

# Cultural and historical heritage of Osijek Baranja county

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**Undergraduate thesis / Završni rad**

**2024**

*Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj:* **University of Rijeka, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management / Sveučilište u Rijeci, Fakultet za menadžment u turizmu i ugostiteljstvu**

*Permanent link / Trajna poveznica:* <https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:191:518833>

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*Download date / Datum preuzimanja:* **2025-03-28**



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**SVEUČILIŠTE U RIJECI**  
**Fakultet za menadžment u turizmu i ugostiteljstvu**  
**Sveučilišni prijediplomski studij**

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**KULTURNO POVIJESNA BAŠTINA OSJEČKO - BARANJSKE**  
**ŽUPANIJE**

**CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL HERITAGE OF OSIJEK -**  
**BARANJA COUNTY**

Završni rad

Opatija/Zabok, srpanj, 2024.

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**Fakultet za menadžment u turizmu i ugostiteljstvu**  
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Poslovna ekonomija u turizmu i ugostiteljstvu  
Studijski smjer: Menadžment u hotelijerstvu

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ŽUPANIJE**

**CULTURAL HISTORICAL HERITAGE OF OSIJEK -  
BARANJA COUNTY**

Završni rad

Kolegij: **CULTURAL AND  
HISTORICAL HERITAGE OF  
CROATIA**

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## IZJAVA O AUTORSTVU RADA I O JAVNOJ OBJAVI OBRANJENOG ZAVRŠNOG RADA

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CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL HERITAGE OF OSIJEK - BARANJA COUNTY

(naslov rada)

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## SYNOPSIS

Cultural heritage comprises both tangible and intangible aspects. It encompasses not just physical artifacts but also intangible expressions of human creativity and tradition. Therefore, it is essential to delineate and understand both the material and immaterial dimensions of cultural heritage. Intangible heritage, often referred to as "living heritage," plays a significant role in shaping national identity. It is crucial to thoroughly comprehend and actively preserve this aspect. Osijek-Baranja County, situated in eastern Croatia, is predominantly oriented towards continental tourism due to its geographical and cultural characteristics. While the county has shown positive growth in tourism in recent years, achieving greater recognition as a destination requires enhanced collaboration and coordinated efforts across all tourism stakeholders. Data from 2022 indicate ongoing development in tourism and the tourist infrastructure in eastern Croatia. Osijek-Baranja County has seen increases in both tourist arrivals and overnight stays, suggesting promising potential for future growth.

The future development prospects hinge on integrating cultural and sports institutions, local businesses, and community efforts to create a cohesive synergy. This approach aims to enhance the overall appeal of Osijek as a vibrant and attractive destination, blending urban culture with its historical and cultural offerings, as well as its natural surroundings. Anticipated growth in tourist numbers underscores the need for continued efforts to bolster Osijek's tourism offerings and effectively capitalize on its attractions. Both the City of Osijek and Osijek-Baranja County are committed to further enhancing the tourism infrastructure and leveraging it to their advantage.

**Keywords:** cultural heritage, Osijek-Baranja County, synergy, future development potential.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The cultural and historical heritage of Osijek-Baranja County represents a rich tapestry woven from centuries of human endeavor and creativity. Situated in the eastern part of Croatia, this region boasts a diverse array of tangible and intangible heritage that reflects its unique identity and significance within Croatian history and culture. From ancient settlements to medieval fortifications, from traditional folklore to modern-day cultural events, Osijek-Baranja County stands as a testament to the enduring legacy of its people and their contributions to the broader cultural mosaic of Croatia. This introduction sets the stage to delve deeper into the intricate layers of cultural and historical heritage that define Osijek-Baranja County as a cherished and vibrant cultural destination.

The cultural and historical heritage of the Osijek-Baranja County is truly special. The diversity and richness of culture, valuable historical locations, beautiful parks, preserved and protected nature in the immediate vicinity of the city, and gastronomic specialties make this area, in its own way, unique. Heritage in Osijek-Baranja County is not valued as well as in other Croatian counties, but it is the leader among the Slavonic regions in terms of the number of visitors and publicity. Relatively good geographical location and wealth of cultural and natural heritage enabled a better affirmation in cultural tourism.

## 1.1. Problem and purpose of the research

*The problem and subject of research* in this final paper relate to the analysis of cultural and historical factors of the development of Osijek-Baranja County. The purpose and goal of research on the cultural historical heritage of Osijek-Baranja County aim to comprehensively document, preserve, and promote its rich cultural legacy. Through these efforts, the research aims to enhance appreciation, awareness, and sustainable management of the county's cultural heritage, contributing to its cultural vitality and socio-economic development.

## **1.2. Scientific hypothesis**

In accordance with the determinants of the problem and the subject of the research, the hypothesis is set:

**H1. Cultural-historical heritage of Osijek-Baranja County is not sufficiently valorized for tourism.**

## **1.3. Scientific methods of the research**

*The methods used* are methods of induction and deduction, methods of classification and analysis, compilation, comparison and description.

## **1.4. Structure of the work**

*The composition (the structure of the work)* consists of six chapters that are connected to each other in order to deal with the topic of this work. In the "Introduction" of this paper, the subject of the research and its purpose were determined. The methods used in the work and the summary structure of the entire work are listed.

In the second chapter "Definition and characteristics of cultural and historical heritage", the concept of cultural and historical heritage, characteristics and development of cultural and historical heritage and the division of cultural and historical heritage - material cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage and cultural and historical heritage of the Republic of Croatia are analyzed. "The connection between tourism and cultural-historical heritage" is the title of the third part, which analyzes the touristic valorization of cultural heritage, the management of cultural-historical heritage and the cultural tourism of the destination.

The fourth part "General characteristics of Osijek-Baranja County" analyzes the tourism resources of Osijek-Baranja County. A statistical analysis of tourism in Osijek-Baranja County and a SWOT analysis of tourism in Osijek-Baranja County is carried out. The fifth chapter entitled "Analysis of cultural and historical factors of destination development on the example of Osijek-Baranja County" explains the current state of cultural and historical factors of the development of Osijek-Baranja County - the most important cultural and historical factors of development, the development of cultural and historical factors throughout history



and future development and exploiting the tourist potential of cultural and historical factors. The conclusion, the final part of this work, serves to present the synthesis of the entire work, and the most important insights that the author came to during the process of research and writing the work.

## **2. DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURAL-HISTORICAL HERITAGE**

Many countries are rich in cultural heritage that attracts tourists, but there are few that can boast such a rich past in such a small area as Croatia. In addition to numerous material remains, which bear witness to the stormy past of these areas, Croatia has passed down numerous traditional customs from generation to generation, which today acquire a new luster and adapt to the tastes of modern guests.<sup>1</sup>

### **2.1. Defining cultural and historical heritage**

Cultural heritage is divided into tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Given that the concept of cultural heritage encompasses not only material forms of cultural heritage but also intangible achievements of human nature, it is necessary to additionally clarify both the material and the immaterial side of cultural heritage. Tangible cultural heritage, reflected in its physical dimension, includes buildings, historical places, monuments, artifacts, while intangible heritage (which does not have a physical dimension) includes rituals, dances, music, religious rituals, traditions, traditional knowledge, customs and skills.<sup>2</sup>

It can be said that cultural heritage includes the following elements:<sup>3</sup>

- museums, art, sculptures, crafts, galleries, festivals,
- architecture (ruins, famous buildings),
- archaeological areas,
- music and dance
- cultural and historical routes,
- language and literary studies (tours and events),
- entire (folk and primitive) culture and subculture.

<sup>1</sup> Kamping Udruženje Hrvatske- <https://www.camping.hr/hr/hrvatska/kulturno-nasljedstvo> (pristupljeno 02.05.2024.)

<sup>2</sup> Geić, S. (2011.): „Menadžment selektivnih oblika turizma“, Split : Sveučilišni studijski centar za stručne studije, str. 312

<sup>3</sup> Pančić Kombol, T. (2006.): „Kulturno naslijeđe i turizam“, Radovi Zavoda za znanstveni rad Varaždin, No. 16-17., str. 211.

Tangible cultural heritage is further divided into movable heritage (all objects that have some connection with human culture, and one should certainly include works of art, such as paintings and statues, but also objects of applied arts and crafts, such as jewelry, dishes and liturgical objects, old money, old books) and immovable heritage.<sup>4</sup> Intangible cultural heritage can be defined as practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, as well as instruments, objects, handicrafts and cultural spaces related to them, which communities, groups and individuals accept as part of their cultural heritage.

Intangible heritage is also called "living heritage"<sup>5</sup>, and its role in national identity is of big value, so it is necessary to work on its preservation. It includes beliefs, customs, knowledge, spiritual creativity and skills that society or an individual considers to be their heritage, and which are transmitted by tradition.<sup>6</sup>

Intangible heritage especially includes: oral literature, language, dialects, folklore creativity in the field of music, dance, games, rituals, mythology, traditional crafts, cultural places where traditional folk values meet.<sup>7</sup> Intangible heritage is an important factor in preserving the cultural identity of the community, therefore its preservation is considered a priority nowadays. Heritage is one of the fundamental values of a nation, which requires strengthening the awareness and responsibility of institutions and state bodies, in order to preserve it from disappearing and dying out.

## **2.2. Features and development of cultural and historical heritage**

The International Organization for the Study of Cultural Heritage (UNESCO) defines that cultural heritage refers to monuments, groups of buildings and localities that have historical, aesthetic, archaeological, scientific, ethnological and anthropological value. There are three main components when defining cultural heritage:<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Jelinčić, D. (2008.): „Abeceda kulturnog turizma“, Zagreb: Meandarmedia, str. 113

<sup>5</sup> Magaš, D. (2008.): „Destinacijski menadžment – Modeli i Tehnike“, Opatija : Sveučilište u Rijeci, Fakultet za turistički i hotelski menadžment u Opatiji, str. 45

<sup>6</sup> Carek, R. (2004.): „Nematerijalna kulturna baština: UNESCO i njegova uloga“, Informativa museologica, Vol. 35., No. 3-4., str. 69.

<sup>7</sup> Zakon o zaštiti i očuvanju kulturnih dobara- NN 69/99, 151/03, 157/03, 100/04, 87/09, 88/10, 61/11, 25/12, 136/12, 157/13, 152/14, 98/15, 44/17, 90/18, 32/20, 62/20

<sup>8</sup> Jelinčić, D. (2008.): „Abeceda kulturnog turizma“, Zagreb: Meandarmedia, str. 11.

- works of architecture: monumental works in the field of sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, drawings, caves and dwellings, combinations of characteristics of exceptional universal value, historical, artistic or scientific,
- groups of buildings: groups of free-standing or connected buildings that, due to their architecture, homogeneity or location in the environment, possess exceptional universal value
- sites: works of man or combined works of nature and man, and areas that include archaeological sites of exceptional universal value, historical, artistic or scientific.

An element of the offer that often has a decisive influence on the choice of travel destination is cultural heritage. It is an important motive for travel and cultural and historical heritage is often used in the promotion and creation of the destination's image on the market.

### **2.3. Division of cultural and historical heritage**

As mentioned earlier, cultural heritage is divided into tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage, material and immaterial, is the common wealth of humanity in its diversity and uniqueness, and its protection is one of many important factors for recognizing, defining and affirming cultural identity. The Ministry of Culture and Media develops mechanisms and establishes measures to protect cultural heritage with the aim of ensuring its sustainability, which includes identifying, documenting, researching, maintaining, protecting, using and promoting its values.<sup>9</sup>

The division of cultural and historical heritage into tangible and intangible aspects provides a nuanced understanding of our collective past. By recognizing both the material artifacts and the intangible traditions, beliefs, and practices, we can better appreciate the depth and diversity of human culture across different societies and eras.<sup>10</sup> This division allows for comprehensive preservation efforts and ensures that future generations inherit a rich tapestry of knowledge, identity, and cultural continuity. Embracing this holistic approach fosters

<sup>9</sup>Ministarstvo kulture i medija - [https://min-kulture.gov.hr/?id=349&pregled=1&datum=Wed%20Jan%2023%202019%2017:02:19%20GMT+0100%20\(srednjoeuropsko%20standardno%20vrijeme\)](https://min-kulture.gov.hr/?id=349&pregled=1&datum=Wed%20Jan%2023%202019%2017:02:19%20GMT+0100%20(srednjoeuropsko%20standardno%20vrijeme)) (pristupljeno 02.05.2024.)

<sup>10</sup>Demonja, D., Ružić, P. (2010.): „Ruralni turizam u Hrvatskoj- s hrvatskim primjerima dobre prakse i europskim iskustvima“, Zagreb: Meridijani, str. 59

greater appreciation and stewardship of our shared heritage, safeguarding it for generations to come.

### **2.3.1. Tangible cultural heritage**

Tangible cultural heritage consists of movable and immovable cultural assets. Immovable cultural heritage includes architectural heritage, archaeological heritage (land and underwater) and cultural landscapes. Due to its material structure, architectural heritage is sensitive and prone to decay.

Many cultural-historical entities are threatened and abandoned, and the cause of this is war destruction, lack of maintenance, insufficient investment of financial resources, unresolved legal property relations, as well as insufficient awareness of the value of heritage. Such a situation is often observed in rural areas and small historic towns where buildings have no purpose. Since 1972, when the Convention for the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage was adopted, until today there are 1,073 properties on the list, among which 832 are cultural properties, 206 natural and 35 mixed properties.<sup>11</sup>

The significance of tangible cultural heritage lies not only in its historical value but also in its ability to evoke emotions, educate, and inspire. By safeguarding these physical remnants of the past, we ensure that future generations can connect with and learn from the achievements, lifestyles, and artistic expressions of their ancestors.<sup>12</sup> Museums, conservation efforts, and heritage sites are instrumental in protecting and promoting tangible cultural heritage, fostering cultural tourism, and contributing to local economies. In essence, tangible cultural heritage serves as a tangible link to our collective past, reflecting the creativity, ingenuity, and cultural diversity of human societies across time and geography. Its preservation is not only a responsibility but also an opportunity to celebrate and cherish the richness of our cultural heritage for generations to come.

<sup>11</sup>Ministarstvo kulture i medija - [https://min-kulture.gov.hr/?id=349&pregled=1&datum=Wed%20Jan%2023%202019%2017:02:19%20GMT+0100%20\(srednjoeuropsko%20standardno%20vrijeme\)](https://min-kulture.gov.hr/?id=349&pregled=1&datum=Wed%20Jan%2023%202019%2017:02:19%20GMT+0100%20(srednjoeuropsko%20standardno%20vrijeme)) (pristupljeno 02.05.2024.)

<sup>12</sup>Demonja, D., Ružić, P. (2010.): „Ruralni turizam u Hrvatskoj- s hrvatskim primjerima dobre prakse i europskim iskustvima“, Zagreb: Meridijani, str. 62

### 2.3.2. Intangible cultural heritage

According to the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2003:3), the term intangible heritage includes expressions, arts, knowledge, skills and instruments, objects and cultural spaces that society, groups, and sometimes individuals recognize as part of their own cultural heritage. In order to preserve cultural identity, promote and develop cultural diversity and human creativity, it is necessary to preserve intangible cultural heritage. UNESCO has been supporting the preservation of intangible heritage for years, so in 2001, masterpieces of the oral and intangible cultural heritage of humanity were declared for the first time, and two years later the Convention on the Protection of Intangible Heritage was adopted.<sup>13</sup>

The Convention contains the following objectives:<sup>14</sup>

- preserve intangible cultural heritage,
- raise awareness of the importance and preservation of intangible cultural heritage at the local, national and international level,
- ensure international cooperation and assistance,
- encourage understanding and respect for the heritage of different communities.

In order for a masterpiece to be declared as intangible heritage, it must meet certain criteria. For example, it must have a special value, it must be in a certain danger of disappearing, it must be related to the cultural tradition or history of the community, it must have a role in confirming the cultural identity of people and cultural communities, the importance of a masterpiece as a source of inspiration and intercultural exchange is required, etc.<sup>15</sup> According to the Convention on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage, intangible heritage is manifested through oral tradition and expressions, including language as a means of

<sup>13</sup> UNESCO (2003): „Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage“, dostupno na: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000132540> (pristupljeno 03.05.2024.)

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Geić, S. (2011.): „Menadžment selektivnih oblika turizma“, Split : Sveučilišni studijski centar za stručne studije, str. 324

communication of intangible cultural heritage, performing arts, customs, rites and ceremonies, knowledge and skills related to nature and space, and traditional crafts.

The significance of intangible cultural heritage lies in its role as a repository of knowledge, skills, and traditions that are essential for the continuity of cultural identity. It reflects the ways in which people interact with their environment, express creativity, and transmit values across generations.<sup>16</sup> Unlike tangible heritage, intangible heritage is dynamic and constantly evolving, adapting to changing contexts while retaining its core essence. Efforts to safeguard intangible cultural heritage involve documenting, preserving, revitalizing, and promoting these cultural expressions. UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted in 2003, emphasizes the importance of recognizing and protecting these living traditions.<sup>17</sup> Local communities, cultural practitioners, researchers, and policymakers collaborate to ensure that intangible heritage remains vital and accessible to future generations.

## **2.4. Cultural and historical heritage of the Republic of Croatia**

Croatia has as many as 27 properties that are under the protection of UNESCO. According to the Ministry of Culture (2021), 17 intangible assets met the strict criteria for entry into the list:

- lacemaking in Croatia,
- the double voice of the narrow interval of Istria and the Croatian coast,
- The Festivity of Saint Blaise, the patron of Dubrovnik
- the annual spring procession of the Queen or Ljelje from Gorjani,
- annual carnival procession of bell ringers from the area of Kastavština,
- "Za križen" procession on the island of Hvar,
- the art of making traditional wooden children's toys from the area of Hrvatsko Zagorje
- Sinjska alka, knight tournament in Sinj,
- Honey making in northern Croatia
- Bećarac – vocal-instrumental tune from Slavonia, Baranja and Srijem,
- Mediterranean diet on the Croatian Adriatic, its coast, islands and part of the hinterland,
- „Međimurska popevka“ a traditional song from Međimurje,

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem, str. 326

<sup>17</sup> UNESCO (2003): „Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage“, dostupno na: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000132540> (pristupljeno 03.05.2024.)

- the art of drywall construction,
- musical expression „ojkanje“,
- Ecomuseum Batana.

Efforts to preserve Croatia's cultural and historical heritage are supported by national institutions, museums, and UNESCO designations, which recognize sites of universal value such as Plitvice Lakes National Park and the Historic City of Trogir.<sup>18</sup> Local communities and cultural organizations play vital roles in safeguarding traditions and promoting cultural tourism. Initiatives focus on sustainable tourism practices that balance preservation with economic development, ensuring that future generations can continue to appreciate and learn from Croatia's rich cultural legacy. Croatia's cultural and historical heritage stands as a testament to its enduring resilience and creativity throughout history.<sup>19</sup> By embracing and preserving this heritage, Croatia not only strengthens its national identity but also enriches the global tapestry of cultural diversity and understanding.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>19</sup> Ministarstvo kulture i medija - [https://min-kulture.gov.hr/?id=349&pregled=1&datum=Wed%20Jan%202023%202019%2017:02:19%20GMT+0100%20\(srednjoeuropsko%20standardno%20vrijeme\)](https://min-kulture.gov.hr/?id=349&pregled=1&datum=Wed%20Jan%202023%202019%2017:02:19%20GMT+0100%20(srednjoeuropsko%20standardno%20vrijeme)) (pristupljeno 02.05.2024.)



### **3. THE CONNECTION OF TOURISM AND CULTURAL-HISTORICAL HERITAGE**

In today's tourism market, characterized by extreme dynamism and competitiveness, survival hinges on continuously monitoring current trends. These trends highlight tendencies in demand, identify current market opportunities, and pinpoint potential investments and infrastructure needs. When planning tourism development, the preconditions include enhancing competitiveness, achieving larger market shares, and maximizing benefits from tourism. This approach is crucial for identifying and implementing long-term trends, adjusting the tourist offer accordingly, and fostering cooperation among participants at all levels.<sup>20</sup> New trends, political changes, globalization, and various other factors significantly impact the complexity of creating attractive tourist offers. One of the most important trends in contemporary tourist demand is the shift in preferences among modern tourists. Today's tourists increasingly seek experiences that allow them to actively use their vacations and gain new experiences, participating in the so-called leisure education. This trend reflects a desire for more interactive and enriching travel experiences, moving beyond traditional passive relaxation to include learning and personal growth opportunities.

#### **3.1. Tourist valorization of cultural heritage**

Each person is motivated by various factors when engaging in certain activities. Similarly, a tourist consumer's decision to travel and select a destination is influenced by factors related to their permanent place of residence and the attractive features of the destination itself. All developed tourist destinations strive to enrich their offerings with new facilities. There are two prevailing trends worldwide. One focuses on the preservation of historical monuments, culture, and nature—authentic heritage. The other trend is oriented towards "derived" attractions. Over time, these derived attractions become integrated into the physical, historical, and cultural environment, eventually being perceived as "natural." This process blurs the lines between them, making it challenging to distinguish between a "natural"

<sup>20</sup>Demonja, D., Ružić, P. (2010.): „Ruralni turizam u Hrvatskoj- s hrvatskim primjerima dobre prakse i europskim iskustvima“, Zagreb: Meridijani, str. 5.

attraction with added derived elements and a "derived" attraction that has quickly assimilated into its natural surroundings.<sup>21</sup>

Valorization determines the tourist potential of the observed destination, that is, the space and content of the destination is evaluated in order to assess the possibility for the development of the tourism industry. The process of tourism valorization implies a qualitative and quantitative objective assessment of the value of tourist resources. Those resources that receive the highest value can expect the highest tourist demand, so they are given priority during the development of the tourist offer. There are two types of tourism resource values:<sup>22</sup>

- use value, which is determined based on the attractiveness of tourist resources (usefulness and rarity),
- market value that determines the potential of the resource to become part of the exchange on the tourist market, i.e. to become an offer that will have the character of goods and services

Tourist valorization of cultural heritage involves recognizing, promoting, and utilizing cultural assets to attract tourists, thus contributing to both the preservation of heritage and the economic development of a region. Croatia, with its rich cultural and historical heritage, presents a prime example of how cultural assets can be effectively valorized to boost tourism.<sup>23</sup> By transforming cultural heritage sites into tourist attractions, regions can stimulate local economies through job creation, increased spending, and the development of related services such as hospitality and transportation. Tourism provides the financial resources necessary for the maintenance and restoration of cultural heritage sites. Increased public interest can also foster greater appreciation and community support for heritage conservation efforts.<sup>24</sup> Cultural tourism offers educational experiences for both visitors and locals, promoting a deeper understanding of history, culture, and traditions. This educational aspect enhances the overall value and significance of cultural heritage.

Based on all of the above, it can be concluded that tourism valorization is a process of quantitative and qualitative assessment of the natural and anthropogenic values of an area of importance for the tourism development of that area. The goals of tourism valorization should

<sup>21</sup>Butler, R., Pearce, D. (1995.): „Change in Tourism, People, Places, Processes“, London: Routledge, str. 25.

<sup>22</sup>Magaš, D. (2008.): „Destinacijski menadžment – Modeli i Tehnike“, Opatija : Sveučilište u Rijeci, Fakultet za turistički i hotelski menadžment u Opatiji, str. 14.-20.

<sup>23</sup>Jelinčić, D. (2008.): „Abeceda kulturnog turizma“, Zagreb: Meandarmedia, str. 58

<sup>24</sup>Ibidem, str. 62

be aligned with the goals of the tourism politics in a certain area. The process of finding goals is considered a tourist-political task that results from shaping the will of the participants and institutions participating in the valorization process.

### **3.2. Management of cultural and historical heritage**

The management of cultural resources involves coordinating the actions of various stakeholders that contribute to the destination's cultural offer, specifically in the segment of touristic cultural attractions and their appeal. Tourist attractiveness refers to both natural features (such as climate, landscape, and sea) and man-made, or anthropogenic, cultural amenities (including towns, villages, local populations, and heritage) that draw tourists. Effective management ensures these elements are integrated and promoted cohesively, enhancing the overall appeal and sustainability of the destination.<sup>25</sup>

Tourist attractions are specific individual localities, phenomena, or events that enhance the destination's appeal through their unique attributes. The use of culture in tourism and the development of cultural tourism must be anchored in the management of cultural resources and the strategic planning documents of a specific development policy. The goals of a destination's tourism policy should encompass understanding and leveraging culture in tourism to support cultural and artistic creativity. This involves using art and culture as tools to achieve broader, non-cultural objectives and shaping tourism and cultural policies to view culture and cultural development as adaptable resources. These resources not only create identity and image but also enhance the well-being of communities. By doing so, tourism and cultural policies can foster a symbiotic relationship where cultural heritage and tourism mutually benefit and contribute to the sustainable development of the destination.<sup>26</sup>

Cultural heritage management is a branch of cultural resource management that involves the systematic care of cultural assets to preserve their value for current and future generations. This field is closely associated with conservation, restoration, museology, archaeology, history, and architecture. While most European countries use the term "cultural heritage," the United States more commonly uses "cultural resources." The distinction lies in their connotations: "resources" suggest economic value and potential for exploitation, whereas

<sup>25</sup> Geić, S. (2011): „Menadžment selektivnih oblika turizma“, Split : Sveučilišni studijski centar za stručne studije, str. 337

<sup>26</sup> Butler, R., Pearce, D. (1995): „Change in Tourism, People, Places, Processes“, London: Routledge, str. 79

"heritage" emphasizes the obligation and responsibility of preservation without focusing on economic aspects.

Cultural heritage management encompasses the identification, maintenance, and protection of significant cultural sites and material assets, while also addressing intangible elements. Folklore, stories, customs, beliefs, festivals, and other cultural traditions are crucial components of heritage management, as they form the foundation of many cultural products that can drive economic activities, particularly tourism. Effective cultural heritage management ensures that these cultural expressions are safeguarded, allowing them to contribute to cultural diversity, community identity, and economic development.

The management of cultural heritage includes its presentation to the public, which generates income. It depends on the legislation of the individual country in most cases, on the meaning of cultural property, on political will and on the organization of human resources.<sup>27</sup> Smaller cultural goods do not have the same value on the international market as large ones, but they are an important factor in local and cultural and tourism policy, so the approach to these goods is also different.

The goal of cultural heritage management is to preserve a representative sample of tangible and intangible heritage for future generations. The science of cultural heritage management seeks to establish a formal system of identification of heritage items in need of conservation. Such a system does not include everything, but only the best or most representative specimens. The basic rule of management dictates that each heritage object is approached in a unique way, with a specially created plan, or management policy.

### **3.3.Cultural tourism of the destination**

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), cultural tourism involves the movement of people driven primarily by cultural motives. These include study trips, visits to performing arts and cultural sites, attendance at festivals and other cultural

<sup>27</sup> Démonja, D., Ružić, P. (2010.): „Ruralni turizam u Hrvatskoj- s hrvatskim primjerima dobre prakse i europskim iskustvima“, Zagreb: Meridijani, str. 89

events, exploring places and monuments, journeys aimed at visiting and analyzing natural attractions, as well as engaging with folklore, art, and pilgrimage activities.<sup>28</sup>

Cultural tourism is a type of tourism that allows tourists to engage in local cultural activities, such as festivals and rituals, fostering genuine cultural exchanges with the local population. This form of tourism also encourages local communities to embrace and celebrate their culture, as cultural tourism drives growth. Communities strive to showcase and promote their unique cultural attributes, distinguishing themselves from other communities. A prime example of cultural tourism is the carnival celebrated in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Goa, India, before the start of Lent. In Rio, the carnival is a vibrant, exuberant celebration where both locals and tourists revel in music, dance, and festivities. In contrast, Goa's carnival focuses on a grand parade followed by performances and feasts, highlighting the region's unique cultural expressions. Both events illustrate how cultural tourism can enhance local traditions while providing tourists with memorable, immersive experiences.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, cultural tourism brings several benefits to local communities, which governments and local tourism bodies should recognize and leverage:<sup>30</sup>

- Positive economic impact: Cultural tourism generates revenue for the destination, contributing to the local economy. This income helps underserved communities thrive by creating jobs, supporting local businesses, and stimulating economic growth.
- Funding for social good: The money generated from cultural tourism can be reinvested within local communities for social welfare initiatives, infrastructure development, education, healthcare, and other essential services. This financial support enhances the overall quality of life for residents.
- Preservation of local culture: Cultural tourism plays a crucial role in preserving local traditions, customs, and heritage. By showcasing their unique culture to visitors, communities reinforce pride in their heritage and traditions. This preservation effort helps to safeguard cultural identity amid globalization and modernization.
- Promotion and differentiation: Cultural tourism enables destinations to market themselves based on their distinct cultural offerings. By highlighting their unique

<sup>28</sup>Florida departments od state- <https://dos.myflorida.com/cultural/info-and-opportunities/resources-by-topic/cultural-tourism-toolkit/what-is-cultural-tourism-basic-information/> (pristupljeno 05.05.2024.)

<sup>29</sup>eTravel- <https://www.etravel.com/explore/travel-industry/what-is-cultural-tourism/> (pristupljeno 05.05.2024.)

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

cultural attributes, destinations can distinguish themselves from competitors and attract tourists seeking authentic cultural experiences.

By harnessing the economic and cultural potential of cultural tourism, governments and tourism bodies can foster sustainable development, preserve cultural heritage, and promote social well-being within local communities. This approach not only enhances the attractiveness of destinations but also ensures that the benefits of tourism are equitably distributed among residents, contributing to inclusive growth and community empowerment.

As countries recognize the significance of cultural tourism in bolstering local economies, they are increasingly focusing on developing cities and towns that attract international visitors eager to immerse themselves in rich cultural experiences. Cultural tourists are drawn to destinations to explore and appreciate a wide array of cultural aspects, including history, heritage, lifestyle, traditions, art, music, literature, architecture, and religion<sup>31</sup>. Traditionally, cultural tourists have been attracted to major cultural sites and attractions. However, the market for this type of cultural tourism has expanded dramatically in recent decades, leading to overcrowding at many popular destinations and a loss of their authentic character.

A growing number of cultural tourists now seek out more personalized, intimate, and authentic cultural experiences. They are less interested in crowded attractions and more drawn to smaller, genuine aspects of culture. This includes artisanal crafts, handmade products, and other tangible expressions of culture. Moreover, they value memorable and emotionally engaging experiences that foster a deeper connection to a place, its people, and their traditions - intangible aspects of culture that leave a lasting impression. Cultural tourists increasingly prioritize attractions, products, and experiences that are unique and offer something distinctive that cannot be replicated elsewhere. This shift reflects a desire for authenticity and a genuine connection to local culture, encouraging destinations to emphasize their authentic, lesser-known cultural treasures to cater to this evolving tourist preference.

Cultural tourism is a global trend experiencing rapid growth, surpassing other forms of tourism in popularity. Coined to describe the intersection of culture and tourism, this trend emphasizes the interaction between travelers and cultural experiences. Tourism activities often flourish in places where the natural environment is delicate and susceptible to disturbance without proper measures in place. Therefore, adopting a sustainable approach to tourism is essential. This approach ensures that cultural and natural resources can be passed

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem.

down to future generations without causing harm. The concept of sustainable tourism emerged as a response to the negative environmental impacts associated with mass tourism. By focusing on sustainability, tourism aims to restore and maintain natural balances while promoting cultural exchange and preservation.

Cultural tourism, in particular, holds promise for long-term sustainability compared to mass tourism. It encourages deeper engagement with local cultures, traditions, and heritage, fostering mutual respect and understanding between tourists and host communities. This approach not only enriches travelers' experiences but also benefits local economies and enhances cultural preservation efforts.

Cultural tourism represents a shift towards sustainable practices that prioritize the conservation of cultural and natural assets. By embracing this approach, destinations can harness the economic benefits of tourism while safeguarding their cultural and environmental heritage for future generations.<sup>32</sup>

Heritage and culture are invaluable assets that require continuous maintenance, preservation, and enhancement. Improving quality of life, living conditions, and reducing poverty are integral to furthering the preservation of cultural and natural heritage. Making such treasures accessible to humanity and transmitting civilizations through tourism are key components of sustainable cultural tourism development. Achieving and sustaining these objectives necessitates high standards in tourism design, implementation, protection, and conservation policies, with active community participation in the preservation, enhancement, and promotion of cultural heritage in the coming decades. Balancing the interests of society, the environment, and tourism to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive effects requires fostering creativity and preserving cultural diversity. Maintaining awareness of the significance of cultural tourism and its enduring positive impacts is crucial. Cultural tourism can cultivate appreciation and pride in local heritage, stimulating greater interest and investment in its protection. Furthermore, tourism can promote inclusive community development, fostering resilience, inclusivity, and empowerment. It contributes to territorial cohesion and socioeconomic inclusion, providing economic opportunities for vulnerable populations, such as women in rural areas.

<sup>32</sup>Eser, S., et.al. (2013.): "Culture Tourism as a Sustainable Tourism Type: The Ephesus Example", *Social Sciences*, Vol. 79., No. 1., dostupno na: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276048593\\_Culture\\_Tourism\\_as\\_a\\_Sustainable\\_Tourism\\_Type\\_The\\_Ephesus\\_Example](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276048593_Culture_Tourism_as_a_Sustainable_Tourism_Type_The_Ephesus_Example) (pristupljeno 10.05.2024.)

Increased awareness of conservation methods and local indigenous knowledge enhances the long-term sustainability of the environment. Moreover, tourism-generated funds play a critical role in sustaining ongoing conservation efforts for both built and natural heritage sites. By aligning tourism development with conservation goals and community well-being, cultural tourism can serve as a powerful force for preserving heritage, promoting sustainable development, and fostering socio-economic resilience across diverse communities.



#### 4. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF OSIJEK - BARANJA COUNTY

The Osijek-Baranja County is located in the east of Croatia, and due to its location and characteristics, it belongs to continental tourism. In the past, continental tourism was not given much attention, but lately it is trying to change due to the influence of the world tourism market. Osijek-Baranja County, situated in the eastern part of Croatia, is distinguished by its rich historical heritage, cultural diversity, and natural landscapes.<sup>33</sup> This region, encompassing both urban centers and rural areas, offers a blend of traditional charm and modern amenities that attract visitors and residents alike.

Osijek-Baranja County boasts a deep-rooted history dating back to ancient times, evidenced by archaeological sites and historical landmarks scattered throughout the region. The city of Osijek, the county seat, is renowned for its well-preserved Austro-Hungarian architecture, including the iconic Tvrđa fortress and the neo-Gothic Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul.<sup>34</sup> These cultural landmarks stand as testaments to the region's historical significance and architectural prowess. The search for "cycling tourism", "ecotourism", "rural tourism", "cultural tourism",<sup>35</sup> etc. is increasingly pronounced, because tourism trends show that there has been a change in the behavior of tourists who strive for as many different experiences as possible in their trip.<sup>36</sup>

These types of tourism have the potential to become the main (primary) tourism products of the County.<sup>37</sup> The Osijek-Baranja County is a place that is rich in natural and cultural attractions, and its potential makes it a destination for tourists who are looking for a real vacation.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Bužančić, R. (2005). Osječki prostor: urbanistički razvoj grada Osijeka od 18. do 20. stoljeća, Masmedia, Zagreb, str. 55

<sup>34</sup> Mažuran, I. (2000). Grad i tvrđava Osijek, Grafika, Osijek, str. 29

<sup>35</sup> Šašić, M. (2016). The demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Osijek-Baranja County in the transition period, Algoritam, Zagreb, str. 56

<sup>36</sup> Sobočan, A. (2005). Baština Slavonije i Baranje: povijest, politika, kultura, Meridijani, Zagreb, str. 34

<sup>37</sup> TZ Osijek (2024). Turizam i prijevoz, dostupno na <https://www.tzosijek.hr/osjecka-okolica-656#>, pristupljeno 29.06.2024.

<sup>38</sup> TZ OBŽ, et.al. (2017.): „Informacija o stanju i razvojnim mogućnostima turizma na području Osječko-baranjske županije i radu turističke zajednice županije“, Osijek: TZ OBŽ, str 1.

Picture 1. The Position of Osijek-Baranja County



Source: Hrvatska enciklopedija (2024): Osječko – baranjska županija, <https://www.enciklopedija.hr/clanak/osjecko-baranjska-zupanija> (accessed 25.05.2024.)

Picture 1 shows, 264 settlements located in 42 local self-government units that the Osijek-Baranja County includes, 7 of which have the status of a city. Among them, the carriers of tourism are Osijek, Đakovo, Našice, Valpovo, Donji Miholjac, Belišće, Beli Manastir, Bilje, Bizovac, Erdut, Kneževi Vinogradi and Draž.<sup>39</sup> These areas stand out for their tourist attractions, but they are also in the phase of valorizing their attractiveness to put them into the function of tourism.<sup>40</sup>

The county's landscape is characterized by the fertile plains of the Pannonian Basin, crisscrossed by the Drava and Danube rivers, which provide scenic beauty and recreational opportunities.<sup>41</sup> The Kopački Rit Nature Park, a UNESCO-listed wetland of international

<sup>39</sup> Živaković, Ž. (2004). Osijek : povijest, kultura, umjetnost, prirodne ljepote, Matica Hrvatska, Zagreb, str. 78

<sup>40</sup>Upravni odjel za kontinentalni turizam Osječko-baranjske županije (2017.): „Izvješće o razvoju turizma na području Osječko-baranjske županije“, Osijek: Upravni odjel za kontinentalni turizam Osječko-baranjske županije, str. 1.

<sup>41</sup> Jurković, M. (2005). Arhitektura Osijeka i Slavonije, Infografika, Zagreb, str. 47

importance, offers rich biodiversity and is a haven for birdwatching enthusiasts and nature lovers.<sup>42</sup>

Economically, Osijek-Baranja County serves as a significant agricultural hub, known for its production of cereals, fruits, and wines.<sup>43</sup> The fertile soil and favorable climate support thriving agricultural practices, contributing to the region's economic prosperity.

#### **4.1. Tourist resources of Osijek - Baranja County**

Osijek-Baranja County is part of Slavonia. When someone mentions Slavonia, the first thing that comes to mind are its plains, the city of Osijek, gastronomy, the Kopački rit nature park, wines, rural households, the Lipizzan horse, the Drava and Danube rivers, and the possibility of recreational activities.<sup>44</sup> These are all the tourist attributes that the Osijek-Baranja County has at its disposal.

The county is home to a diverse population, including Croats, Hungarians, Serbs, and other ethnic groups, each contributing to the vibrant cultural tapestry of the region.<sup>45</sup> Traditional folklore, music, and culinary delights reflect this multicultural heritage, celebrated through festivals and local events that showcase the richness of local traditions.<sup>46</sup> In recent years, Osijek-Baranja County has seen a growth in tourism, with visitors drawn to its historical landmarks, natural attractions, and cultural events. The county offers a range of activities, from exploring historical sites and museums in Osijek to enjoying outdoor pursuits such as cycling, hiking, and boating along the rivers.

<sup>42</sup> Tatarin, M. (2019). *Zvijezda baruna Beckersa : sentimentalna povijest Nutarnjega grada*, Matica Hrvatska, Zagreb

<sup>43</sup> Šoštarić, M. (2008). *Osijek – Baranja County: Cultural and Historical Heritage*, Masmedia, Zagreb, str. 54

<sup>44</sup> Topić, D. (1998). *Osijek i okolica, Osječka rič*, Osijek, str. 67

<sup>45</sup> TZ Osijek (2024). *Povijest grada*, dostupno na <https://www.tzosijek.hr/povijest-grada-671>, pristupljeno 29.06.2024.

<sup>46</sup> Pintarić, A. (1999). *Istočna Hrvatska: Osijek - Vukovar – Ilok, Osijek : Pedagoški fakultet*, str. 72

Picture 2. Tourist resources of Osijek-Baranja County



Source: Osječko-baranjska županija (2017.): „Master plana turizma Osječko-baranjske županije“, Osijek: Osječko-baranjska županija, str. 15.

The geological features of Osijek and its surroundings seem unattractive to tourists at first, but this area offers a lot of potential that can be valorized for tourism. The territory of the Osijek-Baranja County with an area of about 4000 square kilometers<sup>47</sup> occupies the eastern part of the Republic of Croatia. The city of Osijek is considered the seat of the county, and it is also the largest city in eastern Croatia and the fourth largest in the country.<sup>48</sup>

The area of Osijek-Baranja County has numerous tourist attractions and events that it can offer to modern tourists. Accordingly, the most famous tourist attractions are the following:<sup>49</sup>

- Kompa – the most famous bridge in Osijek,
- ZOO of Osijek,
- Mlin – water mill on the Drava river,
- King Tomislav Park and parks around the fortress,
- Sakuntala park,
- Mačkamama,
- Rondel velikana,

<sup>47</sup> Andrić, S. (2004). Slavonija: sažeti vodič prirodnih i kulturnopovijesnih zanimljivosti, Zagreb : V.B.Z., str. 25

<sup>48</sup> Benašić, Z., et al. (1999.): „Gastronomija & turizam sjeverno-istočne Hrvatske“, Vinkovci: Privlačica, str. 48.

<sup>49</sup> TZ Osijek (2024). Znamenitosti, dostupno na <https://www.tzosijek.hr/znamenitosti-57>, pristupljeno 29.06.2024.

- Storks nest in the center of Osijek,
- Promenade and winter port,
- Copacabana and the crown fortress,
- fortress Korogyvar,
- the "red fičo" monument – commemorating the Homeland War in 1991,
- graphite „Osijek, nepokoreni grad“ – commemorating the Homeland War in 1991,
- „wounded“ buildings – commemorating the Homeland War in 1991.

Numerous events are held in the area of Osijek-Baranja County. The following can be singled out as key manifestations:<sup>50</sup>

- In Da Sofa,
- evenings of wine and art - wine fair with concerts,
- Pannonian challenge,
- Sunset run,
- Drava river fest: cycling and descent on air mattresses down the Drava river,
- Osijek street race show,
- the days of the first Croatian beer,
- UFO - urban fest Osijek,
- CRO RACE - start of the international bicycle race through Croatia,
- HOMBRE - fair of homebrew,
- Osijek antiques fair,
- October summer nights,
- BIKEOS - festival of cycling, equipment and healthy eating,
- DOBRO WORLD CUP - gymnastics world cup,
- FEEL GOOD WEEKEND - gastro, wine & music festival,
- Osijek youth summer,
- lanterns for Osijek city day - lantern festival and many others.

<sup>50</sup> TZ Osijek (2024). Hrvatsko podunavlje, dostupno na <https://www.tzosijek.hr/osjecka-okolica-656>, pristupljeno 29.06.2024.

As a result of the above, the Osijek-Baranja County has numerous tourist attractions that are not sufficiently utilized and represent potential for the future successful development of tourism.<sup>51</sup>

The program for the development of tourism in rural areas started the systematic development of rural tourism. In the area of Osijek-Baranja County, 12 tourist-wine roads have been declared: Kneževi Vinogradi-Karanac-Kotlina-Kamenac, Zmajevac, Suza, Sjeverna Baranja, Martinovo Brdo, Općina Erdut, Mandićevac, Zlatarevac, Sveti Martin, Zlatno Brdo, Batina and Frankovka wine route located in four vineyards: Baranja, Erdut, Đakovo and Feričanci.<sup>52</sup> Wine tourism is one of the main drives of tourism development in Osijek-Baranja County. Recognizing the importance of wine tourism, the Wine tour project worth 170 000 EUR was created, which includes four main activities: arranging the routes of the existing wine roads, arranging four mini museums in four vineyards (Drenje, Feričanci, Dalj and Zmajevac) and regional wine shops in Osijek (Fortress), education of tourist workers and other participants and promotion.

Kopački rit Nature Park is a protected reserve with untouched nature and with its surroundings represents great potential for the development of ecotourism, rural tourism, hunting and fishing tourism, excursion tourism, etc.<sup>53</sup> Along with the cathedral of St. Peter and Paul, some of the symbols of Đakovo are the event Đakovo Vezovi, Lipizzaner horses, and the Đakovo Lipizzaner stud, founded in 1506. The Lipizzaner stud is one of the oldest studs in Europe and has around 160 horses. The construction of the piers in Aljmaš and Batina enabled the entry of large river cruise ships on the line of passenger ships Vienna, Budapest, and the Black Sea.<sup>54</sup>

Health tourism, one of the most important trends in today's tourism, finds its place in the tourist offer in the traditional form of spa tourism, and it also follows new trends - wellness and fitness. Bizovačke toplice stands out with its offer and potential, which, after several years of unsuccessful sales, have recently been leased by Sunce concern with the intention of

<sup>51</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>52</sup> Katičić, R. (2023). Cultural Heritage of Osijek-Baranja County, *Journal of Croatian Cultural Studies*, 12 (4), 25

<sup>53</sup> Škiljan, F. (2022). Intangible Cultural Heritage of Osijek-Baranja County: Folklore and Traditions, *Osijek Heritage Review*, 27 833), 128

<sup>54</sup>HGK - <https://hgk.hr/zupanijska-komora-osijek/turizam-i-ugostiteljstvo> (pristupljeno 25.05.2024.)

making significant investments in this valuable complex.<sup>55</sup> Well-known cultural landmarks, sacred buildings, castles, museums and galleries and numerous events represent the great cultural wealth of this region, providing endless opportunities for creating numerous and high-quality tourist arrangements and developing cultural tourism.

Congress tourism has an excellent perspective thanks to hotels that have large halls equipped with modern equipment and in this sense can satisfy the increasingly demanding business clientele. Hunting tourism as one of the specialized tourism products represents a valuable resource, where guest hunters travel several thousand kilometers to enjoy the experiences offered by hunting tourism and, they are guests who spend much more than others.<sup>56</sup> Cyclotourism as a form of selective tourism in the last ten years has seen an increasing growth not only in the world but also in Croatia, as evidenced by the fact that cyclotourism is included in ten key tourist products from the Croatian tourism development strategy.

Although Osijek-Baranja county has been developing on an upward trajectory in terms of tourism for the last few years, even greater engagement and synchronized work of all entities in tourism is needed in order to achieve the best possible recognition of the destination.<sup>57</sup> The economic and social profit created by branding the destination is great, because this way it preserves and promotes its own identity and tradition, improves the quality of life, attracts foreign investment and employs skilled labor. The Osijek-Baranja County initiated the creation of the Slavonija brand as a tourist destination of the five Slavonian counties. Unspoiled nature, a quiet, lowland region, rich history, tradition and culture, the hospitality of the population and the gastronomic offer are the main foundations on which the future brand of the County should be developed.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Đaković, M. (2023). Archaeological Discoveries in Osijek-Baranja County: Insights and Interpretations, *Eastern Archaeological Studies*, 17 (2), 79

<sup>56</sup> TZ Osijek (2024). Turizam i prijevoz, dostupno na <https://www.tzosijek.hr/osjecka-okolica-656#>, pristupljeno 29.06.2024.

<sup>57</sup> Ibidem.

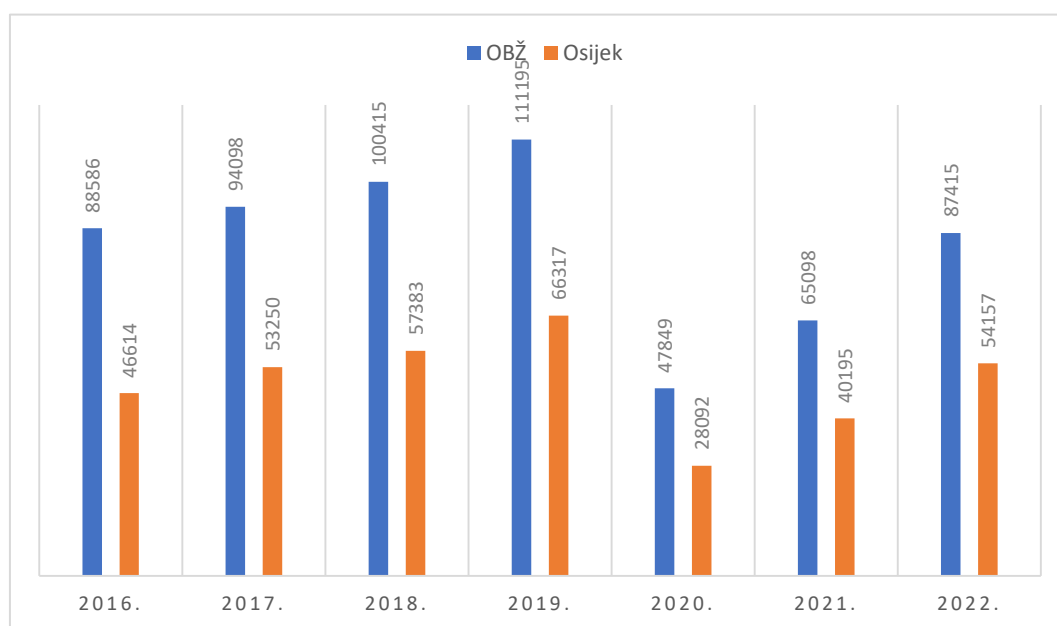
<sup>58</sup> Horvat, I. (2022). Historical Fortifications in Osijek-Baranja County: Preservation Challenges and Strategies, *Heritage Management Journal*, 35 (19), 225

## 4.2. Statistical analysis of tourism in Osijek - Baranja County

Data for 2022 show that tourism and the tourist offer in the east of Croatia are still developing. The Osijek-Baranja County records an upward trend when it comes to the number of tourist arrivals and overnight stays.

The city of Osijek is the bearer of the potential of this region and represents the traffic center of Slavonia and Baranja. As a result of the above, the city is the key backbone of tourist development for this area. This is also visible through the share of the entire tourist traffic of this city when the total traffic of the Osijek-Baranja County is analyzed.<sup>59</sup>

Graph 1. Number of tourist arrivals in Osijek - Baranja county and the city of Osijek from 2016. to 2022.



Source: Turistička zajednica grada Osijeka (2021.): „Prijedlog godišnjeg programa rada turističke zajednice grada Osijeka s financijskim planom za 2022.godinu“, Osijek: Turistička zajednica grada Osijeka, str. 3.

<sup>59</sup>Turistička zajednica grada Osijeka (2021.): „Prijedlog godišnjeg programa rada turističke zajednice grada Osijeka s financijskim planom za 2022.godinu“, Osijek: Turistička zajednica grada Osijeka, str. 3.



As can be seen in graph 1, in 2020 and 2021, there is a visible decrease in the number of tourist arrivals in the city of Osijek due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. After that, there is a significant increase in tourist overnight stays in the Osijek-Baranja County and the city of Osijek.

During 2022, there were 240,085 overnight stays and 112,183 arrivals, which compared to the data from 2021, brings an increase in overnight stays of 33% and arrivals of 40%. These are record numbers, even compared to 2019, which was a record year in tourism at the level of Croatia, including the Osijek-Baranja County. Compared to 2019, there were 2.6% more overnight stays and 0.96% more arrivals. 2020 and 2021 were marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, so tourism indicators were somewhat lower and the majority of guests in the east of Croatia were domestic guests. In 2022, the county was recording an increase in overnight stays by foreign tourists by 7% compared to 2019, which shows an increase in interest in Osijek-Baranja County as a continental destination recognized even beyond the borders of the Republic of Croatia.<sup>60</sup>

The area of the Baranja Tourist Board recorded an increase of 32.5% in overnight stays compared to 2019, and in the city of Osijek there was a 3.6% increase in overnight stays compared to the same year. If you look spatially, more than half of the overnight stays were realized in Osijek, i.e. 57%, 17% were realized in the area of Baranja, and 8% in the area of Đakovo of the total number of overnight stays in the area of Osijek-Baranja County. Last year's record is firmly held by September, when as many as 31,548 overnight stays were achieved. This is a record in the history of the Osijek-Baranja County as it is the first month ever in which more than 30,000 overnight stays were achieved. As expected for the continental part of Croatia, the increased number of arrivals and overnight stays in September was also achieved in May and October. But last year, an increase in the number of tourists was also recorded in the summer months, especially in June and August.<sup>61</sup>

The share of domestic guests continues to exceed half of the total number and for 2022 is 57%, followed by guests from Germany with 6%, Hungary with 3%, while Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Poland and Slovenia with just under 3%. The reason for the continuous increase in arrivals and overnight stays of domestic and foreign tourists lies, among other things, in the organization of large and increasingly internationally known events. When talking about

<sup>60</sup> OBZ - <https://www.obz.hr/index.php/k2-listing/item/3601-osjecko-baranjska-zupanija-u-2022-godini-biljezicak-40-vise-turista> (pristupljeno 26.05.2024.)

<sup>61</sup>Ibidem.

tourist arrivals, a very important segment is the organization of events, organized by the Evening of Wine and Art and HeadOnEast. Equally, Osijek-Baranja County and the Tourist Board of Osijek-Baranja County strive to support tourism workers with a series of infrastructure, marketing projects and grants in tourism. Over the past year, the offer of accommodation in the county area has also increased, with 16.8% more facilities providing accommodation services. The year 2022 was also a record year for the Kopački rit Nature Park. The institution's historical record is this year's number of visitors, 46,070 of them, which is an increase of 27% compared to last year and 10% compared to the record year 2019. The opening of the Tikveš Visitor-Education Center in May 2022 certainly contributed to this, a month that also records a historical record, which amounts to 11,000 visitors in a month.

### 4.3.SWOT analysis of tourism in Osijek - Baranja County

The SWOT analysis talks about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats present for the tourist destination.

Chart 1. SWOT analysis of tourism in Osijek-Baranja County

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developed infrastructure and developed cultural institutions: museums, theaters, galleries, libraries</li> <li>• the existence of higher education institutions in the field of culture</li> <li>• rich culture: archaeological, historical, natural and artistic heritage suitable for the development of cultural tourism</li> <li>• appropriate media interest and media coverage of the work</li> <li>• developed cultural and artistic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• absence of strategic documents</li> <li>• insufficient use of cultural institutions in the education of children and young people in order to raise cultural awareness</li> <li>• insufficient knowledge and inadequate protection of cultural heritage</li> <li>• insufficient integration of cultural assets into everyday life</li> <li>• insufficient tourism valorization</li> </ul>

amateurism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a significant number of regionally and internationally known events and memorials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inadequate and insufficient publicity</li> <li>• insufficient personnel dealing with communication and marketing</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• connecting culture and tourism</li> <li>• the possibility of funding cultural projects from EU funds</li> <li>• connecting with other regions and countries based on culture</li> <li>• protection and valorization of monumental, industrial and craft and multi-ethnic heritage</li> <li>• branding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deterioration of cultural monuments due to the influence of man and nature</li> <li>• unresolved property-legal relations</li> <li>• unsustainability of valuable cultural contents and projects valuable for the local community (example: Tvrđja/UNESCO; cinematographers)</li> <li>• further decline in the number of inhabitants</li> </ul>

Source: Grad Osijek (2014.): „Strategija kulturnog razvitka Grada Osijeka 2014.-2020., str. 8

Osijek-Baranja County boasts a rich cultural heritage, including well-preserved historical landmarks such as the Tvrđa fortress and the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul in Osijek. These attractions attract history enthusiasts and cultural tourists. The county is blessed with natural beauty, including the Kopački Rit Nature Park, a wetland of international importance. This park offers opportunities for eco-tourism, birdwatching, and outdoor activities along the Drava and Danube rivers. The region's multicultural population contributes to its vibrant cultural scene, celebrated through festivals, traditional music, and culinary events. This diversity enhances the appeal of Osijek-Baranja County as a destination for cultural tourism.

Like many tourist destinations, Osijek-Baranja County experiences seasonality, with tourism activities concentrated in the summer months. Off-peak seasons may see lower tourist arrivals and business revenues. Despite its cultural and natural assets, the county may lack

international visibility compared to more prominent European destinations. Efforts to enhance marketing and promotion on global platforms could expand its tourist base.

Expanding tourism offerings beyond cultural and natural attractions to include adventure tourism, wellness retreats, and agro-tourism can attract diverse visitor segments and extend tourist stays. Leveraging digital platforms and social media for destination marketing can raise awareness and attract tech-savvy travelers seeking unique cultural experiences and off-the-beaten-path destinations.

Nearby tourist destinations with well-established reputations and extensive marketing budgets may pose competition for Osijek-Baranja County in attracting international tourists and investment. Instabilities in neighboring regions or economic downturns can impact visitor numbers and investor confidence in the tourism sector.

## **5. ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL-HISTORICAL FACTORS OF DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT ON THE EXAMPLE OF OSIJEK - BARANJA COUNTY**

Osijek-Baranja County invests considerable efforts in the development of tourism, tourism products, promotion and branding of the destination. More than 600,000 euros have been allocated from the 2023 budget for the development of tourism, while this year around 850,000 euros are planned through various programs and grants.

### **5.1. The current state of cultural and historical factors in the development of Osijek - Baranja County**

This year, the Osijek-Baranja County holds the title of European Sports Region, and sports have proven to be one of the strongest generators of tourist activities. Step by step, the Osijek-Baranja County is building a beautiful, sustainable and very interesting hedonistic story that tourists who visit the east of Croatia really recognize.

#### **5.1.1. The most important cultural and historical factors of development**

Thanks to the natural, cultural and ecological conservation of resources, the Osijek-Baranja County has enormous potential for the development of various forms of tourism.

Influenced by traditional values and the multiple use properties of tourism resources, tourism resources were considered worthless for a long time. In recent years, people have begun to determine the correct values of tourism resources. However, due to the specificity of tourism resources, the question of evaluating their value was controversial.

#### **5.1.2. Development of cultural and historical factors throughout history**

At the beginning of the 18th century, the construction of the walls of the Osijek fortress, known as the Tvrđa, began. These walls were in the shape of a large irregular star. After the works were completed in 1722, the fortress became one of the most popular and largest

military fortifications in this area. Then, in 1726, the General Barracks building was built on St Trinity square in the Fortress. This building was built according to the instructions of the great Austro-Hungarian military leader Prince Eugene of Savoy and was at the disposal of the imperial military administration in the area of Eastern Croatia (Slavonia and Srijem). Since 1975, this building has been the Rectorate of Josip Juraj Strossmayer University.

Immediately after liberation from Turkish reign, at the end of the 17th century, a large number of Osijek mosques were converted into Catholic churches. One of such mosques was the Franciscan church of St Michael Archangel. This baroque church was built from 1725 to 1748 by Jesuit monks. It has two 47-meter high towers and dominates the entire Fortress. Its bells ring every Friday, at 11 a.m., as a reminder of the liberation from the Turks that took place on June 29, 1687.<sup>62</sup>

In 1732, the Franciscan monks in Tvrđa built a baroque monastery and the Church of the Raising of the Holy Cross. The main altar is decorated with a statue dedicated to the Mother of God of Osijek, which was rescued from the Maria Jud sanctuary in southern Hungary in the 18th century before the Rákoczi Rebellion.

However, the altar that is the most beloved and recognizable to the people of Osijek is the altar of St Anthony of Padua. That's why, since 1727, on the holiday of June 13, celebration called "kirvaj", has been held in the Fortress.

The main square of the old town is recognizable by the baroque statue of St Trinity Church, which was built in 1729 and is a votive statue that the plague, which had previously struck the city, would never return to this area. Many people and tourists believe that the statue of St Trinity in Osijek, is the most beautiful baroque monument in the Republic of Croatia. Nevertheless, similar votive statues can be found throughout the towns and villages of Slavonia and Baranja and throughout the territory of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. On the eastern side of the square is the Main City Guard with a watchtower. It was built at the beginning of the 18th century and today it houses the Archaeological Department of the Museum of Slavonia.<sup>63</sup>

The city of Osijek is known for Art Nouveau, a style that was popular throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The city is characterized by the magnificent city palaces located in the

<sup>62</sup>Ibidem.

<sup>63</sup>Turistička zajednica grada Osijeka- <https://www.tzosijek.hr/povijest-града-671> (pristupljeno 28.05.2024.)

European Avenue, which were built at the beginning of the 20th century in the Viennese Art Nouveau style. The largest of the buildings, the Post Palace, was built in the Hungarian Art Nouveau style. Classicist buildings dating back to the 19th century and the monumental Court Palace are located within that street.

Of all the houses along this street, the Museum of Fine Arts is the most visited. This museum has a rich collection of art paintings and sculptures. Portraits of Slavonian noble families from the 18th and 19th centuries can be singled out, as well as beautiful landscapes of Slavonia and Baranja by Hugo Conrad Von Hötzenndorf and Adolf Waldinger.

On the initiative of Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer, in 1894, the construction of the church of St Peter and Paul, con-cathedral of the Archdiocese of Đakovo-Osijek. For this reason, the people of Osijek call it a cathedral. After the older baroque church was demolished, this cathedral was built in just four years. Thus, since 1898, the panorama of Osijek has been marked by a 90-meter-high bell tower, which is the second highest in the Republic of Croatia and Southeast Europe.<sup>64</sup> South of Osijek's old town Tvrđa is Eurodom, a cultural and commercial center. This center is known as the glass skyscraper and the "twin towers" because it is 61 meters high and is the third tallest building in this city as well as in the middle Danube region.

## **5.2. Future development and exploitation of the tourist potential of cultural and historical factors**

Osijek is known for the "Advent in Osijek" event. This manifestation represents an essential element for the tourism development and marketing strategy of the city of Osijek, which is the bearer of the human and financial potential of this region. The city of Osijek is also the transport, cultural, economic and scientific center of Slavonia and Baranja. The event "Advent in Osijek" is primarily aimed at local residents, but also at numerous one-day visitors who come from near or far. All visitors can enjoy the pre-holiday charms of the city as well as additional cultural and artistic events organized throughout the city of Osijek.<sup>65</sup>

The potential of the future development of the manifestation refers to the connection and involvement of appropriate cultural institutions, sports institutions, numerous city businesses,

<sup>64</sup>Turistička zajednica grada Osijeka- <https://www.tzosijek.hr/povijest-grada-671> (pristupljeno 28.05.2024.)

<sup>65</sup> Ibidem., str. 12.

but also the community in order to create a synergy of all activities and get a stronger image of Osijek, the city of a positive and attractive Advent entity. This program was organized in 2020 and showed that a walk through the city, through the dispersion of content in several locations, can be considered an attractive tourist product that is recognized by the local community but also by other visitors from the region and neighboring countries.

The Festival of Lights represents a new artistic discipline that has come out of the museum spaces, into the streets and squares, among the people. Light artists use the entire city as a huge painting canvas, the buildings and monuments of the city as well as the squares, promenades and parks. Innovative art is created with light, which has an impact on human emotions, making people happy. It is an excellent project that focuses attention on projects and various forms of culture. It represents a way of enriching the life of the entire work. Kaleidoscope as a manifestation in development represents a tourist product that has the potential to further enrich the current offer in the cultural tourism of this destination.

An increase in tourist traffic is expected, compared to previous years, but it is difficult to predict at what level. Both the city of Osijek and the Osijek-Baranja County will strive to further develop the tourist offer of this destination and then emphasize and use it.



## 6. CONCLUSION

The potential of the future development of the manifestation refers to the connection and involvement of appropriate cultural institutions, sports institutions, numerous city businesses, but also the community in order to create a synergy of all activities and get a stronger image of Osijek, the city of a positive and attractive Advent entity. It is important to point out that the City of Osijek and Osijek-Baranja County represent a good synergy for urban and rural areas connected with the city's cultural and historical offerings and the entire urban culture of the city as well as indigenous locations. An increase in tourist traffic is expected, compared to previous years, but it is difficult to predict at what level. Both the city of Osijek and the Osijek-Baranja County will strive to further develop the tourist offer of this destination and then emphasize and use it. Osijek-Baranja County stands as a testament to the rich cultural and historical heritage of Croatia, offering a unique blend of tangible and intangible assets. The county's historical sites, monuments, and artifacts provide a glimpse into its storied past, while its vibrant traditions, rituals, and customs reflect the enduring spirit of its people. As one of the regions with the highest number of UNESCO-protected properties, Croatia, and specifically Osijek-Baranja County, demonstrates an impressive commitment to preserving both its material and living heritage.

The county's potential for cultural tourism is immense, driven by the increasing global interest in diverse and enriching travel experiences. The upward trend in tourist arrivals and overnight stays is a positive indicator of this potential being realized. However, to fully capitalize on these opportunities, a concerted effort from all stakeholders—cultural and sports institutions, local businesses, and the community—is essential. By fostering a synergistic relationship between urban and rural areas, the county can offer a comprehensive and attractive tourist experience.

Moving forward, the focus should be on enhancing the visibility and appeal of Osijek-Baranja County as a premier destination for cultural and continental tourism. By leveraging its natural, cultural, and ecological resources, and by promoting initiatives like cycling tourism, ecotourism, and rural tourism, the county can continue to attract a diverse range of tourists.

With strategic planning and sustained collaboration, Osijek-Baranja County can achieve greater recognition and establish itself firmly on the global tourism map, offering visitors a rich tapestry of historical and cultural experiences.

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