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Author: Reuter, Evelyn
Title: "Visiting St Naum: Blurring motivations and activities of pilgrims and tourists"
Published in: Pilgrimage in the Christian Balkan World: The Path to Touch the Sacred and Holy
Turnhout: Brepols
Editors: Dragnea, Dorina / Varvounis, Emmanouil Ger. / Reuter, Evelyn / Hristov, Petko / Sorek, Susan
Year: 2023
Pages: 91-108
ISBN: 978-2-503-60308-7
Persistent Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.1484/M.STR-EB.5.132401>

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Visiting St Naum

Blurring Motivations and Activities of Pilgrims and Tourists

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Pilgrimage in the Christian Balkan World: The Path to Touch the Sacred and Holy, ed. by Dorina Onica-Dragnea, Emmanouil Varvounis, Evelyn Reuter, Hristov Petko and Susan Sorek, Religion (Outside a Series) (Turnhout, 2023), pp.

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DOI 10.1484/M.STR-EB.5.132401

Introduction

‘Visiting St Naum’ (Macedonian *Poseti Sveti Naum*) and ‘Going to St Naum’ (Albanian *Shkoj te Shën Naumi*) are the most common expressions in the local languages meaning to visit the monastery of St Naum that is located in the southwest of North Macedonia close to the border of Albania. Today the monastery is a destination for locals and one of the most famous tourist attractions in North Macedonia. Thus, the monastery is frequented by the local Christians and Muslims as well as by international tourists. Especially during the feasts of the saint on 3 July, the pilgrimage sightseeing tours overlap. All visitors behave similarly, e.g. they go the tomb of the saint in the chapel within the church and spend their time in other parts of the monasterial complex with several leisure activities and recreation.

This chapter aims to discuss pilgrimage and touristic sightseeing as two perspectives on visiting religious places, and focusses on how motivations and activities of pilgrims and tourists blur. With this aim my research connects a theoretical framework on pilgrimage and tourism with the spatial concept of the monastery that divides the complex in an inner and an outer area. These areas are connected to different motivations and activities of visitors. The visitors’ behavior changes when moving between these areas.

This micro-study is based on ethnographic fieldwork that I conducted between 2016–2018. During my fieldwork, I conducted interviews and conversations, participated in and observed several activities. The sample included among others, Macedonians and Albanians, Christians and Muslims, clergies, laypersons, and international tourists. Overall, I recorded 66 interviews and talks in English (1), Macedonian (40), and Albanian (25).

Drawing on this data, I deconstruct the dichotomy of ‘religious’ – ‘secular’ because these dimensions merge at the monastery.¹ Moreover, I distinguish the dimensions that the term ‘secular’ includes. Thus, the monastery occurs as an ambiguous place. For this purpose, first I differentiate several visits by considering motivations. Then, I analyze how visitors negotiate the meaning of the monastery referring to their motivations and activities, and considering the spatial structure, i.e. the inner and outer area of the monasterial complex.

Motivations of Visiting Religious Places

Despite the obvious blurred boundaries, the differences between pilgrimage, spiritual search for meaning and hiking are hard to distinguish.² Nevertheless, visitors cannot be generally characterized as pilgrims, because they may not consider themselves as such. Differentiating visits to religious places is necessary in order to cope with the perspectives of the actors. The classification of visitors based on their reasons for visiting is difficult because they can have several motivations for visiting religious places.

Pilgrimages can be defined as visits to meaningful places, i.e. to a “threshold”, a place and moment “in and out of time”.³ Pilgrimages are non-ordinary events, because the participants hope ‘to have direct experience of the sacred, invisible, or supernatural order, either in the material aspect of miraculous healing or in the immaterial aspect of inward transformation of spirit or personality’.⁴ In contrast to holiday trips, pilgrimages can shape the individual and collective self-conception.⁵ Pilgrimages are not necessarily religious, because the interpreting authority can also be a state system or a political group.⁶ Pilgrimages to meaningful places can be defined as political if they were explicitly established without reference to a religious community, but to implement the state ideology.

The terms that are used in the dominant local languages, i.e. Macedonian and Albanian, provide an insight in the language history, and show which aspects are important for visiting religious places. Both languages use two different terms as synonyms: *adžilak* and *poklonenie* in Macedonian; *haxhillëk* and *pelegrinazh* in Albanian.⁷ Although *adžilak* and *haxhillëk* derive from the Arabian expression *hajj*, that marks the pilgrimage to Mecca, both terms can describe Christian and Muslim

¹ I use ‘religious’ and ‘secular’ referring to the meta level of religion as cultural pattern, and avoid the synonymous terms ‘sacred’ and ‘profane’ because of their problematic and constructed character that refers to the object level of religion; cf. Evelyn Reuter, *Die Mehrdeutigkeit geteilter religiöser Orte. Eine ethnographische Fallstudie zum Kloster Sveti Naum in Ohrid (Mazedonien)* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2021), p. 51.

² Cf. Markus Gamper, Julia Reuter, ‘Pilgern als spirituelle Selbstfindung oder religiöse Pflicht? Empirische Befunde zur Pilgerpraxis auf dem Jakobsweg’, in *Doing Modernity - Doing Religion*, ed. by Anna Daniel and others (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2012), p. 228.

³ Victor Turner, ‘The Center out There. Pilgrim’s Goal’, in *History of Religions*, 12 (1973), p. 214.

⁴ Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 197.

⁵ Cf. Polina Tšerkassova, ‘Sterilization and Re-Sacralization of the Places of Secular Pilgrimage. Moving Monuments, Meanings and Crowds in Estonia’, in *Pilgrimage, Politics and Place Making in Eastern Europe. Crossing the Borders*, ed. by John Eade and Mario Katić (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014), p. 119.

⁶ Cf. *New Pathways in Pilgrimage Studies. Global Perspectives*, ed. by Dionigi Albera and John Eade (London/New York: Routledge, 2016); Konstantinos Giakoumis ‘From Religious to Secular and Back Again. Christian Pilgrimage Space in Albania’, *Pilgrimage, Politics and Place Making in Eastern Europe. Crossing the Borders*, ed. by John Eade and Mario Katić (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014), pp. 103–18.

⁷ In Macedonian, there are further expressions to describe religious motivated travels like *verski*, *religiozni* and *poklonički turizam*, or *odočestie*; cf. Ацо Гиревски, *Верски Туризам*, (Скопје: Менора, repr. 2008). However, these terms and Albanian pendants will not be considered here because they cannot be found in my data.

pilgrimages. The same applies for *poklonenie* and *pelegrinazh*, even that their derivations are different. The Albanian *pelegrinazh* derives from the Latin *peregrinus* and has the same etymology as Western European equivalents.⁸ The Macedonian *poklonenie* from the verb *pokloni* has two meanings, first ‘to bow to someone or something’, and second ‘to give a present’. Thus, the term *poklonenie* refers to the humility of visitors towards the saint which they express with respectful behavior. In Macedonian the verb is constructed with ‘to go on’ (*odi na*), and in Albanian, with ‘to make’ (*běj*). Especially the Macedonian expressions focus not on the way to a certain place, but on the veneration practices at the place. This perspective is evident in other languages of Orthodox-influenced countries in Southeastern Europe too.⁹ Nowadays, even in practice only few religious places are connected with a long pathway that has to be mastered on foot. In contrast to these observations in Southeastern Europe, in Western Europe, for many people the journey itself and the self-initiated, non-denominational a search for meaning the main goals.¹⁰

The distinction between pilgrims and other visitors is based on the motivations of travelers because external appearance and actions hardly allow any differentiating conclusions. In general, pilgrims are travelers who also may have motivations like other tourists.¹¹ These motivations include recreation, pleasure, and holidays for the purpose of education or physical compensation. Thus, the boundaries between pilgrimage and tourism blur. In consequence, the common expression ‘religious tourist’ includes pilgrims and those travelers that are interested in religion but are not religiously motivated. In general, ‘[r]eligious tourism’ is a term that has come to define a movement towards places understood as religious heritage, a cultural construct framed by space and by time, an idea, an image, a building or landscape, a route: in sum, objects of memory and devotion’.¹²

Due to the strongly overlapping characteristics, a differentiation of visitors at a religious place requires a working definition that refers to their motivations. As ‘religious tourists’ implies the risk of misunderstanding by emphasizing the travelers’ religiosity, I use the term ‘religion tourists’ for visitors interested in religions and religious phenomena as part of cultures such as art, architecture, and religious history. Thus, religion tourists can be classified as a sub-form of educational and sightseeing tourists and representants of holiday and leisure tourism.¹³

Holiday and leisure tourists mostly have more than one motivation for their trip such as relaxation, sport activities, exploring culture and nature.¹⁴ All tourist types are rarely found in pure form, the same applies to pilgrims. That is why researchers also have ‘to consider [the visitors] inner heterogeneity, the zones of diffusion and the dynamic fuzzy margins between them’.¹⁵ Instead, the category of religion tourists is mixed with other types of holidays and leisure tourism.¹⁶ Pilgrims and

⁸ Cf. Dionigi Albera and John Eade, ‘Pilgrimage Studies in Global Perspective’, in *New Pathways in Pilgrimage Studies. Global Perspectives*, ed. by Dionigi Albera and John Eade (London/New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 5–9.

⁹ Cf. Vihra Baeva, ‘Parishioners, Pilgrims, Tourists. The Visitors of an Orthodox Christian Shrine in Sofia’, in *Pilgrimage and Sacred Places in Southeast Europe. History, Religious Tourism and Contemporary Trends*, ed. by Mario Katić and others (Wien: LIT Verlag, 2014), p. 82.

¹⁰ Cf. Markus Gamper, Julia Reuter, ‘Pilgern als spirituelle’, pp. 211, 228–29.

¹¹ Cf. Walter Freyer, *Tourismus. Einführung in die Fremdenverkehrsökonomie* (Berlin et al.: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, repr. 2015), pp. 81–89.

¹² Jose Eduardo Chemin, ‘Pilgrimage in a secular Age. Religious and Consumer Landscapes of Late-Modernity’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Exeter, 2011), p. 56.

¹³ Cf. Stefan Gatzhammer, ‘Aspekte des religiös motivierten Tourismus in Europa heute. Motivationen, Ziele, Trends’, in *Pilgern. Innere Disposition und praktischer Vollzug*, ed. by Johann Ev. Hafner and others (Würzburg: Egron Verlag, 2012), pp. 253–54; Freyer, pp. 102–04.

¹⁴ Cf. Freyer, pp. 84–85.

¹⁵ Vihra Baeva, ‘Parishioners, Pilgrims’, p. 91.

¹⁶ Cf. Walter Freyer, *Tourismus. Einführung*, pp. 103–04.

religion tourists differ in terms of their motivation to visit religious places but are quite often interested in similar non-religious leisure time activities.



Fig. 1: The map gives an overview of the monasterial complex: (1) market and souvenirs, (2) toilets, (3) restaurant 'Drim', (4) restaurant 'Ostrovo', (5) hotel and restaurant 'St Naum', (6) monastery 'St Naum', (7) church 'St Petka', (8) springs of Black Drin, (9) church 'St Bogorodica', (10) church 'St Atanasij'. A stone wall marked red includes 5 and 6, and separates the inner and the outer area of the complex. The campground, the boat landing stage and the fair are not marked, 2016. Photograph by the author.

The encounter of different motivations, interests and activities becomes evident at the St Naum monastery taking its spatial arrangement into account: While the religious core of the site is primarily characterized by the motivations of pilgrims and religious tourists, the rest of the monasterial complex is dominated by non-religious travel motives. Moreover, the religious core and the tourist leisure area of the monastery complex are recognizable as two spatially separate areas.

The St Naum Monastery and its Visitors

The orthodox monastery St Naum is one of the most famous religious places in North Macedonia close to the Albanian border. Due to its location, the monastery is connected especially to two cities: first, to Ohrid (North Macedonia) located to the north of the Lake Ohrid that is the traditional centre of the Orthodox Church in this region; second, Pogradec (Albania), a smaller city just beyond the

border that some citizens claim to be the first place where Naum landed after crossing the lake in a small boat.¹⁷

Naum started to build his monastery around ad 900. Due to St Naum's reputation as miracle worker and healer, the monastery has been a goal for Christians and Muslims in the Archdiocese of Ohrid since medieval times. Even some Ottoman officers went to the monastery, stayed there overnight, spent leisure time, and contributed to the monastery's reconstruction in the seventeenth century after its destruction.¹⁸ After the Balkan Wars, the monastery became an important reference point in the demarcation process between Albania and Serbia, later Yugoslavia.¹⁹ In 1925, the issue was solved, and the monastery became part of Yugoslavia due to its meaning as cultural heritage for the Slavic orthodox churches.

In 1950, the state expropriated the monastery, declared it as cultural heritage, and turned it into a museum.²⁰ Several new constructions like a restaurant, archeological excavations at the saint's tomb, and asphaltting the street at the east coast of the lake boosted the change into a tourist destination. Moreover, monastic life was banned in favour of tourism: without monks no liturgies were celebrated, and lightning candles was forbidden. Instead, visitors had to pay entrance fee for visiting the museal church. However, according to several interlocutors the religious character has never vanished completely.

After the state returned the monastery to the Macedonian Orthodox Church (MOC) in the early 1990s, the MOC again emphasized the previous Christian character of the place. However, the touristic influence is still recognizable, because the administration of the monastery also kept the inventions of the Yugoslavian time and complemented them with some more measures. Furthermore, even monastic life is quite low, because only one monk has served in the monastery since 1991. In consequence, visitors can perceive the monastery as both, a pilgrimage as well as a tourist destination.

During my fieldwork, vacationers came from the Yugoslav successor states, from Bulgaria and Turkey, as well as Western Europe. Especially, orthodox people from the Balkan states or their descendants who had emigrated to Western Europe visited the monastery with stronger religious motivation. Most of them traveled individually and spend part of their holidays with relatives. There is also a large number of individual travelers from Western Europe without roots in Southeastern Europe. Organized international travel groups come mainly from Turkey and the Netherlands. Like many Western European individual travelers, they are mostly religious and cultural tourists.

The Tomb as the Target of Pilgrimages and Religious Tourism

Historically and according to the inner spatial concept, Naum's tomb is the religious core of the monastery, and the main target for all visitors. As the tomb is located inside the monastery church, visiting the tomb can hardly be separated from visiting the church. The visitors' interests in the tomb and the church depend on their religious background and origin. Consequently, the clearest distinction between religious tourism and pilgrimage can be made in this part of the monastery.

¹⁷ Cf. Krenar Zgjani, personal communication (Pogradec, January 26, 2017).

¹⁸ Cf. Цветан Грозданов, *Свети Наум Охридски* (Скопје: Матица, 2015), p. 73.

¹⁹ Cf. Цветан Грозданов, p. 290.

²⁰ Cf. Стојан Ристески, *Чудата на свети Наум* (Охрид: Канео, 2009), p. 21.

Religious motivations for visiting the monastery and Christian Orthodox actions appear with varying intensity during Naum's summer and winter feasts. On Naum's winter feast, as well as its eve, the religious motivations and actions are more evident than in summer. On 3 July, religious motivations and actions mix with touristic ones. There are two reasons for this mixing: First, the summer feast marks a peak in the general tourist season from April to September, while the winter feast in January is outside the general tourist season. Secondly, 5 January is also the anniversary of Naum's death and the original feast.

Comparing both feasts, the visits on 5 January obviously are motivated by Christian Orthodox ideas, because all leisure activities that can be pursued in summer are missing. At the winter feast, all actions and objects are connected to the monastery church and are part of the symbolic tradition of the Christian orthodox interpretation of the place. At the winter feast, only some people from the surrounding area especially orthodox Macedonians visit the monastery to celebrate the feast day liturgy. On the eve of the feast, the abbot invites the visitors of the vespers for dinner. The dinner is served in the restaurant of the hotel that is usually closed in the winter season like the other parts of the monastic areal. The dinner is made according to the strict rules of the Lenten season before Christmas celebrated on 6 January.

On 5 January, most of the visitors of the liturgy were from Northern Macedonia, especially from Ohrid and some from larger cities like Skopje. In addition, there were also some guests from Albania. They could not speak Macedonian, but had to communicate with gestures and facial expressions to buy for example candles. In front of the courtyard, the visitors lit candles before they entered the burial chapel to deposit money, oil and clothes and to hear the heartbeat of the saint. Afterwards, people crowded into the worship space, which is too small to accommodate all the guests. Those who reached the Naum icon also placed money or a small, dried bunch of basil there. The fragrant scent of basil will honour the saint. The clergy also used dried basil during the consecration of the water at the conclusion of the service in front of the church. After the consecration of water, blessed bread (Mac. *nafori*) and boiled wheat (Mac. *pčenica za slava*) were distributed among the participants. The breads were cut in the shape of a cross, and a sip of wine was poured into them. The participants filled bottles with consecrated water to take home.

The activities, which are oriented towards the ritual sequence of the church services, clearly show the religious motivations of the visitors, but only in the feast context. In contrast to the summer feast, no alternative leisure activities are offered that would suggest other motivations. Consequently, the visitors of the winter feast can be claimed to be believers (Maz. *vernici*) and pilgrims. Although the number of Orthodox people in Northern Macedonia statistically has increased, the number does not refer to 'convinced believers, but the number of traditional believers'.²¹

Furthermore, the assumption that the visits are mostly religiously motivated is encouraged by the attitude of the local population towards the weather conditions. The majority of the local population prefer not to leave their homes in cold, ice and snow. Even the introduction of the summer feast in 1727 was justified to protect the pilgrims from the bad weather conditions in winter.²² Nevertheless, a couple from the neighbouring village of Peštani who visited the Naum monastery for the eve mass on the winter feast said that neither the weather conditions nor the distance to the monastery posed insurmountable obstacles for them. In the past, when there were no buses or taxis, and many families had no car, they walked to the monastery in winter. They started the four-hour walk around midnight and reached the monastery around 5 am. This was in socialist Yugoslavia,

²¹ Zoran Matevski, 'Revitalization of monasticism in the Republic of Macedonia after the fall of communism', *The Sociological Review*, 12 (2011), p. 121.

²² Cf. Грозданов, p. 267; Max Demeter Peyfuss, *Die Druckerei von Moschopolis, 1731–1769. Buchdruck und Heiligenverehrung im Erzbistum Achrida* (Wien et al.: Böhlau, repr. 1996), p. 170.

when the monastery was used as a museum, and there was no clergy or liturgy. They emphasized that they walked at that time ‘to honour’ (Mac. *za čest*) the saint.

The few people who visited the monastery under difficult conditions can be interpreted as ‘convinced believers’. Contrary to the etymological explanation of the Macedonian term *poklonenie*, the interlocutor’s argumentation emphasizes the path to be overcome as relevant in order to reach the tomb. The path is not the goal, but its mastery has been part of the practice of veneration.

During the winter feast, the visitors focus on the Christian Orthodox practices. Nevertheless, in the recent past, the tourist dimension increased slightly for this feast, because two boats cross the lake to the monastery on 5 January, although the boat traffic is suspended during the winter period.

The orthodox feast acts in July is identical to those in January. The festivities differ mainly in terms of the number of visitors. In addition, the main focus is even more on the tomb than in winter. The liturgy could hardly be attended by all visitors because the church is too small. More people attended the distribution of cooked wheat, bread and consecrated water after the feast liturgy in the larger courtyard. The distribution of these items is a short act which involves single visitors. Thus, it enables individual and sensual experiences alike at the tomb.

During the summer feast, there are more religiously interpreted activities inside the monastery complex, which deviate from the official perspective of the church representatives. For most visitors, the focus is on visiting the tomb that is connected with making votive offerings to the saint. Joan Pelushi, the Metropolitan from Korçë, explained that

it’s a [*sic!*] old belief like you offer something to God. Although it’s not something Christian in the sense that we don’t do sacrifice to, the blood is sacrifice. [...] So, the true offering at the Christian church is the holy Eucharist, the bloodless, without blood. [...] the people want to offer something. But [it is] not part of our liturgy.²³

A special type of votive offering is the offering of lambs. Although they are not slaughtered afterwards, the abbot Nektarij said, the lamb offering are remnants of Old Testament and pagan sacrificial rituals, or a Muslim influence.²⁴

Those who give a lamb to the saint interpret their act as part of the worship practice, which has become a tradition over the centuries. For example, an interlocutor from Bitola who brought several lambs to the monastery every year emphasized that he considers this act as an expression of gratitude.²⁵ His statement is proven by the fact that he only came for this act. Although he identifies himself as an Orthodox Christian, he left the monastery grounds without having taken part in the liturgy. He feared that he and the lambs would become a tourist attraction if he got caught up in the mass of festival visitors.

Apart from the fact that walking around the church with the lambs may seem exotic to visitors from Western European countries, this practice gained additional tourist appeal through the musical accompaniment by a Roma band. Sometimes spectators spontaneously decided to lead a lamb around the church. The possibility to rent a lamb existed for all visitors, no matter if they came to the monastery for religious reasons or as religion tourists. Sometimes only the Roma musicians and their instruments in the monastery courtyard aroused the interest of the tourists. Then, the musicians play only for fun and people start dancing and donating money like at a wedding. Thus, in the inner area of the monastery, the interests of the religious and religion tourists overlap with the pleasure motivation of the holiday and leisure tourists.

²³ Joan Pelushi, personal communication (Korçë, 4 August, 2016).

²⁴ Cf. Otec Nektarij, personal communication (St Naum, 7 July, 2016).

²⁵ Cf. Anonymous from Bitola, personal communication (St Naum, 2 July, 2016).

The Yugoslavian efforts to transform the monastery into a tourist destination also affected the motivations for visiting the monastery among the Muslim population. An older Albanian Bektashi from a village near Resen, recalled that he had visited the Naum monastery with his family for the summer feast in his childhood. Then, the Bektashis perceived the monastery like their own. Those who did not go to the monastery could not afford it financially. Because of the distance between the Resen villages and the monastery, most of them stayed overnight at the monastery. Beyond the pragmatic argument the interlocutor emphasized the religious quality of staying overnight as 'good for the soul'. This reason clearly proves a religious motivation recognizable in further actions and interpretations that are in some points similar to those of the Christians.

The target of the Bektashis has also been the tomb inside the church. For venerating, they touched the tomb three times with their mouths. The interlocutor interpreted the green cloth on the tomb as a sign for a Bektashi grave. Unlike the Christians, the Bektashis did not walk around the church with lambs, but they gave put money to the monastery. That Bektashis still visit the monastery is also known among some Christians. Stojan Risteski states in his book *Čudata na Sveti Naum* that the Bektashis put their shoes down before entering the monastery, bowed into the church, and came out backwards facing the church.²⁶

In general, less is known about the behaviour and motivations of Sunnis, especially among the Albanians of Northern Macedonia. According to Christians, Turks from Northern Macedonians call Naum 'our father'.²⁷ In contrast, the Turkish minority have their own legend identifying Naum with a pre-Ottoman missionary called Sarı Saltuk. Furthermore, there are some miracle stories about Turks and Albanians who were healed by Naum.²⁸ During the research, I rarely met anyone from these two groups who claimed to have come to the saint or the monastery for religious reasons. One was a Turkish-Albanian Sunni from Bitola who is married to a Macedonian Christian woman. Besides religious activities at the monasterial church, the couple primarily sold clothes and jewellery at the fair.

²⁶ Cf. Ристески, *Чудата на свети Наум*, pp. 87–88.

²⁷ Cf. Ристески, *Чудата на свети Наум*, p. 88.

²⁸ Cf. Ристески, *Чудата на свети Наум*, p. 104.



Fig. 2: The annual fair at Naum's feast in 2016. Photograph by the author.

Sunni Roma from Northern Macedonia came with different motivations that are evident in stories from the local population.²⁹ In comparison, several Roma declared that they came to Naum because they have faith in him. Many lit candles and visited the grave, but only a few circled the church with a lamb. Thus, Roma can be ascribed clearer religious motivations than other Sunnis. In general, Romas are attributed with religious indifference and flexibility, but there are limits with regard to unambiguous Christian practices: None of the Sunni groups attended the feast liturgies nor did they make the sign of the cross.

The reasons given by Sunni visitors from Albania are even more complex. Among them, especially women married to Christians said that they visited churches, lit candles, took part in the liturgy, and crossed themselves. The majority of Sunni Albanians defined their visit as a pleasurable tradition that they continue to maintain. Even an imam from Pogradec emphasized that Muslims visit the Naum monastery because of curiosity and pleasure.³⁰ Two employees of the city administration in Pogradec said, Sunni people visit the monastery because of their religious tolerance.³¹ Moreover, the monastery is located in a beautiful place and the feast with its fair is an attraction worth seeing.

While the main motivation for visitors from Southeastern Europe is to visit the tomb inside the church, international tourists are more often interested in art-history and architecture of the monastery. They mainly visit the monastery because it is mentioned in their travel guide as one of

²⁹ Cf. Ристески, *Чудата на свети Наум*, pp. 77, 87.

³⁰ Cf. Dritan Shahu, personal communication (Pogradec, 31 July, 2016).

³¹ Cf. Arian Merolli and Avdulla Cana, personal communication (Pogradec, 26 January, 2017).

the most beautiful sights. This minimal information that international tourists have about the monastery influences their expectations. A family from Eastern Germany visited the monastery one day after the summer feast. Accommodated in Ljubaništa, the neighbouring village, they noticed that on the day before a crowd went to the monastery, but did not understand why. While visiting the church, they focused on the icons and frescoes. Due to the darkness and the damaged frescoes, they concluded that the entrance is not suitable for people with deteriorating eyesight.

These tourists associated a monastery with tranquillity and relaxation, and expected to experience authentic religious cultural heritage. One of the family members characterised the monastery as ‘not so touristically overrun’ and ‘untouched’, although the complex was ‘overrun with tourists’ during the feast – mainly by local tourists with religious interests and not by international cultural tourists. In addition, ‘untouched’ emphasizes the authenticity of the site that was preserved because of the lack of influence of western standards. However, the expressions referred to the historically grown cultural part and to the natural surroundings.

The information about the monasterial church that travelers get from travel guide books and groups get from their tour guides can vary greatly. A couple from Vienna travelling alone were very surprised about the celebrations on 2 and 3 July. They got information about the monastery from their travel guide that mentions only feasts in September and January. In other travel guides, even this information is missing.³² Instead, the book offers a historical overview of the monastery, legends about the saint, and short information on how to get there, about accommodations, and restaurants.

In contrast, guided tour groups enjoy the advantage of receiving further information from the tour leader. Especially the leaders of Turkish groups who inform about the history of the monastery and about the legends from local Turkish people that creates a trans-national collective feeling linked to the Ottoman past, and an emotional-nostalgic relationship with the place. In addition, during the Yugoslavian period, parts of the Turkish minority emigrated to Turkey.³³ Now, some of their descendants are searching for traces of their origins.

In addition to the cultural motivations, especially the behaviour of international travelers reveals religious interests when visiting the monastery church. Even if they do not attend the liturgy, some put their ear to the grave out of curiosity. International travelers without roots in Southeastern Europe also take the opportunity to light candles. Probably, this act is founded in the well-known tradition of commemorating the dead in the Catholic Church.

The Place of Recreation and Leisure Activities

The outer area of the monasterial complex is perceived less religious than the inner core, although it is a historically established part of the monastery. The perception as a non-religious area for leisure time activities, is founded in the transformation of the monastery into a tourist destination in the second half of the twentieth century. Being turned into a museum, the religious dimension of the monastery was suppressed. However, the festivities at the beginning of July could persist as part of the local tradition. The state could hardly ban them without interfering too obviously with the self-determination and free creative power of the visitors. Due to the long absence of monks at the monastery, the feast lost its religious character and the outer area of the monasterial complex lost its

³² Cf. Philine von Oppeln, *Mazedonien. Unterwegs auf dem südlichen Balkan* (Berlin: Trescher Verlag, repr. 2018), pp. 134–35.

³³ Cf. Nathalie Clayer, Xavier Bougarel, *Europe’s Balkan Muslims. A new History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2017), pp. 133–34.

religious significance as a festival area. Already during the Yugoslav period, the St Naum monastery was one of the ‘most popular destinations of the Ohrid people and the numerous local and foreign tourists who come here from all sides every year’.³⁴ This process can be referred to as ‘desacralisation’ of religious places boosted by certain tourist activities ‘such as partying’.³⁵ Consequently, the perception of the place and the activities are mutually dependent, and the outer area of the complex became more touristic.

The outer area consists of a natural and an artificial field for tourist activities. These fields are connected to the monastery core but are mainly an attraction for leisure and cultural tourism in summer. The natural field relates to the environment of the monastery.³⁶ This field includes for example the rock on which the monastery is built, the underground springs of the river Black Drin, the sandy beach. The monastery administration interferes insignificantly with the nature of the complex by mowing the lawn in the entrance area and planting single bushes in the green areas. The intervention in nature is especially evident in the garden that is separated from the outer area of the complex by high walls, and directly adjoins the buildings of the monastery and the monastery hotel.

This garden connects the inner religious and outer touristic areas in many ways. Due to the wall, the garden spatially belongs to the inner area, although no obvious religious activities take place in it. The garden serves as a recreational area, where vacation and leisure time tourists enjoy the waterfall installation, while visitors from the surrounding area use this site for picnic, a midday rest or an overnight stay during the feast. Furthermore, the peacocks roaming around the area between the entrance and the monastery church are another attraction.

This garden has a religious dimension too. Peacocks, a religious symbol originating from India, have become very popular in early Christian art and refer to paradise.³⁷ Etymologically, ‘paradise’ means enclosed park or garden, and was always associated with nature as an orderly creation in Christianity.³⁸ In addition, according to the legends, the surroundings of the monastery have been called paradise by God.³⁹ Even today, authors refer to the surroundings of the monastery as ‘one of the biblical landscapes’.⁴⁰ This suggests that the monastery drew its religious character from the natural environment.

In nature outside the garden, attractions from the leisure time sector increase. The southern shore of the Lake Ohrid invites visitors to fish, and despite the low temperatures to swim because of the sandy beach. However, swimming at the monastery is not welcomed by strict Christian Orthodox believers for various reasons. They argue that not presenting someone’s half-naked body is a matter of reverence and decency towards God, the saint and the monk at the monastery. Moreover, these believers argue that no one should go swimming on the saint’s day because the danger of drowning is very high on this day. Another attraction linked to water are the boat trips to the springs of the

³⁴ Cf. Милчо Балеви, *Балканските политички прилики и дипломатските битки за манастирот Свети Наум* (Скопје: Македонска Книга 1984), p. 13.

³⁵ Cf. Nataša Gregorič Bon, ‘Secular Journeys, Sacred Places. Pilgrimage and Homemaking in Himarë/Himara Area of Southern Albania’, in *Pilgrimage, Politics and Place-Making in Eastern Europe. Crossing the Borders*, ed. by John Eade and Mario Katić (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014), p. 148.

³⁶ Cf. Sebastian Kempgen, ‘Die Säulen in der Klosterkirche von Sveti Naum. Ein Projektbericht zur Digitalisierung des sprachlichen Kulturerbes in Makedonien’, in *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach 83*, ed. by Bernhard Brehmer, Aage A. Hansen-Löve, and Tilmann Reuther (Berlin et al.: Peter Lang, 2019), p. 63.

³⁷ Cf. Helmut Lother, *Der Pfau in der altchristlichen Kunst. Eine Studie über das Verhältnis von Ornament und Symbol* (Leipzig: Dieterich’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1929), pp. 33–34, 84–85.

³⁸ Cf. Daria Pezzoli-Olgiati, ‘Paradies. I. Religionswissenschaftlich’ in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft* (N-Q) ed. by Hans Dieter Betz and others (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), p. 909.

³⁹ Cf. Ристески, *Чудата на свету Наум*, p. 56.

⁴⁰ Cf. Грозданов, p. 10.

Black Drin, which flows through Lake Ohrid. Bathing is not allowed there for safety reasons. There are strong currents where the water flows into the lake, the muddy ground near the springs or precautionary?, and the risk of collisions with the boats. Bathing in connection with boat trips to another small monastery on the east coast of Lake Ohrid is less problematic, because there are no more monks to be disturbed.

Another place, whose significance shimmers between tourist and religious motivations, is the meadow to the left of the St Petka church. A musician from the Roma band recalled, in 2012, that there were tables and chairs in the meadow for eating, and music for dancing. However, the church forbade the 'spectacle' because drunks often started fights there. This meadow was called *gupana*, referring to *gupci* a common term for Roma in Macedonia, because they mainly stayed there in the past. During my field research, the meadow only served as a wild camping site for the Roma who ran stalls at the fair. In contrast to these statements and observations, which suggest less religious than economic motivations, there is also a Christian perspective that assumes the Roma had religious reasons for their actions: Like other groups, Roma once had their own shelter (Mac. *konak*) at this place.⁴¹ They came to the Naum monastery mainly for the summer holiday, not for business, but to honor and respect St Naum. Roma helped with the feast preparations and cooked the food; they had committed themselves above all 'to health and progress'. They behaved like other believers, as it had been customary to commit oneself to a self-chosen church for certain services at a certain time. This self-commitment relates to a desire that people hoped would be fulfilled.

Thus, Roma have been considered to be an important part of the fair: 'without them, it does not look like a fair. With their music, song and dance they add a special beauty to the festivity and especially with their reverence for Sveti Naum'.⁴² Music and dance vanished with the ban of the festivities on the *gupana* meadow. While the Roma band played mainly in the monastery courtyard and only occasionally made a little music at the fair, traditional music was played to invite people into the restaurant on the island. In the dining room of the hotel restaurant, neither a live band nor dance options were offered during the feast for reasons of piety.

The campground is an area of the outer monastic complex that has completely lost its religious connotation and has become part of the created touristic field. The campground was built during the time of Yugoslavia as a recreation centre for military staff. After Macedonia became independent, a part of the military recreation centre was made accessible to Macedonian citizens. The other part of this area is left for the recreation of military staff. Motivations for staying at this ground are not religious, although campers visit the monastery during their stay. The main purpose for staying at the campsite is relaxation which includes other leisure activities too. Nevertheless, entering the campsite on 2 and 3 July is linked to religious motivations, when it serves as a shortcut to the monastery for visitors from Albania. As many Albanian visitors, focus especially on having fun, crossing the campsite is not religiously motivated, therefore the campsite lacks any religious significance.

Even other touristic activity fields in the outer area of the monastic complex lack religious motivations. Instead, the desire for fun (Mac. *kef*; Alb. *qejf*) becomes visible. The annual fair for the summer feast (Mac. *panagur*; Alb. *panair*) takes place in the square between the bridge over the Black Drin and the entrance to the inner area of the monastery, and between the landing stage of the boats and the *gupana* meadow. The location illustrates that the fair forms an intersection between religious and tourist motivations and activities. Apart from the offered non-religious goods, the fair has long been associated with the abovementioned exuberant celebrations of the *gupana* meadow.

For the local population, these details about the summer feast at the monastery are taken for granted. For travelers without roots in Southeastern Europe, who may visit the monastery

⁴¹ Cf. Ристески, *Чудата на свети Наум*, p. 170.

⁴² Cf. Ристески, *Чудата на свети Наум*, p. 171.

coincidentally during their vacations, the festivities are big surprise: Tourists from Vienna stayed in the hotel of the monastery around the summer feast but were not prepared for the festivities. They had booked a few nights there and expected a quiet atmosphere, but not to find themselves in the middle of *Ohrider Wies 'n* when they arrived on 2 July. The expression *Ohrider Wies 'n* refers to the obvious parallels with folk festivals in Southern Germany and Austria such as the famous *Oktoberfest* in Munich. When they arrived from Albania, they were already surprised at the border by many people with their plastic sacks to carry their purchases from the fair home. Around 500-metres walk from the entrance of the complex to the hotel, it took thirty minutes by car, and almost ran over a bride's dress. The impression of the outer area named *Ohrider Wies 'n* supports the thesis of the inner spatial order: The monastery has a religious core, and an outer area where religion is irrelevant. The festivities are more like a kermis with a religious core and all kinds of non-religious offerings than a devotional pilgrimage in honour of the saint. In contrast to some kermis festivals in German-speaking countries, only amusement rides are missing.

The artificial touristic field also includes the restaurants, the hotel and the year-round souvenir booths at the entrance of the complex. These buildings were created mainly during the Yugoslavian period, after the monastery was turned into a museum. The construction of the *Ostrovo* restaurant and hotel supported the transformation into a tourist destination, as did the development of the roads between Ohrid and the remote monastery. The MOC continued with the tourist trend and shaped tourism into a form acceptable for the religious context.⁴³

Crossing the lake from Ohrid to the monastery by boat is an experience that especially international tourists enjoy. Sometimes tour operators use this route for big quite homogeneous groups, which then determine the events. Nevertheless, there are even religious motivated groups who choose the boat trip across the lake. In 2002, five clerics accompanied a group of 120 believers to the monastery as part of a faith course.⁴⁴ When the ship was caught in a storm, the passengers were frightened, and the clerics began to pray for the passenger's salvation. After the storm, the tour group spotted the Naum monastery, and one of the clerics reported, 'filled with sweet peace and deep joy, we offered gifts and a gift of the lips – appreciative songs to St Naum, because with his intercession before God we were saved from the terrible storm.' Thus, even the more touristic connotated lake crossing, can be claimed for Christian Orthodox motivations.

Travelers often combine a visit to the Naum Monastery with a tour to the Galičica National Park, i.e. the mountain area between Lake Ohrid and Lake Prespa.⁴⁵ Some claim that this area had belonged to the lands of the monastery.⁴⁶ International tourists rarely know about this, and are more interested in hiking tours and the international nature protection project in which other countries besides Macedonia and Albania are involved.

Conclusion: Between Pilgrimage and Sightseeing

The chapter has revealed an interplay of different motivations for visiting the monastery and linked the motivations with the spatial concept of the monasterial complex. The types of motivations and activities are assigned to one of the areas of the complex. In the focus of the inner area are religious interests and interests in religion as part of culture. In the outer area, the focus is on recreation and

⁴³ Cf. Kempgen, p. 63.

⁴⁴ Cf. Стојан Ристески, 'Шест записи за чуда на свети Наум', *Светиклиментово Слово* (2012), pp. 96–97.

⁴⁵ Cf. Kempgen, p. 63.

⁴⁶ Cf. Ристески, *Чудата на свети Наум*, pp. 115–16.

entertainment for the local population and international tourists. Almost all visitors can move effortlessly between the different areas because their manifold motivations match with the opportunities.

However, each visitor group in terms of their faith or origin has its own main motivations. Especially, the visitors from former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania cannot be clearly assigned to one category. On the one hand, referring to their nationality they belong to the international visitors. However, international guests especially from Western Europe pursue touristic motivations when visiting the monastery. On the other hand, the visitors from Southeastern Europe are emotionally connected to the monastery because of the shared history. For them, the monastery belongs to a homeland from the past. Orthodox Christians and Muslims from Southeastern Europe are religiously and touristy motivated for visiting the monastery and may have political-nostalgic feelings.

The complex results of the chapter oppose a mostly monochrome representation of the monastery. Perception and characterization of the monastery depends on the origin of the descriptors and show a broad variance. Contrary to the perception of Western travelers that the St Naum monastery is one of the most important sights, the monastery is considered a place of worship frequented by believers, especially on the saint's feast day. The feast is regularly and mostly anonymously reported in Macedonian newspapers. Rarely, the articles give new information, but quite often ignore the fair and tourists.

Various non-religious activities during the summer feast enrich the meaning of the monastery. However, the site never lost its religious significance. In the past, Naum's reputation as a miracle worker and healer attracted pilgrims from the region, and nowadays the nature, the history, the architecture, and the art of the monastery increasingly attract international tourists. In addition, local people visit the monastery because of the feast and the annual fair as a trans-regional and nationally well-known event.

While the religious perspective emphasizes the miraculous healing power of the saint in his monastery as a 'holy place', the tourist perspective focusses on the relaxing effect of nature. Both perspectives have the idea of recreation in common. However, the understanding of what is considered recreative differs. While locals and Southeastern European visitors tend to prefer doing nothing, international tourists often aim for a varied holiday. Phases of physical activity and rest are just as much a part of such a holiday as the intellectual preoccupation with the history and culture of the travel region, which includes food, music, and dance.

The perception of the monastery influences the behaviour of visitors who reproduce their image of the place. Examining only the religious interpretation of visiting the monastery ignores its touristic dimension that is significant for a comprehensive analysis. Furthermore, the trans-religious and trans-ethnic contacts imply that there is a political dimension of visiting St Naum even today. Furthermore, the motivations and activities of visitors refer to the economic dimension of the monastery. This merging of the religious and the touristic, economic and political, therefore secular dimensions make the monastery an ambiguous place.

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