

KONSTANTIN
PRESLAVSKY
UNIVERSITY
SHUMEN



ШУМЕНСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ
“ЕПИСКОП КОНСТАНТИН ПРЕСЛАВСКИ”

VI Научна конференция с международно участие
ГЕОГРАФИЯ,
РЕГИОНАЛНО РАЗВИТИЕ И ТУРИЗЪМ
Посветена на 60-годишнината от началото на обучението
по география във висшето образование в Шумен

8 – 10 ноември 2024

СБОРНИК С РЕЗЮМЕТА

VI Scientific conference with international participation
GEOGRAPHY,
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
Dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the beginning of training
in geography in higher education in Shumen

8 – 10 November 2024

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Университетско издателство „Епископ Константин Преславски“

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Сборникът се издава с финансовата подкрепа на Фонд „Научни изследвания“, Проект № КП-06-МНФ/37 от 12.08.2024 г.

РЕДАКЦИОНЕН КОЛЕКТИВ:
EDITORIAL TEAM:

проф. д-р Светла СТАНКОВА
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проф. д-р Дора КАБАКЧИЕВА
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ISBN 978-619-201-793-4

Университетско издателство „Епископ Константин Преславски“
2024

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**РОЛЯТА НА МАНАСТИРИТЕ И ЦЪРКВИТЕ В ОБЩИНИТЕ ПРИЛЕП, КРУШЕВО,
ДОЛНЕНИ И КРИВОГАШТАНИ В ТУРИЗМА И РЕГИОНАЛНОТО РАЗВИТИЕ**

Георги Петкоски, Цане Котески

Университет „Гоце Делчев“ в Штип, Северна Македонија

Клучови думи: манастири, църкви, туризъм, регионално развитие

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VI Научна конференция с международно участие *География, регионално развитие и туризъм, Шумен 2024*
VI Scientific conference with international participation *Geography, regional development and tourism, Shumen 2024*

Резюме

Общините Прилеп, Крушево, Долнени и Кривогаштани са част от Пелагонийският планов регион на Република Северна Македонија, образувајќи непрекъсната пространствена единица. Това позволява интегрирано регионално и междуправителствено развитие, както и динамично популяризиране на туризмот. Популяризацијата се однесува како за регионот како цело, така и за специфичните елементи, коишто притежаваат општините. Те се карактеризираат со богатство на сакрални објекти. Во овој контекст, црквите и манастирите заемаат специјално место, како особено се одликуваат со своите монументални, естетички и одличителни вредности. Тези вредности се резултат од архитектурна и строителна креативност, како и декоративни подходи при создавањето им. Освен религиозната си значимост, тези свештени места имаат и историческо и културно значење. Црквите и манастирите се не само духовни центрове, но и културни забележителности, коишто вклучуваат векови религиозна традиција и уметност. Нивната валоризација, чрез востановување и интегрирање во туристички маршрути, позволява создавањето на специфични туристички производи и засилува препознатливоста им како на национално, така и на меѓународно ниво. По овој начин те добиваат не само културно, но и пазарно значење, коешто стимулира социјалното и икономическо развитие на општините и на регионот како цело. Регионалното развитие се основава на соработничеството, коешто възникнува од врзките меѓу тези објекти, институциите, коишто ги управуваат, местното население и заинтересованите страни. Клучово предимство е взаимниот интерес кон навлизане на туристическиот пазар, коешто насърчава устойчивото икономическо и културно развитие на општините и регионот.

**THE ROLE OF MONASTERIES AND CHURCHES IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF PRILEP,
KRUSHEVO, DOLNENI, AND KRIVOGASHTANI IN TOURISM AND REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

Gjorgji Petkoski, Cane Koteski

Goce Delchev University of Stip, North Macedonia

Key words: monasteries, churches, tourism, regional development

Abstract

The municipalities of Prilep, Krushevo, Dolneni, and Krivogashtani are part of the Pelagonia Planning Region of the Republic of North Macedonia, forming a continuous spatial entity. This enables integrated regional and inter-municipal development and dynamic tourism promotion. The promotion refers both to the

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region as a whole and to the specific elements possessed by the municipalities, which are characterised by a wealth of sacred sites. In this regard, churches and monasteries hold a special place, particularly notable for their monumental, aesthetic, and distinctive values. These values are the result of architectural, constructional creativity, and decorative approaches in their design. Beyond their religious significance, these sacred sites have substantial historical and cultural importance, offering rich heritage to visitors. Churches and monasteries not only serve as spiritual centres but also as cultural landmarks that embody centuries of religious tradition and art.

Their valorisation, through restoration and integration into tourism circuits, allows for the creation of specific tourism products, enhancing their recognition in both national and international markets. Thus, they gain not only cultural significance but also a market basis that drives social and economic development for the municipalities and the region as a whole. Regional development is based on the collaboration that emerges from the connection between these sites, the institutions that manage them, and the local population and stakeholders. A key benefit is the mutual interest in entering the tourism market, which promotes sustainable economic and cultural growth within these municipalities and the broader region.

THE ROLE OF MONASTERIES AND CHURCHES IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF PRILEP, KRUSHEVO, DOLNENI, AND KRIVOGASHTANI IN TOURISM AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

¹Gjorgji Petkoski

²Cane Koteski

^aFaculty of Tourism and Business Logistics, Goce Delcev University, Stip, 2000,
North Macedonia

^aFaculty of Tourism and Business Logistics, Goce Delcev University, Stip, 2000,
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Abstract

The municipalities of Prilep, Krushevo, Dolneni, and Krivogashtani are part of the Pelagonia Planning Region of the Republic of North Macedonia, forming a continuous spatial entity. This enables integrated regional and inter-municipal development and dynamic tourism promotion. The promotion refers both to the region as a whole and to the specific elements possessed by the municipalities, which are characterised by a wealth of sacred sites. In this regard, churches and monasteries hold a special place, particularly notable for their monumental, aesthetic, and distinctive values. These values are the result of architectural, constructional creativity, and decorative approaches in their design. Beyond their religious significance, these sacred sites have substantial historical and cultural importance, offering rich heritage to visitors. Churches and monasteries not only serve as spiritual centres but also as cultural landmarks that embody centuries of religious tradition and art.

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Keywords: monasteries, churches, tourism, regional development

Резюме:

Общините Прилеп, Крушево, Долнени и Кривогаштани са част от Пелагонийския планов регион на Република Северна Македония, образувайки непрекъсната пространствена единица. Това позволява интегрирано регионално и междуправителствено развитие, както и динамично популяризиране на туризма. Популяризацията се отнася както за региона като цяло, така и за специфичните елементи, които притежават общините. Те се характеризират с богатство на сакрални обекти. В този контекст, църквите и манастирите заемат специално място, като особено се отличават със своите монументални, естетически и отличителни стойности. Тези стойности са резултат от архитектурна и строителна креативност, както и декоративни подходи при създаването им. Освен религиозната си значимост, тези свещени места имат и историческо и културно значение, предлагайки богатство на наследството на посетителите. Църквите и манастирите служат не само като духовни центрове, но и като културни забележителности, които въплъщават векове религиозна традиция и изкуство.

Тяхната валоризация, чрез възстановяване и интегриране в туристически маршрути, позволява създаването на специфични туристически продукти и засилва тяхното разпознаване както на национално, така и на международно ниво. По този начин те придобиват не само културно, но и пазарно значение, което стимулира социалното и икономическо развитие на общините и на региона като цяло. Регионалното развитие се основава на сътрудничеството, което възниква от връзките между тези обекти, институциите, които ги управляват, местното население и заинтересованите страни. Ключово предимство е взаимният интерес към навлизане на туристическия пазар, което насърчава устойчивото икономическо и културно развитие на общините и региона.

Ключови думи: манастири, църкви, туризъм, регионално развитие

Introduction

Contemporary trends in regional development and tourism show that culture is one of the most prominent factors in this regard. It not only has a social dimension but also affects the improvement of the economy and the environment as a spatial category. Churches and monasteries are strong cultural factors, playing a dual role. They embody both religious and tourism-related dimensions. The religious implications reflect the human dimension with civilizational significance, representing respect for humanity and its spiritual growth and fulfillment. The tourism aspect lies not only in the spiritual component but also in the material benefits, particularly in terms of profitability. The primary function of these attractions is the experiences and satisfaction that come from tourists visiting and staying. The increase in the number of tourists involved in this activity drives the development of economic and non-economic sectors. The influence of a broader spectrum of service-seeking tourists affects the creation of new tourism content as part of the tourism offerings in these municipal complexes.

The municipalities of Prilep, Krushevo, Dolneni, and Krivogashtani are part of the Prespa Planning Region. They have their own individual characteristics but are united by their continuous spatial scope. Therefore, they should be analyzed as a whole that requires the affirmation of this part of the cultural heritage. The churches and monasteries in these municipalities represent a specific shared offering that enables the creation of joint tourism

products in the form of complexes and heritage trails. Through tourism, they are promoted not only nationally but also internationally. A key role in this process is played by the economic benefits of tourism development. This activity involves an increasing number of service providers, offering them both economic and cultural benefits. In this way, this collection of municipal values becomes a recognized destination. The churches and monasteries attract the attention of a broader audience of service-seeking tourists, leading to the continuous improvement of the economic impact on inter-municipal regional cooperation. Through the values of the churches and monasteries, modern activities are created, and the rational use of spatial, cultural, and human resources is expressed. This influence forms the foundation for the connection between different service providers who respond to the increasingly sophisticated demands of the tourism market. In this way, the cultural impact has positive effects on regional development and the expansion of its boundaries. These municipalities, as a regional entity with continuous characteristics, are part of positive examples that, by utilizing the churches and monasteries, should achieve positive regional results. Their influence enables the enhancement, development, and promotion of the exceptional potential that remains underutilized. Thus, their cultural and economic dimensions intertwine, and tourism serves as both a factor and a function of causal relationships in the municipalities of Prilep, Krushevo, Dolneni, and Krivogashtani.

1. Methodological Framework of the Research

The research methodology for studying the role of churches and monasteries as contributors to regional development and tourism involves the application of modern knowledge in this field. This approach focuses on documenting and evaluating the specific features of the churches and monasteries in these municipalities, as well as their internal and external connections. The research serves as a foundation for creating products that will enable stakeholders to leverage the tourism potential of these cultural assets. The approach involves creating opportunities to integrate resources into the tourism offer and develop specific tourism products. The benefits extend not only to the intensification of tourism in municipal spatial areas but also to socio-economic development.

The research process involves the **inventorying** of churches and monasteries in terms of their location and differentiated spatial scope. The inventory provides a structural framework for balanced internal and external connections, serving as a development potential.

Observation and description, or the identification of the cultural and religious potential of the churches and monasteries, form a methodological framework that outlines future steps in determining their significance. These methods allow for the assessment of these sites as matters of significant interest for planning development.

Valorization is a methodology that enables the assessment of the significance and optimal utilization of churches and monasteries. It allows these values to be systematized and classified as distinct tourism products that are competitive in the tourism market. In this process, it is essential to consider the integrative connections between these sites and their surroundings, which involves understanding their fundamental nature, complexity, and complementarity.

The research framework is based on the **FAS methodology**. This is the most advanced methodology used by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). In fact, the UNWTO recommends this methodology for assessing tourism values in a given area (Marinoski Naume, 1997). This methodology allows for the evaluation of tourism content identified as "Factors," "Attractors," and "Support Services" (FAS), explaining the destination

as a complex system of interacting subsystems in these three areas, which are interrelated.

Table 1: Early Christian Churches by Municipality and Location

No.	Prilep	Krushevo	Krivogashtani	Dolneni
1	Podvis "Church Site" 5 km NW	White Church in the village	Debreshte "Kale"	-
2	Monastery Brailovo	-	-	Zrze "St. Philip" in the village
3	St. Archangel Michael Varosh	-	-	Kostinci Church "St. Bogorodica Mala" in the village
4	St. Nicholas of Myra Varosh	-	-	Zrze "Three Altars" Kleniche
5	St. Bogorodica Varosh	-	-	Kostinci Church "St. Bogorodica Mala"
6	Vasareyca	-	-	Nebregovo "Monastery St. John" 2 km NE
7	Galichani	-	-	Slepche "Monastery" 15 km north from the railway station
8	Golemo Konjari in the village	-	-	Slepche "Sokolica" 2 km south. Dolneni
9	Zagorani "Latin Church" west periphery	-	-	-
10	Lopatitsa "Sunday Water" above the village	-	-	-
11	Melniitsa Vitolishta	-	-	-
12	Nikodin "Bresje" 15 km east	-	-	-
13	Nikodin "Zhelkoec" 15 km east	-	-	-
14	Pashino Ruvci "St. Archangel" in the village	-	-	-
15	Podmol village fountain. Bosilovo	-	-	-
16	Prilepec "Church of St. Demetrius" in the village	-	-	-

17	Rakle "Charshiya Church" 4 km east	-	-	-
18	Troykrsti "Holy Spirit" in the village	-	-	-
19	Fountain "St. Sunday" 15 km north	-	-	-

Source: Viktor Lilic and Veneta Iljoska, *Catalog of Early Christian Churches in the Republic of Macedonia*, Skopje, 1997.

From the tabular overview, it is evident that Early Christianity was widely spread across the territory of these municipalities. The total number of churches amounts to 21. The majority of these churches are located in the municipality of Prilep, which indicates that even during the Early Christian period, this area was a cultural and religious center. In the municipality of Dolneni, there are 8 Early Christian churches, while Krushevo and Krivogashtani each have one church. Despite the symbolic presence in the latter two, it is still significant to acknowledge the existence of such an important civilizational phenomenon.

2.1.2 Medieval and Modern Churches and Monasteries

Medieval and modern churches and monasteries build upon the Christian tradition in the municipalities of Prilep, Krushevo, Krivogashtani, and Dolneni. They appear as standalone elements in certain tourism offers or complement other tourism-based valorization initiatives. It is particularly important to emphasize that these sites are key features of cultural and religious tourism. Their cultural-historical significance, derived from their potential, is crucial for the identity of the state and its international reputation. This also applies to these municipal territories and their unity as a territorial entity. The churches and monasteries from the medieval and modern periods represent a treasure in terms of architecture, primarily influenced by Byzantine tradition, fresco painting, collections of items, wood-carved artifacts in both cultural-historical or artistic contexts, and the publishing of books and lives of saints. Monasteries, in particular, play a significant role in the spiritual elevation of visitors, as well as being a factor that promotes regional development (Buntashevski B., 1995). They also function as economic entities. The satisfaction derived from working in these complexes is not limited to the monastic order but extends to externally employed individuals and those who wish to contribute through material engagements, donations, and gifts.

With their own accommodation capacities, although lacking lucrative components, they play a significant role in the reception of such sacred offerings. They are also a factor in the socialization of individuals who have not found their identity within societal frameworks and through spiritual engagement can view the world from a more humane perspective (Aslimoski Pere, 2000). Through the use of monasteries and churches in a spiritual sense, these facilities offer society many attractive contents. These sites are institutionally framed and do not operate in isolation. They belong to the ecclesiastical system, where rules of conduct are specifically defined. Additionally, they function through mutual interaction with other societal and natural elements, allowing them to be combined as tourism products and various forms of tourism arrangements.

2.2 Presence and Developmental Opportunities of Churches and Monasteries

To assess the scope and opportunities of churches and monasteries in the municipalities of Prilep, Krushevo, Krivogashtani, and Dolneni, we have utilized the catalog of these sites. This is presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Municipal, Locational, and Numerical Distribution of Churches and Monasteries

Municipality	Churches	Monasteries
Prilep	Total: 64; St. Athanasius - Varosh, Vitolishta, Galichani, Nikodin, Rakle, St. Annunciation – Prilep, Birth of the Holy Virgin Mary – M. Konjari, St. Bogorodica – Mazhuchishte, Nikodin, Holy Trinity - Nikodin, Introduction of the Holy Virgin Mary – Varosh, Ascension of Christ – Berovci, Volkovo, M. Ruvci, Topolchani, Veprchani, Polchishte, St. Demetrius of Thessaloniki – Selce, St. Demetrius – Dune, Oreovec, Smolani, Tserovik, Varosh, Veprchani, Gudjakovo, St. George Chapel – Belovodica, St. George – Belovodica, Troyaci, Chaniste, St. Elijah – Veselchani, Vitolishta, Dren, Selce, Sts. Cyril and Methodius – Prilep, Sts. Cosmas and Damian – Pletvar, St. Nicholas – Belovodica, Varosh, Big Radobil, Dabnica, Dren, Zagorani, Krstec, Monastery, Prilepec, Toplica, Chepigovo, Sts. Peter and Paul – Varosh, St. Petka – Bashishte, Zhivovo, Novo Lagovo, Selce, Chenishte, St. Transfiguration – Prilep, Birth of the Holy Virgin Mary – Staviti, Kadino Selo, Small Radobil, St. Saviour – Kalen, Holy Trinity – Great Konjari, Troykrsti, Holy Assumption of the Virgin Mary – Selci	Varosh, Treskavec

Krushevo	Total: 30; St. Athanasius – Arilevo, Assumption of the Holy Virgin Mary – Krushevo, St. Basil – Krushevo, Ascension of Christ – Sveti Mirani, St. Demetrius – Buchin, Gorno Divjani; St. George – Buchin, Gorno Divjani, Ostrilci, Presil, St. Elijah – Aldanci, Birino, Pusta Reka, St. John the Baptist – Krushevo, St. Nedela – Krushevo, St. Nicholas – Krushevo, Arilevo, Belushino, Dolno Divjaci, Pusta Reka, Sveti Mirani, St. Petka – Krushevo, Selce, St. Transfiguration – Selce, Birth of the Holy Virgin Mary – Buchin, Vrboec, Ascension of Christ – Krushevo, Holy Trinity – Krushevo, Assumption of the Holy Virgin Mary – Vrboec	Selce Monastery
Krivogashtani	Total: 15; St. Athanasius – Godivle, Krusheani, Pashino Ruvci, Introduction of the Holy Virgin Mary – Krivogashtani, St. George – Pashino Ruvci, St. Marina – Borotino, St. Nicholas – Vodjani, Korenića, Krivogashtani, Krusheani, Obrshani, St. Theodore Tyron – Krivogashtani, Holy Trinity – Podvis, Assumption of the Holy Virgin Mary – Bela Crkva, Obrshani	Obershani Monastery, Pashino Ruvci Monastery
Dolneni	Total: 46; St. Athanasius – Gostirazhni, Drenovci, Zabrchani, Zapolzhani, Koshino, Lokveni, Rilevo, Ropotovo, Sekirci, Senokos, Slivje, Birth of the Holy Virgin Mary – Gorno Selo, Peshtalovo, Birth of the Holy Virgin Mary – Kostinci, Assumption of the Holy Virgin Mary – Margari, Introduction of the Holy Virgin Mary – Sredorek, Ascension of Christ – Dolneni, St. Demetrius – Koshino, St. George – Debreshte, Sarandinovo, Slepche, Novoselani, St. Elijah – Brailovo, Dolgaec, Strovija, St. John the Baptist – Belo Pole, Nebregovo, Paralís, St. Archangel Michael – Ropotovo, St. Nedela – Brailovo, Strovija, St. Nicholas – Belo Pole, Slepche, Vranche, Zrze, Koshino Lazhani, Nebregovo, St. Peter and Paul – Zrze, St. Petka – Gostirazhni, St. Transfiguration – Zrze, St. Theodore Tyron – Drenovci, Holy Trinity – Desovo, Dolneni, Lokveni, Ropotovo	Gostirazhni Monastery, Brailovo Monastery, Slepchenski Monastery

Source: Category of Churches and Monasteries

From the table, it can be seen that there is a widespread presence of churches, particularly in the municipalities of Prilep and Dolneni. These municipalities are home to 64 and 46 churches, respectively. In the municipality of Kruševo, there are 30 churches, and in Krivogaštani, 15. This abundance positions this regional area as a significant Orthodox shrine and a true treasure trove of cultural wealth.

Monasteries are also notably present (Dejan Metodijeski, Nako Taškov, Nikola Dimitrov, 2015): in the municipality of Dolneni, there are 3 monasteries, in Prilep and Krivogaštani, 2 each, and in Kruševo, 1. It is clear that the mentioned churches and monasteries, as cultural-historical monuments, are not equally activated for tourism. Some are included, while others are not featured in the tourist offer. This is not solely due to their attractiveness but also other relevant factors for tourism. Starting from the implementation of the FAS complex, Varosh, Treskavec Monastery, and Zrze Monastery should be designated as key development factors due to their long-standing tradition. Although the Seleč Monastery lacks the reverence held by the Prilep monasteries, considering the patronage of the famous singer Tose Proeski and the beautiful churches of the Kruševo complex, they are significant factors for tourism development and regional growth. The remaining churches, monasteries, and complexes are recognized as key attractors. To elevate their status as attractions, it is essential to enhance support, which includes connection, signage, and visualization, the development of hospitality services, and promotional activities.

Results and Development Directions

The optimal use of the values associated with the churches and monasteries in the municipalities of Prilep, Kruševo, Krivogaštani, and Dolneni should be realized through guidelines that stem from the dominance of these cultural and religious attractions:

- Adoption of tourist valorization as a permanent process since progress implies new content;
- Harmonization of spatial and urban plans aimed at forming cultural landscapes with church and monastic heritage;
- Defining the most suitable segments of this cultural heritage that can be integrated into the sustainable development of tourism;
- Arrangement and adaptation of heritage locations for tourist visits;
- Creation of informational boards with basic data about the most significant sites in the region;
- Education of local tourist guides;
- Promotion of products as a relevant factor in the development of religious tourism;
- Establishing a program for the production of authentic souvenirs certified by local governments;
- Training the population to organize and participate in events;
- Creation of new event-based content in the spirit of religious tourism;
- Support for the preservation and enhancement of local architectural heritage;
- Stimulation of traditional monastic-style product cultivation;
- Creation of an ethnographic collection of traditional exhibits linked to churches and monasteries;
- Involvement of cultural-artistic societies in animation forms of religious tourism;

- Animation presentations of traditional food and wine consumption in monasteries;
- Establishing a dedicated exhibition focused on the historical and religious significance of religious tourism;
- Encouraging the creation of new capacities related to traditional production equipped with tasting rooms;
- Adapting existing production opportunities with a special line of traditional production;
- Preparing a menu of traditional dishes and drinks to be part of the gastronomic offer related to religious tourism;
- Initiating the process of obtaining certificates (PDO - Protected Designation of Origin, PGI - Protected Geographical Indication, and TSG - Traditional Specialty Guaranteed);
- Training the population to offer local gastronomic specialties attractively, and;
- Utilizing rituals related to religious events.

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