

# FACTORS INFLUENCING THE FUTURE OF CULTURAL TOURISM

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***Abstract:** Cultural tourism has a vision to advertise, promote and provide new directions for the development of the economy. The factors that influence its future are related with the preservation and protection of cultural heritage on the hand, and on the other – with creativity, craft achievements, innovations in tourism management and aestheticization as a form of environment that is constantly being improved. The aim of the paper is to present the relationship between the factors affecting cultural tourism and its future development.*

***Keywords:** culture, tourism. development*

## **Introduction**

It is said that all types of tourism are cultural, but from an economic managerial and tourist perspective, cultural tourism is a different segment and type of tourism and one of the first subtypes in historical terms (e.g. pilgrimages, the Grand Tour). According to Pereiro (Pereiro, 2022) there can be observed ten perspectives and uses of the term cultural tourism:

- Cultural tourism as a psychosocial experience;
- Cultural tourism as a process of commodification of culture;
- Cultural tourism as a trend towards nostalgia;
- Cultural tourism as curiosity and learning;
- Cultural tourism as an escape to the ‘other’;
- Cultural tourism as a modern pilgrimage;
- Cultural tourism as a search for historical-cultural attractions;
- Cultural tourism as an industry of cultural representations;
- Cultural tourism as a specific form of travel;
- Cultural tourism as a specific way of consuming culture.

This complex phenomenon has changed in the last decades and has formed the new perspectives of cultural tourism (Duxbury & Richards, 2019; Richards, 2021), which includes the changes of the previous conceptual and moralistic idea of cultural tourism as ‘good tourism’ and ‘alternative tourism’:

- From traditional approaches based on production and consumption into a more creative tourism way. In creative tourism the tourist could learn about arts and crafts, artistic design, food and gastronomy, health, languages, spirituality, nature, and local sports;
- There is a new connection between cultural production and tourism, and also a new social profile demand of cultural tourism, younger and with high cultural capital;
- More links between culture and nature from the point of view of the visitors;
- Cultural tourism must be analyzed in a holistic way and not in a narrow sense, as culture produced for and consumed by tourists;
- The eventification and festivalization of cultural tourism;
- There are new niches and specialization within cultural tourism field: heritage tourism; food tourism; film tourism; literature tourism; music tourism, indigenous tourism;
- More demand by immaterial cultural heritage and the co-creation of experiences;
- More focus in living as a local resident.
- In conclusion, cultural tourism field is constantly changing and incorporating new cultural trends and agendas.

For example, Alan Titchmarsh in “Mr. Gandhi’s Great Journey” traces the evolution of the Grand Tour and takes us in the footsteps of young English aristocrats of the 18th century who undertook a long journey through Europe to get acquainted with the culture and its sights (Alan Titchmarsh, 2017). Today, this route still exists and passes through Paris, Monaco, Pisa, Florence, Rome, Naples and Venice, increasingly expanding towards modern culture, characterized by beautiful views, good food and masterpieces of painting and architecture.

The contemporary manifestations of phenomena and processes in tourism are influenced by trends such as digital realities, artificial intelligence solutions, adapted concepts and understandings of the tourism industry, etc. In turn, cultural tourism finds expression in various manifestations of culture as a whole and is characterized not only by its digital content, but also by real relations of time (past - future), of traditions and innovations in the creation of a cultural product. The product diversity of cultural tourism depends on factors such as human imagination, creative potential and energy invested in the interpretations of the visible result of culture and the invisible values embodied in material wealth. The future of cultural tourism is emerging as a sustainable and lasting trend that increasingly captures the dynamics of modernity, the cultural patterns of individual eras, symbols and emotions from the history of culture. The preservation of crafts contributes to the technological enrichment of the performance of the tourist service, which acquires originality and uniqueness and, in practice, bears signs of the constant generation of a continuous and self-reproducing culture. At the same

time, slow travel and its nuances contribute precisely to the development of local traditions and craftsmanship, which are the foundation of community life and its cultural distinctiveness.

### **The relationship between the development of crafts and the future of cultural tourism**

Crafts, as an integral part of the creative industries, create numerous opportunities for the valorization of cultural values, as cultural tourism prioritizes heritage and material artifacts. Crafts determine the tradition and the new beginning of trends related to the creation and development of culture. Greg Richards (Richards, 2021) considers “crafts occupy an ambiguous position between art and tradition, which problematises their relationship with the creative industries. This is gradually changing at the creative and tourism sectors which become more closely linked, and craft has become an important element of the development of creative tourism experiences.” The cultural context of crafts creates prerequisites for the development of cultural tourism. On the one hand, the preservation of cultural heritage and traditions through the implementation of crafts is a reason for the curiosity of the cultural tourist to study a certain material culture and intangible artifacts arising from it. On the other hand, the implementation of crafts itself is an occasion for cultural tourism, related to the study of the technological process and participation in creative industry initiatives. Crafts represent a rich heritage, reflecting and carrying traditions and culture. They contribute to the individual creative and artistic identity, which supports the various activities of producing goods, unique and specific in their nature. This process is accompanied by the development of culture and the resulting tourism.

### **The relationship between art and fine works and the future of cultural tourism**

Art in a broad sense includes everything that carries within itself creativity and the gift of creating results in various fields such as theater, ballet, dance performances, the exquisite craftsmanship of jewelers, sculptors, painters, musicians, etc. Art is closely related to the implementation of cultural tourism, because on the one hand it is an occasion for tourists to visit certain destinations and events, and on the other - it is a center around which various cultural events can be organized. Art is the bearer of the idea of cultural tourism. Just as Simonide defines dance as silent poetry (Fertiault, 1854), art gathers within itself all the possibilities that lead to the creation of a cultural product, generating eras and manifestations of the spirit of the times.

Art and culture are key features to the identity of a community and develop cultural heritage by enriching it through people's lives, through improvements in tourism infrastructure, through the preservation of material artifacts from centuries. Art indirectly helps in the strategic

planning of funds: how they will be allocated for the diversity of cultural activities, how they will contribute to a better context, more investments and a better spatial solution related to cultural tourism.

Ashworth defines culture as it relates to tourism in three ways. In the narrowest sense, it is what is called aesthetic productivity. Considered as “art tourism”, this is the simplest form of culture that can be commodified for tourism, usually associated with art and artistic products and performances; i.e. theatre, ballet, concert, festivals, museums and opera performances (Ashworth, 1995).

The second definition of culture is related to “heritage tourism”, which is a combination of preserved buildings, preserved urban landscapes and morphological patterns, as well as places associated with historical events and personalities (Mousavi., Doratli et al., 2016). The last and most general of the three definitions of culture is “place-specific tourism”, “which means that culture can be defined as a common set of values, attitudes and therefore behaviour of a social group” (Ashworth, 1995).

Art tourism contributes to the future of cultural tourism by:

- definition of the scope of organized events, including exhibitions, gorge, theater productions, concerts, etc. On the one hand, these events require careful planning of the means for their implementation, and on the other hand - targeting a viable demand for cultural tourism.;
- developing a kind of expressive forms of art that aim to create varieties of cultural tourism;
- encouraging art critics to present examples of world art and to assist with historical references to reveal culture spatially and through certain eras, etc.

### **The relationship between layers of architectural achievements and archaeological excavations over the centuries and the future of cultural tourism**

Architectural achievements are a rich basis for research into the possibilities for cultural tourism. On the one hand, they tell the story of the past through specific forms, and on the other, they are the distinctive features of modernity, through which they preserve a unique culture over the centuries. For example, Eastern Balkan cellular masonry in combination with brick cornices of the “wolf teeth” type is characteristic of this type of architectural art of the old Bulgarians during the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance (Tuleshkov, 2006). Semicircular pediments, known to us from medieval Bulgarian churches, are distinctive features of the architecture. Bulgarian cellular masonry with narrow stone rows is accompanied by specific architectural and decorative elements, including varieties of solar rosettes. The polychrome combination of stone and brick, characteristic of the Bulgarians, is a sign of the mixed masonry

that is applied. All these architectural achievements reveal the appearance of their locations and are interesting to study.

An opportunity for cultural tourism can be realized in connection with the gold treasures of Bulgaria. Following their discovery from prehistory to the present day, they represent a valuable asset of the material heritage and develop the future of cultural tourism by enriching its routes and by creating catalogs for visiting the places where they are discovered. During the heyday of the European Eneolithic civilization, the first gold in the world is mined and processed (4500-4000 BC) (Ivanova, 2024). It is known as the Treasure of the Varna Chalcolithic Necropolis, belonging to the civilization of Culture Varna and includes 990 gold objects weighing over 1.5 kilograms (in only one of the excavated graves - No. 43). Research on the artifacts found so far from the Varna Necropolis shows that goldsmithing in these places began between 4600 and 4200 BC. Albena Simova summarizes that “the gold objects are total over 3,000 and weigh more than 6 kg, and their presence, as well as the technology of their manufacture, overturn the ideas about the prehistoric development of man and illustrate perhaps the first stages of the emergence of a class society and the emergence of the earliest known prehistoric proto-civilization in Europe.”(Ivanova, 2024)

In 2006, the Hotnitsa Treasure is discovered in a layer of earth dating back to 6000-5000 BC. The find, a millennium older than the Varna gold treasure, said to be the oldest in the world, categorically confirms that the earliest metal mining and metallurgy in the ancient world is located on the Balkan Peninsula in what is now Bulgaria. The gold objects are found in the Hotnitsa mound near the village of Hotnitsa and are 44 pieces of jewelry with a total weight of 312 g. Their chemical composition is 92% gold and 7.5% silver. The purity of the gold is 21-22 carats and it is found in a residential building, which gives reason to believe that people used the jewelry in their everyday lives for decoration, and not only for ritual purposes. It is assumed that the civilization of the 6th and 5th millennia BC, which made the jewelry in the village of Hotnitsa, is older than the Egyptian and Sumerian.

Near the Bulgarian village of Dubene, Karlovo, over 20 thousand gold finds are found, known as the Dubene Treasure, with a gold purity of 18 to 23 carats and including: beads, gold rings from necklaces, earrings, spirals, hairpins, small gold amulets and other extremely fine ornaments from the early Bronze Age, dated at about 3000-2500 BC. This refutes the thesis that the gold is mined and processed in Troy, and not in our country.

The most ancient treasure discovered in our lands so far, considered to be of Thracian origin, is the Valchitran treasure. The find consists of 13 vessels with a total weight of 12.5 kg, made of gold nugget and with natural admixtures of silver, copper and iron alloys and has been

defined as the most mysterious gold treasure, dating back to 1600-1400 BC. (immediately before the end of the Bronze Age) and is recognized as an unsurpassed example of early Thracian art. It is assumed that the treasure originates from the area between the mouths of the Tisa and Ogosta rivers and is a direct witness and participant in the ancient Orpheus mysteries - the triple cup is used for the ritual mixing of wine, milk and honey or wine and intoxicants.

The treasure from Duvanli, Plovdiv region, dated around the 6th century BC and has been studied by Prof. Bogdan Filov between 1929 and 1931. Later it is described in detail and published. It is believed that the complex is an Odrisian royal necropolis, but some scholars insist that they are burials belonging to the dynastic house of the Bess. A description of some priceless objects is discovered in the works of Homer. The necropolis consists of 50 tombs, which belong to different eras, and contain exquisite gold ornaments.

The Kravevo treasure is a group of 47 gold, silver and gilded silver objects - gold applications for decorating horse ammunition, a silver horse breastplate, gold earrings and gilded silver bracelets - discovered during the study of a Thracian tomb near the village of Kravevo, Targovishte municipality. It dates from the first half of the 3rd century BC.

The Rogozen treasure is a Thracian silver treasure discovered in early 1986 in the village of Rogozen near Vratsa. It consists of 108 phials, 54 jugs and 3 cups, i.e. a total of 165 objects made of high-quality silver, some of which are gilded. It weighs more than 20 kg. This is the largest treasure found in Bulgaria, dating from the end of the 6th to the first half of the 3rd century BC. It is assumed that the treasure belonged to a local Thracian ruling family from the time of the greatest flourishing and power of Thracian culture and the Thracian states on the Balkan Peninsula. The name of the Odrisian king Cotys is inscribed on several vessels, and on one - the name of his son Kerseblept.

One of the archaeological finds of the 21st century is the Thracian mound Svetitsa, in the Valley of the Thracian Kings near Kazanlak. The mask of Teres, discovered by Dr. Georgi Kitov there, is similar to the famous mask of Agamemnon. It is made of pure 23.5 carats of gold and weighs as much as 672.5 grams. Until then, several Thracian gold masks are known in world archaeology - from Mycenae (Hellas), Tribenište (near Lake Ohrid) and Sindos (near Thessaloniki). However, all of them are made of thin gold foil and their weight is significantly less than that of the mask of the Saint. The mask of Teres is indeed different, because it has the role of a phial - it is used for ritual drinking of wine during religious ceremonies.

A gold ring with a monogram is carved on it - an Olympian-rower is found in the mound, bronze mail armor, a large iron sword and ceramic vessels are removed. It dates from the middle and second half of the 5th century BC.

The Borovo Thracian treasure dates from the 5th-4th century BC. and consists of gilded silver vessels decorated with animal protomes and mythological scenes. It represents a ritual service of five silver vessels with gilding - three rhytons, a rhyton jug and a bowl with inscriptions on three of them, associated with the Thracian king Cotys I (383-359 BC). It is assumed that they are given to him by a Thracian allied ruler from the city of Boeos, where there was probably a sanctuary.

The treasure from the Mogila mound near Vratsa dates back to the 4th-3rd century BC. It is discovered in a royal tomb associated with the ruling dynasty of the tribals, who inhabited the lands of the current Vratsa region, in the 4th century BC. Two silver jugs, four phials, bronze vessels and various weapons are found - numerous bronze pointed arrowheads, iron blades, a bronze helmet, a unique silver knemis (kneecap) gilded in places with very rich decoration. A gold wreath resembling laurel branches weighing 205 g of purest gold, massive gold earrings decorated in the lower part with figures of sphinxes and plant ornaments, 47 gold applications are also discovered.

Kapinovo gold treasure is from 1987. It contains 30 objects, including unique gold jewelry without analogues in the known Thracian and ancient Greek world. It is a gold chain with a complex weave, to which are attached ten voluminous acorns, two almonds and an amphora in the form of a ram's head with a rosette. The chain ends with a clasp and is a true jewelry masterpiece.

The Lukovita Thracian silver treasure, dating from the second half of the 4th century BC. and consists of two groups of objects: plates, applications for horse equipment and vessels (five phials, three jugs and one bowl), made of silver, some of which are gilded in order to enhance the artistic images and emphasize the decoration.

The Letnik treasure, dating from the mid-4th century BC - the time of the Odrysian ruler Cotys. It consists of 49 jewelry-made silver applications with gilding, part of horse ammunition with a bridle and a breastplate.

The treasure from Sinemorets, is discovered in 1995. Over 180 jewelry items are found - a gold necklace with a bull's head and inlaid precious stones, gold earrings, silver discs, part of ritual clothing, ceramic sculptures, etc. (Ivanova, 2024)

The silver treasure from the village of Galiche is a unique piece of art from the 2nd century BC. The objects are round, slightly convex appliques (phalerae), used for attachment and decoration. The treasure is discovered in 1918 and contains 24 silver objects with gold decoration, of which 14 have survived to this day. It is assumed that the objects are part of a

larger treasure of Thracian warriors, buried either during the Celtic invasions or later, during the hegemony of the Romans.

The treasure in Kitovata Mogila is located near the village of Krushare in Sliven. It represents a Thracian burial from the Roman era at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD of a noble and revered as a victorious woman, buried with a glass rhyton, three gold rings with agates, silver coins and a gold wreath, as well as two bottles with fragrant oils and one in which the tears of the lady's mourners are stored.

The Preslav Gold Treasure is the largest discovered treasure from the First Bulgarian Kingdom. Over 120 ornaments made of 14- and 22-carat gold, as well as utensils, clothing accessories and coins, are found, the latest of which are Byzantine, minted during the time of Emperor Romanos II.

The Panagyurishte Treasure consists of 9 vessels made of 23-carat gold with a total weight of 6,164 kg. It is discovered near Panagyurishte and dates back to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. It belongs to a ruler of the Thracian Odrysian tribe and is used for religious mysteries and rituals.

The great variety of golden treasures and the mastery of architectural achievements must be studied in detail in relation to cultural tourism. The past determines the future in a sense and it is essential to seek and discover all the wealth that a territory can offer. This helps to enrich cultural tourism and to modernize its forms of manifestation.

### **The relationship between aesthetics and its creation and the future of cultural tourism**

Aesthetics is a kind of pleasure from contact with the cultural product of man and it is a sought-after result of experiences related to cultural tourism. As Br. Koprinarov (Koprinarov, 2016) points out, "in modern conditions, cultural tourism is acquiring a new dimension. Today, it embodies the ideas of the intellectual and moral solidarity of humanity and is defined as one of the most promising directions in the field of tourism. In cultural tourism, there is an aesthetic experience, spiritual enrichment and a sublime attitude towards the cultural and historical heritage of humanity." Ivaylo Lazarov (Lazarov, 2023) claims that "aesthetics is a philosophical science of art as a type of cultural activity, which is incomparable with anything else in the artistic recreation of reality. The German philosopher Hegel calls aesthetics "the philosophy of fine art"". Cultural tourism contributes to building its own philosophical concept, relating to manifestations of different types of arts. And since the experience is not a product/goods (Koprinarov, 2016), the intangible feeling of aesthetic perception of the cultural tourism



product is indirectly considered, i.e. the so-called experience economy deals with the needs for experiences that have their own economic value.

“Aesthetic experience is realized as a deeply personal, internally free, generating a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction in itself, through its very realization as an individual act, process. But at the same time, aesthetic perception and experience, the aesthetically affecting form, have the ability to connect the intimacy of the experience, specific impressions and images with different layers of the spiritual life of man and mainly - with the world of human values, norms and ideals.” (Bulev, 2015) Aesthetic experience includes the essence of human interaction with the outside world in terms of a sense of beautiful and sustained content. How relevant is this to cultural tourism? In conditions of an experience economy, more and more people will look for a way to visualize their aesthetic perception through actually existing forms and physical structures. That is why it is of particular importance that cultural tourism develops its capabilities and offers a platform through which people feel aesthetically provoked to seek, find and explore natural phenomena such as the Belogradchik Rocks, to experience the spiritual and material essence of phenomena or givens such as water and the presence of fountains in individual areas. Thus, cultural routes such as “The Most Interesting Fountains near Varna” (Popov, 2024) can be offered and evoke aesthetic sensations in nature. The 553 fountains (Popov, 2025) around and in Varna identified by the local history study of fountains in the Varna region provide information about the current state of old fountains that need preservation and protection and reveal the authentic traditions in their construction, contributing to the aestheticization of the environment. Water as a natural limited resource is of particular importance to people and with its natural power and beauty creates unique landscapes and views from the point of view of art. In its essence, it is an indispensable resource for cultural tourism, carried out in connection with nature and its vast resources.

In her research, Tanya Parusheva defines culture as consisting of “behavioral patterns, knowledge and values acquired and modified over generations. It is the foundation of the process of development, preservation and strengthening of the independence, sovereignty and identity of the human community” (Parusheva, 2020). The phases in the development of culture are as follows: culture 1.0 – culture is a by-product of industrial growth; culture 2.0 – culture is an industry; culture 3.0 – culture is a source of new value. In this context, a concept for the new paradigm of cultural tourism by T. Parusheva is presented, namely: “Sustainable cultural tourism is a specialized type of tourism that includes trips to visit cultural and historical landmarks of a given destination; getting acquainted with the cultural heritage, values and way of life, arts and crafts, traditions and customs of the local population; participation in cultural

events and creative activities. It satisfies the cultural needs of society, creates opportunities for cultural exchange and promotes cultural diversity. While observing the principles of sustainable development, it generates economic, social and environmental benefits for visitors, the cultural sector and host communities". To seek the connection between literary sources and the development of tourism is one of the tasks of the modern tourist.

### **The relationship between the study of literary sources and the future of cultural tourism**

The study of literary sources was implemented by the regional library "Stiliyan Chilingirov" - the city of Shumen, which "recognizes in the literary route an innovative and modern way of presenting authors and titles in the context of the overall cultural and historical heritage and cultural tourism. The program was launched in 2007 with the development of a literary route based on the novel "Istanbul" by Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk within the framework of the project "Orhan Pamuk and the city of Istanbul. Balkan parallels".

The website (Regional Library "Stiliyan Chilingirov", 2025) states that "the Shumen library is the author of eleven literary routes - eight on the artistic world and the life path of significant names in our national literary heritage such as Iliya Blaskov, Vasil Drumev, Dobri Voynikov, Sava Dobroplodni and Stiliyan Chilingirov; two on the novels "Istanbul" and "Museum of Innocence" by Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk and one on the creative legacy that Chudomir created during and after his trip to the Republic of Turkey in 1932. A large part of the routes are presented in the guidebooks "Places of Memory" and "Literary Guide" published by the library. Another interesting route is that of the writer, philosopher and teacher Todor P. Todorov - Enchanting Heights: Literary and Philosophical Trajectories of the Mountain. "The route will start along the high-mountain "places" in philosophy and literature. It will explore the vertical plots and movements from the biblical heights, through Plato, the Middle Ages, the sublime and enchantingly diabolical of Romanticism, to "The Magic Mountain" by Thomas Mann and "The Impusion" by Olga Tokarczuk. The mountain has always been a topos of the exceptional, an object of contemplation, a source of revelation, an imaginary and real destination, a journey and a very special place of the unearthly," says the author of the literary route Todor P. Todorov (Todorov, 2024).

The "Read Sofia" Foundation organizes the so-called literary routes, which follow the cultural outlines of the work of famous authors and create a resource for cultural tourism. The future lies precisely in these innovative approaches to reading and discovering cultural routes - a reflection of literature as a whole.

## **The relationship between tourism resource management and the future of cultural tourism**

The new model for managing the tourist's free time is closely related to the opportunities he discovers as an active consumer of tourism services. He undertakes shorter and safer trips, preferring ground over air transport (Ribov, 2023). When preferring air transport, he resorts to low-budget airlines. He uses the Internet for his trips and for purchasing such, sometimes carried out a day or two before departure (last minute). He buys incomplete combinations of services with a requirement for their personalization, thus initiating the formation of a tourist package, i.e. actively participates in the process of managing the tourist service. The modern tourist tends to show interest in authentic experiences and to create them, having previously informed himself about the possibilities. The price remains a key factor, but he prefers to orient himself towards suppliers who offer more preferences.

The tourist is not passively oriented towards an option that is offered to him, but participates in the formation of his trip with a specific purpose and with specific experiences for which he is willing to pay the price. He communicates, specifying everything that interests him and on this basis makes an informed decision, depending primarily on him, and not on external factors. In this sense, the tourist's perception of the offered tourist product and his understanding of what he should do has changed. It is characteristic that there is a change in the criteria and their hierarchy when choosing a specific tourist route. For some trips, the price is not the most important thing, but a set of amenities that he could benefit from; for others, the amenities are not of primary importance, but the very idea of the trip. All this is a consequence of the dynamic life of modern man and his desire to control his own initiatives even in relation to his tourist routes.

There are three visions for the future of cultural tourism, described as utopian, dystopian and heterotopic, which we expect to coexist to varying degrees at the destination level, even if some modes of consumption and management may prevail in some contexts (Matteucci, Koens, Calvi, Moretti, 2022). In any case, the vision for the future of cultural tourism depends not so much on the philosophical paradigm of society, but on the real possibilities for implementing such tourism, i.e. on the resources, on the natural features and on the peaceful conditions for developing the potential for tourism in a particular place. The factors that influence the future of cultural tourism will increasingly grow and become diverse, according to the creative possibilities of people to combine them in a way suitable for the implementation of interesting cultural events. Moreover, the future of cultural tourism depends above all on the person, on

his attitude to perceive culture as part of his environment and on his desire to develop it digitally and in reality according to the specific contexts.

## **Conclusion**

Cultural tourism creates diverse opportunities for a future vision of culture as a whole. It is an integral part of active research and experimentation in relation to social phenomena and culturally specific events. Its continuous development depends on combining available resources, through which added values can be sought. Its future is connected with the preservation and protection of cultural assets, which predetermine the direction of its further manifestation.

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