

PASSAGES WITH A SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN THE SUBCARPATHIC AREA BETWEEN BUZAU AND RAMNIC

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Abstract : *Passages with a significant potential in the development of religious tourism in the Subcarpathic – the area between Buzau and Ramnic. The religious tourism is a manifestation that can be seen everywhere in a variety of representations. It kept the features of the original pilgrimage although it has developed in terms of contents and other characteristics. Nowadays, especially, the religious tourism assumes a certain degree of self training and knowledge from the tourists. And all these help them make accurate evaluations-related to the architectural or the spiritual significance of the crafts - to the religious and cultural landmarks they have visited. Elaborated and complex pilgrimages performed on religious and traditional reasons are also preserved, such as the compulsory Mecca pilgrimage or those pilgrimages which are particular and specific to individual countries or areas. The religious tourism has the main goal of visiting religious buildings that also involve spiritual manifestations.*

Keywords: *religious tourism, Carpathians traditional preserved.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The religious tourism is a manifestation that can be seen everywhere in a variety of representations. It kept the features of the original pilgrimage, although it has developed in terms of contents and other characteristics. Nowadays, especially, the religious tourism assumes a certain degree of self training and knowledge from the tourists. And all these help them make accurate evaluations-related to the architectural or the spiritual significance of the crafts - to the religious and cultural landmarks they have visited. Elaborated and complex pilgrimages performed on religious and traditional reasons are also preserved, such as the compulsory Mecca pilgrimage or those pilgrimages which are particular and specific to individual countries or areas.

The religious tourism has the main goal of visiting religious buildings that also involve spiritual manifestations. The difference between this kind of tourism and the others consists in the fact that the religious tourism has a powerful religious motivation. The religious tourism can display a variety of manifestations, such as: visits to the holy places, religious pilgrimages and religious youth camps.

The religious tourism is a complex phenomenon that is continuously changing and transforming although it maintains its original background, the religion. It can show individual or group manifestations, for example pilgrimages, or religious camps. The religious tourism may be practised by certain people and it aims at the familiarization of cultural and spiritual values. This

is why we cannot trace a definite line between the cultural tourism and the religious tourism. For example, the tourists who are only curious and practise tourism just for the beauty of the remote area the monasteries are placed in, for the artistic beauty, or for the extraordinary life of the people inside those buildings, once they are in a church they become pilgrims, they change their behaviour, they light up a candle and they say a prayer.

We must underline the fact that the impact with the holy place and its significance has transformed its perception. The meeting with the sacred element has changed the external motivation of the journey. By this, the tourist discovers an interior motivation that has no connection with the visit itself. In connection with the cultural-religious tourism we can analyse two tendencies: the monofunctional one, that has a unique religious purpose. This one can be performed in Romania by visiting those churches which display miraculous icons, such as Neamt, Agapia, Sihastria and Nicula monasteries. The participant to this kind of pilgrimage is strictly the pilgrim. The multifunctional journey combines the religious and the cultural connotations and give us the chance to visit more landmarks.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The actual report is mainly based both on the method of the actual connections we can see in the geographical domain and on the methods that involve the human presence. Being favourable to the religious tradition, these buildings have the advantage of receiving many visitors who are interested in more than just his proximity. Therefore, the religious factor led to some responsibilities not

just benefits. It is worth remembering that these landmarks were previously hermitages which were later on gradually turned into churches and monasteries. It was also used the comparative method in order to work out the similarities and the differences between the holy places that appear in their general evolution. Special documents that have literary connection with this issue were used. For example: *The guide of The Orthodox monastic establishments in Romania* (Vlasie, 2001), and also information from priests and monks.

3. RESULTS

A feature of the religious tourism in the area is the fact that they are all situated around a certain region, or even a certain passage. This report deals with those holy establishments that are geographically and rurally connected. This is the case of the Buzau Passage where we can visit the following holy places.

The Barbu Monastery, Leiculesti Village-Tisau (Figure 1). The church which has the patron saint "St. Nicholas" was built by Barbu Badeanu between 1668-1669. The church underwent many changes, such as the porch which was added in 1892. At the middle of the nineteenth century, the internal paintings were performed by the School of painters from Buzau which had Nicolae Teodorescu as a main painter. The abbey dates from the eighteenth century as a historic monument. Over the last twenty years, the monastery has expanded and new buildings have appeared. It has also increased the number of nuns that serve it



Figure 1 Monastery Barbu
 Source: www.turismbuzau.ro

The Berca Monastery, Berca Village (Figure 2). The little fortress which has the patron saint "St. Archangel Michael and Gabriel" was built by the High Steward Mihalcea Candescu in 1694.



Figure 2 Monastery Berca
 Source: www.turismbuzau.ro

It was a subordinate church to the Buzau Bishopric for two centuries. In the eighteenth century it was reinforced with a wall and so it became a fortress monastery. Today we can only see the church and a part of the portal. After the Second World War ,the monastery was turned into a congregation church. After the year 1990, due to the Buzau Bishopric the Berca monastery was put into its rights again. You cannot find accommodation here.

The Carnu monastery, Tega Village, Panatau (Figure 3). The monastery which has the patron saint 'St.Archangel Michael and Gabriel' was built by the Voivode Mircea Ciobanu and his wife, Mrs. Chiajna (Mircioaia) at the middle of the sixteenth century. The church was restored by Matei Basarab in 1643 and by the monk Lavrentie and Naum Caldarusanu in 1822. It was a subordinate church to the Caldarusani monastery. At the middle of the nineteenth century, the monastery was destroyed (probably by an earthquake) and therefore it was abandoned. After 1990, the Bischoptic turned it into a monastery. The church was restored and a whole monastic structure was built around it. You cannot find accommodation here.



Figure 3 Monastery Carnu
 Source: www.turismbuzau.ro

The Ciolanu Monastery, Hales Village, Tisau (Figure 4). The monastery which has the patron saint ‘St. George’ was built by Mrs. Neaga in 1590. Over the years, the church was restored in 1764 and it was rebuilt after the fire in 1854. In the graveyard of the church ‘St. George’ we can see the tomb of Nicolae Teodorescu, who was the great bread supervisor, the founder of The Painters School from Buzau and Gheorghe Tatarescu’s uncle. The church which has the patron saint ‘St. Peter and Paul’ and ‘The Dormition of the Mother of God’ was built by the archbishop Chesarie in 1828. The internal paintings were made by the students of Nicolae Teodorescu’s school. After the fire, in 1855, the church was restored and repainted. The God icons on the iconostasis were made by Gheorghe Tatarescu, at the demand of the monastery’s abbot. In the yard of the monastery that unites the two churches there are two fountains that have cupolas painted by famous painters from The School of Buzau. Some current buildings of the abbey were built in the twentieth century. The monastery displays a rich collection of icons and cultural works of art which can be admired in its museum. Nowadays, the monastery houses the students of The Seminary that belongs to The Buzau Bishopric.



Figure 4 Monastery Ciolanu
 Source: www.turismbuzau.ro

The Ratesti Monastery, Cojanu Village, Berca (Figure 5). The church, which has the patron saint ‘The Holy Trinity’ was built in 1634 of wood and it was rebuilt of stone by the bishop Chesarie of Buzau in 1844. In the same year, the entrance tower was built. This has later on become a monument. The housing area and the abbey date back from the end of the nineteenth century. The monastery has a rich collection of icons and clerical works of art that can be seen by the tourists in its museum. The graveyard and the church which has the patron saint ‘St. Lazarus’ was built between 1825 and 1826 and it was rebuilt many times later on. After 1990, a Theological Seminary for Girls

was founded within the monastery. Tourists cannot find accommodation here.



Figure 5 Monastery Ratesti
 Source: www.turismbuzau.ro

The Ciobanoaia Monastery, Ciobanoaia Village, Merei (in the forest, about three km. away from the village road) (Figure 6). It is a monument, beam church and has the patron saint ‘St. Pantelimon’.



Figure 6 Monastery Ciobanoaia
 Source: www.turismbuzau.ro

It was built around the year 1700 by the captain Dragomir Bancescu and his family and it functioned as a hermitage. The church was renovated in the years 1913 and 1935, becoming a congregation church. After 1990, a monastery was founded around the old church. Tourists cannot find accommodation here.

The Slanic Passage houses the following monasteries:

The Poiana Marului Monastery, Bisocuta village, Bisoca (Figure 7). The monument, which dates back from the eighteenth century (about 1730), burnt down in the year 1771 and it was rebuilt between 1781 and 1784. The big church which has the patron saint ‘All Saints’ is made of wood. The little church, which has the titular saint ‘The Virgin’s Birth’ was built between 1810 and 1812. At the end of the eighteenth century, Paisie Velicicovski came here all the way from Russia. He was the first theologian to come here. One of the first abbots of the monastery, The Abbot Vasile was canonized in 2003 due to his contribution to the

clerical life and activity. People celebrate him on the 25th of April every year as The Pious Vasile from Poiana Marului. The monastery is quite isolated and the access roads are not very good. Tourists cannot find accommodation here.



Figure 7 Monastery Poiana Mărului
 Source: www.turismbuzau.ro

The Gavanul Monastery, Ciresu Village, Manzalesti (Figure 8).



Figure 8 The Monastery Gavanul
 Source: www.turismbuzau.ro

The church has the patron saints both ‘St.Nicholas’ and ‘The Dormition of Virgin Mary’. It was founded in the first half of the seventeenth century or even 1707 and it burnt down in 1821. It was rebuilt in 1828. The internal paintings, which were made due to the perseverance of the Abbot Arsenie dates back from 1885. Nowadays it is a nun monastery. Because it is situated 14 kms away from the centre of the Manzalesti centre, you cannot have an easy access, nor find accommodation here.

The Balanesei passage houses the following churches:

The cave hermitages from the Colti area-Buzioru-Braiesti (Figure 9).

CONCLUSIONS

The great number of cultural places in the Subcarpathic between Buzau and Ramnic, especially the monasteries, orthodox churches and hermitages, help those people who look for serenity, faith, history and culture. The practice of ecumenical tourism is sustained by a various confessional structure: The Orthodox

This churches from Alunis (Colti Village) are known as the Romanian Athos. They are placed in the Martyrdom Hill and they date back from the fourth century- Middle Ages. The churches have more dwellings which are rock engraved, being grouped together around the church ‘The beheading of John the Baptist’. This church is in Alunis Village, Colti, on the Martyrdom Hill and it dates back from the Middle Ages, year 1277 (by the accounts). The tourists have an easy access to these churches and they can also find accommodation at the lodges there.



Figure 9 Skete rupestral

Trails ecumenical:

1. Diocese of Buzau - Barbu Monastery - monastery Bradu - Ciolanu Monastery - Niphon - Fountain Michael the Brave - then DN 10 to Pătărlagele - Pănătău - Cârnu Monastery.
2. Diocese of Buzau - Mărăcineni - Sapoca - Cernatesti - Beceni - Vintilă Voda - Bisoca - Monastery Poiana Marului
3. Diocese of Buzau - Vernesti - Candești - Sățuc – The Muddy Volcanoes Berca

The large number of churches in Buzau and Râmnic Subcarpathic, especially monasteries and convents Orthodox churches supporting those who are seeking a moment of peace, faith, history and culture. Practicing ecumenical tourism it is supported by a diverse confessional structure: Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Unitarian and Greco Catholic. The notion of ecumenical tourism reminds us not only the idea of spiritual recreation - participation in the daily life of the places sacred - and exposure to an age-old spirituality.

people, The Catholics, The Greek- Catholics and The Unitarians. The ecumenical tourism means more than just spiritual recreation (that is to participate in the everyday life of the holy places). It also means the contact with an ancient spirituality. When the tourist attraction reflects a monument or another display of the religious-cultural heritage, we can refer to the religious tourism. The majority of the architectural buildings is represented by the religious ones, such as the monastic places, churches, hermitages and monasteries. There are many artistic Middle Ages monuments from the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries, which can be easily visited. The Subcarpathic between Buzau and Ramnic are famous monastic centres which date back from the old ages, even from the beginning of the Christianity around the Romanian territory, the third-fourth centuries. There are now eight active monasteries, a monastic centre and they all can receive tourists.

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