

## RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL TOURISM AND THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

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***Abstract:** The objective of this study is the involvement of cultural tourism and especially religious tourism in developing the educational phenomenon among the population and the development of tourist flows. In recent years in Romania, religious tourism gets an outstanding spreading, being thus targeted specific geographical areas which possess a cultural-religious heritage with particular historical value. One can speak of such a religious tourism as a background, represented by the places of worship- on the first hand, and - on the other hand, by tourists, by the tourist flows which develop them, within certain periods of the year. The research has been based on economic data on data obtained from the consultation of some representative samples: tourists and resident population, analyzed by specific statistical methods. The partial results obtained underline the important impact of this idea of development, which may contribute to the increase of the complexity of these territorial functional systems, where this type of tourism might be implemented. Cultural tourism based on cultural-religious heritage and traditional values contribute to the appearance of the economic multiplication effects. The development of the tourist and cultural tourism can mean creating jobs within a period of economic crisis and relative social crisis. It can also be considered a factor in the popularization of cultural identity, which plays an important role in promoting cultural diversity.*

***Keywords:** cultural identity, culture, economic development, religion, tourism*

### **Introduction**

The accomplishment of a tourist route in a geographic space with a great historical value represented by cultural objectives is a complex activity that can involve a number of elements, so that its finality should be one of the most beneficial possibly, for all parties involved. (Garcia-Magarino I., 2015). On this purpose one can conduct a number of analyses, based on the study of groups of tourists on the specialist human component that has to accompany the group of tourists, and, last but not least, on a proper structuring of the kind of targets that will be visited. It is therefore necessary to be prepared several alternative

versions of tourist routes, so that there could be appealed the optimal variant for each group of tourists at a time. An example may constitute the choice of the transport modality from one objective to another, as there is a correlation in communication between tourists and the organizers, or it could just be a decision of the tourists (Le-Klahn, et. al., 2015). The analysis of the distances between the objectives and the time dedicated to each objective sets the total duration of the urban route made on the purpose of tourism.

A tourist route taking place in an area with historical value should be done by keeping in mind the values of the cultural heritage, so as to be a presentation in time of the objectives, so that there may be a spatial and temporal fluency. Making an analysis on the historical periods that have imprinted their mark on a geographical space is as though it would be carried out the construction of a local cultural identity, as Rodriguez specifies (Rodriguez R.G., 2015).

Each period has made its mark in a positive or negative sense on various constructions with distinct architectural and on some cultural values that have lost some of their consistency, with there have been implemented some programs oriented towards the destruction of the cultural values promoted or supported in a given period. Tourism represents today an alternative to economic recovery possibilities of any geographical space. This is exactly what must be understood and promoted through viable strategies (Gant A.C., 2015).

## Methods

The conduct of the study aims at creating economic benefits within the sector of tourism, through the proposed subject and through the public claim of the cultural identity of the region of southern landscapes. (Teodorescu, 2013). For this study there are proposed for analysis after the project: "THE IDENTITY OF THE SPECIFIC CULTURAL LANDSCAPES OF ROMANIA IN RELATION TO THE EUROPEAN IDENTITY", on the first hand, facilitating access to the cultural and religious values existing on the Romanian territory in the southern sub-Carpathian area, and on the other hand, offering possibilities or alternatives of work and, implicitly, of gaining material benefits by all the people practicing any tourist and commercial activity, or any other categories of activities. (Teodorescu et al., 2011) in specific conditions and circumstances of economic crisis. Thus, for this study there can be seen the partial results of the implementation of some tourist activities in this geographical space, each with a cultural landscape particularized by specific architecture and historical value. To these main activities there is added the local traditional art practiced by the local people.

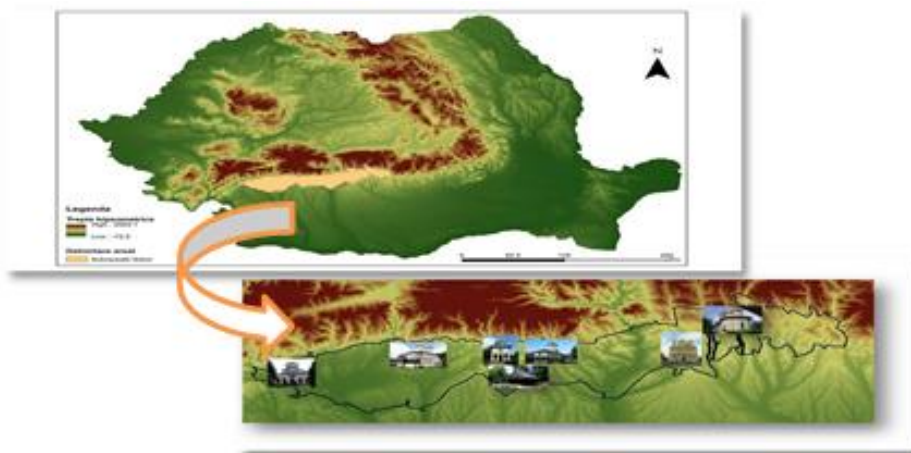
There is also previewed in the analysis of the tourist group, the evolution of their perception in relation to the objectives set The shortcomings of the

application of this method consist of the medium- and long-term possibilities of interaction. The educational tourism in this case is a tool meant to stimulate observation and perception as well as interpersonal relationships, and the analysis segment chosen- the religious culture, is very suitable.

The field data can be obtained through a questionnaire, which should highlight some of the issues that could lead to difference of opinions regarding the cultural, historical and religious architecture values, on the one hand, and the possible income obtained from the tourist activities, on the other hand. Creating a tourist route starts from the idea that tourists want to discover new elements of culture and to connect with those who want to implement such tourism. The trail has a diversified activity, including both cultural activity in itself, and also trade activity or traditional commercial education, thus valorizing the local people's activities, each being focused on certain activities. So that we can say, from the data collected, that those interested in the development of such tourism as a business or as a way of working, are the locals. For tracking the activity, or the perception of their involvement in the productive activity, and the reactions regarding the inter-social relationship, it is necessary to apply direct investigations. The development of this economic branch has been designed as a real modality of gaining, of involvement of the population in the local economy. This way they can work, they can earn a living without having to get additional education.

### **Making the Cultural and Tourist Pathways between the Representative Worship Places on the Frameworko of the Religious and Cultural Landscape of the Subcarpathians between Tismana and Dambovita**

The geographical space located between Dambovita and Tismana - has been considered, since the ancient times, as favorable to human habitation (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1. Locating the main churches of Dambovita and Tismana**

The area has a rich and complex history, which has been developed over several historical stages, which shows a remarkable evolution. Thus, these different historical stages have imprinted their mark upon the territory by the existence of religious buildings.

The Getic Subcarpathians presented, in most part, climatic and economic conditions which are favorable to a demographic dynamic ascendant in time, situation that plain/ field areas did not encounter at the same extent. There should be remarked the fact that this situation was kept in Walachia until late sixteenth century. The Subcarpathian region settlements were much more numerous and more frequent compared to those in the lowlands. The area was considered favorable, especially for economic reasons, due to trade, easy communication both to the higher unit and to the plains. In addition, it is known that the main occupation of the inhabitants was livestock breeding, while pastures of the Carpathian and Subcarpathian area were considered true fortune.

Also, the soil - suitable for grape-vine cultivation, fruit- trees and various plant cultures, has been one of the main causes populating these areas since ancient times.

In this area of the Subcarpathians, cultural and religious edifices "compete" in beauty, each having a fundamental role for the Romanian people. In hard times, the Romanian rulers amounted to places of worship dedicated to thank Divinity, but also to keep alive the faith, hope and culture- necessary for a nation to exist.

Thus, we identified as emblematic in highlighting cultural elements, the following places of worship: Horezu Monastery - UNESCO World Heritage, the jewel of Muntenia, namely the famous Curtea de Arges Monastery, Govora Monastery, Surpatele Monastery, the monastery called Manastirea Dintr-un Lemn and Tismana Monastery.

The area under discussion can be easily considered a privileged one, in which natural environment elements "work together" to create the most beautiful scenery, while the historical sources, by the traces that still witness it, make the depression area of the Subcarpathians to be one of reference, emblematic for our people.

Even if, during this study, we have analyzed the architectural elements discovered at Horezu Monastery (Figure 2) and Arges Monastery (Figure 3), before analyzing the ones belonging to the places of worship already mentioned, it is necessary to complete the picture of these architectural jewels- as they have often been called, with information of historical and cultural nature.

## Results and Discussions

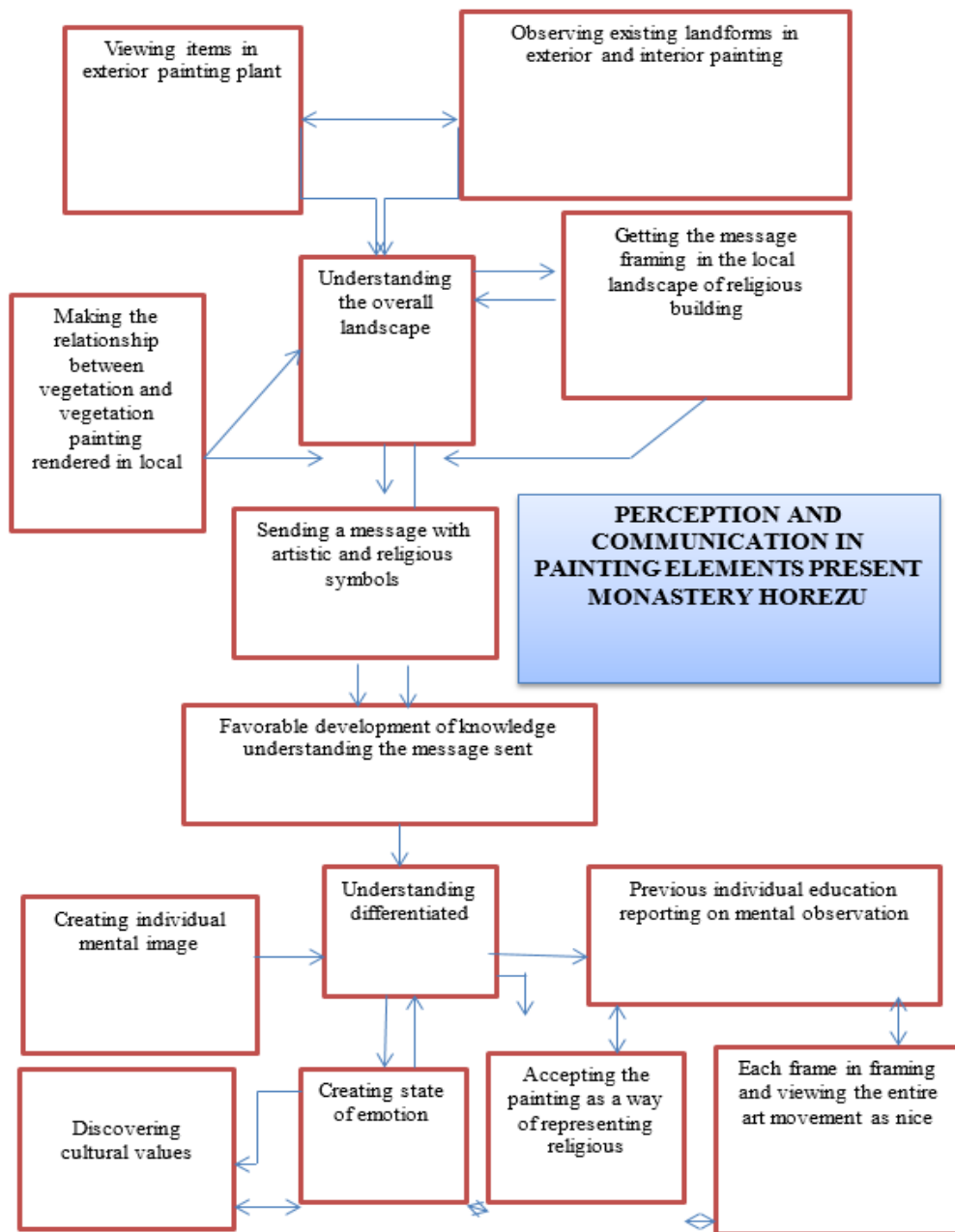
The Getic Subcarpathians geographical area located between the rivers of Dambovită and Tismana has always constituted a favorable space for human habitation, which is why a number of vestiges come to testify it. The area analyzed is a fundamental value in terms of keeping alive the Romanian spirituality in times of ordeal for the Romanian people. In these periods - often tragic- local communities have shown great strength and unity, developing incontestable cultural jewels, as well as sacred places, in which their most valuable riches- language, crafts teaching- could be perpetual.

The space for study replete with places dedicated to the Supreme Deity, but from them we have selected seven monasteries - Negru Voda, Arges, Govora, Surpatele, the monastery called Manastirea Dintr-un Lemn, Hurezi, Tismana - (on the eastern- western alignment), where the natural environment elements "work together" to create the most beautiful view, along with historical sources and the remaining vestiges witnessing it, making this space to be a reference, emblematic one for the development of our people.

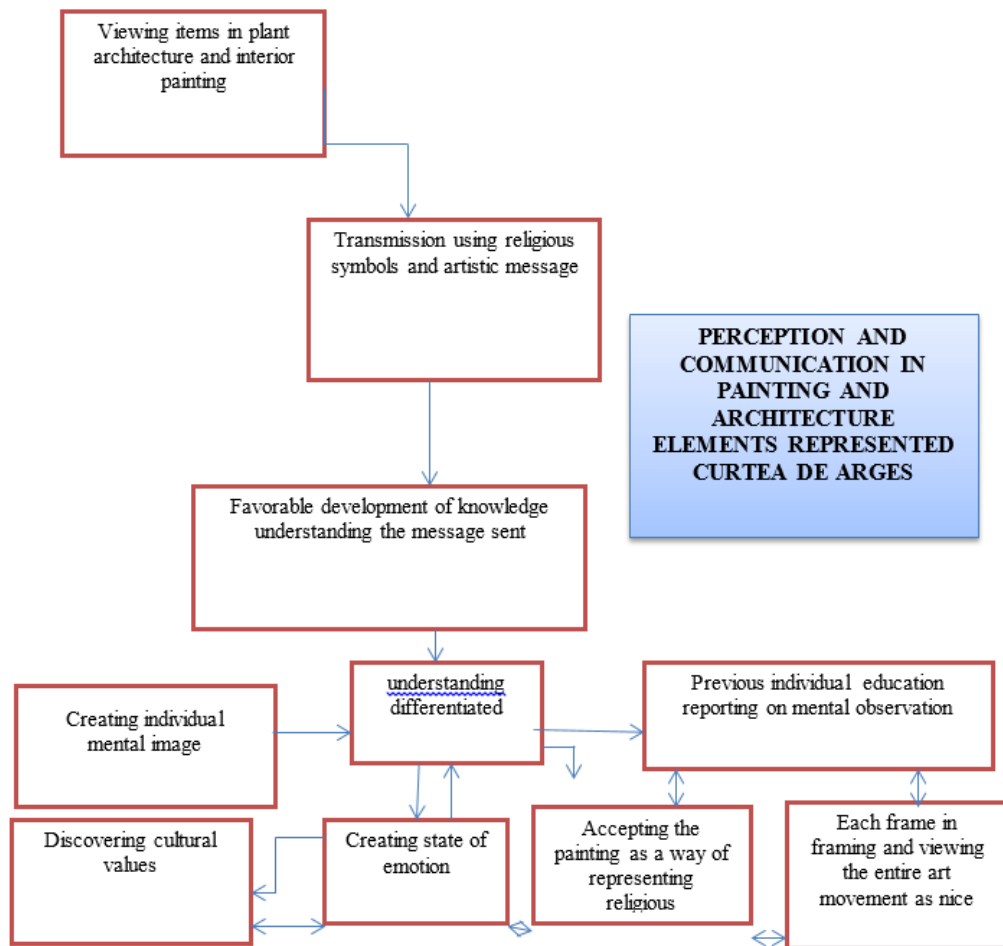
Each of the places of worship analyzed present unique features, as well as numerous artistic symbols designed to create extra beauty. Whether we refer to the authentic elements of architecture in the Brancoveanu style – an illustrative example in this respect being Horezu Monastery, under the protection of UNESCO World Heritage Site, or those belonging to the Byzantine architecture and other "confluence currents" as there is the imposing Monastery of Curtea de Arges, they represent complex attractions of great importance for tourism development in the studied area.

More than that, the continual development of the international tourism and the increase of interest for "escaping" from the great crowded areas towards natural spaces, the desire to acquire the equilibrium between mind, body and soul, the greater and greater need of relaxation and quietness represent true opportunities for the development of tourist pilgrimage within the Getic Subcarpathian space (Dincă I., et al, 2011). Thus, the cultural-religious routes could become the best alternative for tourists, as well as for economical and infrastructural development in these areas.

In conclusion to the questionnaire completed, the interviewed persons have shown their wish to discover the worship places from scientific perspective. The youth finding themselves during the educational formation process, the people of different religion or nationality, the persons specialized on various fields are being interested in discovering the cultural-historical message (Teodorescu Camelia, Porojan Mihaela, 2013).



Once the historic information is properly acknowledged, one can achieve historical dating, can also understand the techniques of construction and spot the particular and spectacular elements, and may realize the importance of the artistic performance. On this background, at maturity age, there may be added the biblical message, and, therefore, a complete picture of the place of worship can be made.



As there could be observed during the field activity fulfillment dedicated to this study completion, the elements belonging to these worship places, the grandeur of the construction, the multitude of symbols, the architectural details, the authentic motives, the unique character of the construction type (“dintr-un lemn”), the iconographic program, the crafting workshops, the museums, the social importance for the development of local communities – all these represent incontestable attractions for each person, no matter of their nationality and religion. But, in the pursuit of historic truth conformity with this information, as well as for making them attractive and compelling these requirements, there is the need to train specialized personnel- as the importance of having guides specialized on the cultural- historical value of the worship places, is an urgent necessity.

There are still situations when, without having certain information, the decrypting code for symbols is erroneously understood, inclusively the message of religious character.

## Conclusions

These activities have a double effect upon society in general and upon all tourists and the population of a certain area, where these objectives are present. On the other hand, it is necessary to implement some programs which favor knowledge of traditions and cultural knowledge of the populations within the Romanian space. No matter of age and social status, tourists are eager to know and understand. Knowledge and valorizing cultural landscape would mean a long term investment. Romanian cultural values expressed in all their forms, including religious one, are important tourist and educational sources. Culture and education are domains to work hand in hand and economy must come to support them by the mechanisms they need, having the corresponding benefits as consequence of proper and capable administration.

To conclude, religious edifices within the analyzed area of the Getic Subcarpathians possess all the necessary mechanisms in order to attract considerably many tourists whose confession may have anything in common with Christianity. Architectural styles, their manner of construction, the quality of materials used, the historical context and uniqueness generated by their intermingling, contribute to produce religious edifices that are well- rooted in tourists' collective memory, as veritable foundation consolidating Romanian specificity.

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