

## LITERARY WORK AND TOURISM “MOROMETII” AND THE POSSIBILITY OF SCHOOL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OR EDUCATIONAL TOURISM

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***Abstract:** Cultural tourism has always been an attraction for lovers of art, culture, knowledge or even education, but in recent it is booming, with many countries developing strategies to capitalize on cultural goals. From the earliest stages of history, cultural landmarks have been a major attraction for all generations. People have always been fascinated to discover what had existed before them and the events that had determined the reality of their times. This can only be understood by studying historical evidence, archeological sites, ancient relics, places of worship, historical monuments and all other testimonies left by our ancestors, as well as by visiting these cultural sites. The study aims to promote the traditions, customs, crafts and important events that took place in the geographical area called Talpă, located within Teleorman county. It is important to introduce the objectives that refer to a locality captured in a literary work. In this way students get in direct contact with the place where the action takes place, with the characters and objects the literary work refers to. The consolidation of the knowledge thus takes place much better. This study focuses on the literary work named “Morometii”, which is written by Marin Preda, which is being studied according to Romanian highschool curriculum. Equally, from a social and economic point of view, the aim is to promote the region and the specific attractions of this area, especially in terms of cultural and school tourism.*

***Keywords:** educational tourism, literary work, local culture, tourism promotion*

## INTRODUCTION

The cultural monuments include historical monuments and buildings, customs, traditions, beliefs, the monastic cultural landscape, art, architecture, ornaments, sculpture, painting, decorative arts, cultural events, traditional clothing, culinary and traditional art and many other elements. The objectives of a cultural nature are those that highlight this amount of elements, thus developing cultural tourism (Teodorescu, 2009).

The components of the anthropic tourist potential in Teleorman County are varied, from the cultural-historical, technical-economic to the socio-demographic ones and are found, with certain peculiarities, in the structure and in the definition of the tourist attraction and value in the territory.

The anthropic component is represented by the vestiges of the civilization that have succeeded each other on the Romanian territory. Thus, monuments and objects of secular or religious art, museums and museum collections, as well as elements of ethnography and folklore bear witness (Teodorescu et al., 2016).

These components are perceived as tourist attractions of great interest, with a cognitive, educational and culturally relevant role for all categories of tourists.

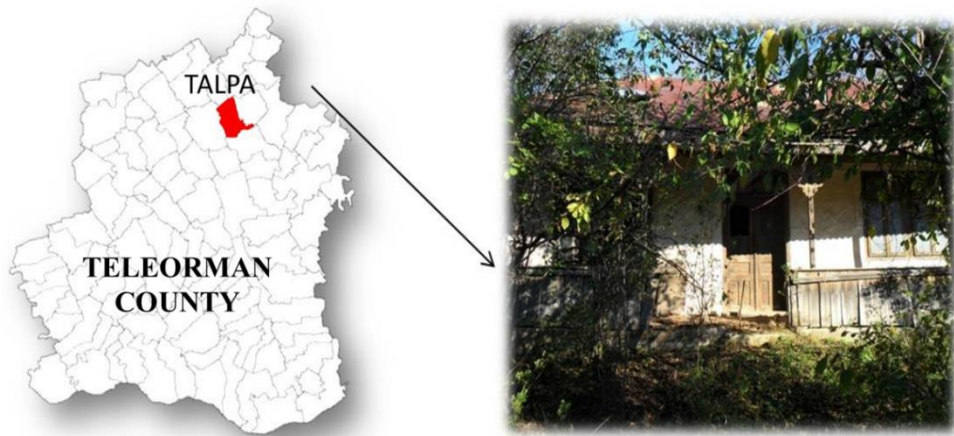
Of great cultural importance for the analyzed county is the fact that in Ciuperceni-Turnu Măgurele, there was discovered one of the oldest human vestiges and remains in the world. The whole area bears the traces of some vestiges belonging to the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, as well as dating since the Daco-Roman period (Florea, 2016).

Talpa commune is located in the Găvanu - Burdea plain in the north of Teleorman county, 45 km away from the county seat, Alexandria. The commune is guarded by the Clanița brook where there is an old forest with very thick trees. In the past, the people here had the main occupation of making “soles” for the construction of houses that at that time were made of beams. The name “Sole” comes from this distant concern of the people who used to live in this territory. At present, this profession is no longer practiced because the houses are no longer built that way. There are 990 households in Talpa.

The nearest National Road (DN) is 45 km away – known as “DN - Bucharest - Alexandria - Roșiori de Vede”. The districtual road known as DJ 506 and the one known as DJ 504 - Talpa - Trivale Moșteni pass both through the commune.

Talpa commune (fig. 1) is of special importance in terms of the development of school tourism, as the famous Romanian film (entitled exactly as the homonymous novel) “Moromeții” was shot here. Moreover,

in the area, in Siliștea Gumești village, there is also the memorial house of the writer Marin Preda.



**Fig. 1.** Location of Talpa commune within Teleorman county

## MARKETING OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to develop and consolidate domestic tourism, by creating promotional materials and by specific marketing activities. The aim is to develop the concept of cultural tourism and school tourism in the geographical area of Talpa and to increase the number of tourists and excursions in this area by promoting programs and projects centered on on tourism.

- Promoting the village where the film "Moromeții" was filmed, according to the book by the writer Marin Preda
- Increasing the degree of access and participation in area-specific activities
- Promoting diversity and preserving cultural identities:

*“Teleorman, an ethnographic area with deep resonances and dimensions in the history of our nation, preserves to this day testimonies of civilization and popular culture of deep authenticity, testimonies that have a great significance for knowing the characteristic being and features of the Romanian people [ ...] The population of Teleorman has created a vigorous and original culture, which by its essence and by its fundamental coordinates forms an organic and harmonious component of the Romanian popular culture.” (Cioara-Bâtca Maria, Bâtca V., - „Teleorman ethnographic area”). .)*

- Protecting and enhancing the cultural heritage of the analyzed development region, both tangible and intangible heritage
- Stimulating activities within local communities and bringing them closer to nature.

## LOCAL CULTURAL HERITAGE OF TALPA COMMUNE

The cultural treasure of Talpa is capitalized by the museums in the county, which organize permanent and temporary exhibitions, colloquia, symposia and other specific cultural events, but also by the activity of the County Center for Conservation and Promotion of Traditional Culture, which is concerned with revitalizing traditions, as well as winter and spring customs in Teleorman County.

The cultural portfolio of Talpa locality belongs to the most comprehensive range of such places, belonging to Teleorman county, and includes fields of handicrafts and folk customs, represented by various local artisans: folk craftsmen, manufacturers of folk instruments (whistle, horse, ocarina, bagpipes), wooden object manufacturers (spoons, cups, dowry boxes), as well as manufacturers of bone objects, besides other such picturesque occupations.

### *a. Rural architecture*

Along with other vestiges of popular culture, the maintenance to this day of a traditional way of living, deeply linked to the geographical environment and the production of material goods, allows us to highlight features which are specific to the ethnographic area of Teleorman.

The geographical relief and climate which are characteristic of the Roman Plain have obviously determined the type of housing developed horizontally, and the raw materials that people had at hand have also imposed the techniques and constructive solutions they have implemented throughout history (Teodorescu, 2009). In turn, the historical factor, correlated with the geographical one, have determined the constructive conception regarding the possibility of rebuilding the shelter, usually on the same hearth, whenever the unfavorable conditions damaged or destroyed it.

In the south of the area, having as northern boundary the villages of Slobozia, Mândră, Salcia, Buzescu, Nanov, the technique of building earthen walls beaten with the so-called “mai” (a kind of wooden hammer used for wood compression) was imposed, a technique that included several operations. On the chosen and cleaned place, the house used to rise to the

south and less frequently to the westside. The plan of the house was "tailored" to the material needs and possibilities of those who would live in it. Along the strings stretched between the stakes there used to be dug ditches of 80-100 cm width to a depth of 90 cm. The ditches used to be afterwards filled with successive layers of earth that would be beaten with corn until the foundation reached ground level. On the wooden poles there would sit the acacia sole of the porch, carved in three edges. Inside and outside the foundation wall there were placed the so-called "dulapi" (tree trunk wooden pillars used for sustainance and building resistance) - boards 5 cm thick and 30 cm wide. Every 2 meters, 5 m long pillars were tied to the ground next to the wooden pillars, which were tied together with ropes, in pairs (the pillar inside and the one outside the wall). Between these wooden pillars supported by the pillars/ columns that followed the contour of the foundation there were placed layers of earth that were beaten with the hammer (called "mai") until the wall reached a height of 30 cm (the width of the vertical pillows/ columns) and the operation is repeated on and on. As the wall rose, the ropes tightened, the supporting wooden columns of the wooden pillars approached, gradually reducing the width of the wall to 70-90 cm. At a height of 2 m, at the corners of the house there began to be placed "connecting levers", made of willow or mulberry, the thickness of a vine being of 80-100 cm length. These levers used to be placed in pairs on each wall, with their heads hanging on the corner. The operation of tying the corners of the house with levers is repeated at heights of 2.5-3 m (Szemkovics et al., 2020).

In the center of the area where the ground technique interfered with that of the cobweb, the "wall" became thinner (50-60 cm at the base and 40-45 cm at the top), and the levers were placed from the base to the top to strengthen construction.

### ***b. Decorative details***

The popular architecture in the area is not spectacular, as here the predominant note is given by the specificity of the development of horizontal constructions. The exterior decoration is not particularly rich either, as the artistic processing of the wood does not embrace particular aesthetic forms. That is why, in the traditional house, many of the decorative elements are in fact constructive elements, functionally justified. The concern for decoration has amplified over time, corresponding to the material power or resistance, the increase of the constructive experience, the local traditions, the raw materials that people had at hand and the increased living necessities.

The old houses are distinguished by a great sobriety and simplicity. What highlights the whole architectural composition is, first of all, the effect of shadow and light obtained by detaching the volumes in different planes. The woodwork of old houses bears the first signs of aesthetic concerns. Thus, the doors had decorations in rectangular or rhomboid "boards" (Teodorescu et al., 2017). Many times, between the pillars and the treadmill, the craftsmen inserted wooden capitals carved from by the beam. The "corners" (or "tassels") on the eaves of the house would have a geometric pattern in the "corners," rarely a phytomorphic decoration, and very rarely an avimorphic; "Decorative baskets", in which the visible part under the eaves used to be shaped with a bard, used to be other decorative elements.

With the closing of the porch by a "parmalac" (name used for a short-height wall or fence used to delimit other building or a certain element of construction), the decor was also amplified. There is a play of geometric shapes intermingling, given by the grilles that close the ends of the porch or by the "plastered" planks of the so-called "parmalac".

Perforation, which had appeared as an ornamental system in the second half of the 19th century, spread afterwards in the interwar period, with the closure of the porch with an element of construction known as "tropozan" (a kind of wooden bannister, or a fence delimiting the porch of the house from the rest of the dwelling).

We also find the ornaments made by the perforation technique, at the guards under the eaves. Starting from the simplicity of the zig zag line, which characterizes the guards of the oldest houses, the decoration diversifies, always intermingling other geometric elements, each time more and more complicated. Sometimes there are decorated in plates, with rhomboidal elements inscribed in squares or with other geometric shapes, the so-called "linings" of the eaves (Szemkovics et al., 2020).

The introduction of the consoles in the roof structure brings a new decorative element; many of these houses built in the interwar period have the consoles worked with great skill, either perforated or scarved and polished/ turned.

Another feature of the traditional peasant houses in the area, also maintained to this day, was the placement of a window at the end of the hall facing the street. Often, it is only marked on the wall, like a bare representation of a fortress niche/ crenel/ slot, with only decorative function. Between 1890-1915, the ornamentation of the exterior walls of the house in the plastering technique spread in the area. If at first profiles appear timidly bordering the windows, doors and corners of houses, the decoration in the

plaster extends into the space under the eaves, in the form of a “friza” (a part of the entablature, between the architrave and the cornice, usually adorned with paintings, bas-reliefs, grooves etc.; ornament under the form of a horizontal band with paintings or reliefs around the vessel, a hall, a sarcophagus; both phytomorphic and avimorphic elements appear within the stucco area, besides geometrical elements, rosettas, circles, rhombes, Xs or little crosses. Sometimes the year of construction appears in relief and less often the owner's initials as well.

Therefore, depending on the construction materials that the folk craftsmen had at hand and which imposed certain techniques, the decoration of the house in the area also evolved as well.

### *c. Customs and traditions*

#### **Winter customs**

##### **Christmas**

On Christmas Eve, children used to organize, in groups, visits at the households with carol singing, a custom in which the coming of the baby Jesus is announced through go-spell religious songs. For example, "Lord, Lord, let us go up" or shouts like this: "Good evening on Christmas Eve, as well as tomorrow on Santa Claus's holiday, with a bread piece baked on stove- fire, whether you may give us, or not, any way you won't get rid of us!" so the households should reward the singers with apples, walnuts, rolls, pretzels, etc.

On Christmas Eve, children use to sing, from house to house, the rising of the Holly Star, in which they proclaim the birth of Jesus. They symbolically carry a wooden star on which there is carved the image of the Mother of God and the holly baby. For the good news, the groups are rewarded, as due to the holly eve, with food items specific to the area.

##### **New Year**

Also specific there are the ritualic songs of house spiritual purification as “Plușor” (Plow's carol), “Capra” (Goat's carol), while in the morning “Sorcovă” carol is sung as well.

The plows that come with the plow are made up of young people of all ages. The plow was pulled by a pair of oxen;

Those who came with the Goat covered with velvets were actually boys who were holding in their hands a kind of goat's head carved in wood that was able to make those specific beat noises of: “ta ta ta”.

And in the morning of the new year, the carol singers used to come, and still do, to complete all people's wishes for the year to come. Thus, after thanking the carol singers, the people believed that it would be easier for them to pass the coming year and that their crops would be fruitful.

### **Spring customs**

On the night of Lent for the Holly Easter, the girls and the boys gather around the gates and the fires are lit. This is symbolic, meaning first of all the coming of spring and then the purification of evil spirits by fire. Two groups are now formed and the boys have a dialogue through shouts about the girls and boys in the village, about the relationships between some people, the affinities of some, the defects of the girls and boys left unmarried, etc. These cries had a moralizing role, and those who were angry and reproached the mob in some way received a farce as punishment. For example, the apparently dissatisfied people's dogs were caught and tied to their tails pieces of scrap (old iron objects).

**Village Round Dances, hand by hand:** The holiday is celebrated every year at Easter.

The great feast makes its presence felt a week before when "The flowers come with the sun / And the sun with the flowers". People come home from the church service bringing willow branches, which they put on the doorstep and icons to protect their family and home from harm. Starting at two o'clock in the afternoon, the village choir begins as well. This was and still is the day when the new generation of girls candidating for marriage, being called "boboace", come out to the "people" to be seen and admired. The people come out of the gate contemplating each passer-by (Szemkovics et al., 2020; Teodorescu et al., 2016). Nothing is left unobserved, especially by the mothers of the boys.

### **Summer customs**

On the Holy Thursday after Easter, women go to the cemetery. Here they spread incense smoke with a bundle of bouquets of certain plants (*Sambucus ebulus*), water the graves and divide the coils because it is believed that from this day their spirits would roam the earth for 40 days until Pentecost.

"Calusul" (Callus dance) is played on Pentecost Saturday. The group had formed a month before and the "Vataf" (name given to the man surveiling the slaves within the landlord's mansions) was the one who designated the places of each one. There were 8 to 15 people in the crowd and there simply could not miss "Stegarul" (the flag bearer) and "Mutul" (the Mute/ Dumb one). In the Teleorman area, the Callus contains two games: the first time the Callus was played in the yard that "Mutul" indicated and the host put a drop of salt and garlic in the middle, then a round dance in which all those who wanted to get lucky were caught, hand in hand. The dance of the Callus was believed to have healing powers, and



those who had broken the commandment of the Lord and worked in the Sabbath could thus be freed from their sin.

On the Saturday of "Rusalii" (holiday commemorating the Holly Spirit's descendance upon the Jesus's apprentices), the children of the village gather in the morning and go to the houses where they have been invited; here they are waited for by the women with lukewarm water and homemade soap; here, their feet were washed, after which they go out on grayling leaves and then they are invited to the table where they serve collars, rice pudding or pasta. Until they leave the household, they receive other goods. It is believed that thus the way the way of the dead, who have roamed the earth since Holy Thursday, will be easier.

The holiday of "Dragaica" (an agrar holiday, based on a symbolic bride) is celebrated on June 24 and consists in the fact that the most beautiful girl in the village has to form a group of 6 girls: the Bride, the Big Boy and the six accompanying girls. The procession has a whistle and a flag and sings: "The "dragaicele" (girls of the village from which a special one and is dressed like a bride) have come / To cut the wheat ears/ The wheat ears are pretty big/ The "Dragaicele" are rather small".

#### **Autumn customs**

Harvesting the vineyard is a process in which the whole family participates. The grapes are gathered in wicker baskets and then in carts. After being brought home, the grapes are placed in a smooth-licking, rectangular wooden assembly, practically a home-made device like a tank with a hole at one end, where the grapes are trampled or mashed, literally, and thus the grape-juice is obtained. The grape-juice is left to ferment for a few days in its own juicy pulp substance and then stored in wood barrels.

#### ***d. Monuments***

- The wooden church "The Pious Paraschiva" (Rom. "Cuvioasa Paraschiva") dating since 1912, located in the village of Talpa-Ogrăzile.

- "The monument of the Heroes who stepped onto the immortal glory" (1976) from the village of Talpa-Ogrăzile.

#### ***e. Peasant crafts***

From the earliest times, various raw materials were processed in the rural household in order to satisfy the essential needs of the peasant family. The specific expression of the natural economy, the traditional household industry or the "household craft" was an accessory of the agricultural household. Over time, however, specialized craftsmen appear, the products of their work being destined for the entire rural community.

- metal processing
- woodworking
- torso and tissue
- animal fur and leather processing craftsmanship.

#### *f. The folk costume*

The port occupies, in the ensemble of the Romanian costume, a special place through its particular features, enriching the repertoire of the Romanian popular ornamentation with original decorative motifs, of a special plastic value. The geographical position of the area, at a crossroads, has made it subject from ancient times to a series of influences that have also affected the popular dress, influences adapted to local conditions and creatively assimilated.

- Women's suit
- Men's suit

The locality called “Talpă” can also become a point of attraction in terms of school tourism. We all know that education is a fundamental pillar of any society. Education, development, research or innovation are the main characteristics of a successful society. Starting from E. Durkheim's definition that associates education with the action of adult generations aimed at young generations, in order to induce physical, intellectual and moral states demanded by social life in general, but also by the social environment for which individuals are intended, we consider that it is our duty, of all, to contribute to the good development of future generations.

Educational excursions, the discovery of diversity and authenticity in Romania, the understanding of values, the practice of sports, the identification of theoretical phenomena in classrooms with those existing in the field are necessary for the educational process to be synonymous with performance.

Consequently, school tourism contributes significantly to the improvement of the instructive-educational process of students, contributing to the formation of their personality from the first years of school and ending with the stage of high school education.

### **INVOLVEMENT OF THE LITERARY WORK "MOROMETII" IN THE LOCAL TOURIST AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY**

In addition to completing knowledge in the field of geography, history and national culture, students can enrich their knowledge of literature and literary works, which are the foundation of their educational training.

The place where the movie "Moromeții" was screened can be admired, and the children have the opportunity to better understand and learn a compulsory literary work from the educational curriculum.

The house where the scenes with Ilie Moromete were filmed belonged to one of the richest people in the village of "Talpă", Nicolae Soare, who, unfortunately, did not have any children. Following the death of the Soare couple, the house was abandoned, but according to 63-year-old Mrs. Tuca Niculina, the neighbor opposite Mr. Nicolae Soare's house: *"Every year a man comes from Bucharest, lights a candle in the yard, then leave!"* Mrs. Tuca Niculina, being very close to the houses where the filming was being done, declared: *"I used to put the cauldron on fire and then cook for the actors: It was a beautiful time!"*

Tuca Niculina's husband, Tuca Tache, a 62-year-old landlord, said the filming took place in their commune 30 years ago during an autumn. Also, the cattle that appear in this movie belonged to himself as well.

The two spouses, together with other householders of the commune, participants in the "Moromeții" film, are happy to think about those moments, but, in a short time, the sadness reappears on their faces. They have no hope that young people who have gone abroad will return to their native village, a village where customs and traditions had a special place (Teodorescu et al., 2019).

An important help in promoting the commune of Talpa and also in the growth of the local economy, is a wide range of promotional products, this package includes: DVDs, leaflets, tourist guides, T-shirts, pens, notebooks, local website and page; The Talpa commune appears in the written press with the help of films made for the film "Moromeții" (the film being awarded on September 28, 1987), but also of a newspaper from January 15, 2010.

*Target group aimed at by the study activity:*

- Medium-income tourists
- Students
- Professors and teachers
- People attracted by traditions
- Travel agents and operators
- Active retirees, eager for tradition

In order to achieve the overall objective of the project implementation, the strategy aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

- Increasing the accessibility of tourists in the South-Muntenia development region and especially increasing their accessibility in centers with cultural objectives;
- Increasing the competitiveness of the region as business locations;

- Increasing the contribution of tourism to the development of the analyzed development region, as well as its urban centers.

Tourism is recognized as a real industry. Incomes and proceeds from this activity have an increasing contribution to the local economy (Petroman et al., 2020). Once the tourist activities in a certain area increase, the economic improvements can be observed (Petroman et al., 2020; Dinca et al., 2015). First of all, the number of jobs is increasing because tourism cannot be achieved without staff, and implicitly the unemployment rate is reduced (Sava, 2020; Ducman et al., 2019; Radoi et al., 2020). Moreover, results outcoming from tourism revenues can be a significant source of local budget.

The proposed project has added value because:

- Promotes the village where the movie "Moromeții" was filmed, after the book by the writer Marin Preda
- Promoting diversity and local cultural identities;
- Stimulates activities within local communities and their proximity to nature.
- The financing granted to the project leads to the increase of the number of jobs;
- The financing granted to the project contributes to the development of the general culture of the population in the area and is influenced by the project;
- Uses biodegradable and recycled materials.

### **Potential beneficiaries of the study**

Direct potential beneficiaries:

- local communities;
- local companies;
- local public authorities;
- skilled or unskilled unemployed looking for a job (guides, translators, etc.);
- people looking for another job;

### **Indirect beneficiaries:**

- tourism agencies and operators;
- event, training and team building companies;
- visitors either Romanian or foreign;
- the inhabitants of the areas;
- neighboring local public authorities;

## CONCLUSIONS

The need to implement this project is based on the fact that in this region, tourism is not well represented, despite the fact that there is potential and valuable elements that can be successfully introduced in tourist circuits.

The development of cultural tourism, but also of the opportunities created by school tourism, mainly by promoting the identity of the Romanian village, as it is presented in the novel "Moromeții", is the indispensable factor in the harmonious evolution for all components of the trinomial equation space-society-economy .

The modernization of the specific-tourist infrastructure, the increase of the quality of the services through the training of the personnel, as well as the paying an increased attention to the investments and partnerships are required in the realization of a sustainable tourism. Due to the fact that most of the county is located in the plain unit, but also to the presence of the Danube river, the natural tourist potential is well represented by nature reserves, ponds, confluence areas, forests or natural lakes. Rural tourism, agrotourism, recreation/ leisure tourism are also important alternatives for the development of the area.

The project could meet the sustained efforts made in the development regions due to the significant migration caused by the significant migration of the inhabitants and implicitly of the tourists from the region, either abroad or in the neighboring counties.

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