

## ASPECTS REGARDING THE TOURIST POTENTIAL OF CARAȘ-SEVERIN COUNTY

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***Abstract:** The visiting-card of Caraș-Severin county in the tourism activity of our country is supported by valuable elements of tourist heritage (position in territory, resources and tourist structures that together make up an offer appreciated in both domestic and international tourism)*

*Caraș-Severin county has the advantage of being located at short distance from two important border points, Moravita and the Iron Gates, to which is added a third one, Naidăș, right on its territory. No other county has such impressive tourist infrastructure for neighboring countries. To the three borders is added a fourth one, namely the natural one, the penetration of the Danube through Baziaș.*

***Keywords:** tourism, potential, landscape value, tourist heritage, anthropic, tavern*

### INTRODUCTION

The notion of tourist resource is more complete and defines more concretely its implications on the tourism activity as an economic field. Due to their specificity, content and value, tourist resources represent, on the one hand, tourist attractions suitable for visiting, and on the other hand, they can be used directly in tourism as a raw material, constituting or becoming part of different tourist products and generating certain forms of tourism (natural healing factors in spa tourism, thickness and duration of snow cover in mountain tourism).

Natural tourist resources are those offered by the natural environment of the area through its components: relief, climatic conditions, rivers, lakes, groundwater, mineral springs, vegetation and fauna.

These natural components of the landscape are challenged as potential tourist resources, have a major role in the development of tourism and constitute the potential primary supply. They are important for tourism activity through the following elements:

- landscape, aesthetic and recreational value, regardless of where it is located (sometimes it is determined by tourist motivation);
- the balneoclimateric value of some components, considered as natural healing factors, including the bioclimate;
- support of some tourist activities, generating specific forms of tourism (snow layer, water mirrors, hunting resources);
- cognitive value, in general, but especially in the case of components designated as scientific reservations and monuments of nature.

As can be seen from the aspects presented above, the natural tourist resources represent a sum of the potential capacities offered by all the physical-geographical components.

Unlike the tempting resources belonging to the natural environment which are a gift of nature, the anthropic tourist heritage represents a sum of elements with recreational function created by man. Their apparition as elements, respectively objectives of tourist interest does not always bear the seal of premeditation, meaning they were not built for this purpose, on the contrary, in most cases, they fulfilled other attributions, gaining the recreational property in time, often reaching to prevail in comparison with the old attributions, becoming a proper tourist objective.

Representing human creation, anthropic tourism resources are the result of technical, cultural and economic efforts, as well as the traditional material and spiritual elements of people, manifested over time in a harmonious combination with nature.

The main recreational attributes of the objectives of anthropic origin have at their origin the following characteristics: the antiquity of the objective, the uniqueness, the novelty, the size, the function.

The antiquity of a man-made objective, regardless of its size and physiognomy, often becomes a source of real interest to viewers. The antiquity of the attractive anthropic elements sets in motion psychological stimuli whose effect is all the greater the better informed the tourists, and the creation of the atmosphere of their place of origin the more inspirationally described.

The uniqueness of certain objects, edifices, or human activities is also a notable source of attractiveness. This uniqueness can result either from a deliberate action of the author of a single product, without copies or variants, or from the destruction or disappearance of objects of the same kind. Statues are unique objectives.

Another tourist feature of the objectives of anthropic origin comes from their physiognomic, positional or structural-behavioral uniqueness. The different physiognomy is the fruit of the eternal tendency of the human spirit towards originality and self-transcendence.

The uniqueness can also result from unfinished projects. This uniqueness as attractive resource is also given by the place chosen by man for the location of his edifices. The size of the objectives of anthropic origin is an attribute accessible to all, easy to evaluate in terms of attractiveness. Finally, the previous or current functions of certain edifices carry an attractive load with a specific touch. The tourist heritage of anthropic origin is of great complexity and can be structured in two groups of objectives, namely:

- edifices and elements with tourist function;
- anthropic activities with attractive function.

Anthropic tourist resources incite a well-deserved interest, including:

- archaeological monuments;
- archaeological sites;
- monuments, ensembles and architectural reservations;
- monuments and memorial ensembles;
- valuable historical and cultural settlements and vestiges.

The very varied and rich tourist potential, of great value and attractiveness is given by the natural setting, the spa resources, the historical monuments, the art and the richness of the ethno-folkloric background.

Regarding the natural tourist resources, the main attractions of the county, the natural resources, present aesthetic, recreational and therapeutic valences, constituting the major factors of attracting and maintaining tourists.

Regarding the relief, we note that from the tourist point of view, it is the main attractive element of the county, which imposes itself both by the beauty of the landscapes it generates and by the possibilities it offers to be capitalized touristy, thus enriching the county's tourist offer.

The mountainous relief is part of a wide range of landscapes and tourist attractions related to the variety of karst and glacial formations, the network of valleys. The greatness of the karst landscapes is given by the limestone relief from the Anina mountains, the Cerna Valley, the Danube Gorge and the Locva mountains, represented by surface forms (gorges, waterfalls, sinkholes, uvalas, limestone pavement) or deep forms (caves), of which we mention the following:

- The Caraş Gorges (17 km) run on the Caraş Valley and are dug in the limestone of the Anina mountains. They are impressive for their picturesqueness and wildness and for the vegetal layer reminiscent of the Mediterranean regions. They are monuments of nature.
- The Gârliştei Gorges start from the immediate vicinity of Anina and run north for a length of 8 km.

- The Minişului Gorges, comprise a succession of wild gorges covering about 14km, of which the gorges and the Bigăr waterfall, the La Adam cave, the Lion’s rock stand out.
- The Nera’s Gorge (22km), between Şopotul Nou and Sasca Montană (in the Anina Mountains), is a valuable tourist attraction due to their wildness and picturesqueness, along their entire route providing a close connection between rock, vegetation and water. They are declared monuments of nature.
- The Thieves’ Cave (Herculaneum Baths), with a length of 143 m and three openings, is crossed by wet streams and houses of bat colonies. The Thieves' Cave is of great archaeological and biospeleological importance.
- The Comarnic Cave located in the Caraş basin is the largest cave in the Banat Mountains. The length of the cave is 4 km and has remarkable underground acoustic phenomena. The cave is declared a speleological reservation.
- The Popovăţ Cave, located a few km from The Comarnic Cave, has a length of galleries of 1.1 km. it consists of galleries and halls that are arranged on two distinct floors. The Popovăţ Cave is declared a speleological reservation and is remarkable especially for the unique splendors of its final hall.
- Buhui cave, which is in the proximity of Anina city, is 3,2 kilometers long and it has a powerful underground water course that flows. It consists of two galleries, one of which has the main touristic potential. In this gallery and in its side spaces, there are many stalactites and stalagmites, which vary, and two picturesque waterfalls.
- Mărghitaş cave, located near Buhui Lake, in Anina Mountains.
- Talasu cave, positioned at the entrance of Cheile Caraşului.

In this landscape, the glacial terrain of Țarcu Mountains is imposing because of its glacial lakes with enormous scree, its glacial valleys, that originated from Iezeru, Tarcu and Pietrele Albe lakes, its water courses, and its large peaks, such as Muntele Mic.

The hilly and depressionary terrain represents less popular touristic attractions, but together with the other components it creates picturesque landscapes, and it encourages the touristic development.

When it comes to hydrography, the surface of Caraş-Severin County is severely fragmented by the flowing water’s valleys which are tributary to Timiș, Caraș, Cerna and Nera rivers, and which are ultimately collected by the Danube.

As long as they flow amongst the eruptive and metamorphic rocks of the mountains, these waters create normal hydrographic networks (water streams, small creeks, large creeks, mountain rivers which flow into each other, all those networks falling into a state of disorganization when they reach the karstic terrain, where certain occurrences take place, such as: waters flowing through hollows (sinkholes); valleys waters being permanently or temporarily dry ; the appearance of underground water courses (Ponor-Plopa, Buhui, Comarnic), and, lastly, the outburst back to the surface of the waters that have flowed in the underground through karst springs, such as the Caraş karst spring (Luncăi karst spring) and the Iordanului karst spring from Cheile Nerei.

The county's climate is continental and moderate with sub-Mediterranean influences and Banat's climate subtype is characterized by the circulation of the Atlantic masses of air and by the inversion of the Mediterranean masses of air, which provide a mild character to the thermal regime with frequent periods of warmth during the winter season, as well as the arrival of the early spring season and medium quantities of precipitations. After having analyzed the medium temperature per season, we reached the conclusion that winters are relatively harsh in the mountainous areas (Semenic  $-4,8\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ ), while in Caransebeş and Oraviţa positive temperatures are registered. Summer is generally moderate, in comparison to winter, in the mountainous area, the temperature only raising gradually in the flatlands (Oraviţa  $20,1\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ , Bozovici  $18,8\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ , Caransebeş  $20,1\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ ).

The climate in the Danube's canyon is sub-Mediterranean, its outstanding characteristic being the average annual temperature, which is the highest in the country. The climate conditions, through the thermal regime and precipitations, encourages the possibility of tourism all year long: the period between August and October is ideal for mountaineering. Winter can offer many surprises at Muntele Mic and at Semenik plateau, especially for those who practice winter sports. Spring is especially recommended for short-distance trips. Summer is perfect for going on hikes.

The climate is also interesting because of its therapeutical valences that concern the refreshing and stimulating bioclimate of the mountain and the sub-Mediterranean bioclimate, which is found only in Băile Herculane, and which allows an efficient cure in each season.

The vegetation, which varies in the mountains as well as in the hills and in the valley lanes, is remarkable because of:

- the value of the landscape and its esthetic, such as: pine forests found in the Mountains of Semenik and Anina, beech forests found in Obârşia

Nerei in Semenic Mountains, lilac forests found in the spreading karst area of Caraș-Severin and the Danube and, lastly, alpine meadows found in the mountains.

- its scientific value: rare floral elements, such as: China pink (garofiță) and primrose; natural sanctuaries (such as Cheile Nerei, Beușnița, Izvoarele Nerei); places for socializing, rest and recreation (in the suburban areas of the resorts, for example: mountain forests and coniferous forests which have the therapeutical effect of regenerating the natural environment.)

The wildlife is of high interest because of its landscape value and esthetic, but mostly because of the hunting area (bear, wild boar, buck, and stag that the mountain areas owe) and the fishing hatcheries that not only rivers and mountain lakes offer (brook trout), but the Danube River as well (carp, catfish, pike, sterlet and zander).

The natural reservations in Caraș-Severin County consists of numerous unique landscapes in the spreading areas and many rare species of flowers and animals, geological structures, and flowers that have been declared as protected natural reservations, but they can be included in the touristic circuit:

- Domogled Mountain is home to over 2000 floral species and about 1500 species of Lepidoptera.
- Oravița, which has a surface of 218,9 ha, shelters a few species of rare plants, such as: yew, peony from Banat and a few species of orchids.
- Cheile Carașului (which have 894 ha) are a hunting and landscaping botanic reservation. Here, the vegetation is very wide.
- Pomarnic cave and Popovăț cave- which are speleological reservations.
- Dognecea forest - which is a forestry reservation.
- Berzovia forest - which is a forestry reservation.
- Izvoarele Nerei - they spread across the south slope of Semenic Mountain, having a surface of 2500 ha and being important for their vegetation and beech stands.

Here is a classification of the touristic objectives:

- Objectives provided by the natural environment:

- a) Karstic objectives, namely doline areas:

- Cărbunari, Știnăpari, Munceii Domanului with potholes and caves, Pat Hill, Dracului Lake, Zăbalul Mare and the doline glade called “Omul Mort”.
- Caves in Caraș area, such as Comarnic cave, Popovăț cave, Talasu cave, Racovița cave, Liliecilor cave, Valea Mare area

- (Berzeasca), Gaura Haiducească cave, Cheile Nerei area, Mică cave from Dracului Lake, Cheile Minişului area, Adam's caves, Neamţu cave, Danube's canyon area, Socolovăţ cave and Moşnic cave.
- Gorges: Caraşului, Gârliştei, Minişului, Valea Mare, Nerei, Danube's canyon.
  - Chalky times: White Rocks (Semenic Mountain) and Rolul Mare rock (Anina Mountains).
  - Hanging bridges: Ceuca Bridge or Vranovăţ Bridge.
  - Chalky massifs: Ciucaru Mare and Ciucaru Mic.
- b) Volcanic touristic objectives: Gheorghe Hill (Sasca Montană).
- c) Fossil points: Soceni, Şviniţa, Greabănul Românesc, Danube's canyon, Zorlenţul mare, Rugi, Tirol.
- d) Epigenetic gorges, besides chalk gorges: Danube's canyon, Cheile Teregovei, Cheile Armenişului, Globului, Rudăriei, Timişului.
- e) Gates and passes in mountains ridges: Poarta Orientală (Domaşnea).
- f) Erosion formats: Balaurul, Râpe Negre.
- g) Isles: Ostrovul Mare and Calinovăţ.
- h) Other objectives: Babacaia cliff and Leul cliff.
- Hydrographic objectives:
    - a) Mineral waters: mineral water streams rich in sulphur and iron-Valea Mare; thermal or mineral water streams: Ciclova Montană, Greoni, Mehadica.
    - b) Lakes, as touristic and amusement objectives:
      - Lakes and dolines: Răcăjileanu Lake, Ochiul Beiului
      - Lakes formed by the collapse of the caves' ceiling: Dracului Lake.
    - c) Waterfalls, jumps and whirlpools: Bigăr Waterfall, Valea Minişului, Şuşara Waterfall, Valea Mare Waterfall, Cataractele Timişului, Valea Rudăriei Waterfalls, Beuşniţa Waterfall, and karst springs.

## CONCLUSIONS

There are other objectives as well. Caraş-Severin County is home to many archaeological vestiges, historical monuments, architecture, and art monuments, even home to an ethno-folk heritage, which certifies the evolution and the life continuity on these lands, as well as the development of culture and art.

The same cultural and historical heritage forms a significant part of the potential touristic offer and it's a component of the touristic image of the county on the domestic and international market.

The tourism method can be addressed by the tangible modality in which tourists benefit from the association and supplying of all services that create a touristic product (means of transportation, accommodation, restaurants, amusement, and treatment).

By combining all these types of services, different tourism areas are born. As a result of the tourist's diverse tastes and preferences, there is a large number of tourism areas, these being categorized in connection to: where the tourists originate (domestic and international tourism); the number of participants (individual and group tourism); the organizational method (tourism organized by one-self or semi-organized); the degree of mobility that the tourist presents (stay tourism and traveling tourism); the reason why the trip takes place (rest tourism, treatment tourism, cultural tourism, recreational tourism, scientific tourism, conventions and business tourism, hunting and sportive fishing tourism); means of transportation used (by train, by boat, by plane, by car, hikes, by riding a horse or by riding a bike) and the length of the stay (short, medium or long trip).

The touristic potential of Caraș-Severin County allows the practice of many diverse tourism areas: spa, mountainous, traveling, sportive, hunting, rest and recreation, end of the week, scientific, business and conventions and, finally, transitive.

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