



THE FUNCTIONS AND THE IMPACT OF THE VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE FROM VAIDEENI VILLAGE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRO-MOUNTAIN TOURISM IN THE CĂPĂȚÂNII MOUNTAINS

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Abstract *By signing the Carpathian Convention, Romania contributes to the preservation and sustainable development of the Carpathians in order to improve the quality of life of local populations and preserve the natural and cultural values, with a special emphasis on vernacular architecture. The traditional house functions in Vaideeni, as seen from the perspective of an integration project or a promotion program for the cultural and mountain tourism, can be divided in two branches: the integration function whose prerogatives are preserving and maintaining intact the old and traditional wooden houses and their interiors unchanged; and the second function is the cultural representation, which refers to the restoration of damaged old houses or, in the case of new constructions, to preserve architecture elements specific to the village of Vaideeni. The basis for this cultural representation is based on studies, researches and archive materials.*

Key words:

Vaideeni, vernacular architecture, cultural tourism, mountain tourism

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For the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathian Mountains, the Carpathian Convention was adopted in Kiev on 22 May 2003. The overall objective of the Convention is to cooperate for the preservation and sustainable development of the Carpathians in order to improve the quality of life of local populations and preserve natural and cultural values. Accession to the Convention has created a general framework for cooperation in various areas such as biodiversity conservation, land-use planning, water resource management, agriculture and forestry, transport, tourism, industry and energy. The Convention also contains framework provisions to be developed and implemented through additional Protocols covering

each of the above-mentioned areas. At the same time, the Carpathian Convention elaborated a map of the territorial administrative units throughout the Carpathian chain, and Vâlcea County and implicitly the Horezu-Vaideeni area is included in this initiative.

In Bratislava, on the 27th May 2011, a protocol on sustainable tourism, ratified by Romania through Law no. 72/2014 and published in M.O. no. 413 / 04.06.2014, stipulating that: *"The signatory parties will take measures to promote sustainable tourism in the Carpathians for the benefit of local populations on the basis of the exceptional cultural, landscape and natural heritage of the Carpathians, increasing cooperation for this purpose, in*

particular, the development of policies that promote and facilitate the development of sustainable tourism, as well as management plans - coordinated or joint - for areas of touristic interest and protected areas in mountain areas." Vernacular architecture as part of the cultural heritage alongside traditional knowledge will be integrated into national or local policies that will aim to promote and protect them.

Over the years, the study of traditional rural settlements has received special attention from geographers and ethnographers. Depending on the factors they considered essential, the specialists tried to typify these anthropogenic units. In the landscape of traditional Romanian architecture, the peasant constructions found in sub-Carpathian Oltenia occupy a well-defined place. In this special area, full of history, legends and traditions, there is also the Vaideeni village, a pastoral enclave, where today some of the inhabitants are still of the sheep flocks, just like their ancestors, coming from the ethnographic area Mărginimea Sibiului .

Located in an exceptional natural setting, at the bottom of the Căpățâni Mountains, on the old roads of the transhumance, the village of Vaideeni is a settlement distinguished in the geographical

and cultural area of Oltenia due to the inhabitants called "*Ungureni*". Some families of these wallachians crossed the mountains at the end of the 18th century, leaving Transylvania behind, which was occupied by the Austro-Hungarian empire during that period. Besides the folk costume and the basic occupation of shepherding, they have also brought with them from Transylvania the technique of building dwellings out of wood logs and

raised above the ground, therefore influencing the development of the local architecture. (see FIG. 1)

The Subcarpathian region of Vâlcea County, where the village of Vaideeni is located, benefits from an architectural point of view of a rich existing study material. In the last couple of years, the study material has been in a steep descent, as a result of the renewal of the villages. In this pastoral settlement there can be found two specific types of houses, each representing a specific ethnographic area : the houses specific to „*Mărginimea Sibiului*”, and houses with a beautiful wooden ornaments specific to „*Oltenia de sub munte*”.

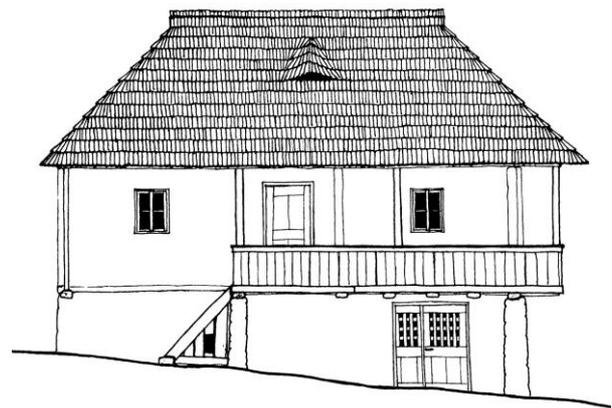


Fig.1. House Nicolae Deloreanu, Padeș street, village Vaideeni, Vâlcea county, end of sec. XIX. Disappeared

Architecture considered to be an artificial body that is implanted in a natural environment must harmonize with it both functionally and aesthetically. This integration into the natural environment is also one of the features of folk architecture, especially since the problem of rural habitat within traditional folk civilization has been and has remained an important component.

Cultural identity can also be preserved by preserving the archaic forms of rural architecture,

considering that all the architectural elements as part of the national cultural patrimony can also have a touristic function.

The way of life of the shepherds in Vaideeni, based on the breeding of animals, especially of the sheep, gave birth to a form of habitation. The traditional house, together with the various constructions that make up the household together, viewed from the perspective of integration into a project / program for the promotion of cultural and mountain tourism, fulfills two functions: the integration function and the cultural representation function.¹

The function of integration of Vaideeni village homes in a good conservation status, useful for programs and tourist circuits. After 1990, many traditional houses were demolished, not realizing the value of their use for the future - a value given by the old architecture of the dwelling - which attests the cultural and spiritual identity of the sheperds from Vaideeni, followers of the shepherds from Sibiu area. In present times, due to the demolition costs, the inhabitants leave old homes "to spoil themselves" under the weather.

Traditional dwellings constitute precious values in the development of agro-mountain tourism and cultural tourism. The inhabitants image of the dwelling is disturbed and modified by the appearance of the dwellings of the city, elements that are otherwise borrowed by the sheperds, the place of the traditional wooden house built with wooden bases, with the foundation of stone from by

the river , taken by the „modern” constructions in concrete and brick. Being a perception misunderstood by the Vaideeni's inhabitants of borrowing elements from the city's houses, it is not aware that tourists are attracted and fed spiritually by the cultural difference, the customs and the specific constructions that made themselves remarked.

Consequently, old wooden houses, well preserved and with intact traditional interiors, must be preserved unchanged, in the same way as in other ethnographic areas, both because they maintain the traditional color and atmosphere at the level of the area and the space that represents accommodation potential that could offer tourists an unforgettable experience and an intimate and welcoming atmosphere than in boarding houses. (see FIG. 2)



Fig.2. Blue houses from Vaideeni (photo: Bogdan Copețchi – Kopecky)

The function of cultural representation provided by the restoration of the old houses in an advanced state of degradation or in the case of new constructions, based on studies and researches as well as archival materials, preserve the specific elements of the vernacular architecture in the village of Vaideeni. The architectural elements of the

¹ http://pangeea.uab.ro/upload/19_250_14_plesa_-_casele_motilor.pdf

buildings from this pastoral settlement are those that enhance the cultural heritage of the community and of the **"Blue House"**², although some of them are in a state of deterioration or have already disappeared.

CONCLUSION

Traditional house and household have always been harmonized with the occupations and way of life of the inhabitants, but also with their economic possibilities. The Romanian architecture, considered a reference point of traditional culture, has been influenced over time by a combination of factors and many aspects of the local architectural specificity.

The Vaideeni village geographically located in the mountain area of Vâlcea County, through the wooden houses specific of Mărginimii Sibiului or those with a beautiful ornamented houses specific to „*Oltenia de sub munte*”, develops a particularity reamarked during the personal field research. The blue-painted houses differentiate themselves from those in the adjoining settlements, therefore having a major impact on those who discover this community.

The tourists, both Romanians and foreigners who visit this village, are impressed not only by the sacred anthropic aspect of the area, but also by the geographical context of the settlement and the picturesque natural landscape, which besides the favorable position, near the town of

Horezu (the capital of the Romanian folk ceramics and near of the Dacian fortresses from Costesti - Ferigi and Polovragi), can discover at the bottom of the Căpățâanii mountains, in Vaideeni, a fragment of Transylvania in the sub-Carpathian area of Oltenia.

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² **The Story of the Blue Houses** - Photographic exhibition made in 2015 at Vaideeni on the occasion of the Folklore Festival "Învărtita Dorului" by photographer Aurel Rapa at the initiative of Simona

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