



ETHNO MUSEUMS - WITNESSES OF THE PAST, TOURIST RESOURCES FOR THE FUTURE

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Abstract:

The authenticity and attraction of a tourist destination are dependent upon various factors in the spatial framework. Among them, tourist resources are singled out for their significant potential for tourist development. Tourist resources can be natural and cultural and they can be represented homogeneously or heterogeneously. Furthermore, various manners exist to shape a variety of tourist products at a single destination. These characteristics are timeless, and for some groups of tourists, the focus itself is on cultural resources, wherein they pay special attention to museums. The focus of this paper is to highlight museums as cultural resources for tourism. The goal is to underline their significance, given the wide range of opportunities for creating and managing museums, alongside the vast potential to become attractive as tourist destinations in the future, as well as recommendations for implementing innovations, all in the interest of growing cultural tourism.

Keywords:

cultural tourism, museums, ethno-museums.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage in and of itself is not a relic of the past, but rather an increasingly important field for managing sustainable development and the wellness of a society, which is frequently experienced through tourism (Dragičević-Šešić & Rogač-Mijatović, 2014). According to Domazet *et al.* (2018), tourism based on cultural heritage represents the main field of cultural tourism, while elements of this type of tourism can be found in nearly all other categories. Cultural tourism is becoming an ever-more important kind of tourism, which has multiple positive effects on the economy and society. It offers financial support for the preservation, revitalization, and promotion of cultural heritage goods of particular spaces (Krivošejev, 2014). The growth in interest in cultural tourism offers the opportunity for cultural heritage to become sustainable as a resource, bringing with it benefits to the local and wider community, under the condition that it must be preserved (Filipović, 2018).

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The potential of cultural tourist attractions, cultural heritage, and cultural resources are classified into two main categories: material (i.e. tangible), and immaterial (intangible) resources (Petković, 2019, p. 16). Material resources include the cultural heritage of the region, cultural landscapes, complexes and routes, museums, galleries, archaeological sites, historical buildings and spaces, historical entities (cities, monasteries, holy sites), and ethno-sites (villages, settlements, infrastructure). Intangible resources encompass performance arts (theatre, music, dance), traditional songs and games (folklore, performing music on traditional instruments), religion, mythology, beliefs, customs and rituals, oral traditions (stories, poetry, and similar), the traditional preparation of food and drink, traditional crafts.

In addition to material heritage, the last few decades have demonstrated that immaterial heritage has become immensely popular among tourists who seek to witness authentic and traditional ways of life (Domazet *et al.*, 2018). It must be underlined, however, that the development of a tourist destination, without the significance of intangible heritage and adequate promotion of it, cannot subsist (Gajić *et al.*, 2021). With that in mind, tourism grounded in immaterial culture and heritage is invaluable for the development of tourist destinations (Filipović, 2018).

The cultural tourist seeks to satisfy his needs, which depends on the presence of cultural heritage and other cultural elements, for which it is necessary to transform them into a suitable, cultural, touristic product (McKercher & Du Cros, 2002).

According to Đukić-Dojčinović (2005), the shaping of a cultural, tourist product enriches the basic tourist offer of the destination, shapes its image, the length of the stay and the satisfaction of the service's user, while its result implies greater spending, that is, a growth of revenue for the site, as well as continued demand, with the option of developing new market segments. Bearing in mind that the attractiveness of the destination is one of the major factors that dictate the position in the tourism market, the development of cultural resources can significantly improve the tourist offer of the destination (Ranković *et al.*, 2022). According to Domazet *et al.* (2018), museum tourism has become one of the leading forms of cultural tourism in the world today. Museum activities hold an important spot in cultural tourism, and it should be highlighted that tourism and museum activities as its products offer insight into a cultural reality, national identity, and tradition that is particular to the local population (Radović *et al.*, 2017).

This paper presents a type of museum as a significant resource of cultural tourism, which attracts (depending upon its theme) large numbers of visitors to various destinations, with the potential for continued growth. Furthermore, its goal is to draw attention to the need for advancement in business activities and plans so that these resources, thanks to their specificities, might be better positioned in the tourist market.

MUSEUMS

In 2022, the international organization ICOM held a conference in Prague, wherein they defined the concept of a museum as follows: "A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing" (International Council of Museums, 2023).

Museums in Serbia are institutions that are operated both publicly and privately, whose role is to protect the museum building and cultural heritage, which implies specialized and scientific work in research, collection, logging, adding, documentary processing, preservation, conservation, restoration, care, exhibition, interpretation, presentation and digitalization of civilian and cultural tangible and intangible goods in physical and digital format to study, education, enjoy and developing society (Law on Museum Activity, 2021).

We classify museums according to their attraction and, as such, according to the tourism market, the following stand out: the Louvre, the Guggenheim, MoMA, the Hermitage, and the British Museum. Based on the category of museum activities, according to Jovanović (2015), the following stand out natural science museums, history museums, museums dedicated to science, technology, archaeology, ethno-museums, contemporary art museums, applied art museums, museums dedicated to iconography, painting, the military, agriculture, old crafts, and similar.



Bearing in mind that the basis of ethno-heritage, as well as touristic potential, represent resources of intangible cultural heritage, it is important to underline their synergy and the manner of valorization, through exhibitions located within material resources, such as museums, galleries, spaces of ethno-cultural heritage-complexes and cultural routes. One of the concrete ways to promote cultural heritage, all the while in the function of a tourist attraction, is the shaping of the building in the form of museum exhibition spaces, with particular leitmotifs when it comes to spaces/destination, through the opening of an ethno-museum. Ethno-museums are cultural institutions which, in a specific way, gather, process, preserve and present the museum building of immaterial heritage. This attracts lovers of culture, ethnology, antiquities, and folklore - it unites those who are interested in learning about the way of life of a particular area.

ETHNO MUSEUMS ON THE TERRITORY OF SERBIA

The rich cultural-historical and intangible heritage of Serbia is reflected in the oral traditions, religion, customs, celebrations, artistic expressions and traditional crafts, which represent a significant aspect of the national and cultural identity of Serbia (Bjeljac *et al.*, 2015), and Serbia's offer as a tourist destination. Keeping in mind the national medleys on Serbia's territory, it becomes evident how much wealth and diversity there is of intangible heritage from the various national communities that live in our country, from its northernmost to its southernmost locations, and which is one of the key attractions of our tourist offer. A museum known for being a leader in the protection and promotion of intangible heritage in Serbia is the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade. Beyond a great number of museums which can be found in settled places and the heritage of local culture and tradition, many small privately owned museums with their unique collections can be found in Serbia, which significantly contribute to the preservation of particular buildings from neglect.

The Wine Museum in Malča – is located not far from the city of Niš, in the village of Malča. The museum's collection dates back to 1903 and hosts four wine cellars from four historical eras, which demonstrate a unique manner of preservation and care of wines dating back to the Roman era, the Middle Ages, the time of Yugoslavia, as well the contemporary era. (Vinski Podrum Malča, 2022).

In the "Roman Winery" area, it is traditional to leave the wine to rest and nurture it in the same manner that the ancient Romans did, in amphorae which are buried into the ground. It is believed to be the most efficient way to care for wine since it is preserved naturally. Moreover, this area of the museum's exhibition space is created with items gathered from that era, which fit adequately into the ambience, whereby the tourists may boast an authentic experience (Vinski Podrum Malča, 2022).

In the "Middle Ages" area, all has been arranged in the spirit of the Orthodox heritage imported by the Nemanjić dynasty into Serbia. The wine is made in barrels dating back to 1953 (Vinski Podrum Malča, 2022).

The exhibition space of the "Yugoslav Winery" dates back to the beginning and middle half of the 20th century. It includes a distillery and concrete tanks, which can hold up to 1,000,000 litres of wine. What's unique about this winery is that its cellars are dug halfway into the ground to maintain a stable temperature for the wine (Vinski Podrum Malča, 2022).

An area of the contemporary winery is rich with technological innovations for the production of wine, as well as digital observation of the production. This system aims to preserve all relevant characteristics of the grapes to ensure their unique flavour (Vinski Podrum Malča, 2022). The museum's mission is to preserve the cultural and historical heritage, as well as to display the unique manner of caring for tradition in wine production.

Ethno-Museum, Priboj – Based on the interview that we conducted with the owner, this museum's collection dates back to 1995, which is when its first exhibition items were acquired. The objects pertain to various historical periods that authentically illustrate the lives of the people from this region. Within the museum's exhibition space, one can come across garments, household objects, musical instruments, tools, etc. The museum creator's idea is to create a collection that will illustrate how our forefathers lived. The museum is unique in that its creator collected the display items in their original states, which contributes to the museum's authenticity.



The museum's space is still being prepared, and adequate measures must be taken for its protection and the preservation of its objects. Moreover, a registry should be created with insight into information on the exhibits, which includes the correct number of items, their correct names, the period they date from, etc. Additionally, work should be done to promote the museum's activities, as well as education so that the museum might have a suitable curator. With the right realization of these and other activities, the museum could greatly enhance the tourism supply of the region of Western Serbia.

Serbian Museum of Bread, Pećinci – it was founded in 1995. The museum's installations contain an oven for baking bread, a hearth, a souvenir shop, as well as a church dedicated to the concept of the Serbian patron saint. The museum's exhibition includes over 2,000 items, and its goal is to demonstrate how life was once lived in Serbia, through the detailed process of making bread. The exhibition items are separated into three thematic collections, which are: artistic, archaeological, and ethnographic. (Srpski Muzej Hleba Jeremija, n.d.).

The ethnographic collection is represented by tools for working the land, transportation devices, objects for the processing of wheat and corn, those for kneading and baking bread, as well as those for food preparation and a collection of ceremonial bread. The archaeological collection consists of a prehistoric and antique collection. The prehistoric collection consists of tools for the tillage of land and ways to preserve wheat, while the antique collection contains tools from the Roman era. The illustrations collection consists of pictures and drawings of the museum's creator (Srpski Muzej Hleba Jeremija, n.d.).

Furthermore, the specificity of this museum is reflected in that tourists can be given a demonstration of how some of the exhibition items work, which contributes to the authenticity of their experience. The museum's mission is to educate and raise awareness of the historical heritage that Serbia possesses. The museum has a library with over 1,550 distinct titles, amongst which one might find cookbooks, and occasionally organizes various gatherings, promotional activities, artistic workshops, and concerts, in addition to a variety of programs for children of all ages. The children's programs are conceived to contribute to their learning of different cultures and values, accept differences, as well as develop creativity (Srpski Muzej Hleba Jeremija, n.d.). This museum is of great significance for the tourist offer of Vojvodina, which is why measures for protecting and caring for its resources must be taken for specific items on display to be presentable for demonstration.

Homeland Ethno-Museum Rautovo - is located not far from Niška Banja. It is another museum of authentic ambience, whose goal is to demonstrate how people once lived. The museum is represented by the old house of the museum's creator, in which display items can be found, illustrating various historical periods. Amongst the items, one can find garments, instruments for work, crockery, tools, etc. The museum consists of five spaces, of which one is dedicated to the bombing of Serbia in 1999. Based on the interview that we conducted with the owner, the museum's exhibition space dates to 2011, and consists of over 1,000 authentic exhibition displays included in the registry of the museum. The museum's aim is to discourage the neglect of the traditional ways of life in the area of southeastern Serbia. Given its space, the museum ought to consider upgrading its exhibition spaces in terms of shelves or cabinets, as well as take measures to protect its items so that they do not get damaged and lose their value.

Ethno-museum of Debeljača – was created with the desire to preserve the ethnographic features of the Hungarians as a minority who, whilst living in the district of Kovačica, can be found only in Debeljača. The museum, as well as its display items, contains objects for everyday use from the 17th century. It consists of four spaces in which the following are preserved: the oldest preserved items for display of Hungarian traditional garments, a variety of woven items (kerchiefs, blouses, skirts, boots, fur coats). One can also view the handicrafts decorated by the famous Hungarian embroidery with red detailing. Then there are objects that were used by everyday individuals. One can find ceramic dishes for preserving winter food, for the distillation of brandy, as well as retired household objects. It includes display items that can enrich the period of extensive agriculture and husbandry, and the know-how of artisans from the past when creating objects that were of daily usage (yoke, ratchet, bundler, first plow, harness). This space was also famous for having one of the very first pharmacies, owned by Ambrose Šandor, who had attended school and was educated in Budapest, from where he brought over the equipment necessary to open a pharmacy in Debeljača. The pharmacist was the first to make his own cosmetic preparations and perfumes according to the recipes of pharmacists from Vienna and Budapest. The supplies for the first biochemical laboratory in Vojvodina are lovingly preserved and displayed. A member of the city's upper class, this pharmacist gifted his own home furniture for the



ethnographic exhibition. The hallway of the museum's building has served to represent yet another important detail in the lives of the older residents of Debeljača. It is the Debeljača market, which continues to this day, and takes place on the last Friday of May and August. Photographs conveying the ambience of markets from the past draw attention to the important market benefit to Debeljača from its inception to today (Etnografski Muzej u Debeljači, n.d.-b).

A situational analysis of the aforementioned museums, along with multiple others, indicates several problems that they have in common, including poor visibility, a small number of visitors, even with the survival of these significant 'cultural stations.' A potential solution to current problems, with the aim of advancing the existence and work of ethno-museums, includes the following advice:

- to promote touristic signaling in cooperation with the local government
- for ethno-museums to be included in the touristic offer of the destination
- museums on their own, that is, their managers/owners should be innovative to promote their activities, as well as implement interaction content, workshops, and similar
- digitalization of the museum's content is recommended, as is the creation of virtual tours, which would contribute to greater positioning, recognition, and would attract new tourists, as would a better marketing strategy for the museum.

The realization of these activities would allow museums to gain importance and contribute to the preservation of history and culture of local people. Furthermore, the recommendation is to shape a kind of cluster, a museum collective, particularly when it comes to private museums and privately owned museum buildings. Thus, a collective, stronger functioning would be enabled, alongside the formation of specific strategies and plans, all with the goal of advancing and raising the quality of work of ethno-museums, the growth of their 'visibility' which, in perspective, results in the growth of revenue and the potential for new investment.

The implementation of technological innovations would improve the visibility and operations of the museum, and would contribute to the attractiveness of the tourist destination and the development of cultural tourism. According to Čigoja, Radović (2014), widespread technologies, today valued among the young as well as the old, seem to be saving for the preservation of civilizational goods, historical facts, local cultural and artistic heritage and practices.

CONCLUSION

The wealth and authenticity of intangible heritage and museum building will see the light of day and contribute to the popularization of cultural/museum-based tourism on the territory of Serbia with the implementation of innovation when applying various tools of technological innovations. Given that this type of resource is counted among those of complementary resources, it would be helpful to point out the possibility of a public-private partnership when it comes to promoting the content and activities of ethno-museums at specific sites. Granted, negative impact can show up in addition to positive, but with the appropriate programs and development strategies, we can be aware of the problems of damage to the building, museum exhibitions and objects, or an over commercialization of the content, and which represent significant intangible heritage of Serbia.

The inclusion of ethno-museums as representatives for fostering intangible, living heritage, indicates that, along with the incorporation of promoting cultural differences and the specificities of the regions, opens up the possibility of reaching a wider audience, thanks to the people who pass on knowledge of traditional skills and artifacts. Thus, they will carry this knowledge on to future generations.



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