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HISTORY OF OSIJEK AND ITS AREA AS THE BASICS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST POTENTIALS IN THE OSIJEK-BARANJA COUNTY

POVIJEST OSIJEKA I OKOLICE KAO OSNOVA ZA TURISTIČKI RAZVOJ OSJEČKO-BARANJSKE ŽUPANIJE

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this work is to explain the development of Osijek and its area, as much as it is to emphasize its historical and cultural potentials. Due to the numerous layers of history, this area indeed possesses such potentials. The core of the work is Osijek's history in the context of the Austro-Hungarian history, so that the historical context, in which Osijek became a macro-regional centre of the Slavonia region with its current potentials, can be understood in a better manner. These potentials put Osijek not only on the national, but also on the regional tourist map level, so it is crucial to understand how they occurred. Bearing in mind also the potentials of its corresponding county as a whole, the work assumes the presentation of the history of the area as a micro-region. This analysis, due to the limitations of the proposed work, does not strive to present minor aspects of its history, but it is rather presented in an understandable and meaningful manner of the historical circumstances in which the most relevant historical facilities in the Osijek region, were erected, namely castles, churches and a plethora of monuments. As each of the aspects is considered individually, none of these facilities were popular enough to attract larger numbers of people (receptive tourism) so far, but perceived as a whole, Osijek and its surrounding area do possess substantial contents to become a well-known and elaborate tourist destination. Therefore, it is rather substantial to conduct a historical analysis of the region which can enable a better understanding of the development of the spaces in the 18th and the 19th centuries. Furthermore, the once geographically united space can thus be merged and united in culture and history using the means of tourism. The work consists of two main chapters: the history of Osijek as a city, and the history of its surrounding and corresponding geo-political area. It is written in the manner that chronologically follows the development of Osijek and its area, so that the origins of the current state could be understood in an easier fashion. The literature referred to in the analysis is limited to the contemporary sources in the Croatian language, and it encompasses relevant titles in the area of history and economics.

Keywords: *Osijek, Osijek-Baranja County, Đakovo, Baranja, Slavonian castles*

SAŽETAK

Svrha ovog rada je prikazati razvoj Osijeka i okolice, te staviti naglasak na povijesne i kulturne potencijale koje ovaj prostor, zahvaljujući svom povijesnom razvoju, posjeduje. Povijest Osijeka, potkrijepljena osnovnim povijesnim kretanjima u Habsburškoj Monarhiji (a nakon 1867. Austro-Ugarskoj Monarhiji), čini okosnicu rada. Važnost ovakvog pristupa je u prikazu povijesne pozadine uspona Osijeka na razinu današnjeg makro regionalnog središta Slavonije i razvoja svih onih povijesnih i kulturnih sadržaja koji taj grad čine prepoznatljivim ne samo u regionalnom nego i

nacionalnom okviru. No imajući u vidu ne samo povijesne i kulturne potencijale Osijeka, nego i potencijale koje nudi cijela županija, u radu se prikazuje povijest osječke okolice u onoj mjeri koliko je potrebno da bi se razumjela geneza nastanka najznačajnijih povijesnih sadržaja, poput dvoraca, crkava ili spomenika, koji se nalaze u blizini Osijeka. Zasebno gledani, svaki od tih sadržaja samostalno nema toliku privlačnu snagu, ali promatrani zajedno tvore iznimno atraktivnu cjelinu, koja bi se mogla turistički iskoristiti. Važnost povijesne analize leži u tome što se iz nje razabire i uočava duh vremena koji je oblikovao ovaj prostor, najviše u razdoblju 18. i 19. stoljeća, te koji geografski odvojene jedinice, povezuje u jedinstveni kulturni i povijesni prostor. Rad će stoga biti podijeljen na dvije glavne cjeline od kojih će jedna biti posvećena povijesnom razvoju Osijeka, dok će druga biti posvećena povijesnom razvoju osječke okolice. Rad je pisan tako da kronološki prati razvoj Osijeka i njegove okolice, čime se osigurava lakše razumijevanje geneze sadašnjeg stanja. Prilikom istraživanja uglavnom je korištena postojeća povijesna i ekonomska literatura na hrvatskom jeziku.

Ključne riječi: Osijek, Osječko-baranjska županija, Đakovo, Baranja, dvorci Slavonije

1. Introduction

We can trace the history of Slavonia from prehistory all the way to the present time, but the present Slavonia, in fact, owes its cultural and historical development primarily to its 18th and 19th century history, which followed the banishment of the Ottomans from these lands. The great Turkish war was took place from 1683 until 1699 and it had reaped significant success for the Habsburg Monarch, which managed to liberate its territories which had been ruled by the Ottomans from the 16th century. As the Republic of Venice and the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth joined forces with them forming the Holy League, initiated by the pope Innocent XI⁷⁹, the three allies led separate war operation on separate battlefields. Therefore, after the war, the Republic of Venice claimed the territory of Dalmatia, whereas the Habsburg Monarchy annexed Slavonia (Hanák, 1995., 90.; Zöllner, 1997., 173.).

Even during the war operations, when it became obvious that war against the Ottomans will end successfully for Habsburg Monarch, the focus of interest shifted to the question of the organization of the liberated territories. The Hungarian and the Croatian nobility wished to assure the return of the liberated territories and put it under the control of both the Hungarian and Croatian Parliament. However, Vienna quickly dismissed this option. The Austrian court put all the newly-liberated territories under their control, namely under the control of the Court Chamber (Šidak 1959., 1003.). The Court Chamber was in charge of governing the newly-liberated territories. Until the mid 18th century it has either distributed the lands to the nobility and the veteran generals, or sold them to load the state Treasury. Consequently, the major part of Slavonia will go to the hands of the foreign nobility and these families will affect the development of Slavonia in the following period via the large estates that they gained. They will also be one of the most crucial figures in the creation of the recognizable historical symbols in these areas.

2. Osijek in the 18th and the 19 century

After the retreat of the Ottomans, the foundations of Turkish Osijek were but a site of fire. Yet the imperial military experts and constructors decided as early as 1691 to engage in the reconstruction of the Osijek fort. Like centuries before, Osijek had an important strategic role and it was decided that the fort which would be erected should provide the stabilization of that territory and prevent Slavonia from being subdued again to the Ottomans in potential future wars. The remaining population of the Ottoman Osijek was relocated a mile westwards where they would expand as a

⁷⁹ Because of this role of the pope Innocent XI and his financial aids during the war, the Emperor Leopold I gave his nephew Livio Odescalchi estates in Srijem (Syrmia).

community and eventually become the Upper Town. Short after, eastwards from the fort, on the location of the former Mursa, another settlement will rise. It would become the Lower Town (Mažuran 1996., 9.-17.). These were the foundations of the present Osijek, set at the beginning of the 18th century.

Unlike the rest of Slavonia, Osijek began its recovery as soon as the beginning of the 18th century. Although the post-war conditions were extremely severe, in 1702 there was already between 3000 and 3500 inhabitants in Osijek. Still, it is crucial to point out that its recovery was not the result of the natural increase, but rather the result of immigration mostly from the German countries (Mažuran 1996., 25.). Furthermore, Osijek was the crossroads of the General-command for the whole Slavonia from 1687-1783 (Živaković-Kerže 1996, 13), so army and commandment staff were continually stationed in the city. Concerning the fact that it had been decided that a new military fort and base would be erected, there was a need for the labour power and craftsmen. All these factors have influenced the rapid development of the city, which would make it the biggest city in Croatia by the 1850s.

After years of planning and preparation, 1709 began the building of the fort of Osijek. The construction was rather successful, so that by the 1719 most of the walls and the facilities were erected, and by 1721 the fort was completed (Mažuran 1996, 27-29). At the end of construction, the fort was a military and urban formation that would not be found neither in Slavonia nor Croatia. The Baroque architecture style gave it its recognizable signature of the time in which it was created. The main square, richly decorated with the votive column to the plague before the Holy Trinity makes one of the most beautiful squares in Croatia.

On the other hand, the Upper and the Lower Town had their own developing dynamics. Although both settlements were literally villages at the very beginning, the vicinity of the fort combined with the military needs positively affected their growth and gave boost to the continual arrivals of new immigrants into both settlements. In the 18th century, both witnessed growth and development. The additional positive boost was the construction of the hard road across Baranja. The very Emperor Joseph II emphasized on its importance to the centre. During that period, under the patronage of the jezuits the Osijek gymnasium and post-service were founded, a German theatre was running, manual trade was blossoming, and all was followed by the increase in population (Mažuran 1996, 44-47). As the settlements around Osijek were separate administrative units, all the municipalities were united on 2 December 1786 by a decree by the Emperor Joseph II into a singular municipality which would be pronounced a free royal city in 1809.

Now united, Osijek witnessed intense economic growth in the 19th century, which led to shaping of the contours according to a proper Central European city. The transportation network that connected it with other cities of the Monarchy contributed to its further development. The importance of Osijek was not reduced only to its surrounding region; it was important as a city for the whole Habsburg Monarchy. By the second half of the 19th century, almost all the transportation of goods and commodities coming from the Ottoman Empire, Bosnia and the Principality of Serbia went through the city so that great number of agricultural goods was stored there, to be transferred later on to the other parts of the Monarchy (Živaković-Kerže 1999, 12). Such atmosphere benefited the growth of production and economics, which was reflected on the architectural development of the city. New streets, business facilities and residential buildings were built. Alongside Zagreb, at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century Osijek became the leading industrial centre of the Croatian lands. In 1910 there were 25 enterprises with 2057 workers and together with Zagreb, Osijek was constituting the third of the factory production in the northern Croatia (Živaković-Kerže 1999, 60). Inside the very city, in 1890 36.7% of the working population had belonged to the various industrial branches, while in 1910 that number increased 39.7% (Karaman 1981, 111). Due to this factors and the wealth of the city, in that period, Osijek got the

representative parts in the Upper Town. The Street of the European Avenue, St. Peter and Paul's church, The Županijska Street and a series of other representative facilities now reflect the affluence of the city and its citizens. Tenders to the architectonic projects applied from Zagreb, Sarajevo, Vienna, Prague, Budapest and other European cities.

In the wake of the First World War and the dissemination of the Habsburg Monarchy, creation of the new state formation and establishing new international relations, Osijek began to stagnate. The traffic network and the economic relations were changed, so the city began to lose its importance that it used to have centuries before. Osijek and Slavonia, once on the crossroads of the worlds, were now immersed into the new political formation which set other paths as their priority, leaving Osijek aside. Throughout the 20th century Osijek continued to grow, yet its recognizable contours had been established in the two preceding centuries.

3. Big estates in the Osijek-Baranja County

Unlike Osijek, which was granted the title of the free royal city and by 1809 was under the rule of the Court Chamber, the bigger part of the civil Slavonia was governed by the aristocracy. Castles emerged on their real estates, as the residences of the noble families, as well as the estate centres often surrounded by vast parks which became recognizable points of almost every manor. In the following text we will discuss the existing ones in the Osijek-Baranja County

3.1 Bilje/Belje

The first and most famous owner of the Belje estate was Eugene of Savoy – the commander-in-chief of the imperial army in the war against the Ottomans. As a token of appreciation, the Emperor Leopold I granted him the Belje estate (Sršan 1993, 88.; Šćitaroci 1998, 74.). The estate was extremely big and in 1851 it had 94.443 acres. The owner had built a hunting mansion, where he did not reside often due to the bad infrastructure in Baranja that assumed crossing the marshland. Following the death of Eugene of Savoy, the mansion was owned by the Court Chamber and from 1780 the House of Habsburg (Šćitaroci 1998, 79). In the mid 19th century, gardens were built around the mansion, spreading over eight hectares. Today, the mansion is uncared-for and in decadent condition, but its revitalization and reconstruction would undoubtedly contribute to the cultural offer of Baranja.

3.2 Valpovo

The Valpovo estate was the biggest estate in Slavonia. The Emperor Charles VI gave it to the baron Peter Hillebrand de Prandau as a gift for borrowing him 100,000 guildens to fight the Ottomans in the war. His descendants owned it until 1945 when it was nationalized (Šćitaroci 1998, 309, Martinčić 2009, 15). On the medieval foundations of the Valpovo fort a Baroque-Classicism castle was built and it became one of the most representative castles in Slavonia. Unlike other castles, this one is special for its well-preserved fragments of the medieval fort with which it is fused into a unique historical and architectural whole.

3.3 Donji Miholjac

Donji Miholjac was a part of the Valpovo estate until 1831 when the first division took place and from which emerged the Donji Miholjac estate. For a short period of time, the two feudal possessions had been joint, but after the death of Peter Hillebrand de Prandau they were separated for good. The Hungarian noble family of Mailáth von Székhely eventually took over the estate (Šćitaroci 1998, 132; Ham 1998, 52). Next to the smaller castle, the building of the new castle took place at the beginning of the 20th century, which was one of the last built castles in Slavonia. It was

constructed in the very specific Tudor style, which makes it unique compared to the other, predominantly Baroque or classicist castles in Slavonia. Its construction was triggered by the visit of the Emperor Francis Joseph II who had promised to pay another visit to Donji Miholjac. Following this, the duke Ladislav Mailáth decided to construct a more lavish castle. The Emperor never came back, yet Ladislav Mailáth kept good relations even with his heir Ferdinand who had spent some time in the castle just three months prior to his assassination in Sarajevo.

3.4 Našice

The estate of Našice had had several owners before it came into the possession of the Pejačević dukes in 1734. It will remain their property until 1945 (Šćitaroci 1998, 212; Martinčić 2009, 13). In less than two centuries as they possessed the property, the Pejačević family erected two castles in Našice, one of which had one of the biggest garden complexes in Slavonia. Two governors came from their lineage - Ladislav i Teodor Pejačević, but also the important female composer Dora Pejačević. Their Big Castle is one of the most significant castles in Slavonia. Today it is the home to the county museum and the local gallery.

3.5 Đakovo

Unlike the other aforementioned properties owned by the aristocracy, Đakovo was returned to the clergy after the Ottomans had left the area. As such, it initially became the centre of the Đakovo estate on which a humble Baroque cathedral was erected in the 18th century (Maković 2005, 15). With the arrival of Josip Juraj Strossmayer, an Osijeker, as the new bishop, a series of substantial changes took place. The estate was modernized and used for the economic purposes, that enable Strossmayer to set the ground for his politics and patronship (Živaković-Kerže 1997., 18.). The most important and representative symbol of Đakovo is the cathedral, finished in 1882 (Maković 2005, 115). Apart from the cathedral, the biggest contribution of the bishop to the city was the boost to develop the Đakovo stud farm, which is still running.

4. Conclusion

The key present issue of the present situation is that there is no systematic development plan to utilize the historical and cultural potentials in the Osijek-Baranja County. In the strategic documentation of the county, tourism is generally perceived through the development of rural and recreational tourism, while the investments into other potentials are rather negligible.⁸⁰ Accepting the artificially imputed interpretations of Slavonia as a rural area rich only in its natural resources and potential, the possibility of further development of other tourist potentials of this area are unnecessarily limited. Such condition is manifested into the big deficit in understanding and comprehending the historical heritage of Slavonia. Although the investments into the historical edifices are demanding and expensive, their long term cost effectiveness are unquestionable. Castles, garden complexes, churches and similar formations with the function of the economic development are paving the way to the development of the local industry, various culture manifestations and stronger identification of the local population with such recognizable symbols that are to be found within their own community.

The advantage of the historical locations in the Osijek-Baranja County is that they are all in relatively good conditions and would not require excessive investments. Naturally, in the long term perspective, it is necessary to invest a lot in order to get them back into a representative shape, like,

⁸⁰ (2011.) Development Strategy of the Osijek-Baranja County 2011-2013 (Županijska razvojna strategija Osječko-baranjske županije 2011-2013), pp 70;
<http://www.obz.hr/hr/pdf/strategija/2011/%C5%BDupanijska%20razvojna%20strategija%20Osje%C4%8Dko-baranjske%20%C5%BEupanije%202011.%20-%202013.pdf>, (accessed 8 Mart 2013.)

for example, the Eltz castle in Vukovar. In such condition, they would undoubtedly contribute to the tourist potentials of the whole county. Therefore, different perception of Slavonia and shifting the focus on its cultural and historical values will not occur unless the intellectual and the political elites put effort into changing the existing and perpetuating stereotypes about Slavonia.

None of the enlisted edifices individually have such historical and cultural importance to attract masses for more than a day. However, by networking the municipalities, the city and their corresponding county potentials in creating a general supply, this region possesses an enormous value. As the biggest city in Slavonia, Osijek, with the existing lodging facilities provides a centre from which any of the points can be accessed and reached within an hour. In that respect, the Osijek-Baranja County could enhance its tourist contents and general supply, eventually becoming a target destination which has a lot more to offer than just food and entertainment.

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