THE LACK OF INTERPRETATION AT FORTRESSES ALONG THE DANUBE IN SERBIA

Aleksandra STANOJLOVIC, Andjelija IVKOV-DZIGURSKI,
Aleksandra DRAGIN
University of Novi Sad

Abstract. One of the rules in tourism is that visitor demand depends on and is based on attractions. Talking about attraction interpretation necessitates is considering why a visitor at any time would like to visit a place, event or a site. Tourism in heritage sites is a relatively young and immature activity in Serbia, and the interpretation on these sites are lacking. This discussion examines the potential benefits of linking interpretation and heritage sites. Many heritage sites only recently have begun to pay serious attention to the implications of increasing visitor numbers and, that the level of tourism management and interpretation fall short of that appropriate for such important sites. Based on the literature and an exploratory study this paper argues that interpretation is essential to the management of such sites. The research focuses upon a case of Serbian fortresses, namely the observation of several well preserved fortresses along Danube river. It examines the activities and possibilities for visitation and interpretation on these fortresses, as it is considered that these fortresses have the great potential for tourism development.

Rezumat. Lipsa de interpretare la cetăŃile din lungul Dunării din Serbia. Una dintre reguli în turism este aceea că cererea vizitatorilor depinde şi se bazează pe atracŃii. Interpretarea acestei reguli are în vedere raspunsul la întrebarea de ce un vizitator doreşte să viziteze într-un anume moment, un anumit loc. Turismul siturilor de patrimoniu este o activitate relativ tânără şi imatură în Serbia, şi interpretarea pentru aceste site-uri lipseşte. Această lucrare analizează beneficiile potenŃiale ale legăturii între interpretare și siturile de patrimoniu. Multe site-uri de patrimoniu doar recent au început să acorde atenŃie implicaŃiilor numărului de vizitatori în creştere, dar nivelul managementului turistic este necorespunzător, deocamdată, pentru aceste site-uri importante. Bază pe literatura de specialitate şi un studiu experimental, această lucrare susŃine că interpretarea este esenŃială pentru gestionarea acestor site-uri. Cercetarea se concentrează asupra unor cazuri de cetăŃi sârbe, şi anume, observarea unor cetăŃi bine conserveヌte de-a lungul fluviului Dunarea. Se analizează activităŃile şi posibilităŃile de vizitare şi interpretare a acestor cetăŃi, considerându-se că aceste cetăŃi au un mare potenŃial pentru dezvoltarea turismului.

Key words: tourism, heritage, interpretation, fortresses, Danube, Serbia

Cuvinte cheie: turism, patrimoniu, interpretare, cetate, Dunăre, Serbia
1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism in heritage sites is still a relatively young activity, especially in undeveloped countries. Over the past decades, research into it has attracted the attention of a variety of academic researchers. It is well documented that tourism is the fastest growing industry in the world, and that heritage sites are the main attractions for various tourists. Heritage sites have become main tourism resources and, consequently, pressure from large number of visitors has diminished the pleasure of visit them and, resulted in undesirable impacts associated with infrastructural development and tourist activities (Bruce, 2006). The relationship between tourism and heritage resources (natural and cultural) has already gained a significant position over a considerable period of time. A balance needs to be maintained between the site, as a sensitive, irreplaceable resource, and the needs of the visitors. Despite this statement being true and well accepted both by academics and practitioners, there is no agreement on how attractions should be managed, and more fundamentally, how the interpretation of attractions should be put into practice (Henrich, 2004).

Culture has become an essential element of tourism system. Cultural tourism is also frequently quoted as being one of the largest and fastest growing segments of global tourism (WTO, 2007). Culture has become a basic resource from which the themes and narratives essential to ‘place-making’ can be derived, often seen as tying the physical assets and the living culture together. It has also been argued that culture is the sort of attraction. The image of a site, city or region becomes based both on physical assets, and a series of experiences built around those assets, generally extending to the “living culture” and the atmosphere of places (CIUTAT Project 2005). Many declining cities, have had to create new narratives of regeneration based on urban culture and heritage, as well as making a transition towards and economy of signs and symbols and the representations of space (Russo, 2002; Russo et al, 2005). Heritage attractions based on historical events, persons or periods are popular with contemporary tourists who wish to directly experience the past of the visited areas (Prentice, 1994; Wilson, 2002; Chhabra et al, 2003).

The central challenge in heritage tourism is the way of reconstructing the past in the present through interpretation. Cultural or heritage tourism interpretation is one form of a communication process, designed to reveal meanings and relationships of heritage through experiences with objects, sites, landscapes or illustrative media, just to mention a few. It is not simply presenting any kind of information, but rather a specific communication strategy that is used to translate that information into such a form of language that everyone can easily understand. (Richards and Wilson, 2006) Interpretation does not only describe historic facts, but creates understanding or emotional response, increases appreciation, awareness and enjoyment. It is important to recognize the scale of heritage attractions concerning possible market segments: only a minority of heritage sites can be considered as international attractions, the rest appeal to national, regional or local visitors only (Puczko et al, 2007). Appropriate, authentic interpretation has been regarded as a means of enhancing cross-cultural understanding and improving the quality of the visitor experience (Čomić, 2007). Tourism interpretation is considered to be the key to ensuring the quality of the tourism experience and successful interpretation is critical both for the effective management and conservation and for sustainable tourism in heritage sites. The perceptions of the visitors may be altered through different means of providing information for them.
that explains the value and possible interactions between visitors and the site environment, giving guidelines of adequate behavior (Richards, 2000). This information may be given, for instance, in such forms as brochures, maps, pamphlets and the like. Thus, interpretation may be also an efficient visitor management tool, a real strength of management at heritage sites, managing visitors and reduce the threats of negative visitor impacts and equally give an understanding of the history and culture of the country or city the site belongs to. Incorporating culturally significant landscapes into the heritage tourism resource requires active management to ensure realistic visitor expectations and appropriate behavior (Russo, 2002; Timothy & Boyd, 2006).

Since there is no neutral or merely physical space, most regard fortresses as being social constructions of power, laden with symbolic and iconic meaning. Rather than the meanings of a place being fixed, it is recognized that places are fluid and open to multiple interpretations and significations. Places, rather than being produced and maintained, are reproduced, represented and contested. Therefore, places and landscapes are works in progress, constantly being renegotiated, renewed, reworked, and contested by both groups and individuals, and contain multiple meanings for multiple groups. Appropriate use of interpretation allows a destination or an attraction to take control of its resource management which in turn allows those who have come to the place to enjoy improvement visitor experience. This in turn, as is already explained, satisfies them as customers and creates good word of mouth and may result in repeat visits. The spectrum of interpretative media is endless, raging from simple panels of printed text to 3d virtual experiences: passive methods providing visitors with one way communication (e.g. self-guiding trails) to active methods with the option of two-way communication (e.g. guided trails, touch-on media). Taking the form of visitor involvement to the delivery of the experience into account interpretative methods are either personal (demonstrations, personalization, enactments and guided trails) or impersonal (signs, displays, self-guided trails, animated and computer-aided models) (Puczko, 2006).

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to introduce and observe the Fortresses on Danube in Serbia in terms of the dimensions of interpretation to the management activity of this particular heritage sites. Firstly, fortresses are presented in detail, giving background information and an understanding of the overall importance of those heritage sites for Serbia. Then, the SWOT analysis is conducted and Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of those fortresses are presented. This will lead to recommendations and suggestions for possible improvements and future actions. In order to obtain valuable in-depth knowledge about the management practice, it was necessary to visit all the fortresses on Danube in Serbia, and observe it from the perspective of an usual tourist. Thus the study provides an overview of a heritage management by describing its activity in relation to on-site management. Prior theory (literature) and information from brochures available at the tourist office were used as a foundation and formed the frame and guideline of the observations. The observations were conducted in form of day visit. This allowed the researcher to identify the extent of interpretation and impacts at the site. The SWOT analysis of Danubian fortresses in Serbia is based on literature review and overall
appearance of sites as well as an investigation of the resources and facilities at the site through observation, in particular as an inventory and evaluation of the different sectors in terms of heritage tourism interpretation. Semi-structured interviews of people in tourism organizations and visitors about existence of interpretation and animation programs on all Danubian fortresses in Serbia is conducted.

3. BACKGROUND OF THE DANUBIAN FORTRESSES IN SERBIA

Republic of Serbia is small landlocked country in South-Eastern Europe. Its territory covers the southern part of the Pannonian Plain and central part of the Balkans. Serbia borders Hungary to the north; Romania and Bulgaria to the east; the Republic of Macedonia to the south; and Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro to the west; its border with Albania is disputed by the partially-recognized Republic of Kosovo. Belgrade is the capital of Serbia.

In Serbia, the largest and most important river is Danube river. It is also considered to be one of the main resources for tourism development – nautical tourism, cycle tourism, cultural routes, etc (Dragin et al, 2007; Dragin, 2008). Along Danube corridor in Serbia, there are well preserved remains of 7 fortresses: Fortress of Bac, Petrovaradin fortress, Belgrade fortress, Smederevo fortress, Ram fortress, Golubac fortress and Fetislam fortress. Being important heritage resources for Serbia these fortresses could maintain a high touristic visitation and exploitation in future. Most of the fortresses in Serbia are considered as cultural monuments of great or exceptional national importance, and are protected by the low, are in jurisdiction of Ministry of culture, and maintained by Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia, and regional cultural institutions. The level of preservation and conservation are significantly different from site to site, in this case, fortresses. Also the tourism development and visitation of sites are much higher in several fortresses within large cities as Novi Sad, Belgrade and Smederevo, where the fortresses are mostly reconstructed and used for public and touristic consumption. These fortresses have proper infrastructural elements, cultural programs, an adequate management and marketing systems. On the other hand, smaller fortifications in Djerdap region – Ram, Golubac and Kladovo fortresses, considerably lack in infrastructure, some of them are hardly available for visitation (Golubac) and proper management and marketing is non-existing, as well as interpretation and cultural programs on sites. As successful tourism development of tourism product based on these fortresses is not possible individually, there is the possibilities of their mutual developing trough cultural routes. The prospects of future tourism product development of those sites could be associated to the formation of cultural routes (Briedenhann and Wickers, 2003; Meyer, 2004) – theme of Military architecture in Europe, integrated into the Council of Europe programme in May 1995 and the Wenzel and Voban routes were awarded certification as a “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” on 16 June 2004. The fortresses on Danube– cultural route, nowadays is in state of project formation, and it is supported by the Council of Europe.

Fortress of Bac is a former military stronghold of powerful Hungarian and Turkish rulers, situated in Bac, in Vojvodina. Fortress has been in ruins for three centuries, but it is still impressive. Even though it is not directly positioned on Danube, it is considered as Danubian fort, as it is in Danube tourist gravitation zone. This valuable monument of
medieval culture was erected by the Hungarians in XI century and their king Karlo Robert of Anjou enlarged it in XIV century. In the late XV century the Bishop Petar Varadi renovated the city and also widened the Mostonga river to enable the boats to reach the fortress. Soon after Turkish victory over Hungarian army in the battle of Mohacs in 1526, Turks took over the Fortress kept it in their domain until 1686. It was badly damaged during the Rakoci's Uprising in 1705. With time, the Mostonga river dried out (Dedić, 2008). Today it is very important tourist attraction of this region, but with poor signposting and interpretation.

**Petrovaradin fortress** is fortification-urbanism complex on the Danube in Novi Sad, built on the foundations from Roman and medieval period, and based on Voban's plans, between 1692 and 1780 by military engineers of Austro-Hungarian Empire. The basis of the colossal fortress had several highlighted parts (Upper fortress in the central part, Lower fortress towards north - Wasserstadt, Bicorn bastion - Hornwerk in the south, the Island fortress - Inzelšanac and the Bridgehead - Brikšanac on the opposite side of the Danube). The colossal fort with its garrison could not be conquered with the military equipment of that time, and was therefore dubbed "The Gibraltar on the Danube". All the devastations so far missed the Petrovaradin fortress, so that it can be considered as one of the best preserved fortifications in Europe. Until 1951, the fortress was a military facility, when the civilian authorities are taking control of it. Petrovaradin fortress has been an important cultural and art center since 1951 (Dedić, 2008). Today it is one of the most visited tourist attractions in Novi Sad. Within the fortress there are the Museum of Novi Sad, hotel “Varadin”, three restaurants, Planetarium, Academy of Arts and 88 art studios, Historical Archive of Novi Sad, underground military galleries. The interpretation activities are rather simple, but there are the great variety of possibilities.

**Belgrade fortress** is located within the Kalemegden park on the junction of Sava and Danube. A Byzantium castle (VI and XII centuries), medieval fortified capital of Serbian state (XIII and XV centuries and in the end Austrian and Turkish military fortress (XVII and XVIII centuries) were built on Roman fortifications, erected here in the form of the Roman castrum (II century). Belgrade Fortress represented one of the strongest bastions in Europe. It was built according to plans of an Austrian general of Swiss origin Nikola Doksat Demorez. During the centuries, the fortress and the city have been ruled by Byzantines, Bulgarians and Hungarians. Serbian king Dusan and later Lazar tried to take the city without success, but in 1403, by the stipulated agreement with Hungarians king Stefan gets Belgrade and it became the capital of Serbia. During the reign of Dusan and later under the Hungarians, the fortress had been fortified due to the constant peril from Turks. Kalemegdan fortress have passed for several times from Turkish hands into the hands of Austrians and vice-versa. Finally the fort was surrendered to the Serbs in 1867, it has lost its military and strategic position and begins to develop into a public park. During the World Wars almost all buildings in the fortress have been destructed. The fortress today keeps also military and naturalistic museum, zoo, the church Ruzica, and the statue "The Victor" the work of Ivan Mestrovic. The Belgrade fortress is one of the most visited tourist attractions in Serbia (Dedić, 2008).

**Smederevo Fortress** is large fortress on the right bank of the Danube, at the confluence of the Jezava and the Danube river. It was erected around 1428 by Despot Djuradj Brankovic. This Fortress represents the most monumental military edifice in Serbia and one of the biggest medieval fortifications. Its main purpose was the defense against
Turkish attacks. When the Turks conquered it in 1459 it was the end of Serbian medieval state. Smederevo became the capital of Smederevo Sandjak, an important strategic stronghold and a trade center. The Danube, the Jezava and Petjevski brook gave the Fortress its triangular shape dividing it into two parts the Small Town and the Big Town. Small Town is a specially fortified ruler's court surrounded by water whilst in the Big Town there is a complex which consists of Archbishop's residence and residential area. The Fortress of Smederevo is an interesting place and for its history and architecture definitely worth visiting.

Ram fortress was built on the foundations from Roman and Byzantium period. The fortress has the shape of an irregular polygon with three closed and one open tower. It was built by Turkish sultan Bajazit II in 1483. It is situated between Smederevo and Veliko Gradiste. Within the fortification there are remains of Turkish church and old caravansary, 6 centuries old. Ram fortress is one of the best examples of military architecture from Turkish period. Today it is in ruins, and opened for occasional visitors. There are some plans for its restoration and tourism development, but they are still waiting donations.

Golubac fortress is a monumental medieval fortress on the bank of Danube, at the entrance to Iron Gate. Golubac is a town of great architecture where its rich cultural, centuries long heritage is present in each corner, wall or its tower. This medieval fortress is situated in National park Djerdap on the high cliffs at the place where the Danube narrows. The first written documents about the Fortress date from the war between Serbian emperor Dusan and Hungarian king Robert of Anjou, around 1335. Golubac had been a refuge of Hungarian rulers for a long time, but it often attracted Serbian and later Turkish conquerors. Golubac was under Turkish rule from 1427 until 1867, when it was abandoned. It is attractive, but only as a landscape, as it is very dangerous to climb to the fortress. It is not used for touristic purposes, even though it has enormous potential.

Kladovo fortress (Fetislam) fortification is situated several kilometers upstream from Kladovo on the bank of river Danube. The Smaller town was erected around 1524 as a starting point of Turkish assaults on Erdelj. During the Austro-Turkish conflicts from 1717 to 1739 the Smaller Town acquires strategic importance, thus the Greater Town is erected around it. After the last reconstruction Fetislam is turned into a artillery bastion. With the erection of Fetislam the Turkish defense line towards Hungary was completed and this line was made of fortresses in Smederevo, Kulic, Ram, Golubac and Fetislam. The Turkish garrison stayed up to 1867 when together with six other fortified towns was handed over to the Serbian prince Mihajlo. Today there are only the remains of this fortress, mostly badly maintained. (Stanojlović, 2009)

Danubian fortresses in Serbia are maintained by regional institutional departments for protection of cultural monuments, under the Ministry of Culture, which renovates, promotes and maintains the sites. Beside renovation and upkeep of the fortresses, it is the task of the governing body to promote fortresses and safeguard its atmosphere and constructions for future generations. The Serbian tourist organization, and local tourism offices additionally give support, assisting in marketing and tourism development. At the moment, none of the Danubian fortresses are on the World Heritage Site List, even though the UNESCO gave a support to the creation of cultural route “Fortresses on Danube” in 2009. Throughout the history a mixture of Serbian, Turkish, Hungarian and Austrian influences had a profound influence on the development of forts, the region and Serbia as whole. Even though these fortresses no longer have their military significance, they serve as
a recreational areas and some of them are tourist attractions. All of these seven sites kept their original character as constructions of military architecture. Beside the local community services, several restaurants, cafés and museums can be found within those sites. On some sites (Petrovaradin, Belgrade and Smederevo fortress) information desks are opened, giving visitors a chance to learn about history of the fortress. All the fortresses on Danube, are open the whole year for tourists, even though it is very dangerous to climb some of them because of litter and poor shape of infrastructure. Some fortresses as those located in Belgrade, Petrovaradin and Smederevo attract thousands of visitors from all ages and social groups with their culture, nature and events. A huge part of the visitors are made up by the local residents and Serbian visitors on educational excursion trips, as well as international tourists, coming to on a outdoor day recreation or visiting the museums, exhibitions and events. On the other hand, some fortresses on Danube are hardly visited at all, like Golubac, Ram and Fetislam. In order to develop tourism and enlarge touristic visitation on these sites, the management of the site demands continuous improvements on all of these fortresses. The elementary touristic infrastructure is needed on several locations – especially on Lower Danube region – Ram, Golubac and Kladovo fortress, and some minor improvements on fortresses in Bac, Petrovaradin, Belgrade and Smederevo. It is essential to improve the services in transportation, interpretation and sign-posting.

4. SWOT ANALYSIS

Usually SWOT is known in relation with market research and marketing planning. It means an analysis of the business environment, appraising the current market situation and identifying problems to determine objectives for the near future. Strengths and weaknesses are identified and any opportunities and threats facing a heritage asset is determined as a basis for further action taken. In fact, it is a conceptual presentation of data collected from both, external and internal analysis. Carrying out an analysis using the SWOT framework helps to focus activities into areas that are strong, and where the greatest opportunities lie. To be able to give a in-depth analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to tourism development it appears necessary to get into the field in order to obtain knowledge about the management of particular heritage sites. In this way, substantial information on the site’s unique strengths can be identified and possible weaknesses recognized. A comprehensive analysis of these elements helps to determine the steps to be taken in order to build on the strengths, correct areas of weakness, highlight advantages of opportunities and figure out plans to counter possible threats at each site. As all fortresses along the Danube corridor in Serbia are predicted for tourism development, the SWOT analysis will be conducted to point out the lacking elements, in order to obtain certain necessarily elements for tourism affirmation. In this case the SWOT analysis is conducted on the basis on whole Cultural route-Fortresses on Danube in Serbia.

- Strengths should be seen from the perspective of the customer and from the management perspective as they comprise the features of the heritage site that have special quality, are unique and strong. They are the features that in general differentiate from the competition and are particularly attractive for the visitors.

- Weaknesses represent those features of the heritage site that are especially weak compared with the competition and therefore would require improvement.
• Opportunities stand for favorable circumstances and interesting trends to exploit any particular strengths and potential for future development.

• Threats are almost always external features and can pose major problems and major effect on the future of a site. It is important to anticipate these threats and try to minimize or negate them.

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<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<tr>
<td>History, Heritage, Culture and Arts</td>
<td>Internationally unknown as a heritage sites</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nature and idyllic milieu</td>
<td>Bad quality of infrastructure and access paths</td>
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<tr>
<td>Available all year round</td>
<td>Access mostly by foot and long walking distances</td>
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<td>Variety of events through the year</td>
<td>Limited availability to some attractive assets</td>
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<td>Hospitality facilities (restaurants, shops...)</td>
<td>Non-existence of visitor centres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day-trip destination for outdoor activities</td>
<td>Lack of interpretation and information</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lack of accommodation facilities and transportation system</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mostly recreation and event oriented visitors rather than culture oriented</td>
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<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Potential of cultural route creation</td>
<td>Lack of maintenance and conservation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development of new services (visitor centres, bike renting, souvenir shops, etc)</td>
<td>Degradation and litter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation, visitor education, animation and events</td>
<td>Lack of funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emphasizing and improving tourist services</td>
<td>Conflicts between residents and tourists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developed management and marketing system</td>
<td>Image problems through unfavorable management, marketing or behavior of event visitors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provision of accommodation, internal transportation, museum and event activities</td>
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From facts presented in Table 1, it seems clear that, the strengths for tourism development in Danubian fortresses certainly share many aspects with the strengths of other heritage sites or attractions with similar characteristics. Therefore the analysis will confine itself to examine the weaknesses and opportunities more closely. The threats, in turn, can be considered as consequences of ignored or inadequately managed weaknesses and missed opportunities. As the core of this research comprises interpretation and visitor education, these will be the areas specifically focused on, when looking deeper into the SWOT analysis of fortresses. The first thing to point out is that those sites face is a great problem with degradation. The most widely reported risk to archaeological type of heritage, such as fortresses, is the lack of maintenance and conservation of remains. Damage to archaeological heritage is almost certain when excavated cultural features are left exposed without any management plan or resources for their protection, conservation or management. The impacts range from physical deterioration - such as the cracking and spalling of monumental stone structures, and the weathering and crumbling of mudbrick features - to the erosion and slumping of excavated cultural layers, as well as vandalism and
looting. It should also be mentioned that certain archaeological heritage sites are at risk because they are not valued as much as other heritage sites. Risks include a lower level or no statutory protection, or limited resources for protection, management and conservation, because that country allocates greater status and protection to monumental archaeological heritage than less visible and less imposing archaeological features. Other problem is seasonality of visits. While the winter season is extremely quiet and almost all the services only have restricted availability, the fortress are flooded with visitors in the spring and summer season. Moreover, due to the vicinity of hordes of residents in everyday life are pulled in. Together with the fact that there appears to be a lack of interpretation and explanatory sign-posting, this indicates that there are extensive impacts on the environment (natural and cultural) in that time. The seasonality could be partly addressed through the organization of several cultural events in the low season to shift the amount of visitors. Even though most of the mentioned fortresses not have large scale touristic visitation, certain levels of degradation through visitor impacts can be found. For the visitors the various long-term damages resulting from tourism do not necessarily become obvious, which may explain the lack of concern and the ignorance in their behavior in many respects. On the subject of insufficient amount of free promotional material, information and marketing of fortresses as valuable heritage sites, it can be stated that this goes hand in hand with interpretation. The process of interpretation for the visitor begins in the promotional activity, as the brochures obtained off-site set a certain scene in the mind of the visitors. Providing good information for visitors may encourage a match between visitor wants and the benefits fortresses can offer. The attractiveness of Danubian fortresses and the sensitiveness of the sites as heritage assets demand changes in the management towards more responsibility and concern.

5. INTERPRETATION ON DANUBIAN FORTRESSES IN SERBIA

From all the different tourist facilities, only those that were accessible at the time and therefore could be observed in terms of interpretation and visitor animation, were included in the research and rated according to different levels and extend of interpretation. This framework model provides an effective tool to consider the extent of interpretation in heritage sites, defined in terms of the level of interpretation that the several facilities within fortresses exhibit.

The criteria used for analysis was as follows:
- No-interpretation - basic information about fortress as heritage sites are not available.
- Simple interpretation - the basic information (maps, signs, brochures) and some services (guided-tours, electronic displays, special exhibitions and other interpretative tools to give detailed explanation to visitors) are available.
- Sophisticated interpretation - use of all tools and their integration in the visitor management with the aim to foster positive attitudes for conservation and appreciation to ensure the long-term protection of the site as well as continued visitor enjoyment.

Observing the Graph 1. it points out to the fact, that there is very little information and poor visitor service at the most of the fortress in Danube region in Serbia. Access to some of the places is constantly restricted. It is rather so, that in order to obtain materials or
information, one has to pay (e.g. entrance fees to museums), a fact that probably makes visitors reluctant to collect information at all. It can not be denied that the overall extent of interpretative information is available in different extent at Danubian fortresses in Serbia. While at Petrovaradin, Belgrade and Smederevo fortress, there are museums, info centers, souvenir shops, restaurants, available tour-guides, presentations, organized events and programmes on regular basis, on other sites (Bac, Ram, Golubac and Kladovo fortress) interpretation is kept definitely at a minimum. The one and only informative source with the possibility to familiarize oneself with the virtues and values of fortress and therefore the reasons for conservation, protection and responsible behavior was the activities of the museums. Nonetheless it should be noted that the terms of interpretation at those facilities do not embrace all tools at hand, and to some extent tools are already in use. However, the development of visitor management and education about value and significance of the sites has only recently begun to draw serious attention.

The facilities rated on a level of simple interpretation mainly offered maps, plain brochures and guided tours, without an addition to some specialty like electronic displays, and are like most of the museums, specialized on one single characteristic of fortress, as for instance, military history, archeology or art. The fortresses in Iron Gate region are rated on no interpretation level as they does not offer basic information, no maps or plain brochures, as there are no institutions of museum type on those sites. Some fortresses even did not have any kind of information on site. Beside all the different facilities, the entire environment in terms of signposts and explanatory boards at places of interest would possibly be rated on having no interpretation, if to be included in the research. There are some thematic events that are organized on the fortresses reviving medieval life and tournaments. Those moments in the contemporary life of fortresses on Danube are rather rare and as the basic infrastructure and interpretation are lacking on several sites, the animation programmes are not imaginable at this moment.

CONCLUSIONS

Fortresses, castles or their remains are important part of history, significant heritage sites and great touristic attractions. Every fortress in Serbia has its own “soul” to be sensed by those who visit it. Nevertheless, their history and stories are still untold and fortresses abandoned and forgotten. Only occasional visitors have the interest to climb dangerous cliffs or steam paths to Serbian fortresses. The conclusion can now be declared – the fortresses on Danube in Serbia lack in infrastructure, as great investments are needed for its construction. The basic information and interpretation on fortresses is lacking also – which is even bigger problem, as it shows the recklessness of Serbian nation to its heritage, as this segment does not necessitates large investments. The main reason for nonexistence of tourism development in Serbian heritage sites is weak local initiative, non-creativity or lack of investments.

First step in developing tourist offer based on fortresses in Serbia should be signposting and basic interpretation on sites and later great reconstructions and infrastructure building. In developing successful tourism destination or attractions the most important is creative thinking, idea and interpretation. By using the interpretation, thematic cultural and animation programmes the “soul” of these magnificent fortresses can be
revived. This is very popular and very successful way of incorporating heritage site in tourism sphere. Every historical site have the potential for tourism development, but as such sites are fragile, they must be used cautiously and substantially. Most important part of touristic development in Danubian and every other fortress is the adequate conservation, management and interpretation. Incorporating these tools in the development of Cultural route – Fortresses on Danube in Serbia, they will most certainly become more attractive, the visitation will rise, as well as the knowledge of the residents and tourists, and their mutual understanding.

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