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Study on the key natural assets and cultural heritage in Montana and Pirot municipalities

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Introduction: The idea and the concept of heritage

The concept of heritage is multifaceted and complex. Heritage can be seen in the cultural- anthropological sense, as the heritage of humanity. What belongs to this heritage of humanity is not only what is natural -original and culturally man made, but also what was shaped by the interaction of culture and nature in general (Cifrić 2010). Understanding of the concept of inheritance has changed over time which influenced the number of definitions that determine the term, too.

UNESCO, as a reference institution in the field of heritage, whose documents are regarded as the international legal basis for the protection of stored elements of the past in countries around the world, in its *International Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* in 1972 gave one of the most cited definitions of cultural heritage: "Cultural heritage refers to monuments, groups of buildings and sites that have historical, aesthetic, archaeological, scientific or anthropological value. "There are three main components in the definition of cultural heritage: monuments (architectural works, monumental sculptures or paintings, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave housing or combination of forms, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science), groups of buildings (groups of individual or connected buildings which, regarding their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science), places (people's works or the combined works of nature and people, and areas including archaeological sites which are of great value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological and anthropological point of view) (UNESCO 1972). The pragmatic definition of a holistic approach in terms of integrating natural and cultural heritage. Over time, the UNESCO concept of defining expanded by including new categories of material heritage. The crucial thing, however, was the inclusion of intangible cultural heritage through the adoption of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, by the General Assembly of UNESCO in 2003. Intangible heritage is broadly defined and includes: oral traditions and expressions, language in particular, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and space/ universe, traditional crafts (UNESCO 2003).

Changes in the theoretical discourse of heritage as well as key processes (technical - technological and socio-economic) at the end of the twentieth century have influenced the change in legacy policy. The concept of protection and care of cultural property was replaced by a new approach to the management of heritage which does not function in isolation but has been developed in the context of the environment and the surroundings, in the context of the socio - economic development, as well as in the context of urban planning and construction. In this way, elements of heritage are no more seen as objects for the study of the past, but as the potential for community development (Willems, 1998). This led to the expansion of the criteria for evaluating heritage and nowadays priorities for evaluating heritage are shifted to the social and economic values.

Today's cultural heritage has an important place in the strategy of European integration. A number of strategic documents, in different contexts, have included cultural heritage as a subject of international cooperation programmes. European policy and principles in the field of cultural heritage are regulated by the thematic conventions, declarations and recommendations, primarily by the Council of Europe and UNESCO. *Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society* (also known as Faro Convention) of 2007, is considered to be reform, because it makes a milestone in the understanding and the role of cultural heritage, predicting instruments for raising awareness about its value and importance. This reform convention offers a new vision, role and course of action in the preservation of cultural heritage, which is treated as a resource for sustainable development of society. It has emphasized the social aspect, putting the category of society in the title of the convention. Faro Convention has made another step forward and offered cultural heritage as a platform for intercultural dialogue.

Developing awareness of the utility values of heritage in a contemporary context has also encouraged the tendency of its economic evaluation and one of its most common forms is tourist valorization of cultural heritage, by which the heritage elements are provided with financial sources for conservation and better public access as well as communication with visitors. So far, the most effective way of creating concerns about heritage and raising awareness about its value through economic valuation has proved to be putting it in the function of improving tourism

¹(Jelinčić, 2010). When the public realizes that cultural heritage can be a revenue generator, the need for its preservation and the need for long-term management, which are mediated through cultural policy and policy in the tourism industry grow rapidly.

However, the increasing emphasis on cultural heritage as a source of economic development can be harmful, if its economic dimensions are favoured in relation to cultural values and other features that heritage has for the community and society as a whole. This fact points to the principle of optimality use and commercialization, and in this sense the model of sustainable development is considered to be the most adequate from the standpoint of management succession too, given the fact that the current economic value is not the only factor within it, but that it also includes values relating to the number of generations, meaning that apart from the existing economic parameters, cultural parameters are also taken into account.

The protection of heritage

The protection of heritage involves research, study, documentation, preservation, legal and technical (physical) protection, presentation, use, management. The goal of protection is the preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage values and the creation of conditions so that they can be transmitted to future generations.¹ Sustainable protection policy should not be based solely on the technical procedures of conservation, but should also include an assessment of its use value. The modern concept of protection means that it is not enough just to preserve the buildings in historical areas and cultural resources, but these areas should be allowed (enabled) to develop, with the criterion of preservation of the essential characteristics. For this reason, it is essential to identify the limits of change and to achieve harmonization of conservation requirements and the goals of urban planning (Roter-Blagojević, Nikolić, 2008).

Modern society recognizes that the natural and cultural heritage is our environment, that it is a basic and inseparable part of humanity and that combined and parallel operation is necessary to enable their joint preservation. This approach resulted in an integrative concept of heritage conservation, common, unified concern for the natural and cultural heritage. Integrative

¹ See the website of the National Council for Culture of the Republic of Serbia:
www.nsk.gov.rs/doc/zakljucci/O%20stanju%20u%20oblasti%20zastite%20kulturnog%20nasledja.doc

care is a part of the overall framework of sustainable development, which consists of balanced economic development, social balance and protection of the environment and cultural heritage.

Since the longstanding exclusive *top down* approach to protection proved unsustainable, participatory approaches, which include the involvement of various participants in the system of heritage conservation are promoted today at the international level. Having in mind that heritage can be perceived and used in various ways, as well as that there are a number of different "producers" or creators (public / private sector, formal / informal producers) it is now at the level of international policies to promote the ideas of creating so called heritology communities and networking of all stakeholders (from individuals to institutions) in the system of inheritance (Srećković, 2012). The principle, which is based on the active role of local communities, is particularly promoted through the UNESCO *Convention on intangible cultural heritage* in which it is stated that communities play a key role in the identification, preservation and use of cultural heritage (UNESCO 2003).

Regarding cultural heritage protection in Serbia, it is regulated by the *Law on Cultural Property* (Official Gazette RS 72/94). The Republic of Serbia is also a signatory to key international conventions that regulate the field of preservation of cultural heritage, but only a few of them were ratified by the National Assembly, which is a prerequisite for their entry into force. The following conventions were ratified: *The Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe* (Granada 1985), in force since 2001; *The European Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage* (La Valletta 1992), in force since March 2010. *The European Landscape Convention* (Florence 2000) and *Faro Convention* (2007) were also signed.

The field of nature conservation in Serbia is normatively regulated by the *Law on Nature Protection* (Official Gazette of RS no. 36/09 and 88/2010) which governs the protection and preservation of natural, biological, geological and landscape diversity. Other acts that directly or indirectly relate to nature and natural resources are also significant for normative regulation in this area. By the harmonization of legal regulations in the field of environmental protection and nature with the European Union regulations, which is in progress, in the area of environmental

protection and nature, European and international standards are taken into account and applied. What also contributes to the improvement and harmonization of the protection of nature is the implementation of the provisions and principles of international conventions to which our country is a signatory.

The management of heritage

The management of cultural heritage is defined as a technical process of managing and use of material culture, which is regulated by law, professional ethics and state policy (Hall and McArthur 1996). The basic principles of cultural heritage management are determined by the Venice Charter and the Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, and the management of the archaeological heritage in particular is processed by the Malta Convention of 1992. The principles are related to the provision of legal protection system, the establishment of integrated protection, matching the needs of archeology and spatial plans, provision of financial support for researches, collection and distribution of archaeological information, as well as the prevention of illegal traffic of elements of the archaeological heritage. Special attention is paid to the development of communication with all stakeholders, promoting awareness among the public and, especially, to the development and satisfaction of various needs, including the needs of tourists, all in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

The anagement of heritage can be understood as a system which, within itself, combines the multi-disciplinary practices and generates different policies, in order to increase sustainable development. In the last 200 years there has been a continuous change of terminology, ideas and strategies that have led individuals and groups in the management of heritage as a significant part of the cultural capital. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century to the 60s of the twentieth century a valid paradigm was preservation, initial efforts in the protection of heritage, from the 60s to the 80s the conservation and systematic concern for heritage come on the scene, and by the end of the twentieth century the integration, the management of heritage in the strict sense of the word takes place, which implies the inclusion of heritage in all aspects of life (du Cros, 2007).

Geography, population, history, settlement, economy, social life

Montana

The Montana province is located in the central part of northwestern Bulgaria; the total land area is 3635 km², which is 3.2% of the total territory of Bulgaria. The northern boundary of this area is the Danube, which also represents the state border with Romania. It borders with Serbia and on the south, it is ringed by the northern slopes of Stara mountain. Vidin is in the west Vidin, Vratsa district is in the east and Sofia is in the south. This area is divided into 11 administrative municipalities: Berkovitsa, Boychinovtsi, Brusarci, , Valchedram, Georgi Damyanovo, Lom, Medkovets, Montana, Chiprovtsi and Yakimovo. Berkovitsa, Montana and Varshets in particular stand out for their cultural and natural heritage. According to the census of 2011, 148.098 inhabitants ²live in Montana. Having settled on the territory the Slavs named the city Kutlovitsa, which was used by the end of the twentieth century, when, trying to reposition the area in terms of the collapse of socialism, the city authorities decided to change the name of the town to Montana, based on the former Roman name.



² See the page of Bulgarian National Bureau of Statistics <http://www.nsi.bg/en#cont>

Pirot

The geographical area of the municipality of Pirot includes the Pirot field rimmed by hilly and mountainous parts. This primarily refers to Stara mountain, which extends to the north and east, and whose slopes on the south meet the slopes of Suva mountain, ringing therefore the Pirot field. Parallel to the crest of the mountain, on the south-east, lies the mountain range of Vidlič. Between Vidlič and Stara mountain there is the area of Visok that can be seen as a separate entity that is locally divided into Upper, Middle and Lower Visok. On the southeast side the Pirot field extends to Dimitrovgrad valley.

The Pirot field with all that is in it - agricultural areas, water, communications, industry and trade represents the basic life potential of the area. (Jovanović i Đorđević 1977). In the low plains of Pirot field the town of Pirot is located, the main urban centre of the region, which includes the municipalities of Pirot, Dimitrovgrad, Bela Palanka and Babušnica. Although it has a relatively large surface area, 2,761 km², making it the third city in Serbia, the Pirot district is, having in mind the number of inhabitants, next to the last among the districts in Serbia. According to the census of 2011, it has a population of 92 277 inhabitants, 57 911 of whom live in the municipality of Pirot³. Compared to 2002, the population at the district level has fallen by 13,377 people, while in the municipality of Pirot the population has fallen by 5,880 people.



³ See the site of the National Bureau of Statistics: http://media.popis2011.stat.rs/2011/prvi_rezultati.pdf

The origin of the population, and historical data

Historical development of Pirot and its environment is determined by its location on a major road that connects Europe and Asia Minor. In Roman times, the road was known as the *Via Militaris*, while in the Middle Ages it was called Constantinople road. Today the road is known as the E80 and represents a part of the European Corridor X.

In toponomastic theory (see: Ćirić J. 1972) the name Pirot is associated with the Greek word *pyr* (meaning "fire", "flame"). However, the most common interpretation is that the name Pirot is actually a Slavic version of the Latin *Turres*, as the Roman Manasseh on the site of the present town of Pirot was called.

By the disintegration of the Roman Empire, that is, by its division into East and West, Pirot became a part of the Byzantine Empire.

At the beginning of the eleventh century and based on the German cartographic literature published at the end of the nineteenth century it can be seen that the whole Nišava area, including the area around the Jerma and Ginska (the spring of the river Nišava) belonged to the medieval Serbian state.

In the thirteenth century the Pirot region came under Bulgarian rule, which lasted during the fourteenth century. In the redistribution of feudal power after 1371, conditioned by the Battle of Maritsa, sons of Despot Dejan: Despot Jovan and his brother Mr. Konstantin Dragaš became administrators of the Pirot area. The reputation of the family Dragaš is confirmed by the fact that Jelena, Konstantin Dragaš's daughter, was married to the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus.

Around 1455, the Pirot region finally came under the Ottoman rule that lasted for the next 422 years. In the Ottoman Empire, administratively, Pirot was a part of Rumelia, and the Turkish sources called it *Šar-koj*.

Settlements and Housing

The municipality of Pirot consists of the town of Pirot and 71 villages, six of which are suburban and 65 rural. Considering the age of the settlement of Upper Ponišavlje and Lužnica, and using data from the Turkish notebooks (census notes and writings, particularly from the period since the mid-fifteenth century and ending with the first decade of the seventeenth century), Ćirić (1977) concluded that in the settlements in the Pirot region, with only a few exceptions, the names of the villages were the same as today, or with small and easily recognizable changes. Čifčija villages (čifčija - dependent peasant in feudal Turkey) are definitely of a younger origin and they emerged in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. (Stojković, 2010: 25)

Regarding the type, all the villages are compact, built without any order or plan, clustered, so they look rather roundish. Everything is subordinated to functionality, while the aesthetic elements are ignored. Only later, in villages near the town, alleys were built along the way and some order was made in the way they were built. Villages are divided into parts or mahalas, which can be separated by rivers, brooks, rocks, ravines and so on.

Traditional architecture of the Pirot region is close to the architecture of neighbouring areas, and, in comparison to the traditional architecture of eastern Serbia, it has no special features neither in the use of building materials nor in the design of the house, but contains some specific elements of local character.

In relation to the type of the house known as the "Moravian", which appeared in other parts of Serbia in the mid-nineteenth century, the specifics of the Pirot type are the chimney or 'komin'⁴ and the porch. In later forms the porch was divided into two parts: one remained on the ground and retained the function of protecting access to the house. The second part of the porch was raised and was called the "doksat" (veranda, porch), which was called "corner" or "bed" in this area. "Corner was used as a daily life room, especially in the summer when people had a rest and slept at night in it" (Rodić 2010: 120).

⁴ Square in base and wide, especially in the lower part, but it gets narrower on the top and resembles a truncated four-sided pyramid. In order to protect it from the wind, rain and snow, it is covered by an inclined blanket of clinker or stone slabs.

Rodić has also pointed out to an interesting phenomenon "that in the villages of the compact type in houses of 'the old school', one could see two hearths and two entrance doors, which points out to once developed family life. Brothers usually lived in such houses. They are called 'houses with two smokes.'" (Rodić 2010: 122)

At the beginning of the twentieth century, instead of post and petrail "wattle" houses, people started to build "kovanice". Because of the way they were made -the wooden frame was filled with mud mixed with chaff or "tugla" (mud-brick)- such houses in the Pirot area were called "tuglare" or "ćerpičare". In order for the façade to resemble more those from the town, which was the result of migrations, in the Pirot version they were decorated with various applications. The decorations were placed on the visible parts of the house, above the door and windows, and ornaments were vegetal and geometric. Also, these houses were painted yellow, green and gray.

Another type of house in the village was developed in the thirties and forties of the twentieth century. It is usually asymmetrical in shape, with a porch and gabled roof, popularly known as the house on "ge" (in Cyrillic) on "glagol" or "dunderska (carpenter's) house." After the Second World War, it was a model of construction that people copied and wanted to reach because, among the rural population, it symbolized the sense of accomplishment of a townhouse.



By liberation from the Turks, Pirot began to form as the urban area, the county seat united with the Principality of Serbia. However, even today, it is still a town of primarily oriental look and a simple structure. It consists of two parts connected with one major bridge – Pazar and Tijabara. The main traffic route Nis - Dimitrovgrad almost touches the urban area and forms today's main street Srpskih vladara. Another important road for Knjaževac passes through Tijabara, to the northwest. Other directions: Berilovac, Krupac through Tijabara or the road for Prisjan to the south, from Pazar, are only of local significance. The basic schema-bound traffic is A network of residential streets is made according to the transport scheme.

Analyzing the urban fabric of Pirot Krunić writes: "As much as the entire assembly seems unplanned and chaotic at first glance, because it is certainly of an irregular form, the simplest analysis reveals that beyond the irregularities and chaotic randomisation, there is a refined, conscious desire to separate, isolate from the streets and the neighbours in one's own home and enjoy the peace and intimacy of family life. This isolation of residential areas from the traffic and passages is even today consciously set as the ideal of modern urbanism. (...) Location of buildings is dictated by the law of orientation. "(Krunić 1977: 235)

The basic prototype of the old house of Pirot is symmetric in base and consists of the front central niche, with or without a protruding porch, with a central entrance room, a hall called "iža". Rooms of the house are arranged on both sides of the "iža". In the final stage of its development, the house became a duplex.

The structure of the urban fabric has begun to change since Pirot freed itself from the Turkish rule. "It seems as if the buildings started to get new clothes. Of course, the external change was also structural in its nature: in the manner of construction. Traditional half-timbered structure: wooden structure filled with adobe, is replaced with solid walls made of bricks. (...) The structure of the building has been changed and its face has begun to transform, according to the European standard. "(Krunić 1977: 245-246)

What significantly contributed to the changes in the appearance of the city is the fact that in the last decades of the nineteenth century Pirot became the economic center of the area. The population was engaged in agriculture, cattle breeding, viticulture and milling. In particular, trade and crafts started developing and became the dominant occupations of the city, and then (especially when it comes to crafts) of the rural population, too.



Agriculture

When it comes to agriculture, wheat was mostly grown (the most important cereals in the diet of the population), then corn (the second priority), while rye, barley and oats were less frequent. Vegetable crops were mountain potato, leek, pepper, tomatoes, turnips and greens, Swedish turnip, cabbage, cucumber, garlic, white beans, coloured beans and green beans and they had a low yield.

Pomology had little economic significance and basically was not the main activity. Plum was the most prevailing fruit. Viticulture was particularly developed in the villages of Veliki and Mali Suvodol, although the grapes were grown, and are still grown in other villages,

too. The famous Pirot wine was made of grapes "without a drop of water, when you pour it into the fire it burns like spirit" (Ćirić D. 1972: 221).

Mountain areas of the Pirot region, as mentioned in the beginning, are very suitable for cattle breeding. Sheep, cattle, goats, horses and, to a lesser extent, donkeys are grown in the area. According to the census of 15. 01. 1950 "it was recorded that in Gostuša and Dojkinici there were a total of 11,727 sheep, thirty goats, 1,153 cattle, 258 horses and a couple of donkeys and mules, and this growth was recorded until the sixties."(Nikolić 2011: 31) Today, in the entire area of Pirot municipality there are 25,000 sheep and goats, which is the proof of the difficult situation of cattle breeding in Stara mountain.

Migration of population for economic reasons (pečalba)

The Pirot area was characterized by frequent population movements both within the region and outside it. They were most often motivated by the desire to improve their financial position and such movements were called "pečalbarenje".⁵ Pečalbari spent a part of the year in Pirot or in their native village, and the other part of the year in other areas where they earned a living. "Pečalbar was a seasonal worker, and the fact that he would be absent for some time, facilitated the adaptation to the new environment and difficult working conditions." (Petković, 1984: 164). More massive movements were to the heartland of Serbia,⁶ Romania, Dobruja, Bulgaria and Belgrade district. It is the quality of the work of pečalbari craftsmen that made people from Pirot known throughout the Balkan Peninsula.⁷

Craftsmen and guilds

At the end of the nineteenth century Pirot was known for its dyers, tailors, weavers, furriers, coopers, harness, pottery and mutavdžija (a weaver who made pouches of goat hair) products. Pirot craftsmen were organized into guilds, which were, during Ottoman rule, concentrated on ensuring the protection of their members, and after the liberation from the Turks

⁵ The name comes from the word "pečali", meaning care and effort to earn an income; most certainly, the people who did that were called "pečalbari", and their economy "pečalba". (Petković 1984)

⁶ People from Pirot learned people from Šumadija to cut adobe and to make charcoal,: Barišić 2009 i 2010

⁷ Petković has indicated that there were potters from Pirot all over Yugoslavia. "Their number is not known, but it is undoubtedly that they have had a great influence on the local craftsmen. Pirot potters left their homeland (...), and because they were highly respected and wanted .. (Petković 1984: 161)

they were reorganized and their target was to provide craftsmen and traders with opportunities for complex and useful work in order to develop trade and crafts.

The first guilds (weaving and abadži (tailor)) in Pirot were established in 1790 (Vučo 1954: 79). Pottery guild was founded in 1840. When the statistical data collected during 1890 were processed in 1891 it was obvious that the following crafts were in the non composite guild: pottery, rogožar (a craftsman who weaves matting of bulrushes), barber, mutavdžija, cooper, cartwright, builder-carpenter saddler, horseshoer, locksmith and blacksmith-coppersmiths craft. "In the composite guild there were even more crafts: furrier, shoemaker, terzije and abadžije (tailors who made clothes for citizens and folk costumes, respectively), goldsmith-silversmith and opanak shoemaking-tanner craft." (Barišić 2010: 177) The kilim cooperative was founded in 1902, and as people in Pirot would say, lasted "as long as the Pirot kilim - 50 years on one and 50 years on the other side", that is, it was closed in 2002.

The products were primarily sold in front of the houses, not always, but when it was time for that, and were presented in the market on the market day. Until 1850, the market day was on Sunday and in the period from 1850 to 1877 on Monday. Since 1877 to the present day, the market day is on Saturday. Artisans, especially potters, sold their products at fairs around Serbia. The famous trade fair in Pirot started on the Assumption, 28 August and lasted about a month. The fair is still held on the Assumption and represents a significant economic event.

Industry

Pirot artisans were among the initiators of industrialization in this town. Barišić (2009) pointed out that the beginning of industrialization in Pirot is related to the establishment of *The Pirot Industrial - electrical society* in 1905 and a few artisans were among its shareholders, too. The development of industry started growing in 1937, when Dimitrije Gaga Mladenović and Cekić brothers founded the **Tigar Rubber Footwear** factory. The factory has developed over the decades and now there are two corporations in Pirot - "Tigar Tyres" which is owned by the French company "Micheline" (*Michelin*), which produces tyres and the Corporation "Tigar AD", which produces rubber footwear. "Tigar Tyres" is still one of the top three exporters in Serbia.



Also, Pirot used to be famous for its textile industry all over former Yugoslavia and outside its borders. Its carrier is (was) the company "**Prvi maj**", whose formation and development is the result of joint efforts of both workers and management. Throughout former Yugoslavia, "Prvi maj" was an example of caring for workers.⁸ In 2012, "Prvi maj" was bought by the Slovenian company "Aha Mura", which, for a brief moment, promised success in the future, but in 2014 the company "Aha Mura" went bankrupt, which makes the future of 1,300 workers of "Prvi maj" today rather uncertain.



⁸ Taking care of the workers during the 70s, the factory resolved questions of nutrition of workers, protection and education of preschool children, education of older children, relaxation room, housing etc.

The Free Zone Pirot is a specially enclosed and marked part of the territory of Serbia in which activities are conducted under the guaranteed benefits and incentives. It began with work in April 1998. The Free Zone is a joint stock company whose majority shareholder is the corporation, "Tigar" AD. Its total area is 17 hectares with the possibility of extension to 50 hectares and infrastructurally it is fully equipped.⁹

Social life

In rural areas of the Pirot region, after finishing with work in the morning, people used to go to "the village" or "to male", which are expressions that mean the daily companionship of neighbours, friends and relatives. People used to go to this type of visits after finishing their chores. Fileki (2010), based on interviews with villagers of the Pirot region, pointed out that receiving guests and visiting means that everything is fine and is a sign of respect regardless of who the guest is and where he comes from. A blog of an American tourist who visited Pirot in 2010 testifies that this tradition has survived to this day.¹⁰

The custom of hospitality, as the backbone of social life, was particularly expressed in family and village feasts on the church celebrations. The most significant events involving whole villages were the village slava ("zavećine"). According to the writings of the ethnologists / amateur Dragoljub Zlatković, St. Trinity (Pentecost) was usually celebrated as a village slava, followed by the Ascension, Saint George's Day (Đurđevdan), Saint Elijah, etc. Celebrating rural slava includes processions, that is, ceremonial procession through the rural area with stops at famous places such as sacred trees, crosses etc. Though it was an important religious holiday, the village slava was also an important social event when the householders - members of rural communities received many guests, usually relatives and friends from neighbouring villages.

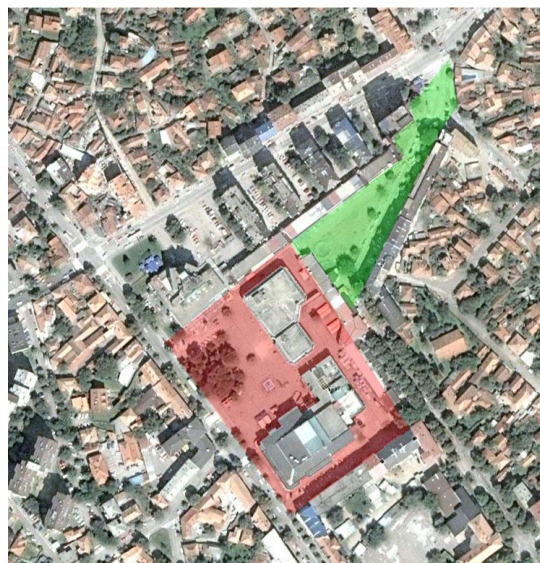
Today, the slava of the city of Pirot is Assumption which is celebrated on August 28th, at the same time as the traditional town's fair is held.

Family slava is a holiday related to the house, which, in addition to religious role has also a social role that has become significant in time. It is the day when the family receives guests in a way that is determined by tradition.

⁹ For details see: <http://www.freezonepirot.com>

¹⁰ See: <http://serbiathroughamericaneyes.wordpress.com/2012/02/10/my-stay-in-pirot-serbia-in-june-2010>

In connection with the custom of hospitality there are also examples of Pirot as a **multicultural environment**. Although throughout its history members of different nationalities and ethnic groups stayed for a longer or shorter period of time in Pirot and contributed to the formation of culture, the most notable example of the development of multicultural society in Pirot was provided by the Jewish community.¹¹ It was destroyed during the Second World War, but how much the Jews meant to their neighbours in Pirot can be seen in the fact that the street where the Jewish mahala used to be (which was after the Second World War renamed into Svetozar Marković street) was named Jewish street in 1992.



¹¹ Fileki gave examples which testify about the help of our neighbours to the Jews during the Second World War, especially an example of the family of Bosiljka Rančić who, with her parents and brother Dragoljub, saved family Konfino (Jews from Pirot) and in 1997 Israel declared them righteous

The Pirot promenade (*korzo*) was, until the end of the 80s, one of the main places of social interaction. It is actually the place where Pirotskih ratnika Square and Pirotskih Oslobodioca Square are today, which are separated by a complex with cafes, the famous cake shop "Rekord", the National Library and the supermarket "Roda". The passage at the cake shop "Rekord" is still one of the favorite meeting places of people from Pirot. Although citizens of Pirot claim that the promenade no longer exists because it has been replaced by the aforementioned complex, the organization of the place is such that even in cases where the meeting place is a certain café, people still take a walk around the squares.

Taverns also have an important role in the socio-economic life of Pirot, where people go to relax, but also (optionally) to make a deal. A detailed description of the taverns in Raben building was given by Ćirić D. (1972), and the important thing to notice is that they, especially the taverns "Esnaf" and "Srpski kralj" were indeed the epicenter of the cultural, social and political life of Pirot because the interaction of their guests actually shaped today's Pirot in social and cultural terms.

When it comes to food, the citizens of Pirot today most often recommend the restaurants "Ladna voda" (in the yard of the Museum Ponišavlje), "Desetka", "Dvojka" and "Varoš". "Dvojka" is also known for the engagement of its owner to preserve the tradition of making the famous Pirot peglane (ironed) sausages, while the "Desetka" and "Varoš" are known for their music programmes, especially on Fridays and Saturdays.

Stakeholders

Activities related to the promotion of cultural and socio-economic life are carried out by institutions and non-governmental organizations which are registered in Serbia as civic associations. Regarding the institutional actors of the cultural and socio-economic life, they are: SO Pirot, the Local economic development office,¹² the Tourist organization Pirot,¹³ Pirot

¹² See the website SO Pirot www.pirot.rs

¹³ For details see: <http://topirot.com>

Historical Archives, the National Library of Pirot,¹⁴ the Museum of Ponišavlje,¹⁵ the gallery "Čedomir Krstić", Dom kulture and the National Theatre.



For the implementation of programs and projects aimed at the conservation of heritage (natural and cultural), it is very important to include educational institutions or schools because they are institutions which directly affect the formation of future professionals in various fields, policy makers, and other stakeholders who will have active participation in different segments of cultural, social and economic development. There are several primary schools, "Pirot High school",¹⁶ "Technical School", "School of Economics", "Dairy School" and "College of Professional Studies for Preschool Teachers."¹⁷

¹⁴ For details see www.nbpi.org.rs. It should be noted that the National Library of Pirot made a significant effort to conserve the material on Pirot by digitizing Homeland department. Although digitized editions are not user - friendly, they were certainly of immense importance for the production of this study.

¹⁵ The museum is of a complex type and it has 9,135 objects. According to the visitor records in 2012, there were 1297 individual visits, 1800 school visits and 2144 visits for special occasions organized by the museum, among which the *sedešća* stands out - gatherings of people from Pirot where they share memories of past days, customs, famous personalities, but also news from everyday, cultural and artistic life of the town. The website of the museum is www.muzejpirot.com

¹⁶ See: www.gimpi.ni.ac.rs

¹⁷ See: www.tsp.edu.rs



There are several non governmental organizations, that is, civic associations in Pirot, such as Mountaineering Club " Vidlič ", Association "Pirgos", "Pirot E Publika," and so on. Associations which particularly stand out are the Association for the preservation of old and art crafts "Grlica," Association "Logos"¹⁸ and the Association of Women "Temštanke" in the village Temska which are one of the most important actors in realization of "Stara planina dish fair."



Natural heritage

Municipalities of Pirot and Montana are located in the climate with a beautiful landscape. In the southwestern part of the municipality of Pirot are the slopes of Suva Mountain ending with the hill Sarlah, at the foot of which the town Pirot is situated. The greater role in the socio-economic life, however, has Stara Mountain, which connects Pirot in Serbia and Montana

¹⁸ The mission of the association is to provide additional education particularly for the youth of Pirot and to encourage teachers to stimulate and encourage their students to learn about their environment and thus grow up into creative people who will contribute to improving quality of life. Despite efforts to bring natural heritage closer to Pirot students, "Logos" has also realized projects dedicated to bringing the cultural heritage closer to people. More detailed information on the activities of the Association of teachers "Logos" and brochures created after the implementation of the projects is available on the website www.logos.org.rs

in Bulgaria. The mere fact that the districts of Pirot and Montana are located on the two sides of Stara Mountain speaks of nature which created barriers that affect the shading differences, but also bonds, which are, like Pirot / Chiprovtsi carpet, interwoven into a single whole.



Stara planina mountain

Stara planina mountain belongs to the group of fold mountains, and its main range extends approximately from Zaječar to the Black Sea, in the length of about 550 km. The smaller part of the main range (about 150 km) is the border between Serbia and Bulgaria, and the major part (400 km) divides Bulgaria to north and south Bulgaria. Another name for Stara mountain is Balkan, and the entire Balkan peninsula was named after it. It covers an area of 114 332 km².

"Stara Mountain is characterized by a complex geological and tectonic structure. In tectonic regard it represents the anticline of the direction of northwest and southeast with the southwest flank in our territory. The core of the anticline consists of crystalline schists, granites, gabbro and diorite, over which are Paleozoic sediments, carbon shale, red sandstone, Triassic and Jurassic cretaceous sediments. Geological formations of Stara Mountain are characterized by even more complex tectonic relationships that had a strong impact on hard wrinkling and placing

the limestone of the older formations over the younger. Thus, the Triassic sediments spread from the valley of Visočica all the way to Bulgaria. Permian red sandstones and conglomerates gradually turn into laminar and micaceous red and purple. Sandy and marly limestones lie over the sandstone. Parties of wrinkled limestone belonging to the older Triassic lie over the lower Triassic sediments. Lower Jurassic sediments extend in a belt ranging from Temska over Pakleštica and Velika Lukanja, Rsovci, Senokos all the way to Bulgaria. All forms of Lower Jurassic and Liassic are developed. Lias - lower Jurassic sediments are represented by sandstones, conglomerates, marls and clays. The occurrence of coal is related to Liassic sediments. "(Jovanović i Đorđević 1977: 112)

From the valleys in the relief Pirot, Nurnevo polje, Bela Palanka, Lužnica and Zvonci spa valleys especially stand out. The Pirot valley is ringed by the slopes of Vidlič and Tepoš plateau from the north and east and by Stol and Belava plateaus from the south and west.

Stara Mountain is divided into three climatic regions:

- Transient or sub-mountainous climatic region at altitudes between 600 and 1,250 m.a.s.l
- A true mountain climate region at altitudes between 1250 and 1900 m.a.s.l
- Climate of high-mountainous region at elevations above 1900 m.a.s.l



By the decision of the Government of the Republic of Serbia in 1997. the nature park

"Stara Planina" was protected. It occupies 142,219.64 hectares, 63 194 ha of which are in the territory of Pirot¹⁹. Nature reserves and natural monuments that make this nature park in the municipality of Pirot are: Arbinje, Bratkova strana, Tri čuke while the following reserves belong to the category of the strict nature reserves: Vražja glava, Kopren, red oak near the village of Sopot and black pine in the village cemetery in Rsovci. The procedures for protection of the natural resources of the Jerma canyon (Wallachia gorge) and the Krupačka wetland (Krupačko Lake) are underway at the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia.

Since 2009, the protected nature park Stara Planina has been managed by the national public company "Srbijašume". There is an initiative to nominate the nature park "Stara Planina" for the "Man and the Biosphere" program. (MAB-UNESCO).²⁰

Flora

Comprehensive geological and climatic conditions influenced the development of exceptional vegetational diversity of Stara Planina. Many plant species are a real natural rarity and were placed under state protection. Higher plants are represented with 89 families, 730 species, 14 subspecies and 2 varieties. 39 species of moss were found, which indicates the ancient origin of flora and vegetation. Cluster structure of lichen that can be seen on some spruce trees and rocks points out to the purity of the air and the large presence of ozone. Herbs, such as mint, yellow pheasant's eye, yarrow, thyme, lemon balm, etc. can be found on the pastures and meadows.

¹⁹ 9,958 ha belongs to the town of Zaječar, 57,968 ha to the municipality of Knjaževac and 11,099 ha to the municipality of Dimitrovgrad.

²⁰ On the Bulgarian side of Stara Planina in UNESCO-MAB Biosphere Reserves Directory the following reserves are included: Boatin Biosphere Reserve located in Central Stara Planina (Balkan Range) beneath the peak of Baba; Djendema Biosphere Reserve situated to the south of the Botev Peak of the Stara Planina (Balkan Highland); Staneto in the Lovech Region in the Balkan Highland (Stara Planina); Tchoupréné Biosphere Reserve situated on the northern slopes of the Stara Planina on the Serbia and Montenegro's border in north-west Bulgaria and Tsaritchina Biosphere situated on the northern slopes of the Central Stara Planina in the Lovech Region. See: <http://www.unesco.org/mabdb/br/brdir/directory/rescount.asp>

Although beech grows to 1,500 m, due to favorable conditions in the foothills of Babin Zub, there is a habitat of subalpine beech, which is protected as a zone - a nature park. On our side (north.) the area of Golema Reka is also protected as a national reserve.

Total of about 1,195 taxa of vascular flora, 51 species of moss were recorded, which, compared to the national flora makes 34% of the specified number. 24.5% of plant species of the total fund of flora of Serbia grows on Stara Planina. 202 taxa are found in the high mountain region, and 116 belong to a certain group of endemics. By the *Regulation on the protection of natural rarities in Serbia* ("Official Gazette of RS", no. 50/93), 18 plant species which grow on Stara Planina are placed under the protection of the law, ie, placed under the regime of absolute protection. Also, 38 plant species that grow on Stara Planina are subjects to the *Directive on control of use and trade of wild plant and animal species* ("Official Gazette of RS", no. 16/96). There are 37 species from the red list (working list of species provided for processing in the "Red Book of Flora of Serbia") that grow in the Stara Planina. In the international Red List (European Red List, UNESCO, New York, 1991), there is one plant species within the group of endemic vascular plants and that is *Pedicularis heterodonta*. The first individual objects that are protected on this mountain were single oak trees styles short - *Quercus pubescens* (five trees near the village Osmakovo) that are protected even in 1966.

The vegetation of Stara Planina is very diverse, there are about 52 phytocenoses, 23 of which are forest and 29 grassland, some of which are endemic or relict.

Also, Stara Planina is rich in various kinds of mushrooms and berries. It has the potential which can be used through the programs of eco-tourism.



Fauna

When it comes to animals in this area, there are deer (European and fallow deer), roe deer, wild boars, hares, foxes, wolves, grouse, partridge, viper and horned viper, wild pigeons (wood pigeons and stock doves), squirrels, and in winter, wild geese flying over from the Danube to the south. There are 92 recorded species of birds on Stara Planina that are considered natural rarities. There are also 116 butterfly species (22 of which are newly established, and six species represent glacial relicts); 18 species of herpetofauna (6 species belongs to the class of amphibians and 12 species to the reptile class); ichthyofauna, represented by 26 species; 203 species of birds (which represents the highest diversity of bird fauna on any mountain in Serbia, former Yugoslavia and much of the Balkans). Stara Planina is included in the register of regions of international importance for the birds of Europe - IBA with an area of 44,000 ha and mammal fauna, represented with 30 species, among which the most important are the ground squirrel, snow vole, lynx and bear. Snakes were rare, but in recent years their number has increased, and now poisonous snakes appear. In streams, There is brown trout in the streams of the Golema River, but more on the south side in the Rakita River, Devil's Stream and Javorska River, all of which merge into the Temštica river in the village Topli Do, which flows into the Nišava.



There are parts of Stara Planina which stand out and have specific values. Baljevski peaks are among them, a steep rocky slope, often cliff-like, undercut by the Kamenička river, opposite the village Senokos and the karst bay Vrtibog and Ponor, which represent a kind of phenomenon of karst terrain with complex relations of karst morphology and surface and ground water circulation in the karst.

Three čuke - a set of three peaks, by many the most beautiful in Stara Planina. It extends to Bulgaria, and the highest point is 1,937 m, while the other two are slightly lower. It can be reached over the village Dojkinci and mountaineers have investigated some other options over Arbinja, but these paths are problematic, especially if the weather is rainy.

Kopren is located at an altitude of 1,963 meters. On the Serbian side, it is a plateau that looks like a sea of dwarf plants, juniper. But, on the Bulgarian side, it's a terrible rocky section at the end of a much shorter, but incomparably steeper path that mountaineers use when coming to Kopren from the east. Orientation for the top, in the middle of impassable plateau, is the boundary stone number 318, the largest of all landmark stones on Kopren.

Stražna čuka is, in the mountain climbers' opinion, the real Stara Planina peak. The earth is red and there are some stones and rocks at the top, but lawns prevail. We can see the whole plateau of Kopren as well as the difference in the terrain configuration from the Serbian and the Bulgarian side.

The valley of the stream Bigar, which is entirely filled with tufa, out of which the 35 meter long waterfall flows and dives into the main valley of the Stanjanska River, one of the headwaters of the Trgoviški Timok and represents "one of the most beautiful waterfalls in eastern Serbia"; *the curving meanders of the Temštica* in the 160-260 m deep gorge with numerous sculptures of skerries in red sandstones; *the Defile of the Rosomač river*, squeezed between the Rosomač peak and Gradište, a short gorge cut through the breccias and conglomerate rocks with a series of giant pots at the bottom.

Particularly interesting are also geological profiles on Stara Planina, among which the profiles of Mesozoic age dominate. For example, on the route Jelovica – Rsovci, as extremely fossil, the following profiles stand out : the Middle Triassic profile near the village Vrelo, whose limestone is full of predominantly bivalvia fauna; the profile of the Lias sediments at the Monastery of St. Virgin, in which the terigeno carbonate sediments have extremely rich and well-preserved fauna of brachiopods; the profile of Triassic limestone in the Gostuša river in the village Lukanja; and the profile of the Jurassic sediments in the village Rosomač.

In literature, but also in the local division of Stara Planina, the following landscape units can be distinguished: Visok, Tepoš, Zaglavak, Vidlič and Zabrđe.



Hydrology

The mountain areas of the municipality of Pirot are abundant in waterways and the hydrographic network is highly developed on the slopes of Stara and Suva mountains in Serbia as well as in a part of Bulgaria. The main drain and the recipient of the region is the river Nišava, which is supplied with water from the Jerma, Ginska, Bistrice, Temštic (Visočica) and a number of strong karst springs along the rim of the Pirot field. The catchment area (the drainage basin) is of an extremely mountain type, and consequently, has a regime of a mountain type with frequent spring rainfall and long winters with lots of snow.

„Karst springs, which are arranged around the rim of the Pirot valley at the foot of the hill, contribute to the wealth of the hydrographic network. The springs have high capacity, individually from 20 to 600 l / s of healthy drinking water. "They are the greatest wealth which nature gave to the Pirot valley and to the living creatures in it. This wealth should be permanently protected from pollution. Waters of these springs supply the underground basin, which lies in the Pliocene sands and partly, in the peat. Hence the abundance of relatively shallow underground water in the whole valley. "(Jovanović and Đorđević 1977: 111)

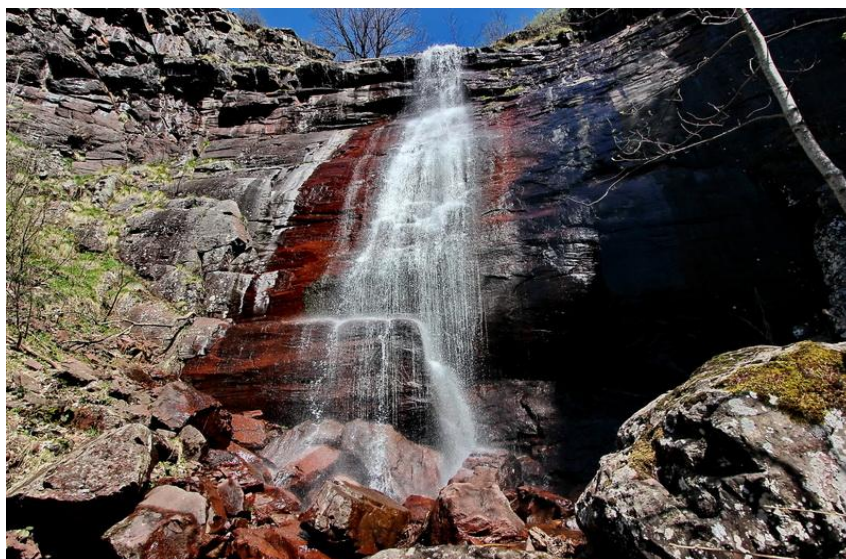
The three main water flows in the municipality of Pirot are Visočica, Jerma and Nišava.

The river Visočica is the right tributary to the Nišava. The Visočica is 84 km long, 69 km of which are in Serbia and 15 km in Bulgaria. The Visočica originates from several sources under the mountain peak Kom (2016 m) on the south-eastern part of Stara Planina in Montana. In Serbia, in the municipality of Dimitrovgrad, the river flows 2 km southeast of the village of Donji Krivodol and to the village Slavinja, this river is known as the river Komštica, by the village Komštica in Bulgaria. From the village Slavinja the river gets its recognizable name Visočica that changes into the Temštica river, downstream from where the Toplodolska river flows into the Visočica, not far from the place called " Mrtvački most ". The total fall in Serbia is 509 m, and the development of flow coefficient is 1.95. The largest left tributary of the river Visočica (Temštica) is Pokrovštica. Major right tributaries to the Visočica river are: the Vodenička river, Rosomač river, Dojkinci river, Gostuša river, Toplodolska and Rudinjska river.

The Dojkinci river near the village Dojkinci forms one of the most impressive sights in the municipality of Pirot and that is the 15 meter high waterfall Tupavica.

The Toplodolska river forms waterfalls, among which are **Čunguljski skok**, 40 meters high, at an altitude of 1,400 meters and **Piljski** waterfall which is, due to its 64 meters of height the second highest waterfall in Serbia. Both waterfalls are located near the village of Topli do²¹.

²¹ Also nearby the village Topli do, but on the tributary of the Toplodolska river – the Javorska river, there is another interesting waterfall known as Kurtulski skok. It is a cascading waterfall in a small strait, 27 meters high.



Zavoj lake

Due to the melting of snow and heavy rain in February 1963, there was a landslide of the part of the hill on the right side of the present dam at the place called Izvorski dol. This created a natural dam that caused the sinking of the village Zavoj and accumulation of Zavoj lake. Slipping affected some 240,000 m² between elevation 960 and 790 m, the length of the landslide was 1.3 km and the average width was from 160 to 220 m. Earthen dam, by which the river Visočica is dammed, has over 1.95 million m³, and the maximum depth of the lake is over 34 m. The width at the base is 530 m, and at the top from 120 to 140 m. The formed lake is about 16 km long, at 612 m above sea level, with accumulation of about 160 mil.m³ of water. The catchment area is 584 km². Jovanović and Đorđević pointed out, " A flow tunnel was built at the bottom of the river, which now drains the small and medium waters downstream of the natural dam. Also, a side overflow was made at the level of the dam crest in order to evacuate the excess amount of water to prevent flooding of the dam. Functions of these two objects protect the natural barrier from destruction. "(Jovanović and Đorđević 1977: 112)



About 3km from the village Rsovci, in the area between the village the village Rsovci and the village Pakleštica, there is **Vladikine ploče** gorge. It stretches from the cave Potpeć and ends at the Kozarnik creek. The gorge is about 200 m deep, and ,at the bottom, it turns into a narrow canyon through which the river Visočica flows. Between 1985 and 1986 Dr. Stankovic and his team explored 11 caves in the gorge: *Toplica Cave*, *Natpeć Cave*, *Mouse Cave*, *Water Cave*, *Nameless rock shelter* (at the *Mouse Cave*), *Vetrena Cave*, *Vladikina ploča Cave*, *Cave at the Linden tree*²², *Trifun's Cave* (beneath the Cave at the Linden tree) and *Cold cave*.

The river Jerma originates from the rivers Vučja and Grubina which meet near the village of Klisura in the municipality of Surdulica. After that it enters Bulgaria where it is named Erma, and re-enters Serbia at Zvonci Spa. The length of the river Jerma from the village Klisura to the confluence with the Nišava is 74 km. 45.1 km of the river belong to Serbia and 27 km to Bulgaria. The catchment area of the river is 796 km ², about 400 km² of which belong to Bulgaria. Larger right tributaries of the river Jerma are: the river Kostraševska, the river

²² In the book 'The Geography of Ponišavlje' from 1997, Stanković pointed out that remains of burnt wood were found in this cave (by the method of C14 it was determined that the fire burnt about 780 years BC) as well as two human skeletons which, after the analyses in the Institute "Ruđer Bošković" in Zagreb, were determined to date from 220 year of the new era, that is, from the the pre-slavic period, so it can be assumed that they were Thracians. Data are taken from the website www.logos.org.rs

Liskovica, the river Glogovštica, the river Jablanica, the river Poganovo, the Zvonci and Kusovranska rivers. Left tributaries of the Jerma are the river Srežina, the Draginjska river, the Groznatovska river, the Turokovska river, the Kusa river and the Sukovski sream.

In a part of its course from the village Vlasi (25 km south-east of Pirot) the river Jerma breaks through the gorge known as the gorge of Jerma or **Vlaško ždrelo**. The gorge was created by vertical erosion and partly has the characteristics of a canyon. At the entrance of the village Vlasi, the height of the cliff exceeds 200 m. The Vlaška gorge is brook trout fishing area, which makes it popular among fishermen, but it is also popular as a picnic site.

In the area of the village Vlasi, there is a cave known as **Vetrena dupka**. The cave Vetrena dupka consists of two main morphological elements which build the underground karst relief: the horizontal cave of Vatrena dupka and the vertical pits of Pešterica. "The total length of the cave Vetrena dupka, the horizontal channel and Pešterica, without side blind tubules, is 2,760m." (Petrović 1972: 129)



The river Nišava is created by merging of rivers Ginska (which comes from the territory of Bulgaria, 51 km in length) and Erma immediately after the monastery of St. Jovan Bogoslov and near the village Sukovo. In the Pirot region, Nišava can be divided into two sections: upstream from Pirot and downstream to Bela Palanka. In the upstream section, from Pirot to Sukovo, the river has a very steady riverbed, but with large meanders and a shallow basin. Downstream from Pirot, to Bela Palanka, the river passes through lowland terraces and plenty of meanders in a broad basin. This section requires some correction and regulatory interventions, especially in order to protect the arable land, the road and the rail. This section is characterized by large amounts of bed load deposited in the terraces.

The section of Nišava through the town of Pirot was successfully regulated by the plan implemented in 1929 - 1930 (see: Jovanović i Đorđević 1977: 117) The Pirot quay was afforested around the rim in 1933.



Spas and springs

In the area of Upper and Middle Ponišavlje there is a large number of thermal-mineral springs. Petrović and Popović point out that, apart from the Zvonci Spa, these sources are connected to the simple surface geological structure in which "cretaceous limestone and Neogene,

lake sediments." are the most widespread (Petrović and Popović 2006: 35) Most researchers associate the origin of the thermal - mineral waters of Ponišavlje with the process of deep karstification.

Gradašnička thermal zone and Dag-spring

Gradašnička thermo-mineral springs belong to a type of broken springs. A more detailed description of the characteristics of the region was given by Martinović and Kostić (1971) who also pointed out that the thermal springs of Gradašnica region were used uncaptivated, and that it was certainly done even in ancient times, as evidenced by the finding of a Roman tomb with stones in gold frame in it. The name Dag – spring comes from the name of the former Turkish landowner who was called Dak, but over time, the letter "k" began to be pronounced as "g" and, therefore, the name became the Dag - spring. Water is still mostly used uncaptivated. On the main thermo-mineral and natural basins in the riverbed of Gradašnica, the treatment season usually begins on May 6th and lasts until late autumn. What enables the long medical treatment season outdoors are its sheltered position and a relatively high temperature of the source. "Visitors of the Dag-spring try to cure themselves by drinking, bathing and keeping certain parts of the body in the mineral water. (...) Some patients come every day to drink the water, while others take bottles of water home. Patients from many of Pirot and other villages of the upper Nišavlje come to the Dag-spring. "(Martinović and Kostić 1971: 114-115)



Zvonci Spa is located 50 km away from Pirot. "Thermal springs of Zvonci spa break out on the left side of the river Blatanica (Zvonačka river), the left tributary of the river Jerma, at an altitude of about 550 m. Water of the main source breaks out under pressure which causes bubbling and purling. The source is enclosed by a small cofferdam from which the water is drained to bathrooms and fountains where it is used for drinking. The water temperature is 28°C. Chemical analyzes were performed at the Geological Institute "Jovan Žujović". The water of Zvonci Spa is not only thermal and mineral, but it is also radioactive. According to the analysis carried out at the Institute of medicine, hydrology and climatology in Belgrade, water at the main source contains $239 \cdot 10^{-9}$ Ci, or 6.55 MJ

The remains of several pools - terme, floor ceramics, coins, commemorative plates and remnants of the temple of the ancient period were discovered in the Zvonci spa in 1903 and 1926. The Zvonci spa treats musculoskeletal system diseases, nervous diseases, rheumatism and menopausal symptoms. The only tourist facility, the hotel "Mir", is ruined.



In the area of the Upper Ponišavlje, by the karst springs or a slight distance from them, in places where the lacustrine clay - sandy sediments are washed off from the limestone slopes at the lowest point, another four known springs are located. **The Pirot spring, Krupačka and Čubrina** spring break out at the "nišavski fault", while the spring in the village Vlasi – the **Vlaška spring** appears in the transverse fault that cuts the valley. Of the four springs, only the Pirot spring was tested in more detail. In other springs, only the temperature was measured.

Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage of the municipality of Montana are numerous objects of immovable cultural heritage - ancient castles and sites, medieval sites (cemeteries in the village Živovci, a medieval fortress on the top of Stovci in the village Smoljanovci, etc.), shrines (Klisura Monastery of St. Cyril and Methodius, Lopusanski monastery between Montana and Berkovica, medieval church of St. Forty martyrs in the village Lipen, St. George in Varešac, etc.) as well as stone crosses (obroci) which are testimony to the religious practices of the inhabitants of Stara Planina. The greatest number of stone crosses are protected in the village Belotinci. In connection with the ancient findings, it should be noted that around the gardens, 160 plates with inscriptions were found, including a panel in which the goddess Diana was presented, which is now shown on the emblem of Montana. When it comes to the intangible cultural heritage, the carpet-making stands out and it will be discussed later.

Pirot²³

Archaeological sites

Prehistory

During protective archaeological researches and excavations around the motorway E80 (section of Corridor X Niš - Dimitrovgrad) a multilayered prehistoric settlement was revealed on the site *Obrenovac – Srečkovo*, in the village of Obrenovac. Parts of the settlement of Starčevo cultural groups (late Neolithic) were discovered in the oldest strata. In some higher layers, they are replaced by habitats and areas of the Vinča culture group (early Neolithic / Eneolithic), and Bronze Age findings²⁴.

²³ On the website of the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments www.heritage.gov.rs/cirilica/nepokretna_kulturna_dobra.php there are tables of the Central Registry of immovable cultural property in the territory of the Republic of Serbia.

²⁴ See: www.heritage.gov.rs/cirilica/zastitna_arheoloska_iskopavanja_koridor_10_Obrenovac_Sreckovo.php

Roman and ancient period

Since Pirot was located on the Roman *Via Militaris*, there are numerous remains of antiquity on the territory of the municipality of Pirot. Given the importance of this road for the military and commercial purposes, Petrović said: "Incidental stations between cities were built in places that enabled the reception of passengers. Itineraries list them as *mutationes* (inns, smaller resting places) and *manasiones* (stations where people could spend the night, supply with food and satisfy other needs. We don't know much about their appearance, not only in Ponišavlje but also outside it, in the province, and the Balkans in general. (...) Gradually, small villages, farms, and together with them, some other facilities (which were not used only by passengers but also by the residents who were permanently inhabited there) began to develop around these stations: workshops, bathrooms, residential buildings and others. The formation of these settlements in general was influenced by other factors, primarily the natural resources (hot springs of mineral water, ore deposits) which were abundant in the area of Ponišavlje." (Petrović 1977: 178-179)

The town *Tures*, now Pirot, developed as a *mansio* near the religious and administrative centre *Remesiana* (now Bela Palanka). Apart from Tures, the following settlements are also on the territory of Ponišavlje: *Vrgudinac*, *Veliki Suvodol Krupac*, *Sukovo*. The site at *Planinica* and *Poganovo* should be also added to the list. Finally, we should mention the following sites, too: *Nišor*, *Temska Ragodeš*, *Osmakovo*, *Gornja Kamenica*, *Štrbac* (early Byzantine church), etc.

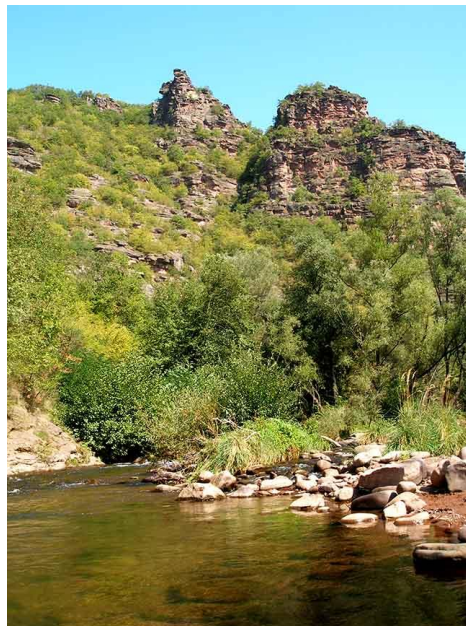
Local legends and stories suggest that, in addition to these documented sites in the municipality of Pirot, there were some other ancient sites and the most notable now is the suburb Gradašnica, where, according to Ćirić, *Mutatno Translitattae* was probably situated. (Ćirić 1977)

During the protective archaeological research and excavations around the road E80, the remains of a necropolis of cremated dead people that can be roughly dated to the first century BC were discovered on the site *Sarlah south*. What was also found were the remains of four building facilities which belong to the late antique - early Byzantine horizon of this site.²⁵

²⁵ Data taken from the website of the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments, www.heritage.gov.rs/cirilica/zastitna_arheoloska_iskopavanja_koridor_10_Sarlah_jug_Pirot.php
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The Middle Ages

The town of Temac. Near the village Temska, located next to the old road that connects Pirot and Knjaževac, 16 km away from Pirot, are the remains of the medieval town Temac. Information about this town is scarce and consists of two notes - one in Pavlović's monograph (1966) and the other in Radović's text (1974). The ruins are even now, in the second decade of the XXI century, still visible, especially the walls above Temštica, and it is possible that it was the subject of interest of so-called "Wild archaeologists", that is, treasure seekers.



Pirot town is a very well preserved example of a medieval city which, due to its preservation, served as a setting for the films "Dorotej" (1981) and "Battle of Kosovo" (1989). Pirot town is also known under the names of *Momčilo's Town* and *Kale* and is considered one of the most important symbols of Pirot. It is a Serbian medieval fortification built on the right bank of the Bistrica, on a secluded cliff at Sarlah elevation. It was created from the remains of Roman Tures and Byzantine Kvimedava (Quimedava). It consists of three connected parts: the Upper (built in the last decades of XIV century), the Middle (built in the early fifteenth century) and the Lower town. It had three gates: Niš, Stambol and Knjaževac, and necessary defense was

strengthened by a brick water channel. In the Niš gate of the Lower town, a marble plate with the following inscription was found: "A military commander Rahim Pasha rebuild this town in 1804."

Researches of the town were performed on several occasions.²⁶ Analysis of its situation in the XXI century was made in 2013, for the project "Programme for Spatial Planning of Pirot fortress Kale" realized by the Public Agency for the construction of Pirot, on the basis of which comprehensive works on revitalization are planned.

On 29. 03. 1953, Pirot town was declared a monument, and on 29. 03. 1979 it was identified as a cultural monument of great importance. It is registered in The Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 226.



Sacral objects

²⁶ See for example, Nevenka Petrović 1954-1955 "Pirotski grad" *Starinar* volume V-VI; Slobodan Nenadović. 1964 "Osvrt na način zidanja srpskih srednjevekovnih spomenika," *Zbornik zaštite spomenika kulture*, Volume XV, Belgrade

The church of St. Petar and Pavle in Rsovci is the oldest church in the territory of Pirot - dated to the thirteenth century. It is also known as the cave church because it is located in a cave opposite the village, on the right bank of the river Visočica. It is believed that it was built as a hermitage. The church is especially known for its icon of Christ the Infant, that is, the presentation of Christ in the first age of life (when a person has no hair), which can be connected with the understanding that a man goes through seven stages in his life: infant (from birth to 4 years), child, detišt, junoša, husband, sar and the old man (see Trifunović, 1974: 332). By the decision of the Municipality of Pirot no. 02-020 / 128/81 the church was declared a cultural asset - a monument of culture. It is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 769.



The church of St. Paraskeva in the village Staničenje, located 9 km away from Pirot, on the road to Bela Palanka and Niš, near the road E80, has, despite its accessible location, long been unknown to the professional community. It was only in 1966 when fragments of frescoes that were already determined to be from the fourteenth century were observed under the later layers. Researches, carried out intermittently from 1974 to 1979, showed that the church was built as a mausoleum. Above the west door, on the inside, there's the founders' inscription from which we learn that the temple was built and painted by Arsenije, Jefimija and Konstantin during

1331 and 1332, in the period when Bulgaria was ruled by Tsar Ivan (Alexander) Asen, and when the regional lord was Belaur. Detailed information about the church can be found in the monograph *The Church of St. Nicholas in Staničenje* (Popović, Gabelić Cvetković and Popović 2005). These authors state that it was probably between the XV and XVIII century when the church in Staničenje was restored and became the village church, so it changed its name, that is, the saint to whom it was dedicated. There are two legends about that which the authors quoted. On 09. 05. 1967, the Church of St. Paraskeva in Staničenje was declared a cultural asset and on 23. 03. 1979 it was identified as a cultural monument of great importance. It is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 231.



The monastery of St. Jovan Bogoslov, also known as *Poganovo monastery*, is situated on the left bank of the river Jerma and administratively belongs to the municipality of Dimitrovgrad. However, its outstanding significance for the culture of the Pirot district makes it indispensable in presenting the religious architecture of the Pirot region. The church is dedicated to John the Theologian. It was built in the second half of the fourteenth century. According to its plan, it is very similar to the monuments of the Moravian school. From 1967 to 1972, the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Niš conducted archaeological surveys and excavations, and although excavations have not been fully completed, the conservation works have been mostly finished. They showed that the church was built "from the ground up", but also that it was subject to vandal digging and destruction of graves in the monastery for centuries. (Tomić, Deljanin and Mitrović 1977) The remains of the cells are conserved and left as visible evidence of an ancient architectural complex. Apart from the church, the most important object is a

building built in the XIV century, simultaneously with the church. It is assumed that these are the remains of secular architecture and that the building was prepared to be the home of the founder and his family.



The most famous icon from the Monastery of Poganovo is a double-sided icon, dimensions 89x60 cm, which shows the best artistic quality of the Byzantine imperial workshops and it is a masterpiece of icon-painting art of the time. It was made in the last years of the fourteenth or the first decade of the fifteenth century. The front side shows the Vision of the prophet Ezekiel with Christ Emanuel, who is sitting on a rainbow, with the rocky ground of clear lake and fish below him and the prophets Ezekiel and Habakkuk on the sides. On the back of the icon, the figures of the Virgin with the epithet Katafigi and st. John the Theologian are painted and a partly damaged memorial of the purchaser, written on a gold base, is between them. The icon is now in the crypt of the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Sofia.

The monastery of Poganovo was declared a cultural monument of great importance and it is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 222.



The monastery of St. George, also known as the monastery Temska, is situated about 16 km northwest of Pirot and 1.5 km from the village of Temska.

Although there are assumptions that the church dedicated to St. George was built on the ruins of the church from the XI century,²⁷ according to the inscription in the naos, it can be said with certainty that the naos was painted in 1576, although there is a possibility that the naos was built earlier. According to the inscription above the front door leading from the narthex to

²⁷ See the website of the monastery Temska <http://manastirtemska.weebly.com>

the naos above the window on the south wall, the narthex was built and painted in 1654. A very valuable historical and artistic analysis, especially regarding the paintings and ornaments, was given by Leontije Pavlović in the monograph *the Monastery Temska*. He believes that the monastery Temska was one of the last descendants of the Moravian school, which is indicated by the three conches which in Temska have their own special features. Among them there are several niches merged in the wall mass in order to meet the liturgical practical needs and functional use of the building, which makes the architecture better in quality. When it comes to painting, "153 individual figures and 41 compositions are preserved today." (Pavlović 1966: 70) Pavlović points out that harmony of the individual frescoes, composition and ornamentation is noticeable, and that that tests of of the frescoes ornaments showed that decorative solutions are not literary taken.

Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Niš began a research project and the conservation - restoration work on the church in 1970. Based on the research, Radović (1974) pointed out that, at the time it was about to be painted in 1576, the church had certain impairments, so first, it was quickly and clumsily repaired and then painted. Presumably, the monastery was abandoned in 1692, and the restoration began in 1699 by the monk Parthenius. It was the last larger intervention on the church.

On 06. 03. 1948, the monastery of St. George or the monastery Temska was declared a cultural asset and on 28. 06. 1983 it was identified as a cultural monument of great importance. It is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 212.



The church dedicated to St. George is on the crossroads between the villages Dojkinci and Brlog, near the former village Dojkinci. It is believed that the church was built in the fifteenth century. The Church of Sts. George in Dojkinci is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 771, but it is indicated that it belongs to the municipality of Vladičin han.²⁸

In today's village Dojkinci, on the left bank of the river Dojkinci, about 1 km downstream from the village, there is the Church of St. Nicholas. It was built in the fifteenth century. was declared By the decision of SO Pirot no. 02-020 / 54-84 it was declared acultural asset- a monument od culture.

The Church of St. George in Osmakovo from the fifteenth century, known as the Osmakovo church, was built on the older cult place, as evidenced by the late antique sculptures. The church was declared a cultural asset- a monument of culture by the decision of SO Pirot no. 02-020 / 83-84. It is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the numberSK661.

The monastery of St. Nicholas in the village Sinjac, on the left bank of the Nišava, was built in the sixteenth century, and the church was painted in 1618. A large and well-preserved mural was discovered there. Wall painting decoration is the most important painting whole in eastern Serbia at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The monastery is declared a cultural monument and registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 946.

The monastery of St. Nicholas in the village Planinica was built in the fifteenth century. Its architecture is simple. The inner walls were painted entirely in 1606, as evidenced by the inscription above the entrance on the west wall. The monastery was declared a cultural monument on 09. 05. 1967 and it is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property – monuments of culture under the number SK 297.

²⁸ See the excel document *Cultural monuments* available on the website of the Institute for the Protection of Monuments of Culture http://www.heritage.gov.rs/cirilica/nepokretna_kulturna_dobra.php
In the municipality of Vladičin han there is no village named Dojkinci.



The Church of the Ascension in the village Zavoj is practically nonexistent today. Experts of the Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, together with the director of the Museum of Pirot at the time, performed reconnaissance on the basis of which they made a proposal that the church should be placed under protection. This was done on 04. 02. 1963. It is registered in the Central Registry of Cultural Heritage under the number SK 470. However, shortly after the decision on declaring it a monument of culture, at the end of February 1963, due to heavy rainfall, there was a slippage of soil and the formation of the lake that overflowed the village and the church. During the summer of 1965, experts of the Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments made detailed architectural, documentation painting and photographic record and carried out the preparations for the dislocation of the church. The wall paintings were removed by the *strappo* technique, and the church was dismantled. The construction material was stored at the future location and the frescoes were transferred partially to the Gallery of the Museum of Ponišavlje in Pirot and partly to the atelier of the Republic Institute. However, the church has not been rebuilt to this day, nor the frescoes can be seen anywhere. Based on the black-and-white photographs from 1965, Pejić (1993) presented a detailed paintings of the church, providing valuable information about its former appearance. Since the church, according to its architectural style, resembles temples in Planinica

(1606), Božica (1607/8), Donja Lisina (1610) and Sinjac (1618), it is assumed that the church in Zavoj was built in the first decade of the seventeenth century.



Сл. 1. Завој, црква Св. Тројице, североисточни изглед цркве у време поплаве 1963.

Fig. 1. Zavoj, église de la Sainte Trinité, vue nord-est de l'église au moment de l'inondation de 1963.

The Church of the Nativity of Christ is located in the town of Pirot, and because it is in a part of the town called Pazar, the church is also known as *the Pazar church*. Since the older church suffered arson and flood, a new church was built in its place (completed in 1866.) by the approval of Sultan Abdul Medžid I. The church is entered by going down the stairs because the Sultan's condition was that the church had to be lower than the nearby mosque. By the decision of the municipality of Pirot no. 02-020 / 115-86 the Church of the Nativity of Christ was declared cultural heritage – a cultural monument. It is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 2091.



The Monastery of St. Virgin is located near the village Sukovo on the right bank of the river Jerma. The inscription above the windows on the west facade says that the construction of the monastery lasted from 1857 to 1859. Folk tradition about the origin of the monastery was also recorded²⁹. Two frescoes particularly attract attention in the monastery: one depicts St. Hristifor with a halo and an animal head and the other the Virgin Mary with wings.

In 1974, the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Niš implemented conservation and restoration procedures and the whole gabled roof was re-covered. During the operation, in the vicinity of the dome, a large number of ceramic items were found, organized and closely huddled side by side and one above the other, with the opening always facing downwards. Marković (1979) points out that findings of this kind are very rare in our area, which makes the Sukovo monastery rather unique. On 13. 03. 1968, the Monastery of St. Virgin was declared a cultural monument. It is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 302.

²⁹ See website www.piot.pi.co.rs Page visited: 10. 08. 2014.



The Church of St. Nicholas in Krupac is a smaller building in which the range between the north and the south wall is emphasized, which are the characteristics of the seventeenth century constructions. On the inner walls of the church there are mural paintings where two layers of fresco decorations are evident. The figural zone of the altar area and the facade of the west wall of the naos are decorated with the newer painting (dated by the inscription over the entrance to the temple). The lower parts of the original, older painting are whitewashed. Saved painted surfaces of the older fresco set, by its iconographic, thematic and visual characteristics and peculiarities, have characteristics of artistic works created in the seventeenth century.

In 1995, when the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Niš, in cooperation with the Museum of Ponišavlja, completed the reconstruction of the narthex, some archaeological researches were conducted and four cultural horizons were found, the oldest of which belong to the early Christian basilica from the fifth or sixth century. (see: Jeremenković 2009). By the decision of the Municipality of Pirot no. 02-020 / 85-84, the church was declared a cultural monument. It is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 663.



The Monastery of the Holly Mother of God (Vavedenje) near Visočka Ržana on the right bank of the river Visočica was declared a cultural asset – a monument of culture by the decision of the Municipality of Pirot no. 02-020 / 82-84. It is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 660.

The Church of St. George in Slavinje was declared cultural asset – a monument of culture by the decision of the Municipality of Pirot no. 02-020 / 84-84. It is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 662.

The Church of St. Jovan Glavosek is located in the hamlet of Rakovica. It was built as a memorial to fallen soldiers in the war for the liberation of south east Serbia from the Turks in the Balkan Wars and the First World War. By the decision of the Municipality of Pirot no. 02-633 / 1-86, it was declared cultural asset – a monument of culture. It is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 912.



Stone crosses (obroci)

Apart from monasteries and churches, a large number of so called “obroci” have been preserved in the Pirot district. They are really a continuation of the Slovenian pagan respect of the cult of trees. The local residents put them (stuck them) in places that were not accessible and visible to every passer by. "Many stone crosses were stuck to propitiate certain saints, such as St. Elijah or St. German (Džerman), to protect (preserve) their fields and vineyards from the weather, such as hail and storm. Some were put as signs of gratitude of the villagers, families and individuals, for the good deeds (st. Petka) or because of a vow given for the termination of various diseases, or the recovery of a family member as well as the termination of mass mortality of men and cattle. It is interesting that, in addition to the reasons mentioned above, in the stories of many people, the dominant role, even decisive, have dreams in which the Saints appeared ... "(Jeremenković 2009: 14 - 15)

Today, obroci are visited on the day of the saint to whom the cross is dedicated. "In addition to carrying flowers, candles and cakes, people sometimes ‘slaughter a prayer’." (Jeremenković 2009)

Jeremenković listed and described in more detail twenty stone crosses in the Krupac parish: 12 in the area of Krupac, four in the area of Veliko Selo and three in the area of Mali Jovanovac. Also, studying microtoponymy, Zlatković noted down obroci in some other villages of the Pirot region.³⁰



Buildings in Pirot

The house of the Hristić family. The architect Jovan Krunić (1977) considered the house of the Hristić family one of the finest examples of oriental architecture, which is quite in accordance with the principles of modern architecture.³¹ On 14. 09. 1953, the house of the Hristić family was declared a cultural monument, and on 29. 03. 1979, a cultural monument of exceptional importance. It is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 295. The Museum of Ponišavlje is situated in the house.

³⁰ Zlatković's papers were published in editions 31, 34 and 35-36 of Pirot Proceedings which is electronically available at the National Library of Pirot <http://www.nbpi.org.rs/ostalo/digitalizacija>

³¹ The description of the house is given on the website of the Museum of Ponišavlje www.muzejpirot.com

M. Panajotović's house, known as „**Bela mačka**“ (White Cat). Krunić said that ".. its external appearance is rather spoiled by subsequent adaptations, such as frescoes painted with lime. The building is 'protected', but this does not stop the process of its slow decay. "(Krunić 1977: 244) Today, 37 years after Krunić wrote these lines, the house „Bela mačka“ is almost completely ruined, even though many of our respondents mentioned it as one of the most important symbols of the city. On 29. 03. 1953, it was declared a cultural monument and on 29. 03. 1979, it was identified as a cultural monument of great significance. It is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 298.



The house of Stojan Božilović Beli was built after 1840 of post and petrail in Balkan folk style. By the decision of the municipality of Pirot no. 02-020 / 129-81 it was declared cultural heritage – a cultural monument. It is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property, under the number SK 2071.

The pharmacy building Karlo Skacel was the first purpose-designed business - residential building in Pirot, built by a pharmacist of Czech origin, Karlo Skacel, during 1912 and 1913. It was designed and constructed as a building in a row, placed directly on the regulation line of the street. In the decorative processing, along with classical, neo-Renaissance and Neo-Baroque style elements, shallow stylized secession sculpture was used. This building was declared a cultural monument on 21. 07. 1977. It is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 464.

The high-school building (the Gymnasium) in Pirot was built in the period 1904-1907, according to Milorad Ruvidić's architectural design. The side wings of the building were added in 1920 and 1921. The building was constructed in the spirit of academic neo-Renaissance architecture. It was declared cultural heritage – a cultural monument by the decision of the Municipality of Pirot no. 02-020 / 44-89. It is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 940.



Alongside the Gymnasium building, a gym was built in 1920 and 1921. It is known as the “Sokolana”, because its construction was initiated and helped by the members of the Sokol Society "Dušan Silni", founded in 1903. In its architecture, we can see the impact of Renaissance, mostly in the molded window frame, horizontal sub-window cornice with consoles in the opening zone and cornice above the window with the keystone imitation.

The County Authorities building was built in the late nineteenth century for the needs of County Authorities. Today, it is the hotel "Gali". It was declared cultural heritage – a cultural monument by the decision of the Municipality of Pirot no. 02-020 / 45-89. It is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 941.



The building of the Municipal Court - District Authorities building was built in the period 1910 - 1912, according to the architect Aleksandar Janković's dedicated project. What is stylistically noticeable are different inspirations within the general academic classicist, neo-Renaissance and neo-Baroque composition. The building was declared cultural heritage – a monument of culture by the decision of the Municipality of Pirot no. 02-020 / 46-89. It is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 942.



Craft and trade shops in the Republic Square in Tijabara make the ambient unit that was declared cultural heritage by the decision of the Municipality of Pirot no. 02-020 / 127-81. Tijabara is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property - physical cultural and historical sites under the number PKIC 72. There is a market in the center of the square which is in the shape of a triangle. On the southwest end of the market, there is a drinking fountain called Guševica, and craft and trade shops are located down the streets that make up the

Republic Square. Trade shops prevail today, there are just a few craft stores of different profiles, but the architecture is preserved.



At the northeast end of the Republic Square in Tijabara there is the Monument to the Liberators from the Turks. It is a stone monument topped by a bronze figure of a falcon. Originally, it was gilded, but during the Second World War it was taken to Bulgaria. The monument was restored in 1987 and, by the decision of the Municipality of Pirot no. 02-020 / 42-87, it was declared a *monument of culture*.



Serbian and Greek military cemetery at Metiljivica. At the end of 1918, soldiers of the Third Greek division were deployed in Pirot villages Izvor, Gnjan, Suvodol and Temska. Inadequately equipped for the warfare in this region and the harsh winter in Pirot, 358 Greek officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers died. During 1923 and 1924, their remains were transferred next to the Tijabara part of the cemetery where Serbian soldiers were buried. A monument of white marble in the shape of the letter T with a stone relief on the top of it was built on an area of about 500 m² in 1924. Lyrics that celebrate the brotherhood of Serbian and Greek people are carved on the monument. (see: Lilić 1994). By the decision of the Municipality of Pirot no. 02-020 / 44-87, Serbian and Greek military cemetery at Metiljivica was declared cultural heritage - a monument of culture.



The Beg Bridge near the village Staničenje is situated on the river Temštica, near the highway Bela Palanka - Pirot. Only its western part is preserved. It was built probably in the late seventeenth century, just before the start of the Austro-Turkish War of 1683 - 1690, when the construction was interrupted, and, it is believed, was never completed. Today, the stone part of the bridge is in very good condition, but the added wooden part is in the state of decay.

The Beg Bridge was declared a cultural monument by the decision of the Municipality of Pirot on 12 April 1992. It is registered in the Central Register of immovable cultural property under the number SK 2090.



The Monumental area with a memorial plaque on the Kaca Stone is an area where, during the Second World War, the Bulgarian soldiers executed a number of inhabitants of Pirot villages, of which the citizens of Pirot were informed by an eyewitness, a Bulgarian boy. A memorial plaque was built at the execution site, where, in the 80s of the twentieth century, the citizens of Serbia and Bulgaria gathered in order to commemorate the victims of fascism. The Monumental area with a memorial plaque on the Kaca Stone was declared cultural heritage – a significant location by the decision of the Municipality of Pirot no. 02-020 / 43-87.

In addition to these objects of immovable cultural heritage which are under the protection of the state, we would like to mention another three facilities which, in our opinion, deserve attention in the future activities of the preservation of immovable cultural heritage and its integration in the function of socio-economic development.

Raben's building is in Srpskih Vladara Street. It was raised by the Jewish merchant Aron Raben. Shops and taverns were on the ground floor, and four flats with a lot of rooms were upstairs. There were iron balconies in front of the flats. Rods are bent on one of the balconies to mark the year of its construction – 1883. Out of four balconies, only two exist now. The loft was decorated with mortar figures (some of them can be seen now) and on the edge of the roof, in the middle, various plaster statues were arranged. Until they got their own buildings, Pirot High School (until 14. 10. 1907, when it moved into its present building), the Pirot District Court and the Tax Department for the district of Pirot were located in Raben's building. The balconies of the building occasionally served as grandstands for speakers.

Until recently, there was a large furniture store in Raben's building. Since there is still a living memory of Raben's building as the epicenter of social and cultural life in Pirot, and that the space is now empty, it could be used for educational and cultural purposes.

Tvrđava na Crnom vrhu. Na samom vrhu Stare planine, Crnom vrhu, nalazi se jedna od najbolje očuvanih vojnih tvrđava iz XIX veka. Podignuta je nakon izgubljenog rata protiv Bugara 1885. g. sa namerom da se bolje zaštite istočne granice i nije bilo moguće proći kroz planinski prevoj a da se ona ne vidi. Iako se o njoj veoma malo zna, poznato je da nikada nije služila svrsi u koje je podignuta. Tvrđava je u sistemu prehodne zaštite, ali je njeno stanje sve lošije.

The fortress on Crni vrh. On Crni vrh (Black top), the top of Stara Planina mountain, there is one of the best preserved military fortress from the nineteenth century. It was built after the lost war against the Bulgarians in 1885 with the intent to protect the eastern borders better and it was not possible to go through a mountain pass without it in sight. Although there is very little information about it, it is known that it never served the purpose for which it was built. The fortress is in the system of previous of protection, but its condition is getting worse.



Jewish bathroom. In the centre of Pirot, in Jewish street, in the yard of number 13, as a free parking place, there are remains of a Jewish ritual bath, which is called mikveh in Hebrew. The Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Niš has currently set protection only in the form of beams and eaves as the weather would not have a greater impact on the deterioration of this important testimony of Pirot as a multicultural environment.



Vernacular architecture also represents an important segment of immovable cultural heritage. Based on the data given in books, particularly the description given in the promotional materials of TO Pirot, doing fieldwork, we found out that in the villages of Topli Do, Dojkinici and Gostuša traditional architecture is preserved to a large extent.

Objects and machines that perform the activities required for the economy, especially water mills, cloth watermills and wool carding mills, represent a special type of traditional architecture. On the rivers of the upper Ponišavlje there were 79 water mills, nine cloth watermills, seven wool carding mills and two hydropower plants. The largest number of mills were on the Dobrodolska river (21), followed by the Jerma basin (16), the Prisjanska river (14) and on the river Gradašnica (9).

Petrović (1961) gave a detailed description of two mills on the river Gradašnica - Beg and Banković's mills and made specific reference to the possibility of their conservation (which is a prerequisite for the use for the purposes of cultural tourism). Among Gradašnica mills is Šađina mill which, by the expansion of Pirot, became the only mill in the town.



Industrial heritage

Rapid development of industry in the period between the two world wars, especially since “Tigar rubber footwear” factory was opened in 1935, led to the increased need for the production of more electricity. This need was, among the first, noticed by the owners of "Tigar" who initiated the construction of the hydroelectric power plant "Temac". The description of its construction and the elements in the plant were given by Manić (2006). "Included in the hydroenergetic system of Serbia, the hydropower plant 'Temac' worked continuously until May 1990, when, due to inefficiency, it stopped working and was conserved in operating condition." (Manić 2006: 25, 28). In 2001, the Museum of Science and Technology submitted a proposal to the Government of the Republic of Serbia to declare the hydropower plant "Temac" a technical monument of culture, but it is still only under preliminary protection. However, in 2012, the hydropower plant "Temac" was included in the cultural route *Roads of Tesla and Stanojević*.



Intangible cultural heritage

Language, oral and written (speaking and writing) is the main distinctive way of expressing of cultural groups, people, or region, as is the case in the districts of Pirot and Montana. In interviews with respondents in Pirot, the language of the citizens of the Pirot district (including residents of neighbouring municipality, Knjaževac) as well as the language of the citizens of the district of Montana was emphasized as a very important link between Pirot and Montana municipalities because people from Pirot and Montana can easily understand each

other, which facilitates the prospects of future cooperation between these municipalities. In Serbia, among people who have no connection with the Pirot area and parts of eastern and southern Serbia, it is often thought that people in this region speak a mixture of Serbian and Bulgarian, and it is therefore difficult to understand.

Oral heritage in the Pirot area is also cultivated through expressing humor. "Humour is significant in identification of spiritual identity of a person from Pirot, *not only by what it reveals, but rather by what is concealed, covered by joke and humour*. This can be seen most clearly in long humorous prose forms, such as stories about animals, fairy tales and novellas."(Jovanović 2011: 154) However, the full effect of the oral tradition can be seen in shorter narrative forms such as anecdotes, funny stories, jests and jokes. "These numerous genres attract attention not only by the content of the narratives, but also by the methods which are used in the humorous insults of human and collective weaknesses and flaws." (Jovanović 2011: 155)³²

Throughout Serbia, the best known characteristic of people from Pirot is frugality. It is also the subject of a great number of jokes. Respondents were unanimous in their answers that they don't mind jokes about people from Pirot unless they are offensive. Several respondents indicated that, in fact, difficult living conditions caused thriftiness, because people didn't forget how hard it was to acquire property. Respondents also agree with the opinion that the jokes about people from Pirot became widespread due to pečalbari who painstakingly tried to make a better life for their families outside Pirot. Prevalence of jokes about people from Pirot also speaks of population movements and social conditions in the Pirot region.

Crafts

³² Over decades, Dragoljub Zlatković collected a large number of jokes, jests and anecdotes from the Pirot villages, which were mainly published in editions of Pirot collections. This has made a significant contribution to the preservation of the oral tradition of the Pirot region.

As it was mentioned in the introductory chapter of the study, there were various craftsmen in Pirot and the environment: builders, potters, carpenters, woodworkers, coopers, trough-makers, wheelwrights, joiners, blacksmiths and farriers, cobblers, shoemakers, farriers, opanak-makers, tailors, shoe-makers, furriers, abadžije (tailors) dyers, terzije (tailors), sartors, kilim makers etc. In the introductory part of the study attention was paid to their organizational forms and in this part, we will briefly present the specifics of the crafts which have survived even at the beginning of the XXI century in the context of the efforts to preserve them as a form of intangible cultural heritage.

Building craft

Showing the development of houses in the Pirot region, Rodić pointed out a very important factor in building and the overall architecture of the nineteenth century. "They were masters builders, farmers and pečalbari of this area. People of the region, in a concrete and visible way, imprinted their architectural knowledge and skills in the objects of material culture, which is reflected in the types of houses in the villages. The fact is that a farmer-builder strived toward progress, creating better living conditions if his material conditions allowed him that. In this creative architectural path, he accepted, used and passed on the knowledge of his ancestors. "(Rodić 2010: 114)

Since 2012, the Center for intangible cultural heritage and the Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage have begun work on the project "Mapping of national builders" which includes builders from Pirot and the environment, primarily from the village Gostuša. , Describing the implementation of this two-year project, Panić said that traditional architecture makes "a peculiar thesaurus of specific knowledge, skills, religious beliefs and practices that fall into an indispensable part of Serbian identity and *heritage*. As a result of the cooperation of the Centre and the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Niš, summer school of vernacular architecture, intended primarily for young architects and conservators, has been organized in the village of Gostuša since 2012.



Pottery



Pottery is one of the oldest crafts in the municipality of Pirot. Petković said that, during her field research, when asked how long pottery existed, people answered "from time immemorial." Petković points out that two things were crucial for the development of pottery, especially after the liberation from the Turks: the need for pottery and underdevelopment of industrial production. (Petković, 1984: 143) Most artisan potters were from the villages of Veliki and Mali Suvodol, Gjilan, Blato, Rasnica, Barje Čiflik, Kostur, Berilovac Izvor, Poljska Ržana, Trnjane and Veliki Jovanovac. Apprentices from these villages usually went to Pirot to learn their craft. Petković quoted the interpretation of a potter who said that a great number of potters in a village were not caused by better soil quality and material, but the desire for profit: „In the

village, 'people watch each other'. One boy goes to learn the craft, studies it, and eventually becomes a master, acquires possessions, buys land - property in the countryside and it is one more reason for fathers to send their children to study pottery craft. Another reason is probably the fact that pottery was the only craft where the apprentice was paid for the assistance provided to the master, or his work. "(Petković 1984: 145 - 147). The craft was taught and the diploma was received according to the rules set by the guild. The pottery guild in Pirot existed even in the time of the Turks, but after the liberation from the Turks, as noted in the sections devoted to the economy, all the guilds were reorganized.

The use of all three types of techniques in making pottery was notable in Pirot and its environment: pottery made without a wheel (this type of pottery making was also called woman's pottery because women dug the earth, prepared and shaped it, and put it to dry or bake); pottery made on a hand powered wheel (which was a technique used briefly and those types of wheels were not particularly widespread); and pottery made on a foot operated wheel (made from fat clay without any additives. Items made in this way were less resistant to fire and were primarily used for storing liquids). West of the Velika Morava, this type of pottery were made by pečalbari from Pirot.

Potters made household items (various deep and shallow dishes), personal items, decorations of zoomorphic and anthropomorphic forms, objects that were installed in houses, craft tools and musical instruments. However, the following items were mostly made: jugs – "stovne" (it is still said that when you drink from stovna you can't spill water), pitchers, flasks, carafes, stew pans (đuvečarke), flower pots, etc. Today, pottery products are a part of souvenir offers.



Woodworking

A number of different crafts engage wood processing: carpenter, woodworker, cooper or pinter, trough-maker, cart-wright and joiner. These crafts were developed thanks to the wealth of the forests in the region of Pirot. Carpenters or dogramadžije - what they were called in Turkish times, did rough wood processing and prepared material for making houses, especially roofs. Large saws, as well as some hand-forged adzes with wide blades were used as woodworking tools.

After primary processing, woodworkers cut the wood, adzed and prepared material both for their own needs and for sale. They also made wooden accessories. They mostly made flasks, salt and pepper shakers, rasps, cups, plates and spoons. They also made spindles and spindle lathes, wooden coat racks, wash and pig slaughtering troughs, beds, benches, shelves, tripods, and other pieces of furniture.

Carpenters usually made: chairs, tables, benches, beds, stools, tripods, cabinets, closets, window and door frames and frames for photos. Solid wood was rarely used because of the high cost and the difficulty of processing. Carpenters also made fences and eaves for economic buildings. If the customer required, carpenters decorated furniture with woodcarving. Woodcarving was done solely on dining room, rarely on room furniture and usually on sticks of furniture.

Metal processing

Blacksmiths, farriers, coppersmiths, gunsmiths and goldsmiths were involved in metal processing. Farriers worked with blacksmiths under the same roof because in most villages and especially in smaller ones, one craftsman could provide all the needed services. Therefore, these two crafts are inseparable, and their activity is described together. Blacksmiths also made agricultural tools and instruments: plowing equipment, tools for harrowing land, for reaping fruits, for the transport of goods. Regarding craft tools, they made tools for processing: metal, stone, wood, leather and textiles. Interior items which were used and built into village and townhouses were also made in blacksmith workshops: black plate furnace, curry combs, tongs and cabinet parts. Blacksmith products labeled with hunting stamps were marks of workshops

and product quality. Barišić noted that there were two blacksmith shops in Pirot where iron items for home interior and exterior as well as agricultural tools were made and repaired.



The craft of stonemasonry is based on the use of stone excavated from quarries or stone pits. The largest quarry was in Temska, near the monastery and there were smaller quarries in the surrounding villages. "The stone from the quarry was used by the peasants usually for building the foundations of houses and economic buildings, for covering the roofs with stone plates, for covering economic buildings, mostly stables. Special activity in the stonecraft is making and placing gravestones."

Leather processing

The following artisans were engaged in leather processing: tanners, saddlers, opanak shoe makers, cobblers and furriers. Leather was obtained in various ways, by hunting and livestock breeding. When it comes to crafts related to leather processing, they are mostly extinct because life circumstances changed and the need for their products no longer exist. This primarily refers to a furrier craft (making leather and fur products), tanner craft (preparing the leather for further treatment) and saddler craft (making horse equipment, saddlebags, leather belts with compartments, leather bags, knitted horsewhips etc.). Opanci (leather peasant shoes),

although no longer used as footwear, are still made for the souvenir purposes, although there is no accurate data on whether and how many opanak shoe makers there are in Pirot.



Kilim (capret) making



Pirot kilim-making, that is, a specific type of carpet making, is historically linked to the town of Pirot and the municipality of Chiprovtsi in the Bulgarian district of Montana. Unlike Pirot, where women wove carpets only in the town, in Chiprovtsi, carpets were woven by women from the surrounding villages, too.

When it comes to the history of kilim making, Filipović says that carpet-making is a cultural creation that came from the east, while Živković and Kostić believe that it existed before, that is, in the Middle Ages and before the arrival of Turks on the Balkan peninsula, and that during the

Turkish rule, it was developed and perfected under the oriental influences. Ćirić (1968: 29-30) links the development of carpet-making to the period of Ottoman rule, because there is no data nor mention of it earlier, and the oldest preserved kilim is dated to the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. Petković and Vlatković emphasize "Pirot kilim-making, however, entered a higher stage of development, with a highly developed production, in the sixteenth century. At the time of the arrival of Turks in this region the weaving technique, the loom and basic ornaments, as well as certain items such as crga and pokrovac had already been formed." (Petković and Vlatković 1996: 16)

When it comes to the production process, the quality of the wool is the most important. Pirot kilim makers indicate that the Stara Planina mountain sheep wool is of a very good quality because of mountain grazing in an area which is rich in various types of plants. A vertical loom is used in making of carpets, which makes a productional specificity of the Pirot kilim.

The "characteristics of Pirot kilims are: the originality of weaving (identical on both sides), geometric (perpendicular) tread pattern, strong color contrasts (which are not mutually exclusive), and, finally, the origin and the name of the pattern." (Ćirić 1968: 33) The original designs were triangles and diamonds, and those which appeared later were either the same in various combinations or in combinations with hooks and clasps. These original geometric patterns on the oldest kilims "provided – in the next phase - an incentive for the kilim makers to (using the same technique) start copying and applying objects from their environment, which were close at hands or eyes. (...) what occurred later was an extraordinary scale and richness of the combinations in which floral motifs were predominant. Finally, animal motifs appeared and, in the end, scenes from life with human figures." (Ćirić 1968: 32-33)

Patterns were actually symbols through which the kilim maker expressed her desire to contribute to the prosperity of her family and provide protection for her home. The number of carpets was an indicator of the wealth of the family. A remarkable characteristic of the Pirot kilim is that the patterns were learned by heart. So, the skill which a young kilim maker needed to weave a carpet was actually a proof of her intelligence. Knowledge and skills necessary for carpet making were transferred to girls as soon as they started growing up for marriage.



The fact that the patterns were learned by heart as well as the fact that the process of weaving is not a simple physical work, and, finally, the fact that now, the kilim makers' income is slightly higher than the minimum wage, seem quite daunting for young women from Pirot who would like to start weaving carpets.

Pirot kilim-making is included in the National Register of elements of intangible cultural heritage.

As it has already been mentioned, the production of carpets is a link between Pirot and (the district of) Montana, as carpet making has also been developed in Chiprovtsi (a municipality in the district of Montana, at the north east side of Stara Planina). Since Pirot was the main centre for carpet distribution and women in Pirot made more quality carpets, carpet-making in Chiprovtsi can be labeled as Pirot-style kilim making.



Gastronomy

Pirot is also famous for its culinary specialties. This primarily refers to kashaval (cheese) and ironed sausage, though there is a large number of other specialties in the Pirot menu.

Kashaval (cheese)

Until 15 years ago, one of the best types of cheese in the world was made on the territory of Stara planina mountain. This cheese was called Staroplaninski cheese or Pirot kashaval and represented one of the most important export products of Serbia, and it is interesting to add that in the 60-ies of XX century, this was the cheese that was mostly used in the White House.

Experts of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Belgrade, in cooperation with the specialist of the Fund for Agricultural Development of the municipality of Pirot and the Institute of Molecular Genetics and Genetic Engineering drafted *A Major study on the protection of appellations of origin of Pirot kashkaval from cow's milk*³³ in 2012. It describes in detail the technological process of production of Pirot kashkaval from cow's milk. While the first phase of the preparation, on the basis of the composite character of milk, does not differ from the production of other kinds of cheese, the differences occur in other stages of production. Generally speaking, the rind of Pirot kashkaval is characteristic, but the cheese can be without it or with a thin rind if its surface is protected by an appropriate coating or foil, which must ensure the preservation of the quality of the cheese and health safety. The rind color is from light to golden yellow. The structure and consistency of the paste is monolithic, partially puffed and elastic - plastic. The colour of the paste is from light yellow to intense yellow. When cut in slices, it can be seen that Pirot kashkaval does not have small holes, but it may have a small number of tiny cracks created during processing.

Pirot kashkaval from cow's milk corresponds to the standard JUS E.C2010-A. At the moment, Dairy school is the only one with a license for its production, and it also has a store in the centre of Pirot. This store, as well as several other stores, also sells kashkaval from sheep's milk.

³³ Study is available at http://www.zis.gov.rs/upload/documents/pdf_sr/pdf_ogp/G%2061%20Pirotski%20kackavalj%20od%20kravljeg%20mleka.pdf The site was visited on 30. 08. 2014.

At the suggestion of the municipality of Pirot and the Museum of Ponišavlje, Pirot kashkaval has been included in the National Register of elements of intangible cultural heritage.



Ironed sausages are a specialty made from a combination of sheep, veal (or beef) and goat meat, although there are combinations with donkey meat, too. Pork is not used because it goes bad quickly, but pork intestines can be used for "packing". It is very important that the meat does not have fibrils, so only the highest quality meat is used. After the initial processing of meat (removal of any fibrils and fat) and adding spices (salt, cayenne pepper, black pepper, garlic, bay leaf and basil possibly), it is packed in intestines and dried in a drafty place, shaped in the typical form of a horseshoe. After the second day, the sausages are ironed with a glass bottle filled with room temperature water, and the procedure is repeated every day, once a day. According to the information given by Mr. Stanković, the owner of the restaurant Dvojka (who is among the most credited for the preservation of Pirot ironed sausage) drying period is 40 days and the temperature must be between - 5 and + 5 ° C. Therefore, ironed sausage is made in the period from late autumn to early winter. Mr. Stanković also told us that the Pirot ironed sausage is at least 400 years old and, according to one version, the Tatar horsemen in the Turkish army carried it under the saddle and that's how it was created.



Dishes

Regarding breakfast food, polenta (kačamak) is even today among the most favorite, as well as a dish called „prženo“ (fried) (vegetables, especially peppers, fried with eggs and cheese, much like sataraš), although Šarac – Momčilović³⁴ points out that the term " prženo " is also used for belmuž (a dish made of melted young sheep's milk cheese).

In addition to kashkaval, vurda (curd) is made of milk too – a kind of skimmed white cheese eaten alone and also in combination with cayenne pepper and other spices as urnebes salad. "Ceđeno mleko" (as yogurt or sour cream is called in Pirot) is also served as a kind of salad with peppers.

When it comes to cooked dishes, the most popular today are stuffed vine leaves with sheep sour milk; stuffed peppers (fresh and dried), wedding cabbage, beans (as a broth and baked), and other types of vegetables (green beans, peas, etc.) in combination with or without meat. *Podrobica* is among the favorite dishes, too (which is, in other parts of Serbia, called lamb sarma) which is also eaten with sour milk.

³⁴ Šarac - Momčilović Vera. 2010. " Tradicionalna i savremena ishrana stanovnika opštine Pirot ". *Glasnik Etnografskog muzeja* 74/1 . Belgrade : Etnografski muzej , p . 317 - 408



People from Pirot point out that their barbecue is the best, and the confirmation of these claims can be found in the fact that the barbecue competition which is organized in Pirot as an annual event in early August causes great interest of both people from Pirot and citizens of other towns in Serbia, as well as a large number of citizens of Bulgaria. Barbecue products are most sought after on Saturday, when a great number of citizens of Bulgaria come to Pirot to go to the market and visit monasteries (especially Poganovo).



Unfortunately, a great number of tourists are interested primarily in barbecue specialties, which reflects in the fact that these kinds of dishes dominate in the menus of Pirot restaurants, while other food, especially cooked meals, are harder to find.

Contextual analysis of the legacy of Montana and Pirot in order to create a joint programme of protection and maintenance of cultural and historical heritage in the cross-border region

Generally speaking, the importance of natural heritage and especially the heritage of Stara Planina mountain is recognized in both Pirot and Montana (in Pirot, for example, those places are Visok, Vidlič, Tri čuke, etc, and in Montana the peaks Kom, Todorini kukli). In Serbia, it was declared a Nature Park, while some of its parts in Bulgaria are included in the UNESCO MAB Biosphere Reserves Directory. The hydrological network of Stara Planina shaped the impressive scenery - waterfalls (Kurtulski skok, Čunguljski skok, etc. in Pirot, while Haiduk's falls stand out in Montana), gorges (Vlaška gorge, Vladikine ploče gorge, the gorge beneath Todorini kukli, etc.) and caves. Hydrological resources in Montana (Varšec) and Pirot (Dag-spring, Zvonci spa) act as a disincentive for the development of spa tourism.

When it comes to immovable cultural heritage, there are 26 buildings under the protection of the Republic of Serbia in the municipality of Pirot. One building (the house of the Hristić family) is categorized as a monument of great importance, while there are four monuments of great importance; one is protected as a significant sight, one as a part of regional cultural and historical sites and the others as monuments of culture. In addition to this, the Monastery of St. Jovan Bogoslov in Poganovo, which is also under the protection of the Republic of Serbia as a cultural monument of great importance, is also very important for the Pirot region.

In the municipality of **Montana**, having in mind that the system of heritage protection in Bulgaria is somewhat different from the system in Serbia (for example, in Bulgaria, local museums perform activities which are performed by institutes for the protection of monuments in Serbia), and that the objects of cultural heritage are classified into two groups (heritage of national and heritage of local importance), it should be noted that in the territory of Montana, as the heritage of national importance, there are 34 protected facilities, two of which are buildings of vernacular architecture, six of them are religious buildings (churches and monasteries), 13 are archeological sites (primarily burial sites (graves), the ancient heritage, one building dating back

to the prehistoric period and the Middle Ages), and 13 are of historical significance.³⁵ Unlike Pirot, where the stone crosses are locally recognized as important representatives of religious practice but are not protected, Montana's large number of obroci are protected as areas of local importance.

Different forms of intangible cultural heritage are recognized primarily as elements that form the image of cities (and the area around them - municipalities) rather than as parts of legacy whose preservation requires special attention. It is good, however, that the civic associations and other private economic organizations (including small businesses) found that heritage such as gastronomy and crafts represent a potential distinctive quality that can ensure sustainability in the long run.

Problems that occur in Montana in terms of heritage conservation are insufficient recognition of heritage as a development resource (which results in a greater number of so-called "wild archaeologist" whose interest in heritage only for personal gain actually destroy objects, (s: Zlateva and Zlateva) and the absence of local strategy for the preservation of heritage which is reflected in the fact that municipalities allocate very little amount of money for heritage conservation projects unless the decision makers perceive a particular object or element as particularly important. Similar problems occur in Pirot, too. These observations can be summarized in the SWOT analysis table:

(Strenghts)	(Weakneses)	(Ooportunities)	(Threats)
Archaeological heritage	Insufficient exploration (especially Pirot); wild archaeologists (both Pirot and Montana)	Archaeology of the community; Archaeological cultural routes	The lack of local heritage policy
Fortresses	Links with other elements of heritage; poor condition of the	Contents related to the development of cultural tourism	Lack of funds for renovation

³⁵ See the website of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria <http://mc.government.bg/images/NPK/MONTANA.pdf> The page was visited on 05. 09. 2014

	fort at Crni Vrh		
Industrial heritage (the hydro power plant Temac included in the route “Roads of Tesla and Stanojević”)	Not enough material recognized as heritage	Adaptation of the route <i>Roads of Tesla and Stanojević</i> in the function of promoting other forms of industrial heritage ("Tigar", "First of May" accumulation "Ogasta")	Lack of understanding (especially of decision-makers and experts in cultural institutions) why the industrial heritage important
Ambient units	Preventive care is not well developed; Spatial planning policies often suffer changes.	Educational programs and projects	Ignorance of the earlier scheme of spatial organization; Inconsistency of spatial planning policies
Examples of urban and rural architecture	Dilapidated condition	Review of existing and identifying potential contents in the function of cultural routes (provisions on construction)	Preference for cheaper solutions can only improve the situation in the short term. For long-term use of these resources, maintenance should also be kept in mind.
Intangible cultural heritage - the elements under protection	Discrepancies Pirot - Montana; product placement (rugs, pottery, cheese)	Joint workshops; joint performances at international fairs (Culture and Tourism); Joint Fair; Connecting to immigration clubs; On - line sales.	The lack of substantial support of local and national decision-makers in particular with regard to placement of craft products can lead to the extinction of the trade.
Manifestations (Montana – music; Pirot – gastronomy)	Weaker connections with other segments of heritage; superficial involvement touristi organizations in the field of promotion if the tourist organization is not the main organizer	Connecting in projects of cultural routes; Connecting to immigration clubs.	Inertness in inter-sector cooperation

Relation of gastronomy and small business (Piot)	Weaker connection of gastronomy as heritage and small business (Montana)	Exchange of experiences and joint ventures	Focus on one type of food (barbecue) leads to neglect of other dishes
Cultural institutions (projects Via Militaris by the Dom kulture in Piot, digitizing local history collection of the National Library in Piot, folk architecture camps in Gostuša organized by the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments of Niš)	Inertness; underdeveloped skills in the interpretation of heritage; obsolete museum exhibitions; only the library and the museum have websites (Piot) The absence of digitization (Montana);	Connecting with other institutions in the field of culture and tourism; The new settings of museums; Proactive Internet facility presentations; Development of digital platforms for connecting libraries and archives.	Conservatism / understanding of protection in terms of technical fix
Stara planina (Serbia – the park of nature; Bulgaria – UNESCO MAB)	Ideas and initiatives instead of designed programs and tourist products	Serbia - UNESCO MAB; Common hiking tours; Eco tourism	Mass tourism
Hidrology; recognition of cultural heritage in connection with the use of hydrological resources (Vares Montana)	Uncaptivated sources and reliance on nature for the formation of whirlpools and swimming pools	Spa turism	
Agriculture and cattle breeding (prerequisites for crafts and gastronomy); Agricultural Development Strategy (Piot)	Depopulation of the municipality; reduction of livestock fund	Organic production; collecting mushrooms and berries; Involvement in programs for the increase of livestock fund	Further emigration of population
NGO projects in the field of nature conservation and fostering cultural heritage and cultural tourism (for example projects: "Know your homeland 'by Association Logos; Festival" Refreshments	Institutions generally formally involved while the fundamental and complete support is sporadic.	Greater support, fundamental institutional support and active involvement throughout the project implementation.	Insufficient understanding of the importance and role of civil society especially by institutions

"NGO" Refreshment "," We have potential, use them "Association" Grlica, "etc.)			
Turistic organizations; Heritage presented in tourist brochures	Promotion without insight into the real situation (Vetrena hole); valorization	Development of offers for passengers in transit; clear signals to objects where it is possible to buy handicrafts and learn about the craft; inclusion in international Internet forums and connection with sites like Trip Advisor; monitoring	The weakening of the inter-sectoral collaboration; "If you want to get things done, do it yourself." mentality; The absence of monitoring.
Municipalities - strategies (Strategic Action Plan of Pirot, Local Economic Development Strategy, Development strategy of GIS Municipality of Pirot, Local Action Plan for the Children of Pirot, Social Protection Strategy, etc. Municipal Development Plan of Montana from 2007 to 2013, etc.	No mention of culture (Pirot); Homogeneity of institutions (Montana)	Connecting strategies with this study	Formal acceptance of the study; Lack of interest of stakeholders to come up with strategies both individually, on the municipal levels, and on the common level

Eco-tourism is a form of tourism that is based on the interest of the visitors to learn about the natural values (such as the beauties of the landscape and the products created thanks to the blessings of nature in a certain region), but also contribute to preserving the natural heritage by understanding it as vitally important not only for a particular climate, but also for the entire planet. In this sense, the natural heritage of Stara Planina mountain enables establishing pedestrian (hiking) tours that would be in the function of integrative promotion of heritage. We

can take the village Topli Do as a concrete example in the Pirot area. There are very well preserved buildings of vernacular architecture and there are three waterfalls near the village: Čunguljski skok (Čungulj jump), Piljski waterfall (both on the Toplodolska river) and Kurtulski skok (on the Javorska river). It is harder to get to this village because the road is narrow, and only cars and vans (mini buses) can pass. Also, the waterfall can be reached only on foot which is why we emphasize the possibility of hiking (walking) tours. Regarding footpaths to the falls, they should be cleared and marked and trash cans should be set and as far as architectural heritage is concerned, it is necessary to educate the residents and the village shop workers to know how to provide basic information and give instructions how to get to the representative objects and to the paths that lead to the waterfalls. There is a similar possibility in the village Dojkinci.

When it comes to walking tours, gorges (eg. Vladikine ploče) and caves also provide opportunities, but, according to the respondents, for example, the cave Vetrena dupka should be promoted in tourist brochures of the organization, but in reality requires special attention during visits to the cave because it is difficult to access and there is a possibility that, if a person comes to it from the side of Pešterice, he or she might fall right into the pit.



Common opportunity for hiking tours in the area of Pirot and Montana provides the area Tri čuke because one side is in Serbia (Pirot) and the other side is in Bulgaria (Montana). Mountaineering Club "Vidlič" from Pirot has launched the idea of marking tracks and the

formation of a joint tour with mountaineering clubs in Montana, but the idea has not been realized yet.

Also, since both Pirot and Montana recognize the importance of stone crosses, and that in the area of each village in Pirot and Montana there is at least one stone cross which testifies about the specific form of religious practice, they can be included in the walking tours. At the same time, one possibility should be considered and discussed with the local residents; if the visitors come to the village at the time of the celebration of the village patron ("zavećina") or during the celebration of the saint to whom the obrok is dedicated, they should be enabled attendance at these celebrations.

In either way, it is important to insist on walking tours because they provide long-term sustainability of natural resources in particular and not to insist on greater investments in addition to repairing existing roads, at least until the running activities show effects. Visitors should be encouraged to post their impressions and comments on reference sites such as *Trip Advisor*, *Lonley Planet*, *Rough Guide*, etc. because in that way they can see the actual effects of running activities can be seen, on the basis of which then the options of major investments should be considered.³⁶

Religious tourism has been developed more in Pirot than in Montana because every weekend a great number of citizens of Bulgaria come to Pirot and visit places such as the Monastery of Holly Virgin in Sukovo, Monastery of St. Jovan Bogoslov in Poganovo, the Monastery of St. George in Temska. This is not the case with Serbian citizens, who rarely visit sacred sites in Bulgaria, and if they do, the visits are primarily focused on the Rila Monastery (which does not belong to Montana, but is on the way to Greece, one of the most important destinations for tourists from Serbia). In the case of Pirot, it is therefore necessary to make an

³⁶ The efforts of the Republic of Serbia to encourage the development of rural tourism were also reflected in subsidized loans for citizens who possessed objects that could be adapted for the purposes of rural tourism (to invest in adaptation). However, there was no systematic support in the strategic placement of renovated buildings in the tourist market, and the result is that most of the investments realized during the second half of the first decade of the XXI century have not started to generate income, not even five years after the completion of (private) investment.

effort to encourage visitors to see other things and beauties (both natural and cultural) of Pirot, while in the case of Montana it obviously necessary to examine current approaches because, in the presentations of Montana, sacral objects are listed as an attraction, presumably only for the visitors from Bulgaria.

Having in mind that many people in Europe and the Mediterranean (including Asia Minor and North Africa) share a common history and many elements of heritage, the concept of cultural routes has been developed. At the moment, in the municipality of Pirot, as already mentioned, the hydropower plant "Temac" is included in the route "Roads of Tesla and Stanojević," which aims to popularize **industrial heritage**.

In the municipality of Pirot, the factories "Tigar" (particularly the old factory where rubber boots are still made), and "Prvi maj" provide opportunities for better understanding of the process of industrialization (in Serbia). In Montana, artificial accumulation of Ogasta is primarily promoted as the beautiful scenery, but what is lacking are indications of the reasons for its creation and the development process of its use. The problem, therefore, in Pirot as well as in Montana is reflected in the lack of recognition of industry as a part of heritage, and the key to overcome this problem is to make efforts so that stakeholders can understand that industrial heritage is also an important part of heritage.

As it has already been indicated in the first part, highly developed crafts had the greatest influence on the development of industry. However, kilim making really stands out among the crafts, which is also among the most important ties between Pirot and Chiprovtsi (Montana District). In this sense, there is a possibility of expanding the route of creativity - **Routes of kilim making and creative skills**. Through it, the carpet making would be presented to tourists as a traditional women's craft through several models: a demonstration of the process of production of carpets; presentation of the symbolism of motifs and patterns; stories of women weavers and the history of carpet making throughout history, kilim motifs applied in contemporary art and clothing, souvenirs and others. Workshops for tourists would represent specific content where they could try weaving, or for those who stay longer in Pirot or Chiprovtsi, multi-day courses could be organized. This touristic product can include other traditional skills such as pottery, but also those skills / crafts which are already extinct, and which can be revived through different models of interpretation (demonstration of skills, video

presentations, etc.) for the needs of tourism, where digitizing local history collection which contains publications related to the history and process of kilim making represents an additional advantage. In order to create the contents of this route, map tourist sites, develop book standards for souvenirs and all the other elements necessary for the development of a unique touristic product, designers, applied artists, ethnologists, tourismologists and other interested experts in cross-border areas should be included in the process. A weakness that can turn into a threat (extinction of kilim making) is a product placement. By modern presentation on the internet, the route would contribute to improving the placement of kilims and other craft products primarily through a platform for *on-line* sale of specific products (for example, Pirot and Chiprovtsi rugs, pottery products, etc.). The arrival of the international system of *Pay Pal* in Serbia, which is already present in Bulgaria, also supports this idea. Also, the promotion of this route should include expatriate clubs in European and world countries because they can be a channel for the distribution of kilims and other handicraft products. Finally, we should consider the possibility of placing carpets in countries where islam is the predominant religion.³⁷

When it comes to the benefits of Pirot and Montana, there is a great number of archaeological sites which allow the initiation of *The route of archaeological heritage*. It is a complex route which connects, for example, the Pirot fortress, the fortress at Crni Vrh in Pirot and Kaleto and *Castra Ad Montanezium* in Montana, as well as sacred objects in which various archaeological materials were found during research. Through this route, the history of these two regions, migration and cultural interaction between people who inhabited this area through different eras would be "told" in a certain way. As many of the archaeological sites are not investigated and preserved, the condition for their use for tourism purposes assume the activities of conservation and protection. For this purpose, it is possible to organize archaeological volunteer camps, which at the same time represent a kind of tourism. These types of camps could be offered on the market as a package tour for students and experts in the field of archeology and other related disciplines, as well as for those tourists, archaeology lovers, who want to have active holidays.³⁸ Camps would be organized under the supervision of experts from relevant

³⁷ We should bear in mind that for centuries the main customers for the carpets were Turks and other Muslims who went down the Imperial road.

³⁸ Archaeological sites are very popular in western Europe, from Italy and Austria to Scandinavia and Britain. The largest and best known such project was initiated in 1964 as an attempt to reconstruct the village from the Iron Age

institutions (museums, Institute for the Protection of Monuments, Archaeological Institute, Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, Department of Archaeology, University of Sofia, the National Institute of Archaeology of Bulgarian Academy of Science and Arts, etc.), and they would contribute to the popularization of not only archaeological heritage of Montana and Pirot, but also to better understanding of archaeological heritage by young people in the communities of Montana and Pirot. The last mentioned contribution would also enable the creation of the pillars of defense of the site from the so-called "wild" / "amateur" archaeologists who, with their unprofessional work and the desire to achieve personal gain above all, cause damage not only to the objects of heritage but also to the communities that live nearby. So, through professional leadership, archaeological sites may eventually provide the basis for the development of the concept of *archeology of community*, ie. independent projects through which local archaeological heritage is explored and becomes accessible. This concept is shown by the British Channel 4 show, *Time Team*.³⁹ Basically, its main advantage is attracting, animating local communities and their promoters to improve their attitude towards heritage with the help of experts / professionals in the fields of archeology, geology and geophysics. The basis for initiating the archeology of community exists, as evidenced by the large number of editions of local communities about heritage of their villages, as well as the interest that the implementation of the project of the Association "Logos" *Know your homeland* has caused. Finally, another benefit of the show *Time Team* is reflected in the fact that several episodes were devoted to the Roman heritage, with graphic representations of the appearance of Roman *manasios* and *mutationes* which can also be seen in the area of Montana and the territory of Pirot, and since these objects looked the same throughout the Roman empire (only the materials were different), the show, therefore, makes it possible to see how, for example, *manasio* actually looked in Pirot and in Montana, too.

on the location near the Danish town of Leire. This project is also an excellent example of harmonization (and complementing) the tourist offer and scientific-research mission.

³⁹ This team is a show produced by *VideoText Communications Ltd* i *Picturehouse Television Co. Ltd* and the purchaser is the British television station Channel 4. It is a series aired from 1994 to 2013 where a team of experts (archaeologists, geophysicists and geologists) in cooperation with the local population conduct a three-day surveys and drilling excavations. Sites were proposed by property owners, local archaeologists (both professional and amateur), academics, interested institutions of local government, civil society organizations and the general public. In Serbia, the series runs on the cable channel Viasat History.

The archaeological route would include other elements of heritage that are on the route (gastronomy, legends, myths, natural values) as additional tourist contents that integrate this product. Creating such routes, in addition to mapping the sites and ensuring their availability, includes the use of modern technology in the interpretation of archaeological heritage such as interactive maps, 3D reconstructions, video games and the like. Creating such contents may be also a part of the joint project activities of Montana and Pirot. A prerequisite for the activation of archaeological heritage in the tourist route is also reflected in the development of heritage interpretation. Development of interpretive themes for each site and the entire route would represent a joint activity of key stakeholders from Pirot and Montana, primarily representatives of the cultural sector and tourism.

Institutions, therefore, have a key role in the process of interpretation of heritage, especially cultural institutions. Unlike institutions in Montana where, at least judging by their presence on the Internet and statements in the studies,⁴⁰ the older principles (of sporadic and insufficiently responsive perceptions of new technology) are still used, some institutions in Pirot began the process of transforming the institutions which deal both with the protection and integration of heritage in the processes of cultural and socio-economic development in the municipality and the county. More specifically, institutions have implemented, and continue implementing programs through which citizens gather around topics related to inheritance (for example *sedešče* in the Museum of Ponišavlje represent a kind of discussions of oral tradition, then vernacular architecture camp in the village Gostuša organized by the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Niš), take various options of modern interpretation of heritage into consideration (the project of Dom kulture, *Via militaris*), and provide the preconditions for analysis and approaches to heritage and its use (for example, digitization of the Regional department of the National library of Pirot). In doing so, they have the assistance of the civil sector, that is, civic associations have implemented a number of projects that are of great importance for the understanding of inheritance (the project *Ecological camp Stara Planina* in Temska and the

⁴⁰ See: ОБЩИНСКИ ПЛАН ЗА РАЗВИТИЕ 2007 – 2013 г. http://www.montana.bg/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Montana_OPR.pdf, Annual Tourism Reporting Template 2012 http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/files/annual_reports/2011/bulgaria_2011.pdf Assessment of National Tourism Development Strategies of Bulgaria http://www.ceeweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Final_NTDS-Assessment_Bulgaria.pdf etc.

aforementioned project of the Association "Logos" *Know your homeland*), and its promotion through rural tourism (the project of creating a database of households that can participate in the development of rural tourism *We have potentials –let's use them*, which was initiated and conducted by the Association "Grlica").



However, there are still some preconditions for further improvements. First of all, the municipalities must individually make (enabling further development) a local strategy of culture development in which strategic directions in the field of culture and heritage will be defined, as well as an action plan which will use the current values of heritage as a development resource. Development of the local cultural strategy should be based on a participatory approach, that is, all relevant stakeholders should be involved in its creation. This means that, in addition to representatives of institutions and organizations (culture, tourism, education, media, economy), the citizens of Pirot should also participate through different models (questionnaires, focus groups). In that sense, it would be important to conduct a research on the identity of the city in order to map the key cultural markers that people perceive as identity value of their local community. In this way, wider support for the implementation of cultural development center will be obtained. It is possible to initiate concrete projects which will enable a better start-up position for the development of cultural tourism out of these strategies. There are two complementary activities which especially stand out among them:

1. It is necessary to develop management plans for the key facilities that are under protection, in order to consolidate the planning, conservation, research, presentation and the use of immovable cultural property. Since 2005, the management plan is necessary for all cultural goods that pretend to be nominated for the UNESCO world heritage list. It is a strategic document that recognizes the potentials of the legally protected cultural property and the possibilities of its use for the development of local communities and the wider heritage environment (Jokileto 2004). Its main goal is to ensure (through valuation, protection and promotion of the values of cultural and natural heritage) the sustainable development of cultural property as a place that offers a unique experience for all visitors, while, at the same time, it is also actively involved in local community development. Since management plans are primarily developed for cultural property of exceptional and great importance, in the case of Pirot, therefore, it is necessary to create management plans for: the Church of St. Paraskeva in the village Staničenje (very important), The Monastery of Temska (very important), the house of the Hristić family (of great importance), the Pirot fortress (very important), Panajotović's house "Bela mačka (White Cat)" (very important). In doing so, in terms of ambient units, we should recall that Krunić (1977) presented what is even today a modern and contemporary proposal of revitalization of the urban fabric of Pirot, which should certainly be kept in mind in future activities in the field of urban planning coordinated with the local tradition.

2. In the case of the Museum of Ponišavlje, which, to some extent, can be also applied to museums in Montana, it is necessary to revise the permanent exhibition and modernize it since the settings were made in the 60s and 70s of the twentieth century, and in the meantime, museology and approaches to the presentation of museum collections have been developed in correspondence with the development of modern technologies. The fact is that museum collections enable telling different stories, including different versions of the same story, and the permanent exhibition is conceptualized in such a way that those different stories can be told in the function of the museum concept as (in this case) local institutions in the service of local heritage fostering (which is also a part of the national and European heritage). In doing so, modern technology, especially through pro-active sites, contributes to the development of

imagination of the visitors of websites, which, in turn, can inspire a physical visit to a certain museum.

Finally, intersectoral cooperation exists, but in rudimentary form and it is usually reduced to a formal support in the corresponding domain. Intersectoral cooperation which can provide long-term effects implies collaborative work of tourist organizations, cultural institutions, schools and the civil sector, starting from the idea to realization, that is, in the full cycle of realization of certain ideas for the use of heritage resources. One possibility lies, for example, in the joint efforts of the institutions (the tourist organization, Institute for the protection of nature, museums, Institute for the protection of monuments, libraries, archives, municipalities, civic associations) on the creation of an interactive educative video game, *Life on Old (Balkan) Mountain*, through which young people (from 7 to 77) would get acquainted with landscapes, flora, fauna, traditional architecture, social life and customs on Stara Planina mountain. The game could be put on the websites of institutions as a free trial on-line option and the full on-line access could be charged electronically or the whole game could be sold in a DVD format. The point is that a proactive approach to heritage, along with the use of all the benefits of new technologies, should be one of the themes for the gathering of both institutional stakeholders and individuals, irrespective of age, interested in preserving the heritage of Pirot and Montana.

In order to encourage attempts to set the heritage of Montana and Pirot as a catalyst for socio-economic and cultural development, we would like to mention two examples of successful projects implemented in historically close environments.

First of all, in the context of the development of heritage routes, and keeping in mind the geographical similarities (ie. the fact that the mountains and hydrological resources dominate the areas) and the fact that it is also a multicultural environment, the project *Heart of Istria: Heritage and Culture of Istra* is very encouraging. It is designed with the idea of discovering the hidden side of Istrian cultural heritage in a way that represents the cross-border cooperation of institutions, scientists, cultural and tourist workers, while ensuring the preservation and revival of cultural heritage and its higher visibility. The project was co-financed by the European Union through the initiative of INTERREG IIIA program for neighborhood of Slovenia - Hungary -

Croatia 2004 – 2006.⁴¹ The aim of the project was a scientific evaluation of the heritage on the basis of which new itineraries were identified and these itineraries were jointly promoted in all participating countries, which created the basis for further work on transboundary sustainable development. Specific objectives of the project were: strengthening of existing and creating new tourist destinations in cities and rural areas of Istra; establishing a common tourist area and cross-border cooperation in tourism and culture through institutional cooperation at the local, county and national level; establishing a model of good practice; the creation of cross-border tourism itineraries and scientific valorization of cultural heritage; raising public awareness of the cultural heritage of the area through the publication of the project results and development of new tourism products. Target groups of the project were: local population, tourists, employees in cultural, scientific, educational and tourist institutions and organizations. The greatest value and, at the same time, the challenge of the project was the cooperation of partner institutions and experts and institutions in the tourism and culture involved in the project. Through their collaboration, cross-border Slovenian - Croatian roads were created, which were explained in project publications. The routes are made up of, so far, insufficiently promoted cultural tourist destination (growing segment of the tourism market). The results of the project are presented through publications / brochures which, in four languages, analyze in detail the four thematic routes. They represent the summary of scientific and tourism experts research from both sides of the border. Each booklet is thematically accompanied with five-language leaflets with a map of sites which is connected with photographs of the sites described in the brochure by numbers, a DVD release, that is, a promotional film with four covered topics. Brochures were distributed to institutions in tourism and culture, and due to its educational character, one part is intended for local schools and libraries.⁴²

In connection with the possibility of **the Route of kilim making and creative expression**, the project of cross-border cooperation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia can also be stimulating. The project is called *The Development of typical products in north-east Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Zlatibor District of Serbia*, and it is based on the idea that the

⁴¹ INTERREG is the widest EU Community Initiative, funded by the European Regional Development Fund. The aim of the initiative is to increase the economic and social cohesion by promoting cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation, which will enable a balanced development of the whole territory of the Community (European Union along with border areas).

⁴² For details about this project as well as supporting activities in its implementation, see the website: <http://heartofistria.org/index.php?id=32>

typical products from the area of agriculture, livestock and old crafts are a chance for economic development and cross-border cooperation between the north-east Bosnia and the Zlatibor District in Serbia. Typical products are defined primarily as economic and gastronomic products, but, at the same time, as products which are a part of tradition and culture of the area from which they come from. The general objective of the project was to protect the typical products of the target region in accordance with European standards and increase their sale. Specific project objectives were: to make products of north-east Bosnia and the Zlatibor district visible in the wider region and make their protection feasible. The project aimed at improving the productivity and competitiveness of economic, especially rural, resources and thus, the tourist potential of the mentioned area (indirect impact on improvement of the environmental conditions), as well as contributing to the preservation and further development of the rural area and natural environment). In this sense, the project was focused on reviving the production of what is characteristic of the local communities, on protection and promotion of characteristics in the wider area, and preventing the local population from leaving the villages.

The project was implemented through several key activities: 1) mapping of typical products and key actors who can contribute to their development (research, analysis, printing of brochures and promotional material, 2) support to producers and tourist workers (training, promotional materials, study tours, promotions); 3) promotions (typical products fair and the promotion of products as a tourist product)

The target groups of the project were: state institutions, non-governmental organizations, specialized organizations / institutions which can actively participate in the promotion, production and protection of typical products; producers of typical products in the border area.

Results of the project include: performed evaluation of typical products in north-east Bosnia and the Zlatibor district in Serbia and identified key stakeholders for the development of typical products; consensus of key stakeholders regarding the development of typical products in connection with common development goals; increased capacity of institutions which should work on the protection and development of typical products, as well as the manufacturers of these products; typical products adequately promoted and recognized at the regional level and beyond; printing of a professional publication, *Typical products of the Zlatibor district and north-east Bosnia and Herzegovina*, and printing and distribution of promotional materials.

One of the key values of this project is establishing closer cooperation between the two regions, especially small manufacturers who, through training and study tours, gained new knowledge and shared experience with their colleagues from the region. Through educational programs, manufacturers have been trained to manage finances, create action and business plans, which is essential for the expansion of their production and for strengthening of production capacities.⁴³

The described project of cross-border cooperation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia is not the only good example provided by other municipalities in Serbia. In connection with the promotion of municipalities and their natural and cultural resources, the project *The Kikinda mammoth* should also be mentioned because it provides a model of gathering around the (natural) resources and is applicable in Montana and Pirot.⁴⁴ Implementation of the project in its first phase included a series of joint workshops of the participants in the cultural and socio-economic life of the municipality. At the workshops, in addition to the exchange of ideas and experiences, incentive for joint development initiatives and their implementation was also provided. Among the outcomes of the project is the reorganization of the permanent exhibition in accordance with modern museological principles of the National Museum in Kikinda, which is today one of the best museums in Serbia. The Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia took part in financing the reconstruction of the permanent exhibition, as well as the local businesses which, through workshops and participation in the first phase of the project *The Kikinda mammoth*, identified opportunities that culture provides for the improvement of the business environment.

Sites like *Viminacium* (the municipality of Kostolac) and *Felix Romuliana*⁴⁵ (Gamzigrad, in Zaječar) provide examples of how the creation and adoption of the management plans have

⁴³ For more details, see <http://www.rrazlatibor.co.rs> i <http://srb-bih.org/?cat=42> Page was visited 30. 07. 2014.

⁴⁴ The realisation began in 2006 with the financial assistance of the European Agency for Reconstruction; in later phases, finances were provided by local and government funds.

⁴⁵ Locality Felix Romuliana was included in the UNESCO list of world cultural heritage in 2007.

contributed to improving the visibility of these sites. Apart from that, the realization of plans included ways of obtaining benefits not only for the sites but also for the communities that are close to them. Management plans have already been discussed and what should be emphasised here is that their creation facilitates access, especially to UNESCO funds dedicated to the preservation of heritage. In the context of nature conservation, including Stara Planina mountain (in the Pirot district) in the UNESCO MAB directory of nature reserves opens the door to both UNESCO and the EU funds for the preservation of the natural environment and biodiversity.

Finally, old crafts, particularly kilim-making, correspond to the objectives of UNESCO in terms of preserving the diversity of cultural expression and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage.⁴⁶ Also, their development and connection with the creative industries and IT sectors (eg. already mentioned possibility of the video game about Stara Planina) are closely related to the objectives of the European Union expressed through the support program of the cultural and creative sector *Creative Europe*.⁴⁷ What needs to be done in relation to access to the mentioned funds of UNESCO and the European Commission is monitor the websites of ministries of culture regularly (both in Serbia and Bulgaria)⁴⁸ which themselves announce contests for co-financing of projects in various fields of culture, and the site of the Regional Centre for the preservation of intangible cultural heritage in south-east Europe, which is located in Sofia.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ See: http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=34321&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html i <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/> UNESCO announces competitions every year in these areas.

⁴⁷ For details see: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/index_en.htm

⁴⁸ Website of the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia is : www.kultura.gov.rs and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria <http://mc.government.bg>

⁴⁹ For details see: <http://www.unesco-centerbg.org>

Conclusion

According to all that has been said and mentioned above, it can be concluded that Montana and Pirot share historical contexts in which they have developed in cultural and socio-economic terms, and that they have in common many elements of cultural heritage, the firmest of which is the common natural heritage of Stara mountain. However, there are some noticeable differences which are now reflected in the approaches to the conservation of heritage, which therefore imply protection and popularization of heritage in the local as well as in wider communities. These differences are manageable primarily through a dialogue that leads to the establishment of a common platform for the promotion of socio-economic status of the citizens of Montana and Pirot and achieving common cultural development.

Obviously, there is much room for joint action, but the crucial thing is to work on **strengthening the capacity**, in order to achieve the possibilities described above. Strengthening the capacity primarily means to promote and exploit the knowledge and skills of stakeholders so that it, together with training, develops receptivity and adaptability of professionals and decision makers in institutions and civil society organizations and individuals outside of the above mentioned organizations for new ideas and initiatives that result in the achievement of progress on both the individual (individuals and organizations individually) and on the joint level. Strengthening the capacity is usually accomplished through seminars and workshops where participants learn about the trends and opportunities and work together on articulating a set of common features that can be applied in their work. More specifically, since the library in Pirot made efforts to digitize county collection and the library in Montana has not started that yet, the first thing that could be done is to organize a joint meeting where opportunities that digitization offers would be presented and certain topics such as the shortcomings of the current form of digitizing of the homeland department in Pirot and finally options for a harmonized platform and implementation of specific training for employees would be discussed. In doing so, the model could be the National Library of Australia, which offers one of the best examples of how libraries can fit in preserving the oral traditions of the local communities in which they are located. In fact, thirty years ago the National Library of Australia launched a project called "oral history" to which all the libraries in the territory of the country responded and whose goal was

recording (audio and video recording), traditions, legends, myths, customs and memories of famous people.⁴⁹ All recordings are available to library members via the local server. Recordings were performed by permanent and part-time associates of the local libraries trained for such activities. More specifically, the local community could, with the help of ethnologists (for example, in the Museum of Ponišavlje and the Historical Museum in Montana), and in collaboration with libraries, initiate a project to systematize and record oral traditions of Pirot and Montana and the materials would be available to the users / members of the library. Also, as evident within the Nordic cooperation⁴⁹, the similarity in languages (as is the case with Montana and Pirot) has enabled the reissues of important writers, poets and other artists from one country to another and their promotion in which all stakeholders of cultural life in the given countries have been included. In addition to reprints of older editions, new editions of modern authors have been jointly published.

It is also obvious that there have been major shifts at the level of cooperation of civil society than it is the case with tourist organizations and cultural institutions. Finally, some possibilities for cross-border co-operation at the local level have been identified, which have resulted in the present study.

In relation to this, however, there is a threat which is expressed in the lack of attention to **monitoring**, that is, to tracking the effectiveness of the taken actions and undertaking efforts which will, through further activities, promote and elevate them to a higher level. This is about the *post-factum* monitoring, but what should be kept in mind is that it is also important to monitor the activities while they are being implemented. The evaluations during the project (assessment) in the last ten years have more and more suppressed what was until then more frequent assessment of the costs / benefits (cost / benefit analysis) because they enable a timely detection of problems and reaction in a timely manner, in order to achieve the objectives more effectively and pave the way for further development.

Threats to the efforts of local participants in the cultural and socio-economic life of Montana and Pirot (stakeholders) are the trends on the state level of Bulgaria and Serbia, primarily prioritizing efficiency over effectiveness. That means giving priority to activities which are supposed to be faster in improving socio-economic status of citizens. However, this reduces the room for consideration of the long-term effects, and they can be dangerous for (long-term)

resource maintenance on which development, especially the development of natural resources, should be based.

Also, although there have been some progress in the culture policies of these countries in the last fifteen years, what is especially lacking is the local heritage policy, which actually stems from the lack of serious, long-term national heritage policy. On the other hand, however, both Bulgaria and Serbia, due to the improvements in the field of cultural policy and regional development policy, leave room for local initiatives that could be the stimulus for accelerating the formulation of strategies. What should primarily be kept in mind in their formulation is that natural resources are practically non-renewable (because several thousands of years are needed for the creation and restoration of eco-systems), and not taking them seriously, especially intangible cultural values, may lead to their extinction, as is the case of the symbol of not only Pirot, but also Serbia, the kilim, which was on the verge of extinction.

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