

**TRANSFORMATION OF A RELIGIOUS SITE: THE  
ROCK-CUT CHURCH OF ST. PETKA IN THE TOWN OF  
TRAN BETWEEN RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AND TOURIST ATTRACTION**

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Abstract

Focus of research interest is the rock-cut Church of St. Petka located in the town of Tran, near the Bulgarian-Serbian border. This religious site is related to a strong and vigorous local worship of the well-known in a wide Balkan perspective St. Paraskevi Petka. The cult is supported by an interesting local legend according to which St. Petka has lived in that same small cave in which today the church is situated. Because of this St. Petka is considered patron saint of Tran and its inhabitants. The religious site and the specific cult of St. Petka in the past, as well as nowadays, play an important role in structuring the religious life and constructing the identity of the local community. Proceeding from the historical preposition and formation of St. Petka's cult in the region, the article aims to examine some present characteristics of the development and functioning of the rock-cut Church of St. Petka as a site of worship, as well as to study the changes which came during the last two decades when the religious site was recognized as cultural heritage and resource for development of local tourist product in the wide context of local sustainable development.