

PROSPECTING OF NATURAL AND HUMAN TOURISM POTENTIAL OF SĂLAJ COUNTY

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ABSTRACT. Prospecting of Natural and Human Tourism Potential of Salaj County. Salaj county has a rich and diversified tourism potential induced both by natural and human resources. Natural potential consists in the presence of natural resources of the following types: morphological (the mountainous relief, spectacular valleys with sectors of gorges or gulleets, karst relief, residual microforms or those created by the action of the external agents), climatic, hydrological (the presence of mineral waters mainly sulfurous and thermal which have been known and used since the previous century, the spectacular landscapes created by some peculiarities of the river valley and also to the presence of a few lakes), bio-geographical (vast areas with forest, which give the appellation of Sylvania Country). In Salaj there are also a few natural reservations and over 350 archeological (the Roman castra Porolissum, and also many other vestiges of Roman, Dacian or even prehistorical origin) and architectural sites with a great architectural and historical value, original gastronomical and folk traditions, cultural and artistic events known both locally and nationally. Distinctive for Salaj county is the presence of over 70 wooden churches, architectural monuments of great artistic and historical value.

Key words: natural touristic potential, human touristic potential, relief, mineral springs, sulfurous waters, thermal waters, gorges, canyon, lakes, plant associations, edifices with touristic function, churches, ethnographic resources

1. INTRODUCTION

Salaj county, situated in the North-Western part of Romania, with an area of 3850 sqkm overlaps the bonding area between Eastern Carpathians and Apuseni Mountains, known in the geographical literature as the Somes Platform. The mountains occupy a quite restraint area, in the South-Western part and are represented by the two northern branches of the Apuseni Mountains, Meses, respectively Plopis Mountains. From the hydrological point of view the county develops in the hydrographic basins of Somes, Crasna, Barcau, Almas, Agrij and Salaj Rivers.

In literature there are several classification criteria of the resources that are attractive for the touristic phenomenon. In the present paper we used the genetic criterion resulting two main categories, namely: natural and human resources, each of

them with the corresponding subcategories. Among the natural resources we can distinguish the morphological ones, climatic, water and biogeographical. The human resources are much more diverse and consist of the edifices and elements with touristic function (historical landmarks, religious edifices, the ones with cultural and sports functions, monuments, economic edifices and technical buildings, paracultural sites), social activities with touristic function, cultural and paracultural events and also ethnographical resources (crafts, traditions, traditional costumes)

2. DATABASE AND METHODS

The data used in this research have been obtained from various sources, directly from some institutions like Salaj County Council, the Mairies of the localities where the landmarks are situated, the companies which hold various touristic facilities in the interest areas, Salaj County Statistics Institute, or indirectly from bibliographical sources or dedicated internet sites. The methods used in this research are diversified among which the land-observation method, bibliographical method and statistical and data processing methods are worth mentioning.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Tourism potential of the natural resources

The natural tourism potential of Salaj county is given by the great variety of the natural resources that are touristically attractive (relief, waters, climate, biogeographical resources)

3.1.1. Tourism potential of relief

The low altitudes of the mountainous areas of the county (Meses and Plopis Mountains) together with the easy acces make out of this area a favorable territory for tourism development, especially recreative and for hiking. In Meses Mountains there are several easy touristic routes, spaces for picnic and recreation and also proper places for wintwr sports, especially for children. The fact that they are near Zalau and their lack of spectaculosity of these mountains make them more adequate for the weekend tourism of the locals. Likewise Plopis Mountains, with large meadows, are an excellent area for recreation and resting.

Another touristically attractive element is the karst relief found mainly in the Somes Plateau. According to the list of Romanian caves published by wikipedia.org in Salaj county there are 3 caves, situated in Somes Plateau, Letca commune.



Fig. 1 Meses Mountains (<https://turism.bzi.ro/trasee-drumetii-muntii-Meses>)

The best known is Cuciulat Cave, situated on the right bank of Someș, under Prisnel peak. It was first discovered before the First World War, when the extraction of limestone began in the area. The explosions used in this activity led to the destruction of several hundreds of meters of galleries of the first part of the cave. It was rediscovered in 1978 by a team of amateur speleologists. What is remarkable for this cave is the fact that inside there were discovered the first paleolithic cave paintings in Romania and even in South Eastern Europe. The painting is known under the name of „The little horse of Cuciulat”. It is a brick-red figure, painted on the cornice of the ceiling of one of the halls. The painting is very beautiful, the little horse has arched neck and the back legs leave the impression that it just stopped running. In the cave there are several more painted figures, with a more or less precise outline. We can see a bird and a feline, painted on the ceiling of the cave. In order to protect the paintings the public access in the cave was forbidden and the entrance was blocked with a grid. Later, as a result of the limestone extraction the entrance of the cave collapsed so the access is now impossible. Also, it is not known if the paintings are still conserved.



Fig. 2 „The little horse of Cuciulat”, cave painting

Lii Cave is also situated in Cuciulat, on the right slope of Someș, between Ciocmani and Perii Vadului. It is 1520 m long and has a total oscillation of level of 29 m. The first part of the cave can be visited without special equipment, offering several interesting views. At the entrance there are arranged several climbing routes, as the limestone walls, not very tall, offer good climbing possibilities.

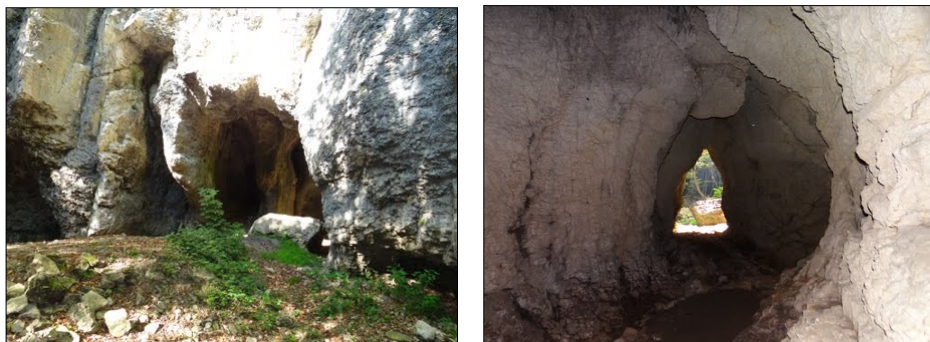


Fig. 3 Lii Cave (photo source <https://sites.google.com/site/romanianatura31/home/podisul-transilvaniei/podisul-somesan/pestera-lii>)

„Pocol’s Mill” Cave, situated at the end of Letca village, is important for Salaj county, being the longest mapped cave in Transylvania with a length of 3493 m and an oscillation of level of 76 m. The cave is not accessible to everyone, because the access in the cave is difficult and dangerous.

Magurici Cave, situated in Rastoci, Ileanda commune is a protected area of national interest. It has a surface of approximately 1 ha, developed in oligocene rocks. It is opened with an access gallery which leads to Bifurcation Hall, from which start other galleries (Ascending Gallery, The Gallery with bats, the Gallery with Guano) and other circular halls. The cave is important due to its population of bats which form colonies of hundreds or thousands of copies, their number depending on species, season and their biology. Among the identified species in the reservation we can mention *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, *Rhinolophus hipposideros* and *Miniopterus schreibersii*.

The relief has also a landscape potential, as the river valleys, in certain morphological and petrographical conditions gain a spectacular aspect in some places.

Babei Gorges, on Poiana River, situated at the border with Maramures County, between the villages Poiana Blenchiei and Baba, have a length of 1,2 – 1.3 km and a height of the walls of 80-100 m. Here we can also find the Bulbuc karstic spring. Its tributary, only 1 km long, Valceaua Dracului, crosses a canyon like area, where the walls are 3 m close. There are also 2 waterfalls in the area, with heights of 3,5 respectively 3m.



Fig. 4 Magurici Cave (photo source <http://www.dozadebine.ro/pestera-magurici/>)



Fig. 5 Babei Gorges (photo source www.defileul-lapusului.ro/cheile-babei)

Barcau Gorges develop between the villages Tusa and Sag, at the contact between Meses and Plopis Mounains. Here we can also find Tusa – Barcau Natural Reservation, situated in the area of the springs of Barcau. The reservation includes a forest sector, a meadow as well as two intermitent springs called Izbucul Mare and Izbucul Mic with an impressive water discharge. Barcău, the most important tributary of Crișul Repede springs under Plopisului Mountains, in a karstic area (Ponorul Negrenilor). The most important spring is the grand karstic spring which supplies Toplița rivulet. The waters gathered on the karstic plateau burst out here in several branches giving birth to several waterfalls. Afterwards they disappear among the stones and burst out again with a higher discharge leading to a 10 m high waterfall.

On river Barcau we can also find the epigenetic and antecedent gullet at Marca while on river Crasna there is a similar type of gullet between the villages of Cehei and Uileacul Simleului.



Fig. 6 Barcau Gorges (photo source www.welcometoromania.ro/Tusa_Rezervatia_Izvoarele_Barcaului)



Fig. 7 Ticau Gorges (photo source www.salajulpursisimplu.ro/provocarea-ticaului)

Another elements of touristic atraction are the residual micro-forms resulted through the action of water or wind over the rocks with heterogenous structure. Devil's Rock, in Hida, sculpted in oligo-miocene sandstones, known as Hida layer, has the shape of a two headed Sphynx and it is the subject of numerous local myths.



Fig. 8 Devil's Rock, Hida (photo source <https://peterlengyel.files.wordpress.com/2015>)

Among the natural resources with touristic attractiveness we can also mention the landmarks whose genesis is related to the processes and phenomena of intense areal and linear erosion over the friable deposits (ravines). An eloquent example is Dragons' Garden in Galgau Almasului (Balan commune), an assembly of strange figures revealed out of the soft deposits and sculpted by water and wind in the most surprising ways (Soldier's Daughter, The Dragon and the lady Dragon, The Old Man, The Monks, The Captain, Cleopatra's needle, The Soldiers, Eva, The Little Finger, The Sphinx) as well as bizarre shapes (towers, mushrooms, needles, rocky slopes). Dragons' Garden is a landscape and geological type natural reservation. The geological systems (from holocene) made of sandstones (of grey – yellowish colour) with intercalations of microconglomerates, were formed by the repeated actions of the air (frost-defrost, wind, temperature), water (washing, gully erosion) and of the gravitational processes (crushes, crumbings), that developed over the time.



Fig. 9 Dragons' Garden, Galgau Almasului (photo source https://www.roportal.ro/articole/despre/gradina_zmeilor_monument_al_naturii)

3.1.2. Tourism potential of the climate

The climate plays a double part in the development of the touristic phenomenon: that of atmosphere, setting where the touristic activities develop, and a touristic resource of it's own (spas).

Regarding the setting where the touristic activities develop the most important is the presence of the „fine weather”. As a result of its geographical position Salaj county is situated in the area of the moderate continental climate. The annual average temperatures are between 6 and 9 °C, January being the coldest month, while the hottest is July. The annual number of summer days (maximum temperatures over 25 °C) in between 50 days in the mountains and over 80 in Somes valley and the lower regions in the western part of the county. The number of tropical days is relatively low, between 10 and 20, resulting a proper climate for the summer tourism, hiking, recreation in open air or visiting landmarks. In the mountains there are around 80 cloudless day a year, while in the depressionary areas there are over 100 – 110 days per year. The average annual rainfall is between 600 and 900 mm/year, the frequency of rainy days being between 120 days in the depressionary areas and 150 days in the mountains. The number of days with a snow layer is important for practicing winter sports (around 60 days, excepting the mountains where the snow layer lasts for more than 80 days)

In Salaj county we can find two spas: Bizusa (Ileanda commune) and Boghis.

3.1.3 Tourism potential of water resources

Among the water resources of the county, the underground waters have the greatest tourism potential, due to the presence of numerous mineral and thermal springs. From this point of view the most important aspect is given by the qualitative characteristics of underground waters. Underground waters may contain a series of healing elements such as: iron, iodine, sulfur, radioactive substances, bromine or free gases such as carbon dioxide or nitrogen. Underground waters can be classified according to the mineralisation degree: oligomineral (with a mineralisation of 0,5 gr/l) which can be cold or warm and mineral, used both in internal and external cure. Mineral waters fall into several categories: carbonated, bicarbonate carbonated, bicarbonate simple, ferrous, sulfurous, sulfated, chlorine, iodine.

According to water temperature springs can be classified as cold and hot (thermal). According to the temperature span there are hipothermal springs (20 – 25 °C), isothermal (36 – 37 °C), mesothermal (38 – 42 °C) and hyperthermal springs (over 45 °C).

The mineral waters that are the widest spread in Salaj County are the sulfurous ones. They are used in the internal cure for healing gastro-intestinal and

hepatobiliary disorders and in the external cure for healing rheumatic, gynaecological and skin disorders.

Sulfurous mineral springs appear in various localities across Salaj county.

Bizuşa is situated in the north-eastern part of the county at an altitude of 240 m, in Somes Valley, next to Ileanda, on the road DN 1C which connects the towns of Dej and Baia Mare. There are here deep aquifers with low mineralised water. The mineralisation is given by the presence of gray clay, lignite, sandstone, chalks and pyrites. The water is slightly sulfurous, sulfated, very slightly chlorine, contains calcium sodium and magnesium. There are 4 springs, three with cold water and one with semi-thermal water at a temperature of 19 °C. The content of H₂S is 0,7 mg/l in the probes and 4,2 mg/l in springs.

At Jibou the mineral water source is a natural spring collected in a concrete basin built directly on a natural emergence. The water is sulfurous, chlorine, sulfated, contains sodium, calcium, magnesium.

In Zalnoc village, Bobota commune, situated in the north eastern part of the county there are 4 high discharge springs with sulfurous water. The healing water is collected from 2 wells and has the following characteristics: Ferrous, sulfated, bicarbonate, contains calcium, magnesium, aluminum and is recommended for the disorders of the urinary tract and of the kidneys as well as in hepatobiliary disorders especially for recovering after hepatitis. As an external cure it is recommended to those suffering from arthritis and rheumatism.

In Zauan, situated in Ip commune, there are also mineral springs with sulfurous water, appreciated in the interwar period not only for curing rheumatic but also gynecological disorders.

At Valea Pomilor, Samsud commune there are sulfurous mineral waters, used for rheumatic disorders.

At Chiesd the water is sulfurous, bi carbonated, contains calcium and magnesium and it is used especially in the internal cure.

At Mesesenii de Sus (Mesesenii de Jos commune) there are springs with sulphurous cold water which can be used for the treatment of rheumatic disorders as well as a drilling with thermal water at a temperature of 42°C.

An important tourism potential is given by the presence of thermal waters (hypo and meso- thermal) identified on the territory of various localities.

Boghis is situated on the County Road DJ 191D, 45 km far from Zalau and 15 km from Simleu Silvaniei. There are 3 drills of mineral waters (sulfurous, bi carbonated, with sodium, iodine, chlorine) which are also thermal having a temperature of 42°C.

At Criseni, near Zalau a spring with thermal water with a temperature of 25°C was identified.

Thermal waters, used in curing rheumatic disorders, disorders of the peripheral nervous system and of the digestive tract have also been noticed at Simleu Silvaniei and Sumal.

Because the rivers in Salaj do not have characteristics that allow the practicing of water sports, they have in the first place a tourism potential of the landscape type, their banks being often used as spaces for relaxation or picnic spots, or even for bathing in the hot summer days.

Another worth mentioning attractive element related to running waters is the waterfalls on Treznea rivulet. Treznea rivulet with its tiny tributaries springs out of Meses Mountains, close to Osoiu Peak (874 m). On Treznea rivulet we can find 9 water falls, or even 14 according to different sources. The waterfalls are especially attractive for fresh-air walking lovers.

Salaj County is very poor in natural lakes but the recent period shows an increasing number of the artificial ones. The greatest lake in the county is Varsolt reservoir on river Crasna, situated on the territory of the homonymous commune. It was finished in 1979, with the purpose of the water supply of Zalau and Simleu Silvaniei, abating of flash floods on river Crasna and recreative fishing. The reservoir has a surface of 652 ha and it is of great interest for amateur fishermen. The lake is rich in fish, one can find here various species such as: carp, perch, tench, flat-fish, crucian, luce and fitophagus. It is also a point of attraction for passionate bird watchers.

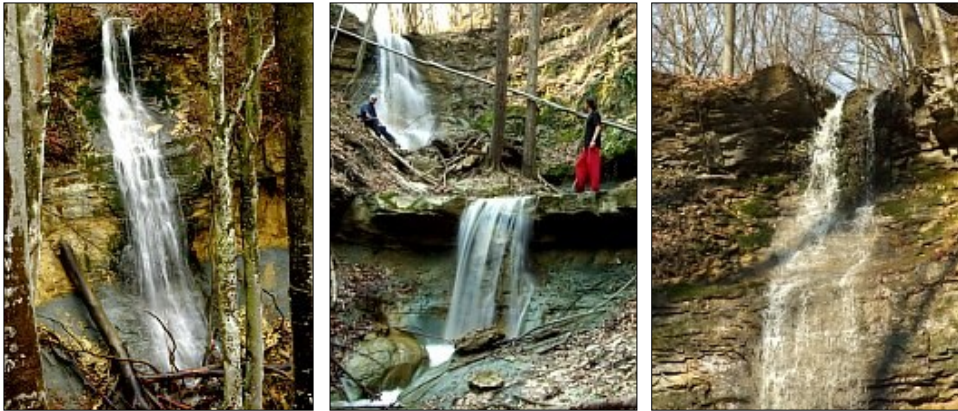


Fig. 10 The waterfalls on Treznea rivulet (photo source www.welcometoromania.ro/Treznea_Cascade)

The reservoir in Sălașiș village was built in 1982 on Mineu river. It was designed to abate the flash floods and for the water supply of the nearby villages. It has a surface of 70 ha and it is proper for fishing as it has been populated with carp and perch.

Benesat Pond appeared around 1980 as a result of the extraction of ballast and has a maximum depth of 3 m. It is situated 50 m far from Somes River and has a surface of 8 ha. Besides the abundance in fish (carp, crucian, catfish, perch and luce) which attracts numerous fishermen Benesat Pond represents an auspicious habitat for water birds as we can notice some very interesting species.

The only natural lake is Cehei Pond, a protected area of national interest, having been declared natural reservation for vegetation and fauna is situated in the administrative territory of Șimleu Silvaniei. The natural area is represented by the hydrological area developed on an old branch of river Crasna (alluvial deposits over older layers of clays and marnes) with specific vegetation and a rich fauna of invertebrates, vertebrates (reptiles, amphibians) and birds.

3.1.4 Tourism potential of biogeographical resources

Regarding the tourism potential of biogeographical resources, of great importance are major plant associations, the forest being specific for Salaj county. Today the afforested area in Salaj is of 106 336 ha, and decreasing. The most wide spreaded forests are the deciduous ones (beech, sessile, hornbeam, sycamore, linden, ash, elm, oak, garneau), while the coniferous appear only in plantations. The most important touristic functions of the forests are the esthetic and the recreative one, where we can find several types: the hunting type (the forests in the mountainous and hilly areas host several animals of hunting interest: wild boars, deers, hares), the recreative type (hiking possibilities and touristic routes in Meses mountains) the recreation and entertainment type (the forests near towns, for example Bradet Forest, near Zalau).

Vegetation is attractive for tourism also because of the presence of some particular vegetal elements, some of them being recognized as protected areas of the floristic type: The River meadow with speckled tulip Salaj Valley, situated in the South-Western part of Cehu Silvaniei, with an area of 10 ha with the purpose of protecting an important population of the mediteranian species of speckled tulip (*Fritillaria meleagris*), The Swamp from Iaz, Plopis commune (an area with turbo-active swamps, very rich in vegetation), the Chestnut Forest in Ileanda (edible chestnut), the Daffodils meadows in Racas – Hida (*Narcissus stellaris* and *Narcissus augustifolius*), the Puddle oak Panic, (protection for a rare species of red oak - *Quercus rubra*).

The fauna is important because of the hunting and fishing potential or the presence of some particular elements. The fauna of the running waters is very rich: trout and grayling in the uper sectors, barbell, chub, nase in the lower sectors. The artificial lakes are also populated with fish in order to allow catch and release and recreative fishing. There are also in Salaj several reservations for the protection of some rare animal species: Cehei Pond (birds, several species of ducks, shelfish and insects), Iaz Swamp (more speciees of beetes, among which a bug, *Phytobius velaris*, is unique in the Romanian fauna), Magurici Cave (species of bats).



Fig. 11 Daffodile meadow in Racas (photo source <http://www.turismzalau.ro/images/obiective/PoianaNarciselor>)

3.2 Tourism potential of human resources

The human landmarks that are attractive for the touristic phenomenon can be classified in three major categories (Cocean, P. Deszi St, 2009): edifices and elements with sightseeing function, social activities with sightseeing function and the ethnographical touristic resurces. bic funcii si elemente cu functie turistica, activitati sociale cu functie turistica,

3.1.1. Edifices and elements with sightseeing function

In this category we can include several types of landmarks (historical landmarks, religious buildings, monuments, touristic edifices with cultural and sports function, economic edifices and technical buildings, paracultural sites).

A) Historical landmarks are represented by traces of human civilisation beginning with the prehistoric age until present times.

Across the county ancient traces of human habitations were discovered. The settlements that were discovered are shown in Table 1.

Roman civilisation is omnipresent in the archeological discoveries across Salaj county, culminating with the Roman castra and Municipium of Porolissum, a vaste archaeological system containing sanctuaries, public and civil buildings, an amphiteatre and elements of the defensive systems. It is situated on the adminuistrative teritories of Moigrad (Mirsid commune), Brebi and Jac (Creaca commune). The total surface of the site is of aproximatively 500 ha, of which only a small surface (under 10%) has been studied. Capital of the Roman province Dacia Porolissensis, Porolissum was probably established in the summer of the year 106 A.D. according to the military diploma discovered here as two bronze tables with Latin inscriptions, issued on the 10th of August 106 A.D. attesting the Roman citizenship of Marcus Ulpus Novantico, a soldier in a Roman military unit

in Dacia Province. The name Porolissum, is believed to be of Dacian origin and it means „crossing point”, „gorge” and it is related to the presence in the nearby of the gorge „Meses Gate” – an important way of acces between the Pannonian and Transylvanian space. Porolissum developed as a civil settlement around the military Castra, later becoming a prosperous border town, with an important economical, commercial and production potential, as well as a strong center of Roman spirituality. Porolissum has gained the status of municipium during the reign of the emperor Septimius Severus (193-211). The entrance in the site is through the Praetoria gate, made of two towers that stand each side of the gates, having above a wall with loopholes. The castra was rectangularly shaped, had four entrance gates and was crossed by two perpendicular roads: Via Principalis which linked Porta Principalis Dextra with Porta Principalis Sinistra, Via Praetoria starting at Porta Praetoria towards the command building and continuing with Via Decumana until Porta Decumana. The roads were built of stone slabs and had gutters for water drainage. The Command building stood in the center of the Castra and was an imposing building which also had an inner yard. In the Northern part of the Castra stood a trapezoidal tower, called the Corner Tower, made of stone and covered with tiles and pantiles.

Table 1. Traces of human settlements discovered across Salaj county

| The age the settlement belongs to | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|------------------------|---|--|
| Prehistoric | Neolithic | Bronze age | Iron age | Feudal | Dacian |
| Ciocmani Campia Rogna Lemniu | Zalau (Valea Mitii) Bocsa Port Mesesenii de Sus | Zalau (Valea Mitii) Rogna Port Doh Vadurele Bulgari | Zalau (Valea Mitii) | Ciocmani Bocsa Campia Sancaiu Silvaniei Badon Rogna Lemniu | Zalau (str. C. Coposu) Simleu Silvaniei (Dacidava) Padurea Dobrinului Bocsa Valea Mitii (IV d. Hr century) Sancaiu Silvaniei Badon (dicii liberi) Panic (daco-romana) Rogna Cosniciu de Jos Doh Fetindia (sec II-IV d. Hr) Mesesenii de sus Mirsid Vadurele Nusfalau (and a tumular cemetery of VIII –IX century) Bulgari (dicii liberi) Lompirt Varsolt (sec. V –IV i. Hr.) Zalha (sec. II – I i. Hr.) |



Fig. 12 Porolissum Roman Castra from Moigrad (photo source www.porolissumsalaj.ro)

After Porta Decumana, outside the Castra there was the Amphitheatre. It had a capacity of 5500 spectators and hosted fight between gladiators, or between gladiators and wild animals. The city of Porolissum had a population of aproximatively 20000 inhabitants, and the living conditions were similar to those from Rome: paved roads, sewerage system, running water in the houses, underfloor heating and windows with glass. The city also had sacre spaces such as Jupiter” Temple and the Temple of the Goddes Nemesis.

Other Roman roman artifacts discovered across Salaj county are shown in Table number 2.

Table 2. Roman artifacts discovered across Salaj county

| Roman Castra | Roman Towers | Other artifacts |
|---|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Buciumi (the Praetorium is still conserved) | Creaca (2 towers) | Brebi (2 burguri) |
| Brusturi (castra and civil settlement Certiae) | Var | Garbou (asezare de tip villa rustica) |
| Romanasi (castra and civil settlement Largiana) | Clit | Negreni |
| Tihau (castra and civil settlement) | Bogdana | Podisu (Burg) |
| Sutoru (castra and civil settlement Optatiana) | Buciumi (2 towers) | Valea Lesului |
| | Huta (4 towers) | Falcusa |
| | Sangeorgiu de Meses | |
| | Barsau Mare | |
| | Capalna | |
| | Starciu | |
| | Ileanda | |
| | Rogna | |
| | Cormenis | |
| | Lozna | |
| | Preluci | |
| | Mesesenii de Sus | |
| | Treznea (3 towers) | |

Cross the county there are several citadels dating from the Dacian age to the Middle Ages. Among them we can mention: the Dacian citadel in Simleu Silvaniei, the dacian fortress from Marca, the Dacian Porolissumul on the Magura Hill in Moigrad, the fortress dating from early Middle Ages from Jac, where a hermitage dug in the rock was also discovered, Cheud citadel (Napradea), built between centuries X –XIV, Almasu Citadel, built between 1247 – 1278 as one of the strongest medieval citadels in Transylvania, as well as the citadel belonging to the Bathory family in Simleu Silvaniei, built in the XIVth century.



Fig. 13 Bathory Citadel, Simleu Silvaniei (photo source <http://www.simleusilvaniei.ro>)

We can also mention a series of buildings with historical and architectural value, which may result in attractive landmarks: Zalau Town Hall (former courthouse and prefecture – 1889), Transylvania Building (former city theatre – 1895), Sylvania National College (former reformed college, built in three stages 1860, 1903 si 1925), Simion Barnutiu School (former school for girls – 1895), the Military Center (former Dragalina caserne – end of the XIX century), the Gymnasium of the Minorit monks in Simleu Silvaniei (1730), the Wesseleny Castle in Jibou, built between 1779-1810 inside the Botanical Garden, Beldy castle and park (Jibou), the Csaky family Mansion with stables, park and crypt (Almasu), the Banffy family Mansion (Nusfalau), Jozsika castle (considered the birthplace of the Hungarian historical novel – XVII century, Surduc), Sombory castle and park (Zimbor, XIX century).



Fig. 14 Almasu Citadel (photo source <http://www.taracalatei.ro>)

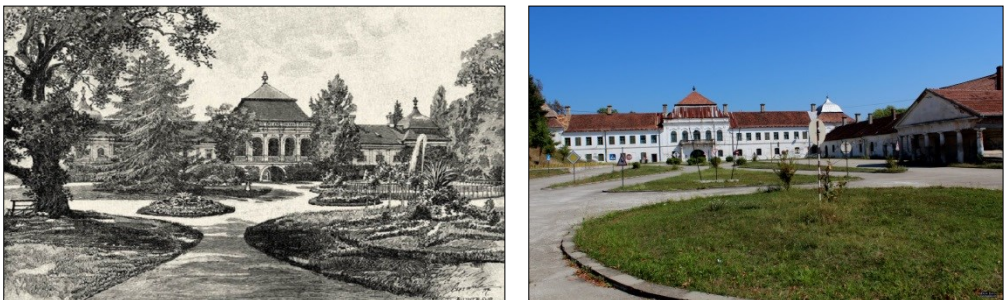


Fig. 15 Wesseleny Castle Jibou (photo source <http://www.descoperalocuri.ro/descopera-romania/castelul-wesselenyi-din-jibou>)

B) The religious edifices are very attractive landmarks for the touristic phenomenon, being spread all across the county. First we can mention a series of churches which impress either because of their architectural elements or the strenght they resisted to the vicissitudes of the time: the Assumption of Virgin Mary Cathedral (built between 1923-1933), the Reformed Church in Zalau (1904 – 1907), the Roman Catholic Church Simleu Silvaniei (1532), the Reformed Church Simleu Silvaniei (1730), the church of the former Benedictine Monastery in Uileacul Simleului (nowadays reformed church 1260 – 1300), Reformed Church in Cehu Silvaniei (1519), Reformed Church Tetisu (XIV century), Reformed Church

Stana (1640), the church in Bobota, historical monument (1859), Reformed Church Crasna (1380 – 1400), Reformed Church Petrindu (XIV century), Reformed Church din Sfarasu (XV century), Reformed Church Mesesenii de Jos (XV century), Reformed Church Nusfalau (1450 – 1580), the remains of the Benedictine Church in Napradea (XII – XIII century).

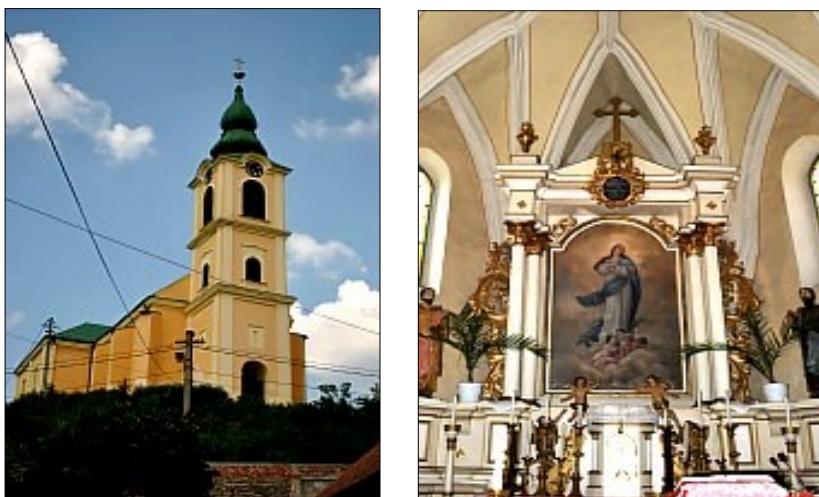


Fig. 16 Roman Catholic Church Simleu Silvaniei (photo source www.welcometoromania.ro/DN1h/DN1h_Simleu_Silvaniei_Biserica_Catolica)



Fig.17 Reformed Church Petrindu (photo source <http://www.taracalatei.ro>)

What is interesting to mention is the fact that almost all these „stone” religious edifices belong to the Reformed or Roman Catholic cults, whose followers were the Hungarians in Transylvania, who were privileged in those times. Instead the majority Romanian population, followers of the Greek-Catholic or Orthodox cults, built splendid wooden churches, some of them historical

monuments, over 70 of them being still conserved today. Table number 3 shows the list of the wooden churches in Salaj county.

Table 3 Wooden Churches in Sălaj County

| Locality | Date | Locality | Date | Locality | Date |
|---------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------------|
| Sighetul Silvanei | 1832 | Borza | 1758 | Brebi | 1759 |
| Brusturi | 1701 | Creaca | 1710 | Jac | 1756 |
| Prodanesti | 1730 | Muncel | Sec XVIII | Cublesu | Sec XVIII |
| Doba | Sec XVII | Dobrin | 1720 | Dragu | 1809 |
| Voivodeni | 1820 | Fildu de Sus | 1727 | Barsau Mare | 1690 |
| Fodora | 1817 | Cehei | 1765 | Husia | 1800 |
| Var | Sec XVIII | Horoatul Crasnei | 1749 | Nadis | 1738 |
| Ulciug | 1781 | Rastoltu Desert | Sec. IX | Almasu | 1645 |
| Poienita | Sec XVIII | Pirosa | Sec XVII | Balan | 1695, 1762, sec XIX |
| Miluani | Sec XVI | Paduris | 1600 | | |
| Racas | 1783 | Sanpetru Amasului | Sec XVII | | |
| Benesat | Sec XVI | Dersida | 1700 | Zalnoc | 1700 |
| Rastolt | 1835 | Camara | Sec XVIII | Chiesd | Sec XVIII |
| Solomon | Sec XVIII | Samsud | 1885 | Halmasd | Sec XVIII |
| Bocsita | Sec XVIII | Baica | 1645 | Hida | Sec XVIII |
| Ileanda | Sec XVII | Negreni | Sec XVII | Podisu | Sec XVIII |
| Rastoci | 1833 | Bozna | Sec XVII | Letca | Sec XVII |
| Purcaret | Sec XIX | Soimuseni | 1736 | Toplita | 1700 |
| Lozna | 1813 | Port | 1792 | Mesesanii de Jos | 1785 |
| Vadurele | Sec XVII | Badacin | 1705 | Magura | 1707 |
| Chichisa | Sec XVII | Ciumarna | 1771 | Zimbor | 1843 |
| Pausa | 1730 | Poarta Salajului | 1670 | Romita | 1733 |
| Barsa | Sec XVIII | Domnin | 1753 | Inau | 1732 |
| Sanmihaiu Almasului | 1778 | Sarbi | 1707 | Tusa | Sec XVIII |
| | | Bulgari | 1547 | Notig | 1842 |
| Turbuta | Sec XVII | | | | |

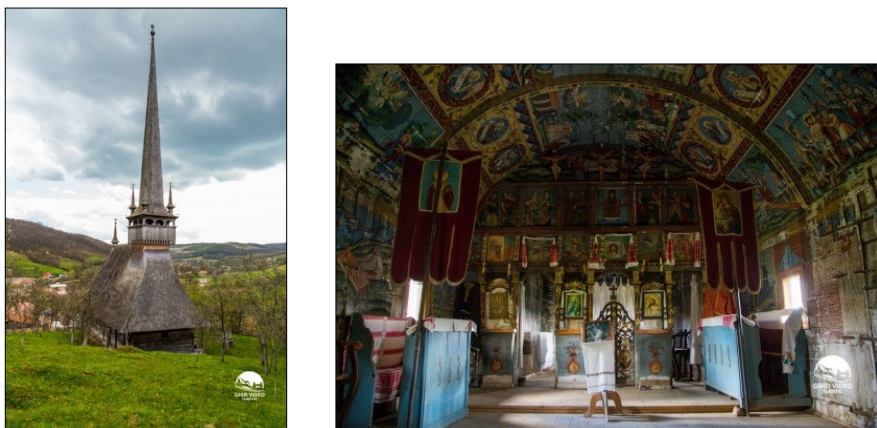


Fig. 18 Wooden Church in Fildu de Sus (photo source www.taracalatei.ro)



Fig. 19 Wooden church in Zimbor (photo source www.taracalatei.ro)

The monasteries were scarce in Salaj before 1990. Though, after this date begun a revival of the monastic settlements, either by the reopening of some old settlements, either by bulding new ones. Among the old settlements we can mention Stramba Paduris Monastery, „The Assumption of Virgin Mary, in Sanpetru Almasului. The church of the monastery is built of wood, at the end of the XVIIIth century. We cand find here a wondrous image of Virgin Mary. It is a friary and it was reestablished in 1993. Another old monastery is the one from Balan, also a

friary. The church was built around 1477, the monastic settlement being reestablished in 1993. Of the new appeared monasteries in Salaj we can mention: Bic Monastery, in Simleul Silvaniei, a nunnery „The Birth of Virgin Mary” (1996), The Friary „Birth of St. John the Baptist” Bobota (2004), Voivodeni Monastery (monks, 2002), the nunnery „Holy Mary ” Rus (1998), the nunnery „The Birth of Virgin Mary in Marca (2005).

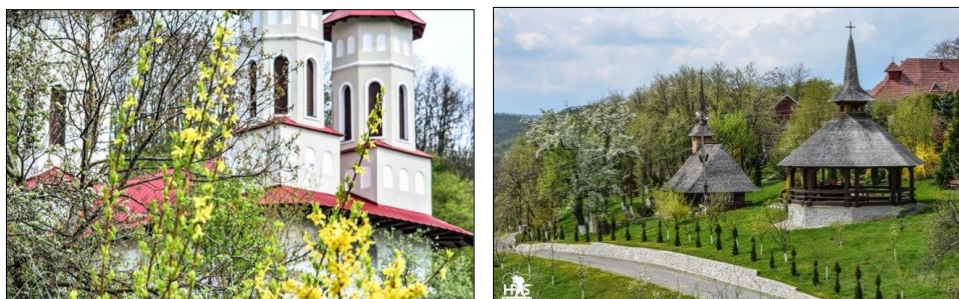


Fig. 20 Stramba Monastery Sanpetru Almasului (photo source [www. adevarul.ro](http://www.adevarul.ro))

C) Monuments are those symbolic achievements meant to recall and immortalize the image and features of the people and of the events that are important for a people (Cocean, P., Dezsi, St., 2009). Even if their touristic attractivity is low, they are unique landmarks of the spots where they are placed. We can mention here the statue of Baron Wesseleny, in the centre of Zalau, made by Fadrusz I. in 1902, the half - lenght statues of some local personalities such as Gh. Sincai and C. Coposu in Bobota or those of S. Barnutiu and A. Barbilovici in Bocsă. On the hill near Guruslau stands the monument dedicated to the memory of the battle won by Mihai Viteazu on the 3rd of August 1601, erected in 1976, work of the sculptor Victor Gaga. In Ip and Treznea there are Monuments of the Martyrs dedicated to the citizens that were slaughtered by the hortyst troupes as a consequence of the Dictate from Vienna, in September 1940 (157 in Ip in the night of 13/14 September, and 87 in Treznea in the 9th of September. Their bodies were thrown in common graves, nowadays covered with flagstones impinted with the name and the age of those who were killed.

D) The touristic edifices with cultural and sports function are present in Salaj through museums and memorial houses. County Museum of History and Arts Zalau, established in the former casiono of the Craftsmen assosiation, built around 1900, hosts impressive collections of exhibits, coming especially from the archeological discoveries in the county, the ones from Porolissum being the most impressive. The museum also has a department of ethnography and folk art, as well as exhibits of plastic art. The contemporary art department works in a separate

building, known as Ioan Sima Art Gallery (former bank, built in 1910), where together with other artistic works there are the works of the master Ioan Sima and an impressive collection of butterflies. In Ciumarma there is a folk art museum founded by the folk singer and traditional costume designer Ileana Gatiana Pop.



Fig. 21 The Mihai Viteazul Monument in Guruslau
(photo source www.welcometoromania.ro)

A novel museum for Salaj is the Memorial Museum of the Holocaust in Northern Transylvania arranged in the former synagogue in Simleu Silvaniei. This museum is dedicated to the memory of the over 160000 jews from the region deported in the concentration camps in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Among the memorial houses dedicated to the local personalities we can mention that of Iuliu Maniu in Badacin and of Simion Barnutiu in Bocsa.

E) The economic edifice and the technical buildings may be attractive for tourists. We can mention here the Varsolt dam and reservoir, Salatig reservoir (their touristic valence was discussed in a previous chapter), as well as the Champagne Factory in Simleu Silvaniei, which has 4 km of tunnels for wine champanizing.

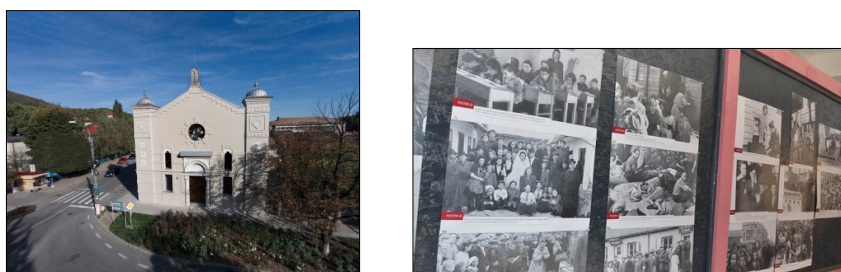


Fig. 22 Memorial Museum of the Holocaust in Northern Transylvania, Șimleu Silvaniei
(sursa foto <http://www.simleusilvaniei.ro>)

F) Paracultural sites are those human works meant to beautify, to create a comfortable ambiance, to ennoble the landscape. The most important landmark of this kind is the Vasile Fati Botanical Garden in Jibou. It was established in 1968, by professor Vasile Fati and works inside the Wesseleny assembly. It has a surface of 25 hectares and over 5000 species of plants from different parts of the world. It includes an ornamental sector, Roman garden, rosarium, Japanese garden, dendrological sector, a complex of greenhouses of 4000 sqm, aquariums with over 40 species of fish, Amazonian gallery with artificial waterfalls, tropical plants and parrot species, as well as a zoo with deer, wild boars and birds. The garden has a distinguished architecture, with dome-shaped greenhouses, in its yard standing the Wesselenyi castle, the largest baroque building in the country.



Fig. 23 Vasile Fati Botanical Garden, Jibou (sursa foto www.dozadebine.ro/simfonia-lalelelor-la-gradina-botanica-jibou/)

In this category we can also include the recreation parks built to offer the population spaces for recreation and relaxation. We can mention here the park near Zalau (Bradet forest) or the ponds that were arranged lately for catch and release fishing which attract many tourists who are passionate about this sport: Odorhei Pond, Glod Pond, Motis Pond, “Fishing Camping” Pond, near Simleul Silvaniei. Some of these places have cottages for accommodation or places where you can set a tent.

3.1.2. Social activities with touristical function, cultural and paracultural events

In this category we can include festivals, religious pilgrimages, sports competitions, as well as other events (festivities, celebrations), which attract thousands of visitors every year. Worth mentioning for Salaj are:

- Roman Festival Zalau Porolissum, which takes place in Zalau and at the Roman Castra from Moigrad is a reenactment festival, focused on ancient history, so for two or three days Zalau becomes a huge Roman camp. Soldiers, gladiators, vestals, dancers, inhabitants of the old Roman Empire,

can be seen walking on the streets of town. The combat demonstrations of the legions are shows where the history can be touched and tried. The combat equipment are a reality and the spectators take a real lesson of antic history. The actors recreate combat scenes between Romans and the so called barbarians, either Dacians, either other peoples. Its date is not invariable, the 14 editions until now took place in different dates between July and September.

- The International Folk and Traditional Artistic Crafts Festival, called „Someș, cântecele tale” from Jibou, the longest living international folk festival in the country, reaching its XXXII nd edition
- The Folk Festival in Valcău de Jos, dedicated to Women Day (March)
- Daffodiles Festival (Racas, Hida commune, in May)
- Folk Festival “De dor și de omenie” (Horoatu Crasnei – June)
- Folk Festival “Porolissum” (Moigrad, Roman Castra Porolissum - July)
- International Festival of Women Dances “Ecouri Meseșene” (Zalău and Guruslău – Mihai’s Hill, August)
- The Festival of the „codrenesc” dance and song (Cehu Silvaniei September)
- In towns and different villages take place popular celebrations such as „The days of the Town”, „The Days of the Commune”, „Sons of the Village”

Religious tourism begins to develop in Salaj, too, the monasteries attracting thousands of pilgrims, especially during Christian Hollidays.

3.1.3. Ethnographical touristic resources

Among the attractive element of ethnographical origin, the most relevant for the touristic phenomenon are: occupations and crafts, traditional customs, folk costumes, dances and songs, architecture peisant technical equipments.

We can mention here the celebration „Masurisul Oilor” in Pria, a pastoral celebration similar to „Sambra Oilor” in Oas, which takes place every year in May. There are some traditional crafts such as: twig braiding (Var), traditional pottery (Deja), hatters (Gîrbou), traditional weaving and sewing (Ciumărna, Hurez, Mesesen, Agrij, Moigrad, Iaz, Plopis, Buciumi), husk braiding (Ulciug, Cristur), wood carving (Șamșud, Fildu de Sus). As interesting elements related to folk dance and song we can mention the „muiereasca” dance in Seredei and „Tulnicaresele” from Buciumi. Regarding traditional architecture, worth mentioning are the sculpted gates made of wood and stone from Fildu de Sus and Buciumi.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Salaj county has a high tourism potential both natural and human, due to the presence of different types of relief (mountainous, karstic, residual with spectacular shapes), of numerous sources of mineral water with curing properties, of some peculiar landscape elements induced by the hydrographic network, of vast afforested areas, as well as a rich cultural and archaeological patrimony. Unfortunately this high potential is not fully capitalized. It is to be appreciated the recent efforts of rehabilitation of some popular spas such as Bizusa, Boghis or Jibou, but in spite of all efforts they are only of local interest, or at most for the nearby counties. Also, some extremely beautiful places (Barcau Springs, the waterfalls on Treznea river) are almost unknown or very hard-to-reach because of the lack of advertising, bad condition of roads or the lack of hallmarks on the tourist routes. In the last years some landmarks, especially of anthropic origin have been successfully advertised: Jibou Botanical Garden, considered to be one of the most beautiful in Europe, Porolissum Roman Castra, or the wooden churches, declared historical monuments. In spite this, there are some great value landmarks such as the cave with drawings from Cuciulat, or very beautiful buildings which are on the verge to disappear because of the lack of interest for their preservation and rehabilitation. A more intense advertising of these places, even organizing certain events or specific tournaments, fund allocation for the preservation or reconstruction of some landmarks, together with better roads and easy ways of access would be a great help for the development of the tourism in the county.

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