

## **THE RELIGIOUS ATTRACTIONS – AN EXPRESSION OF AUTHENTICITY IN THE TERRITORIAL SYSTEM ALBAC - ARIEȘENI AND ALBA COUNTY (ROMANIA)**

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**Abstract:** The anthropic tourist fund becomes more and more important within the tourist heritage of the territorial system Albac – Arieșeni, due to its qualities of diversity, originality and uniqueness at a national and even world level. The tourist attractions constitute a touristic potential that can be valorised differently, according to the intensity and the means of perceiving the spiritual and cultural essence. In the context of the economic and social globalization, the way every nation can highlight its identity is by preserving and transmitting its spiritual and cultural values to the following generations. During the last decades, the tourist importance of the cultural and spiritual values has increased as they were introduced in the national and international tourist circuits.

**Key words:** wooden churches, stone churches, monasteries, anthropic tourist resources

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The territorial system Albac – Arieșeni and Alba County own historical monuments of architecture or folk art, which attest the evolution and continuity of work and life in these regions. All this cultural and historical fund constitutes a significant part of the potential touristic offer and a component of the national and international touristic image of Alba County (Figure 1). The anthropic tourist resources of the representative

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area include the religious attractions. Religion and faith took shape by the erection of places of worship which demonstrate the spiritual continuity in Țara Moților. Here, the leaders of the uprisings were also church builders and knew thoroughly what the values of the faith meant. Horea (one of the leaders of the 1784 peasants' revolt in Apuseni Mountains) built churches in Țara Moților and Transylvania.



**Figure 1.** The map of the mountainous regions of Alba County in relation to the neighbouring mountainous units

## **METODOLOGY**

In order to realise this study related to elements of continuity and preservation of the cultural values in the territorial system Albac – Arieșeni and Alba County (Romania) we have used a series of classical geographical research methods, as well as a series of modern means. The bibliographic documentation included the consultation of literature and of specialty documentary sources. Along with the official data, we have used in the study a series of information obtained following the on-the-ground research, by applying certain methods used in geography: observation and description (Ianoș, 2000; Kothari, 2004); the method of the analysis refers to the geographical environment considered as a complex system; to know this system means to follow the elements and the relationships among them (Cocean, 2005); the graphic representations were made using certain specialised software, such as Arc Gis, Global Mapper, Adobe Photoshop and Microsoft Excel (Clifford et al., 2010); the method of synthesis led to the conclusions regarding the wooden churches in the territorial system Albac – Arieșeni and Alba County.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The religious edifices must highlight their authenticity and continuity in time, in relation with the socio-historical conditions. Regardless of whether they were built in wood, stone or bricks, they were adorned with skilfully carved furniture, with icons painted on wood, cloth, leather or glass support, but also with rich frescoes on the inside or on the outside. From a touristic perspective, these painting elements and the interior decorations are added to the oldness and to the architectural style, generating an attractive vast and multivalent motivation (Cocean, 2010).

We should only settle the border between the touristic value and the cultural value, as a derived function given by the own attractiveness of the anthropic resources. The specialists have added some selection criteria so that the anthropic attractions could be valorised in tourism activities. These are major criteria and they can underline the touristic attributes of the anthropic attractions (wooden churches, old historical centres, architectural monuments etc.). In the tourist activity, we take into account several important criteria for the classification of the anthropic attractions. In relation to the analysed area, these criteria are the following:

- the artistic value of the buildings due to the indoor and outdoor ornaments;
- the overall aesthetic value, which preserves fragments of a lifestyle ambiance;
- the cultural value, conferring uniqueness in relation to the hierarchical classification of this type of goods and conferring authenticity when compared to other anthropic elements;
- the value of the artistic and cultural events organized there, which increase its importance;
- the accessibility and the degree of tourist arrangements;
- the position of the anthropic attractions refers to the degree of accessibility, as well as to the facilities that are necessary in order to have them known and visited;
- the technical genius refers to the means that the artist used in order to create the works and the monuments. Generally speaking, the tourists are interested to know the artistic techniques used for the creation of these works and monuments;
- the degree of preservation and restoration refers to the cultural goods which have a good level of preservation and restoration, even if the good in question is an archaeological site or the ruins of old monuments;
- the degree of perception of the cultural goods refers to the coverage level of the anthropic resources, but it also reflects the way they are known by the potential tourists, and the way they contribute to the broadening of the cultural and educational horizon.

The ethnological hierarchy refers to the origin of the anthropic attractions, their position in the historical evolution of human civilisation and the transformations they have undergone in time and in space; it is important to relate to the different historical periods: pre-Christian, ancient, medieval, pre-modern and contemporary (Cândea & Simon, 2006). The specific classification criteria are specific standards of a certain field, according to which one is able to evaluate the archaeological, historic-documentary, artistic, ethnographic, scientific or technical importance of the cultural goods and by means of which one is able to determine the special or exceptional cultural value, establishing the legal category of the national cultural heritage that they belong to.

Other specific criteria which serve to separate the cultural goods from architecture can be found in the web page of the Ministry of Culture and of National Heritage ([www.cultura.ro](http://www.cultura.ro)), out of which we can mention:

- the historical and documentary value – the criterion according to which one can assess if the cultural good serves to know an important or significant historical fact, in the sense that it represents a historical evidence of the period what that fact occurred;

- the memorial value – the criterion which helps to assess if the cultural good belonged to an important personality of the national or international history, culture and civilisation or represents a direct and significant testimony regarding the life and activity of that personality;

- the authenticity – the criterion which serves to assess if the cultural good was created manifestly by an identified author, or was produced in a workshop, in a manufacturing plant or in a factory precisely determined as belonging to a certain epoch, to a certain artistic style, to a certain culture or civilisation;

- the author, workshop or school – the criterion that serves to assess if the cultural good belongs to an important author or was produced in workshops, in manufacturing plants or in factories significant for a historical epoch, for an artistic style, for a certain culture or civilisation;

- the formal quality – the criterion that serves to assess if a cultural good is an important artistic production, an object of special or exquisite plastic expressiveness or an object that stands out due to the characteristics resulting from the execution technique (including the material support), from the uniqueness or rareness of the design, as well as from its creativity;

The degree of endurance of the building elements and their specificity, from settlement to faith, are recognizable, even nowadays, in the elements of an ancient tradition which constitutes the cultural heritage of the Romanian people in this Transylvanian region (Mocan, 2011). Even though Alba is one of the Romanian counties where the wooden churches representing historic monuments have not been yet fully registered, a real treasure nestles here, due to the authenticity and originality of these values, a treasure which deserves to be duly appreciated. This is why our research focuses on the quantitative, qualitative, typological and cartographic study of the wooden churches, true “pearls” of the traditional architecture of this Transylvanian region (Ilieș, 2014; Ilieș et al., 2008, 2014, 2015).

Further on, we shall try to highlight the cultural values inherited by the identity of the religious edifices, as well as their historic importance and in the end, their role in shaping the overall touristic space. By a comparative analysis from the perspectives of age, function, but especially of the building style, we can operate a differentiation into several categories of religious dwellings: churches, monasteries and hermitages. In Alba County, the religious dwellings can be grouped according to their age, but also to the material used for their construction. According to the type of material used for the construction, we can find the following categories: stone churches and wooden churches.

### Stone churches

Among the stone churches, the oldest ones are the fortified churches. “Nowhere else in the world will you find so many fortified churches in such a small territory, a fact that proves the degree of generality of this phenomenon within a geographical and ethnocultural area. They represent an exceptional architectural product due to the diversity and to the use of the range of defensive patterns of the late European Middle Ages” (cimec.ro). The spiritual and defensive centre of each rural community was the fortified church, meant to resist to the frequent forays made by the Turks and Tatars during the 12th-15th centuries. In Alba County, 19 localities have fortified churches: Aiud, Teiuș, Sebeș, Bălcaciu – the commune of Jidvei, Boz – the commune of Doștat, Călnic, Cenade, Ighiu, Jidvei, Mănărade, Pianu de Jos, Reciu – the commune of Gârbova, Șard - commune Ighiu, Valea Lungă, Veseuș – the commune of Jidvei, Vingard – the commune of Șpring, Vințu de Jos, Vurpăr – the commune of Vințu de Jos, Petrești (Table 1).

**Table 1.** The stone churches representing historical monuments in Alba County  
(Data source: Ministry of Culture and Cults)

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Locality</b>	<b>Age</b>
1.	Franciscan church	Alba Iulia	18 <sup>th</sup> century
2.	Goodavestire Church	Alba Iulia	1783
3.	Sf. Treime Church (Maieri I)	Alba Iulia	1795
4.	Adormirea Maicii Domnului Church	Alba Iulia	1691
5.	Archdiocesan Cathedral or Reintregirii	Alba Iulia	1921
6.	Roman Catholic Church	Abrud	15 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> century
7.	Sf. Apostoli- Church ensemble - Soharu	Abrud	18 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> century
8.	Sf. Apostoli Church	Abrud	1787
9.	Evangelical chapel	Aiud	18 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> century
10.	Church	Aiud	1728-1763 - Church, 1896 - tower
11.	Schimbarea la Față - Church Suseni	Almașu Mare	1822
12.	Buna Vestire Church - Joseni	Almașu Mare	1418, modified 19 <sup>th</sup> century
13.	Cuvioasa Paraschiva Church ensemble	Ampoiața; Meteuș	17 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> century
14.	Cuvioasa Paraschiva Church	Ampoiața; Meteuș	17 <sup>th</sup> century
15.	Învierea Domnului Church	Baia de Arieș	1769
16.	Stone Church Ensemble	Băcăinți; Șibot	13 <sup>th</sup> century
17.	Tower Stone Church (ruins)	Băcăinți; Șibot	13 <sup>th</sup> century
18.	Fortified Evangelical Church Ensemble	Bălcaciu; Jidvei	13 <sup>th</sup> century
19.	Evangelical Church	Bălcaciu; Jidvei	15 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> century
20.	Roman Catholic Church	Bărăbanț; Alba Iulia	1302, modified 17 <sup>th</sup> century
21.	Reformed Church Ensemble	Benic; Galda de Jos	13 <sup>th</sup> - 18 <sup>th</sup> century
22.	Reformed Church (ruins)	Benic; Galda de Jos	13 <sup>th</sup> -16 <sup>th</sup> century, modified 18 <sup>th</sup> c.
23.	Sf. Treime Greek Catholic Cathedral	Blaj	1741 - 1749, exterior 1835 - 1842
24.	Ensemble Greek Catholic Metropolitan	Blaj	16 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> century
25.	Metropolitan Residence	Blaj	1535, modified 1837
26.	Metropolitan Chancellery	Blaj	18 <sup>th</sup> century
27.	Sf. Arhangheli Church ensemble	Blaj	18 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> century
28.	Sf. Arhangheli Church (the greeks)	Blaj	cca. 1770
29.	Fortified Evangelical Church Ensemble	Boz; Doștat	16 <sup>th</sup> - 18 <sup>th</sup> century
30.	Fortified Evangelical Church	Boz; Doștat	1523
31.	Reformed Church	Bucerdea Grânoasă	16 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> century, exterior
32.	Adormirea Maicii Domnului Church	Cărpiniș; Gârbova	18 <sup>th</sup> century
33.	Chapel	Călnic	13 <sup>th</sup> - 15 <sup>th</sup> century
34.	Evangelical Church	Călnic	14 <sup>th</sup> century, modified 16 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> c.
35.	Evangelical parsonage, today Foundation headquarters "Ars Transsilvaniae"	Călnic	16 <sup>th</sup> - 18 <sup>th</sup> century
36.	Fortified Evangelical Church Ensemble	Cenade	14 <sup>th</sup> - 15 <sup>th</sup> century
37.	Evangelical Church	Cenade	15 <sup>th</sup> century, modified 19 <sup>th</sup> - 20 <sup>th</sup> c.

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38.	Gooda Vestire Church	Cergău Mare	1804
39.	Reformed Church	Cetatea de Baltă	13 <sup>th</sup> - 15 <sup>th</sup> century, modified 19 <sup>th</sup> c.
40.	Sf. Nicolae Church	Cib; Almașu Mare	1750
41.	Sf. Arhangheli Church	Cicău; Mirăslău	15 <sup>th</sup> century, modified 18 <sup>th</sup> c.
42.	Chapel	Cisteiu de Mureș	18 <sup>th</sup> century
43.	Reformed Church Ensemble	Ciumbrud	13 <sup>th</sup> - 14 <sup>th</sup> century
44.	Reformed Church	Ciumbrud	13 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> century, exterior 1918
45.	Roman Catholic Church	Colțești	1727, rebuilt 1897
46.	Cloister (Franciscan cloister)	Colțești	1727
47.	Fortified Reformed Church Ensemble	Cricău; Cricău	13 <sup>th</sup> - 15 <sup>th</sup> century
48.	Reformed Church	Cricău; Cricău	13 <sup>th</sup> - 15 <sup>th</sup> century
49.	Orthodox parish house	Cricău; Cricău	19 <sup>th</sup> century
50.	Sf. Arhangheli and Sf. Treime Church	Cugir	1808
51.	Pogorârea Sf. Duh Church	Daia Română	17 <sup>th</sup> century
52.	Nașterea Maicii Domnului Church	Feneș; Zlatna	1750
53.	Nașterea Maicii Domnului Church	Galda de Sus	1715
54.	Sf. Arhangheli Church	Galda de Sus	17 <sup>th</sup> century, 1750- 1800
55.	Romanesque church - "Bergkirche" (ruins)	Gârbova	13 <sup>th</sup> century
56.	Roman Catholic Church (ruins)	Gârbova de Jos; Aiud	13 <sup>th</sup> - 15 <sup>th</sup> century
57.	Din Deal Church (ruins)	Gârbova de Sus; Aiud	14 <sup>th</sup> - 15 <sup>th</sup> century
58.	Nașterea Maicii Domnului Church	Gârbovița; Aiud	14 <sup>th</sup> century, modified 18 <sup>th</sup> c.
59.	Pogorârea Sf. Duh Church	Hădărău; Lupșa	1770 - 1800, 1862
60.	Cuvioasa Paraschiva Church	Ighiel; Ighiu	18 <sup>th</sup> century
61.	Cuvioasa Paraschiva Church	Ighiu	1724, tower- belfry 1761
62.	Reformed Church Ensemble	Ighiu	15-18 <sup>th</sup> century
63.	Reformed Church , fostă biserică Evangelical	Ighiu	18 <sup>th</sup> century
64.	Casa parohială reformată	Ighiu	18 <sup>th</sup> century
65.	Sf. Arhangheli Church	Izbita; Bucium	18 <sup>th</sup> century
66.	Evangelical church ensemble	Jidvei	15 <sup>th</sup> century - 18
67.	Evangelical Church	Jidvei	15 <sup>th</sup> century, modified 1795
68.	Belfry tower	Jidvei	15 <sup>th</sup> century
69.	Adormirea Maicii Domnului Church	Livezile	1611, 1848
70.	Reformed Church	Lopadea Nouă	15 <sup>th</sup> century, 1864 (tower)
71.	Sf. Gheorghe Church	Lupșa	1421, ext. 18 <sup>th</sup> century- 19 <sup>th</sup> century
72.	Sf. Treime Church Ensemble	Măgina; Aiud	17 <sup>th</sup> century - 18
73.	Sf. Treime Church	Măgina; Aiud	1611, exterior 18 <sup>th</sup> century
74.	Schimbarea la Față Church	Mănărade; Blaj	1737
75.	Evangelical church ensemble fortificate	Mănărade; Blaj	17 <sup>th</sup> century - 19
76.	Evangelical Church	Mănărade; Blaj	1864
77.	Incintă fortificată, cu Belfry tower	Mănărade; Blaj	17 <sup>th</sup> century
78.	Cuvioasa Paraschiva Church	Mesentea; Galda de Jos	1782
79.	Cuvioasa Paraschiva Church	Metes	1780
80.	Reformed Church	Noșlac	15 <sup>th</sup> century, modified 18 <sup>th</sup> century
81.	Roman Catholic Church	Ocna Mureș	18 <sup>th</sup> century
82.	Ensemble former evangelical churches	Petrești; Sebeș	14 <sup>th</sup> - 18 <sup>th</sup> century
83.	Belfry tower	Petrești; Sebeș	14 <sup>th</sup> - 18 <sup>th</sup> century
84.	Reformed Church	Petri; Blaj	13 <sup>th</sup> century, exterior 15 <sup>th</sup> century
85.	Evangelical church ensemble	Pianu de Jos; Pianu	13 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> century
86.	Evangelical Church	Pianu de Jos; Pianu	13 <sup>th</sup> - 15 <sup>th</sup> century, modified 1798
87.	Cuvioasa Paraschiva Church	Pianu de Jos; Pianu	1780
88.	Cuvioasa Paraschiva Church	Poiana Ampoiului	1700 - 1761, modified 1918
89.	Sf. Dumitru Church	Poieni; Vidra	18 <sup>th</sup> century
90.	Reformed Church	Rădești	18 <sup>th</sup> century
91.	Evangelical church ensemble	Reciu; Gârbova	13 <sup>th</sup> - 18 <sup>th</sup> century
92.	Evangelical Church	Reciu; Gârbova	13 <sup>th</sup> - 15 <sup>th</sup> century, modified 1801
93.	Orthodox parish house	Roșia Montană	19 <sup>th</sup> century
94.	Adormirea Maicii Domnului Church	Roșia Montană	1741, balcony 19 <sup>th</sup> century
95.	Roman Catholic Church	Roșia Montană	1860 - 1870

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96.	Unitarian Church	Sânbenedic; Fărău	15 <sup>th</sup> - 18 <sup>th</sup> century
97.	Sf. Nicolae Church Ensemble	Sânbenedic; Fărău	18 <sup>th</sup> century
98.	Reformed Church Ensemble	Sâncrai; Aiud	1830
99.	Reformed Church	Sâncrai; Aiud	13 <sup>th</sup> - 18 <sup>th</sup> century
100.	Wooden belfry	Sâncrai; Aiud	1830
101.	Castle Banffy Ensemble	Sâncrai; Aiud	1903
102.	Unitarian Church	Sânmiclăuș; Șona	
103.	Reformed Church	Sânmiclăuș; Șona	
104.	Reformed church, former Greek Catholic	Sântimbru	13 <sup>th</sup> century - 16
105.	Învierea Domnului Church	Sebeș	1819
106.	Adormirea Maicii Domnului Church	Sebeș	1778
107.	Sf. Bartolomeu Roman Catholic Church	Sebeș	14 <sup>th</sup> - 18 <sup>th</sup> century
108.	Evangelical church ensemble	Sebeș	13 <sup>th</sup> - 16 <sup>th</sup> century
109.	Evangelical Church	Sebeș	13 <sup>th</sup> - 16 <sup>th</sup> century
110.	Sf. Iacob Chapel	Sebeș	cca. 1420
111.	Reformed Church Ensemble	Șard; Ighiu	15 <sup>th</sup> - 18 <sup>th</sup> century
112.	Reformed Church, evangelical churches	Șard; Ighiu	15 <sup>th</sup> - 18 <sup>th</sup> century
113.	Adormirea Maicii Domnului Church	Șibot; Șibot	19 <sup>th</sup> century
114.	Intrarea în Biserică a Maicii Domnului Church	Teiuș	16 <sup>th</sup> century, exterior 1885
115.	Evangelical Church	Teiuș	14 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> century
116.	Roman Catholic Church	Teiuș	15 <sup>th</sup> - 18 <sup>th</sup> century
117.	Sf. Arhangheli Church	Tiur; Blaj	1730
118.	Evangelical church ensemble	Valea Lungă	14 <sup>th</sup> - 18 <sup>th</sup> century
119.	Evangelical Church	Valea Lungă	14 <sup>th</sup> century, 1681, 1721, 1725
120.	Nașterea Maicii Domnului Church	Valea Lupșii; Lupșa	1799
121.	Nașterea Precistei și Izvorul Tămăduirii Church	Valea Mănăstirii; Râmeț	14 <sup>th</sup> century
122.	Adormirea Maicii Domnului Church	Valea Sasului; Șona	1790
123.	Evangelical church ensemble	Veseuș; Jidvei	16 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> century
124.	Evangelical Church	Veseuș; Jidvei	1504
125.	Belfry tower and gate	Veseuș; Jidvei	1825
126.	The bell tower of the Sf. Mihail și Gavril church	Veza; Blaj	18 <sup>th</sup> century
127.	Sf. Arhangheli Church	Vidra; Vidra	13 <sup>th</sup> - 17 <sup>th</sup> century
128.	Evangelical Church	Vingard; Șpring	1461, 18 <sup>th</sup> century
129.	Adormirea Maicii Domnului Church	Vințu de Jos	cca. 1700
130.	Roman Catholic Church	Vințu de Jos	1726
131.	Cloister	Vințu de Jos	1726
132.	Evangelical church ensemble	Vințu de Jos	14 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> century
133.	Evangelical Church	Vințu de Jos	14 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> century
134.	Evangelical church ensemble	Vurpăr; Vințu de Jos	1300 - 1350, 15 <sup>th</sup> - 16 <sup>th</sup> century
135.	Evangelical Church	Vurpăr; Vințu de Jos	1300 - 1350
136.	Sf. Nicolae and Nașterea Maicii Domnului Church	Zlatna	1770 - 1780
137.	Adormirea Maicii Domnului Church	Zlatna	15 <sup>th</sup> century, 1696, 1744
138.	Trinity	Sartăș; Baia de Arieș	14 <sup>th</sup> century
139.	Trinity chapel	Șibot	1899

The inclusion of these attractions in the international touristic circuit is supported by Prince Charles of Great Britain, who has visited several times the Transylvanian villages, has bought a house in Viscri and has set up a foundation which prepares the local workforce for the restoration of the houses and of the fortified churches. Another tourist attraction in the form of a religious dwelling is the Coronation Cathedral of Alba Iulia, also known as the Union Cathedral, one of the largest stone churches in the whole Transylvanian region.

The church is dedicated to the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel and it also reveres the memory of Michael the Brave, an important personality of the Romanian history. The Cathedral also witnessed the coronation of King Ferdinand I and of

Queen Mary, two outstanding personalities of Greater Romania. Their busts are placed at the entrance of the cathedral, reminding of the significance that this stone church has had throughout the Romanian history.

### Wooden churches

While trying a practical approach, in this endeavour, we must underline the fact that the wooden churches represent one of the most important component of the Romanian cultural heritage and Alba County has inherited a rich endowment of such edifices. Among these, the most numerous and the best preserved such churches are located in Valea Arieșului and Valea Mureșului. Some of them date back to the 17th -18th centuries and face a permanent state of decay; they have not been introduced into tourist circuits of local, regional or international interest: the wooden church “Pious Parascheva” from Vingard, the commune of Șpring (17th century), the wooden church “The Holy Archangels” of Șpălnaca, the commune of Hopârta (16th century), the wooden church “The Holy Archangels” of Sânbenedic, the commune of Fărău, (1837), the wooden church “Saint Peter” of Berghin (1707).

**Table 2.** The wooden historical monuments in Alba County  
(Data source: Ministry of Culture and Cults)

Nr. crt.	Name	Locality	Age
1.	Sf. Nicolae Wooden church	Alba Iulia	1768, modified 19 <sup>th</sup> century
2.	Învierea Domnului Wooden church	Alba Iulia	1769
3.	Înălțarea Domnului Wooden Church ensemble	Arieșeni	1791
4.	Înălțarea Domnului Wooden church	Arieșeni	1791
5.	Sf. Theodor Tiron Wooden church	Băgău; Lopadea Nouă	1733, modified 1847
6.	Sf. Constantin și Elena Wooden church	Bârlești; Mogoș	1844
7.	Sf. Arhangheli Wooden church	Cisteiu de Mureș	18 <sup>th</sup> century
8.	Sf. Arhangheli Wooden church	Cojocani;	1700 - 1769
9.	Sf. Arhangheli Wooden church	Copand; Noșlac	17 <sup>th</sup> century
10.	Sf. Arhangheli Wooden church	Dealul Geoagiului; Întregalde	1742, exterior 19 <sup>th</sup> century
11.	Sf. Arhangheli Wooden church	Fărău; Fărău	1664
12.	Sf. Arhangheli Wooden church	Fărău; Fărău	1762,1842
13.	Sf. Arhangheli Wooden church ensemble	Găbud; Noșlac	18 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> century
14.	Sf. Arhangheli Wooden church	Găbud; Noșlac	1776,1874 - 1875
15.	Wooden belfry	Găbud; Noșlac	19 <sup>th</sup> century
16.	Sf. Ioan Botezătorul Wooden church	Gârda de Sus	1792,modified 1863
17.	Sf. Arhangheli Wooden church	Geogel; Ponor	1751, modified 1848
18.	Sf. Nicolae Wooden church	Ghîrbom; Berghin	1688, exterior 19 <sup>th</sup> century
19.	Sf. Trei Ierarhi Wooden church	Goiești; Vidra	18 <sup>th</sup> century, (1792)
20.	Sf. Ilie Wooden church	Întregalde	1774, modified 19 <sup>th</sup> century
21.	Sf. Arhangheli Wooden church	Lăzești; Scărișoara	1700 - 1738, exterior 1878
22.	Botezul Domnului Wooden church	Lunca Largă; Ocoliș	18 <sup>th</sup> century
23.	Pogorârea Sf. Duh and Sf. Arhangheli Wooden church	Lunca Mureșului	1723, modified 19 <sup>th</sup> century
24.	Sf. Arhangheli Wooden church	Noșlac	1700 - 1783, modified 1923
25.	Cuvioasa Paraschiva Wooden church ensemble	Pianu de Sus; Pianu	18 <sup>th</sup> century
26.	Sf. Arhangheli Wooden church	Poșaga de Sus; Poșaga	1789
27.	Sf. Arhangheli Wooden church	Runc; Ocoliș	1733, rebuilt 1852
28.	Pogorârea Sf. Duh Wooden church	Sartăș; Baia de Arieș	1780
29.	Sf. Arhangheli Wooden church	Săliște	a former monastery Cioara
30.	Sf. Nicolae Wooden church	Sânbenedic; Fărău	18 <sup>th</sup> c. rebuilt 1730,1773
31.	Wooden belfry	Sânbenedic; Fărău	18 <sup>th</sup> c. rebuilt 1730,1773
32.	Wooden belfry	Sâncrai; Aiud	1830
33.	Cuvioasa Paraschiva Wooden church	Sub Piatră; Sălciua	1798, exterior, 19 <sup>th</sup> century
34.	Sf. Nicolae Wooden church ensemble	Șilea; Fărău	18 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> century
35.	Sf. Nicolae Wooden church	Șilea; Fărău	1761 - 1774, exterior, 19 <sup>th</sup> c.



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36.	Wooden belfry	Șilea; Fărău	1761 - 1774
37.	Wooden belfry	Șilea; Fărău	1664
38.	Sf. Arhangheli Wooden church ensemble	Șpălnaca; Hopârta	18 <sup>th</sup> century
39.	Sf. Arhangheli Wooden church	Șpălnaca; Hopârta	18 <sup>th</sup> century, modified 19 <sup>th</sup> c.
40.	Wooden belfry	Șpălnaca; Hopârta	18 <sup>th</sup> century
41.	Sf. Gheorghe Wooden Church ensemble	Șpălnaca; Hopârta	18 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> century
42.	Sf. Gheorghe Wooden church	Șpălnaca; Hopârta	18 <sup>th</sup> century, rebuilt 1865
43.	Sf. Gheorghe Church ensemble Wooden	Tău; Roșia de Secaș	18 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> century
44.	Sf. Gheorghe Wooden church	Tău; Roșia de Secaș	18 <sup>th</sup> century, exterior 1820
45.	Wooden belfry	Tău; Roșia de Secaș	18 <sup>th</sup> century
46.	Wooden gate Reformed church	Țiur; Blaj	19 <sup>th</sup> century
47.	Sf. Arhangheli Wooden church ensemble	Turdaș; Hopârta	18 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> century
48.	Sf. Arhangheli Wooden church	Turdaș; Hopârta	1770, additions 1826
49.	Wooden belfry	Turdaș; Hopârta	18 <sup>th</sup> century
50.	Sf. Treime și Sf. Ilie Wooden church	Valea Largă; Sălciua	1782
51.	Sf. Nicolae a monastery Lupșa Wooden church	Valea Lupșii; Lupșa	1429, modified 1694, 1865

As regards the building technique of the wooden churches, it perfectly falls within the scope of the traditional technique of the folk architecture (Baiaș, 2012; Baiaș, 2013). The wooden churches truly attract the lookers-on, due to the litness of the vertical display of the towers. For the rural community, but also for the city community, the church has represented and still represents the spiritual centre of the collectivity. In Alba County, Valea Arieșului (Figure 2) and Valea Mureșului (Figure 3) are the most representative in terms of religious architectural monuments. Many wooden churches are located here (table 2), a fact which ensures the specificity of the area and represents a link of the touristic potential. Even though brick churches are being erected, the wooden churches are preserved as well, so that in many localities, a brick church has been built along with the old wooden church (Arieșeni, Gârda de Sus, etc.).

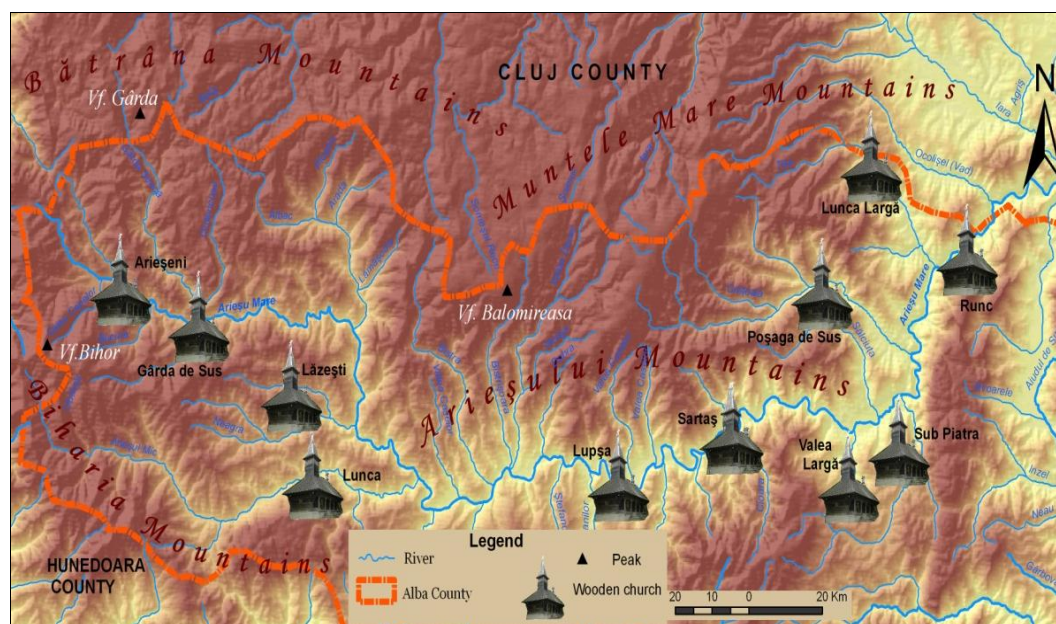
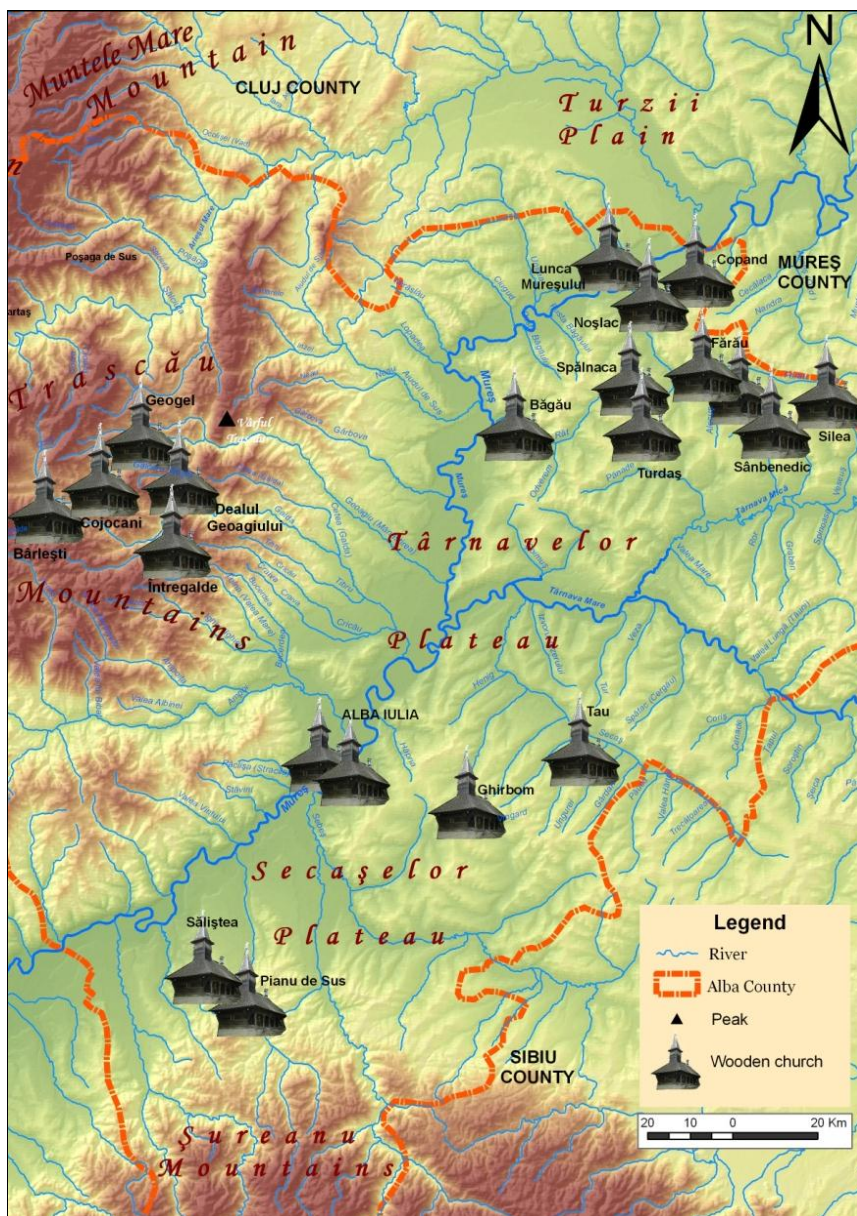


Figure 2. The wooden churches location on Valea Arieșului, Alba County



**Figure 3.** The wooden churches from Valea Mureșului

The old churches used to be built in the centre of the village, usually on a higher land and around them grew the cemetery of the village. If a part of these churches are located at the end of the locality, this is due either to the fact that the church was moved when the new brick church was built, or to the fact that in the structure of the original villages occurred certain transformations imposed by the authorities or by other necessities. In some situations, the community would build a new church in the new living centre and the old one would be left at the end of the village or in the middle of the

cemetery, serving sometimes as a chapel or becoming a tourist attraction for the visitors; it would rarely be used for officiating the religious services. The tallest wooden church ranked as historic monument (22 m) is situated in the drainage basin of Arieș, in Arieșeni, while the smallest church (5 m), is situated in the drainage basin of Mureș, in the village Șilea, the commune of Fărău (Baiaș et al., 2015). The most representative element of folk architecture in the commune of Arieșeni is the wooden church located in the centre of the commune, as well as the households with the wooden houses specific to Țara Moților and spread in all the villages of the commune. The wooden church located in the centre of the commune of Arieșeni is a monument of folk architecture dating from the 18th century. Situated in a dominant position, it owns an important collection of icons painted on wood and glass support. It was built in 1791 and is dedicated to the Ascension of Christ. The church was painted in 1829 by the artist Michael the Painter of Abrud. The wooden church of Șilea was built in the second half of the 17th century and in 1995 it was moved to Fărău Monastery, situated between the village Șilea and the commune centre, Fărău.

### **The monasteries and their role in the development of religious tourism**

The monasteries are architectural ensembles with religious and accommodation functions, but also having many attractive valences originating from the old age of the edifices, the building styles, the fame of the omnipresent churches, the fortified precincts, the cultural function, etc. The monasteries have their own organisation and complex functions; they include the church, that in some cases was founded by a voivode, as well as living quarters (cells for the monks and nuns, depending on the type of monastery), painting workshops (Albac and Patrangeni-Negroiu Monasteries), sculpture and tailoring workshops (Albac Monastery), carpentry and icon production workshops, editorial activity (Saint John the Baptist Monastery of Alba Iulia), theological seminaries and land properties (gardens, hayfields). The monastic life has been accompanied by a constant cultural preoccupation that expressed itself in the drawing up and printing of works included in the cultural heritage of our people. Also, schools have functioned along many monasteries, intended to spread the thirst for education among young people.

As specific microhabitats, whose main mission is the unhindered communication with the divinity, the monasteries have usually been placed in remote areas, often picturesque, at the foot of rocky steep slopes or near the valley springs, in areas that were easier to defend of that could provide shelter in times of trouble. Therefore, monasteries are to be found at the trenchant contact of the landforms, where the plains meet the hills or where the hills meet the mountains. The monastic settlements represent for a certain category of tourists a true oasis of peace and meditation, thanks to the simple presence of nature, looked after with passion by the dwellers of the monasteries (Cocean, 2010; Ciangă, 2007). The people who visit the monasteries can be separated into two main categories: tourists and believers. The difference between them is that the tourist admires the painting, the architecture, the location of the monastic settlement, etc., while the believer is aware that he is in a sacred place and the character of his experiences and feelings is totally different. The literature refers to all as pilgrims. The monastic settlements witness the largest influx of pilgrims on the days dedicated to the patron-saints of the churches; this type of tourism is the religious one. The celebration of the patron-saint generates a large-scale cultural event.

The degree of accessibility has been joined to the table, because the analysis of the resources from the perspective of tourism requires such an indicator (Ielenicz, 2006). This indicator is tightly related to the factor of distance (the distance to the national road, for example. For the criteria used to assess the touristic potential, three levels were

proposed regarding the degree of accessibility: high (value 5), average (value 3) and low (value 1). The numeric values are necessary for the quantitative analysis of the potential. The degree to which the attractions are known is valorised from 1 to 5, from low to very good; this is a relative indicator, but it is useful for assessing the tourist resources at a local level (Table 3). This indicator has been applied using again the method proposed by prof. Ielenicz. In order to know better the possibilities to practice the religious and pilgrimage tourism, we considered that it was important to gather information concerning the accommodation offer. Some monasteries in Alba County do not have accommodation facilities for tourists, only 10-20 beds for the staunch pilgrims, as well as for the priests, bishops, etc. We have identified this issues following the on-the-ground investigations. From a touristic perspective, the importance of these attractions becomes greater and greater also because of the degree of poverty and struggle of the Romanian people. The pilgrims, whether they believe or not, practice to a great extent the religious and pilgrimage tourism, as the liturgical atmosphere within the monasteries is much deeper than the one in the space they come from.

**Table 3.** The monasteries of Alba County  
(Data source: Ministry of Culture and Cults)

Nr. crt.	Name	Locality	Age	Grade of accessibility	Grade of knowledge	Space accommodation
1.	Afteia Monastery	Margineni-Strungari, Salistea	century 17	Low	Relative	Yes
2.	Archdiocesan Cathedral	Alba Iulia	1921	High	Very good	Not
3.	Cergaul Mic Monastery	Cergaul Mic	2001	Low	Relative	Not
4.	Patrangeni-Negroiu Monastery	Patrangeni, Zlatna	1993	Average	Relative	Yes
5.	Dumbrava Monastery	Dumbrava, Unirea	1996	High	Good	Yes
6.	Lupsa Monastery	Lupsa	1990	High	Good	Not
7.	Farau Monastery	Farau	1995	Low	Relative	Not
8.	Sfantul Ioan Botezatorul Monastery	Alba Iulia	1990	High	Good	Not
9.	Roman Catholic monastery	Vintu de Jos	1726	High	Very good	Not
10.	Magina Monastery	Magina, Aiud	1611	Low	Relative	Not
11.	Oasa Monastery	Tau-Bistra, Sugag	1990	High	Good	Yes
12.	Sf. Bartolomeu Monastery	Sebeș	14	High	Very good	Not
13.	Magura Monastery	Jina	1989	Low	Relative	Yes
14.	Cheile Cibului Monastery	Almașu Mare	2001	Average	Relative	Not
15.	Poiana Sohodol Monastery	Poiana Sohodol	1998	Average	Relative	Yes
16.	Ponor Monastery	Ponor	2007	Low	Relative	Not
17.	Sfanta Treime Monastery	Albac, Rusești	2015	Low	Low	Not
18.	Albac-Rogoz Monastery	Albac	1999	High	Good	Yes
19.	Sfantul Ioan Botezatorul Monastery	Rimete	2000	Low	Relative	Not
20.	Strungari Monastery	Strungari	1997	Low	Relative	Not
21.	Tet Monastery	Șugag	1990	Average	Relative	Yes
22.	Sub Piatra Monastery	Sub Piatra, Salciua	18	Low	Relative	Not
23.	Tauni Monastery	Tauni, Valea Lunga	1996	Low	Relative	Not
24.	Monastery minorities	Aiud	18	High	Very good	Not
25.	Monastery Bazilians	Blaș	1741	High	Very good	Not
26.	Râmeț Monastery	Valea Mănăstirii	14	High	Very good	Yes
27.	Roman Catholic monastery	Teiuș	15	High	Very good	Not
28.	The former Franciscan monastery	Colțești	18	High	Very good	Not

## CONCLUSIONS

The originality of the Romanian people consists in the creativity potential that takes shape in the material and spiritual culture. In this regard, the monasteries, the stone and wooden churches have a prominent place in this culture.

The problem of developing tourism by spotlighting these elements of particular value remains an open issue. Within the analysed area, some patrimonial elements are valorised by tourist signs, by various promotional methods, but others are not even easy to identify on the ground or are too little known. The wooden churches of Alba County represent the main visible elements of the material anthropic heritage, that could be valorised by means of cultural, educational and even scientific tourism. The priority actions should aim to help people understand the risk of losing this cultural legacy, as well as to promote public awareness about the fact that these "pearls" must be preserved, because they reflect the past, the present and the future of the Romanian people in these lands. The historical and cultural importance represent the touch of originality for these elements that are unique in the east of Europe.

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