

THE GEO-HISTORICAL PATRIMONY IN THE POIANA RUSCĂ MOUNTAINS

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Abstract: *The Geo-historical Patrimony in the Poiana Ruscă Mountains.* The patrimony represents „the goods inherited by law from parents or spiritual goods of a people”. Starting from this, the geo-historical patrimony of the Poiana Rusca Mountains highlights the whole spiritual and cultural legacy which has been preserved down the centuries by the inhabitants of this area. Taking out from the anonymity the historical values inherited from the ancestors rekindles the “sense of identity” for the inhabitants of this area, sense which has been destroyed by the society we are living in. The patrimony elements analysed are: the Deva Fortress, the Huniazilor Castle, the Sarmizegetusa Ulpia Traiana Fortress, the Orthodox Church from Densuș and other elements with a high historical value.

Rezumat: *Patrimoniul geo-istoric din Munții Poiana Ruscă.* Noțiunea de *patrimoniu* înseamnă „bunuri moștenite prin lege de la părinți, sau bunuri spirituale ale unui popor”. Plecând de la acest aspect, patrimoniul geo-istoric al Munților Poiana Ruscă, scoate în evidență toată moștenirea spirituală și culturală pe care locuitorii acestui areal muntos l-a conservat și păstrat de-a lungul veacurilor. Scoaterea din anonimat a valorilor istorice moștenite de la înaintașii noștri are rolul de a naște „sentimentul de identitate” a locuitorilor de pe aceste meleaguri, sentiment distrus de societatea materialistă în care trăim. Elementele de patrimoniu analizate sunt: Cetatea Devei, Castelul Huniazilor, Cetatea Sarmizegetusa Ulpia Traiana, Biserica Densuș și alte elemente cu valoare istorică ridicată.

Key words: *patrimony, geo-historical, Poiana Ruscă.*
Cuvinte cheie: *patrimoniu, geo-istoric, Poiana Ruscă.*



1. INTRODUCTION

The elements of the historical heritage to be found in a geographic area represent the identity and the value of that specific area. The more historical meaning an area has, the more significant is its scientific value in the domain of the archeological research.

Through the complex concentration of the historical resources, both up the mountains and at their foot, The Poiana Rusca Mountains take out of its anonymity the cultural-historical uniqueness of this area, situated at the passage between two historical and geographical regions of the country: Banat and Ardeal.

2. THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE GEO-HISTORICAL PATRIMONY

We have ranged the monuments according to their age, the classification being indicative both of the size of their age value, and also of the need of some consistent action of conservation and restoration.

- Monuments dating from the Paleochristian age until the year 1775- high value
- Monuments dating from the time interval 1776-1830-very high value
- Monuments dating from the time interval 1831-1870- high value
- Monuments dating from the time interval 1871-1920-medium value
- Monuments dating from the time interval 1921-1960- low value
- Monuments dating from the time interval 1960- no value

(The Department of Historical Monuments of the Ministry of Culture)

Acknowledging these periods according to their time measure is very important because in the protection and restoration proposals the financial resources are usually directed to the first three categories of monuments, of which a substantial support comes from the government institutions. As far as the touristic side is concerned, the most attractive are the monuments and the cultural goods with the oldest age which are indicative for the historical evolution of a nation.

According to the age of the historical monuments of the classification mentioned above and according to the typology (nature) of the landmarks, in the Poiana Rusca Mountains the following are classified in the first category:the archaeological sites in a significant number, the Dacian , Roman and medieval citadels, the castles and churches made of wood as well as those of stone.

3. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

The archaeological sites from the Poiana Rusca Mountains territory are mostly from the Bronze Age, The Geto-Dacian Age, The Roman, the II-III century B.C. and the most important locations are: the archeological site from Deva, the „ Citadel's Hill” landmark, the archeological site from Hunedoara, the „Saint Peter's Hill” landmark, the

archeological site from Bucova, with the Transylvania's „Gate of Iron” landmark, the archeological site from Nandru, the archeological site „The cave with water”- Romanesti.

The most important archeological site is The Archeological Site Sarmisegetusa Ulpia Traiana. Its area consists in 100 ha, of which 32 ha are represented by the vestige of its own city and is under a protection and restoration regime. The excavations made only on 5 ha uncovered valuable vestiges, among which most impressive are: the Australilor Palace, the forum, the Amphitheatre, the Roman (thermal) bath, multiple temples, Necropolis, mausoleums. A part of these materials are exhibited in the Sarmisegetusa Museum. Some remains of the Roman settlement can be found at Breazova, Peșteana (N. Popa, 1999, p.368).

4. THE MIDDLE AGE HISTORICAL VESTIGES

These historical vestiges are situated on the main axes of communication, which represent the limits between Poiana Rusca Mountains and the neighbouring geographical areas.

On the North side of the mountains, on the River Bega's valley, **the Citadel of Faget** and the Citadel of Margina are situated. The first information about the Citadel of Faget, date from 1548 where Bekes Jacob, the owner of the domain Fagyath, is mentioned. This was the survivor of the Hunedoara's castellan, Ioan Bekes, who also had the title of castellan for the Manastir and Margina. It is possible that the Citadel of Faget was made under the sovereignty of the Hunedoara's Citadel and its domain. The setup of the Citdel of Faget near the roads which connected Banat and Ardeal, on the Mures' valley or the Padurenilor's domain, between the old citadels Margina and Manastir was not an accident.

The Turkish occupation on 26 August 1552 of the Timisoara's Citadel and later of other important landmarks between Banat and Transylvania such as: Lipova, Cenad, Mures' valley, makes us infer that the Citadel of Faget was in the same situation. In that terrific atmosphere, full of violence and incertitude, The Citadel of Faget is frequently mentioned as placed in the middle of events. (Tomoni D, 1999, p 41).

The Margina Citadel is mentioned by Nicolae Olahus, under the name of « castellum Morsyna » in 1536, on the eastern side of the village's hearth. The Citadel was destroyed after the peace of Karlowitz (1699), when the Banat continued to remain under the Turkish rule and the demolition of all the citadels from Banat, with the exceptions of those from Timisoara and Arad was decided. (Ceașescu Mărioara, 2006, p.16)

In connection with Margina a page of history tells the story of Iancu of Hunedoara's life, whose mother was Elisabeta de Margina, who was married with Voicu, the son of a nobleman from the Roumaian Country. He with his brothers Radu and Mogos, and also his son Iancu, received the Castel of Hunedoara, lands, forests, cities and 25 villages from King Sigismund of Luxemburg.

The Citadel from Jdioara is placed on the western side. It was documentary attested in 1320 under the Magyar name of Zsidovar which is translated by „The Citadel of Jidov”. The citadel was built by Istvan de Zsido, one of the friends of King Carol Robert de Anjou. In 1441 the citadel is under the possession of Iancu de Hunedoara. Throughout history the citadel is given from crown to crown to the kings of Hungary- the Queen Izabella, The King Ferdinand I, Ioan Sigismund- who gave the citadel to some of his subjects. (Jianu N.,2009, p 40).

The Citadel of Deva is important both for its historical significance and also for its touristic value. The Citadel of Deva was built in the 8th century for military purposes. Being converted into a noble castle by Iancu de Hunedoara, it will be consolidated during the years in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, and considered one of the most powerful citadels from Transylvania. The fortification suffered many sieges from the Otoman's armies which assaulted Transylvania (1550, 1552, 1557). In the year 1784 „the ultimatum” of Horia was delivered to the nobles who had retreated in the citadel, and in 1848 it served as the center of the imperial armies who stood against the Magyar revolutionaries. Blown up in 1849, the citadel is today only a ruin, standing at the top of a steep hill. More belts of strong walls which follows the level curves are strengthened with quadratic or circular towers and with monumental gates. In the central part there are ruins of the noble palace.

The Huniazilor Castle was built in the 15th century by Ioan of Hunedoara on the area of an old building, on a rock at the base of which the Zlasti creek flows. It is an impressive building with towers, bastions and one dungeon. The edifice roofs are high and covered with polychrome tile. The castel was rehabilitated and converted into a museum. The citadel-castle was one of the biggest and well-known of Ioan of Hunedoara's properties. The building suffered various transformations, serving boht as a strategic fortified point and also as a feudal residence. Over the years the different owners of the Castle changed its appearance enriching it with towers, salons and guest rooms.

5. THE RELIGIOUS VESTIGES – ELEMENTS OF CULTURE AND HISTORY

The religious wooden vestiges acknowledge a strong rural community, with a sense of their Romanian identity and religion. The Poiana Rusca Mountains are rich in wooden churches, randomly spread on the mountain slopes, and more numerous in the Faget Area (the north-west side of the massive). Their dating is based on the information kept from the 17- 18th century.

The stone religious vestiges can be found in small number, but have a high historical value.

The Orthodox Church Saint Nicholas, from Densus. Its architectonic features belong to the late romanian and to the early gothic style, being dated in the second half of the 13th century. The anonymous craftman was familiar with the modern forms of his time, but he also had a lot of imagination in assembling the building material which was very heterogenous, but consisting of a big amount of Roman material. The figures' monumentality and solemnity are qualities which highlight the craftman „*Ștefan de la Densus*” as the main author of the paintings from Densus (according to the inscription, his team painted during the year 1443). At the end of the 18th century in the church of Densus, Simion from Pitesti, the most popular painter of the time for the Hateg area, signed on a mural painting and on the iconostasis .

The orthodox church from Ghelari, even if not registered in the catalogue of historical monuments, its age being quite insignificant in relation with the time of history, attracts thousands of tourists because of its prominence in the rural area. Under the foundation of the priest Nerva Florea, the bulduing' construction lasted between 1939 and 1973. Of a great interest is the grand project of the church to which all the parishioners

contributed over a period of three years with a monthly amount of 5% from their salary. Near this building a block of four flats was built and also another construction where the church' museum is now located. In the vicinity of this impressive church one can find the old Orthodox church from Ghelari-The Saints Archangels Michael and Gabriel-dating from 1770, and having as a founder the grof Govăjdia- Brevoi Gheorghe. (Vlad A.,2003).

The monachal vestiges with a historical character help the consolidation of the religious continuity on this region shattered by different historical events. The most significant historically are: The Prislop Monastery- Silvasu de Sus (Hunedoara county) and the Fountain of Miron Monastery – Românești (Timis county)

The Prislop Monastery founded by Saint Nicodim in the 14th century at a distance of 13 km from Hateg, represents a spring of spiritual life, being rated as the most popular monachal place of our times, due to the presence of the great confessor of the 20th century, father Arsenie Boca.

Of great interest are also the history and the stages of this monastery in time. It is well known because of some important personalities like: lady Zamfira (the daughter of the mountain prince Moise Voda Basarab from Bucharest), Saint John from Prislop and father Arsenie Boca.

The main elements, important sights for the visitors to the monastery are: the grave of Father Arsenie Boca, The Cave of Saint John from Prislop, and the pieces made by Father Arsenie (the iconostasis of the church, the monastery's Bell Tower, the Park, the Dacian Saivan, the Cross of Oak, the Entrance Gate of the Monastery.

The Fountain of Miron Monastery, Romanesti founded by the Patriarch Miron Cristea, was started in the year 1911 and finished in 1929, sanctified in 1930 on 20th of July with the commemoration of The Saint Prophet Ilie. It is also known as „Balta Calda” due to the carbonated water which preserves the same temperature of 19 degrees during the whole year.

The architecture of the church from the Fountain of Miron Monastery is eastern – byzantine, in ship form, having a stone foundation and a high base placated with travertine. The monastery is also known under the name of „Voronetul Banatului” due to the external painting. At present the monastery's church is under reconstruction, being elevated (Sava C., 2006).

6. CONCLUSIONS

The data presented consists only of a few aspects concerning the historical evolution of the settlements in the Poiana Ruscă Mountains area, of the cultural life and its spirituality, the storage and the preservation of the identity elements through these landmarks, which are more or less known to the locals. To ignore the history of a territory means ignoring your own parents, your roots.

In all the institutions of education, but not only, the need of historical knowledge according to the geographic conditions should be emphasized more.

The globalisation process in all its methods of manifestations has only one aim: to destroy the process of knowledge, to cut out the culture of identity through the eye of history. The process is slow but with repercussions for the future.

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