

The Topos of “Monastirya” – Lost in the Past or Having a Chance in the Present (Based on Materials from the Region of Sliven)

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(Summary)

The word “monastirya” is not just a dialect variant, meaning a place (an old place), relative to the knowledge of a monastery that existed or still exists. It has a generalizing emotionally-assessing aspect, regarding the place and the function of the religious Christian monastery in the local memory. The stress in it is the statement that these are monasteries from the age of the Bulgarian kingdom.

The topos “monastirya” dynamically produces the process of the ethnic and religious identification and self-identification on the grounds of a particular cult. In this same sense, there is also a variant of designation not only of Christianity. Even places, related to the Islam and most often – tekkes – are also referred to as monasteries.

The cult has specific dynamics in time and grows with numerous legends and traditions. They motivate its vitality in the past by the particular character of its realization in sites that have really existed and which, in many cases, have been obliterated in the real space. Nevertheless, even today they still have their place and vitality namely as knowledge.

The information that has been preserved and the local knowledge about the Little Sliven Holy Mountain confirm the place and function of the topos “monastirya” in the cultural space. Today, it is the vitality of this knowledge that lies at the root of re-creation of sites which have once existed.

Keywords: topos; “monastirya”; local meaning; identity; cult; biography of places; re-creation

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