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**THE JEWELS OF EASTERN CROATIA - MONUMENTAL HERITAGE OF
ERDUT**

**DRAGULJI ISTOČNE HRVATSKE - SPOMENIČKA BAŠTINA MJESTA
ERDUT**

ABSTRACT

Monumental heritage of the village of Erdut (approximately 600 residents) is a significant tourism potential of the whole Eastern Croatia. Historical site Erdutska kula (The Tower of Erdut) is a monument once belonging to category zero, and now according to the new classification of monumental heritage it is a monument of A category. It is one of the major tourist attractions of the whole region. Domestic and foreign visitors come on a daily basis to visit the tower and admire the landscape which can be seen from its viewpoint. Besides the tower, there is an old castle in Erdut, the Manor of Counts Adamovich-Cséh, which together with Erdut wine cellars and winery from the 17th century also presents a significant part of the tourist offerings. Within the Erdut winery there are facilities for receiving tourists with overnight stays, a complete gastronomical offering, and facilities for recreation, a walking path and tennis courts. Besides these facilities which are partially in function, there are findings and archaeological sites still not sufficiently explored which would also significantly contribute to Erdut's tourist offerings. The findings which are registered and located in the settlement of Erdut are prehistoric site Mali Varod, Veliki Varod and Žarkovac, and prehistoric site Stari prkos and Kremenuša. Registered archaeological sites in the settlement of Erdut are medieval site Centar naselja and prehistoric site Orašje. There is also a protected area of nature, the significant landscape of Erdut, with an area of 160 hectares.

Furthermore, there are elements of sacral monumental heritage, a Roman Catholic Church of All Saints and Orthodox Church of St. Archangel Gabriel.

The Erdut Agreement on Peaceful Reintegration of the Occupied Part of the Croatian Danube Region was signed in Erdut on 12 November 1995.

The goal of the paper is to present the potential of the village of Erdut, considering its valuable monumental heritage, ethnic values and unexplored archaeological sites, in order to include it in the program of rural and regional development with significant potential for development of cultural and sacral offers of continental tourism. However, the Conservation Department in Osijek and the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments should urgently implement revitalization of the Tower of Erdut in order not to collapse. Since it is not protected, it deteriorates on a daily basis and this is also a threat for visitors because a brick or a piece of building material can suddenly fall off during a visit. Furthermore, it is necessary to conduct a revitalization of the castle, the Manor of Counts Adamovich-Cséh, and also to initiate the activities for exploration of archaeological sites and prehistoric finds. If the revitalization of the buildings was started and put into function, a complete tourist offer would be achieved, thus increasing the interest of visitors from home and abroad. This would increase employment and stop the departure of entire families from the village of Erdut.

Key words: *monumental heritage, The Tower of Erdut, Erdut vineyards, tourist potential, rural development, regional development.*

SAŽETAK

Spomeniča baština malog mjesta Erdut (cca 600 stanovnika) značajan je turistički potencijal cijele istočne Hrvatske. Povijesno naslijeđe Erdutska kula, predstavlja spomenik, nekada nulte, a sada po novoj klasifikaciji spomeničke baštine A kategorije, jedna je od glavnih turističkih atrakcija cijelog kraja. Svakodnevno dolaze, domaći, a i strani, posjetitelji obići kulu i diviti se krajobrazu s njenog vidikovca. Osim kule u Erdutu postoji i stari dvorac, zvan Kurija grofa Adamovica Cseha koja zajedno s Erdutskom podrumima i vinarijom još iz 17. stoljeća predstavlja također dio značajnog turističkog sadržaja. U okviru Erdutske vinarije nalaze se uređeni sadržaji za prijem turista s noćenjem i kompletnom gastronomskom ponudom i sadržajem za rekreaciju, šetnicom i teniskim terenima. Osim ovih sadržaja koji su djelomično u funkciji, postoje još do sada nedovoljno istražena nalazišta i arheološki lokaliteti koji bi također značajno doprinijeli turističkoj ponudi Erduta kao što su u samom naselju Erdut, koji su registrirani, „Mali Vard, Veliki Vard i Žarkovac“ – prapovijesno nalazište „Stari prkos i Kremenuša, prapovijesno nalazište. Arheološki lokaliteti u naselju Erdut evidentirani su „Centar naselja“ srednjovjekovno nalazište, „Orašje“ prapovijesno nalazište i zaštićeni dijelovi prirode: Značajan krajobraz, površine 160 ha. Tu se nalaze sakralna spomenička baština katolička crkva Svih Svetih i pravoslavna crkva sv. Arhangela Gavrila. U Erdutu je 12. Studenog potpisan je Erdutski sporazum o mirnoj reintegraciji okupiranog dijela Hrvatskog Podunavlja.

Cilj rada je prikazati potencijal malog mjesta Erdut, s obzirom na vrijednu spomeničku baštinu, etno vrijednosti i neistražene arheološke lokalitete, za uključivanje u program ruralnog i regionalnog razvoja sa značajnim potencijalom za razvoj kulturne i sakralne ponude kontinentalnog turizma. Međutim, Konzervatorski odjelu u Osijeku i Zavoda za zaštitu spomenika kulture trebaju provesti pod hitno revitalizaciju Erdutske kule kako se ne bi urušila. S obzirom kako nije zaštićena svakodnevno propada, a prijete i posjetiteljima kod obilaska od mogućeg iznenadnog

pada opeke i građevnog materijala. Isto tako neophodna je revitalizacija dvorca – Kurije grofa Adamovic Cseh, ali i aktivnosti oko istraživanja arheoloških lokaliteta i prapovijesnih nalazišta. U koliko bi se pristupilo revitalizaciji građevina i stavilo u funkciju postigla bi se kompletna turistička ponuda, a time povećao i interes posjetitelja iz zemlje i inozemstva. Na taj način povećala bi se zaposlenosti i zaustavio odlazak cijelih obitelji iz mjesta Erdut.

Ključne riječi: *spomenička baština, Erdutska kula, Erdutsko vinogorje, turistički potencijal, ruralni razvoj, regionalni razvoj.*

1. Introduction

According to the OECD definition, rural areas are communities with less than 150 residents per square kilometre. In the Republic of Croatia rural areas make up 90% of total land, or 61% of inhabited land where approximately 47% of the total number of residents live.

These are areas where agricultural and forestry areas prevail, where the local population lives in smaller or bigger settlements and deals mostly with agriculture, farming, cattle breeding, fruit growing and viticulture, growing a variety of other crops, or sometimes crafts that gradually go into extinction. These are areas where people are mostly related to agriculture, but also to ethno-content, they cherish their monumental and sacral heritage, and recently more and more want to engage in rural and regional development programs through tourist offerings. Although the village of Erdut still does not have telecommunications, sewage, gas, and even electricity is occasionally out, since new waterworks are being introduced, areas are regulated, and waste disposal is organized, there are all preconditions for its development.

Considering the variety of nationalities in the village of Erdut, and thus variety in ethnic and sacral values, through a joint work, relations and networking they can achieve a significant tourist product in the mosaic of offers. It is this diversity that provides a special atmosphere for tourists who come in this region and wish to get to know the landscape, people, their traditions, habits and culinary specialties. Variegated offering, together with numerous other features that Erdut has, with tourist stories throughout the past and the present, can be a significant factor for a complete tourist offer of Erdut.

All the stories for tourists are related to life in the Tower of Erdut, Adamovich-Cséh Castle, and people who lived here in the past and who are still remembered by some and gladly told to those who wish to hear them.

However, only networked into a joint offer with the indications of individual parts of the content can they attract tourists and encourage their interest in coming and experiencing the atmosphere provided by the beauty of people, monumental and sacral heritage, archaeological sites, ethnic values, culinary specialties, and landscape beauty.

2. Settlement of Erdut

Settlement of Erdut¹ - according to ancient records the “Town of Erdut” - with its famous Tower of Erdut from the late 15th century, situated on the inner side of the great Danube meander, on the eastern vineyard slopes of *Erdutska kosa*, lately a monument of category zero and recently of A category² and the castle called Manor of Counts Adamovich-Cséh, according to the 2001 census had 964 residents. However, the fact is that in 26 streets there are approximately 600 people in Erdut.³ Others are listed as residents, but they live and work elsewhere.

It is a place of extraordinary possibilities for development of tourism considering it is a vineyard area, the Tower of Erdut, the Manor - the old castle, the Danube River, the view on the mouth of the Drava River in the Danube, numerous Danube branches and the landscape. In the very centre of Erdut there is the Manor - an old castle Adamovich-Cséh with Erdut winery.⁴ Its cellars date back into 1730. Within the winery, a former administrative building has been adapted for the reception of tourists for overnight stays, a complete service and relaxation, and also with recreation facilities. Along the walking paths going to the viewpoint from which one can see the Tower of Erdut as well as the Danube, extends a wide view of everything from Bogojevo to Sombor, and on a clear day even to Novi Sad. There are organized tennis courts to make the tourist offer as much comprehensive and enjoyable as possible for visitors to stay.

¹ Erdut – once a medieval fortified feudal town, then the seat of an estate, is today a settlement on the eastern slopes of Dalj Mountain, along the Danube River bank, in the micro-region *Erdutska kosa* of the Eastern-Croatian plain, 46 kilometres away from the city of Osijek, the centre of Osijek-Baranja County to which the village and the Municipality of Erdut belong. It is a treasury of history, located on the inner side of the great Danube River meander, on the eastern wine-growing slopes of *Čvorkovo brdo* with the widely known wine-cellars. The ancient, still preserved towers of the medieval town, which is said to be mostly collapsed into the river, provide a view of the surroundings, the vineyards and the Danube River. The soil around Erdut was very fertile and suitable for the cultivation of many agricultural crops, especially vineyards. Erdut had already in the Middle Ages had a Danube port, which made it a small market-town, so it was first mentioned as the castellum Erdeed in the second half of the 14th century, that is in 1359.

² Ibidem

³ Personally counted by Vinko Albert, resident of Erdut

⁴ Erdut castle - manor. The Adamovich family built a sizeable manor on the eastern part of Erdut, which served as a seat of the estate. So, besides a residential part (a small castle), it used to have the necessary commercial buildings and several large wine cellars that are still used today. The exact time the manor was built is not known. Namely, a rather modest ground floor manor was built either at the end of the 18th or in the first half of the 19th century. It had a ground plan in the shape of an elongated rectangle. It was fundamentally renewed and upgraded in time of nobles Franciska Adamović Čepinski and Ervin Cséh, probably in the last decade of the 19th century. It was then when it changed its ground plan and facades received historicist features. The old rectangular castle got the following additions: the octagonal tower on the southwest corner, the porch over the southwestern entrance, the extension in the form of a shallow wing on the southeast corner and a one-floor extension on the north-east facade. In the place of the old garden, on the south side of the castle, a small late prehistoric park was arranged. Its construction is related to the renovation and restoration of the castle. At the beginning of the 20th century it was a densely planted area with diverse trees, bushes and flowers. Only some original parts of the park are preserved. In the direction to the north of the castle, towards the viewpoint over the Danube, leads a straight line of grape vine lattices.

From the life of the Adamovich-Cséh family. In the old basement there were, from the second half of the 19th century, several static barrels size of a small living room that had been internally coated with ceramic tiles. According to legend, Count Ervin Cséh and his companions played cards and drank inside them, hiding in them from his wife.

Erdut is connected by road through the Erdut vineyards and the Dalj Mountain by a windingly landscaped road with Aljmaš. The village of Aljmaš is a well-known sanctuary where pilgrims come during the Assumption to visit the church of Our Lady of Salvation and the Calvary. Besides, Aljmaš is well-known for the refuge of the inhabitants from Aljmaš by Danube to Osijek during the Homeland War on 1st August 1991. Thus, the village of Aljmaš, together with Erdut, have their charisma due to the extermination of the domicile population from their homes, suffering and destruction - without a provocation, but politically persecuted only because the aggressor's appetites were to evict them and replace them with some other people who have never lived here before, or belonged to this ambient.

Erdut is rich in houses of traditional architecture. Family farms in Erdut have prepared their houses for rural tourism and tourist activities, offering traditional culinary specialties consisting predominantly of fish dishes, but also some meat dishes, prepared according to the recipes of the old cuisine masters. These are usually spicy dishes with strong spices and pleasant aroma.

Furthermore, monumental heritage of Erdut is made of architectural heritage:⁵

- Medieval town of Erdut is the name for the Tower of Erdut - the remains of a late 15th century tower, renovated on several occasions, and now in decay;
- Ivana Adamovich-Cséh Manor or „the Great Castle“, sometimes called a mansion, is a part of “a commercial-residential complex”. Together with a winery it has been the centre of viticulture, “vineyards and other agricultural production in this region for over 250 years”.

Registered archaeological sites in the village of Erdut:

- *Mali Varod, Veliki Varod and Žarkovac*, prehistoric site;
- *Stari prkos and Kremenuša*, prehistoric site.

Recorded archaeological sites in the village of Erdut:

- *Centar naselja*, medieval site;
- *Orašje*, prehistoric site.

Sacral heritage:

- The Church of All Saints, destroyed in 1991/92, renewed in 2005;
- Orthodox Church of St. Archangel Gabriel restored from 2003 to 2005.

Protected area of nature:

- Significant landscape of Erdut, with an area of 160 hectares.

It is important to emphasize that the well-known Tower of Erdut has been forgotten by the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments, and restoration cannot be expected from EU funds.

On 12th November 1995 the Erdut Agreement⁶ was signed in Erdut. It was preceded by the Agreement on Basic Principles for Negotiations on Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srijem,

⁵ A. Mašek: *Overall Development Program of the Municipality of Erdut*. in 2007; pp. 173 - 175;

⁶ **Erdut Agreement** is the name for the *Basic Agreement on Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srijem*, which was reached during negotiations in the American Dayton (Dayton Agreement) between Croatian President Franjo Tuđman and Serbian President Slobodan Milošević. It was signed on 12th November 1995 in Erdut by delegation of the local Serbian community, and in Zagreb by delegation of Croatian Government (Milan Milanović on behalf of the Serb negotiators and Hrvoje Šarinić on behalf of the Croats), with the mediation of Peter Galbraith (US Ambassador to Croatia) and Thorvald Stoltenberg (UN mediator). The signing of the Erdut Agreement initiated a

signed on 3rd October 1995 in Erdut. With Erdut Agreement Croatia has agreed upon a peaceful reintegration of the occupied part of the Croatian Danube Region, and at the same time it guaranteed all minority rights and other civil rights to the Serbian community.

Picture 1 *The Tower of Erdut*⁷



Picture 2 *Manor, Adamovich-Cséh Castle*



Source: the authors of the paper

Picture 3 *House of traditional architecture*



Picture 4 *Wine cellar with wine barrels*



Source: the authors of the paper

process of peaceful reintegration of the Croatian Danube region in the constitutional and legal system of the Republic of Croatia.

⁷ Remains of the medieval town. Erdut is famous for its medieval fortification, whose remains rise above the Danube. From the medieval town remained the ruins of two towers and a wall. The round tower is best preserved, almost in its original form, with protruding upper part on the consoles, reminding of Renaissance Italian buildings from the 15th century. The three-storey building is expanded on the final part and reinforced by counterforts. From the circular tower in the north there is a part of the wall separated from the tower. And toward the east are the remains of the walls (large fragments) leading to the main square tower located in the centre of the site. In the medieval Erdut it played the role of the main (defence) tower. This main tower was incorrectly restored in 1891 and converted into a tomb of the Adamovich and Cséh noble families; At this time, the quadrilateral tower changed its original appearance; it was reduced by one floor, On the southwestern corner a small rectangular tower with a crown on top was added, and the main south facade has been added the decorative portal with the toothed ends and the coats of arms of Adamovich and Cséh families.

In the region of the Erdut vineyards there are numerous private wine cellars which offer tourists a wine tasting. The Erdut winery is proud to own the largest wine barrel in Europe that is in operation. The barrel has a capacity of 75,000 litres, and is made of oak wood⁸. As an added value the barrel is woodcut with a central motif of the Last Supper, and it has been made by the sculptors Mato Tijardović, Ivan Forjan, Vedran Jakšić and Saša Matković.

3. SWOT Analysis of Erdut

The SWOT analysis of Erdut shows strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the village of Erdut.

Table 1: SWOT analysis of Erdut

STRENGTHS +	WEAKNESSES -
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Erdut Agreement on Peaceful Reintegration from 12th November 1995; there is a memorial plaque in the Castle; - Medieval town of Erdut is the name for the Tower of Erdut - the remains of a late 15th century tower, renovated on several occasions, and now in decay; - Ivana Adamovich-Cséh Manor or „the Great Castle“, sometimes called a mansion, is a part of “a commercial-residential complex”. Together with a winery it has been the centre of viticulture, “vineyards and other agricultural production in this region for over 250 years”; - Erdut winery with approximately 470 hectares of land area, 361.33 hectares of fertile plants⁹; - wine barrel for 75,000 litres of wine in the cellars of Erdut winery; - <i>Brzica winery</i>, in Erdut Mountain, with a modern organized wine storage cellar; - Gallery of Fine Artists in Erdut, 5 J. Pavića Street; owned by A. Mašek Tonković; - An excursion site with maintaining colonies of academic painters and sculptors in Erdut, 22 I. Horvata Bečara Street; owned by Predrag Stojčić; - Family farm for tourism and catering <i>Stari dud</i>, 53 I. Bakića Street; - Family farm for tourism and catering <i>ERK HIM</i>, 60 I. Bakića Street; - Grocery store <i>NTL</i>, 10 I. H. Bečara Street; - <i>River D inn</i>, 8 I. H. Bečara Street; - Vicinity of Osijek; - Built-up stairs of health from the Tower to the Danube, approx. 250 stairs, built with funds of EU funds; - High quality land for the development of crop production; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Close to the border - increased traffic affects bad living conditions due to noise and environmental pollution caused by a large amount of exhaust gases, - Insufficient infrastructure, - The lack of sewage, - Public lighting largely on homes, - There is no old-age care, - Unmanaged and neglected channel network, - Illegal dumpsites that still exist, although the landfill renovation project arranged two dumpsites, - Low voltage network in poor condition, - Extremely old population structure, - There are no young experts, - Computer illiteracy, - Abandoned ramshackle houses, and fences, - The Adamovich-Cséh Manor is not completely restored - facades, windows, - The Tower of Erdut is not illuminated by night, so ships that cruise the Danube do not see it at night, modeled on the illuminated castles along the Rhine in Germany;

⁸ The barrel was made in DIK Đurđenovac, ordered by Aron Nadjvegi, then director of the IPK accounting centre Osijek, to charge the work of his programmers.

⁹ A. Mašek: *Overall Development Program of the Municipality of Erdut*. in 2007; p. 157;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water - the Danube and Drava River pass through the outskirts of the settlement and enable the inhabitants to develop fishing tourism; - Development based on river waterways; - The mountainous region suitable for planting vineyards and wine growing (famous Erdut wines), and wine cellars - Source of geothermal and sulfuric water in Erdut, (to date not yet explored); - Houses of traditional architecture; - Of sacral buildings there is the Church of All Saints in Erdut and Orthodox Church of St. Archangel Gabriel in Erdut; - Registered archaeological sites in the village of Erdut: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Mali Varod, Veliki Varod and Žarkovac</i>, prehistoric site; o <i>Stari prkos and Kremenuša</i>, prehistoric site - Recorded archaeological sites in the village of Erdut: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Centar naselja</i>, medieval site, o <i>Orašje</i>, prehistoric site; - Protected area of nature: Significant landscape of Erdut, with an area of 160 hectares; - In the Erdut area there are 58 family farms. - A peaceful reintegration was carried out; 	
OPPORTUNITIES ++	THREATS --
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The vicinity of Osijek enables faster development of the economy; - The vicinity of the border enables the development of cross-border cooperation; - Wine roads for tourism development - Development of rural tourism; - Development of catering industry; - Development of traditional crafts; - Development of modern family farms; - Production of healthy food; - Development of recreational tourism; - Corridor Vc will contribute to a greater flow of goods and connectivity of the north to the Croatian south; - Improving the quality of life through the construction of the main drinking water pipeline, which is underway in Erdut; - Maintenance of folklore groups, ethnic dances, and the local tradition of playing the musical instruments with an incentive of local governments; - The illumination of the Tower of Erdut at night would have the effect of creating the image of Erdut and its monumental heritage; - Development of rural tourism with special emphasis on: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Departure of young people and whole families; - Collapse of the Tower of Erdut; - Collapse of the Adamovich-Cséh Castle; - Devastated park; - Abandoning Ethnic Values; - Flooding along the river Danube; - Old crafts are unprofitable and do not open; - Negligent empty spaces; - Polluted wells because there is no sewage network; - Pouring wastewater into the channels;

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Making souvenirs ○ Making handicrafts ○ Gold embroidery ○ Fashion details ○ Various handicrafts ○ Decorating ethno houses | |
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4. Potentials of Sustainable Development of the Erdut Settlement

Erdut has all the predispositions for sustainable rural development, as it has rich monumental and cultural heritage and archaeological sites, witnessing the time and living in this area, the natural potential of the Drava River and the Danube, connecting the east and west, there are still preserved houses of traditional architecture, ethnical values, wine cellars that want to be included in an organized tourist offer with all accompanying amenities and gastronomic specialties within family farms.

The rural development of Erdut starts with the following content activities:

- Reconstruction of the Tower of Erdut under the protection of the Conservation Department for the Protection of Cultural Monuments;
- Reconstruction of the Manor - Adamovich-Cséh Castle;
- Reconstruction of the park according to the historical features of the park (as before the devastation);
- Arrangement of streets and buildings that have been abandoned and forgotten, by the decision of the Municipal council (according to the Law on Local Government Planning);
- Arrangement of wine roads to expand the tourist offer of Erdut Municipality;
- Protection of monumental, cultural and sacral heritage in order to create a complete tourist product.
- Construction of a cycling path alongside the Danube.
- Folklore Society of Erdut
- Within the activities of hunting and fishing associations, a tourist offer program is being developed.
- Putting in function the tourist offer of houses of traditional architecture with economic contents and customs;
- Activate the Gallery of artists with displays of academic painters;
- Arrangement of complete infrastructure in the settlement; Electricity, water is being introduced, sewage, telephones, secondary roads and gas for the purpose of better living of the locals and creation of conditions for tourism development and sustainable development of Erdut;
- NGOs and local government are involved in the organization of the neglected and protected parts of nature in the settlement area, the Significant landscape of Erdut, with a surface area of 1.22 hectares;
- Implementation of education and project development is needed for application to the world institutions, donors and pre-accession and cohesion funds of the EU by the County Development Agency.

5. Conclusion

Due to the rich monumental and sacral heritage of the Tower of Erdut, Manor - Castle Adamovich-Cséh, churches, Erdut winery, wine association, landscape, the river Drava and the Danube, rich history and the present, and sacral values, Erdut can contribute to the development of rural areas not only in Erdut and Eastern Croatia, but also in the whole Croatia..

In order to achieve this, cooperation of all relevant stakeholders of the Municipality and the County is necessary - non-governmental organizations, family farms, entrepreneurs and craftsmen, but also the care of the Institute for the Protection of Monuments of Construction and Culture and the Ministry of Regional Development of the Republic of Croatia.

The activity of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) within the Municipality of Erdut represents a significant factor for rural development, in particular the tourist activities with which the Municipality is to partner and to work on their networking at the Micro-region level. By combining, it is easier to achieve the goals for which they have been established, to work jointly on projects in order to use the resources of international donors, money institutions, pre-accession and cohesion funds of the EU.

However, without the Ministry for Rural Development and the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Croatia all efforts to include Erdut as a priority need for reconstruction and arrangement with the purpose of a comprehensive tourist offer will not be feasible.

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