

HISTORICAL MONUMENTS - SUPPORT FOR TOURISM IN THE GORJ SUBCARPATHIANS

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***Abstract:** The existence of historical monuments is a starting point in the development of tourism. This type of objectives have attracted and will attract tourists of all ages. The current study aims to analyze the types of historical monuments between Bistrita Valcii and Tismana. As the analysis method, I used the empirical interview method. The questions were addressed to the tourists who visited these monuments. The purpose of this study is to achieve a classification of the main historical heritage monuments for this southern Subcarpathian area. The Subcarpathian area is a geographical area with many other tourist attractions. Precisely for that reason, these historical monuments come to complete the palette of attractions in a geographical area with a very attractive relief. The database used in establishing the historical monuments analyzed consists of the list of historical monuments created by the Ministry of Culture.*

***Keywords:** cultural tourism, heritage, historical monuments, culture*

INTRODUCTION

Heritage monuments represent cultural expression and cultural space that are closely related to the lives of people of all generations. Humans have modified nature, carried human history and civilization, and condensed the essence of traditional culture (Ortiz et al., 2022). Meanwhile, historical heritage monuments show local characteristics, being the important vector of local spirit, being an important symbol of cultural identity for a nation (Park, 2011; Teodorescu et al., 2017; Herman et al., 2014; Mazilu et al, 2023). However, with the rapid development of modern society, historical heritage monuments may be threatened with destruction. Another problem they may face is the lack of investment. The importance of a territory is determined by the components that participate in the creation

of the ensemble. The natural setting, with all the changes it has undergone, together with the demographic component, represents a whole that can be difficult to analyze individually (Ilieș et al., 2017; Kasagrandă et al., 2016). This difficulty of the differentiated analysis of the physical component or the population that lived in this geographical space, is given by the immense interference relationship between the two components. Man was constantly looking for a place to shelter and a means of living (Teodorescu, 2009). These two basic elements and found them in the natural environment. Without these, man would not have been able to achieve the purpose of his existence. Building materials have become part of the continuity of life in a certain area (Teodorescu et al., 2019; Ziakas, 2016). In the Gorj Sub Carpathians, man has found all necessary components to enable him have a stable life; the vicinity of the mountains has provided them with stone for construction, the valleys have provided them with spaces to cultivate what they needed, the slopes have come with their attractive supply of fruit trees, and the climate and the supply of forests has favored them to raise animals (fig. 1). All these components have created that rudimentary yet necessary ensemble of human existence. Each area in Romania offers, through its monuments, information about its past (Teodorescu et al., 2016; Teodorescu et al., 2017; Szemkovics et al., 2021; Ducman et al., 2021; Szemkovics et al., 2018).

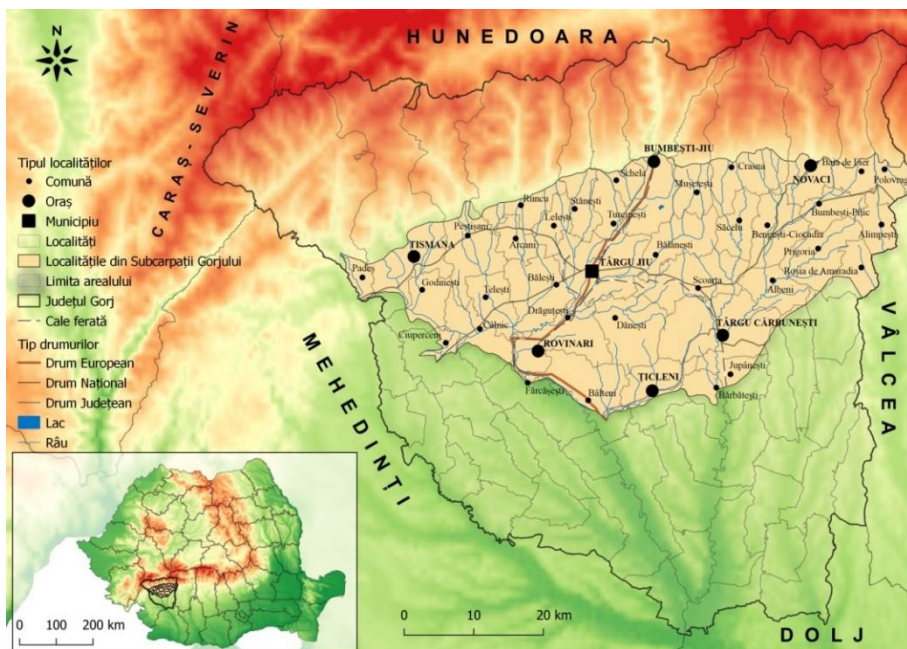


Fig. 1. The location of the geographical space of the Gorj Sub Carpathians.

THE MATERIAL TRACES OF THE DWELLINGS LOCATED IN THE AREA OF THE GORJ SUBCARPATHIANS

1. *Living in the geographical area of the Gorj Subcarpathians in the ancient period – the Dacian habitation and the traces of Roman influence.*

The subcarpathian area of Gorj has many material traces of the old historical eras, historical monuments that belong to a cultural heritage with incontestable value, the presence of which attests the existence of a dwelling from ancient times. All this needs to be analyzed starting from the Paleolithic, as time follows its course towards the modern period. Only in this way can the cultural phenomenon be understood as a whole, on the cultural landscape created by the population of this geographical area in a joint collaboration with nature.

The Sub Carpathian area has been one of the most attractive areas for living, due to the conditions it has offered (the vicinity of the mountain for building materials, high hills, river valleys with possibilities for agricultural crops, extensive forests, etc.). Traces of habitation in the Gorj Subcarpathians have been mentioned since the Paleolithic.

In the Getic Sub Carpathians there are traces of habitation dating since the Paleolithic period at Baia de Fier, Runcu and Broșteni Peștișani. Traces from the Neolithic are present at Baia de Fier, Schela (Vinéa Culture), as well as at Tg. Cărbunești (Salcuța Culture). In this geographical area there are also traces of the bronze age at Padeș Glina Culture - the characteristics of this culture can be found in the ceramics belonging to the Glina Culture and consist of the button holes, the flat belt and the horizontal spiral belt)-, Schela, Runcu, Socu-Bărbăți, Tg. Carbonești, Topești, Tismana and Jupânești. Most of the traces of habitation in the geographical area of the Getic Sub Carpathians date back to the Dacian period and constitute solid proof of the living, in a fairly large number, of a population with various occupations in that area. Traces of Dacian habitation can be found in the localities of Albeni, Alimpești, Polovragi (fortified Dacian settlement), Socu – Bărbăți, Șomânești – Telești, Țicleni and Vidin – Jupânești (fig. 2).

The development of society is also testified by the multitude of these material traces. The presence of agricultural tools, household ceramics in a rich variety of shapes and types, gives the big picture of food diversification. Along with the development of the society, some related occupations develop, and with time they bring changes to the landscape. A primary material processing sector is developing, and it is characterized by the

appearance of mills, wood carvers, kilns (especially for burning limestone and obtaining lime for construction), mills (for salt and grain). The procurement of raw materials for housing construction, the exchange of tools and materials develop the first forms of infrastructure and commercial sense.

The local cultural landscape takes on new forms. Villages become much more extensive and the administrative organization evolve proportionally.

The following periods bear the imprint of a complex culture, which has evolved together with its creators. The Dacian tribes find favorable living conditions in the Sub Carpathian area. These tribes build new settlements, which implies a demographic increase. The habitats were well consolidated and had a social organization. The main occupations have been the factor that has determined the existence of local landscapes. Agricultural occupations based on plant cultivation and animal husbandry have dominated within these lands. Agricultural landscapes (specific to the cultivation of plants) and pastoral landscapes (based on raising animals, especially sheep) have developed in the entire geographical area below the mountain, acquiring local specificity. Cereals (wheat), vegetables (rather small in number) and vines were essential for food.

This period is also characterized by the appearance of religious landscapes, as a result of the spiritual evolution of the Dacian society. The spiritual needs were materialized in the construction of temples and places for practicing the worship of the deities (Zalmoxis, the supreme god, a god of war, a protector of fields, etc.), to whom they brought incantations or animal and human sacrifices. Various rituals were practiced, parades, sacrifices, cremations in the attempt to reach eternal life.

The Roman era brings new traces of habitation, as the ones found at Tg Jiu, Bumbesti Jiu (Civil Settlement, Stone Castle, Earthen Castle, Wave of Earth), Bălănești, Hăiești – Săcelu and Glodeni. After the battles with the Romans (105-106), military units were stationed around the roads that connected various important routes at the time. During the excavations of the Târgu Jiu - Rovinari railway, mosaics, coins, ceramics and Roman bricks were found in the southeastern part of Tg Jiu. This and ancient testimonies support the idea that Târgu Jiu was a commercial town (vicus) during the rule of the Roman Empire. A very important route that connects the Danube to Transylvania runs through the town of Tg Jiu, then the town of Bumbesti Jiu, so historians believe that part of the Roman army under the leadership of Trajan remained in these lands. Society is increasingly modifying the natural environment through deforestation and creating agro-pastoral landscapes.

The wooden table is used in craft workshops and in civil and public constructions. After the retreat of the Roman army in 271, the localities of Bumbesti Jiu and Targu Jiu remained in the area of Latin influence, mainly due to the important constructions erected at Bumbesti Jiu. Rural landscapes were shaped by the population that was organized and used to live in village communities. The alternation of crops for the food of the community and animals as well as the pastoral areas offered a mosaic image of the landscapes. Later, there is also known the involvement of Constantine the Great in Oltenia, including the geographical area of the Gorj Subcarpathians, which he sought to bring under imperial rule.

The migration period of the first centuries of the millennium shows traces of Asian populations within these lands. Some of them were found in Bâlteni and date from the 5th century. This is the period when major changes are noted in the local landscape due to these migratory peoples such as: Sarmatians, Vandals, Cumans, Huns, Pechenegs, Tatars, Slavs, Turks, Goths, Mongols. Cultivated areas are reduced due to military incursions, and rural landscapes also suffer as a result of the differences between the native population and the migratory tribes.

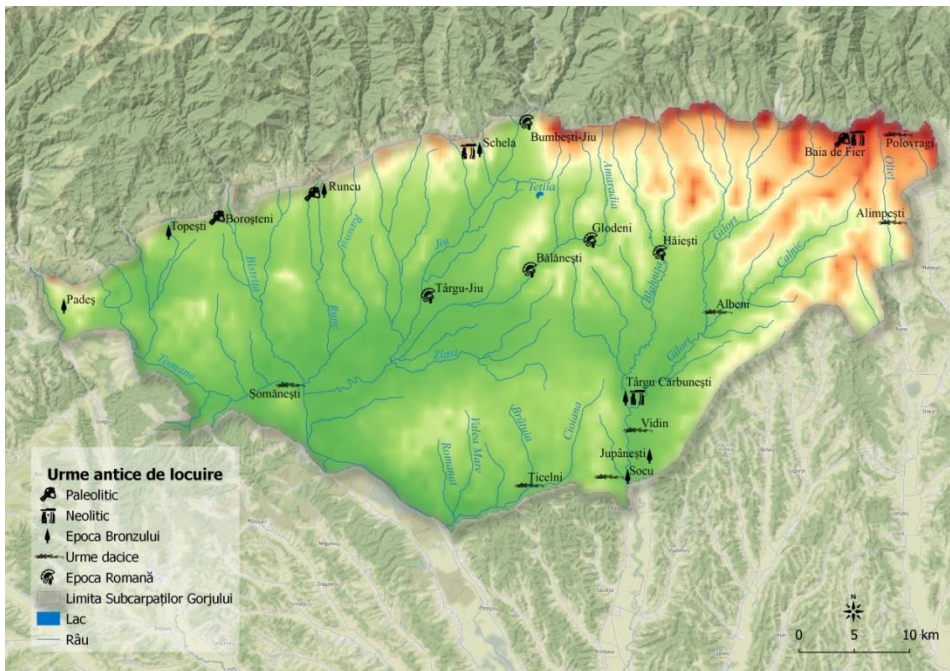


Fig. 2. Traces of ancient habitation in the Gorj Sub Carpathians.
Source: List of historical monuments, Ministry of Culture

The sources from that period mention the locals as living in rural settlements and engaging in crafts or mining. Animal breeding or plant culture is added to them. Urban landscapes in the study area are poorly mentioned. There are references only to life in the Bumbesti Jiu castle area, but which do not clearly mention an urban life and details of an urban landscape. Due to this fact, the details regarding the urban centers in the historical sources of the time are very poorly mentioned.

Throughout the ancient period, in the geographical area of the Gorj Sub Carpathians, the best represented are rural landscapes, to which agricultural landscapes and pastoral landscapes are added depending on the occupation. Local faith also creates a type of landscape, the spiritual or religious one, the influence and evolution of which persist with the expansion of the inhabited space. In the Roman period, the urban landscape appeared in an early form, adapted to the local specifics (military, commercial and craft or processing of local materials).

2. The Middle Ages and the effects of the Orthodox religion on living in the Gorj Sub Carpathians.

The Middle Ages brought great changes to the local Sub Carpathian landscape. The countryside was already a common image. The agricultural landscape is what comes to complete this rural landscape in a perfect relationship. There are developed or extended villages along rivers or main traffic arteries (roads). There are also hamlets present in the higher areas, and the basic occupation of the inhabitants is shepherding or raising animals, thus creating an image of the pastoral landscape.

Underground deposits, forests and other local riches, represented attractions for having a short stay in the vicinity. In these lands the fighting was almost permanent. Precisely these permanent conflicts sometimes damaged the villages, which were afterwards rebuilt, thus there is a permanent change in the aspect of the rural landscape. Wood is the present building material, to which stone and earth are added. These construction materials will manage to create, in time, the characteristic landscape of the Sub Carpathian village.

The relationships between the local peasant architecture and the church architecture can later be linked to these, reinforcing a permanent connection between the rural landscape and the religious one. From an administrative-political point of view, this territory was under the rule of Litovoi, a Vlach (Romanian) voivode in the 13th century, whose territory included the north of Oltenia. He is mentioned for the first time in a diploma issued by the king of Hungary on July 2, 1247. In 1277 (or between 1277

and 1280), Litovoi, who was at war with the Hungarians. Litovoi refused to pay tribute to the kingdom of Hungary, being then killed in battle.

A strong historical personality is Voivode Mircea the Elder. He is the one who signs some documents by which a number of monasteries in the subcarpathian area of Gorj are expropriated and exempted from taxes. A first creator of religious landscape in the medieval period is Radu Voievod, the father of Voivode Dan I and grandfather of the great Voivode Mircea the Elder, whose name is linked to the Tismana Monastery. Voivode Dan I, on October 3, in Argeş, (probably Curtea de Argeş) signs a document by which he donates wheat from Jales county to the Tismana Monastery. Moreover, the rural landscape is greatly influenced by the existence of monastic life, of the Orthodox religion in all the activities carried out. An example of this influence can be found in a series of documents issued by the rulers of Wallachia, including Mircea the Elder, who in 1399 signed a document in the premises of the Tismana Monastery, giving it the villages of Jarcovăţ, Şuşita, Pesticovo, Sogoino, Salcişor and reinforces the previous grants for Vodiţa and Tismana monasteries. The villages acquired by Tismana and Vodiţa monasteries order their life, agriculture (types of crops) and pastoral activity, wood exploitation and all other activities, under strict monastic supervision. Another example of the influence of the monastic domains on life and the agricultural and rural landscape is that of the document issued on November 23, 1406, at the Tismana Monastery by ruler Mircea the Elder, by which he forbids everyone fishing in the Tismana water and cattle grazing on the monastic domain without the consent of the monks. Also in 1406, the village that was to become the town of Tg is mentioned for the first time. Jiu. Among those present at the signing were "all the abbots of the monasteries and the nobles of my lordship". This locality, Tg Jiu, can be talked about since 1406, during the reign of Mircea the Elder. In 1426, Dan II, ruler of Romania, gave it the name of Târgu-Jiu in an act by which he strengthened the control of the Tismana monastery over some mills.

The entire activity carried out in the medieval period can be found in the documents issued by the rulers of these centuries, in connection with the fortunes, then the estates and the ecclesiastical (monastic) dominions. As a city, Tg Jiu is mentioned during the time of Mihai Viteazul, in 1597, when a series of activities specific to a city are attributed to it.

Mr. Jiu, also mentioned in 1611, during the reign of Radu Mihnea. An example of the imposition of the tax in the territory between the mountains and the Danube is the one mentioned in the historical documents, one of them being the one issued on April 13, 1554, by Voivode Pătraşcu, referring to the Tismana Monastery. In the sector between Bistriţa Vâlceană and

Motru there are localities where residents from southern Transylvania are registered. This diversity of occupations, assimilated by the local population, offers a variety of local cultural landscapes, from those related to occupations, to those related to food (cuisine) or clothing (folk costume), through chromaticity, components and form.

3. Mutations of the modern and contemporary period

The modern period brings important changes in the general appearance of the landscape. The end of the medieval period and the beginning of the modern period, brings an addition to the local architectural landscape. There are significant changes in the urban environment, so the city of Tg Jiu City is the place where traditional architecture intervenes with the air of European architecture, creating a special cultural-architectural landscape. Even the countryside is not without changes or influences in the architecture and occupations of the inhabitants. New areas of activity appear, especially the pre-industrial workshops, then the installation of industry, which led to important changes in the local landscape.

Cultural life is also changing. Apart from church life, cultural centers appear, where both young people and adults can enjoy important cultural moments. The school is one of the institutions that is starting to expand in the analyzed territory, starting with the city of Tg Jiu, then to the other urban centers, but also to many of the rural areas. Until then, education was practised only in the churches. Now is the time when it breaks away from them and becomes accessible to a larger number of children. Industrial development led to an increase in the number of inhabitants in the entire subcarpathian area of Gorj. A strong and continuous process of urbanization is taking place. Specific to the city of Tg Jiu is the maintenance of industrial functionality in the northern part of the city, to which living spaces and socio-cultural buildings have been added. New cities appeared in this analysis field, such as Țicleni, Tg. Cărbunești, which is added to the existing ones, i.e. Tg Jiu and Bumbăești Jiu. The cultural landscape is found as urban landscape, rural landscape, agricultural landscape, agro-pastoral landscape and what is important is the appearance of a new type of landscape, the industrial landscape.

4. The post-December period

After the collapse of the communist regime and the totalitarian era at the end of 1989, the road to democracy was opened. The first reforms with a major impact on the population were the privatization laws and the Land Fund Law, based on which retrocessions and appropriations were carried

out. The situation of these retrocessions and appropriations were realized only in the southern communes of the study area, because many of those in the north of the analyzed Subcarpathian area were not subjected to collectivization. The analysis is carried out by taking into account the specific features mentioned. Thus, the agricultural cooperatives and their related institutions, such as the S.M.A.s or the C.A.P. farms, were abolished, thus producing the destructuring of the intensive agricultural landscape. Peasant families got back in the position of owning the land, and from a landscape point of view, their mosaicing began through the multitude and diversity of crops planted by the renewed senior land owners. Following the division of inheritance strips of land, the land lots became relatively small in some places. Following the abolition of the C.A.P.s, the peasants could buy the agricultural machinery, as well as the animal farms with the related annexes which could be taken over by private individuals.

For the urban landscape, there are certain particularities given its size and economic importance and financial power. In the case of the city of Tg Jiu, the central area is the center of gravity, and at the extremities there are the industrial areas. It should be mentioned that most of the new constructions in the city belong to the private sector, being intended for both housing and economic activities.

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Through tourism, all this information can become useful and known. The utility is oriented towards the young generation. Among those interviewed, the answers were more than enlightening regarding the attractiveness of this southern Subcarpathian area:

"The visit to the Tismana Monastery brought us knowledge about its importance in this area and, notions related to religious architecture. The existence of the museum is a plus offered to those who want to discover this area..." (Mihai, 37 years old, Bucharest, teacher)

"The image of a nation is presented only by what it left behind. Here, in Tg. Jiu, Brancusi left us all the best we have in this country: a wealth that we should appreciate properly." (Marta, 55 years old, Craiova, engineer).

"Everywhere you pass, you just want to stop and see. To see as much as possible; the fields, the people, the houses! Everything is different here. Every man tries to do everything to be beautiful!" (Eliza, 67 years old, Sibiu, retired).

"We keep coming because we liked what we saw. Here we visited the Polovragi Monastery, the lime kilns from Baia de Fier, the Brancusi Complex from Tg Jiu and many others. It was a trip with a lot of information that I didn't know. Now we found out and we are proud that we live in Oltenia!" (Madalina, 16 years old, Horezu, student)

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study highlight that the Gorj Sub Carpathian area is one of the geographical areas where cultural and historical monuments are numerous and important. At the same time, it provides a big picture of the historical events over time. The presence in the area of contact with Balkan and Central European culture, over which the traces of migrations from the medieval period appear, offers all the details of a complete study of European culture. On top of these elements come the local details, with the modern period and industrialization with local specificity, in an interweaving that can be said to be a cultural complement. Traditions and folk art also come to finalize this unique and orderly amalgam, creating all the assets of a geographical space where tourism can represent the real economic source and resource. The unique cultural-historical resources and in a quite varied range, can represent educational means with a bilateral role: both for those who want to learn, and for local economic stability.

The study represents an early stage of establishing direct relationships between material heritage and tourism. The study brings as a novelty a possible implementation of cultural-religious tourism based on the material cultural heritage, based on the certainty of supporting the residential population and tourists visiting the area. It is a market study for what cultural tourism means. Among the most visited cultural heritage monuments are the Brancusi Museum Complex in Tg. Jiu, to which is added the Curtisoara Village Museum, a series of monasteries with Byzantine architecture and painting from Timmana, Crasna and Polovragi, villages with their specific architecture from each commune of this area. What could become tourist attractions is industrial tourism. It is not yet visible, but it can be one of the touristic forms that would bring a plus in the knowledge of the local profile. The local industry should be presented to the young generations, eager to get to know the country. From the point of view of local development, the past can represent a real source of income for the future! The present study is only a beginning in the presentation of this area with real heritage values and material traces.

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