

MASTERPIECES OF INTANGIBLE HERITAGE IN THE COUNTRIES OF SOUTHEAST EUROPE AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Georgi Georgiev
South-West University "Neofit Riski", Bulgaria
glgeorgiev@abv.bg

Ilinka Terziyska
South-West University "Neofit Riski", Bulgaria
terziyska@swu.bg

Abstract:

Culture plays a significant role as a resource in the development and maintaining of national and religious identity, and the cultural diversity, which is sought and appreciated by many tourists. Cultural tourism may be viewed as a symbiosis between two elements – culture and tourism. That is why the trends in cultural tourism development to a great extent reflect the ones in cultural heritage and tourism.

At the same time, cultural tourism development is based on the striving to preserve the world cultural heritage and the natural heritage that is related to it. In this regard, the role of UNESCO is indisputable. The organization is at the forefront of the international efforts for preservation of cultural diversity, of tangible and intangible heritage. To achieve its goals, UNESCO encourages the identification, protection, and preservation of the world cultural and natural heritage, as well as the broader spread of oral and intangible heritage. These goals are united in two conventions – the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

In this paper, an analysis of the importance of intangible cultural heritage on a global and regional scale and the role of The Convention for its safeguarding has been made. The opportunities for the countries of Southeast Europe to make use of the masterpieces of intangible heritage for tourism are discussed. Some recommendations and conclusions are also made.

Keywords: conventions, World Cultural Heritage, intangible cultural heritage, nestinarstvo, polyphony

Culture plays a significant role as a resource in the development and maintaining of national and religious identity, and the cultural diversity, which is sought and appreciated by many tourists.

According to the ICOMOS International Charter on Cultural Tourism (International Council on Monuments and Sites, Mexico, 1999), cultural tourism is a form of tourism whose resource is heritage – the cultural and natural treasures of the environment which keep the collective memory of the community. This integral product is considered to be shared by two different types of tourism – cultural (motivated by the cultural heritage and the living culture) and eco tourism (directed towards the natural environment). They often operate on the same area – in nature territories rich in cultural heritage. Both types of tourism strive to achieve sustainable development by not only using but also preserving the values and authenticity of its specific but often irretrievable resources (Krastev, 2009).

From this point of view, cultural tourism can be seen as a symbiosis of two elements – tourism and culture. That is why, according to Krastev (2009), the trends in cultural tourism development to a great extent reflect the ones concerning the role of cultural heritage and tourism in the world of today and tomorrow.

Cultural heritage is bound to play a significant role in the information society of the new century. In an age of globalization and an unprecedented mobility, it is heritage, which will affect the choice of living environment. Environments bearing memory will be increasingly attracting people, activities and investments.

Today a number of studies highlight the most important trends in the perceptions and approaches to cultural heritage. Among them of significant importance for its relation to tourism are the following three:

1. Cultural heritage is expanding its content to include, apart from cultural sites, other values such as traditional agricultural practices, social events and traditions, local cuisines, traditional crafts etc.
2. Cultural heritage is expanding its territorial scope to include values of higher levels: historic towns, cultural landscapes, and cultural routes of local, national, continental and even transcontinental range.
3. Cultural heritage is not only a spiritual value, which should be preserved, but also a unique resource, which can be used for sustainable development. The main tool for achieving this is cultural tourism (Kutin, 2007, p. 136).

On the other hand, tourism has also been developing as a result of increasing lifespan and the transition from a 'civilization of labour' to 'civilization of recreation'. Without neglecting the role of natural resources, the trend shows obvious increase in the role of cultural ones, reflected in a new kind of tourist motivation.

Resulting from this, some important trends in cultural tourism can be outlined (Kutin, 2007; Krastev, 2009):

1. Integration and close economic relation between culture and tourism is being developed. The resolution of the IV Conference of the Council of Europe (Helsinki, 1996) emphasizes that the income generated from cultural tourism can significantly contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage. It is therefore possible that just as cultural heritage stimulates tourism, tourism on the other hand should assist in the identification, preservation and promotion of this resource.
2. The tourist packages including cultural, tourist transport and information infrastructure are gaining irreplaceable commercial value, especially when they are complete with attractive secondary products and activities: festivals, trade, culinary, hunting and fishing etc.
3. The image of a town, territory, country is turning into a tourist product, which is marketed throughout the world under integrated marketing and advertising, because it creates favourable environment for investments and tourism. Cultural tourism is a key element of image (Krastev, 2002).
4. As a result of everything mentioned so far, cultural tourism is developing as one of the most successful tourist industries in the world. The share of tourist travel motivated by culture and cultural heritage is increasing. The tourist practice points out cultural heritage as a true 'gold mine' for the development of national economies.

5. Cultural tourism is based on the striving for world cultural and natural heritage. In this respect, the role of UNESCO is indisputable. The organization is at the forefront of international efforts for preserving cultural diversity, the tangible and intangible heritage. UNESCO works for the preservation and respect to every culture, at the same time striving not to ignore the specifics of other cultures. The challenges UNESCO sets together with its partners are directed towards stimulating personal engagement of cultures aimed at the creation of a common approach which should unite them and broaden their horizons for a world of cooperation and partnership.

To achieve its objectives UNESCO encourages identification, protection and safeguarding of world cultural and natural heritage, along with the wider distribution oral and intangible. These goals are united under two conventions - the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Historically, the idea of protecting the world cultural heritage goes back to the years after World War I and is associated with the name of the famous artist Nicholas Roerich, who offered the preparation of a peace treaty aimed at protecting all cultural treasures created by mankind. According to Katosheva (Katosheva, 2012), the idea of Roerich received wide international support, which led to the formation in the early thirties of the last century of a broad international movement, united by the desire to protect cultural property both during war and in peace. This led to the development of so called Roerich Pact and in 1931 the International Union of Roerich Pact was created. As a result of the efforts and several international forums held in April 1935, the U.S. and 20 countries from Central and South America signed the first international treaty for protection of cultural property in armed conflict and peace. The tragic events that followed during the Second World War represented a serious obstacle to realizing the ideas of the Pact. In the early fifties of last century all documentation connected with the Roerich Pact was transmitted to UNESCO. Later, in 1954, based on the Roerich Pact was adopted the Hague Convention on Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which has a considerably narrower range (Katosheva, 2012).

In more recent times, the idea of conservation of World Heritage received further development in 1959, when UNESCO launched an international campaign to protect the temples of Abu Simbel in the Nile valley. At that time it developed the first draft of the Convention for the Protection of World Heritage. In 1962 UNESCO presented Recommendation concerning the safeguarding of Beauty and Character of Landscapes and Sites.

This recommendation covers the protection of both cultural and natural sites. In 1965, during the White House Conference the idea to create a World Heritage Trust to protect the natural scenic areas and historical sites was born. In 1966 UNESCO led international campaign to save Venice after devastating floods, which affected the whole city. Several years later, in 1968, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) was included in that initiative. In 1972 after the UN Conference on Human Environment, and after completion of the work of the Expert Group of IUCN, ICOMOS and UNESCO, all proposals were collected in the "Convention for the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage". This was done on 11.16.1972, during the XVII session of the General Assembly of UNESCO in Paris. The beginning of the practical realization and was set on 07.12.1973, when the U.S. joined, followed by other 19 countries, including Bulgaria.

In the countries of Southeastern Europe (Balkan region), including in Bulgaria, there are 69 sites of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, including 57 cultural and historical monuments, 6 sites with natural features, 5 mixed and one in danger (the Medieval monuments in Kosovo).

The gradual broadening of the concept of cultural heritage and the inclusion of a wider set of inherited resources (tangible and intangible) has led to the emergence of new approaches to the understanding of protection and respect of cultural heritage. While the tangible heritage survives long after its creator, the fate of the intangible one is much more closely related with its creators, because it is usually orally transmitted. A lot of the elements of intangible heritage are endangered by the aftermath of globalization, uniform policies, the lack of funds and understanding.

As a safeguard of cultural heritage UNESCO has sought opportunities for promoting oral and intangible heritage in a balanced way, corresponding to the specifics of the different geographical regions. The new approaches to cultural heritage, which include the recognition of communities and groups of people in their capacity of bearers of living heritage, led to adoption of the Convention for

the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage on 17.10.2003 during the XXII session of the General Conference of UNESCO in Paris.

The convention is a result of years of efforts of the international community for the adoption of an international tool which regulates and facilitates the efforts of the state parties for protection and continuity of the intangible forms of culture.

According to this convention, the intangible cultural heritage is manifested via the following domains (Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003):

- oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
- performing arts;
- social practices, rituals and festive events;
- knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- traditional craftsmanship.

In the context of this international act, "protection" implies measures to ensure the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, development, operation, promotion and delivery, mainly through formal and informal education and as well as the revival of various aspects of this heritage.

So far the Convention has been ratified and adopted by 88 state parties of UNESCO. It was ratified by an Act of the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria and entered into force on 01.06.2006. Under the Convention, its main authorities are the General Assembly of the State parties and the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural heritage.

Every state which has acceded to the Convention is obliged to take the necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage on its territory. Ensuring protection of the intangible cultural heritage of the countries finds expression in identifying the various elements of the intangible cultural heritage present on its territory, with the participation of communities, groups and relevant non-governmental organizations. To ensure identification for protection, each country depending on the current situation creates one or several registers of Intangible Cultural Heritage on its territory. These records shall be regularly updated. In Bulgaria nominates may include any one of the fields of intangible cultural heritage in the regional lists of the national register "Living Human Treasures – Bulgaria", including:

- Traditional rituals and celebrations;
- Traditional singing and playing;
- Traditional dancing and traditional children's games;
- Traditional stories;
- Traditional crafts, home and livelihood activities;
- Traditional medicine.

Moreover, the regional meeting of experts from South East Europe in 2007 established regional networks of co-operation and coordination in the protection of intangible cultural heritage. On the XXXIV Session of the General Conference of UNESCO (2010), the Bulgarian president announced the country's desire to participate in the establishment of a Regional Centre of intangible cultural-heritage under the patronage of UNESCO and headquarters in Sofia, covering the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Mediterranean.

In order to provide greater visibility of the intangible cultural heritage, to encourage a deeper understanding of its importance and to encourage dialogue which respects cultural diversity, the Committee (on the proposal of the Member State Convention) has established , keeps up to date and publishes a Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. A similar list is drawn up for the intangible cultural heritage in need of urgent measures for their conservation.

The first list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity was drawn in 2003. It now includes 298 elements (formerly known as masterpieces) of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, official website). 32 of them belong to seven of the countries located in Southeast Europe, including:

1. Croatia (13 elements): Klapa multipart singing of Dalmatia, southern Croatia; Bećarac singing and playing from Eastern Croatia; Nijemo Kolo, silent circle dance of the Dalmatian

hinterland; Ojkanje singing, Gingerbread craft from Northern Croatia; Sinjska Alka, a knights' tournament in Sinj; Annual carnival bell ringers' pageant from the Kastav area; Festivity of Saint Blaise, the patron of Dubrovnik; Lacemaking in Croatia; Spring procession of Ljelje/Kraljice (queens) from Gorjani; Traditional manufacturing of children's wooden toys in Hrvatsko Zagorje; Two-part singing and playing in the Istrian scale.

2. Albania (1 element): Albanian folk iso-polyphony.
3. Turkey (10 elements): Mesir Macunu festival; Ceremonial Keşkek tradition; Kırkpınar oil wrestling festival; Semah, Alevi-Bektaşî ritual; Traditional Sohbet meetings; Âşıklık (minstrelsy) tradition; Karagöz; Novruz, Nowrouz, Nooruz, Navruz, Nauroz, Nevruz; Arts of the Meddah, public storytellers; Mevlevi Sema ceremony.
4. Cyprus (2 elements): Tsiattista poetic duelling; Lefkara laces or Lefkaritika.
5. Greece (1 element): Mediterranean diet (share with Italy, Spain and Morocco).
6. Romania (3 elements): Craftsmanship of Horezu ceramics; Doina; Căluş ritual.
7. Bulgaria (2 elements): Bistrishki babi – Archaic polyphony, dances and ritual practices in the region of Shopluk, and Nestinarstvo.

Bulgaria is presented by two elements. In 2005 the International Jury of UNESCO, chaired by the Princess of Jordan, Ms. Basma Bint Telal, announced the Bulgarian group "Bistrishki babi – Archaic polyphony, dances and ritual practices in the region of Shopluk" a masterpiece of world intangible cultural heritage. Diaphony, also known as Shopp polyphony is a type of polyphonic singing, in which one or two voices form curves, while other singers maintain the, which doubles or goes into triptongs thus accompanying the leading singers. Dancers are dressed in costumes and play a dance in a circle, whose direction is usually counterclockwise. Despite the variety of steps, one thing is characteristic – music and dance rhythms are in sync. Although the social function of polyphonic singing has changed in recent years as it is now primarily performed on a scene, "Bistrishki babi" is regarded as an essential part of the cultural life of the country, popularizing folklore performances among younger generations. Certainly it can be said that the aforementioned folklore group is among the few remaining representatives of traditional polyphony and the village of Bistritsa is one of the last regions in the country where this cultural tradition has been preserved and handed down from generation to generation.

The other element from Bulgaria which is included in the treasure house of world intangible heritage is the Nestinari ritual. It was inscribed on 30.09.2009 during the regular session of the IV International Committee of UNESCO held in Abu Dhabi (UAE). Nestinarstvo (fire dancing) is an ancient Greek and Bulgarian custom where people dance barefoot on smouldering embers. According to tradition nestinari dancers play on the feast of St. Konstantin and Elena (3 to 4 June). The custom was widespread in beginning of the XX century in several Bulgarian and Greek villages in Eastern Thrace, part of which after the Balkan War (1913) fell in Bulgaria and Greece, and the other, larger part remained in Turkey. The Greek population of the villages in Turkey moved to Greece in 1920, bringing with them the custom.

In Bulgaria the Nestinarstvo is preserved in only one village in Strandzha – the village of Balgari. In the past there several more Nestinari villages: the Greek villages of Kosti and Brodilovo and the Bulgarian Gramatikovo, Slivarovo and Kondolovo and a single village in the Rhodopes. There is, however, fire dancing in other locations in Bulgaria too, but mainly as a tourist attraction. In present day Greece Nestinarstvo is practiced in several villages in Aegean Macedonia, populated by the descendants of Thracian refugees. The tradition was first documented by Slaveykov in 1862. according to some historians the custom is associated with pagan rituals from Thracian times. Although the dancers play on the embers with the icons of St. Constantine and Helena, the custom was never recognized by the Orthodox church, it is haunted, and fire dancers themselves considered "possessed by the devil."

It is more than obvious that the countries of Southeast Europe, including Bulgaria, are characterized by rich heritage and cultural diversity. Their safeguarding is essential to preserve their national identity, the relationship with the land and the traditional culture. Today they are part of a global, not only economic and social but also cultural market. This dependence, despite the benefits, holds a significant number of hazards. An important one is the interpenetration and blurring of the cultural identity of the region. As a result of these processes the boundaries between the national cultural identities of individual countries over time become more culturally indistinguishable. Traditionalism is shifted to the periphery of public life and becomes a part of life and practices of small, economically

disengaged communities (Borisova, 2008). It is them, by the same author, that are becoming media and repositories of traditional practices and cultural diversity in the dynamics of a competitive society, because of their uniqueness being used as a competitive advantage by offering their form of cultural attractions in the area of cultural tourism (Borisova, 2008). Such are the Annual carnival bell ringers' pageant from the Kastav area; Festivity of Saint Blaise, the patron of Dubrovnik; Âşıklık (minstrelsy) tradition; Karagöz; Novruz, Nowrouz, Nooruz, Navruz, Nauroz, Nevruz, the Nestinarstvo ritual in Bulgaria etc .All these, combined with other of cultural heritage sites, particularly those recognized as World Heritage, are a serious resource for the development of cultural tourism. Important in this respect may be the role of the already developed and validated nine cultural corridors in Southeast Europe, and also of the World Intangible Heritage and the National Registers of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

At the same time the changes in the cultural diversity and its traditional practices for the purposes of the economic exploitation of holds some risks. In this case, it is essential to create an effective system for the protection of cultural heritage. Particularly important in this regard is the role of UNESCO and some other international organizations. So far Bulgaria has ratified all the conventions that form the basic framework of the activities of the member parties of UNESCO, namely - the Convention on the Protection of Cultural Sites in the Event of an Armed Conflict (1956), the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1971), the Universal Copyright Convention (1975), the Convention for the protection and promotion of the diversity of expression (2006); the Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001), etc.

During the Eighth Summit "Cultural Corridors of South East Europe" held on 23.06.2010 in Istanbul, entitled "Music as a metaphor for international dialogue," the Bulgarian President proposed the Balkan folklore heritage as a common candidate for representative list of Masterpieces of the World intangible Heritage of UNESCO. The realization of such an idea will result in the further deepening of cooperation in the field of cultural tourism between the countries of the region. Bulgaria has significant experience in this regard with thirteen previously organized workshops. The practical seminar for Balkan folklore called "BALKANFOLK" in Koprivshtitsa held in August 2010 drew participants from around the world. Lovers of Balkan folklore experienced the culture and traditions of the Balkan countries and at the same time became familiar with the beauties of Bulgarian nature. The program included activities related with the peculiarities of instrumental music, folk dances, folk singing and local crafts.

We should not overlook the fact that the opening of the Bulgarian cultural market and the increase in the tourism mobility of the country leads to increasing changes of intangible heritage, and to new and unusual elements and influences. This increases its marketability but at the same time results in a distortion of its tradition and cultural knowledge. The cultural market of intangible heritage is dominated by a variety of expressive forms of commercial nature, such as souvenirs, adapted folk dances and traditional performances, adapted folk songs, etc. (Borisova, 2008). This mostly stems from the development of the tourism industry, whose influence goes beyond the promotion of culture and instead leads to distortion, degradation and commercialization of its specificity. Similar problems exist in other countries in the region, in order to preserve cultural identity and to ensure its sustainability over time in the face of globalization, it is necessary to establish a regional center for cooperation in the field of intangible cultural heritage.

In conclusion, we would like to cite part of Koichiro Matsuura's message on the occasion of the World Day of Cultural Diversity of Dialogue and development. He said: "We must now give greater recognition to culture as a contributor to truly sustainable development that respects people and environments, and serves the cause of dialogue and peace. In this way we shall be able to recover the sense of our joint commitment to promoting "the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind" (Matsuura, 2008).

REFERENCE LIST

1. Борисова, В. (2008) България и нейното нематериално културно наследство. В „ *Медии и обществени комуникации*“, Научно електронно списание за медии, PR и журналистика,бизнес комуникации и реклама. Брой 1/2008.,www.media.journal.info. (Borisova, 2008)

2. Георгиева, И. (1987) Нестинарството в Странджа, в „*Културно-историческото наследство на Странджа – Сакар*”, съставител Валерия Фол, сс 105-114 (Georgieva, 1987)
3. Кръстев, Т (2009) *Културно наследство, образование, наука – Опазване, интегриране в туризма* (Heritage, ESPRIT) Eds: T. Krastev, Liter Net, Varna (Krastev, 2009)
4. Катошева, М. (2012) Пактът Ръорих, Хагската конвенция и защитата на културните и природни ценности, Retrieved from <http://milenakatosheva.wordpress.com> (Katosheva, 2012)
5. Кутин, Л. (2007) *История на културата*, Издателство „Наука и икономика”, ИУ – Варна
6. Фол, А. (1984) Тракийският античен културен субтракт, в „*Културно-историческото наследство на Странджа – древност, съвремие*”, т. I (Kutin, 2007)
7. <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00011&multinational=3&display1=inscriptionID#tabs>
8. Message from Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, on the occasion of World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development (21 May 2008) retrieved from http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=37199&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
9. Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00006>