interesting are the painted ornaments on the façade and on the interior walls of the worship area.

Skopje – The Capital City – the birth place of Mother Teresa



In its 2,500 years of existence, Macedonia's welcoming capital city has had many different embodiments. All of them – from Roman to Byzantine, from Ottoman to Yugoslav – have left permanent traces on the city as is evidenced by Skopje's varied architecture and its mix of cultures. Yet in addition to its strong historical associations, Skopje is a forward-looking city offering an abundance of modern amenities and attractions.

Here one can find sleek modern hotels above the cobblestoned Ottoman streets, outstanding neo-classical homes right around the corner from grand old Yugoslav-era buildings, red-bricked Byzantine churches and rounded Turkish mosques, chic cafés, shopping malls and brightly-colored new offices. The concentrated complexity of Skopje today attracts visitors offering a great variety of things to see and do, constantly reminding the public of the city's storied past. Chief among sights to see are the Stone Bridge crossing the River Vardar, the Ottoman-era Old Bazaar (Stara Charshija), and the Kale Fortress walls. In the sloping narrow streets of Stara Charshija one feels the spirit of the old city with its small shops, mosques with their ceramic tiled interiors, the outdoor bazaar and hamam that continues to exist from Turkish times. A short climb up to the Kale Fortress is well rewarded; from this hilltop where Skopje's masters ruled for centuries one enjoys a commanding view of the city and its surroundings.

Mother Teresa was born and baptized in Skopje, and on the place where Catholic Church was, you can visit the Memorial House dedicated to her.



ADDITIONAL VIDEOS ABOUT MACEDONIA

Hyperlinks. Please click on the words to see the related promotional videos.

Macedonia

FOOD WINE

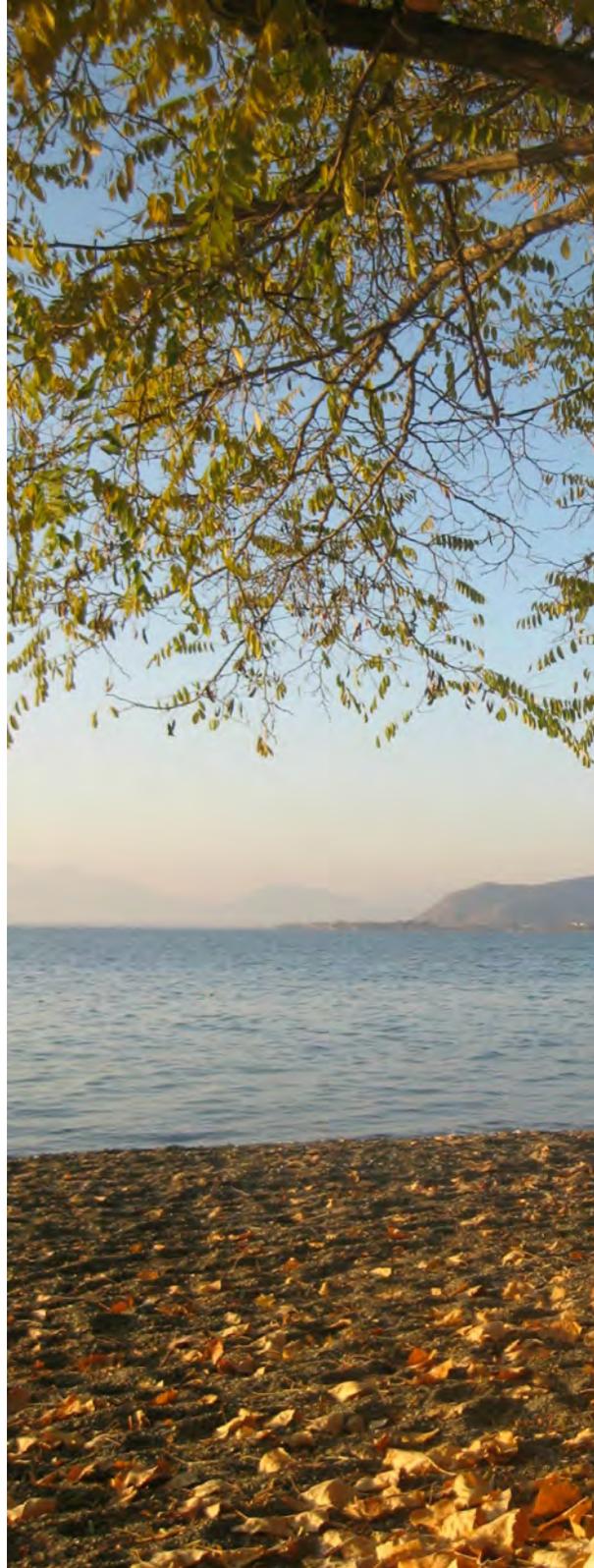
OHRID Temples

MOUNTAINS



Archeology

Macedonia



a global voice
for women

