

# THEORY AND HISTORY OF CULTURE



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Original article



## Methodological Aspects of Resource Assessment in the Formation of Archaeological Tours in the Rostov Region

Alisa V Miroshnichenko, Vadim S Makarenko

Don State Technical University, 1, Gagarin Square, Rostov-on-Don, Russian Federation

✉ [vadim251@yandex.ru](mailto:vadim251@yandex.ru)

### Abstract

**Introduction.** The article investigates the issues of resource assessment methodology in the formation of archaeological tours. This issue is relevant in connection with the reorientation of the Russian Federation to the development of domestic tourism, which implies the rational use of tourist resources.

**Materials and methods.** The scientific basis of the developed methods of assessment of tourist and recreational resources and the state of archaeological sites, in particular in the regional aspect, is analyzed. Based on the analysis, the author's methodology for assessing the possibility of involvement of archaeological sites in tourism is presented.

**Results.** As the results of the study, the methodology for assessing the possibility of involvement of archaeological sites in the program of tourist routes according to five parameters — accessibility, infrastructure development, holding events, the availability of guided tours, and public activity — is presented. The developed methodology is adapted on the resources of the Rostov region, in particular, 15 archaeological sites were evaluated. According to the results of the assessment, archaeological sites were typified into three categories of the degree of possibility of their involvement in tourism and recreation. The assessment also allowed to single out potential sites from the position of priority of their inclusion in the archaeological routes being developed.

**Discussion and conclusion.** Possible vectors of further scientific and practical development of the presented methodology through the expansion of assessment parameters and adaptation in other subjects of the Russian Federation have been identified. It is rational to use the methodology not only for a one-time “cut” of the state of archaeological sites, but also to record the dynamics of their development. The conclusions of the presented article include the uniqueness of the methodology, which is at the intersection of assessing the state of tourist and recreational resources and archaeological sites, the development of evaluation parameters, the practical application of the methodology for the evaluation of fifteen sites of the Rostov region and the determination of vectors of its further development.

**Keywords:** archaeological sites, tourist resources, assessment methodology, assessment parameters, criteria of the degree of involvement of sites in tourism

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## Методологические аспекты оценки ресурсов при формировании археологических туров Ростовской области

А.В. Мирошниченко, В.С. Макаренко ✉

Донской государственный технический университет, Российская Федерация, Ростов-на-Дону, пл. Гагарина, 1

✉ [vadim251@yandex.ru](mailto:vadim251@yandex.ru)

### Аннотация

**Введение.** Исследуются вопросы методики оценки ресурсов при формировании археологических туров. Данный вопрос является актуальным в связи с переориентацией Российской Федерации на развитие внутреннего туризма, подразумевающей рациональное использование туристских ресурсов.

**Материалы и методы.** Анализируется научная база разработанных методик оценки туристско-рекреационных ресурсов и состояния археологических объектов, в частности, в региональном аспекте. На основе анализа представлена авторская методика оценки возможности вовлеченности археологических объектов в туристскую сферу.

**Результаты исследования.** В качестве результатов исследования представлена методика оценки возможности вовлеченности археологических памятников в программу турмаршрутов по пяти параметрам — доступность, развитость инфраструктуры, проведение событийных мероприятий, наличие реализуемых экскурсий, публичная активность. Разработанная методика адаптирована на ресурсах Ростовской области, в частности, было оценено 15 археологических объектов. По итогам оценки произведена типизация археологических памятников по трем категориям степени возможности их вовлеченности в туристско-рекреационную сферу. Также оценка позволила вычленить потенциальные объекты с позиций приоритетность их включения в разрабатываемые археологические маршруты.

**Обсуждение и заключение.** Определены возможные векторы дальнейшего научно-практического развития представленной методики за счет расширения параметров оценки и адаптации в других субъектах Российской Федерации. Рационально использование методики не только для единовременного «среза» состояния археологических объектов, но и для фиксации динамики их развития. К выводам по итогам представленной статьи отнесены уникальность методики, находящейся на стыке оценивания состояния туристско-рекреационных ресурсов и археологических объектов, разработка параметров оценки, практическое применение методики для оценки пятнадцати объектов Ростовской области и определения векторов ее дальнейшего развития.

**Ключевые слова:** археологические объекты, туристские ресурсы, методика оценки, параметры оценки, критерии степени вовлеченности объектов в туристскую сферу

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**Introduction.** Currently, the issues of intensifying the development of domestic tourism in the Russian Federation are significantly actualized. In particular, the reorientation to domestic tourism is due to the decline in the intensity of outbound tourism in Russia, due to the political and economic situation. These issues are also reflected in the tasks of the “Strategy of tourism development in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2035”, one of which is “the formation and development of the tourist product of the Russian Federation, taking into account the natural, cultural, ethnic diversity of Russian regions” [14].

To solve this problem, it is necessary to apply a rational approach to the use of tourist resources of cultural and historical nature in the subjects of the Russian Federation. The optimal involvement of regional resources in tourism activities is impossible without an adequate assessment of their condition, since only those resources that can be fully utilized should serve as objects of tourist routes.

In this regard, the task of developing a methodology for assessing certain types of cultural and historical resources is actualized. It seems that of particular interest and importance are archaeological resources as objects that, due to their significant age and location (initially they are often located underground or at the bottom of the water surface) are in different physical condition and stage of development.

The scientific research was based on the existing works in the field of methodology of tourism and recreational resources assessment, as well as regional approaches to the study of the resource base of the tourism industry. The basic

basis was provided by the research of E. O. Ushakova devoted to the methodology of comprehensive assessment of regional tourism resources [15]. The methodological approach to the assessment of tourist and recreational resources of individual subjects of the Russian Federation, presented in the work of I. E. Polyakova, R. M. Ivanova and O. V. Skrobotova analyzing the Lipetsk Oblast [13], was considered as a key approach to the study of specific regions.

The experience of developing a methodology for assessing tourist resources of cultural and historical nature is represented by the works of A.A. Fedulin, L.V. Zgonnik, O.Y. Lebedeva, L.L. Dukhovna, S.V. Ilkevich [2]. In turn, V.V. Minenkova and A.E. Potapova [11] conduct an assessment of regional areas in the field of cultural and historical tourism potential of Krasnodar Krai, which takes into account the recognizability of the object, the organization of excursion display, as well as the preservation of these objects.

Foreign experience is represented, in particular, by the studies of N. Grdzhelishvili and L. Kvaratskhelia, who studied the issues of tourism resources assessment on the example of Georgia [3], as well as D. Navarro, who analyzed the problem of resource assessment in Latin America [6] and T. Rahayuningsih, E. Munasib and L. Pravsetio, who studied the territory of Indonesia [7].

At the regional level, studies were conducted both at the integral level of the hospitality industry [4] and from the perspective of the tourism [8], service [5] and museum spheres [1]. Variants of the methodology for evaluating archaeological sites were proposed in the works by D. V. Gruzdev, I. V. Zhurbin [9] and Y. Y. Kurashov [10].

It is worth noting that the analysis of studies related to the development of methodologies has shown that there is also no clearly developed point system of assessment, with the help of which it would be possible to quantitatively and qualitatively assess not only archaeological sites in tourism, but also the very tourist potential of the territory.

Having analyzed the methodologies of evaluation of tourist and recreational resources of archaeological orientation, we can conclude that in scientific practice these methods are carried out separately. In this regard, this article proposes a method that includes an integrated approach to determining the level of attractiveness of archaeological sites for the realization of cultural and historical tourist routes on them.

**Materials and methods.** Archaeological tourism resources are specific sites that may be several millennia old. Also, since they often become available to tourists only as a result of research excavations, it is not always possible to fully demonstrate them. In this regard, it is important to have a methodology for their evaluation from different possible perspectives.

In the presented scientific study, a methodology for the evaluation of archaeological sites as resources for tourism is proposed. The methodology is adapted on the sites of the Rostov region, but can serve as a “key” for similar analysis in other subjects of the Russian Federation. To carry out the assessment, a register of the presented archaeological heritage sites of the Rostov region was compiled, the most infrastructurally secured (availability of access roads, arranged territory, etc.) were selected.

The method of comparative analysis was used to compare and rank the individual sites according to the conducted evaluation, as a result of which the most promising sites for use in the archaeological tour routes of the region were selected.

**Results.** On the basis of the existing methodologies for assessing tourism and recreational resources and archaeological sites, a methodology for assessing archaeological tourist resources from the position of their use in tourist routes was proposed. Five indicators were chosen as evaluation parameters, the evaluation parameters of which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Developed methodology for the assessment of archaeological sites  
in the tourism and recreational sphere

Indicator	Assessment parameters
1. Object accessibility	3 — availability of an asphalted road near the object, as well as the possibility to reach it by at least 2 modes of transportation
	2 — availability of an asphalted road near the object, as well as the possibility to reach it by at least 1 mode of transportation
	1 — availability of an asphalted road in the vicinity
	0 — there is no asphalted road near the facility.

Continuation of table 1

Indicator	Assessment parameters
2. Infrastructure provision	3 — availability of accommodation and catering services on the territory adjacent to the facility
	2 — availability of accommodation and catering services at a distance of no more than 10 km from the facility
	1 — availability of accommodation and catering services at a distance of no more than 20 km from the fa
	0 — absence of accommodation and catering services at a distance of less than 20 km from the facility
3. Organization of events	3 — at least 2 events per year
	2 — one annual event
	1 — holding a one-off event that is not of an annual nature
	0 — no events
4. Availability of excursions	3 — more than 3 excursion programs
	2 — 2–3 excursion programs
	1 — 1 excursion programs
	0 — no excursion programs
5. Public activity	3 — social media, website and video hosting presence (all three)
	2 — availability of two of the above positions
	1 — availability of one of the above positions
	0 — no public activity

Table 2

Evaluation of the Rostov region archaeological sites as tourist and recreational destinations

Archaeological site	Average score	Category of the possibility degree for using in tourism
Ethno-archaeological complex “The Lost World”	2.8	Good
Tanais Archaeological Reserve Museum	2.6	
Azov Fortress	2.2	
Annenskaya fortress	1.6	Satisfactory
Temernitskoe ancient settlement	1.4	
Kobyakovo ancient settlement	1.2	
Liventsovsky fortress	1.2	
Semikarakorsk fortress	1.2	
Sambek settlement	1.2	
Karataev settlement	1.2	
Elizavetinsky settlement	1.0	Unsatisfactory
Rakushechni Yar	0.6	
Crimean ancient settlement	0.6	
Kurgan group “5 brothers”	0.4	
Yagodinka II	0.2	

As an adaptation of the presented methodology, the archaeological sites of Rostov region were evaluated. It was done according to the five presented positions, after which an average score was made for it. As a result, all sites were divided by the degree of possibility of their use in tourism activities: “good” (2–3 points), “satisfactory” (1–2 points) and “unsatisfactory” (0–1 points).

The objects for assessment were selected according to the criteria of the possibility of conducting tourist and excursion programs on their territory (presence of the object or its part on the surface, favorable landscape, availability of hiking trails leading to the object).

As a result, 15 objects located in different parts of the Rostov region were evaluated. The integral assessment for each site is presented in Table 2.

The analysis of the assessment results allows us to draw a number of conclusions. It is noteworthy that only three sites, the ethno-archaeological complex “Lost World”, the Tanais Archaeological Reserve Museum and the Azov Fortress received the category “good” of the possibility degree of using archaeological resources in tourism activities. These sites are characterized by a developed infrastructure and regularly held events, such as “Tanais Day”, “Reconstruction of the Azov siege”, festivals dedicated to Slavic holidays and others [12]. It should be noted the fact that all the objects of this evaluation category are located within, or not far from the Rostov, which leads to a significant attendance by the residents of the region and motivation for further expansion of events and existing infrastructure facilities. It is the objects of this area that should be rationally involved in the archaeological tours being developed.

Archaeological sites rated as “satisfactory” are characterized primarily by their territorial accessibility and location in areas with relatively well-developed infrastructure. Nevertheless, in terms of their public activity, they are significantly inferior to the first category sites, in particular, due to the lack of official websites and communities in social networks. Excursion programs are conducted on the territory of some of these sites (Elizavetinsky ancient settlement, Anninskaya fortress), which, however, have not reached the level of regular tourist routes. It is assumed that with a proper vector of development, these archaeological sites can eventually reach the parameters corresponding to the assessment of good, because they are located near settlements with developed infrastructure and have significant archaeological value.

The “unsatisfactory” rating was given to the sites that have extremely low indicators in all parameters. On the territory of these sites there is almost completely no tourist infrastructure, no regular events of event character are held, and also a high degree of public activity and availability of permanent excursion programs are not recorded. Nevertheless, these sites have significant potential for use in tourism activities, provided that the adjacent territory is developed, possible creation of museum complexes and subsequent involvement in the tourist and excursion sphere of the Rostov region.

It is assumed that the presented methodology can be used not only for «cross-sectional» assessment of the state of archaeological sites as tourist resources, but also for dynamics’ monitoring of the archaeological monuments’ development, recording changes in their condition. Also, the assessment methodology can be considered as a “key”, so there is a possibility of its adaptation in other subjects of the Russian Federation.

Further development and improvement of the assessment methodology is possible, both by including additional parameters (for example, criteria of the physical condition of objects) and by taking it to a higher hierarchical level, in which the objects of assessment can be administrative districts as a whole.

**Discussion and conclusion.** The conducted research allows us to draw a number of conclusions:

1. Currently, the research literature presents several methods for assessing tourism and recreational resources, including cultural and historical resources, as well as methods for assessing the condition of archaeological sites. Nevertheless, there is no unified methodology for assessing archaeological monuments from the perspective of their use in tourism.

2. The presented methodology for assessing the possibility degree of archaeological sites’ involvement in tourism includes five parameters, such as accessibility, infrastructure development, holding events, availability of realized excursions, public activity. Each of the parameters is evaluated on a four-point scale, as a result of which the objects are divided into three categories: “good”, “satisfactory”, “unsatisfactory”.

3. The assessment of fifteen archaeological sites in Rostov region allowed us to typify them according to the possibility of their involvement in tourism. As a result, three sites — ethno-archaeological complex “Lost World”, the Tanais Archaeological Reserve Museum and the Azov Fortress received the highest rating. These objects are distinguished by well-developed tourist infrastructure, regularly held events and excursion programs, as well as a high degree of public activity. It is assumed that these sites should be primarily involved in the archaeological tours to be developed.

The presented methodology can be further developed through the expansion of evaluation parameters, as well as through its application to archaeological sites of other subjects of the Russian Federation. In addition, the use of this methodology is possible to fix the dynamic parameters of the development of objects.

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*About the Authors:*

**Miroshnichenko Alice Vitalievna**, student, Don State Technical University (1, Gagarin Square, Rostov-on-Don, 344000, RF), [ORCID](#), [alisa\\_miroshnichenko@list.ru](mailto:alisa_miroshnichenko@list.ru)

**Макаренко Вадим Сергеевич**, Ph.D. in Geography, Associate Professor of the Department of Service, Tourism and Hospitality Industry, Don State Technical University (1, Gagarin Square, Rostov-on-Don, 344000, RF), [ORCID](#), [vadim251@yandex.ru](mailto:vadim251@yandex.ru)

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*Об авторах:*

**Мирошниченко Алиса Витальевна**, студент, Донской государственной технической университет (344000, РФ, г. Ростов-на-Дону, пл. Гагарина, 1), [ORCID](#), [alisa\\_miroshnichenko@list.ru](mailto:alisa_miroshnichenko@list.ru)

**Макаренко Вадим Сергеевич**, кандидат географических наук, доцент кафедры сервиса, туризма и индустрии гостеприимства, Донской государственной технической университет (344000, РФ, г. Ростов-на-Дону, пл. Гагарина, 1), [ORCID](#), [vadim251@yandex.ru](mailto:vadim251@yandex.ru)

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