

RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA – ATTITUDES OF THE VISITORS OF THE MONASTERY

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Abstract

The links and relations between religion and tourism are becoming more and more complex and evolving over time, and best reflection is in the numerous sacral objects and contents that have become the subject of interest of tourists over time. With the popularization of tourism, cultural content and historical values of sacral objects attract more and more visitors, so their original religious purpose is often neglected. Therefore, it is very difficult to draw the line between religious and cultural forms of tourism, since tourists and religious visitors who visit religious sites for cultural needs and knowledge still have something in common: both types of visitors to religious sites have certain spiritual needs, but they are manifested in different ways. The Republic of Serbia, owing primarily to its geographical location, has had a turbulent history, which also left a mark on the wealth of sacral architecture. In recent decades, with the increasing popularity of religious tourism in the world, religious objects of the Republic of Serbia have gained importance.

Key words: religious tourism, religion, monastery, Christianity, orthodoxy.

ВЕРСКИ ТУРИЗАМ У РЕПУБЛИЦИ СРБИЈИ – СТАВОВИ ПОСЕТИЛАЦА МАНАСТИРА

Апстракт

Везе и односи између религије и туризма бивају временом све комплекснији и развијенији, а најбоље се огледају у бројним сакралним објектима и садржајима, који су временом постали предмет интересовања туриста. Са омасовљавањем туризма, културни садржаји и историјске вредности сакралних објеката привлаче све више посетилаца, тако да је њихова изворна религијска намена често у другом плану. Зато је веома тешко повући границу између религиозног и културног облика туризма, јер туристи верници и туристи који посећују верска места из културних и сазнајних потреба ипак имају и нешто заједничко: и једни и други посетиоци верских објеката имају одређене духовне потребе, али се оне испољавају на различите начине. Република Србија је, захваљујући пре свега свом географском положају, имала бурну историју, што је оставило трага и у виду богатства сакралне архитек-

туре. Последњих деценија, са повећаном популарношћу верског туризма у свету, и верски објекти Републике Србије добијају на значају.

Кључне речи: верски туризам, религија, манастир, хришћанство, православље.

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Serbia has a rich cultural and historical heritage. This cultural wealth is made up of the remains of numerous civilizations, many thousands of years old, which at certain periods of human history existed on the soil of today's Republic of Serbia. Medieval churches and monasteries, as well as objects of Islamic and Jewish religion, are one fragment of the cultural wealth that can today play a far greater role in Serbia's tourist offer. Beside their unique architecture, church and monastery buildings contain some of the oldest and most beautiful examples of medieval paintings on the European soil, which, in addition to artistic, have great historical value. In addition to frescoes, as artistic values that attract the attention of tourists of different profiles, some monasteries hold the relics of saints, icons and other sacred objects, which attract a large number of religious tourists, while the monastic way of life leaves a special impression on all visitors.

On the tourist map of Europe, Serbia is, among other tourist values, recognizable by its monasteries and frescoes. These sacred places are especially attractive to tourists coming from countries with a predominantly Orthodox population, such as Russia, Bulgaria, Romania or Greece. The growing interest of Turkish tourists, who are particularly interested in visiting the cultural and historical sites of the Ottoman Serbia, including Islamic religious sites, should not be overlooked. Religious objects are difficult to valorize as independent tourist values, since only for a minor number of tourists these objects are their sole destination. Therefore, it is necessary to design a more complex tourist product, which in addition to the buildings, churches, monasteries and mosques themselves, offer much more to the visitors. The monastery complexes are mostly built in natural environments of exceptional beauty, which in addition to the cultural objects themselves, represents a significant potential for the development of tourism in general, particularly religious tourism, as one of the selective forms of tourism. Experts at the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) consider religious tourism to be one of the most promising branches of tourism, with the highest growth rate in recent years, and that the interest of tourists and pilgrims for that branch is only expected to grow (www.cf.cdn.unwto.org).

THE CONCEPT AND DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM

The term religious tourism is widespread in modern tourism, but there is no clear view of what religious tourism really is, or where the border between tourist and religious travel is. There is no common approach to religious tourism within any religion. Thus, for Christian Catholics, much attention is paid to religious tourism, which is discussed at religious congresses, unlike Orthodox Christians, who pay almost no attention to religious tourism, but only consider issues related to the organization of religious travels when needed. That is why it is very difficult to draw the line between purely religious and tourist movements, because tourists and religious visitors who visit religious places out of curiosity have something in common. Namely, both groups of tourists most often have certain spiritual needs, which are expressed in different ways (Šušić, 2017).

One of the reasons for the increased interest of the inhabitants of the world for religious tourism is international migration, which necessitates the intensive mixing of different confessions. Migrants have also been reported to express increased religiosity, and those who work and live abroad have a desire to visit the holy places of their religion, in their home country or elsewhere (Bouma, 2007).

Basically, two types of religious tourism need to be distinguished, though with the increasing development of this type of tourism, the differences are narrowing and increasingly difficult to separate. The first group of religious tourists belong to pilgrims, that is, tourists who visit holy/sacred places solely for religious purposes. These trips are attended by members of the same religion, mostly accompanied by a priest or expert guide, such arrangements are organized by specialized travel agencies or religious organizations, and the trip is not seasonal in nature, but is related to specific dates, i.e. religious holidays. The second group of religious tourists are those whose tourist needs are not spiritual, and these tourist movements have similarities to other trips in cultural, urban and other forms of tourism. The second group of tourists is far more massive, though there is a high percentage of those who, for some reason, travel because of spiritual needs. This applies especially to members of particular ethnic groups, although travelers do not declare themselves believers. The poll, further analyzed in the paper, shows that every other citizen of Serbia who visits the monastery comes equally for cultural and spiritual needs, whether he declares himself a believer or not.

According to the 1990 definition given in Ravenna at the First Congress of Religious Tourism, religious tourism is a "humane promotion, a form of solidarity and friendship, a meeting of peoples, their cultures and religions, learning peace between people, respecting nature and valorizing the natural and cultural good" (Plavša, 2000).

One of the definitions of religious tourism is that it is a set of relationships and service activities that satisfy predominantly spiritual, as

well as cultural and social needs of believers that arise from their religious orientation (Vukonić, 2001).

The essence of religious tourism rests on the belief in supernatural power, manifested by miracles, apparitions, relics or indicators of the existence of some kind of connection between life and death. Different beliefs have influenced the movement of millions of people throughout the history of mankind. There are thousands of shrines around the world, and in recent decades many of them have experienced a strong tourist boom. These tourist journeys are very reminiscent of the pilgrims' journey from earlier centuries, primarily because of the great diversity in the behavior, demand and motivation of contemporary religious tourists. While spiritual needs were once the only reason for religious travel, today there are numerous other needs that lead to the movement of tourists in religious tourism (cultural, cognitive, social and other needs) (Martinez, Minguez, 2015). This promotion of religious tourism has led to the creation of different types of travelers, ranging from those who visit holy places solely for spiritual needs (pilgrims) to tourists who travel for different needs, but not spiritual ones (Smith, 1992).

Religious tourism, spiritual tourism or religiously motivated tourism, today represents a great development opportunity not only for holy places, but for entire countries. This phenomenon has made a large number of small cities, in countries around the world, whose economies have traditionally been based on agriculture or industry, consider shrines in their surroundings and promote sanctuaries' local/regional character to (inter)national tourists increasingly in recent years. The economic effect of religious tourism has made monks willing to "endure" tourists who visit religious sites and disturb them in prayers (Robles, 2001).

Religious tourism researchers focus on four different fields of research (Kaelber, 2002):

- the demarcation of the terms "pilgrim" and "tourist",
- the characteristics and ways of travel of religious tourists,
- the economic side of religious tourism,
- the negative impacts of tourism on holy places.

Most researchers do not distinguish between pilgrims and tourists, that is, between pilgrimages and tourism. There are many reasons for this, and most of all because pilgrims have similar behavioral patterns as other tourists (travel modes, use of destination services and infrastructure, etc.). In addition to the spiritual side and performing religious rituals, pilgrimage involves traveling, visiting other non-religious tourist sites, using accommodation and catering facilities, souvenir shopping, shopping, night out, etc. Differences that may be more or less noticeable are related to the behavior of tourists in the destination, because the pilgrims are pious, modest in demand and more attentive to the host, while tourists are more hedonistic and more demanding, but also far greater spenders. Also, pilgrimage does not produce negative cultural, environmental and social impacts in the destination, unlike mass

tourism (Olsen and Timothy, 2006). However, this last statement is not entirely true. There are plenty of examples where pilgrims are equally guilty of destroying the shrines. The Orthodox monk Onurfije Vranić from the monastery Drača near Kragujevac also writes about this occurrence on Mount Athos (www.bastabalkana.com):

"Someone will say, that 500-600 years old frescos are most likely to be desecrated by children or maybe those who are not quite established in faith?! Serbs will gladly attribute this to the Albanians, numerous as cheap labor in Mount Athos. The photo of the fresco of St. John the Baptist from the Precursor chapel from the pier of St. Sava, is a testimony of something completely different. In the middle of the fresco there are inscriptions of two archpriests - Borivoj Jakovljević, a parish priest of the cathedral in Novi Sad (so he wrote), and beneath Tihomir Stojanović, the archpriest from Kragujevac. Is the pilgrimage of these archpriests more relevant for the history of the Mount Athos than the fresco they defiled? "

The beginnings of religious tourism (pilgrimage) are linked to the oldest civilizations. In ancient Greece, the most visited destinations were the shrines of Zeus in Olympia, Apollo in Delphi and Asklepios in Epidaurus. It is interesting that these shrines already had guides back then, which is one of the oldest examples of the "interpretation" of cultural heritage (Rabotić, 2012). In the Middle Ages, among Christians, the basic pilgrimage was a tour of the tomb of Christ in Jerusalem. Later, thanks to the development of traffic, religious tourism developed rapidly and over time a large number of holy places appeared, in various confessions. Today, the most visited holy places are Jerusalem, the Vatican, Mecca, Medina, Karbala and Fatima, and some of the most famous sites are: the Church of the Nativity of Christ in Bethlehem, the Church of the Resurrection of Christ in Jerusalem, the Grand Mosque of Mecca, the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal, Marianas the shrine in Lourdes (France), the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City, the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem and the Basilica of Saint Peter in Rome. According to The World Religious Travel Association, 300 million world tourists travel for religious reasons, with religious tourism revenue estimated at \$ 18 billion (Tala, Padurean, 2008).

Today, shrines are increasingly seen as places of spirituality, and increasingly as tourist resources, which can be adapted to tourists interested in cultural and historical sites. Churches, cathedrals, mosques, pilgrimage routes, etc. are now the main motives in tourist guides and other promotional tourist materials. Since there is a great interest of tourists for holy places, and the number of spiritual pilgrims is decreasing, the sanctuaries are being redecorated and adapted for tourists with other, non-spiritual, needs. The researchers of religious tourism fail to explain this popularity and growth of religious tourist movements, as modern religious pilgrimages diverge from widely accepted beliefs in the progressive development of Western culture, as a modern civilization based on science, technology and reason, rather than

magic, religion and irrationality (Olsen, Timothy, 2006). Also, the high rate of growth of religious tourism in Europe is in contrast to the decline in religiosity of the population and the decrease in church attendance. The fact is that the revival of religious tourism and visits to holy places is the result of the rise of religious fundamentalism in the World, the globalization of local holy places through art and media (films, books, television), investments in large transport systems and infrastructure, etc. Religious tourism has less and less in itself of the spiritual, and what has influenced the “dilution” and devaluation of religious tourism is that the modern “pilgrimage” often has nothing to do with religion. Thus, a pilgrimage also includes visits to some national symbols (Mačkov kamen, Kajmakčalan), disaster sites (atomic bomb drop in Hiroshima and Nagasaki), soldiers’ cemeteries (Zejinlik in Thessaloniki), places of birth or death of writers (Bora Stanković’s house in Vranje), historical figures, music stars, scientists, etc.

The attractiveness of medieval shrines was predominantly based on the “miracles” that took place thanks to the relics of the saints. Religious tourists still expect to see some supernatural phenomena today, not only by pilgrims, but by all other visitors to holy places. A typical example of such pursuits of the “miracle” is Lourdes in France (Digance, 2006). There are such holy places in Serbia as well, such as the Tumane Monastery and the Djunis Monastery.

Many places of the world have lost their spiritual role due to mass tourism. One of the examples is the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, which is visited by about 12 million tourists annually as a cultural and historical site. This also applies to Westminster Abbey in London, Cologne Cathedral and most of Rome’s religious buildings. The best example is the Cathedral of the Sagrada familia in Barcelona, which from the very beginning of construction was more of a tourist attraction than a religious object (Vukonić, 2006).

RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

The confessional diversity of the population of the Republic of Serbia is an important precondition for the development of religious tourism. Although it is usually considered that Orthodox monasteries are the target of tourists, religious sites of other confessions in the Republic of Serbia are worthy of attention. In terms of religion, Serbia’s population is mostly Orthodox, 84.6%, Catholic (5.0%) and Islamic (3.1%). 7.3% of the population of the Republic of Serbia belongs to other religions and includes atheists (Census, 2013).

The Orthodox monasteries of Serbia, in the past decades, did not have much attendance, as is the case today, especially when it comes to foreign guests. With the development of religious tourism and tourism in general, monks and nuns were forced to adapt to the daily visits of both believers and other guests. Religious tourism should therefore be pursued

under stricter rules in terms of preserving Orthodox shrines, primarily as cultural property, but also in the form of greater respect for monastic prayer and quiet. This condescending aversion, of monks towards tourists, is more pronounced in monasteries that are not among the most visited monasteries in Serbia, which is clearly evident from the example of the monastery in Lešje near Paraćin, one of the four in which the research was given below. In other monasteries, especially Manasija, the nuns do not insist on a visitor dress code and do not discuss it.

There used to be a monk (nun) in most monasteries whose job was to receive guests, guide them through the history of the monastery, show its sights, and say something about events and personalities relevant to Orthodoxy and the monastery itself. Of course with the mass of tourist visits, in many monasteries this is no longer present, as the fluctuation of visitors is far greater than before. This kind of hospitality remained in Hilandar, where the daily number of guests was restricted, so that the monastic life could proceed undisturbed.

Beside several hundred Orthodox churches and monasteries, there are several dozen Catholic churches and monasteries in the Republic of Serbia, about 15 mosques and three synagogues. Among the most valuable non-Orthodox religious objects in the Republic of Serbia are the following: the Catholic Church of the Name of Mary in Novi Sad, the Church of the Holy Trinity in Čoka, the Church of St. Gerhard in Vršac, the Church of St. Archangel Michael in Arača, the Altun-alem Mosque in Novi Pazar, the Bajrakli Mosque in Belgrade, the Sukat Shalom Synagogue in Belgrade and the Novi Sad Synagogue (www.srbija.travel).

On the websites of Russian agencies that organize pilgrimage travels, one can find Serbia and Orthodox shrines travel programs. Thus, one of them, within the eight-day tour, offers a tour, attendance at liturgies and confession in the churches of Kalemegdan, the monasteries of Lelić, Čelije, Mileševa, Sopoćani, Djurdjevi stupovi, Gradac, Stara and Nova Pavlica, Žiča, Manasija, Ravanica, Lazarica, Ljubostinja and the Niš temples (www.icstrvl.ru).

Unfortunately, the Serbian Orthodox Church does not record visitors, so the number and structure of visitors, as well as the popularity of individual churches and monasteries can only be speculated. Still, it is a common belief that the most visited monasteries, are those with good traffic position and those with great cultural significance and valuable relics, such as Studenica, Sopoćani, Ravanica, Manasija, Žiča and Ostrog. Considering that the most visited destination in Serbia is the City of Belgrade, it is assumed that its temples are at the same time the most visited Orthodox buildings, namely the St. Sava Temple on Vračar, Virgin Mary of the Rosary Church with St. Petka Chapel, as well as the St. Mark Church.

Of particular importance among the Orthodox religious sites of Serbia are the monasteries that UNESCO has put on the World Heritage List: Studenica, Djurdjevi stupovi, Sopoćani, Visoki Dečani, Gračanica,

Virgin Mary of Ljeviš and the Patriarchate of Peć. The importance of listing an object on the UNESCO list lies in the fact that many old tourists, in the absence of time, when visiting a country, generally go to sites that UNESCO has mapped, as they are considered to best represent the culture and history of the nation and states.

In addition to the aforementioned monasteries, there are dozens of other religious sites, no less important for culture, no less valuable for Orthodox believers. In terms of attendance and historical significance, the monasteries of Fruška Gora stand out, including 16 old monasteries, built more recently in the style of Moravian school. Monasteries of Ovčar-Kablar gorge on the Čačak - Užice highway are also of tourist value. In this gorge, there are ten monasteries, commonly known as "Mala Sveta Gora". The Moravian monasteries are characterized by a specific style, and beside the previously mentioned Manasija and Ravanica, this group also includes Ljubostinja, Kalenić, Naupara, Sisojevac, Sveta Petka, Gornjak, etc. In southern and southeastern Serbia, the most visited are the Pčinja monastery, Poganovo, Sukovo monastery, St. Roman, Lipovac Monastery, etc. The monuments of Kosovo and Metohija are of great cultural wealth, but although some of them are on the UNESCO cultural heritage list, due to political instability in the province, in recent decades they have been outside the tourist stream. Many other churches and monasteries are also worth mentioning, owing primarily to historical and cultural values, valuable relics or "miracles": Pokajnica, the St. Nicholas monastery in Pribojska Banja, Mileševa, the Oplenac church, the St. Nicholas church in Kuršumljija, Lelić, Čelije, Tumane and many others.

The economic importance of religious tourism in the Republic of Serbia can only be speculated because the competent institutions have no insight into the financial operations of religious communities. On the other hand, the economic effect, even if indirect, certainly exists, and is reflected in the spending of foreign religious tourists, who spend significant funds outside the holy places (accommodation, transport services, agencies, food, visits to other tourist destinations, etc.).

ATTITUDES OF THE VISITORS OF SERBIAN MONASTERY

Mass in religious tourism has a negative impact on the life and work of monks, as well as on believers who visit monasteries for spiritual needs. Monks and believers, due to the great fluctuation of tourists, who very often do not obey the rules of conduct in holy places, fail to achieve the peace required for prayer. That is why in large tourist city centers, religious communities are trying to solve the problem of mass in addition to the economic effect by charging tickets. This can irritate foreign believers who do not have passes, like native believers, and have to "pay to pray" (Olsen, 2006). Some religious sites are trying to solve this with a separate entrance for believers (St. Mark's Church in Venice; tourists use

it to avoid long queues) or in the case of Madrasa of al-Qarawiyyin Madrasa in Fez (Morocco), guards allow entry only to those who know Arabic or have other proof of their affiliation with Islam, while at the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, believers enter a separate door and have a prayer section separate from the tourist space.

Surveys of visitors to the monasteries were conducted in July and August 2019 in four monasteries of the Serbian Orthodox Church: Djurdjevi stupovi and Sopoćani near Novi Pazar, Manasija near Despotovac and the monastery in Lešje near Paraćin. At these four sites, 356 domestic and foreign visitors were surveyed. All respondents were adults (18 years and over) and were classified into four groups according to age.

A negligible number of local authors has dealt with creating polls among the visitors of the monasteries or revealing their attitudes, as well as the issue of religious tourism in general (Stamenković, 2005; Mićunović et al., 2015; Radisavljević Ćiparizović, 2012; Nedeljković, Markov, 2006, 2007). Exploring this type of tourism is of great importance because, as already stated, there is a clear “conflict of interest” between tourism providers, in this case nuns and monks in need of peace and prayer, and tourists who are very often in search of attraction, do not respect the typicon and disturb the monastic peace. It should be emphasized that the survey only examined the attitudes of tourists, not monks. The monks’ opinion about visiting monasteries is equally important, in a way, even more important than the tourists’. Unlike all other providers of tourism, who can set rules, and conditionally “choose” their guests, monks and nuns have an obligation to accept each guest, regardless of their religious attitudes, cultural characteristics, ethnicity, etc. Unfortunately, monks generally do not want to participate in such research, though it is possible to find out in an informal conversation what they think of the tourists’ visits. Earlier quoted monk Onufrije Vranic also speaks of this, describing the inappropriate behavior of tourists on Mount Athos, dissatisfied with monastery meals, early and long prayers, prohibition of bathing in the sea, rigid rules, etc., to which he sharply responds (www.bastabalkana.com):

“Why do we have to announce that we are planning to stay in somebody’s home for a couple of days, why do we have to respect a house rules, a typicon more than thousand years old, when we still know and act better. The answer is simple, you don't have to... you don't have to come, stay at the beaches, in the taverns, better yet, stay home and save both time and money.”

Methodology

The survey contains 13 questions, of which three are of general type (gender, age and origin), and 10 questions relate specifically to visiting monasteries. The survey of monastery visitors was done by the random sample method, and the only important thing, as noted, was that the interviewed person was adult. The data obtained in the survey were

processed in the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program, version 26.0.

Table 1. Questions and answers offered

No.	Questions	Answers offered
1.	Gender?	1. male 2. female
2.	Age?	1. 18 to 35 2. 36 to 50 3. 51 to 65 4. over 65
3.	Where you come from?	1. Republic of Serbia 2. abroad - Orthodox 3. abroad - others
4.	How many times have you visited the monasteries in the last 5 years?	1. 1-5 times 2. 6-10 times 3. 11-20 times 4. over 20 times
5.	Why you visit the monasteries?	1. spiritual needs 2. cultural and tourist needs 3. both
6.	You usually visit monasteries ...?	1. with organized groups 2. with family 3. with friends 4. alone
7.	Duration of the visit?	1. I am only visiting this monastery for one day 2. I visit several monasteries as part of a one-day / multi-day monastery tour 3. just passing through
8.	How did you find out about the monastery you visited?	1. via the internet / media 2. recommendation from a friend / tour organizer 3. information from a fair or tourist exhibition 4. I've been here before
9.	Are the monasteries adapted enough for visitors (parking, toilet, drinking water, garbage cans, etc.)?	1. mostly they are 2. partly they are 3. mostly they are not
10.	Are the monks (nuns) kind to visitors and do they like guests?	1. they are kind 2. they could be kinder 3. they are not kind
11.	In your opinion, do visitors annoy the monks (nuns) in their silence and prayers?	1. they bother them 2. do not bother them
12.	Do you financially assist the monastery (on icons, cash, by buying candles, souvenirs, etc.)?	1. I leave a lot of money to the monasteries 2. I leave the money 3. I don't leave the money
13.	Should the state invest more in the preservation and promotion of the monastery?	1. should invest more 2. already invests enough

Source: Created by authors

All questions are closed-ended, designed to have 2 to 4 descriptive answers. The fact is that the answers of this type are harder to process statistically (compared to the numerical ones), but this method was chosen for the sake of greater credibility and more accurate results. In addition to gender, tourists are classified into four categories according to age, and by origin, they belong to local Orthodox, foreign Orthodox and other foreign guests. As mentioned, other questions relate to visiting monasteries.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of respondents

		Gender		Age				Origin		
		M	F	18-35	36-50	51-65	66+	Serbia	Abroad Ortodox	Abroad other
Gender	M	180	-	53	70	35	22	133	12	35
	F	-	176	79	58	27	12	143	8	25
Serbia		-	-	99	98	46	33			
Abroad Ortodox		-	-	9	11	0	0			
Abroad other		-	-	24	19	16	1			

Source: The author's research

Starting Hypotheses

The starting point of the survey research was based on the following questions: Do the residents of Serbian Orthodox monasteries visit religious sites for spiritual or secular reasons, how familiar are they with the rules of conduct in the monasteries, or whether it is possible to raise the religious tourism of Serbia to a higher level? Or international level?

When creating the questionnaire, we started with several main hypotheses:

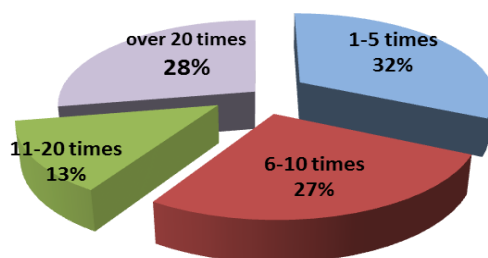
1. Most domestic tourists visit monasteries for religious (spiritual) needs.
2. Group visits to monasteries, except for school trips, are almost exclusively organized for Orthodox believers.
3. Women are greater believers than men and visit Orthodox monasteries more often.
4. Foreign tourists of Orthodox denomination represent the absolute majority among foreign visitors to Serbian monasteries.
5. In response to the uncultured and arrogant behavior of tourists in monasteries, monks (and nuns) are often repulsive to visitors.
6. Monasteries have considerable financial benefits from visitors, although there is no organized monitoring of tourist income in religious sites.

RESEARCH RESULTS

It has already been stated that the survey contains 13 questions, which relate to general demographic characteristics and questions related to the visit to the monasteries, their infrastructure, etc. The individually processed questions gave the following results:

- The gender structure of the respondents is in favor of the male population, which accounted for 50.6% of the surveyed body, compared to 49.4% of the female population.

- The majority of visitors are persons under 50 (73%). Both age subcategories have an approximate number of visitors (18 to 35 - 37.1%, and 36 to 50 - 36%). Women are more prevalent in the 18-35 age group (59.8% of women), while men are more prevalent in all older categories, especially among visitors over 65 (64.7%). It should be emphasized that the realized level of significance of the chi-square test, which tested dependence of the gender of the respondents on attitudes on religion and monasteries (gender structure/other issues), in all cases was 0.832. This research result clearly indicates that the tourists' attitudes about monasteries do not depend on the gender of the respondents. In contrast, the chi-square test showed that all attitudes of the interviewed persons were closely related to their years of life, since the value of the chi-square was 0.000.

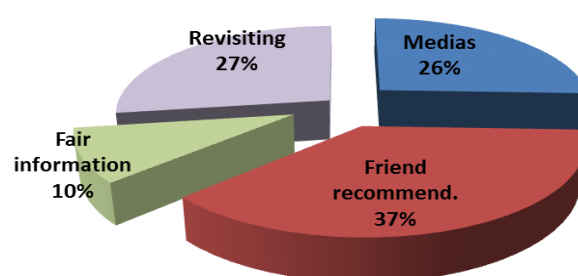


*Graph 1. Frequency of visiting monasteries
(The author's research)*

- The respondents were dominated by the local population (77.5%), followed by foreign non-Orthodox (16.9%) and the least foreign Orthodox (5.6%). The gender structure is balanced in all three categories. The percentage of the local population is identical in all age groups (about 75%), with the exception of the last one (over 65 years), where 97.1% of tourists are locals. It should be noted that as many as 30% of foreign Orthodox tourists visit Serbian monasteries three or more times a year. It can be assumed that the greater part of this category is Serbian population from the neighboring countries (former Yugoslav republics), while the rest are predominantly Bulgarians, Romanians, Macedonians and Russians. Even more interesting is the fact that 18.3% of foreign non-Orthodox

tourists have this frequency of arrivals. Nearly half of foreign tourists visit several monasteries during one trip.

- Up to twice a year, 70.2% of tourists visit monasteries (44.9% of them annually). Three to four times a year, 14% of tourists visit monasteries, and more than four times a year, 15.7% of visitors come to monasteries, the most frequent guests are being over 65 (26.5% of this category). Tourists who visit monasteries five or more times during the year often return to previously visited monasteries (51.8%), as opposed to those who rarely visit religious sites (13.1%).

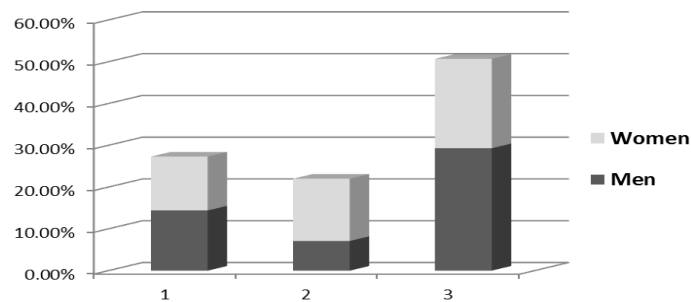


*Graph 2. Informing about monasteries
(The author's research)*

- Spiritual needs are the reason for the arrival of 27.3% of visitors (believers, pilgrims), while 22% of tourists come exclusively for cultural needs (“cultural” tourists). Similar data refer to the native and foreign Orthodox population, as opposed to the foreign non-Orthodox population, which in 43.3% of cases emphasizes cultural needs. Interestingly, even among these non-Orthodox tourists, there are 5% of those who come exclusively for spiritual needs. A much higher percentage of women (30.3%) than men (13.9%) stated that cultural needs were the main reason for visiting the monasteries. Among those who visit monasteries only for cultural reasons, majority are the youngest visitors (28.8%), while among the oldest visitors only 6.1% gave this answer.

- Tourists most often visit monasteries with family (46.6%) and with friends (28.1%), rarely with organized groups (18%), and least often alone (7.3%). In particular, family visits are expressed by believers, as much as 57.7% of this category. It is interesting to note that men visit monasteries more often on their own (10.6%) than women (4%). Group visits to the monasteries are typical for the oldest category of visitors, that is, as many as 50% of people over 65 travel organized. Solo visitors are the youngest tourists (38.5%), both domestic and foreign, as well as the oldest visitors (26.9%), which with great certainty can be classified as pilgrims. Unlike local and foreign Orthodox tourists who mostly visit the monasteries accompanied by family, non-Orthodox visitors usually come with friends.

■ As many as 81.5% of tourists visit monasteries on purpose, one monastery (43%) or more (38.5%), while 18.5% of tourists visit these religious sites as a destination and as part of another (non-religious) tourist tour. Tourists whose spiritual needs are the only meaning of the trip are targeting only one monastery in 59.8% of cases, and very rarely as a route site (9.3%). The targeted visit to a particular monastery is characteristic of the oldest visitors, who mostly organize in one group to visit one (41.2%) or more monasteries (52.9%). Mostly tourist aged 36-50 practice ad hoc visits to the monasteries, as much as 27.3% of this age group, and they find information about monasteries mostly online. Families generally visit only one monastery, while organized groups or tourists traveling with friends prefer longer and more meaningful monastery tours.



*Graph 3. Reasons for visiting monasteries
(1. spiritual needs, 2. cultural needs, 3. spiritual and cultural needs)
(The author's research)*

■ Most visitors (37.6%) visit monasteries on the recommendation of friends or as part of a tourist arrangement. Only 9.6% of tourists point out that information about the monastery came from tourism fairs and tourist exhibitions (28.3% of non-Orthodox foreigners), while 25.6% of respondents informed themselves via the Internet and other media (38.3% of non-Orthodox foreigners). Interestingly, every fourth visitor (27.2%) had previously visited the monastery in which he was interviewed. These are mostly pilgrims (43.3%), while “cultural” tourists rarely return to the same monastery (only 9%). It is interesting that 61.5% of tourists who travel alone return to the same monastery. There are none among the oldest tourists who were informed about the monasteries at the tourism fair.

■ Men are more demanding about services in the monastery complex (parking, toilet, drinking water, trash cans, etc.). 68.2% of women and 58.3% of men consider that monasteries are adapted for tourist visits, i.e. only 3.7% of visitors believe that the monastery infrastructure does not meet the needs of tourists. As many as 75% of the youngest travelers believe that the monasteries are tailored to the needs of tourists, while among the oldest there are no dissatisfied services within the monastery complex. Also, visitors who

frequently visit monasteries (over five times a year) generally have no objection to the arrangement of religious sites (only 1 visitor).

- When it comes to the kindness and hospitality of monks and nuns to tourists, female visitors are a little more demanding. Thus, 78.3% of men think that monks are kind, compared to 70.5% of women who are of the same opinion. It is interesting to mention the comments of five respondents, who believe that monks and nuns are unkind to visitors. All five are from the group that visits the monastery not more than once a year, and they agree that the visitors are those who disturb the monks, that is, the source, to say the least, of monastic unkindness comes as response to the expansion of tourists. On the other hand, everyone is satisfied with the internal organization of the monasteries, while four of them financially assist the monasteries. The oldest visitors are those who stand out in the age structure, of whom over 40% think that monks might be more kind to guests. With decreasing age, tolerance towards monks increases, and as many as 79.5% of the youngest visitors find the monks hospitable. As many as 39.7% of “cultural” tourists believe that monks could be more kind to guests, while their like-minded people are significantly less (18.6%) among pilgrims. Visitors who travel in an organized manner have the most objection to the hospitality of the monks, which is understandable considering that the simultaneous arrival of a large number of tourists (one or more buses) can significantly disturb the monastic peace.

- Most surveyed visitors to the monastery (56.5%) believe that tourists do not disturb the monks. Most of those who believe in this are in the category of the youngest. However, 43.5% of visitors disagree with this view, that is, they believe that tourists disturb the monks in their prayers and daily affairs, and are dominated by the oldest tourists.

- Only 22 persons (6.2%) claim that they donate large sums of money to the monasteries, of which 12 are pilgrims. There are twice as many people who do not leave any money (12.1%), and most of them are among “cultural” tourists (29.5%). There are slightly more men leaving money than women (5.4% more). Other visitors (81.7%) leave a smaller amount of money (on icons, buy candles and souvenirs, etc.). The largest donors are tourists aged 51-65, who, along with the oldest visitors, in most cases leave contribution. Among those who do not leave money, the majority are those who visit monasteries at most once a year (18.8% of persons in this category).

- As many as 85.1% of those surveyed believe that the state is not investing enough in monasteries, and this view is mostly represented by the youngest tourists. Also, with the increase in the number of monasteries visited the opinion of the tourists is determined that the state should invest more in monasteries, so that as many as 92.9% who visit monasteries five or more times a year think that more should be invested. All tourists have the same views on this issue, regardless of their religious and/or cultural needs.

CONCLUSION

Religious tourism is one of the oldest forms of tourism in recent years, in recent decades it has become one of the leading forms of tourism in the world. There are several reasons for such successful growth and development, and one of them is non-seasonal character of religious tourism. Contrary to the former definition of a religious tourist as a pilgrim, that is, a person who goes to religious places exclusively for religious reasons, today there are more and more of those who emphasize on cultural and historical reasons or cognitive needs. Also, pilgrims are not as rigid as they used to be in organizing their religious travels, but they also use the services of the tourism industry, either as users of travel agency services or as independent organizers of accommodation, transportation, food and other needs in the destination.

The research on religious tourism, conducted in the four monasteries mentioned above, largely refuted the initial hypotheses. The assumption that domestic tourists visit monasteries primarily for spiritual needs is completely unfounded. Although the 2011 census data shows that 84.6% of Serbia's population is Orthodox, less than a third of surveyed domestic visitors listed the spiritual needs as a reason for visiting the monastery. This indicates that the population of the censuses, in terms of religion, clearly declares itself by automatism, by nationality, and not by a firm religious belief. The second hypothesis that group visits to monasteries, mainly organized for Orthodox believers, is also incorrect. Moreover, among visitors who come in groups, as well as those who do so with friends, only about 20% are believers. There is a much higher number of believers in family and independent visits to the monasteries (about 34%). The third hypothesis that women are greater believers than men has not been confirmed. Visitors whose spiritual needs are primary are slightly higher in the male population (2% more than women), but it is interesting that women, in much higher percentage, exclusively list cultural needs as a reason for visiting monasteries (30.3%, vs. 13.9% of men).

The fourth hypothesis, that foreign tourists of Orthodox religion, dominate among foreign visitors to the monastery, is difficult to prove. Namely, there is no official statistics on visitors to the monasteries at the level of the Republic of Serbia, so it is not possible to determine how many foreign tourists visit the monasteries during the year or what countries they come from. Everything that is said about this hypothesis is in the rank of the assumption. It should be emphasized that the surveyed visitors were selected by random sample method, which is not the evidence of the real representation of domestic and foreign religious tourist movements on the territory of Serbia. This survey covers 60 non-Orthodox and 20 Orthodox foreign tourists, yet we can only assume that the number of non-Orthodox foreign visitors is higher than Orthodox foreign guests, which also indicates that religious tourism is less of a pilgrimage and more of cultural tourism.

The penultimate hypothesis of the monks' aversion to tourists, who by their visits disturb the monastic peace, has been completely rejected. Despite the fact that tourists do not allow monks to fully devote themselves to prayer, patience and philanthropy, two of the seven Christian virtues that monks aspire to, the results show the monks' good attitude toward tourists. This is also indicated by the fact that only 5 out of 356 tourists surveyed consider the monks to be unkind. The latter hypothesis cannot be proven reliably, because, as stated earlier, there is no information on the monastery's income, and therefore it cannot be argued that the monasteries receive considerable financial benefit from visitors. After all, the revenues of the monasteries are not and cannot be identical, since the attendance of each monastery depends on many factors. What the survey found is that 88% percent of tourists leave money to monasteries, of which 22 surveyed claim that they leave large sums of money. On this basis, it can be concluded that the monasteries benefit economically from tourists, but the extent to which they are financially dependent on their visit cannot be determined.

Based on all of the above, it is not difficult to conclude that the Republic of Serbia has great opportunities for the development of religious tourism. In addition to Orthodox temples, religious sites of other confessions are also represented in Serbia, which can be more seriously incorporated into the tourism business. Greater investment in tourism infrastructure, marketing, training of professional staff is needed, but better cooperation between religious communities and the state is also needed. Particular attention must be paid to a balance between spirituality and commercialization, that is, care must be taken to preserve the cultural, historical, national and spiritual values of the monasteries and prevent them from being transformed into centers of pop culture.

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ВЕРСКИ ТУРИЗАМ У РЕПУБЛИЦИ СРБИЈИ – СТАВОВИ ПОСЕТИЛАЦА МАНАСТИРА

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Резиме

Поред других туристичких вредности, Србија је препознатљива по манастирима и осталим верским објектима. Ова света места су нарочито привлачна туристима који долазе из држава са доминантно православним становништвом, попут Русије, Бугарске, Румуније или Грчке. Не треба занемарити ни све веће интересовање туриста из Турске, који су посебно заинтересовани за посету културно-историјским објектима отоманске Србије, између осталог, и исламским верским објектима. Стручњаци Светске туристичке организације при Уједињеним нацијама (UNWTO) сматрају да је верски туризам једна од најперспективнијих грана туризма, са највећом стопом раста последњих година.

Треба разликовати две врсте верског туризма. Првој групи верских туриста припадају ходочасници, односно туристи који света места посећују искључиво због верских потреба. На овим путовањима учествују припадници исте вероисповести углавном у пратњи духовника или стручног водича, такве аранжмане организују специјализоване туристичке агенције или верска организација, а путовање нема сезонски карактер, већ је везано за одређене датуме, односно верске празнике. Другу групу верских туриста чине они чије туристичке потребе нису духовне, те ова туристичка кретања имају сличности са другим путовањима у културном, градском туризму и другим видовима туризма. Данас су у свету најпосећенија света места Јерусалим, Ватикан, Мека, Медина, Карбала, Фатима итд., а 300 милиона туриста путује из верских разлога сваке године.

Православни манастири Србије, у претходним деценијама, нису имали велику посећеност, као што је то случај данас, нарочито када су у питању страни гости. Развојем верског туризма и туризма уопште, монаси и монахиње били су принуђени на прилагођавање свакодневним посетама, како верника тако и осталих гостију. Посебну вредност међу православним верским објектима Србије чине манастири које је UNESCO ставио на листу светске културне баштине: Студеница, Ђурђеви ступови, Сопоћани, Високи Дечани, Грачаница, Богородица Љевишка и Пећка патријаршија.

Анкетирање посетилаца манастира спроведено је 2019. године, у четири манастира Српске православне цркве: Ђурђевим ступовима и Сопоћанима код Новог Пазара, Манасији код Деспотовца и манастиру у Лешју код Параћина. Истраживање проблематике верског туризма, спроведено у четири наведена манастира, углавном је оповргло почетне хипотезе. Тако је доказано да домаћи туристи манастире не посећују преваходно због духовних, већ културних потреба, као и да монаштво радо дочекује посетиоце, без обзира на чињеницу да гости манастира нарушавају манастирски мир. Осим православних храмова, у Србији су заступљени и верски објекти других конфесија, које је могуће озбиљније укључити у туристичко пословање. Потребно је веће улагање у туристичку инфраструктуру, маркетинг, обуку стручних кадрова, али је нужна и боља сарадња верских заједница и државе.