THE TYPOLOGY OF THE SETTLEMENTS IN BÂRGĂU DISTRICT (ROMANIA)

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Abstract. The typology of settlements is an important factor in the regional geographical analysis of a territory. In order to make a typology there are used a large number of indicators, thus outlining a complex image of the system of studied settlements. The region has a strong rural character, consisting of four municipalities, all of them bearing the name “Bârgău”. Analyzing the localities by number of people, structure, texture, function, spatial distribution one can identify the problems they are facing, and the interventions to remedy the situation in order to achieve optimal living standards. This paper aims to emphasize the main aspects concerning the demographic dimension, structure and texture of the settlements, as well as the function and spatial distribution of the human settlements in Ținulul Bârgăului (Bârgău District) by means of morphologic and quantitative indicators. The morphology of the area plays and important role in the distribution of the settlements, four groups specific to the altitudinal levels being identifies. Thus, the majority of the settlements (6 of the total 13) are situated between 600-1000 m. The morphology of the settlements has changed in time due to the activity in this district of the II Romanian Border Regiment between 1783 and 1851, so that the majority of the villages with irregular shape changed due to imperial orders to a simple linear or linear-tentacular shape. The functional typology of the settlements in Bârgău district was subject to numerous changes. The presence of high quality pastures and meadows determined the economic profile of the settlements, by the development of the zootechnical sector. The presence of forests determined the development besides the agricultural activities of the wood and timber exploitation activities in most settlements. After the analysis of all the indicator we can perceive the great humanisation of the studied geographical area.

Keywords: settlements, demographic dimension, density, quantitative distribution, spatial distribution.
1.1. INTRODUCTION

According to the Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language, the notion ținut is “a larger territory which used to represent an administrative unit”, “place”, “region”, “zone”, “country”, “realm”, “a territory of large extension having certain specific traits (in terms of climate, relief, economic resources), “an administrative-territorial unit within a state” but also “a dominion and dominated region”.

From these definitions we may conclude that the ținut is characterized by spatial (place, geographic surface, territory), structural (relief, climate, vegetation) and political-administrative valences, eventually emerging as an administrative-territorial entity. In the Administrative Law of 1938, passed by the Royal Decree 2191, the ținut is defined as an “administrative unit with economic, cultural and social attributions”, having as subdivisions the county, the plasa and the commune. As administrative unit, the ținut disappeared in the year 1940, being nevertheless perpetuated in the geographical area by means of its mental valence. Thus, the new mental space appears in the area of geography as a regional taxon, resembling the regional system of the lands, remaining however inferior to them. (P., Cocean, 2010).

The term mental space represents ”a territory that a community, as well as an individual belonging to it, integrate in their own scale of existential values through perception (l’espace perçu), experience (l’espace vecu) and imaginary (imagined space )” (P., Cocean, 2010). As such, the mental space is characterized by the spatial dimensions of: the perceived space (l’espace perçu) representing ”the image that the individual or the community has about a place, a region, the way it is reflected on a sensory and mental level” (P., Cocean, 2010), the experienced space (l’espace vecu) ”combines the concepts of the social life space, adding to it the psychological values attached to the place” (A., Fremont, 1976,1999, P., Cocean, 2010), the imagined space ”is born of the information received by the individual from various sources (books, mass-media, oral descriptions) as well as of the compositions of the individual’s imagination” (P., Cocea, 2010), so that eventually the regional space includes all the above mentioned space types.

The geographic space, hereinafter called Ținutul Bârgău/the Bârgău District, lies on the southern side of the Bârgău Mountains, belonging to the superior and middle basin of the Bistrița River and its affluents Bârgău and Bistricioara. This mountainous, intensely inhabited space evinces a well individualized level of erosion: the platform of the Bârgaie, with an appearance of smooth plains, dominated by volcanic hills, with altitudes ranging from 1000 to 1100 m, covered in woods, meadows and hayfields, characterized by a large spreading area of dwellings and temporary households, extending towards the south, to the foot of the Călimani Mountains. The area of this spreading marks with great precision the contact of the Bârgău Platform with the eruptive mass of the Călimani mountains (Fig.1).

This ținut has been inhabited since ancient times, the settlements being documentarily attested as early as the 14th century. In 1317 it was named Borgo, in 1328 Pargio, in 1390 vilis ultrisque Borgo, in the year 1599 we have the name pro utroque Borgo, in 1548 Borgo superior et inferior, in 1549 Borgo maiori, and in 1561 Burghau. 1

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the year 1328 we find its name in the syntagm Neppendorf et Burgo, being made up of two dominions: Borgoul de Sus (Felső Borgó) and Borgoul de Jos (Alsó Borgó) as component part of the Doboca county. The two Bârgaie are also mentioned in the fiscal conscription of 1750. In the 8th century the names of the localities Josenii, Mijloceni, Prund, Colibița and Tiha appear in a statistics. In the year 1870 we find attestation for Rusu Bârgăului, Josenii, Susenii, Prund, Bistrița, Tiha and Mureșenii Bârgăului. The inhabitants of Ținutul Bârgăului adhered in the course of time to the same cultural, spiritual, mental and linguistic values, thus outlining the clear identity of this space in relation to the neighbouring territories (Țara Dornelor, Țara Năsăudului), which came to the surface in the inhabitants' awareness of belonging to these places, in their feeling of calling themselves bârgăuani (inhabitants of Bârgău), respectively in their psychological and behavioural characteristics of arrogance, intrepidity, cheerfulness and hospitality.

The emergence and the development of the settlements in this district were influenced both by the presence of man and of the Bistrita river, by the shelter offered by the Bârgău and Călimani mountains, as they evolved in a close relationship to the resources they provided. The way of life and the activities of the population in this valley were defined by the existing resources, thus laying the foundations for wood cutting and processing, as well as for shepherding. Bârgăuani focused on the manufacturing of timber, traverses and other wooden objects which they traded for grains in the plain, thus developing a genuine wood culture and completing the culture of the Romanian people and of the Romanian spirit.

The main objective of this work is that of analyzing the habitat from the geographic space of the Ținut of Bârgău, following the evolution and the major changes that have occurred in the demographic dimension, the physiognomy, the functioning and the layout of the settlements, in order to obtain a thorough vision over the territory, sustaining in this way the possibility of identifying existing dysfunctional issues, and giving the chance in the future to fix the problems and to maintain a decent standard of living.
The work methods employed in writing this paper are meant to highlight the succession thread of the undertaken actions, the finale of which should efficiently represent the desideratum of this analysis. In order to create the database, the analysis and the graphical and cartographical representation of the results obtained by processing information provided by the population censuses from the years 1850, 1900, 1956, 1966, 1992, 2002, 2011 in the form of graphics and thematic maps we used the software Microsoft Office Excell and ArcGis 9.3.

The organization of the households, the structure and the typology of the villages as well as their distribution indicate the close relationship between the local people and the environment.

Ținutul Bârgăului comprises four communes and no urban settlement. This is why we can assert that the excessive ruralization is the main feature of this regional system of the tinut-type. The optimal functionality is insured by the extra-regional polarizing centre, the town Bistrita, lying very close to the tinut.

The classification of rural settlements abides by several criteria: the demographic dimension, the structure, the texture and the economic functions.
1.2. CLASSIFICATION OF SETTLEMENTS

The most important factors influencing the demographic dimension of a settlement are the natural dynamics and the territorial mobility, which have always had a significant contribution to the dimensional changes of settlements. In order to highlight this fact we took into account the statistical data of the years 1850, 1900, 1956, 1966, 1992, 2002 and 2011.

In order to analyse the number of inhabitants of the rural settlements of the Ţinutul Bârgău we considered the following relevant categories: small rural settlements (under 500 inhabitants) with a sub-category of very small villages (under 200 inhabitants), settlements of inferior medium size (501-1000 inhabitants), settlements of superior medium size (1001-1500 inhabitants), large villages (over 1500 inhabitants) with a sub-category of very large villages (over 4000 inhabitants).

The establishment of the very small rural settlements in this area is linked to the year 1966, when the village Strâmba of the commune Josenii Bârgăului, which had 169 inhabitants, was transferred from the category of hamlets into that of villages after the second rectification of the Soviet-type administrative organization in 1956. In 2011 the village Cioasa of the commune Tiha Bârgăului entered this category with a population of 142 inhabitants, even if in the period 1956-2002 it had a population of more than 200 inhabitants it belonged to the superior category. The numeric decrease of the population between 2002-2011 owes to the young and adult population migration due to economic constraints as well as to the high rate of mortality among the remaining elderly population.

The small villages emerged as a consequence of the same processes of transferring hamlets in the category of villages, so that in 1965 the hamlets Colibiţa, Cioasa and Piatra Fântânele became villages with a population below 500 inhabitants. In 1966 we notice the existence of two small villages, the village Colibiţa passed into the category of the inferior medium ones with a population of 731 inhabitants. In the year 1977 three more villages entered this category as a consequence of the population’s growing over the 200 inhabitant threshold of the village Strâmba. Until 2002 their number recorded no change, but the data of that year’s census show the demographic regression of the village Colibiţa, which thus entered the category of small villages. In 2011 the number of small villages remained the same. The social-economic realities, the accentuation of the phenomenon of demographic ageing, the migration of the active population are the factor that led to the impossible demographic recovery of these villages. Even if two of these settlements, Colibiţa and Piatra Fântânele, have important resorts with local and regional influence, whereto the population is attracted in the summer and winter seasons, this does not improve the population’s evolution since the tourists are present only temporarily.

Medium size rural settlements have a population between 501-1500 inhabitants. In order to perform an analysis thereof this category was divided into villages of inferior medium size villages and superior medium villages respectively.

In the category of villages of inferior medium size fall the rural settlements with population numbers between 501-1000 inhabitants. In 1850 four villages entered this category: Rusu Bârgăului, Susenii Bârgăului, Mijlocenii Bârgăului and Mureşenii Bârgăului. Due to the demographic recovery, in 1900 the number of inferior medium size villages dropped, so that only the villages Rusu Bârgăului and Susenii Bârgăului fell into this category, while the other two (Mijlocenii Bârgăului, Mureşenii Bârgăului) passed into
the category of the superior medium size ones, exceeding the 1000 inhabitant threshold. This slight demographic growth continued, so that in 1930 no rural settlement belonged in this category anymore. In 1966 the number of villages in this category rose due to the change of the status of small village into village of inferior medium size of the settlement Colibița. However, because of the demographic involution, Colibița went back to the category of small village in 2002. This demographic decline owes to the migration of the young population after 1990 as well as to the decrease of the natality rate and the significant rise of mortality among the elderly. In 2011 only one settlement was part of this group, namely Rusu Bârgăului.

The inferior medium size settlements comprise the villages with populations between 1001-1500 inhabitants. In 1850 three villages entered this category: Bistrița Bârgăului, Josenii Bârgăului and Tiha Bârgăului. Due to migration and the positive natural balance from 1850 to 1900, the villages Bistrița Bârgăului and Tiha Bârgăului went to the superior category, with only one village remaining in the lower category: Josenii Bârgăului. Thanks to the growing population, in 1930 Josenii Bârgăului entered the category of large villages. In 1956, in Rusu Bârgăului, the inhabitants’ number dropped below 1000 people, so that it went back to the category of inferior medium size villages. The census of 2011 placed in this category the villages Mijlocenii Bârgăului, Susenii Bârgăului and Tiha Bârgăului.

The large rural settlements whose population numbers range from 1501 to 4000 inhabitants, next to the medium size rural settlements, represent the dimensional category with an uninterrupted presence during the analysed period. Whereas in 1850 there was but one large rural settlement within the Ținutul Bârgăului, namely Prundu Bârgăului with 1519 inhabitants, in the year 1900 their number tripled, as the villages Bistrița Bârgăului and Tiha Bârgăului joined in. Due to the positive natural balance recorded in 1930, the village Josenii Bârgăului entered this category as well. In 1956 the number of villages in this dimensional category dropped, as the village Tiha Bârgăului returned to the group of villages of superior medium size when the hamlets Ciosa and Tureac passed into the category of villages, thus reducing the population numbers of Tiha Bârgăului. In 1966 Prundu Bârgăului went into the group of very large villages. Bistrița Bârgăului joined the category of very large villages in 1992, while Josenii Bârgăului, Mureșeni Bârgăului and Tureac stayed in the same category, while Mijlocenii Bârgăului and Tiha Bârgăului entered the category of large villages. In 2002, owing to the demographic regression, Bistrița Bârgăului returned to the category of large villages, staying on the same position in 2011 as well. In that year the number of large villages was four, as the villages Bistrița Bârgăului and Josenii Bârgăului, Tureac and Mureșeni Bârgăului joined in.

Within the group of very large villages fall the ones which present a high demographic potential of over 4000 inhabitants. These villages have been present in Ținutul Bârgăului since 1966, when Prundu Bârgăului was the only locality which belonged to this category. The culminating moment was year 1992, a time when two very large settlements existed in the district: Prundu Bârgăului and Bistrița Bârgăului. In 2002 and 2011 the initial number of very large villages was renewed. Only Prundu Bârgăului managed to maintain this level, with a population growth of 100 inhabitants in the interval 1992-2002 and in spite of a decrease in the demographic potential by 649 inhabitants until 2011. In the same period the population of the village Bistrița Bârgăului dropped under the 4000 inhabitant threshold, thus passing into the large village category. Owing to the high demographic potential, to the economic, social and cultural development, the village Prundu Bârgăului aspired in the
eighty decade of the 20th century to the status of town. We can thus assert that of the four very large villages of the Bistrița-Năsăud county, namely Feldru, Maieru, Prundu Bărgăului and Rodna (Cocean, P., 2011) one, Prundu Bărgăului, lies on the territory of the studied area, which developed as a former border center and due to its agro-industrial and cultural functions. In the jinut as a whole the proportion of large villages is 61.53% with a central position dominating the proportion of small villages of 38.47% which are localized peripherically in the mountainous area.

Before the establishment of the Romanian Border Regiment II Năsăud, the villages on the territory of this jinut evinced irregular shapes (areolar, tentacular). Due to the instauration of the military regime in 1783 many changes emerged in the physiognomic typology of these villages as opposed to mountainous areas where settlements with irregular boundaries predominate. In consequence of this militarization process done by imperial order, the authorities resorted to gathering the Romanian population from the forests and from the mountain versants and moving them along the valley of the Bistrita river, the settlements being systematized with a view to the severe instruction and education of the border population. Thus, simple linear villages such as Tiha Bărgăului and linear tentacular ones such as Bistrița Bărgăului (Fig.3.), Rusu Bărgăului and Josenii Bărgăului were shaped. The degree of relief fragmentation and its declivity imposed the outlining of settlements with areolar shape such as Colibița (Fig.2) and Mureșenii Bărgăului. Nowadays we can identify four types of settlements, according to their shape:

- **linear tentacular ones**: Rusu Bărgăului; Mijlocenii Bărgăului, Susenii Bărgăului; Bistrița Bărgăului, and Tureac.
- **tentacular ones**: Prundu Bărgăului;
- **simple linear ones**: Strâmba, Tiha Bărgăului, Piatra Fântânele.
- **areolar ones**: Colibița, Ciosa.

Considering the district’s relief and the spatial criterion of the settlements we notice the presence of the three main structural types; however, some settlements combine the compact structure and the raveled and scattered structure. The main feature of large villages, especially of communes, is their morphostructural arrangement, so that the inner part of the locality mingles the features of a compact village, with households placed at its centre, with the features of a raveled village, with households placed along roads and with the features of the scattered village, with households dispersed on heights, versants and along brooks. The villages Rusu Bărgăului and Strâmba appear as settlements with compact structures. Josenii-, Mijlocenii, Susenii-, Prundu- and Bistrița Bărgăului have shapes of equalized nuclei with intercalations of raveling and even scattering towards the exterior. The coupling of settlements, which is characteristic to the jinut, begins at the contact with the mountain, gradually climbing towards valleys and plains up to altitudes of 1000 m.

At Prundu Bărgăului the coupled settlement bifurcates. The first branch follows the course of the Bărgău Valley, by outlining the village Tiha Bărgăului, with raveled structure. Towards the defile area, the number of households drops, so that the villages Tureac and Mureșenii Bărgăului transform into an area of scatterings over the plains. The second branch follows the course of the Bistrita river, including the settlements Bistrița Bărgăului and Colibița. The village Colibița adopts a typical scattered structure and links to Mureșenii Bărgăului. The initial nucleus of these settlements is constituted by the three villages of the confluence zone of Bărgău with Bistrița, Prundu-, Tiha- and Bistrița Bărgăului. On the Zimbroaia surface there used to be the village Piatra Fântânele, with a scattered structure.
Another characteristic of villages is their intercalation with temporary dwellings. The inhabitants of this ținut perform their shepherding activities during summer in the mountains, so that temporary dwellings show up. These temporary dwellings are frequent in the areas Paltin, Dl Drăgan and Merezuri, situated on the watershed between the sources of Leșu and Ilva, Dl. Ingrădit between the valleys Iliuța Corchii and Iliuța Calului, on the heights Măgura Calului and Dealul Calului, between the valleys Teșna and Trifon, on the height Măgura Calului-Priorul Candrii, between the sources of the brooks Teșna and Trifon, on the hill Dealul Rusului, between the brooks Rusu and Trifon, on the height Zămbu, between Trifon and Dornișoara, and on the height Culmea Şendroaia. As such, the compact villages are the most numerous in Ținutul Bârgăului. These settlements were subject, during the time of the military border, to an ample process of reorganization and systematisation, represented by "Theresianism” and "Josephinism” (Bădescu, I., Cucu-Oancea Ozana, Șișeștean, Gh., 2009). As a consequence 3 of the settlements were moved down into the valleys and the households within the village’s perimeter, the spatial dispersal was forbidden and the street network was systematized. Nevertheless, this compact structure of settlements is intercalated with the ravelled and scattered one.

Based on the criterion of settlement texture, which reflects the structure of the street network, of the buildings inside the village perimeter, these localities are characterized by irregularity, having the appearance of linear villages inside their inner area. Thus we may distinguish settlements without texture (Colibița, Ciosa), settlements with linear textures (Tureac, Strâmba, Rusu Bârgăului, Susenii Bârgăului), with bilinear texture (Josenii Bârgăului, Mijlocenii Bârgăului, Bistrița Bârgăului, Tiha Bârgăului), with rectangular structure (Prundu Bârgăului).

In defining the function of a settlement one considers the following indicators such as: the way the grounds are used, the professional structure of the population, the value of the material production and the proportion of the active population (Surd, V., 1993).

Ținutul Bârgăului is characterized by the high proportion of the forestry fund, the superior quality of the meadows and hayfields, the high degree of scattering of the used agricultural surfaces, which are proof of the strong character of the agricultural economy. Based on these considerations, the dominant functional type, i.e. the agricultural function has been highlighted. Such settlements are Mijlocenii Bârgăului and Mureșenii Bârgăului, characterized by the subsistence agriculture based on raising animals. One can also identify settlements with agricultural and industrial functions, characterized by the performance of activities specific to the secondary sector, namely by the development of the industry of wood cutting and processing. Such functions may be encountered in the settlements Bistrița -, Josenii-, Susenii- and Tiha Bârgăului. Due to the vast wooded areas there are a high number of economic agents performing activities in these fields. In the settlement Josenii Bârgăului, there are 100 economic agents, in Tiha Bârgăului, 50, and in Bistrița Bârgăului 19. Large orchards have been developed on the territories of the localities Bistrița Bârgăului and Josenii Bârgăului.

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2 I. Băca, Ținutul Bârgăului: Abordări conceptuale și structural- funcționale, în Studii și cercetări etnografice, XVI, Bistrița, 2011, p.420
Fig. 2. Colibița - areolar form
(source www.earth.google.com)

Fig. 3. Bistrița Bârgăului linear tentacular form.
(source www.earth.google.com)
The agricultural and sylvan function of the village Bistrița Bârgăului is completed by its energetic function, due to the existence and function of the hydroelectric plant situated downstream from the accumulation lake in Colibița.

The localities with mixed functions, in which the population is employed in the three sectors in relatively equal proportions are Prundu Bârgăului, Colibița and Piatra Fântânele. In Prundu Bârgăului, a polarizing centre of the 3rd order, such agricultural activities as sheep raising, processing industry and services in the fields of finances and banking, trade, education, medicine and ambulance services are quite balanced. It was in this locality that the first paper mill was set up in 1786, later transformed into a paper factory; the RAAL factory, which produces cooling systems for building equipment and agricultural machines, created 1000 work places. The settlements Colibița and Piatra Fântânele evince very good touristic potentials, next to agricultural activities, based on the presence of such touristic objectives as the Colibița Lake, the Dracula Castel Hotel, the ski slope, the Monastery "Nașterea Maicii Domnului" in Piatra Fântânele.

The spatial distribution of the settlements is an important factor in analyzing the habitats within a geographical space and it can be approached from two perspectives: a quantitative and a morphological one. The data used to calculate these indicators are the ones provided by the census of 2011.

The quantitative distribution of the settlements is effected by means of the following indicators:

The settlements’ density – the 13 settlements in Ținutul Bârgăului are scattered over a surface of 488,4 km², so that the medium density is 2,66 localities/km². Compared to the medium national value of 5,06 localities/km², we get an inferior value. This owes to the high degree of the households’ scattering in the mountainous area, as well as to the existence of vast areas with no settlements. In communes one notices the existence of densities with values inferior to the national average in the case of the communes Bistrița Bârgăului (1,07), Tiha Bârgăului (2,5) and Prundu Bârgăului (4,2), as well as with superior values in the case of the commune Josenii Bârgăului. This superior value owes to the small territory of the commune’s surface (55,6km²) occupied by a large number of settlements (4

The density of the conventional settlements – refers to the territorial repartition of the localities with conventional areas. It is calculated by relating the inhabitants’ number of the administrative unit to that of the localities. The value obtained for the ținut is as high as de 1739,15. By relating the total population number of the administrative unit to the obtained value, by referring to 100 km², we get the number of conventional localities within the territorial-administrative unit. We notice high values in the commune Prundu Bârgăului, namely 7,89 conventional settlements/100 km² and lower ones in the communes Bistrița Bârgăului, namely 1,35 conventional settlements /100 km² and Tiha Bârgăului with a value of 1,85 inhabitants /100km².

The areal coefficient is obtained by relating the surface of the administrative unit to the number of the localities it comprises. The value obtained represents the surface corresponding to the component settlements. The value obtained for the entire ținut is 37,56km²/locality, situated much above the national value of 18,1 km²/locality. As far as the communes are concerned, these vary between 13,9 km²/locality in the commune Josenii Bârgăului and 39,8 km² in the commune Tiha Bârgăului. This coefficient is in inverse ratio to the density of the settlements, so that the units with high values of settlements’ density evince low values of their areal coefficient (commune Josenii Bârgăului).
The medium distance between settlements is equal to the value obtained by extracting the radical of the areal coefficient. In Ținutul Bârgăului the medium distance is 6.12 km, which is above the national level (5.1 km).

The dispersion index gives the degree of territorial scattering of settlements. It is calculated by using A. Demangeon’s formula:

\[ \text{Id} = (N - N^*)n/N \]

where:
- \( N \) - the unit’s population
- \( N^* \) - the administrative population
- \( n \) - number of the unit’s component localities

The value of the index varies within the district from 0.19 in commune Bistrița Bârgăului and 3.76 in commune Tiha Bârgăului. The low values characterize the communes which comprise a low number of villages (Bistrița Bârgăului and Prundu Bârgăului, which are composed of 2 settlements). The high values are characteristic of communes with a large number of structures.

The district of Bârgău is crossed by the major road DN 17. Most of the localities are crossed by this road or at located at less than 5 km from it. The villages with a high degree of isolation, located at more than 20 km are Strâmba, Colibița and Ciosa. The district is partially crossed by the railway which makes the link between the town of Bistrița and the village of Bistrița Bârgăului.

![Fig. 4. The altimetric distribution of settlements.](image-url)
The altimetric distribution of settlements is conditioned by numerous lithologic and tectonic factors, by the fragmentation degree of the relief, by the organization and density of the hydrographic network.

Under the height of 600 m the Strâmba, Josenii-, Mijlocenii and Rusu Bârgăului villages are situated. Between 601 – 800 m the villages are developed in the lowlands: Bistrița-, Prundu-, Susenii Bârgăului. Between 800 – 1000 m the villages that belong to the commune of Tiha Bârgăului (Tureac, Mureșenii Bârgăului, Tiha Bârgăului) and Colibița (commune Bistrița Bârgăului) are developed. Only two of them, Ciosa and Piara Fântânele are located at more than 1100 m. (Fig 4.).

CONCLUSIONS

Due to the particular features of the natural environment, the southern area of the Bârgău Mountains gave birth in time to a habitational area whose anthropization vectors were the hydrographic networks Bistrița and Tiha (Bârgău). This morpho-hydrographic axis shelters a united network of settlements that the local people call "The United States of Bârgău". The specific trait of these settlements is their development along the rivers Tiha and Bistrița, which drain the entire territory of eight villages of the whole number of thirteen, all of which are called Bârgău. The density of the settlements shows values inferior to the national average, due both to the morphological conditions and the predominance of the middle, large and very large villages. There are also differences in the indicators which show the repartition of settlements. The morphologic distribution of the settlements indicate the development of a large number of localities (7), at altitudes ranging from 600 to 1000 m, both in the Prundu Bârgăului Depression and in the interfluve areals of Tiha-Bistrița, as well as their resilience to the morphological conditions, at the same time illustrating the necessity of extending the settlements’ boundaries due to their geodemographic potential. The morphology of the village boundaries underwent changes as a result of the establishment and functioning of the Romanian Border Regiment II Năsăud in the time span 1783-1851, so that most of the villages with irregular shapes changed, as a result of the imperial orders, into villages with simple linear and linear-tentacular shapes.

The functional typology of the settlements in Ținutul Bârgăului was subjected to many changes. The existence of high-quality hayfields and meadows has defined the economic profile of the settlements in this ținut and led to the development of the zootechnical field based particularly on the raising of bovines and ovines. Thanks to the rich forestry fund, next to agricultural ones, activities in the field of wood cutting and processing have developed in the majority of the settlements. The largest number of the population perform forestry activities in their own households, and occasionally in other households as well. Next to the settlements with agricultural functions emerged the ones with agricultural and industrial ones based both on the primary cutting and processing of wood and on machine constructions and electrical energy production (the micro hydrowlectric plant in Bistrița-Bârgăului) and even on green energy (Eoliene-Piatra Fântânele). The traditional handicraft activities, among which pottering, weaving, manufacturing of sheepskin clothing and sofas are constantly loosing ground because of the precarious financial situation of the population and the market-invasion by the larger companies.

The classification of the settlements, the analysis of the numerous indicators offer us a clear vision on the studied territory and an opportunity to identify the existing
dysfunctionalities and the possible remedies or even their prevention in the future in order to reach a decent standard of living.

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