



HISTORICAL HERITAGE AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS OF WATER-MILLS IN FUNCTION OF DOMESTIC TOURISM

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Abstract:

Diversity of information on traditional values of past times with all differences of cultural environment results in creation of new interests and knowledges that contribute to wider conceptual understanding of cultural values. Traditional way of life and work as the element of cultural and historic heritage has permanent potential in forming of creative touristic attractions. In this context the position of water mills in Serbia is quite special. With the strength of historically played role in life of people and national community, water mills remain essential and significant part of historic tradition and permanent record of the life in the past times. In order to position the water mills in proper way in terms of economic, environmental, cultural, historic and touristic aspects the establishment of integrated institutional framework with the rules of operation of water mills in economic, ecological and touristic ambience is necessary. Along with further management of activities and broader incentives in the work of local water-mills, a number of issues has to be managed including the proprietary rights and the application of customary law, the energy aspects of water mills and the rules for their inclusion in the energy system, the rights to use water-courses as a natural resource, as well as the conditions in terms of equipment and space that must be fulfilled in order to place products from the stone mill, representing additional part of tradition based touristic offer, on the market.

Keywords:

Cultural-historical heritage, water-mills, institutional framework, tourist attractions, classification, implementation

INTRODUCTION

Dynamic processes of the national business-tourist environment condition the need of constant care of cultural-historical goods and traditional cultural values. The universal time limitless spatial distribution, usability, and eternal mysticism characterize the historically significant role of water mills in the lives of our people, and at the same time defines their historical and cultural role. The significance of the historical heritage of water mills in Serbia points to the need of wider support of their reconstruction and the real focus on tourist but also often forgotten, economic activities organized in rural environment.

This paper initiates the definition of the situation and review of different aspects of the need to initiate the topics of development, renewal, improvement and successful synergy support, qualitative and

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quantitative organization, classification and grouping of the forgotten traditional crafts and values including neglected cultural goods such as domestic water mills, as well as improved applications of their values in business practice and overall tourism offer.

STATE OF THE ART ANALYSIS

Water mills as cultural and historic heritage

With the cultural and historical role that they had in the lives of our ancestors and materialistic and spiritual culture in general water mills and old mills in general are characterized with the historical path defined in many historical values: economic, construction, gastronomic, cultural, artistic and many others. With their long duration and proven significance water mills are directly related to the tradition of life, the survival of the people and various aspects of the accompanying cultural and social relations and events. Water mills in Serbia as a historical and national value with a special significance for the social, historical and cultural development of the people in national history, as well as for the development of the natural environment deserve a clear form of defining as cultural good of exceptional importance.

With their historical importance and the millennium and indispensable role in society, water mills and mills in general deserved the everlasting role. As the part of the historical heritage, water mills are not characterized only with their economic activities but also by other aspects of their contribution to cultural tradition. In Serbia, there are several historical sites where milling stones were discovered, even from the time of the Lepenski Vir culture (about 4,700 years ago). In spite of decay and general misery today, we still have enough existing water mills that are authentic and usable, and thus can be reconstructed and restarted. There are dozens and hundreds of water mill facilities or their traces in different parts of our country. They are in different forms, shapes and degrees of usability, especially in rural areas and rural households where individual cases can still be easily identified today. With the necessary protection and sustainable functionality, water mills are today an example of a everlasting struggle to provide nutrition. As Dedić *et al.* (1999) stated Water mills (Vodice) are “a significant part of the economic strength of the old village: a valuable monument of construction, through which the technical know-how and technologies of the construction of mill plants have been conquered; they are still a living monument of the provisions of old customary law, and also a significant factor in everyday life in the countryside - one of its social centers.” From the historical point of view, the heritage of water mills (vodenica) represents a tradition and a part of life that can be considered a cultural-historical good and heritage of the culture of life, essentially denoting various forms and ways of economic, cultural and social organization.

Available data on the history of water mills are mainly part of oral heritage and to a large extent unverified but also very valuable evidence. According to unofficial information and quotes, “200 years ago in Serbia there were 7,500 water mills. There is a list of water mills and arable land in Serbia from 1867. There were 7,125 water mills registered (<http://zivetisaprirodom.rs/vodenice-u-srbiji>). The number and capacity of water mills in Serbia, confirms the significant economic role, but also the wider social as well as their cultural and historical significance in the period before industrialization of grain processing in the post-war period. Existence of a characteristic business-craft jargon and the guiding terminology of technical and technological circuits and parts in water mills (Bukumirović, 2002) provides also significant cultural and historical contribution to the field of lexicography.

Water mills state of the art

Water mills capacities are today minimized and relatively evenly distributed in the entire territory of Serbia, where there are water resources necessary for their work.

There are currently no complete and accurate records on the spatial distribution and the number of water mills in Serbia. There is also no unique classification and registry, and therefore neither professional nor esnaf arrangement nor other accompanying forms of program organization. Therefore, a clear view of the situation and the possibility of organized development is not possible. However, by combining sources of information



that can be obtained from the research, from associations, historians, journalists, owners, enthusiasts and other interested parties occasionally disclose interesting data and plans. Although the available data are mostly unverified and superficial, they are nevertheless valuable. The existing spatial distribution, the number and other studies, provide insight into the potential for revitalization of the economic activities of water mills, but also for the needs of creating an innovative tourist product: the touristic and cultural program of water mills in Serbia.

According to unofficial just a little over 50 water mills are in use today in Serbia. By searching the part of the database of the central register of monuments of culture, architectural heritage, immovable cultural goods of Serbia it can be seen that in the villages of Serbia, out of a total of 2,200 positions registered as cultural monuments, only 23 water mills were registered (http://www.heritage.gov.rs/latinica/nepokretna_kulturna_dobra.php).

It is evident that the significant potentials and possibilities of water mills as cultural, historical and economic assets have not been given sufficient importance, nor have development programs that are real support for this type of cultural heritage been applied, neither in the business nor in the tourist context. Therefore, the historical and social value of water mills is not valorized, and the possibilities and perspectives of multifunctional engagement have not been exploited. The current situation is also characterized by insufficient number of active and infrastructured water mills that are significantly engaged in flour production, which is also an important part of the tourist offer. The current conditions of the majority of water mills could be summarized in the following way: high degree of construction, equipment and tools negligence; insufficiently developed and abandoned infrastructure; business individuality without organized incorporation in business-tourist activity; undefined working conditions, lack of knowledge about water milling procedures; unclearly defined legislative and legal aspects; lack of promotional activities; neglected standards of quality and food safety management.

Classification and grouping of water mills

Water mills in Serbia are not individually or generally classified and grouped according to realistic criteria. It would be desirable to define water mills as significant historical and cultural values as objects with unique and characteristic economic, tourist and other business characteristics and features, and classified according to mutual differences. Regarding the specific characteristics, a categorical classification and categorization methodology should be developed according to credible spatial, temporal, functional and other demarcations. Particular consideration should be given to the difference in the arrangement of ownership relations, the manner of business and the form of organization. Based on the essential elements of classification and grouping, it would be possible to make core and, in practice, applicable economic and tourism maps with marked access roads, road signs, paths as well as other infrastructure. When defining the classification criteria, account should also be taken of the state of operational operability, proven historical and cultural heritage, the current status and aspects of possible protection for reconstruction and development projects. Water mills could be classified into the following groups:

Group 1. – Water mills working according to the current and intended purpose of using in a regularly registered business activity and provide subsidies for renovation, adaptation and development.

Group 2. – Water mills that exist but do not work for established and / or unspecified reasons. For this group of water mills it is necessary to define ownership, management, cultural-historical significance, social value and role and other essential elements, demarcation and classification in relation to historical periods and time of creation, mode and model of work, current state, determined functionality, development opportunities and others. and determine the program of adaptation, renovation and restarting;

Group 3. – Water mills at defined locations of previous existence with the determination of the time of origin, existence, layout and classification, categorization, establishment of a program of comprehensive renewal and rebuilding and other related issues.

Group 4. – Water mills in the group for which special conditions should be defined for classification and starting a new water mill (replicas etc.): historical, cultural and tourist significance, special cultural or market-commercial purpose, form of protection, management, maintenance, etc.



Status and organizational issues

By their long existence, water mills have created rules of conduct through their own customary law - legal rules whose formal source is not contained in official regulations, but in the social environment that is gradually and more or less spontaneously created. Through written and ordinary sources of medieval Serbia and later, these issues took significant place through resolving the status and organizational as well as all other important issues related to the water milling profession. Having in mind the position that the water mills traditionally took, water milling was very important economic activities of the society at that time, and the communities provided them with a full confirmation of their roles and status. Issues of the legal, business and institutional framework regarding ownership of water mills are still present. The current national legislation in the field of cultural property management regulates this matter as a special issue and at the same time harmonizes systemic jurisdiction with parts of the entire national, legal and economic codification.

In contemporary water mills rules of “ordinary” law from the past are often emphasized and generally obeyed. These rules often stand out as the source of the conflicts of interest of participants in the conduct of water mills in the present time, pointing out at certain legal gaps and nonconformities that need to be harmonized. The existing legal regulations in the registered activity clearly define the manner and conditions of the work of the local water mills, but it is necessary to upgrade and improve the regulations in the domain of “professional” rules of conduct of registered activity of water mills. Customary law as the original traditional and oldest type of autonomous law still has its clearly defined role and continues to retain its place in improving the work of water mills. The National Law on Obligations (Official Gazette SFRJ 29/78, 39/85, 45/89 Official Gazette SRJ 31/93 Official Gazette SCG 1/2003) recognizes existing “commercial” and “good” business practices, with the addition of new customs, in addition to the old ones, in the function of improving work and a more adequate business place for water mills in an economically and increasingly important tourist activity. The fact that customary law is based on the “important assumptions of the generality of application, long-lasting performance and conviction in the regularity of custom” (Mitrović, 2015) provides solid base and the possibility for simple and additional definition and full clarification existing uncertainties and incorporation of work of water mills in legal regulations. Modern business systems of improved water mills management do not diminish the importance of customs and customary law, but they can open issues of type, legal force and proving of the customs. The unique national legislative and institutional framework is the fundamental condition and principle of methodological development and continuous improvement of the work of water mills, regardless if they are pure economic entity or a heterogeneous object where the cultural aspects of tourist services represents a significant part of their overall activity.

Production activities in water mills

Business rules, quality standards and health and safety aspects are important elements of the prescribed professional and conscientious organization of water mills work. The historically set up method of “watermilling craft” today cannot compete with advanced technologies. High technologies and food safety requirements determine other rules. Under the new conditions adequate rules should be set for water mills operation, adjusted to the preserved historical values and as well as technical and technological level. It is necessary to prescribe appropriate minimum conditions in terms of facilities, equipment, good hygienic and manufacturing practices necessary to guarantee the safety of the products without undermining the concept of traditional technology and preserving the heritage of water mills as the holders of the preservation of traditional technology.

The usual grinding of cereals and other raw materials of plant origin, between two stones, resulted in flour of various granulations and end uses. In the technological and production process, a number of important aspects was taken into account: the correct and clean production and storage of raw materials, the correct and controlled delivery and removal as well as the market conditions: prices of cereals, flour and other products, as well as payment of labor costs and compensations. In addition to these products, water mill was also a place for the swap, exchange and trade of other goods, products and services that characterized the work and the place of existence of the water mills.



Today important and actual questions in achieving of set goals in the reconstruction and work of local water mills are professional and legal forms of education and cooperation. A good example is the “Association of Serbian Water Millers”, which in Art. 5 of the Statute sets out the goals and tasks: “The goals and tasks of the Association of Serbian Water Millers are: preserving the ethno-style of construction, protecting the property of the monument value, preserving the traditional production of healthy food and in that regard preserving the old Serbian tradition and old crafts, with special attention to the reconstruction of old water mills in the territory of Serbia and nurturing and preserving water milling crafts, advocating for the development of rural tourism and for the use of clean and renewable energy“ (<http://kumovavodenica.com/drustvo-vodenicara-srbije/>).

RECOMENDATIONS

Water mills can make a great contribution and significant cultural and historical value in respect to tourism. Water mills point to the complementary possibilities of “sustainable development of domestic tourism that is not exclusively related to known and dominant locations on destinations, mountains and spas, but indirectly for each local, rural and other environment, municipality, location and individual business situation“ (Vukotić, 2016). The unique historical map and the spatial distribution of water mills along with local tourism development plans can renew and define the basis for plans, reconstruction, development and further improvements and more powerful implementation of role of water mills in the domestic tourist industry. Creating a unified national foundation and framework with initial local and individual programs and implementation plans, would enable new projects in the tourist offer. The way in which water mills would be launched in organized economic work and tourism activity is conditioned by the understanding of the historical significance and the role that water mills had in the centuries-old life of the people who lived in the existing geographical and national space. It is necessary to define professionally the authenticity of ambient and organized behavior, a full standard of functional and operational usability while preserving the minimum of working, production and overall service atmosphere characteristics of historical time that will be presented to the guests.

In many typologies, including the Law on Cultural Property (Official Gazette RS 71/94, 52/2011, 99/2011) of the Republic of Serbia, water mills as tangible or intangible goods are often not seen as cultural goods and objects of tourists’ interest. They include many cultural characteristics of the way of life from the past, objects, material construction, culture of life with traditional objects, original manifestations, events, folklore, old crafts, furniture, accessories, women’s equipment and clothing, costumes, national food tradition, beliefs or and methods of work and performance of economic activities. Also, relations with natural phenomena, folk customs, written and oral presentations, water mills especially mark the ethnical areas, natural areas around parks and water resources (rivers, streams and lakes), special villages, monasteries and other ambient complexes, old medieval settlements, fortifications, towns, villages and towns, preserving old culinary skills, traditional arts, music and games, old craft-tools, works and much more.

By combining the complexity of historically important aspects of the existence of water mills over the centuries, it is necessary to transform them into a real present and a certain future. It is primarily necessary to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the present status and position of water mills and establish a unified and acceptable institutional framework with all the principles, rules and working conditions. Generally, it is necessary to spatially mark water mills and mills of all kinds and then make the necessary planning, program and normative documents. The multiple and dominant orientation towards the goals of existence and survival, lead the water mills to the adequate functional organization, the type and degree of dedicated diversity in line with: historical and cultural requirements and goals; economic and economic conditions and aspects; traditional and conditions of tourist activity and accompanying markets and other targeted programs and aspects.

According to the Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia (2016) in the institutional and organized procedure for improving the water mills activities within the tourist activity on the domestic market, it is necessary to draw up planning documents: strategic master plan; strategic marketing plan; tourist product development program; program of promotional activities and other necessary documents. In accordance with the established place and its own function, all the prescribed conditions and elements that define a clear definition of all segments and aspects of the work and the purpose of existence of water mills are in



accordance with the positive legal regulations. The following is also important: goal, purpose, organization, technical-technological standards, personnel and other type of equipment and training, system of classification and categorization of all prescribed types and methods of work and finished products and services, quality standards, health safety of products and other envisaged conditions and rules.

The design and implementation of renovation, adaptation, restoration and / or launching of water mills must be coordinated by the organizational and supervisory control authorities, administration and urban and construction institutions and ministries, local self-governments as well as the nearest Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments. Projects of this type must be adequately planned and fulfill the conditions for achieving the planned development with the preservation of preserved and newly established values. Revitalization can include adaptation, restoration, conversion or other forms of work, which enable the return of the cultural good-water mill in a functional and labor-active, operational condition. Also, through the rehabilitation, the existing structure, the facade's appearance and the other position of the building can be improved. The rehabilitation can include the execution of construction and other works on the building for repairing and restructuring of roofs, walls, facade, etc. which does not change the outer appearance but affects safety and security. The reconstruction and protection of water mills does not affect destructively because the object still enjoys a certain degree of protection, and certainly the plant, equipment and / or certain device, a piece of mobiliary, part of the interior and even the exterior positions can be repaired" (Vukotić, 2016).

Successful market implementation of domestic water mills depends primarily on clear definition of set goals and successful implementation of sustainable development programs as well as the institutional framework, procedures and ways of implementation. The conditions for successful positioning of domestic water mills, as significant objects of the domestic historical and cultural heritage on the business-tourist market, is contained in a series of synchronized and synergetically organized activities of important participants in the defined processes and activities of the adopted structure of the planned reconstruction. The reconstruction and adaptation of water mills in the function of tourism activities is necessary to implemented from the aspect of economic and cultural significance of the project and processes of operational work in the business including the following steps:

- ♦ original and authentic reconstruction of existing and new, authentic water mills;
- ♦ resolving remaining unresolved ownership relations, possible defining the implementation of the public companies system;
- ♦ arranging of all ownership, status, organizational and labor-legal statuses and relations;
- ♦ the procedure for the preliminary determination of the type and degree of importance of a water mill as a cultural and historical heritage;
- ♦ professional classification according to quality standards, types and defined activities;
- ♦ institutional, material and financial support for the development of this type of tourism product;
- ♦ the establishment of an up-to-date registry of recording, sorting and categorization;
- ♦ provision of expert supervision and assistance by the competent institutions and institutions for the protection of cultural monuments;
- ♦ professional design and management of revitalization, adaptation, rehabilitation, conservation, restoration, etc.;
- ♦ the possibility of making a replica of water mill facilities, with a prescribed manner of use, supervision and maintenance;
- ♦ professional support to business activities;
- ♦ supporting the implementation of related forms of tourism activity as well as receptive types of tourism;
- ♦ support for professional renewal, sustainable protection and preservation of connected functional units;
- ♦ support to restoration of important infrastructure, program, material and non-material values;
- ♦ designed and engaged tourist promotion of water mills as a significant cultural and historical heritage;
- ♦ effective start-up procedure established - "pre-opening";
- ♦ established organization of work with all rules and procedures;



- ♦ monitoring of organizational, business, economic and other performance aspects;
- ♦ other prescribed and necessary procedures and activities.

CONCLUSION

Water mills are our history of the culture of life that is characterized by the general social significance and attractiveness of universal national values and attractions. Aspects of tourist activity of the water mills contribute to the interest in the national tourist area, cultural heritage and attractions, contributing to a higher quality valorisation and evaluation of the domestic tourist product. According to the attitude and type of interest and desire for knowledge about our water mills, several types of tourists in different areas and levels of cultural interests can be recognized, such as culturally motivated, inspired and welcomed tourists. Within cultural tourism, interesting and important are acquaintances with cultures, traditional ways of life and work, occupations and food, as well as the overall cultural and historical heritage of other nations, states and regions, who are in a special way and actively presented and promoted to the interested tourists and guests. These and other analyzed aspects are the foundations for directions for development and improvement of the work of water mills. More organized launching of domestic water mills can significantly contribute to changing the existing opinions and attitudes as well as more organized attitude towards national cultural values and domestic traditional heritage. A complex change in the state of affairs and attitudes, as well as solving of issues opened in this paper would improve the current situation and work of domestic water mills. By enhancement of the work of water mills, this part of the historical and cultural tradition of our lives, in the long terms becomes the applicable force in the function of developing domestic tourism activity.

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