

The impact of Ivo Andrić's novel *The bridge on the Drina* on the formation of tourist image on the historical Višegrad bridge and its surrounding waterscape

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Abstract

The Mehmed Paša Sokolović Bridge across the river Drina in the town of Višegrad (Bosnia and Herzegovina) was built at the end of the 16th century and it was recognized as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2007 based on its historical and architectural values. However, the bridge became subject of worldwide recognition when the Nobel Prize awarded author Ivo Andrić wrote his novel *The bridge on the Drina* (1945) making it a focal point in which history and literature tangle into a tourist attraction. Arcos-Pumarola; Osácar Marzal *et al.* (2018) state that the value of literature enriches the image of destination by adding meanings to landscape. The aim of this paper is to analyze the influence of Andrić's novel on the formation of the tourist image of the place. The main hypothesis is that the novel has effect on visitors' perception of the place by bringing together the value of the bridge as historical monument with the author's literary legacy. A content analysis of 131 reviews from travel website TripAdvisor was conducted, of which 102 were in English and 29 in the Serbian language in order to understand the value of place to tourists. For qualitative data analysis software package NVivo was used, as previously done in Arcos-Pumarola;

Osácar Marzal *et al.* (2020), and Mansfield (2015). The remaining 89 reviews (TripAdvisor, 2022) which were written in other languages were excluded from this research to avoid any possible misinterpretation due to language barrier. The results will suggest that the literary landscape of *The bridge on the Drina* adds symbolic layers to the Mehmed Paša Sokolović Bridge and its surrounding waterscape, therefore creating a new perspective on the destination. This result is in line with previous research (Mansfield, 2018) where it has been shown that literary texts can contribute to place-making.

Keywords

Literary tourism • Mehmed Paša Sokolović Bridge • Ivo Andrić • *The bridge on the Drina*

1. Introduction

The concept of *lieux d'imagination* was introduced by Reijnders (2010: 48) and can be defined as places of the imagination that, for certain groups in society, serve as physical points of reference to an imagined

world. These places offer the possibility for tourists to construct and transcend the symbolic boundary between an 'imagined' and a 'real' world, making them social actors that ascribe different meanings to specific places (Reijnders, 2010: 40). Tourism, therefore, has a role in co-production of place identities (Schiavone & Reijnders, 2020: 3). While tangible components of placemaking involve physical interventions, intangible components involve creation of mental images and place identities through, for example, storytelling (Lew, 2017, cited by Schiavone & Reijnders, 2020: 3). According to Brook (2000, cited by Schiavone & Reijnders, 2020: 8), cultural meanings imposed on settings matter a great deal in place production. As part of the intangible heritage, literature can add value to a destination by enriching its image. Literary landscape, as an extension of a cultural landscape, plays a vital role in the process of image creation of a territory (Arcos-Pumarola; Osácar Marzal *et al.*, 2018: 178).

Literary tourism originates when the popularity of a literary depiction or the stature of an individual author is such that people are drawn to visit the places that they wrote about or were associated with (e.g. birthplace, home, gravesite) (Busby & Klug, 2001: 319). Daly *et al.* (2021, cited by Anjo; Sousa *et al.*, 2021: 59) point out that literary tourism happens when there is an oscillation between the imagination of the reader and the physical space identified in the text to which the tourist moves. This is in accordance with the above mentioned *lieux d'imagination* (Reijnders, 2010), making literary sites places where literary tourists act as co-producers of their own experience through storytelling and imagination.

Even though journeys to places associated with the world of imagination are not modern phenomena (Reijnders, 2010: 41), it has only been in the recent decades that literary tourism has been popularized, and especially among academic scholars. Since many regions around the world are characterized by their own unique literary heritage, the potential for the development of literary tourism is great. However, literary tourism scholars (Arcos-Pumarola; Osácar Marzal *et al.*, 2020; Çevik, 2020) point out the lack of a global approach to research on literary tourism. Out of 132 analyzed literary tourism articles over the period 1997-2016, Çevik (2020: 9) found that 5 were in Africa, 16 in America(s), 17 in Asia, 70 in Europe, and 19 in Oceania as research areas. This shows regional inequality, making literary tourism seem to be a dominantly European phenomenon. Çevik (2020: 16), however, further notes that the number of publications on literary tourism in countries outside the United Kingdom is limited. This was also confirmed by Arcos-Pumarola; Osácar Marzal *et al.* (2020: 197), who acknowledged a reduced presence of

non-English speaking countries with a strong literary tradition in research on literary tourism.

The region of the Balkans, with former Yugoslavian countries being part of it, has a rich literary heritage. However, its potential for literary tourism development has barely been explored so far. Considering many benefits that literary tourism could bring to this region such as promotion of literary heritage, enhancing the image of destinations through literary symbolism, regional collaboration, and economic development, it is clear that academic focus should be more on it. What makes regional development through potential destination collaboration plausible is the fact that many writers who were born or lived in former country of Yugoslavia left their traces across modern-day national borders (e.g. birthplace, house they lived in and their burial place are today located in two or more neighboring countries which were once part of the same one). One of the most famous writers from this region with worldwide recognition was Ivo Andrić (1892-1975) who remains until today the only Yugoslav novelist awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, in 1961.

This paper aims at fulfilling the lack of academic research in this region by analyzing the influence of Andrić's most famous novel *The bridge on the Drina* on the formation of the tourist image on the Mehmed Paša Sokolović Bridge and its surrounding waterscape in the town of Višegrad. By doing so, it will be determined whether the novel has effects on tourists' perception of the place by adding literary meanings to the landscape, as previously acknowledged by Arcos-Pumarola; Osácar Marzal *et al.* (2018), and Mansfield (2018). The results of this paper are significant for academic researchers as well as for regional Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) who might use these findings to consider exploring the existing literary potential for literary tourism development, destination promotion, and eventual branding.

2. Theme of water and bridge in the work of Ivo Andrić

Ivo Andrić, born on 10th October 1892 in Dolac, Bosnia and Herzegovina, was the author of 6 novels, over 100 short stories, critical essays, and poetry. Born when Bosnia was still under the Austro-Hungarian Empire rule, young Andrić became part of the national revolutionary movement that later resulted in his arrest in 1914. Throughout his student years he studied at several universities across Europe becoming Doctor of Philosophy in 1924. Andrić worked for an association of southern Slavic countries, and after the formation of Yugoslavia, he served as a diplomat

for the country (Nobel Prize, n.d.). Even though he started publishing his early work in 1911, it was during the period of 1940s that his most famous works were written, including *The bridge on the Drina*. In 1961 he received the Nobel Prize in Literature “for the epic force with which he has traced themes and depicted human destinies drawn from the history of his country” (Nobel Prize, n.d.). His novels and stories were translated into more than thirty languages. He died on 13th March 1975 in Belgrade, Serbia.

His work illuminates the destinies of individuals against a historical, cultural, and religious background (Nobel Prize, n.d.), with atmospheric scenery and deep psychological insight into people's emotions. In the form of stories or episodes, *The bridge on the Drina* chronologically follows four centuries of events around the bridge over the river Drina, from 1500s until the beginning of World War I, describing the lives of Višegrad people through different generations. It is a tale of common people whose destiny is tied to the bridge and water below it, among whom some are historical personalities and some imaginary characters. The bridge represents a focal point of the narrative where all main events take place – love and joy, conflicts, and tragedies. It is the side character, the silent observer, a stage where history takes place, and a symbol of permanence and continuity. Along with the bridge, the river Drina itself represents the conventional image of passing time with its fluctuating moods, now rough, now still (Hawkesworth, 1984: 219). At the beginning of the novel, water acts as a separator of two shores and two sides (East and West), which are later bridged thanks to the Grand Vizier Mehmed Paša Sokolović. Mehmed's bridge offers the promise of mending a soulscape, and the “wicked water” between its banks, overcoming its divisions, separations, and limitations. Once the bridge was completed, each inhabitant sensed the transcendent effect of its structure (Harrison, 2021: 118), something that Andrić described as:

Even the least of the townsmen felt as if his powers were suddenly multiplied, as if some wonderful, superhuman exploit was brought within the measure of his powers and within the limits of everyday life, as if besides the well-known elements of earth, water and sky, one more were open to him, as if by each one of them could suddenly realize one of his dearest desires, that ancient dream of man – to go over the water and be master of space. (Andrić, 2021: 72)

However, water, similarly to human nature, cannot be tamed and has been causing damages to people's households and the bridge itself during the

big floods. Despite many natural and human turmoil, it is the bridge and the river that remain permanent witnesses of short human lives, outliving every event, every conflict and tragedy, and almost every chapter in the novel ends on a similar note. In Andrić's work, the bridge becomes a metaphor that describes not only the link between East and West, different religions and ethnicities for which Andrić hopes that “despite difficulties, difference could be bridged” (Wachtel, 1998: 216), but also his understanding of the permanence of art where life is “an incomprehensible marvel that is incessantly wasted and spent” (Andrić, 2021: 90), while life work lives forever. The literary legacy of Ivo Andrić continues today, with many schools, streets and institutions across Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina carrying his name, including The Ivo Andrić Foundation, The Memorial Museum of Ivo Andrić located in the apartment where he lived until his death, Andrićev venac (Belgrade), The Andrić Institute, Memorial classroom of Ivo Andrić and Andrićgrad (Višegrad). Every year on his birthday, The Ivo Andrić Foundation presents Andrić Prize, an award for the best short story or book of short stories, as was the last wish of the writer.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research area

The town of Višegrad is located at the confluence of the rivers Drina and Rzav, on the eastern edge of the Republic of Srpska, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, near the border with Serbia. Since the Middle Ages, it has been an important strategic point on a road across the river Drina, and it still represents an important connection between Serbia and Bosnia. While Andrić wasn't born in Višegrad, he went to the elementary school there and was inspired by it in such a way that he made Višegrad the setting of his most famous novel many years later. In that way, it can be said that Višegrad was a special town for Ivo Andrić and his creative work. The town offers a variety of attractions such as the Drina river for sightseeing, leisure and sport activities, Višegrad spa for health tourism, the complex of Andrićgrad, a few cultural monuments and events. However, the bridge over the river Drina is certainly what the town is best known for worldwide and its main symbol. Despite its historical value, the bridge became subject of worldwide recognition when Andrić wrote his novel *The bridge on the Drina* (1945).

The Mehmed Paša Sokolović Bridge across the river Drina was built at the end of the 16th century

and it was recognized as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2007 based on its historical and architectural values. It was built by the court architect Mimar Koca Sinan by order of Grand Vizier Mehmed Paša Sokolović, who was born in Ottoman Bosnia into an Orthodox Christian family and abducted at an early age as part of the Ottoman *devşirme* system. Grand vizier had wanted his endowment to represent a passage that would unite East and West in the center of the Ottoman Empire, and today this 179.5 m long bridge with 11 masonry arches is a remarkable architectural testimony to the apogee of the classical age of the Ottoman Empire. As Drina is a mountain river, it is prone to flooding and the bridge parapets were destroyed in an exceptional flood in 1896. In addition, the bridge was severely damaged during both World Wars and reconstructed in stone in the early 1950s. Despite these historical events, authenticity has generally been maintained through the course of the bridge's successive restorations (UNESCO World Heritage Convention, n.d.). Because of its geostrategic position, through the course of history the bridge has been carrying a symbolic role in cultural exchange between the Balkans, the East and the West, between different religions and ethnicities, a symbol of permanence. And in many ways, it was exactly this turbulent past that inspired a lot of Andrić's written work.

3.2. Methodological approach

The number of tourists accessing the Internet before, during and after a trip is increasing; they look for information about what to visit and then share their experience online, often in the form of reviews or comments. Digital presence is indisputable nowadays, both for entities and consumers, and taking advantage of the fact that the number of individuals planning a trip over the Internet is high, it is essential to be present and offer what tourists are looking for (Anjo; Sousa *et al.*, 2021: 64). Because of that, Web 2.0 is nowadays an important tool in the tourism industry. It offers knowledge on how to improve tourist offer of the destination, what are the weaknesses and negative sides, as well as destination strengths and positive sides. At the same time, in literary tourism research, Web 2.0 can be a key in understanding the impact of literary work on the formation of tourist image and emotions about a place. The results of such a research could be helpful for further development of a destination and its competitiveness through the unique literary heritage.

Web 2.0 has already been used as a data source by other literary tourism scholars (Potočnik Topler,

2018; Mansfield, 2015), and travel website TripAdvisor in particular has proven to be useful in content analysis studies (Lei & Law, 2015; O'Connor, 2010). In this research, a content analysis of 131 reviews from TripAdvisor Mehmed Paša Sokolović Bridge page was conducted, of which 102 were in English and 29 in the Serbian language in order to understand the value of this place to tourists. The remaining 89 reviews (TripAdvisor, 2022) which were in other languages were excluded in order to avoid any possible misinterpretation due to language barrier. For qualitative data analysis, software package NVivo was used, as previously done in Arcos-Pumarola; Osácar Marzal *et al.* (2020), and Mansfield (2015). Firstly, content analysis of reviews was done before each code was assigned. After that, the initial codes were grouped into main themes based on common characteristics as following: History, The Association with Literature, Nature landscape, Tourist activities, and Conative component.

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Is Andrić or his novel present in the tourist image of the bridge?
2. Are there visitors who specifically stated that reading the novel was a motive to visit Višegrad?
3. Did the trip to Višegrad awaken the desire to get acquainted with Andrić's work after returning home?

The main hypothesis is that the novel *The bridge on the Drina* has effects on visitors' perception of the Mehmed Paša Sokolović bridge and its surrounding waterscape by bringing together the value of the bridge as a historical monument with the author's literary legacy.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Reviewer's characteristics

Analysis included reviews posted from August 2011 (in the English language) until September 2020 (in English and Serbian). The average rating of Mehmed Paša Sokolović bridge by March 2022 was 4.75 in the analyzed sample, out of which 109 reviews (83.2%) rated it as 5 stars (*excellent*).

As regards the countries of origin, Table 1 shows that the majority of the visitors were Europeans (72.5%) with Serbia (47.4%) being in the first place, followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina (8.4%), United

Kingdom (8.4%), Bulgaria (4.2%) and Italy (4.2%) in the top five European countries. The fact that visitors from Serbia represent the dominant group could be explained by the proximity of Višegrad from the state border. American visitors include both North America (USA; n=6) and South America (Brazil; n=1), while visitors from Asia came from Turkey (n=2), Malaysia (n=1), Singapore (n=1) and Philippines (n=1). Since Turkish visitors were from Istanbul (which is lying in both Europe and Asia) and Izmir (which is a city in the Asian part of Turkey), it was decided to put them into the Asian category. However, the nationality of 15 reviewers (11.5%) remains unknown since the country where they come from was not specified. Other potential details available on TripAdvisor such as traveler type or time of the year were not analyzed, as they don't represent key details for this study.

N	%
Europe (n=95)	72.5%
Australia (n=9)	6.9%
America (n=7)	5.3%
Asia (n=5)	3.8%
Unspecified (n=15)	11.5%

TABLE 1.
Reviewers' nationality. Source: Based on TripAdvisor data.

4.2. Thematical framework

This study revealed 63 references in association with literature and 67 references in association with history making them two main tourist values of Mehmed Paša Sokolović bridge.

According to Atsız; Ogretmenoglu *et al.* (2022: 59), cultural attractions are important for both tourists and destinations, as they play a major role in the heritage experience of cultural and heritage destinations by creating feelings of experiencing the past and history. That is something that could be confirmed here as well:

- "I am very happy I got a chance to take a walk on this historical monument."
- "I waited for so long to see this bridge. It is magnificent in all its glory and history."

- "It was amazing to be looking at this rich in history bridge from our hotel room."

As part of a conative component of destination image, some of the visitors mentioned that the bridge evoked in them thoughts about the past, but also feelings:

- "The bridge is beautiful and returns you to the past."
- "You can see the bridge from almost every corner of the city and every time you look at it you got that deep feeling and respect."
- "Being next to it emits positive energy and wisdom collected during centuries."

Important value for visitors was the architectural structure of the bridge and the fact that it is well-preserved despite its long and turbulent history, suggesting the knowledge on the topic:

- "Built by the Ottomans, partly destroyed in the 90s, then completely renovated after the last Balkan war, this piece of Bosnian history is a feat of great architecture and engineering."
- "The bridge stands at the test of time, rising waters, wars, differences."

Several visitors commented on the bridge being part of UNESCO heritage and compared it to other bridges:

- "It is one out of the total number of three UNESCO heritage bridge monuments around the world – of which two are in Bosnia and Herzegovina!"
- "Of the three great Ottoman bridges that I know in the Balkans, at Višegrad, Mostar, and Skopje, Višegrad is the most aesthetically pleasing, partly because of its beautiful natural setting, over the green river Drina to low wooded hills beyond. [...] It's one of only three bridges in the world that has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage site."
- "To my mind it is just as elegant as the better-known bridge at Mostar, and infinitely more peaceful and pleasurable to visit."

The last two comments could be important information for DMOs to note, since these visitors give clear advantage to Višegrad bridge in comparison to the other bridges in the region. In addition, another visitor stated a similar thing:

→ “Mostar bridge has one «over-commercialized» arch. The Drina Bridge at Višegrad has [11] impressive arches AND NO TOURIST HORDES!!!!”

These comments reveal that tourists value cultural sites that are quieter (with no tourist crowds). One of the mentioned advantages of Mehmed Paša Sokolović bridge is its nature setting with the river Drina flowing underneath it. When it comes to water, people don't experience only visual sensations, but also the sounds and smells of it. The soothing sound of the water and a cooling breeze on a hot day are the reasons why people like spending time by the waterside (Bernat, 2014: 8). Many visitors acknowledged the color of the river Drina (emerald green, turquoise green) as an important attribute, and stated how the nearness of river offers a soothing experience to them:

- “The location of the bridge is wonderful, the water reflects the emerald green color, and the surrounding area is beautiful; filled with old buildings and architecture as well as tall mountains.”
- “The green water of the river Drina with inverted image of the bridge gives a soothing experience to the eyes.”
- “To look at Drina and rest [...] eyes, heart and soul in its beauty.” (translation)

When it comes to the association with literature, 10 different codes have been revealed by this study. References relate to the number of times each code was mentioned (see Table 2). In his research on place-making, Reijnders acknowledges (2010: 40) that while the world of imagination can have a historical basis, geographical realism in fiction can also grant authenticity to a certain location. In the case of Višegrad bridge, it is evident that the location serves equally well as a memorialization of the real history as well as a memorialization of something that never took place, a hypothesis which can be underlined with an almost equal number of references found in TripAdvisor data for history (67) and literature (63). Reijnders also states (2010: 42) that while the plot of a novel may be fictional, the events could have also actually occurred, something that is as well evident in the analyzed site. Andrić's *The bridge on the Drina* is a historical novel that drew inspiration from real historical events and historical people, despite many of the characters being imagined. There is also an interesting note on the legends surrounding the construction of this bridge. The first chapter in the novel introduces readers to these legends, and today they are included as part of the cultural heritage of the town, as displayed on a website of tourist organi-

zation of Višegrad with short excerpts from the novel on the legends about beautiful but tragic Fata, twins Stoja and Ostoja, and the tower of Marko Kraljević.

Code	References
Portrayed by Andrić	20
Novel gives literary hue to the site	10
Well-known bridge because of Andrić	7
Recommendation to read the novel before visiting	6
Inspiration for Andrić	6
Literary pilgrimage	4
Quote by Andrić	3
A bridge that was written about	3
Site for fans of literature	2
Desire to read the novel after returning home	2

TABLE 2. The Association with Literature. Source: Based on TripAdvisor data.

The most prevalent code within this theme was ‘Portrayed by Andrić’ (n=20):

- “It was a very nice experience to walk on this 16th century bridge over Drina described by Andrić and financed by Mehmed Paša Sokolović.”
- “The Nobel prize laureate in literature – Ivo Andrić – has himself named his most praised work – *The bridge on the Drina river* – the bridge that still stands on the same river.”

Knowing that the majority of visitors were from Serbia, it is not surprising that previous knowledge on Andrić is present in lot of reviews. This could be explained by the fact that *The bridge on the Drina* is part of mandatory literature for children in high schools in Serbia. Aside from that, Andrić is a well-known writer in the Balkans with an established literary legacy behind him. However, this single fact does not give us deeper insight into whether the visitors have previously read the novel or visited the site for specific literary reason (literary pilgrimage). To find

that out, deep reading was done in order to reveal the other codes that can give us better understanding of tourist image on Višegrad bridge.

When readers visit a place that they had read about, they perceive the place through the eyes of the author and within the sentimental state of the main characters of a novel (Del Chiappa *et al.*, 2021; Fotiadis, 2018; Baraw, 2017, cited by Anjo; Sousa *et al.*, 2021: 65). In tourists' experience, the characters, plots and landscapes are inextricably connected to one another (Reijnders, 2010: 47). Examples of this theoretical framework were found in Višegrad:

- "If you have read the *Bridge on the Drina* by Ivo Andrić, it almost feels like all of the characters are passing by and you can see all the descriptions around you."
- "Since I read the book I was waiting to see the bridge and figure out some scenes from this famous book."
- "I started reading Ivo Andrić's novel *The bridge on the Drina* a couple of days before my husband and I set off for BiH. The book moved me on so many levels and it lent its magical literary hue to our entire visit to the country and this bridge in particular."
- "I was mid-way through *The bridge on the Drina* when I visited the site itself. If you haven't read the book then this is just a very beautiful bridge, but with the added context from the book it becomes so much more."

The above-mentioned examples show that for some visitors the novel indeed adds a literary layer to the landscape and that without it, as the last comment states, it would be 'just a very beautiful bridge'. As Schiavone and Reijnders previously mentioned in their research on film tourism (2020: 12) by connecting the reference, which is a read novel in this case, to a physicality of the place, visitors' imaginations are ignited and they are invited to re-imagine fictional stories in the exact spot. One visitor went even further in showing the importance of the novel on their tourist experience by listing the names of fictional characters. For this visitor, Višegrad and fictional narrative are tangled as one, as it is evident in the comment:

The bridge is exactly as Ivo Andrić immortalized it in his best literary work. It all starts with Mehmed Paša Sokolović bridge and the view that Lotika admired from her room. [...] in Višegrad, nothing is as it used to be except the famous bridge, the Drina and good food. But even that is enough to return to Andrić's town and bridge built on the innocent victims Stoja and [Ostoja],

on the silent pain of Radisav, Rade the Mason's ability to turn Sokolović's idea of connecting Bosnia with the east into a magnificent building with eleven arches and *kapia* in the middle. (translation) (TripAdvisor, 2022)

The term *kapia* is mentioned in another review as well:

- "If you haven't read *The bridge over the Drina* by Ivo Andrić before you visit, at least make sure that you go at least to the middle of bridge and experience the *kapia* where so much of the novel takes place. We hadn't read the book and only walked out a third of the way. What a mistake."

The middle part of the bridge called *kapia* was designed for passengers to rest. It also plays important part of the novel where most of the events take place. Even though it was not directly stated, this comment indicates the possibility that the visitor got the desire to read the novel after returning home because otherwise they wouldn't know the importance of *kapia* nor would they regret the fact they didn't walk to it. A similar example of awakened desire to read the novel afterwards was given by another visitor:

- "When I get home I must read *bridge on the Drina* by Ivo Andrić."

This finding confirms that the customary process of reading leading to tourism ('text-to-tourism') can be inverted to an evolution of tourism leading to reading ('tourism-to-text') during experiences of literary tourism, as pointed out by Smith (2012: 167). On the other hand, those who have read the novel prior to the trip recommended to all the future visitors that they should read it beforehand too:

- "Hint: read the book before visiting Višegrad."
- "Before visit this place you have to read the book *Bridge on the Drina* written by Ivo Andrić. After that you will know why this place is so important and spiritual."
- "I would also recommend reading the book by Ivo Andrić, *The bridge on the Drina* before the visit!"

Writers have the ability to change prevailing attitudes towards scenery and nature by transforming real landscapes into literary landscapes through imagination and emotion (Agarwal & Shaw, 2017, cited by Anjo; Sousa *et al.*, 2021: 60). For these reviewers, *The bridge on the Drina* plays an important role in

the formation of their image of a destination and they want for the other future visitors to experience the site through the same literary layer as they do. Višegrad was also acknowledged and recommended as a site for fans of literature:

- “Bridge on the Drina is a real historical site, especially if you are a fan of literature and if you have read a novel *Bridge on the Drina* by Ivo Andrić, Nobel prize author.”
- “If you like the literature and travel to Bosnia and Herzegovina, I recommend a lot you come here.

Some visitors stated that it was only after visiting Višegrad bridge and seeing the Drina waterscape that they understood why it inspired Andrić:

- “Only now do I understand the influence of the bridge and the river on Andrić.” (translation)

The legacy of the writer was further acknowledged through the impact he had on making the bridge and its surrounding environment known worldwide, and three visitors even used direct quotations of his words in their reviews:

- “«Life [is] an incomprehensible marvel, since it was incessantly wasted and spent, yet none the less it lasted and endured like the bridge on the Drina», wrote Ivo Andrić and with it probably described life and the bridge in the simplest and most beautiful way.” (translation)
- “This bridge became famous by Nobel prize winner Ivo Andrić who wrote *The bridge over Drina* novel which speaks about life in Bosnia.”
- “A place that Andrić made famous and important.” (translation)

Probably one of the biggest findings of this study is the evidence of literary pilgrimage existing in the analyzed destination. In many literary tourism studies, the term ‘literary pilgrim’ is used for tourists who travel to find the traces of the authors they admire and who have a motivation to visit the places where the authors lived or worked, to see the objects the authors used or to take a trip to the landscapes or settings in the writings of the authors for reliving them (Çevik, 2020: 15). In other words, literary pilgrims are individuals with a strong literary conscience who are especially motivated by the narrative or the life of the author in question (Anjo; Sousa *et al.*, 2021: 60). An example of this in Višegrad can be seen below:

- “Decided to visit from Sarajevo after reason [of] Ivo Andrić’s novel.”

- “We went there following steps of Ivo Andrić and we did not regret.”

Following the steps of an author is a good indication of literary pilgrimage. Aside from the bridge across the river Drina that represents a main setting for Andrić’s novel, his house and the school where he used to go as a child are also part of tourist attractions in the town. Every year in June *Višegrad Path* is held, a cultural manifestation which is dedicated to the life and work of Andrić. According to a website of tourist organization of Višegrad, the program consists of literary evenings, meetings of writers, promotions, theater and other performances (Višegrad turizam, n.d.). Therefore, it is understandable why Višegrad could represent important destination for lovers of his literary work.

As for types of literary tourism that surround the place, the findings of this study suggest there are two types: (1) places of significance in the work of fiction, as suggested by Butler (1986), and (2) literary festivals, as suggested by Mintel (2011, cited by Çevik, 2020: 4). The third type of literary tourism that could potentially be further developed in the future is (3) aspects of homage to an actual location (Butler, 1986, cited by Çevik, 2020: 3), which mostly includes the actual places associated with an author such as their house, gravesite, etc. As previously mentioned, Andrić spent most of his childhood and school days in Višegrad; however, his house can only be seen from the outside. According to Robinson (2002, cited by Çevik, 2020: 3), the house of an author is arguably the most powerful tourism resource that allows tourists to engage in several emotional experiences and activities. In that way, if reopened or turned into a museum, as it was the case with his apartment in Belgrade, Andrić’s childhood house in Višegrad could be further used as a place of authenticity and intimacy for literary tourists that would like to connect with the author in the town where he lived.

4.3. Potential for regional collaboration

Overall tourist experience was mostly positive. Some of the things that visitors valued was the fact that the bridge is free and open for walking, practical for children and elderly, well-lit at night, and aesthetically pleasing (good for photography). Aside from that, visitors were satisfied with reasonable prices and hospitality of local people, as well as for the fact that there are restaurants nearby the river where they can enjoy the view and relax. The vast majority pointed out that a boat ride on the river Drina should not be missed and recommended that the bridge is worth

visiting. All these codes represent positive image and advantages of the destination. Some reviewers commented in relation to these as follows:

- “If you have time, take a boat ride around the river – very relaxing and scenic. Worth the drive from Sarajevo or Belgrade.”
- “Its architectural beauty and history that lies within its fundamentals will leave you breathless. But you should see it for yourself, and you’ll realize how words cannot describe how much this bridge is amazing. Simply, don’t miss this place!”

Concerning disadvantages, negative codes which referred to negative image included the following: no English translation, no English language signs, lack of some writings and tables with information about history of the bridge or town, souvenir sellers on the bridge. Contrary to *must see* comments above, two visitors stated that there is not much to see there:

- “Not much to see though and, unless Višegrad is somewhere along your way, it is not worth a special trip.”
- “Quite picturesque but that is about all. Still, it is worth a quick visit.”

Other visitation details such as duration of stay and decision making suggest that Višegrad is a good stopping point for travelers:

- “I went to see this bridge as part of a day tour and I must say it is spectacular.”
- “Yesterday we (my wife and I) have returned from a two days trip to Višegrad.”
- “Looking for a midpoint stopover on the wild nerve-racking ride from Dubrovnik to Belgrade, we picked out Višegrad. What a fortuitous choice.”
- “If you are planning to go from Sarajevo to Belgrade or the other way plan your road trip via Višegrad.”

From here we can conclude that Višegrad has a favorable geographic location, as it is located on the road that connects cities in three different countries on the Balkan Peninsula, making it a good destination for short visit (couple of hours to one-two day stay). It is also situated near the border with Serbia, which a few reviewers referred to as a separate code such as: “From here you can go very easy to Serbia” (TripAdvisor, 2022). For DMOs this is important information. As one of the marketing and

branding strategies of literary destination, Hoppen; Brown *et al.* (2014) suggest collaborative product and experiential development. They acknowledge that the collaborative opportunities for destinations via tourist routes, trails or clusters are significant in broadening destination market appeal, countering seasonality and attracting new markets (Hoppen; Brown *et al.*, 2014: 44). The routes oscillate between regional, supra-regional or international scope, and involve places, landscapes and attractions related to the writer. It is up to the tourist to decide whether to travel independently or on the basis of a tourist package (Carvalho & Batista, 2015, cited by Anjo; Sousa *et al.*, 2021: 60). The ability to connect places through literary figures has already been proved possible, not just in the United Kingdom where literary tourism is well established, but in some other countries as well. For example, The Slovene Writers’ Path is a project of the Slovene Writers’ Association which leads across the entire Slovenia connecting the birthplaces and homes of Slovenian writers and poets, representing the country’s literary heritage (Potočnik Topler, 2016: 131).

When it comes to Ivo Andrić, he had lived and created his work across different countries leaving his “literary traces” both in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. This creates an opportunity for destination collaboration on a regional level via a literary heritage trail. It is important to note that something similar has never been done before, as literary heritage remains an underdeveloped potential in these two countries. However, the present study has proved that there exists a demand for literary tourism experience, as the novel plays an important part in the formation of tourist image of Višegrad bridge and surrounding waterscape. A literary itinerary is not only about listing literary places, but also about aggregating other elements as forms of expression present in the cultural heritage, or the suggestion of performing leisure activities or recreation (Quinteiro & Baleiro, 2017, cited by Anjo; Sousa *et al.*, 2021: 61), and Višegrad has shown to have both exceptional and general qualities of a literary place, as proposed by Herbert (2001: 315). In addition to exceptional qualities (literary connection with the author and literary work setting), more general qualities that promote the attractiveness of Višegrad are the fact that it is a stopping point along a more general tourism itinerary due to its geographically convenient location (Hoppen; Brown *et al.*, 2014: 43), waterscape of river Drina, surrounding green hills, historical value and cultural attractions. Therefore, existing exceptional and general qualities of Višegrad form the image of a place that can be exploited for greater promotion of literary and other local heritage.

5. Conclusion

The study and analysis of landscape and its intangible connotation is crucial when generating a proposal for literary tourism (Arcos-Pumarola; Osácar Marzal *et al.*, 2018: 178). The findings of this research suggest that the literary landscape of *The bridge on the Drina* adds symbolic layers to the Mehmed Paša Sokolović Bridge and its surrounding waterscape, therefore creating a new perspective on the destination. As previously noted by Schiavone and Reijnders (2020: 13), through the process of placemaking, fiction eventually becomes part of the socially constructed core of the place, which is seen in the example of Višegrad bridge, where storytelling, tourism and waterscape are interwoven. Through deep content analysis of TripAdvisor data, it was confirmed that the value of the bridge as a historical monument (material) and as a setting for the novel (imagined) coexist in the formation of the tourist image. By blurring the lines between history and fiction, material and imagined, place is being transformed in almost the same way as in the novel itself reality and imagination inextricably mingle when it comes to tales surrounding the existence of the bridge. This result is in line with previous research (Mansfield, 2018: 13) where it has been shown that the literary text can contribute to place-making.

This research has given the insight into visitors' needs, motivations and values, the information that could be used by DMOs for development and marketing strategies. Through his life and work, Andrić granted Višegrad a literary connection which is present on a website of tourist organization of Višegrad as part of destination's image. Specifically, a 90-minute walking tour around the town includes the bridge over river Drina, Ivo Andrić monument, hotel of Lotika (described in the novel), Memorial classroom of Ivo Andrić, as well as his childhood house, which are all sites in association with the famous writer. Here will be suggested more ways in which the destination can use its benefits to create a tourist offer that would make experience enjoyable for literary tourists and literary pilgrims in particular. For example, creating a virtual literary map could help literary enthusiasts make their own travel plans; inclusion of literary places in road maps and guidebooks; design of a mobile literary application that would provide background information on key locations of the novel and the writer (similarly to Spot-lit project); and potential creation of a literary heritage trail through regional collaboration. However, mentioned disadvantages such as lack of writings and information in the English language should previously be fixed. Despite many benefits that literary tourism could bring, e.g. literature

heritage and literacy promotion being only part of, it remains an unexplored research field in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, hence why academic focus in the future should be more on it. By promoting local writers and their work, destinations in these countries can be distinguished on the basis of their own unique literary heritage that tourists can experience only there and nowhere else.

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