

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OF THE ȘUREANU MASSIF THROUGH THE VALORIZATION OF ANTHROPOGENIC POTENTIAL

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Abstract: *The knowledge of cultural heritage constitutes a fundamental element in understanding communal identity and in consolidating the nexus between past, present, and future. Cultural heritage, in both its tangible and intangible forms, reflects the historical, social, and spiritual evolution of society, serving as an essential resource for education, social cohesion, and sustainable development. The study of one's own history contributes to the formation of identity consciousness and the valorization of cultural diversity, providing the necessary benchmarks for interpreting contemporary processes.*

In the current context of globalization, the protection and promotion of cultural heritage become imperative for maintaining local and regional specificity. The responsible capitalization of heritage stimulates interest in culture, tourism, and scientific research, generating significant economic and social benefits. Thus, the knowledge and transmission of cultural and historical heritage represent essential premises for the harmonious development of communities and for the preservation of collective memory.

Keywords: *GIS, development, anthropogenic, cultural tourism, tourism planning, tourism valorization*

1. Introduction

The Șureanu Massif has been inhabited since antiquity, its periphery and surroundings being replete with cultural landmarks that reflect the historical, social, and spiritual evolution of the local community, thereby constituting a genuine resource for tourism activities. [7]

Given that the tourism potential belongs to the category of resources that can only be consumed *in situ*, its integration into the socio-economic circuit of assets constitutes itself into both a superior capitalization process and a significant factor in the economic development and spatial planning of the region. [6]

The present work constitutes a continuation of previous studies conducted within the same area, specifically the analysis of natural tourism potential. The development of tourism in the massif through the capitalization of anthropogenic potential cannot be achieved without the fundamental understanding and contribution of the morpho-touristic potential (relief, climate, hydrography, vegetation, fauna, etc.), as the latter 'establishes itself as the richest and most varied tourism resource and constitutes the backbone of any landscape' [3] and its supporting framework. Within the aforementioned study, an accurate spatial delimitation was performed to maintain the unity of geomorphological individualities, which were deemed appropriate for the objectives of tourism development and valorization. [8]

The attractiveness of the anthropogenic potential stems from the emotional impact and the interest generated by these diverse objectives, viewed through their close connection

with the civilization and culture of the Romanian community. Man-made forms can be categorized into distinct periods—prehistoric, ancient, medieval, and modern—during which objectives of historical, cultural, religious, economic, and touristic value were established. [7]

The historically uneven exploitation of these attractive elements was primarily due to the degree of accessibility relative to the main centers of tourism interest. A reassessment of the development strategies necessary for the planning and tourism valorization of the Șureanu Massif is currently required. A primary step in this endeavor is the accurate and comprehensive identification of anthropogenic elements.

This study aims to investigate and rectify the state of existing facilities within the perimeter of the massif, which are characterized by a lack of systematic planning. Having been constructed in a disorganized manner and in non-compliance with industry regulations, these developments lack a sustainable character. [7]

2. Materials and Methods

The research was conducted in several successive stages. During the initial phase, the study area was defined and its boundaries established based on geological, geomorphological, and functional criteria. To ensure the accuracy of the cartographic representations, the primary spatial elements (hydrographic network, access infrastructure, and built-up perimeter) were vectorized, while primary and secondary data were integrated into a Geographic Information System (ArcGIS 10.1).

This was followed by an exhaustive and highly detailed inventory of all cultural-historical and tourism-related objectives across the entire surface of the Șureanu Massif. Their geographic localization was influenced by the morphological layering—from the periphery towards the interior—of all natural framework components, which, in turn, determined specific patterns of human settlement and anthropogenic exploitation.

The database was augmented through the use of contemporary and historical cartographic materials, as well as data from institutional sources and public databases (eGISpat – the spatial database provided by the National Institute of Heritage), Law No. 5 of March 6, 2000, regarding the approval of the National Territorial Planning Plan, Section III – Protected Areas; Law No. 190/2009 regarding Section VI – Tourism Zones; and the List of Historical Monuments – an inventory document compiled by the Directorate of Cultural Heritage within the Ministry of Culture, including subsequent additions and updates.

Fieldwork played a pivotal role in identifying, verifying, and updating anthropogenic objectives. This involved interviews and discussions with representatives of public authorities and the private sector to capture local perceptions, socio-economic initiatives, and relevant territorial issues. Concurrently, working hypotheses were validated, inaccuracies regarding current realities were corrected, and photographic documentation of the identified anthropogenic objectives was conducted.

Data processing was performed using both general-purpose software (Microsoft Office) and specialized applications (ArcGIS 10.1, AutoCAD), tailored to the type of analysis and the volume of processed data.

The interpretation of results was based on correlating the acquired information with specialized literature, relevant scientific articles, national and international databases, and cartographic documents (including orthophotos) used for the analysis of territorial evolution. The resulting thematic maps highlight the spatial distribution and the role of anthropogenic objectives within the analyzed territorial system at a local and regional level.

3. Results and Discussion

Anthropogenic tourism heritage encompasses elements that integrate a complex of recreational attributes, determined by their inherent material and spiritual values. Man-made forms can be classified into distinct historical periods—prehistoric, ancient, medieval, and modern—during which structures of historical, cultural, religious, economic, and touristic significance were established.

The analysis of these elements was conducted using a historical-chronological approach to highlight the specific features and values characteristic of different eras. The most significant attributes identified include antiquity, uniqueness, novelty, scale, and function (both original and current).

The Șureanu Massif hosts heritage assets of national interest (HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF EXCEPTIONAL NATIONAL VALUE) in accordance with Law No. 5 of March 6, 2000, regarding the approval of the National Territorial Planning Plan, Section III – Protected Areas:

a. Architectural monuments and ensembles: under the category of fortresses, the Crivadia Tower (Crivadia village, Bănița commune) is notable.

b. Archaeological monuments and sites:

- Dacian fortifications: The Dacian fortress at 'La Cetate' (Săsciori commune, Căpâlna village, Alba county); the Dacian fortress and tumular necropolis at 'Cetățuie' (Cugir); the Dacian fortifications in Orăștioara de Sus commune (specifically 'Cetățuia Înaltă' and 'Blidaru' in Costești village; and 'Dealul Grădiștii', 'Vârful Lui Hulpe', and 'Fețele Albe' in Grădiștea de Munte village); and the Dacian fortress in Luncani village.
- Paleolithic complexes: Mousterian occupational levels at 'Peștera Bordul Mare' (Ohaba Ponor village, Pui commune, Hunedoara county).

The primary administrative-territorial units within the Șureanu Massif characterized by a very high concentration of built heritage of national cultural interest (according to Law No. 5/2000) are Săsciori, Pianu, and Săliștea (Alba county), alongside Baru, Bănița, Boșorod, Pui, Orăștioara de Sus, Sălașu de Sus, and Sântămăria-Orlea (Hunedoara county).

The Directorate of Cultural Heritage within the Ministry of Culture has conducted an exhaustive and highly detailed inventory of all cultural-historical and tourism objectives at the national level. According to the List of Historical Monuments (LMI, 2015, with subsequent updates), the built/immovable heritage situated within the Șureanu Massif comprises 74 entries. These are categorized into 3 ensembles, 42 historical monuments, and 29 archaeological sites; 43 of these are classified as of national importance (Category A) and 31 as of local importance (Category B).

Structurally, these monuments are classified as follows: 52 archaeological monuments (I), 21 architectural monuments (II), and 1 memorial and funerary monument (IV).

Beyond these, the region's heritage is further enriched by elements of movable heritage (museums, archives, collections, etc.) and intangible heritage (crafts, rituals, oral traditions, etc.).

In accordance with Law No. 190/2009 regarding Tourism Zones, the study area includes administrative-territorial units (UATs) with a high concentration of anthropogenic resources (Romoș) and units with a very high concentration of such resources (Bănița, Boșorod, and Orăștioara de Sus in Hunedoara county). [10]

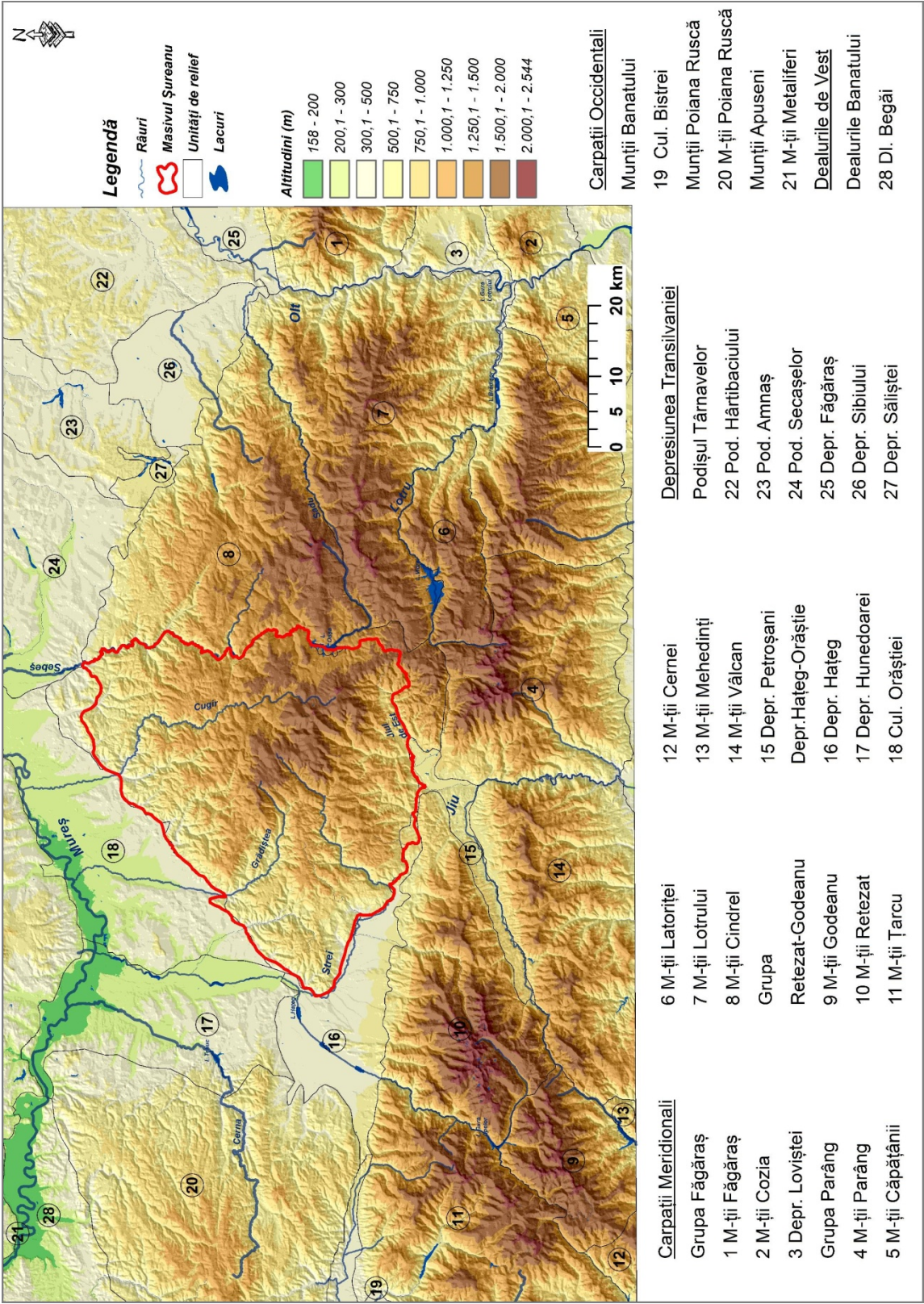


Figure 1. The Șureanu Massif. Geographical location

Table: Built Heritage within the Șureanu Mountains

Source: Ministry of Culture, National Heritage Institute, 2015, updated

No.	Administrative-territorial unit	Historical monuments of universal and national cultural value – Category A			Historical monuments of local cultural value – Category B			Total
		monuments	ensembles	sites	monuments	ensembles	sites	
1	Bănița	2	-	2	-	-	-	4
2	Baru	1	-	-	2	-	2	5
3	Căpâlna	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
4	Cioclovina	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
5	Costești	6	-	4	-	-	-	10
6	Crivadia	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
7	Cucuiș	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
8	Cugir	-	-	-	3	-	1	4
9	Grădiștea de Munte	11	-	6	-	-	2	19
10	Luncani	-	-	1	1	-	-	2
11	Ohaba Ponor	-	-	3	-	-	-	3
12	Petrila	2	1	-	5	-	-	8
13	Petroșani	-	-	-	7	2	-	9
14	Ponor	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
15	Săsciori	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
16	Șugag	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
17	Târsa	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
	Grand total	23	1	20	19	2	9	74

The massif encompasses a rich built cultural heritage, comprising elements dating from the Paleolithic to the Modern Era, including cultural, historical, economic, tourist, ethnographic, and folklore sites.

In the category of Historical Edifices, Paleolithic habitation vestiges are found both in numerous caves that sheltered the earliest human communities and at open-air sites (naturally protected locations). The most significant are located near Cioclovina and Ohaba Ponor, featuring Mousterian occupation levels at the 'Peștera Bordu Mare' site.

During Antiquity, this territory was intensely settled, serving as the core of the Getae-Dacian state. Evidences of Dacian habitation are ubiquitous, appearing as military or civilian fortified settlements, fortresses, towers, sanctuaries, household annexes, isolated dwellings, or seasonal pastoral shelters (*stâne*). Consequently, a concentric defensive system was constructed from the center toward the periphery, surrounding the legendary Sarmizegetusa Regia (located at Grădiștea de Munte). This system includes the fortresses of Fețele Albe, Blidaru, Costești-Cetățuia Înaltă, Piatra Roșie, Peștera Bolii, Cugir, and Căpâlna. Most of these are currently in a precarious state of conservation, with only fragmentary ruins remaining. Civilian residences, now covered by soil, appear as prominent mounds, such as those on the Luncani Plateau, Bobicului Hill (near Prohodiște), or Hulpe Hill, near Groape Peak (1284 m). Sarmizegetusa Regia, the capital of Dacia, was the

preeminent military, religious, and political center of the period. The fortress, quadrilateral in layout, covers an area of 30,000 m². Archaeological excavations have revealed traces of Dacian and Roman settlements, a complex of circular sanctuaries, as well as granaries and tool workshops.

The Dacian Fortresses of the Orăştie Mountains—Sarmizegetusa Regia (Grădiştea de Munte), Cioclovina, Costeşti-Cetăţuie, Costeşti-Blidaru, Luncani-Piatra Roşie, and Băniţa—are included in the National List of Historical Monuments and are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List [11]. The analyzed area (the Hunedoara section of the Şureanu Massif) is thus part of the Universal Heritage, validating its exceptional significance and mandating special protection measures. [18]

The Daco-Roman cohabitation stage is represented by *villae rusticae* at Sântămărie Orlea, Roman settlements, archaeological sites, fortifications, and Roman castra (forts). The most spectacular historical monument in Şugag, locally known as 'Ocoale,' is the Roman marching camp established by the Moorish cavalry on the Auşel Plateau, west of Pătru Peak, during the final assault on the Dacian defensive system. Other castra are located at 'Piatra Grădiştii' (Bucium village), the 'Grădişte' marching camp (Târsa village), 'Comărnicele Height' (Baru village), and the Jigorul Plateau (Băniţa village). Additionally, the Roman fortification at Costeşti-Cetăţuia and the earthwork fortification at Grădiştea de Munte are noteworthy. [12]

From the Medieval Period, numerous vestiges remain in the form of ruins and watchtowers, such as the medieval fortresses of Săsciori, Sibişel, or Crivadia, and fortifications like 'Dealul Bolii' (Băniţa). The Crivadia Medieval Tower, situated on a limestone cliff near the Crivadia viaduct, is included in the List of Protected Areas as an architectural monument and ensemble of national importance. [9]



Figure 2. Sarmiszegetusa Regia Fortress

Archaeological monuments and sites are present in the commune of Pui, specifically in the village of Ohaba Ponor, which features Mousterian occupation levels at the 'Peștera Bordu Mare' site [9]. Other notable archaeological sites are located in Cugir, Baru, and Sarmizegetusa, including the specific locations of 'Dealul Grădiștii', 'Vf. Lui Hulpe', 'Sub Cununi', and the 'Fețele Albe Massif'.

Religious edifices exhibit a spatial distribution comparable to that of historical ones, reflecting humanity's continuous quest to establish private sanctuaries for quiet retreat and unhindered communication with the divinity [3]. Based on their antiquity, cultural-historical significance, artistic value, and tourism potential, the following are particularly noteworthy: the Church of the 'Holy Archangels' and 'Holy Trinity' in the town of Cugir (1808) and the Roman Catholic Church in the Scăunel district of Cugir, constructed between 1824 and 1826.

Regarding the tourism importance of religious buildings, monasteries play a prominent role. Notable examples include the Oașa Monastery in the village of Șugag, situated on the shores of the Oașa reservoir, and the Afteia Monastery (traditionally known as Cioara) in the village of Mărgineni, Săliștea commune, which dates back 600 years.

Monastic life is further represented by several hermitages, such as the Țeț Hermitage in Șugag commune, the Călene Convent (nuns' hermitage) dedicated to the 'Protection of the Mother of God', and the 'Saint George the Great Martyr' Hermitage (monks' hermitage) in the village of Cucuiuş, Beriu commune. [5]

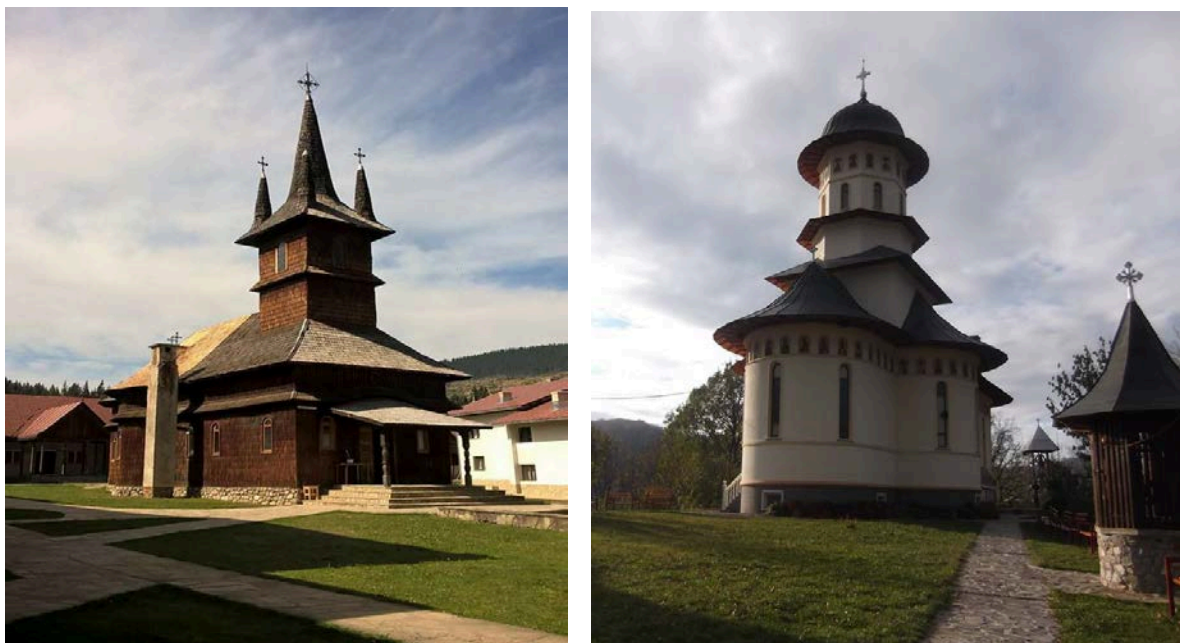


Figure 3. Oașa Monastery and Afteia Monastery

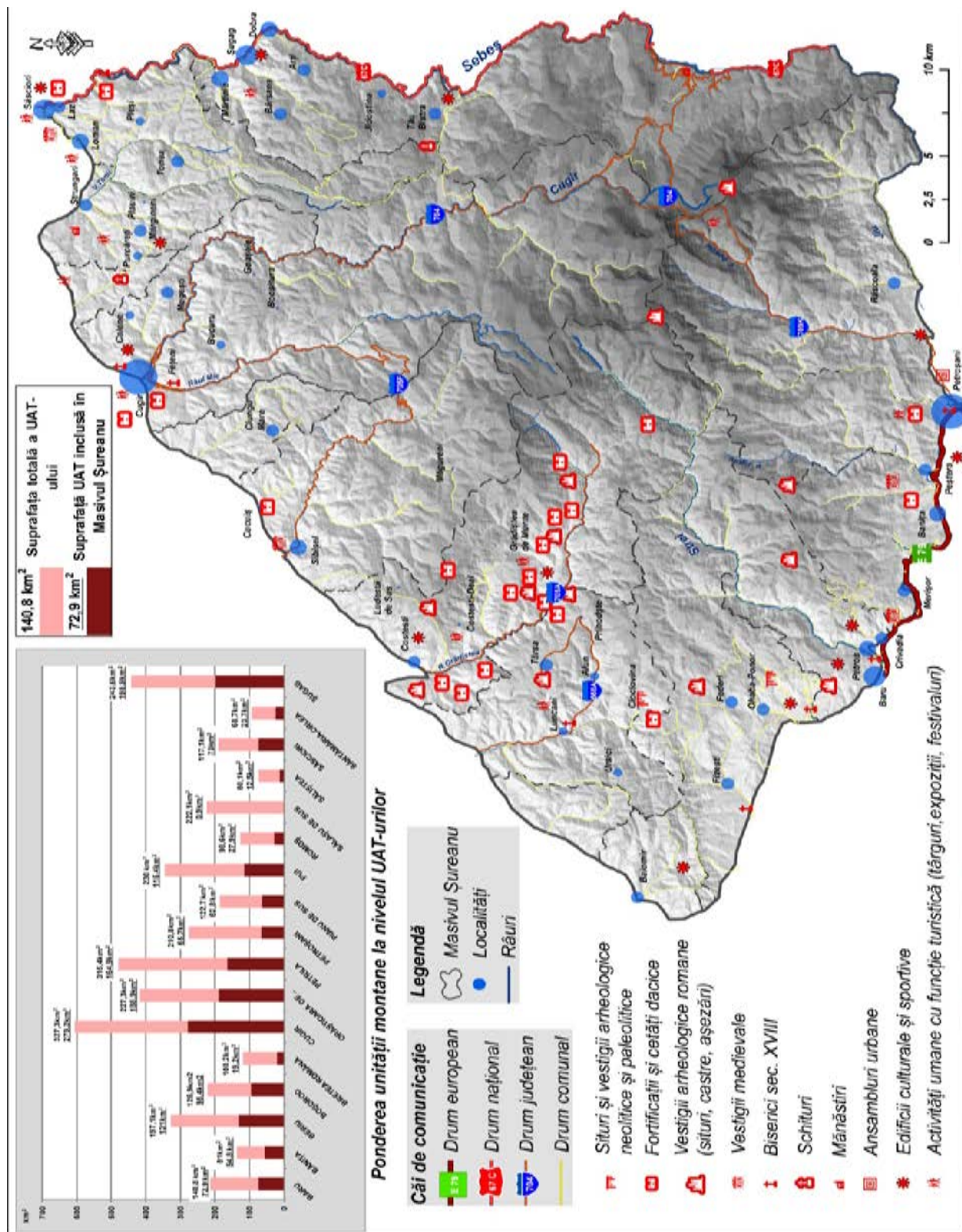


Figure 4. Spatial distribution of anthropic tourism potential in the Sureanu Massif

Cultural edifices exhibit a relatively low density across the massif's territory. The memorial house of the folk craftsman Nicolae Cernat (1892–1962) in Șugag preserves a series of exhibits—including woodworking tools, wooden platters (*blide*), traditional shelving units (*blidare*), and icons on glass—alongside testimonies of local traditions. Museums and exhibitions are represented by the 'Nicolae Cernat' museum collection in Șugag, the tripartite

museum collection at the Children's Palace in Cugir, and various exhibitions of icons and fine arts in the town of Cugir. Additionally, the museum and house-museum of teacher Stancu in Loman are of significant interest.

Within the monuments category, we note the War Memorials (Heroes' Monuments) in Șugag and Sebeșel, as well as the birthplace and bust of Sava Henția, the latter being a work by sculptor I. Panait . [15]

The number of libraries within the area experienced a significant decline between 1995 and 2016. Nevertheless, libraries in Cugir, Săliște, Săsciori, Șugag, Petroșani, Petrila, Baru, and Boșorod remain noteworthy. The rural cultural heritage of the Șureanu Massif is sheltered and preserved in museum collections, such as the one in Cugir—which hosts periodic icon and fine arts exhibitions—and the Ethno-folklore Museum of Baru commune.



Figure 5. Monuments of the heroes in Șugag and Sebeșel

Sports facilities include the 'Arena Metalurgistul' sports complex and 'Parc Stadium' in Cugir, the 'Râul Mic' recreational area, as well as nautical recreation and sport fishing sites on the Oașa, Tău Bistra, and Canciu reservoirs. This category also encompasses hunting and fishing grounds located in Tău-Bistra, Cugir, Ponor, Purcăreți, and Șugag.

Economic edifices with tourism functions comprise technical achievements with significant economic and tourism impact, such as tunnels, access roads, narrow-gauge railways, and funiculars, all developed within the context of natural resource exploitation in the Șureanu Massif.

A relevant example is the artificial tunnel within the Cioclovina Cave, designed for guano extraction, alongside the forestry and mining infrastructure situated in the Râul Mic al Cugirului, Grădiște, Petros, and Aușel valleys, as well as on the limestone plateaus (Șomârdale, Valea Lola), which are currently decommissioned. Extractive activities have left visible morphological traces, manifested through quarries, spoil tips (waste heaps), and mining adits, such as the bauxite exploitations at Ohaba-Ponor, the limestone and clay quarries at Bănița, the rockfill quarries in the Oașa Lake area, or the galleries on the Grădiște Valley at Muncelu. These are complemented by engineering structures of aesthetic and historical value, such as the Crivadia Viaduct and the 'Wasser Leine' aqueduct in Cugir (1906), which enhance the industrial heritage and its potential for tourism valorization.



Figure 6. The Crivadia Viaduct and the Bănița Quarry

The four dams situated on the Sebeș River are noteworthy features, impounding reservoirs of varying scales that introduce a distinctive element into the mountain landscape.

All these economic-industrial structures with tourism potential possess significant landscape value, serving as opportunities for the development of recreational, weekend, and sport fishing tourism, as well as industrial heritage tourism.

Ethnographic Tourism Resources

The Șureanu Massif integrates several ethno-folkloric areas: the Orăștie Region (accounting for approximately 80%), the Sebeș Valley, the Hațeg Country, and the Jiu Valley (the *Momârlani* subculture). From an administrative standpoint, the Sebeș Valley Area encompasses settlements along the Sebeș Valley, Pianu Valley, and partially the Secaș Valley [1]. The Orăștie Region includes villages in the Geoagiu and Grădiște valleys; the Hațeg Country penetrates the massif along the Strei Valley (Ohaba-Ponor, Boșorod, Baru, etc.); and the Jiu Valley Region (Momârlani) includes the settlements of Petroșani, Petrița, Câmpa, Tirici, Jieț, Râșcoala, etc.

The traditional village and peasant household reflect the evolution of agricultural domestic units over centuries. This evolution has been influenced by improvements in building material processing methods and the expansion of human needs. Consequently, several construction types can coexist within the same village, presenting varied states of preservation depending on their construction period, the craftsmen involved, and the maintenance provided. The characteristics, shape, and structure of these settlements are primarily influenced by the topography of the construction site, the hydrographic network, the inhabitants' basic occupations, locally available raw materials, characteristic vegetation, and ethno-cultural traditions.

Several types of traditional settlements corresponding to the ethno-folkloric zones are discernible within the Șureanu Massif. The Petroșani Depression combines urban settlements and industrial colonies with pastoral rural settlements. Here, the traditional *Momârlani* household is characterized by simplicity, a rectangular footprint, and the use of wood. The influence of the Hațeg Country is manifested through households with reduced volume, a single level, and planimetric typologies adapted to agriculture and animal husbandry. The Orăștie Region and Sebeș Valley exhibit Saxon influences, visible in the street-facing enclosure of properties, the use of stone, brick, tiled roofs, and the specific spatial organization of the dwellings.

These traditional typologies constitute a valuable built heritage, playing an essential role in defining local identity and facilitating the cultural and tourism valorization of the Șureanu Massif.

Traditional Basic Occupations

Agriculture, practiced intensively at the periphery of the mountain area where surface areas are larger, the terrain is fertile, and yields are high, penetrates the interior up to altitudes of 800–1000 m, utilizing species adapted to lower temperatures. Cultivated species, particularly in the Sebeș area, include rye, barley, spelt, oats, and grapevines; the grape harvest was historically a celebratory event [4]. The Orăștie Region is distinguished by its cereal crops (spring and winter wheat, maize, barley, rye), as well as textile, oilseed, and industrial plants.

Pastoralism has ancient traditions, with transhumant movements being a common practice—flocks would cross into Wallachia, reaching the Danube and even Dobrogea. An event of profound significance in community life is the custom of 'măsuratul oilor' (the measuring of the sheep's milk), a traditional local festival that takes place during the ascent of the sheep to the mountain pastures. Held between June 1st and 8th, it attracts both flock owners and tourists seeking authentic experiences. Also linked to pastoral activity are the traditional flute players from Grădiștea de Munte, Costești Deal, the Luncani Plateau, Ohaba Ponor, Federi, and Petros. [13]

The massif area also contains a series of temporary settlements used for various economic purposes (hay collection and storage, wintering of animals), as well as numerous sheepfolds, located on the ridges in the central part of the mountain, at the upper limit of the forest.

Milling was a highly developed occupation in southwestern Transylvania, with traditional water-powered technical installations widespread along the Sebeș Valley in Petrești, Căpâlna, and Laz. Căpâlna also housed an oil press for pumpkin seeds, and Laz one for walnut oil. Within the Șureanu Massif, several localities still practice small-scale peasant industries utilizing water power: milling, oil extraction, and fulling. Noteworthy are the fulling mills and whirlpools at Dobra and Laz, featuring two encountered types ('with cups' and 'with paddles' or 'wings'), used to process the white woollen cloth for traditional trousers, vests, leg wraps, shepherd's cloth for hoods and capes, or striped rugs known as [4].

Fulling involves the production and finishing of heavy fabrics using special installations, practiced in the villages of Dobra, Șugag, and Laz. The resulting material was used for manufacturing traditional folk costumes. Coopering was practiced in the village of Prihodiște (Hunedoara County), producing various vessels from oak wood, vats for cabbage, barrels for wine and plum brandy, etc.

Traditional crafts exhibit great typological diversity within and at the periphery of the massif: continuously practiced crafts, such as sheep farming in the Șureanu Mountains and icon painting on glass in Laz; revived crafts in specialized centers, such as pottery in Săsciori; and disappeared crafts with potential for relaunch, such as artistic wood processing and weaving in the Sebeș Valley.

Wood Processing

The study area possesses significant forest resources that have shaped the entire occupational and spiritual universe of its inhabitants regarding traditional architecture. In this context, artistic wood processing techniques have materialized in the creation of practical household objects (tables, chairs, beds), technical tools, peasant technical installations (washing tubs/fulling mills, mills, oil presses), and the construction of century-old wooden houses, houses with enclosed courtyards (*ocol închis*), polygonal barns (*șuri*), and wooden gates specific to pastoral households, originally covered with shingles (*șiță/șindrilă*).

A distinct chapter in the artistic processing of wood is pastoral art, illustrated by objects meticulously crafted by shepherds during the summer months. These include intricate carvings on personal items such as staffs (*bâte*), flutes (*fluiere*), or drinking vessels (*căuce*), as well as gifts for a beloved woman—the distaff (*furca de tors*) and the spindle (*fusul*). The specific wooden architecture landscape of the Sebeș Valley is further defined by its funerary art, specifically the existence of monumental wooden funerary posts (*stâlpi funerari*) in the villages of Săsciori (Loman) and Pianu de Sus. In the cemeteries of the Sebeș Valley settlements, funerary monuments made of oak wood take the form of crosses placed at the head of women's graves, or posts in the case of men's graves.

Stone Processing

The art of processing local materials extended to construction materials like stone. In Șugag locality, the roadside shrines (*troițe*) are notable; deeply rooted in ancient solar cults, they are usually located on mountain ridges, at the convergence of ridge roads, or alongside main access routes. Their presence is linked to rituals of sanctifying places and animals performed by the priest on specific annual dates. Unlike shrines found elsewhere, those here possess a unique character: small altars protected by a house-shaped stone construction.

On the ridges of Aușelul and Pătru Peak, there are peculiar stone constructions resembling small towers up to 2-2.5 m high, known locally as *momâi*. Although their ancestral purpose is no longer known, today they serve as orientation markers for both tourists and shepherds in foggy conditions.



Figure 7. Stone wayside crosses specific to the Șugag highlands

Clay Processing

The pottery center of Săsciori represents the oldest and most significant center of Romanian ceramics in southeastern Transylvania, boasting several centuries of documented continuity and origins dating back to the Dacian era. The local specificity is defined by red, unglazed earthenware (red ceramics). Currently, this craft is sustained through traditional transm

Textile Fiber and Yarn Processing

The processing of textile fibers is manifested through home-woven fabrics, carpets, traditional towels, tablecloths, and pillowcases. These are complemented by wooden objects

such as distaffs, spindles, drinking vessels, cheese molds, birch bark salt cellars, and spoons. Artistic weaving holds a distinct place in the traditional art of the Sebeș region, with renowned centers in the Sebeș Valley, Săsciori, and Șugag. Of particular academic interest is the use of vegetable dyes for coloring textile fibers and fabrics, a process that yields warm, subtly nuanced tones in contrast to the stark colors produced by chemical methods. [4]

Glass Processing

The iconography school of Laz is represented by the Poienaru family, which produced five generations of painters over two centuries. The Poienaru family home houses an impressive collection of works spanning the entire lineage, including folk costumes, Săsciori ceramics, and local textiles, which together form a cohesive representation of the folk culture of the Sebeș Valley.

Folklore Elements

The traditional folk costume is characterized by a sober and tasteful chromatic diversity, expressing the artistic attributes of the local inhabitants. The Sebeș Valley is distinguished by a simple, sober, and remarkably elegant black-and-white combination, reflecting the influence of neighboring ethnographic zones: Mărginimea Sibiului and the *Momârlani* of the Jiu Valley. The folk costume of the Orăștie Region belongs to the typology featuring a black woollen back-skirt with fine stripes and a pleated front apron. Women traditionally braided their hair and used wool to add volume to the headdress. The chemise was gathered at the neck and ornamented on the sleeves, typically paired with richly decorated fur coats and closed white leather vests featuring green or multicolored embroidery.

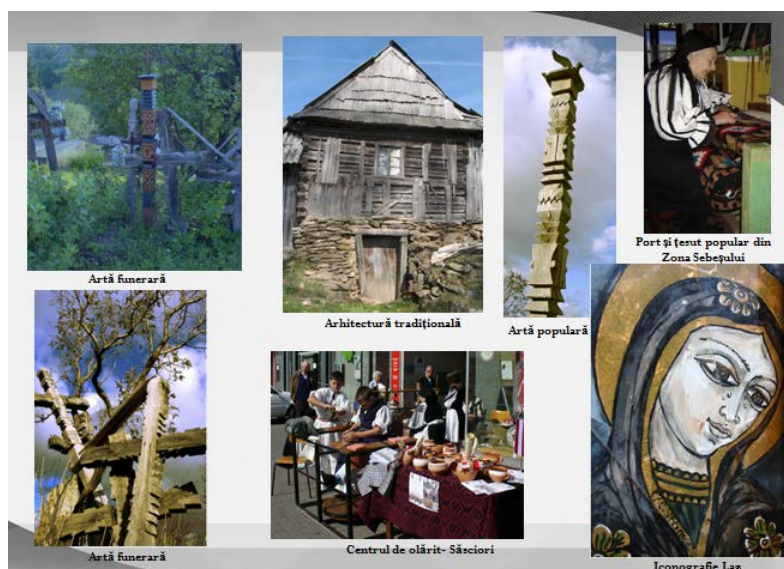


Figure 8. Material and spiritual rural ethnographic specificities

Folk Dance and Song are characterized by highly complex dances such as the spinning dance and stamping dance, with the folk ensembles from Căstău and Geoagiu, and the flute players from Ciungu Mare and Grădiștea de Munte, being particularly renowned. The folklore creations and the ethnographic treasury—distinguished by great expressiveness, originality, and charm—render the Șureanu Mountains region a 'true folklore hearth and an expression of popular culture'. [2]

Among the specific traditions and customs of the Șureanu Massif, the Călușer ritual stands out as a genuine treasury of Romanian and even universal popular culture. This custom has garnered significant international interest, as the 'Ritual of the Căluș' is inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, a recognition of our cultural heritage values within the global cultural landscape. The most prominent *Călușeri* groups are found in the communes of Romoș, Orăștioara de Sus, Bretea Română, Baru, and Boșorod. Other winter traditions in the Șureanu area include the folk plays *The Herods* and *Țurca*.

Human Activities with Tourism Functions

In addition to the tourist objectives previously analyzed, which are 'tangibly manifested in the landscape, thereby possessing the attribute of permanence, the attractive potential of anthropogenic origin also encompasses a series of activities and manifestations that are not spatially materialized' [3]. Such human activities with tourism functions include *nedei* (traditional mountain festivals), folk festivals, and sporting competitions.

The high degree of anthropization in the Sebeș and Parâng Mountains has facilitated diverse ethno-cultural connections, generating traditional customs, the most well-known being the *nedei*. Closely linked to the pastoral calendar and characterized by a complex evolution, these festivals are regarded as possible remnants of pagan celebrations related to solar cults. They took place on fixed dates in areas of maximum convergence of mountain paths, serving as linking elements between pastoral communities and between these communities and the settlements at the foothills.

Beyond their initial ethno-cultural role as social and recreational gatherings, the *nedeia* also functioned as a fair, providing opportunities for the sale of artisanal products or pastoral consumer goods. Furthermore, it acted as a social institution, resolving personal, emotional, or economic issues related to grazing rights. The most captivating were the high-altitude *nedei*, accompanied by flute music and dancing on mountain glades, along with the traditional *balmoș* dish. The most famous occurred on the Jigorul Mare mountains, Porumbelii Mici Peak, Steaua Peak, Căări, and Rotunda Peak. Today, these ancient high-altitude gatherings have been replaced by pastoral-themed festivals, such as '*Zi bade cu fluiera*' (Play, Shepherd, on your Flute) held in Șugag in May. Another remarkable event in the folkloric calendar celebrated in Șugag is the 'Folklore Festival', which marks the ancient custom of the sheep's ascent to the mountains and the partitioning of communal mountain pastures.

Sporting events are prevalent throughout the Șureanu Massif, occurring in both urban and rural settings. They are differentiated by the types of competitions organized, the significance of the activities hosted, and the overall scale of the events. Noteworthy is the 'Șureanu Mountain Festival', a cultural-sporting event that celebrates tradition and the natural environment throughout August. It takes place within three renowned areas of the massif: Poarta Raiului, Luncile Prigoanei, and Transalpina. 'Șureanu Mountain Bike', a competition organized by the Alba County Council in collaboration with Alba Sport Vision and the 'Bicheru-Cycling' club, aims to promote the region and its potential for summer sporting activities. The 'Șureanu Mountain Race', an integral sporting trial of the Șureanu Mountain Festival, further highlights the substantial tourism potential of the massif. Additionally, 'Snow Celebrations' are held annually in February at the ski resort, featuring skiing and snowboarding competitions, fireworks, and musical performances.



Figure 9. Șureanu Bike-Fest



Figure 10. The Snow Celebrations

The Spiritual Life of the Tradition-Preserving Rural Community

In addition to human activities with tourism functions, the tradition of free transhumance—common to the ethno-folkloric zones of Mărginimea Sibiului, the Orăștie Region, and the Sebeș Valley—is of significant importance. Mention must also be made of the

'Salt Road', which traverses the area through Loman, Săsciori, and Sebeș, originating from the Jiu Valley and crossing Pătru Peak.

The practice of greeting passersby, regardless of personal acquaintance, remains a distinctive social custom in this region. The unwritten rules of greeting dictate that the younger person greets the elder, the one passing greets the one standing, and the one descending greets the one ascending. Failure to initiate or respond to a greeting is considered a breach of social etiquette [2].

The spiritual life is profoundly rich in traditions, with communities that strictly observe ancient customs; however, the aging demographic of participants poses a challenge to their long-term continuity. These celebrations and their associated traditions are categorized into fixed-date holidays (Christmas, New Year) and moveable feasts (Easter, Palm Sunday, etc.). Each is manifested through a complex palette of customs, ranging from common practices—such as *Colindul*, *Plugușorul*, *Sorcova*, *Mărțișor*, and the Easter tradition of 'sprinkling' the girls—to unique local events like the *Călușeri* dance (Săliște), *Țurca*, the 'Statul la vase' custom in Șugag (held on Easter Monday), and the Onion Fair in Săsciori.

Following the inventory and qualitative assessment of anthropogenic objectives, the tourism potential of the Șureanu Massif reveals the following aspects:

- The Șureanu Massif reunites a broad and varied range of anthropogenic resources, categorized into historical, religious, cultural, sporting, economic, and ethnographic components.
- However, only a small fraction of these elements are clustered or possess significant scale; the majority are isolated objectives of limited size, insufficient to serve as standalone attractions. Consequently, their efficient valorization is only possible through integration into thematic tourist circuits.
- The attractiveness of these sites is influenced by their territorial distribution and degree of concentration; clustered objectives hold a significant advantage regarding tourism integration.
- The highest-value sites within the anthropogenic framework are those inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List (the Dacian fortresses of Căpâlna, Sarmizegetusa Regia, Costești-Cetățuie, Costești-Blidaru, Piatra Roșie, and Bănița).
- Priority is given to areas featuring objectives from different historical eras that excel through their uniqueness or complexity (e.g., Sarmizegetusa Regia, Mousterian occupation levels in Bordu Mare Cave).
- High concentrations of anthropogenic resources are identified in the following Administrative-Territorial Units (ATUs): Romoș, with 'very high' concentrations found in Bănița, Boșorod, and Orăștioara de Sus (Hunedoara County), in accordance with Law no. 190/2009 regarding the National Territorial Management Plan.
- Conversely, ATUs such as Crivadia, Cucuiș, Șugag, Târsa, Ponor, Luncani, and Săsciori possess only solitary anthropogenic elements with tourism value, thereby limiting their valorization potential.
- Ethnographic resources remain vital, as traditional crafts and annual events (e.g., 'Snow Celebrations', 'Zi bade cu fluiera', or 'Statul la vase') attract a significant volume of tourists."

Table: The Anthropic Tourism Potential of the Șureanu Mountains

Anthropic tourism potential	Proposals for tourism planning and development	Suitable forms of tourism
The presence of a rich built cultural heritage, comprising elements dating from the Paleolithic to the modern era: cultural, historical, economic, and touristic objectives, as well as ethnography and folklore, which is insufficiently capitalized upon.	The restoration and valorization of all cultural, historical, religious, and economic sites (monuments, fortifications, fortresses, museums, Roman camps, and memorial houses), followed by their appropriate signage and integration into a structured tourism circuit; The protection and marking of historical and cultural buildings within the study area by prohibiting advertising banners on their facades and promoting them through multilingual identification plaques (Romanian and English)	Recreational and leisure tourism Cultural tourism; Scientific tourism; Short and long-distance mountain hiking
Religious edifices;	Promoting religious edifices of historical significance; Integration into a tourism circuit; Low-impact infrastructure development to ensure accessibility to the area;	Religious tourism; Visitation tourism; Cultural tourism.
Economic edifices with a tourism function (tunnels, viaducts, railways, quarries, galleries, aqueducts, industrial sites, hydroelectric reservoirs, and dams etc.);	Attracting funds for the maintenance, development, and conservation of economic edifices; Ensuring the operational functionality of rolling stock for historical railways; Low-impact infrastructure development to ensure accessibility to the area;	Visitation tourism); Transit tourism; Cultural tourism; Scientific tourism.
Cultural and sports edifices (libraries, museums and museum collections, ethnographic museums, sports grounds, green spaces, and the Transalpina highway);	The conservation, protection, and valorization of cultural and sports edifices; Low-impact infrastructure development to ensure accessibility to the area;	Cultural tourism; Adventure tourism.
Cultural and ethnographic traditions and archaic rituals	The establishment of ethnographic study and creative centers tasked with the collection, research, conservation, and valorization of the ethnographic potential within the Șureanu Massif area;	Cultural tourism; Recreation and leisure tourism.
Vernacular heritage	Encouraging owners of traditional households to convert them into ethnographic museums; Preventive conservation policies for the	Cultural tourism; Recreation and leisure tourism; Visitation tourism.

	vernacular heritage within the Șureanu Massif; Low-impact infrastructure development to ensure accessibility to the area;	
Traditional economic activities (milling, fulling, traditional hydraulic washing, cooperage, pottery, etc.);	The restoration and reactivation of water mills, traditional hydraulic washing installations (whirlpools), and other traditional technical devices;	Cultural tourism; Recreation and leisure tourism; Visitation tourism.
Human activities with a tourism function (festivals, sporting events, etc.)	Supporting, preserving, and promoting traditional festivals and sporting events to strengthen the cultural and recreational role of the Șureanu Massif: "Șureanu Mountain Festival," "Șureanu Mountain Bike," "Șureanu Mountain Race," "The Snow Celebrations," and the "Costești Festival";	Ethno-cultural tourism; Recreation and leisure tourism.

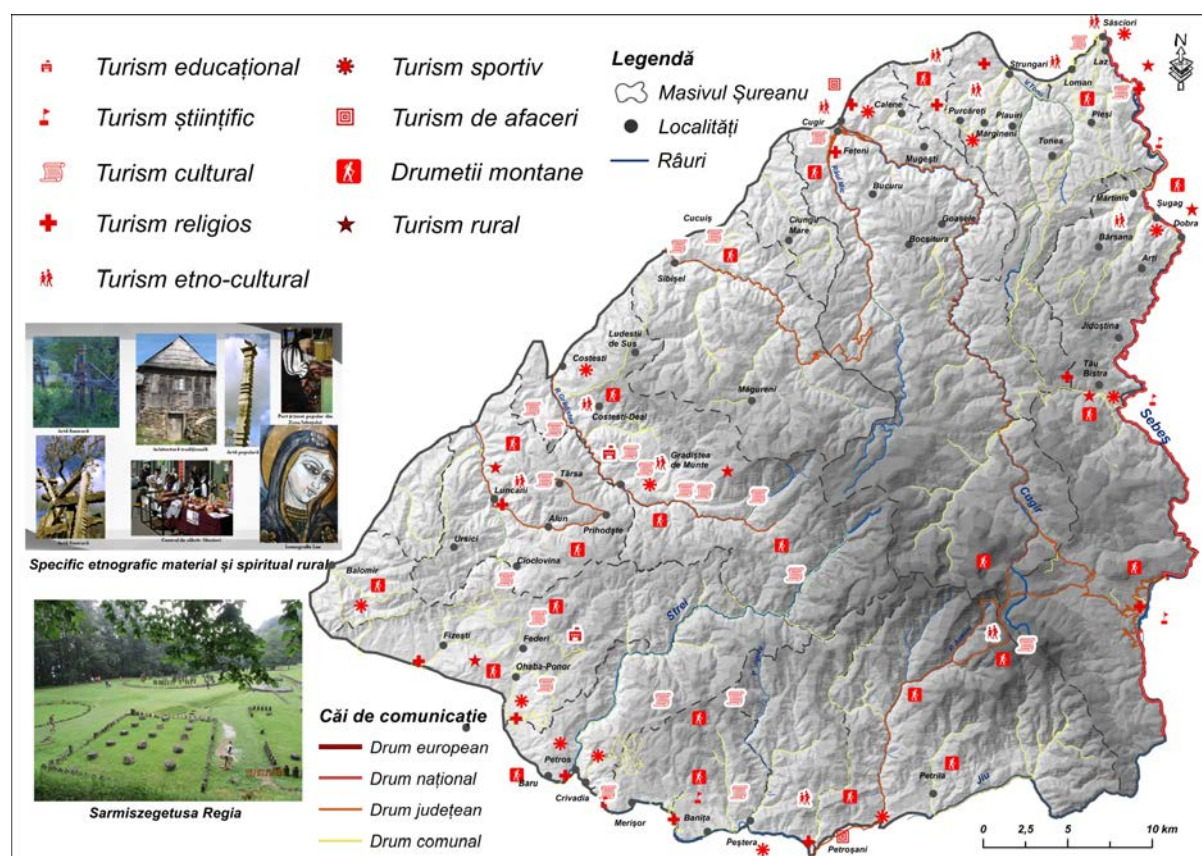


Figure 11. Tourism types generated by the anthropic resources in the Șureanu Massif

4. Conclusions

The anthropic tourism potential encompasses a broad and diverse range of components, which this study has categorized and analyzed based on their affiliation with historical, religious, cultural, sports, and economic resources, as well as ethnographic tourism assets. Defined by its cultural-historical significance, diversity, potential for scalability,

attractiveness, and the imperative need for protection and conservation, this anthropic potential holds particular interest due to the profound impact of the experiences it offers to visitors. Consequently, tourism benefits from favorable development conditions, drawing upon the extraordinary complexity and richness of the attractive elements provided by the man-made heritage. All these elements, in correlation with the mountainous landscape of the Șureanu Massif, its traversing valleys, and the presence of protected natural areas with high aesthetic value, provide the necessary framework for the implementation of organized tourism.

The current degree of capitalization of anthropic sites is far below their deserved status, considering their historical importance, coupled with attributes such as novelty, uniqueness, and picturesque landscapes. Unfortunately, due to neglect, indifference, and the perpetual lack of funding cited by authorities—compounded by a lack of responsibility among many tourists we are witnessing the degradation of the cultural treasury preserved by previous generations.

Currently, tourism within the massif operates on a small scale, limited by the existing tourist infrastructure. The tourism development and valorization of the Șureanu Massif depend on determining geographical factors, as well as on local, provincial, regional, and national stakeholders and authorities. The absence of coherent policies to support integrated tourism development represents a significant bottleneck for local planning and valorization initiatives.

Ultimately, this study aims to support local communities by providing proposals for tourism planning and development that could contribute to the growth of tourism as a key economic activity in the region, or at least raise awareness regarding the rich tourism potential of the Șureanu Massif. It remains a matter of ongoing observation to track the evolution of tourism development in the Șureanu Massif across time and space a phenomenon that remains compelling through its dynamics and future prospects.

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