

Basic characteristics of pilgrimage localities and their virtual image on the Internet

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Abstract

Pilgrimage tourism has a long tradition in the world and in Slovakia. People have worshiped places that symbolized their religion, sites of miracles, or localities where they can feel „God's presence“ for a long time. The aim of our article is to analyze pilgrimage localities in the Žilina Region on the basis of selected websites' offer. The analyze includes regions with a high concentration of the religious population (Orava, Kysuce). We assumed that the representation of pilgrimage localities will also have one of the leading positions in Slovakia. All analyzed pilgrimage localities are places of local significance. Most of them belong to St. Mary's pilgrimage tradition. Proof of this is the fact that many of them are the part of Slovak St. Mary's Route - its northern part.

Keywords: pilgrimage, religious localities, religious tourism, St. Mary's tradition, Žilina Region

Introduction

Religious - referred to as pilgrimage tourism, is one of the oldest forms of tourism. Pilgrimage tourism is connected with the traditions of religions where the basic manifestation is a pilgrimage. It is characterized by a visits of pilgrimage centres under the influence of religious motives (Michalová et al., 1999; Ryglová, 2009; Pichlerová –Benčat', 2009; Gúčík, 2010). The main motive of pilgrimage in its religious and spatial context is the visit of the holy place where the God's presence is the most visible and realization of religious activities, prayers and so on, at that place (Jackowski – Solan, 2008).

Pilgrimage tourism is a part of the cultural tourism. Its manifestations are mainly pilgrimages, which are characterized by 3 features: pilgrimage participants, religious act and pilgrimage locality. As Oriška (2011) states, a town, village, settlement or some landscape element (e.g. mountain, river) can be considered a pilgrimage locality. It differs from the cultural tourism in motivation which is the religious motive and in the refusing to consider its participants as “tourists”.

While a visitor arrives to the place for cultural and sightseeing purposes, the pilgrim also tries to feel the atmosphere of the saints who have left a mark on localities which are being visited.

In the literature, we can also meet the term religious tourism. This form of tourism is defined by Rinschede (1990, 1992) as a migration where participants during their journey are exclusively-strongly religious motivated. Besides pilgrims he also takes into consideration participants of tourism, who seek cultural monuments and thus sacral objects only for cognitive motives.

Pilgrimages as an external expression of faith are in this time tied to all world religions: Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity (Collins-Kreiner 2010).

There is probably no country without pilgrimage localities nowadays. The proof that this form of tourism has its own position is the fact that the World Religious Travel Association (WRTA) was founded in the United States in 2006. Its main goal is connecting all believers and education in religious tourism. It tries to promote religious travelling and the development of hospitality in individual countries. Several destinations, wholesalers, specialized travel agencies, etc. are the members of WRTA.

Religious tourism has its history since ancient times. It is associated with the largest religions in the world - Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. Rome, Jerusalem and Mecca belong to the world's centres of religious tourism.

RELIGIOUS TOURISM AND SLOVAKIA

Slovakia is a Christian country. According to the last Population and Housing Census in 2011, more than 80% of the population claimed a religious affiliation. The Roman Catholic Church (62.0%) dominates, the second-largest group are Evangelists of the Augsburg Confession (5.9%). Greek Catholics are on the third place (3.8%). On the other hand, we have to say that since 1991 there has been an increase in the number of non-religious people from 9.8 to 13.4% (Fig.1).

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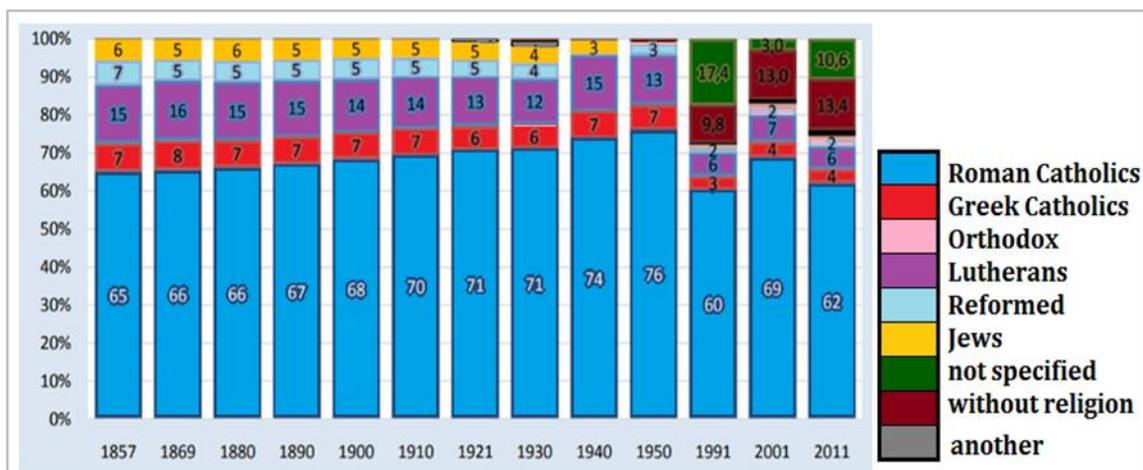


Fig. 1 Development of Religious representation in Slovakia 1857-2011
Source: <http://www.infostat.sk/vdc/pdf/Storocie.pdf>

The high number of churches in Slovakia is the evidence of the strong representation of believers. 4165 churches have been registered so far, of which 63.24% are Roman Catholic (Tab.1).

Table 1 Churches in Slovakia

churches	abs.	%	churches	abs.	%
Roman Catholic	2634	63,24	Reformed Christian	309	7,42
Greek Catholic	522	12,53	Evangelical A. V.	544	13,06
Orthodox	155	3,72	Czechoslovak Hussite Church	1	0,02
together	4165				

Source: Dzurjanin, Z. author of the map: <https://dennikn.sk/160769/kostoly-slovenska-mapa-fotky/#mapa>

Their localization shows (Fig. 2):

- there are mostly Greek Catholic churches in the north-east and east of Slovakia,
- higher concentration of churches of the Reformed Church can be observed in the south-east of Slovakia, in the south of the districts of Rožňava, Rimavská Sobota, Revúca, Levice and streved in the districts of Danube Lowland,
- most evangelical churches are concentrated in central and upper Liptov, in the northern part of Gemer (Rožňava, Rimavská Sobota and Revúca District), in districts in the south of central Slovakia - Krupina, Lučenec and Veľký Krtíš. There is also a strong concentration on the outskirts of western Slovakia in areas with dispersed settlements (Myjava and Nové Mesto nad Váhom District),
- The concentration of Catholic churches is evident in the traditional centers of the Catholic Church (Nitra and Trnava Region, north of the Žilina Region - Orava and Kysuce) and districts of north-western Slovakia.

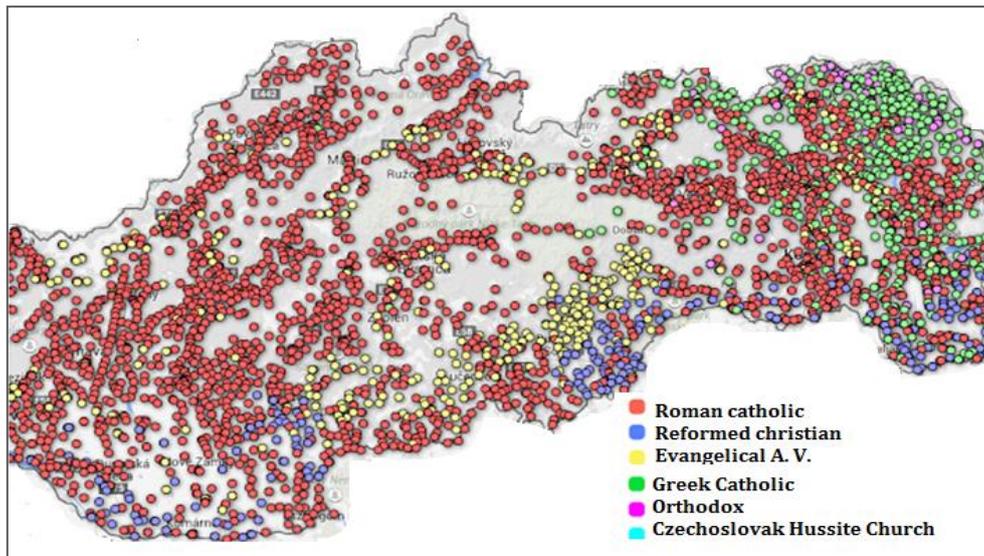


Fig. 2 The churches in Slovakia

Source: <https://dennikn.sk/160769/kostoly-slovenska-mapa-fotky/#mapa>

One of the main representatives dealing with religious tourism in Slovakia is A. Krogmann (2007, 2017 et al.). He paid most attention to the Nitra Region. Čuka (1996, 1998) focuses on pilgrimage in the Staré Hory - especially the size, intensity, seasonality and geographical background of visitors in the village. Similarly, Bubeliny (2008) and Čuka, Bubeliny and Gregorová (2009).

Bubeliny (2010) conducted research on the pilgrimage activities in the Žilina Region, in Rajecká Lesná in terms of several aspects (such as geographic background of pilgrims, size and frequency of pilgrimage activities).

The aim of our article is to analyze pilgrimage localities in the Žilina Region. It includes municipalities with a large percentage of religious population (mainly in Orava and Kysuce). We assumed that the representation of pilgrimage localities will also have one of the leading positions in Slovakia, but as it has been shown in Tab. 2 and Fig. 3, the most of the pilgrimage localities are located in the regions of Banská Bystrica and Prešov.

Table 2 Representation of pilgrimage localities in regions of Slovakia

Region	representation of pilgrimage localities in regions of Slovakia	
	abs.	%
Banská Bystrica	23	15,3
Bratislava	13	8,7
Košice	20	13,3
Nitra	22	14,7
Prešov	24	16,0
Trenčín	18	12,0
Trnava	13	8,7
Žilina	17	11,3
together	150	100,0

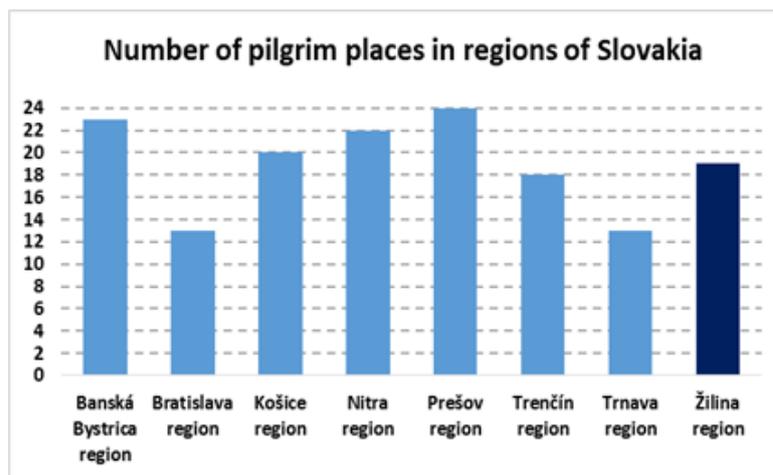


Fig. 3 Number of pilgrimage localities in regions of Slovakia
Source: www.putnickemiesta.sk

Pilgrimage localities and Žilina region

In terms of placement of pilgrimage localities five of them are in the Čadca District, four in the Žilina District, two localities are in the Námestovo District, Tvrdošín and Ružomberok District and one in Martin and Dolný Kubín District (Tab. 3, Fig. 4).

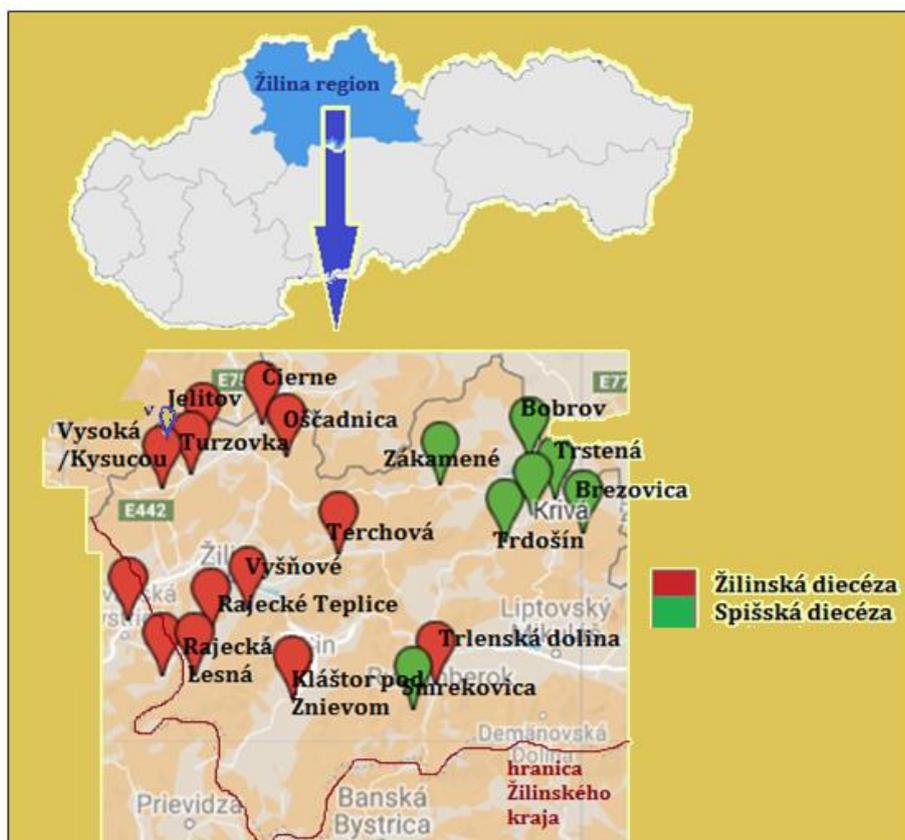


Fig. 4 Location of pilgrimage localities in Žilina Region
Source: edited by the author googlemap.com

Table 3 Location of pilgrimage localities in Žilina Region

Municipality	District	Place of pilgrimage - locality	Regular pilgrimage
Bobrov	Námestovo	Calvary of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary	August 15 on the Feast of the Assumption of Virgin Mary
Čierne	Čadca	Trojmedzie - pilgrimage at the chapel in the mountains above the village of Čierne, where three countries meet: Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland	Regular pilgrimage: August
Kláštor pod Znievom	Martin	Church of Virgin Mary, St. Nicholas Church, Lourdes Chapel, Calvary, Good Shepherd Monastery	weekend around August 15 (Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary)
Krivá	Dolný Kubín	birthplace of Blessed Sister Zdenka Cecilia Scheling	July 30 on the Feast of Blessed Sister Zdenka
Oščadnica	Čadca	Calvary	Sunday after August 15, the Feast of the Assumption of Virgin Mary
Rajecká Lesná – Frivald	Žilina	Basilica of the Nativity of Virgin Mary	several times a year
Rajecké Teplice	Žilina	Chapel of St. Gianna Beretta Molla (with relics)	weekend after the Feast of St. Gianna (April 28)
Smrekovica – kaplnka	Ružomberok	Chapel of St. Gorazd	in July around the feast of St. Gorazd (27 th July), the highest situated chapel in Slovakia
Staškov – Jelítov	Čadca	Calvary of the Seven Sorrows of Virgin Mary and Chapel of St. Anna	end of July on the feast of St. Joachim and St. Anna
Terchová	Žilina	Oravcové Hill, there is an altar with stone pillars forming a two-arm cross. The way to it is lined by the Stations of the Cross.	celebrations for the feast of Saints Cyril and Methodius on July 5 - all-decesium pilgrimage
Trstená	Tvrdošín	St. Martin's Church	Sunday on the feast of Virgin Mary of Carmel (July 16). It is an indulgence pilgrimage associated with the music festival Sing to Virgin Mary.
Turzovka – Hora Živčáková	Čadca	Živčáková Hill - Chapel (Church) of Virgin Mary	spring and autumn pilgrimage, rich program throughout the year
Višňové	Žilina	St. Nicholas Church	all year round, Fatima Saturdays (1st Saturday of the month)
Trlenská dolina	Ružomberok	Chapel of Virgin Mary of the Snow	every 5 th August, respectively. on Sunday after 5th August
Brezovica	Tvrdošín	Skorušina Hill	1 st September. Holy Mass and thanking of believers to God for granted benefits
Vysoká nad Kysucou	Čadca	Chapel of St. Anna below Kýčera Hill	26 th July, on the feast of St. Anna or on Sunday after it
Zákamenné	Námestovo	Chapel of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary on the Calvary	15 th August on the Feast of the Assumption of Virgin Mary

processed by the author

Characteristics of pilgrimage localities in the Žilina Region

Bobrov - Bobrov pilgrimages have been held for over a hundred years. At the end of the 19th century, the local canonist Štefan Košťalik had built 14 Stations of the Calvary, which start from the parish church to the nearby hill with chapel. The ceremonial consecration of the Calvary was held on the 15th August 1984. Pilgrimages also took place during the communism, although with the permission of the district committee and not to the extent as it is nowadays. The specific feature of the pilgrimage is the "funeral of Virgin Mary". Every year, on the 14th August or on the eve of the local forgiveness, a parade with a statue of the Virgin Mary lying in a chest, is organized. It starts from the parish church and goes around the stations of the Calvary to the top of the hill. There is the statue of Virgin Mary placed in the symbolic grave in the chapel. This custom is unique in Slovakia. We can see similar tradition in Poland on the Zebrzydowski Calvary (<https://www.naoravedobre.sk/aktivity/bobrovska-kalvaria-miesto-pokoja-akrasnych-vyhľadov-12/>).



Fig. 4 Calvary Bobrov

Source: <https://lisinovic.blog.sme.sk/c/163872/Putovanie-po-slovenskych-Kalvariach-XXI-Bobrov.html>

Čierne – Trojmedzie - symbolically connects three countries - Slovakia, Czech Republic and Poland. Its point lies in an isosceles triangle. The peaks of the triangle are represented by 240 cm high granite monoliths, which have been mounted in pedestals since 1995. The tradition of the common pilgrimage of Czechs, Polish and Slovaks in this place began after the establishment of the Diocese of Žilina (Fig. 5) (<http://www.putnickemiesta.sk/events/put-na-trojmedzii-cierne-trojmedzie-2/>).



Fig. 5 Trojmedzie

Source: <http://www.obeccierne.sk/42-region-kysuce/209-trojmedzie>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIAopswq1g>

Kláštor pod Znievom – The Calvary area was founded at the beginning of the 18th century and gradually completed until the 20th century. The hill is dominated by the narrow tower of the Church of the Holy Cross (Fig. 6), which was built in 1728 by Mikuláš Ďurčáni, pastor of Tri Sliache and by chaplain Juraj Mihalóczi. The church is surrounded by a wall with three entrances, which were originally decorated with baroque vases and a ring of chapels built into the wall. There are three simple wooden crosses in the central area. The chapels at the church are now a continuation of the younger stations built on the hill slope.

The whole area of the Calvary with the Church of St. Cross is the destination of the main pilgrimage for the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross with the procession from the parish church of St. Nicholas. (<http://www.putnickemiesta.sk/putnicke-miesta-na-slovensku/banskobystricka-dieceza/putnicke-miesto-copy-copy-2/>)



Fig. 6 Church of the Saint Cross

Source: <https://www.infoglobe.sk/tip-na-vylet/sr-klaster-pod-znievom-obec-s-kralovskym-hradom-zniev-video/?action=2>

Krivá na Orave – every year before 30th July - the liturgical feast of Blessed Zdenka (a pilgrimage) is held here with the participation of believers from a wide area. A chapel with a memorial plaque has been built in front of the former Scheling family house since 2010 (Fig. 7).

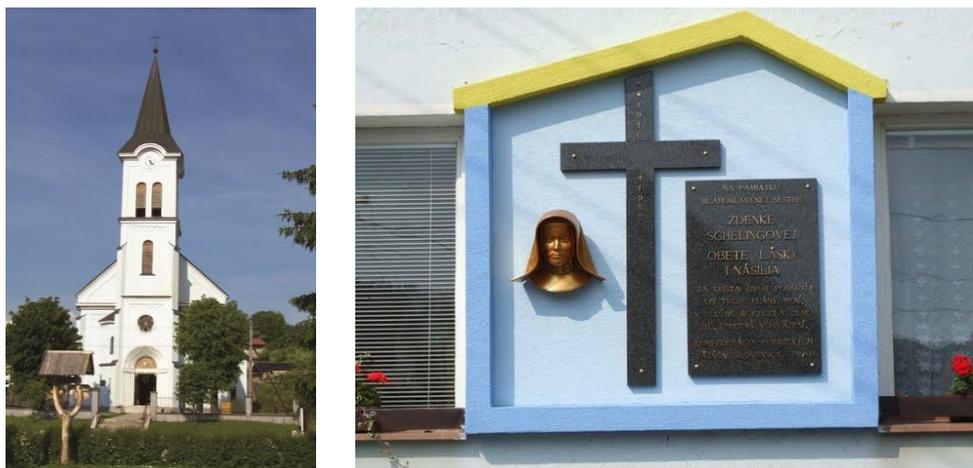


Fig. 7 Church of Saint Joseph worker and a memorial plaque dedicated to Blessed Zdenka
Source: <http://www.zdenka.sk/sk/putnicke-miesta/kriva>

Oščadnica - The Kysuce pilgrimage to the Calvary has been taking place on Sunday after the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary on the August 15th for several decades. Calvary in Oščadnica is the only one of its kind in Kysuce (Fig. 8). Its construction began in 1946 in the area of Sivova grapa. It was built within one year by Oščadnica's believers of gratitude for the fact, that in 1945 during the World War II, when the fighting in nearby Rača lasted almost 30 days (people at that time prayed and fled to the Virgin Mary and begged her to protect their lives and dwellings), none of the inhabitants died and the village was not even touched.



Fig. 8 Calvary in Oščadnica

Source: <https://www.regionkysuce.sk/sk/zaujímavosti-z-regionu-kysuce/kulturno-historicke/113-kostol-a-kalvaria-v-oscadnici#gallery8752b01685-1>

Rajecká Lesná – Frivald – In the past it was a place where many pilgrims from near and far came to present their requests and prayers to the Virgin Mary, whose statue is located in the Basilica of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Fig. 9) above the main altar. They came from all four cardinal points. From the east they came from Valča „Vrčko”, Martin and other villages. The last stop before entering the gracious Basilica was the cross at the end of the village. From the west from Považská Bystrica, Pružina, Mojtn and other villages, pilgrims stopped at the chapel of St. John of Nepomuk. From the north the processions came from Rajec, Ďurčiná, Kamenná Poruba, Kanská and surrounding villages. Their stop before entering the village was the chapel of St. Anna at the place called "Na Hôrkach". From the south pilgrims came from Fačkov, Čičmany, Zliechov, Kľačno, Nitrianske Pravno, Prievidza and other villages. They stopped at the cross in the Rybná Valley, which is over the village towards Prievidza. These were four stops where the pilgrims gathered and went to the basilica (<https://saletinirozkvet.webnode.sk/products/rajecka-lesna-frivald/>).



Fig. 9 Basilica of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Source: <https://www.turistika.cz/mista/rajecka-lesna-bazilika-narodenia-panny-marie/>

Rajecké Teplice – Is one of the youngest pilgrimage localities in the Žilina Region. Pilgrimages to St. Gianna in the Church of the Divine Heart of Jesus in Rajecké Teplice began in 2006 (Fig. 10). Pilgrimages took place on the occasion of the end of her earthly life – in the 28th April 1962. Italian doctor Gianna B. Molla was declared saint in 2004. She sacrificed her life to the love of her unborn child. St. Gianna B. Molla is also the patron of a Home for lonely pregnant women and mothers with children in need in Rajecké Teplice.



Fig. 10 Local Church of the Assumption of Virgin Mary (left) and Church dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus (right)

Source: <http://rajecketeplce.fara.sk/?cat=kostol>

Smrekovica – Chapel dedicated to St. Gorazd, was built in honor of the priest, politician and nationalist Andrej Hlinka. It was built in the area of Military Recreation Center in Smrekovica, currently the Granit Hotel. It was blessed on the 17th August 2008. The original chapel, which was built on the instruction of A. Hlinka, burnt down in 1935. It lies at an altitude of 1428 m and so it is the highest located sacral building in Slovakia (Fig. 11).



Fig. 11 Pilgrimage to Smrekovica

Source: http://www.rkhlas.sk/?id_bl=3980

Staškov – Jelitov – the first wooden chapel in Staškov - Jelitov was built in 1888. In 1937 it was replaced by a brick chapel, which is still used today (Fig. 12). The chapel is devoted to the Mother of Virgin Mary – St. Anna. The chapel is surrounded by the Stations of the Calvary of Seven Sorrows of Virgin Mary (1st prophecy of Simeon in the temple, 2nd escape to Egypt, 3rd loss of 12-year-old Jesus in the temple, 4th encounter with Jesus on the

Stations of the Cross, 5th Jesus crucifixion and death, 6th Jesus's taken down from the cross, 7th the funeral of Jesus).

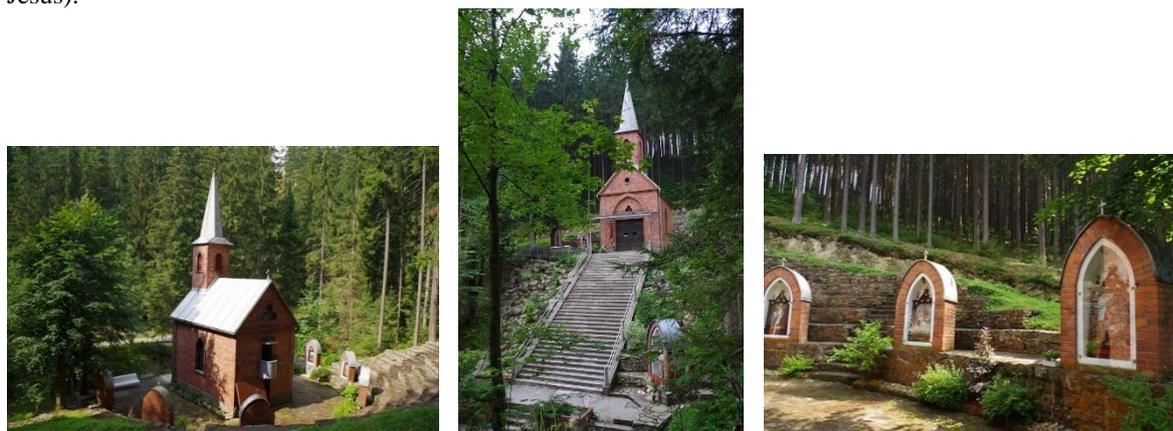


Fig.12 Chapel of St. Anna

Source: <https://www.regionkysuce.sk/sk/zaujímavosti-z-regionu-kysuce/kulturno-historicke/724-putnicke-miesto-staskov-jelitov>

Terchová – in 1990 was the first place in the territory of the then Czechoslovakia, where the St. Cyril and St. Methodius Days took place. The Terchová Roman Catholic Church is the largest church in Slovakia dedicated to Thessaloniki brothers, co-patrons of Europe - Saints Cyril and Methodius (<https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/sviatok-sv-cyrila-metoda-terchova/90559-clanok.html>).

The Stations of the Calvary are built of glass and stone from Terchová, which was extracted here hundred years ago. The stations have a cross shape which is always in a position indicating the content of the station. At the end of the Calvary on the Oravcová Hill, there is a platform with a large modern cross (Fig. 13).



Fig. 13 St. Cyril and Methodius Church and Stations of the Cross, Terchová

Source: <http://www.putnickemiesta.sk/putnicke-miesta-na-slovensku/zilinska-dieceza/terchova/>
<https://www.terchova.uteczmesta.eu/tipy-na-vylety/zaujímavosti/cirkevne-stavby/311-krizova-cesta-na-vrch-oravcove>

Trlenská Valley – one of the favourite pilgrimage localities of Liptov - the Chapel of Virgin Mary of the Snow. A copy of the gracious icon “salus populi romani” is hidden here. The original is in the Roman Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore inside the chapel.

Since its inception, the place itself has been spiritually linked to one of the four main Roman basilicas. The chapel was built in 1935 as a part of the Jesuit convalescent home on Vlčia skala National Monument. Every year on the 5th August or on Sunday there was held public pilgrimage from 1936 until forcible liquidation of religious in Slovakia in 1950. This tradition was restored in 1995, when the chapel and the whole complex were returned to the Jesuits.

However, the chapel with its original sanatorium is not the only place where incoming pilgrims can recharge their energy and peace of mind. Religious brother Andrej Ratulovský modified the crevice in the rock into a Lourdes cave in 1939. It included statues of Lourdes and Saint Bernadette, made by Master Mydlo. The original statue of Virgin Mary from Vlčia skala was moved around 1954 to the church in Vlkolíncec (fig. 14).



Fig. 14 Chapel of Virgin Mary of the Snow

Source: [www.https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/serial-kaplnka-v-trlenskej-doline-sa-odd/347514-clanok.html](https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/serial-kaplnka-v-trlenskej-doline-sa-odd/347514-clanok.html)

Turzovka – Živčáková Hill, as part of the Turzovka Highlands, is located about 3 km east of Turzovka as the crow flies. In 1958 (June 1st), game-keeper Matúš Lašut, in his own words, had a vision of the Virgin Mary of Lourdes in this place. It was the year of the centenary of the apparitions of Our Lady in Lourdes, France (www.zivcakova.sk, <https://www.zivcakova.sk/historia-zivcakovej/>).

Since that time, believers from the neighborhood and gradually also from far have started to visit this place. After the fall of the atheistic regime, the diocesan bishop commissioned preparation in 1991, and in 1992-1993 the construction of the Chapel of Our Lady of the Queen of Peace was carried out (Fig. 15). On 19.10.2008 the Žilina bishop declared Živčáková Hill as a pilgrimage place. The construction of the pilgrim church began on the 11th June 2009 (<http://www.putnickemiesta.sk/putnicke-miesta-na-slovensku/zilinska-dieceza/turzovka/>). Calvary leads to the mountain (Fig. 16) from town Turzovka (<http://www.putnickemiesta.sk/putnicke-miesta-na-slovensku/zilinska-dieceza/turzovka/>).



Fig. 15 Chapel of Virgin Mary Queen of Peace



Fig. 16 Church of the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church with a pastoral center

Source: <https://www.zivcakova.sk/chram-panny-marie/>
<http://www.magnificat.sk/turzovka-jesenna-put/>

Višňové – Church of St. Nicholas, it has been a pilgrimage locality since the 17th century (Fig. 17).



Fig. 17 Church of St. Nicholas Višňové

Source: <http://www.visnove.sk/>

Skorušina Hill is not a pilgrimage place in the true sense of the word. It is rather a thankful place. The tradition has been known since 1995, when people from the surroundings of Brezovice started to thank to the Skorušina Hill, for blessing at work, for harvest etc.

Vysoká nad Kysucou – chapel dedicated to respect to St. Anna was built on the top of Kýčera Hill. It has become a pilgrimage place over the years. Every year ceremony of holy mass is held on the occasion of the Feast of St. Anne's pilgrimage (Fig. 18).



Fig. 18 Chapel of St. Anna

Source: https://hiking.sk/hk/ar/4234/potulky_kelcovskymi_osadami3.html
<https://mapio.net/pic/p-108809659/>

Zákamenné - Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and Calvary accessible by a country road leading from behind the parish church (Fig. 19).

Calvary consists of a group of fourteen stations with a larger central chapel of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary with a horseshoe-shaped plan and a wooden bell tower. There are two smaller chapels next to the central chapel. There is the „God's tomb“ in one of them. The second chapel is the chapel of St. Helena. Calvary was renovated in 1955 (Fig. 20).



Fig. 19 Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary

Source: <http://rkczakammene.sk/>

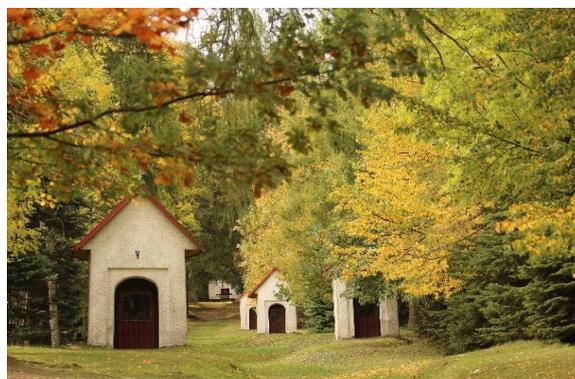


Fig. 20 Calvary

Conclusion

All analyzed pilgrimage localities are of a local significance. Most of them belong to St. Mary's pilgrimage localities. It is proven by the fact that many of them are the part of the Slovak St. Mary's Route - its northern part. The Slovak St. Mary's Route is a pilgrimage cycling route connecting important St. Mary's pilgrimage localities in Slovakia. It starts in Gaboltov near Bardejov and goes north and south to the Šaštín Basilica of the Seven Sorrows. Both routes of the pilgrimage path create a wreath of towns connected with St. Mary's respect. At the same time, they inform pilgrims with less known natural and cultural attractions of Slovakia (<https://slovenska-marianska-cesta.webnode.sk/>).

We have analyzed following pilgrimage localities on our route: Trstená (on the 5th stage), Zákamenné (on the 6th stage), Turzovka, Živčáková (on the 7th stage) and Višňové and Rajecká Lesná (on the 8th stage) (<https://slovenska-marianska-cesta.webnode.sk/etapy-pute/severna-cesta>).

In the future, we can see the perspective of the transformation from the pilgrimage localities to the center of religious tourism in two places - Terchová, which has a perspective in terms of national Cyril-Methodius

pilgrimages and Rajecká Lesná, which develops year-round pilgrimage tourism - mainly thanks to the wooden Bethlehem.

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