

Pilgrimage tourism in Košice and its surroundings

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Abstract

Pilgrimage tourism is an important part of cultural and religious tourism. Regardless of their own proper motivation, it allows in every case visitor to become profoundly familiar with the cultural heritage of the visited area. This is also true for the researched area, as the pilgrimage centre in the past was Košice itself and several localities in its vicinity, of which we pay attention to Rudník, Obišovce, Malá Vieska, Bôrka and Úhorná.

Keywords: *pilgrimage, pilgrimage centres, cultural, religious and pilgrimage tourism*

Introduction

Pilgrimage tourism and pilgrimages

Pilgrimage tourism is an integral part of religious and cultural tourism. Pilgrimage is a specific, religiously motivated type of migration and represent an important but not exclusive travel motive of religious tourism. (Krogmann et al., 2017) Tourism starts when interest in a specific type of locality, in this case associated with religious cult, persists but one or more of all the transcendental motives of visiting such a place are eliminated (Bubeliny, 2011) and the need for education, recreation and so on comes to the fore. As religious tourism is therefore referred to when people, who may or may not be Christians, are acquainted with Christian tradition through exploring of history or monuments of cultural heritage. (Hatalová, 2012)

A folk pilgrim could barely dream of wandering into sacred places in distant lands. Wandering beyond the frontiers of birth county was also an extraordinary event. However, he was able to find "sacred" also in the microcosm of his village life, during the recurring cycle of the liturgical year within the boundaries of his own village: at the chapels and the crosses alongside the roads ... "Ceremonial walking before great holydays have origin in a folk representation of the biblical event of the search and discovery of the tomb of Christ." (Buganová, Šangala, 2002) Pope Francis said of a spiritual meaning of pilgrimage that it is a symbol of life. "It makes us think of life as walking, as a path. If a person does not walk, but instead stays still, this is not useful; it accomplishes nothing. Think of water: when water is not in the river, it does not course, but instead it remains still and stagnates." And so, does the soul that does not walk in life doing good or seeking inspiration from the Holy Spirit, according to the Pope. (Sontag, 2016) The very word journey, tied narrowly to the pilgrimage, is an ancient symbol of being of humans in the world. (Kučerková and Knapík, 2018)

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Fig 1 "On the pilgrimage" (www.burv.sk)

The pilgrimage of believers to pilgrimage sites, individuals or groups, has always been part of the Catholic faith. Accompanied by sounds of a religious songs and praying, the procession led by the priest set off to a march for several days, most often on foot. The parade, in which everybody had own place according to his age and sex, carried crosses, religious paintings and Marian flags. Pilgrimage encouraged the Church and ecclesiastical orders in the context of the boom of Baroque piety and counter-reformation, in a territory divers in religious and ethnic terms. Legends of miracles, revelations, miraculous healings, merciful images, or other similar motives were often created post-hoc in pilgrimage sites. Sometimes, however, the reputation of the place was the decisive impulse for the development of the pilgrimage site (Úhorná). In the case of Calvary in Košice, however, such a context was lacking completely, and the reason for its origin was primarily the manifestation of Baroque Catholic piety and the development of the Marian cult in the city, which at that time still had a fresh tradition of Reformation in memory.

Pilgrimage sites served the people of a wide neighbourhood, often from distant counties as well as the urban population of Košice. Within today's Slovak territory, they concentrated more and more in its east, which in this respect equalled the western and north-western parts of Slovakia. (Fekete, 1941) The current popularity of some religious tourism destinations is a faithful reflection of the peripetia of historical development. Places that were once visited by numbers of pilgrims up to tens of thousands during the pilgrimage before World War I or even World War II, survive sometimes with an interrupted tradition as places of local importance. This was mainly due to political reasons such as the post-war delimitation of state borders, the persecution of a particular church (the case of the Greek Catholic Church from 1950 to 1990) or the political unacceptability of a wider manifestation of religious sentiment in the years of dictatorship. This went hand in hand with changes in lifestyle and disruption of continuity, as happened to a large number of inhabitants of Košice during its tumultuous industrialization and a sudden increase in population, coming from all possible extremities of the then Czechoslovakia. In many cases however, these places continue to enjoy unchanging respect and popularity among pilgrims, despite the often unfavourable circumstances in the past (Rudník, Obišovce, Úhorná).

St. Elizabeth Church and Calvary in Košice

Thanks to the favourable historical development Košice has become a natural religious centre of the wide surroundings. In this position, Košice followed the Benedictine Abbey in Krásna n. Hornádom from 1143, which was one of the most geographically extreme centres of the Benedictine monastic life in the whole of Europe. Over the centuries, more male and female religious orders have settled in Košice. At the time of the occupation of part of Hungary by the Ottomans, Košice first became temporary seat of ecclesiastical administration (Eger Bishopric and Chapter 1603 - 1724), University (1672) and later also the seat of its own ecclesiastical province - Bishopric of Košice, 1804 (today Archbishopric). These institutions, both by virtue of their authority and naturally as cultural and educational centres, influenced the broad background of the city. The city of Kosice, surrounded itself by pilgrimage sites at a closer or greater distance from its gates, was also an important pilgrimage centre, probably according some sources already in the Middle Ages. Certainly, however, in modern times of the Marian Devotion's blossoming. Within this chronological sequence, the city is currently adding another chapter thanks to the renaissance of religious life after the end of the totalitarian regime three

decades ago. Traditionally are at focus of pilgrim interest the first temple of the city - the Cathedral of Saint Elisabeth and the building complex of Calvary.

Some authors (Zubko 2012, 2014, Jukes, 2011) believe that the configuration of the main ecclesial monuments on the Main Street of Košice (St. Elisabeth parish church and neighbouring St. Michael's Chapel) reflect the fact that Košice was, from the middle of 14th century until when reformation was fully established in the city over the 17th century, an important pilgrimage centre of medieval Hungary. Specifically, the chapel, built in the style of Paris's Saint Chapelle, was about to serve precisely to **store the miraculous relics of the Holy Blood**. The Eucharistic miracle consisted in the appearance of Christ's face from accidentally spilled consecrated wine on the Corporal. The miracle could happen sometime around 1352. If so, Košice would become exceptional in this context also because it was a Christ-centric cult. And it was rare in Hungary then and in later centuries also. There are only a few historical sources on which the interpretations are based, but the most important of them is the bull of indulgence of Pope Boniface IX from the year 1402. The later transfer of Holy relics from the chapel of St. Michael directly to the parish church of St. Elisabeth, which then started to be rebuilt after the fire, was again witnessed by the bull of Pope Alexander VI from 1494, which mentions a number of miracles associated with the church of the St. Elisabeth. These miracles manifested themselves in the proselytism of the Orthodox pilgrims who came to the city because of Holy relics.



Fig 2 Saint Michael Chapel. Saint Elisabeth Church on the background (www.flickr.com)

Roughly at a time when in Košice the worship of the relics of the Holy Blood was to gradually disappear, the events of the early part of the Thirty Years' War marked the future restoration of the town as an important pilgrimage centre. In 1619, Jesuit priests - Stefan Pongráč and Melchior Grodecký and the canonist Marek Križin of Esztergom became victims of an escalated religious struggle during the anti-Habsburg uprising of that time. The investigation of the circumstances of their tragic death and the process of their canonization began in 1628 by Archbishop Peter Pázmány. After many peripetia, the martyrs were finally beatified and the related ceremony was carried out in 1905. (Ondruš, 1994) Pope John Paul II visited Košice for the ninetieth anniversary of the event, and on July 2, 1995, the martyrs of Košice were canonised here. The very visit of the enormously popular priest, whose holiness was no longer doubted in his lifetime, was perceived of the same importance to believers as the act itself of canonization of Saints Martyrs of Košice in itself. In the city (as in other places in eastern Slovakia), a commemorative plaque, street name and a monument appeared in the coming years on his honour.

Cathedral treasure of St. Elisabeth Church, in addition to the reliquary of **the Saint Martyrs of Košice**, has in recent years continually expanded with the memorabilia of new saints or gained valuable Holy relics, which significantly contribute to the boom of modern pilgrimage. Every twenty-second day of the month, with the abundant participation of the faithful, a holy mass is held in the temple to veneration of saint Charbel which relics are in the shrine since 2017. Bl. Anna Kolesárová was beatified right in the church on September 1, 2018. The idea of building a **Calvary** in Košice, as it was at that time in some other places in eastern Slovakia, was initiated by local Jesuits and thanks to the support of the Bishopric of Eger and the town itself, construction began in 1737. The main landmark of the spacious area - Church of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows was built

between the years 1742 - 1758 according to the plans of Nicodemus Litzky. The temple with a relatively simple triaxle façade has two-storey interior, divided at each level by pillars into main and side naves. The two-storey conception of the division of the inside temple space reflects the symbolism of earthly and celestial reality. At the end of construction period, sixteen chapels of the Stations of the Cross were added. Even in the later centuries, the complex was complemented by small sacral buildings and solitary statues and sculptures (chapels, Pieta, Crucifixion, statues of various saints), some of which no longer exist today. (Zentko, 2007)



Fig 3 Positioning of Calvary on the North West edge of Košice.
(Plan der königl. Freistadt Kaschau 1856, National Archives of Hungary Budapest, S – Térképtár, S 12 - Div. X. -No.29:1.)

Pilgrimages to Košice Calvary took place twice a year - on the feast of the Discovery of the Holy Cross in May and the Feast of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows in September, during which numerous processions were directed to Calvary even from distant counties. The procession led by the bishop also came directly from the city, started at the Cathedral of Saint Elizabeth. Members of the religious communities, the Congregation of Mary, women's and men's associations, bishop and canonists, and popular strata formed gradually their marching order. Along the way they sang religious songs, prayed the Rosary, and stopped also with prayer before the chapels of the Stations of the Cross. The last section - the ascent of the Holy Steps (Santa Scala) to the altar in the upper church was made kneeling by some pilgrims. (Pietrová, 2010)

Pilgrimage sites around Košice - Rudník, Obišovce, Malá Vieska, Bôrka and Úhorná

At the well next to the wooden chapel, men from **Rudník** and the villages in the vicinity used to stop on their daily journey to work in nearby mines. The chapel was dedicated to the fancied patron of miners - Saint Anne. The modest building stood here long before the abbot of the Premonstratensian Monastery in Jasov Andrej Sauberer had built a brick construction between 1750 and 1766 in its place. The single nave baroque church with a polygonal closure was probably built according to plans of the Košice builder Salzgeber. Valuable interior decoration was provided by prominent Baroque artists - sculptor Ján Anton Krauss and a native of Znojmo, painter Ján Lukáš Kracker, who worked for the Premonstratensians in the Jasov Monastery and elsewhere. (Balega, 1991, 1996) The pilgrimage to St. Anne in Rudník is confirmed by the Papal bull of Pope Benedict XVI from 1751, but after the abolition of the Premonstratensian Order by Joseph II, the tradition was interrupted for a time. The pilgrimages were renewed before the end of the century and took place on the holiday of St. Anne on 26th July and in addition several times a year, such as the Feast of the Assumption and Easter Monday. Pope Pius IX granted to pilgrims on St. Anne's Day full indulgences in 1856. Pilgrimages have been held here to this day and there is still a custom that in the procession that comes from the Church of Saint George in Rudník, is sixteen girls which carry four ornate statues of celestial patrons. (Pietrová, 2010)



Fig 4 Saint Anne Chapel in Rudník (www.cestovnyinformator.sk)

The pilgrimage character of the Church of the Rosary Virgin Mary in **Obišovce** was restored during the first wave of local Catholic Revival in the 1760s with the help of Polish patrons and Franciscans from monastery Nižná Šebastová. A picture of the Virgin Mary of Czestochowa was placed in the church at that time. This first historically known Marian painting was destroyed during the anti-Habsburg uprising in 1682. The Catholics did not regain the church until several decades (1729), and at that time they brought in another painting, this time of the Virgin Mary Queen of Hungary, a gift of probably Jesuits from Košice. This image was removed also by non-Catholics when the parish was again in their hands. Several fairy legends concerning the Obišovce paintings seem to reflect the ill fate of the first two paintings of Holy Virgin and the transfer of third and the current one from nearby Drienov. According to legend, Drienov thanks to popular imagination has turned into a distant Polish Tarnow, for similarity to the name of Trnava, where the pattern of Obišovce picture really originated. It was a copy of the Theotokos icon from the Church of St. Boniface and Alexius in Rome, probably created at the end of the 16th century and then transferred to Trnava. The third picture last until now. Church of Obišovce became definitely Catholic in 1769. Shortly thereafter the local pilgrimages were renewed. The bishop of Eger confirmed the indulgence privileges for the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary in 1773. Following year the parish received a copy of the merciful image of the Virgin Mary of Trnava from the Holy Trinity Church in Košice of the abolished Jesuit Order.



Fig 5 Holy Virgin of Trnava from Obišovce (www.katolickenoviny.sk)

Relatively few victims, claimed by the cholera epidemic in 1831 in Obišovce, made the church in Obišovce and its gracious image of Holy Virgin famous. Up to 7000 pilgrims then went to Obišovce every year and in 1865 a new, third church was opened for them. Even more, 20 to 30 thousand pilgrims gathered here at the end of the period of totalitarianism at the end of the 1980s. (Jurko, 2007) In 2011 Obišovce became a Diocesan Sanctuary of Košice ecclesiastical province. (Kmec, 2017)

From the parish Church of the Rosary Virgin Mary in Obišovce up to the Baroque pilgrimage sanctuary of the Birth of the Virgin Mary in **Malá Vieska** it is only 7 kilometres along the road nearby Hornád River. Despite their close proximity, both Malá Vieska and Obišovce became important pilgrimage centres at the same time and for the same reason, which was veneration of merciful images.

At first, the painting from Malá Vieska attracted more attention. It was a copy of the famous icon of the Mother of God of Máriapócs, also originated from Holy Trinity Church in Košice. (Košík, 1992) When the author of the first written work about the pilgrimage sites of Hungary Alex Jordánsky of Košice, as a young boy, visited this place together with his parents, large crowds of Greek-Catholic believers headed here. Obišovce were not so well known at that time. Little bit paradoxically, after 1831, when Pope Gregor XI granted to the Church in Malá Vieska the right to full indulgences on the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, the favour of the pilgrims had just begun to orient themselves to a greater extent to adjacent Obišovce.

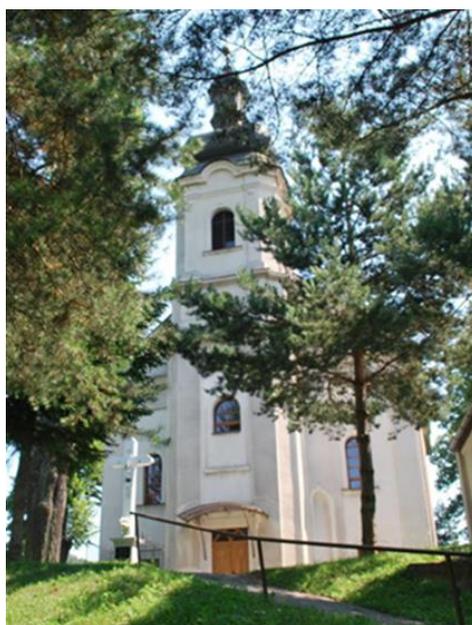


Fig 6 The Church of the Birth of Virgin Mary in Malá Vieska (www.putnickemiesta.sk)

At the time of the dissolution of the Jesuit Order in 1773, the monumental parish church of Saint Stephen in Kostol'any nad Hornádóm was just finished. It is possible that the dean of Košice, Michal Berec, who carried out an inventory of assets of the abolished Jesuit Order in Košice, brought here almost simultaneously both paintings from the Jesuit church in Košice. From obvious reasons, two paintings with a strong background of tradition and veneration in one site weren't necessary. And so the painting of the Virgin Mary of Trnava finally went to Obišovce, the filial parish of Drienovec, and the painting of the Holy Mother of Máriapócs remained in Malá Vieska, the filial parish of Kostol'any. The parish priests of Kostol'any and Drienov were friends and they both knew each other well with the Košice dean. All three priests who participated in the transfer of images from Košice knew that they could become an effective instrument for the consolidation of the Church, precisely "in a place between Prešov and Košice, in a religiously mixed environment that needed reconciliation and peace most." (Kmec, 2017)

Pilgrimage site **Bôrka** is located in Rožňava Diocese. Its development in the 18th century was supported by the bishopric and the Order of the Discalced Carmelites in strengthening the position of the Catholic Church in the area. The Baroque church was consecrated after 1732 to the Virgin Mary of Carmel and replaced the then dedication to the Sacrifice of the Lord. The altar painting, brought in from Italy in 1757, depicts the handover of the brown scapular to Saint Simon Stock, prior to the Carmelite religious order. Before World War I, up to twenty thousand people were visiting Bôrka, of all ethnicities living in the region, nevertheless which changed after the war when have waned pilgrims from Hungary. (Petrová, 2010)

The pilgrimages take place in **Úhorná** on the feast of Our Lady of the Snow on August 5th. According to a legend, a ploughman found a picture of the Virgin Mary in the place of the local chapel. He took him to the local church, but was lost. After a year he was found in the same place. The snow falling on miraculous spot turned into stones. The first chapel was built here in 1813, in 1940 it was replaced by a larger brick building. In vicinity there are also a miraculous spring to help the visually impaired and two grottos with sculptures of the Virgin Mary and the Suffering Christ. (Petrová, 2010).

Conclusion

The aim of the paper was to describe localization prerequisites for pilgrimage tourism as an integral part of cultural tourism in an important regional centre such as Košice and its surroundings. The rich history of the city and the whole region predetermines them to receive adequate attention of those interested in religious - and specifically pilgrimage tourism.

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