

Hollókő village- the living heritage

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Abstract

Hollókő is a well-known village in Hungary for its traditional Easter sprinkling ceremony. How come that most of people identify Hollókő with this image? And what more can be known about Hollókő? Firstly, Hollókő is a small village, secondly, the Old Village of Hollókő and its Surroundings are a world heritage site since 1987, due to their exceptional qualities.

The living village - living heritage is one of the main universal values of Hollókő world heritage site. It means that the tradition, the heritage is still alive in the form of architecture, folk customs, and gastronomy.

And what does a small - scale world heritage village, such as Hollókő contribute to the sustainable tourism? So many questions are arising, for example how did the village receive the world heritage title? How did Hollókő's population accept the fact that their living space became a World Heritage Site? How did they survive or rather suffer from the arrival of the first tourist groups? The locals were not the ones who created the increased tourism, neither the protection of values, nor the growing importance of tourism. Therefore, tourism is a completely new challenge for the village, although it is required from the locals to protect and live according to the traditional way of life, to serve the tourism industry and to make a living from it. And do all of this by not transforming the village into a reserve but cultivating the lands and cherishing their traditions. And all this should happen as if it wasn't happening in a shopwindow.

Keywords: *living heritage, Outstanding Universal Value, attributes, Palócz settlement, sustainable tourism*

Hollókő, the Palócz village

First of all Hollókő is a small village, a Palócz settlement located in the County of Nógrád in Northern Hungary, about 100 km northeast of Budapest. The village of Hollókő (means raven stone) has two main parts, the old village and the new village. The older part has 55 traditional houses built in the 17th century architectural style of the Palócz (pr. pah-lotz) people, but after 1909.. The church of the village has written records from 1343, but the

well-known wooden church spire was built in 1889. Around the village there's a picturesque landscape with the hills of Cserhát and the old wine hill characterized by strip-field farming, orchards, vineyards, meadows and woods. These all are also the part of Hollókő Nature Reserve and UNESCO World Heritage Site as well. The property also includes the medieval castle ruins situated on the hill perched above the village, which is mentioned as early as 1310.



Figure 1: Hollókő landscape photo by Zsolt Batár

Old Village of Hollókő and its Surroundings is a world heritage site

Secondly, the Old Village of Hollókő and its Surroundings is a world heritage site since 1987, because it has exceptional qualities. The so called Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the property justified its inscription on the World Heritage List.

There are criteria and conditions for the inscription of properties on the World Heritage List, which have been developed to evaluate the Outstanding Universal Value of properties and to guide State Parties in the protection and management of World Heritage properties.

Criteria from the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of Hollókő:

- an outstanding example of a deliberately preserved traditional settlement,
- The village represents the Palócz subgroup (which developed mainly during the 18th and 19th centuries)
- also bears witness to the traditional forms of rural life (which were generally abolished by the agricultural revolution in the 20th century.)

Attributes that carry the Outstanding Universal Value of the world heritage site:

- Land use and landscape - The appearance of the Old village landscape is in harmony with the general landscape and natural environment
- Settlement construction – The historic settlement structure, plot structure and the typical comb construction of the Old Village
- Built values – Unity of the traditional Palócz architecture, design and use of materials, the treasures of the Palócz architectural forms, weight training, ornamentation



Figure 2: Historic settlement of Hollókő by Zsolt Batár

Management:

The local municipality acts now as the World Heritage management body. The Minister responsible for culture through its institution (Forster Gyula National Centre for Cultural Heritage and Asset Management) Forster Centre, precisely through its Division of International Cooperation and World Heritage takes part in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in Hungary.

Mid-term tasks of the management /Statement of Outstanding Universal Value /:

- rehabilitation of traditional land-use
- creating sustainable local economy building on traditions and becoming capable of sustaining the local population
- ensuring a good quality of life
- preventing Hollókő from becoming a museum village
- one of the means to attain the above mentioned objectives is sustainable tourism

The living village- living heritage, one of the main universal values of Hollókő world heritage site

In the Brief synthesis from Statement of Outstanding Universal Value we find: “The Old Village, which has been deliberately preserved, is a living example of rural life before the agricultural revolution of the 20th century. “ and “Thus, Hollókő is not a museum village devoid of any traditional activity, but a living community whose conservation includes farming activity.”

Hollókő is a live village, or rather a living example:

It means rather that the tradition/heritage is alive – tradition in architecture, folk customs, gastronomy, folk costumes.

- From village perspective –if it is livable
- Tourism perspective – if it is able to introduce the authentic traditions (culture, built heritage, land cultivation, livestock farming and life)

How is life in Hollókő:

By the end of the twentieth century as a result of the social and economic changes Hollókő finally lost its agricultural character. Only a few (people) were working in agriculture, and following the change of regime, due to the deindustrialization of the region, the service sector grew stronger in Hollókő as well. Previously undetected economic processes started in Hollókő from 1990, and the village has become better known as a tourist value.

As a result of decades of conservation work the architectural values of the village have remained well-preserved. The village buildings are a real tourist attraction; however, the outside help with the conservation works did not rely on the local society. Over the last fifty years heritage protection could focus only on the houses but not the people. Heritage protection has no license and no financial possibilities to shape the economic processes today. In other words, objects and assets can be preserved, but the life that created them cannot.

Therefore it is important to keep the architectural control, while to establish opportunities that allow for viable and even attractive life for the population in the old village. To provide an opportunity for the residents need for development and transformation, which can increase comfort but does not affect the heritage values negatively and takes the world heritage aspects of the site into consideration.



Figure 3: Hollókő - the living heritage by Zsolt Batár

What does a small -scale world heritage village such as Hollókő the sustainable tourism?

So many questions are arising, e.g. How did the village receive the winning of the world heritage title? How did Hollókő's population face the fact that their living space became a World Heritage Site? And how did they survive or rather suffer the arrival of the first groups of tourists?

The local society was not the one who created the increasingly stronger tourism, just like they initiated neither the protection of the values nor the growing importance of tourism.

Tourism is therefore a completely new challenge for the village, while it is required of them to protect their traditional way of life, live their everyday life accordingly [BZ1] and also to learn to serve the tourism industry and make a living from it

And do all of this by not transforming the village into a reserve but cultivating the lands and cherishing their traditions. And all should happen as if it wasn't happening in a shopwindow.

Recently completed tourism development:

- parking place in the New village
- renovation of the Castle Restaurant
- Traditional cheese workshop and store, bakery , dance hall have been established
- Smaller spaces are also renewed.
- IT exhibitions of new installations,

- Palots Workshop,
- a new stage, which will be the venue of traditional events.



Figure 4. Medieval castle ruins by Zsolt Batár

Plans for organizing tourism:

- Achieved tourism development:
- Replacing the old rundown village road,
- Castle preservation and reconstruction works
- New exhibitions will be established in the XIII. century old castle rooms and in the Oldtower
- reception building is being built

Summary

The tourism is in need of the general local community, and service providers while the village population has grown older and the land use has changed fundamentally.

In order to meet the challenges of tourism, the village operates with a number of accommodation facilities, the community reconstructed the castle and the former dirt road and established numerous tourist services within the framework of a large-scale development:

Sustainable tourism shall mean that both service providers and visitors should benefit from the attractions generated in favour of the maintenance and presentation of values. So I would like to encourage you to visit Hollókő and watch how the inhabitants could make of the possibilities and how they can learn to handle the challenges of tourism due to popularity.

Literature

- [1] <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/401>
- [2] <http://www.vilagorokseg.hu/>
- [3] <http://www.holloko.hu/>