

10<sup>th</sup> International Conference “Ohrid- Vodici 2022”

**“Global trends and threats related with identities,  
cultural heritage, environment, creative communities,  
tourism and sustainable local/regional development”**

- Conference Proceedings -



10-та Меѓународна конференција „Охрид- Водици 2022“

**„ГЛОБАЛНИТЕ ТРЕНДОВИ И ЗАКАНИ ПОВРЗАНИ СО  
ИДЕНТИТЕТИТЕ, КУЛТУРНОТО НАСЛЕДСТВО, ЖИВОТНАТА  
СРЕДИНА, КРЕАТИВНИТЕ ЗАЕДНИЦИ, ТУРИЗМОТ И  
ОДРЖЛИВИОТ ЛОКАЛЕН/РЕГИОНАЛЕН РАЗВОЈ“**

- Зборник на трудови -

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DEVELOPMENT**

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## **Božica Slavković Mirić**

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### **DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN KOSOVO AND METOHILJA BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract:**The current health situation affects all areas of life and work, including the research of the cultural heritage of a country. Tourism is one of the important branches in which cultural heritage is promoted, and which is currently limited. In our paper, we came up with the idea to look at the development of tourism in the past, specifically in Kosovo and Metohija in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Tourism in this area was not developed as much as it could be, primarily because it did not give direct benefits in the first place, and also because of the poor knowledge of these areas that were far from the highway and railway. The first tourist association in Southern Serbia “Jug” was founded in 1927 in Skoplje. Progress in tourism began in 1930 when tourist propaganda intensified. Tourist activity in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was based on the Decree on the Promotion of Tourism. The Royal Ban’s Administration of the Vardar Banovina had an elaborate program for tourism for 1937, which included arranging traffic. The tourist line located in Kosovo and Metohija started from Skoplje via Uroševac and Prizren, led to Djakovica and Peć, and from there via Kosovo Polje and Priština back to Skoplje. An important source for research on tourism development is the Review of the Tourist Association of the Vardar Banovina “Jug”. In addition to the natural beauties of Kosovo and Metohija, it was necessary to promote the cultural heritage of different peoples and religions, which this area is rich in. These are monuments unique in their beauty and value. The Yugoslav state’s efforts to improve tourism in the South were slow because tourism depended on the development of other branches of the economy, and modernization was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II.

**Key words:**Kosovo and Metohija, Period between the two world wars, Tourism, Vardar banovina.

#### **The area of Kosovo and Metohija and its potentials in the period between the two wars**

The area of Kosovo and Metohija extends between 41°50’58 “ and 43°15’42 “ north latitude and 20°00’30 “ and 21°04’02 “ east longitude in

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the southwestern part of Serbia (Berisha, 1973:p. 1). The northernmost point of this area is on the slopes of Kopaonik near Trešnjice, the southernmost on the top of Kepi and Bard (2,595 m), the westernmost on Mokra planina west of Peć, and the easternmost on the hill Krivo Brdo, northwest of Vranje. Kosovo and Metohija covers an area of 10,690 km<sup>2</sup> (Hadri, 1969:p.52) but does not represent one specific geographical unit but also covers the peripheral parts of the Sharr mountain, Dinaric Mountains and the southern part of Kopaonik (Berisha, 1973:p.1).

The lower part is 36.5% of Kosovo and Metohija. In the east it includes the Kosovo, Upper Moravian and Krivoreč basins, and in the west the Metohija basin (Krstić, 1994:p.14). The highest altitude is near Uroševac (580 m) (Nušić, 2001:p.14). The lowest part of 500 m above sea level, along the river Sitnica, represents a spacious and flat valley (Urošević, 2009:p.170–171, 180). Little Kosovo (B. Nušić mentions that the parish of Lab is in fact Little Kosovo) stretches in northwestern Kosovo, along the river Lab (Ristić, 1971). The lowland area of Gornja Morava is located in the southeast of Kosovo and Metohija, and the Kriva Reka basin is located in the eastern part of this area (Berisha, 1973:p.16).

The Kačanik gorge, 23 km long, narrow and deeply cut between the Sharr Mountain and Skoplje Montenegro, through which the traffic line to Skoplje led. Due to its wooded nature, it was considered “romantic” (*RevijaTurističkogsavezaVardarskebanovine “Jug”*, April 1940:p.12), but it was suitable for robbery raids (Urošević, 2009:p.21). Rugova gorge, 20 km long, stood out “with huge rocks that rose quite steeply to a height of 2,000 meters, next to caves where hermits once lived and prayed to God, while a large number of streams with noisy falls, flow into the depths.” (*RevijaTurističkogsavezaVardarskebanovine “Jug”*, April 1940:p.14). This gorge is also important because of the connection of the southern part of the Adriatic coast with the interior of the country (Božović, 2006:p.70-75).

Metohija (medieval “metoh” means land possession of monasteries and churches, which included an area with several villages) extends parallel to Kosovo Polje, about 60 km long (23 km wide) at an average altitude of about 550 m. It was formed by the gradual lowering and swelling of the lake with numerous rivers in the BeliDrim basin (Adriatic Sea basin). Metohija covers the territory from the East to the Prizren Basin(Berisha, 1973:p.13-16).

The Kosovo-Metohija area is fenced on all sides and filled with high and medium mountains. Mountainous areas cover 63.5% of the area of Kosovo and Metohija, and most of it (the southern part belongs to the Hellenes) belongs to the Dinaric Mountains (Berisha, 1973:p.5). To the south and southwest is the vast Sharr Mountain between the Kačanik Gorge and the border with Albania, about 80km long. This mountain consists of several relief areas, Opole and Dragash with steep and narrow valleys, forested Gora with a height of 1,500 m, and from the foot of Cvilen stretches PrizrenPodgor, whose upper part passes into Sredska and Ošljak (Berisha, 1973:p.8). Between Ošljak and Šara lies the Sirinić parish, on the southern side of which are the hills Ljuboten, Livadica, Jezerskačuka and Bistra (Urošević, 2009:p.194). Ljuboten and the highest peak Bistra (2,640 m)

were “the most ideal ski terrains in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia” (*Revija Turističkoga saveza Vardarske banovine “Jug”*, December 1939:p.6). Koritnik (2,006 m) and Paštrik (1,989 m) also belong to the Sharr mountain area, and within them is Has. In addition to the above, the Kačanik, Prizren and Drim gorges, created by Lepenac, Bistrica and Beli Drim (Berisha, 1973:p.9), also belong to the Sharr mountain area. The western parts of Kosovo and Metohija form the mountain range of Prokletije. The southern part of Prokletije consists of Junička, Dečanska, Kožnjar, Lumbardska and Koprivnik mountains. Đeravica is the highest point of 2,656 m. In the upper basin of Pečka Bistrica is Rugovo with a narrow Rugova gorge. The mountains Hajla, Žljeb and Mokra are located in the northern part, and towards Metohija they cross into the hilly Podgor (Berisha, 1973:p.9). Within Kosovo and Metohija, there is the Kopaonik area, to which the Rogozna mountain belongs (1,000–1,200 m), within which the Banjska valley is located (Berisha, 1973:p.10-11). The mountainous area of Drenica stretches between the Kosovo and Metohija valleys with over 2,000 km<sup>2</sup>. In the northern part of Drenica there is Čičavica (1,091 m), and in the southern Drenica there are mountains Goleš, Drenička and Crnojleđa with about 1,000–1,500 m altitude. Milanovac, Gradište and Koznik are separated by mountains above Miruša, Topluha and Beli Drim (Berisha, 1973:p.12).

The hydrographic node of Yugoslavia was located in Kosovo and Metohija. The basins of the Black, Adriatic and Aegean Seas touch the Drmanska glava on Nerodimka mountain (Radovanović, 1937:p.108). The Nerodimka River is known for its bifurcation, ie forking over the Sazlija pond into Sitnica and further north into the Black Sea and another part into Lepenac and further south into the Aegean Sea (Urošević, 2009:p.293–303). The Kosovo-Metohija area, in addition to rivers, is also rich in lakes. On Sharr mountain and Prokletije there were glacial lakes (Urošević, 2009:p.414-415). There were about fifteen of them on Shara, and a little less on Prokletije. Livadić Lake is the largest on the Kosovo side of the Sharr Mountains. Below the top of Bistra were Veliko and Malo Jažinačko lakes. At the source of Prizrenska Bistrica, there was Gornjeselsko Lake, the highest lake in Kosovo and Metohija and one of the highest in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. On Prokletije, under Đeravica, there are the Big and Small Đeravica lakes (Berisha, 1973:p.42–44).

In addition to mountain, forest, river and lake wealth, Kosovo and Metohija are characterized by favorable climatic conditions. The climate in Kosovo and Metohija is moderately continental with Mediterranean influence penetrating the Drim and Beli Drim valleys, so Metohija has a milder climate than neighboring areas. Kosovo is more exposed to the influence of continental air masses and is at a higher altitude. In Kosovo, winters are cold and summers are dry and warm. Average temperatures are around 11 degrees, July is the warmest month (around 20 degrees), and the coldest is January (around -1 degree). The highest precipitation is in Metohija, and the lowest in Kosovo Polje. Snow is a regular occurrence in Kosovo (30-40 days a year). In Metohija, winters are less cold (from 0.5 to -0.5 degrees), but they are snowier. Summers are often warmer than in Kosovo (21.5 to 22.8

degrees). Cloud cover is very low throughout the territory and sunshine is longer (Berisha, 1973:p.29).

### **The importance of traffic for the development of tourism between the two world wars**

At the beginning of the 20th century, the main roads were cobbled and covered with crushed stone, and there were parts that were not even cobbled. The main roads were Mitrovica-Vučitrn-Priština-Kaçanik-Skopje; Priština-Djakovica; Priština-Prizren; Priština-Kuršumlija; Priština-Gnjilane-Vranje (*Službeni list Vardarske banovine*, no. 65, 1931:p.3). From 1918, the most important roads were repaired (*Službeni list Vardarske banovine*, no. 67-68, 1931:p.9-13), which was an indicator that the state strives to modernize and harmonize with modern requirements of labor and economy. With the help of roads, the economic life of the country as well as its culture developed (*Ilustrovani zvanični almanah – šematizam Zetske banovine*, 1931:p.112).

From 1918 to 1930, 1,250 km of roads were built in southern Serbia, 1,570 km were repaired, 1,395 km were repaired again and 1,004 km due to natural disasters (SlavkovićMirić, 2018:p.260). Special attention was paid to the construction of the Skopje-Kaçanik road (*Pravda*, May 26, 1936; *Vardar*, April 26, 1934:p.7). The Tetovo-Prizren road, build in November 1936, was economically, touristically and strategically important, as it connected the Vardar Banovina with the Zeta Banovina, as well as with Albania (*Vardar*, November 3, 1935:p.2; *Vardar*, November 25, 1936:p.2). The road connecting Gornja Morava and Izmornik with the Kosovo communication line, on the west, and with the Moravian-Vardar, on the east, was the road Uroševac-Gnjilane-Bujanovac (Urošević, 1993:p.66–68). From Kosovo, people went to Metohija by state roads, one shorter (the road from KosovskaMitrovica to Peć) and the other more circular (the road from Uroševac via Prizren, Djakovica and near Dečani to Peć). Both roads led to the one along the Rugova gorge, which was the main and only connection between Belgrade and the Bay of Kotor. RoadUroševac - Peć, according to GrigorijeBožović, was one of the most beautiful and interesting in Yugoslavia. Its route (from Uroševac, through the village of Košre, Štimlje, Crnojevskiklanac, Dulje then to the Prizren plain, to Đakovica, the foothills through Istenići and Dečani, to Peć) was “modern, solid construction, very careful maintenance, absolute safety and the beauty of the landscape through which it passed was complex, impressive and diverse” (Božović, 2006:p.178–182).

Due to the importance of railway connections, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia began tracing railways in the south. The Raška-KosovskaMitrovica railway, 64,760 km long, was built from 1927 to 1931. The Kragujevac-Kraljevo-Raška-Mitrovica railway was important from an economic point of view because it connected many towns and fertile places, Metohija, Kosovo and the West Morava basin with Belgrade. According to the source, this railway was a real pleasure for tourists when they travel on it (*Jubilarnak njiogradržavnihželeznicaKraljevineJugoslavije (1919-1929)*, 1929:p.81,129;

Milenković, 1936:p.364-366; *Statistika jugoslovenskih železnica: za godinu 1930. sa uporednim podacima za godinu 1929, 1931:p.7*). From 1928 to 1930, the Priština-Glogovci-Peć railway was built (Milenković, 1936:p. 373-374). The Kosovo Polje-Priština railway was launched on July 9, 1934 (*Vardar*, July 14, 1934:p.4).

The railways were mostly concentrated in Kosovo, while the whole of Metohija had only one Kosovo Polje - Peć, opened in July 1936. In this way, it was possible to produce products from Kosovo Polje and Metohija to all parts of the country, and it was important in tourist view (*Statistikaju goslovenskih železnica za godinu 1938 sa uporednim podacima za godinu 1937, 1938:p.4*). Grigorije Božović wrote that the “railway from Kosovo to Peć was through the most beautiful and convenient areas. It covers the bed of the river Drenica and through Mekić Klisura it erupts into the area of Drenica near the village of Glogovac. Going further in the middle of Drenica and below the village of Banjica, it passes between Prekoruplje and Drenica through the Drenica gorge built by Klina to belong to the Adriatic basin, although it springs in Kolašin whose waters go to the Danube. Further, the railway crosses the Drim, through the forest villages below Budisavac and through flat Metohija it comes to Peć”. Secondly, Božović states that “the railway is solidly built and, according to the last word of construction skill, insured against weather accidents”. Božović points out the stations, especially Peć, which was “in the style of a monastery and a tower in the foothills”, made of Peć marble. Across the Drim towards Pristina all the way to Mekić Klisura, the stations were made of granite in the shape of stylized towers, “the most impressive in Klina and Glogovac”. (Božović, 2006:p.174–177).

## **Development of spa tourism**

In Kosovo and Metohija, there were a large number of spas and thermal springs that were connected to various cracks in the ground and faults along the edges of the valleys. The springs and spas were owned by the state and managed by the Ministry of Social Policy and Public Health. There should have been a spa administration in each spa, which was determined by the ban (*Godisnjak o narodnom zdravljui raduzdravstvenih ustanovai organa 1937–38:p.18*). However, all the spas were primitive and untidy. They were visited by a small number of visitors, mostly from the immediate vicinity, primarily due to traffic conditions but also due to disorder.

The most famous were Klokotska Banja (near the village of Klokot on the Gnjilane-Uroševac road) and the spa in Banjska or the King Milutin Spa in the village of Banjska (5 km southeast of Kosovska Mitrovica). The water in this spa was carbonate (alkaline, alkaline-earth), with a temperature of 43-47 degrees and treated rheumatism and neuralgia. The apartments were in country houses and it was primitively decorated, there were about 1,500 visits a year. Banja Ilidža (7 km northeast of Peć) was with a beautiful natural position, healthy mountain water, air and greenery. It treated gout, rheumatism, scrofula, nervousness, gynecological diseases, etc. It was not decorated, the

houses of the visitors were small and primitive, made of planks, reeds and straw. The spa itself was a "small barn surrounded by planks" within a meter and a half, where men and women were treated separately without instructions, squeezing completely naked, withstanding the heat of water of 40 degrees and more (*Zetski glasnik*, no. 59, 1933:p.3; *Zetski glasnik*, no. 721, 1938:p.2).

As far as mineral springs are concerned, the most famous were Hodžinkamen, Kmetovo, Pasjane, Poreše and Žitine. The people believed that the first two were especially healing for St. George's Day. There was a fountain of alkaline-acid water in the village of Burnik in the Nerodim district. In the Kačanik district, the mineral water was Đeneral Janković, and it was one of the alkaline-alkaline acids. Dečani sourdough (kiseljak), in the Đakovica district, under the Dečani monastery, belonged to the group of alkaline earthworms, it was used for the treatment of gastrointestinal diseases (Aleksić, 1937:p.787–798; *Ilustrovanizvaničnialmanah - šematizam Zetskebanovine*, 1931:p.366).

### **Cultural heritage as part of the tourist offer**

In addition to natural resources, southern Serbia is also rich in cultural heritage. Kosovo and Metohija have been a constant inspiration in various arts. Artistic heritage is great for such a small territory. According to the list of religious buildings, 22 monasteries, 110 Orthodox and 3 Catholic churches (mostly in ruins) and 25 mosques (2 in ruins, from the 16th century) were registered. If we add to that religious archeological sites and tomb architecture, the number of religious monuments exceeds half of the total heritage fund (208) (Krstić, 1994:p.48; Pavlović & Marković, 2009:p.293). Kosovo and Metohija are rich in medieval endowments, very important and respected even today, such as the Pečka Patrijaršija, the Bogorodica Ljeviška in Prizren, the Banjska Monastery near Kosovska Mitrovica, Gračanica, the St. Archangels near Prizren, Dečani and many others (see: Jevtić, 1987).

Albanian cultural monuments are located in the western part of Metohija and a total of 40 registered. Among the monuments of the first category are the Old Bazaar in Djakovica, from the residential architecture Kula Beć Hadrija in Junik, Jašar-pašakona in Peć, the residential house in Đakovica and Hadum mosque, and from the memorial architecture the memorial unit of the Prizren League. Monuments of residential architecture stood out, especially the Albanian towers (22 were registered). There are also registered monuments that represent the common heritage of Serbs, Montenegrins, Albanians, Turks (153). In the category of Byzantine monuments, 28 cities, temples and palaces are registered. There are 76 Turkish monuments, the most important being Mehmed Pasha (Bajrakli) and Sinan Pasha Mosque and Hamam in Prizren, Imperial (Fatih) Mosque in Priština, Potok Mahala in Prizren and Tahir Bey's residence in Peć, Vojinović Bridge in Vučitrn and Terzi in Djakovica, as well as Murat's tomb in the field of Kosovo. Among the monuments of common heritage are the remains of three

Catholic churches (Latin Saxon Church in Stari Trg near Kosovska Mitrovica from the 13th century), the Cathedral of St. Nikola (14th century) in the old town of Novo Brdo and the 14th century Catholic church in Priština. The Jewish community left in its common heritage the Jewish cemetery in Priština (since 1850, with 27 preserved plates) (Krstić, 1994:p.58-66).

### **Improving tourism in the Kosovo and Metohija in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia**

In connection with well-developed traffic and telephone lines, there was also the improvement of tourism. Tourism in the South Serbia was not as developed as it could have been, primarily because it did not provide direct benefits in the first place, but also because of poor knowledge of these areas that were far from the highway and railway (Uslovi turizma u Južnoj Srbiji, *Južni pregled*, March 1931:p.129-131). Tourism was the youngest branch of the South. The first tourist association in Southern Serbia, “Jug”, was founded in 1927 in Skoplje. Progress in tourism began in 1930, when tourist propaganda intensified (Krstić, 1937:p.733-738). There was a paradox that foreigners were better acquainted with the natural beauties of the South than the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Getting to know the South presupposed great courage and sacrifice, not only because of the “kačaks” (Albanian outlaws) but also because of the bad roads, food and lodgings. Mountain facilities have lost their appeal due to difficult accessibility, but also due to the distance of accommodation and food. The shorter stay on the Sharr Mountains was made possible primarily thanks to the gendarmerie stations and branches, which, after the necessary checks, made the apartment and food available (Uslovi turizma u Južnoj Srbiji, *Južni pregled*, March 1931:p.129-131).

Tourist activity in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was based on the decree on the promotion of tourism. Until the enactment of the decree, all work on tourism was conducted mainly by private initiative, and then tourism development was left to municipalities and tourism committees; however, this issue was not resolved as it should be because the committees were not formed (*Revija turističkog saveza Vardarske banovine “Jug”*, February 1941:p.4-5). In early February 1935, the Yugoslav government passed a decree on the financing of major public works in order to revive the national economy, reduce unemployment and improve tourism. The construction of modern roads and railways is planned (Jovanović, 2011:p.361).

The Royal Ban’s Administration of the Vardar Banovina had an elaborated program for tourism for 1937, which included the regulation of traffic (*Službeni list Vardarske banovine*, no. 68-69, 13-16; no. 70, 7-8; no. 71, 7-8). Special attention should have been paid to the arrangement of hotels, which were neither modernly decorated nor according to hygienic regulations. In a hotel in Priština, according to the description of Rebeka Vest, there were “monastic clean and ascetic rooms”, with beds with metal headboards, with rickety dressing tables and a toilet that was of the Turkish type - a small room

with a stone floor with an opening near the wall and a faucet not far from it for water (Vest, 2000:p.673).

The tourist line located in Kosovo and Metohija started from Skoplje via Uroševac and Prizren, led to Djakovica and Peć and from there via Kosovo Polje and Pristina back to Skopje (Arandjelović, 1930:p.16; *Revija Turističkog saveza Vardarske banovine "Jug"*, February 1941:p.10-11). The *Revue of the Tourist Association of the Vardar Banovina* "Jug" described the beauties that should have been visited in Kosovo and Metohija. For skiing, the Sharr Mountain was highlighted, which was a sensation for nature lovers. There were instructions on how to get there and how much the ticket cost to certain mountain lodges, as well as instructions on accommodation (*Revija Turističkog saveza Vardarske banovine "Jug"*, December 1939:p.6-10), a description of an interesting highway from Skoplje via Prizren to Peć (*Revija Turističkog saveza Vardarske banovine "Jug"*, April 1940:p.12–14) and Gračanica on the field of Kosovo (*Revija Turističkog saveza Vardarske banovine "Jug"*, July 1940).

All plans for the arrangement and modernization of roads, traffic, mountain places, spas and thus tourism and modernization of Southern Serbia were interrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War.

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