

GEOGRAPHIA

STUDIA
UNIVERSITATIS BABEŞ-BOLYAI
GEOGRAPHIA

1/2023

ISSN (print): 1221-079X
ISSN (online): 2065-9571; ISSN-L: 1221-079X
©2023 STUDIA UBB GEOGRAPHIA
Published by Babeş-Bolyai University

EDITORIAL BOARD OF STUDIA UNIVERSITATIS BABEŞ-BOLYAI GEOGRAPHIA

EDITORIAL OFFICE: Clinicilor no. 5-7, 400006 Cluj-Napoca, Romania
<http://studiageographia.geografie.ubbcluj.ro/>

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:

Senior Lecturer Titus MAN, PhD, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania,
E-mail: titus.man@ubbcluj.ro

EXECUTIVE EDITORS:

Senior Lecturer Raularian RUSU, PhD, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania,
E-mail: raularian.rusu@ubbcluj.ro
Senior Lecturer Ştefan BILAŞCO, PhD, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania,
E-mail: stefan.bilasco@ubbcluj.ro

EDITORIAL BOARD:

Professor Dan BĂLTEANU, Romanian Academy Member, PhD, University of Bucharest, Romania
Professor Alexandru UNGUREANU, Romanian Academy Member, PhD, „Al. I. Cuza” University, Iaşi, Romania
Professor Petru URDEA, Romanian Academy Member, PhD, West University, Timişoara, Romania
Professor Jozsef BENEDEK, PhD, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Professor Pompei COCEAN, PhD, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Professor Ştefan DEZSI, PhD, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Professor Ionel HAIDU, PhD, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Professor Ioan Aurel IRIMUŞ, PhD, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Professor Gavril PANDI, PhD, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Professor Dănuţ PETREA, PhD, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, România
Professor Valerio AGNESI, PhD, Palermo University, Italy
Professor Dorianò CASTALDINI, PhD, Modena University, Italy
Professor Walter LEIMGRUBER, PhD, Université de Fribourg, Suisse
Professor János MIKA, PhD, The National Meteorological Institute, Budapest, Hungary
Professor Jean-Claude THOURET, PhD, Univ. Blaise Pascal, Clermont-Ferrand, France
Professor Marina TODORVIČ, PhD, Beograd University, Serbia
Professor Dragoş ŞIMANDAN, PhD, Brock University, Ontario, Canada
Professor Christoph WAACK, PhD, Regional Geography Institute, Leipzig, Germany
Professor Jan WENDT, PhD, Gdansk University, Poland
Professor Zoltán NAGY, PhD, University of Miskolc, Hungary
Professor Ioan IANOŞ, PhD, Bucharest University, Romania
Professor Ionel MUNTELE, PhD, „Al. I. Cuza” University, Iaşi, Romania
Professor Constantin Viorel RUSU, PhD, „Al. I. Cuza” University, Iaşi, Romania
Professor Alexandru ILIEŞ, PhD, University of Oradea, Romania
Professor Petre GĂŞTESCU, PhD, Hyperion University, Bucureşti, Romania
Professor Nicolae POPA, PhD, West University, Timişoara, Romania
Professor Maria RĂDOANE, PhD, „Ştefan cel Mare” University, Suceava, Romania

YEAR
MONTH
ISSUE

Volume 68 (LXVIII) 2023
JUNE
1

PUBLISHED ONLINE: 2023-07-30
PUBLISHED PRINT: 2023-08-30
ISSUE DOI: 10.24193/subbgeogr.2023.1

S T U D I A
UNIVERSITATIS BABEŞ-BOLYAI
GEOGRAPHIA

1

CONTENT/ SOMMAIRE/ INHALT/ CUPRINS

Raularian RUSU, Climatic Data Comparison Between Mid-latitude Azores (North Atlantic) and Tristan da Cunha (South Atlantic) Islands 5

Ileana-Cristina VASILIŢĂ-CRĂCIUN, The Tourist Exploitation of the Cultural Landscape of Ocna Mureş – as a Factor of Socio-Economic Well-Being and an Alternative to the Major Impact Consequences Induced by Floods in the Anthropocene.....17

Ioana Irina GUDEA, Archaeotouristic Axes Related to Roman Camps in Bistriţa-Năsăud, Cluj and Sălaj Counties in Romania31

Roxana MIHELE, Cristina BOLOG, Building Tour-Guiding Skills During the ESP Course. Tourism Students' Vision of Their Potential Professional Development43

Balai Chandra DAS, In Search of Birthplace of Sri Chaitanya: Part I. A Study on Hagiographies Up to 17th Century63

INTERVIEW

The Reflexive Approach to Truth in Human Geography: Lessons from Professor Virgil-Achiles Gârbacea (Virgil-Achiles GÂRBACEA, Alexandru-Sabin NICULA)	93
--	----

BOOK REVIEWS

Stancu, Marcel, 2019, <i>Omnibus, tramvai, troleibuz: transportul public electric în Sibiu și în România</i> , 388 p., Editura Honterus, Sibiu (Alexandru A. PĂCURAR).....	107
Radosav, Doru, 2022, <i>Transilvania are forma inimii: istorie și peisaj în spațiul transilvănean al secolului al XVIII: percepții, sensibilități, reprezentări [La Transylvanie a la forme du cœur : histoire et paysage dans l'espace transylvain au XVIII^e siècle : perceptions, sensibilités, représentations]</i> , 399 p. + illustrations, éditions Școala Ardeleană, Cluj-Napoca (Alexandru A. PĂCURAR)	113

CLIMATIC DATA COMPARISON BETWEEN MID-LATITUDE AZORES (NORTH ATLANTIC) AND TRISTAN DA CUNHA (SOUTH ATLANTIC) ISLANDS

Raularian RUSU¹

ABSTRACT. Climatic data comparison between mid-latitude Azores (North Atlantic) and Tristan da Cunha (South Atlantic) islands. The Azores islands in the North Atlantic and the Tristan da Cunha islands in the South Atlantic are approximately located at the same latitude, stretching between 36 and 41 degrees North and South respectively. Nevertheless, there are important climatic differences between the two archipelagos. The average annual temperature is higher in the Azores by more than 3 degrees, while the amount of precipitation is higher in Tristan da Cunha by about 600 mm/year on average. The warmer climate of the Azores may be explained by several contributing factors, such as: the smaller distance to the nearest continental landmass – less than 1500 km, compared to more than 2700 km in the case of Tristan da Cunha; the land mass of the islands themselves, as the Azores are much larger; the location of the Azores in the area of the North Atlantic High, with more stable weather and a higher amount of sunshine hours compared to the Tristan da Cunha islands, where westerlies prevail; and, not in the least, the influence of the Gulf Stream in the case of the Azores. The larger amount of precipitation in the case of Tristan da Cunha islands is due to their location on the southern flank of the South Atlantic High, which causes a higher degree of cloudiness and therefore more precipitation. The altitude is also a factor, as both archipelagos feature volcanic mountains rising above 2000 metres, providing a barrier for the air masses and determining orographic precipitation, especially on the windward side of the islands. The climate has had an impact on the settlement and human life on the islands. The Azores were settled immediately after their discovery in the 15th century and there is a rich social and economic life ever since. By contrast, the small community on Tristan da Cunha main island was formed only in the 19th century and has endured many hardships.

Keywords: climatic comparison, Azores, Tristan da Cunha, average temperature, precipitation.

¹ Babeş-Bolyai University, Faculty of Geography, Centre for Regional Geography, Cluj-Napoca, 5-7 Clinicilor Street, e-mail: raularian.rusu@ubbcluj.ro



Introduction

The Azores Archipelago and the Tristan da Cunha Archipelago are both located in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and approximately at the same latitude, the former in the North Atlantic and the latter in the South Atlantic. The largest islands, São Miguel (in the Azores) and Tristan da Cunha, are both located between 37 and 38 degrees of latitude, North and South respectively, while all the islands in the two archipelagos lie between 36 and 41 degrees North and South respectively. Given their similar location, the climatic data should be comparable. Nevertheless, there are important climatic differences between the two archipelagos, and this paper aims at identifying the causes for such dissimilarities.

Data, materials and methods

Climatic data from several weather stations in the Azores and the two stations in Tristan da Cunha (one on Tristan da Cunha Island, and the other one on Gough Island) have been collected from public online databases and compared. Data from Observatório Afonso Chaves in Ponta Delgada (São Miguel Island, 37°45' N, 25°40' W, 35 m altitude) and from Edinburgh of the Seven Seas (Tristan da Cunha Island, 37°04' S, 12°19' W, 23 m altitude) were used primarily because their location is most similar, both in terms of latitude and altitude, and because they are located on the main islands.

The comparison reveals a difference in terms of average annual temperature of approximately 3 degrees in favour of the Azores Archipelago, where average annual temperatures are in between 17.5°C and 18°C on all islands, compared to Tristan da Cunha Island (14.8 °C), and up to 6 degrees if compared to Gough Island (11.5°C, located further South, at 40°21' S, 9°53' W, 28 m altitude).

The situation is quite the reverse in terms of precipitation, with about 600 mm more annual precipitation (on average) on Tristan da Cunha (1,681 mm) compared to São Miguel (1,052 mm). However, precipitation values in the Azores stretch from 730 mm/year on Santa María, the southernmost island, to 1,666 mm/year on Flores in the North-West. The difference is much higher if one takes into account the values on Gough Island (more than 3,000 mm/year), while most islands in the Azores account for 1,000 to 1,200 mm/year (table 1).

Data regarding wind speeds could not be collected, but wind speeds on Tristan da Cunha and Gough Islands are notoriously high, compared to those in the Azores.

All these climatic factors have had an impact on human life on the islands. The Azores have been inhabited at least since the 15th century, when they were settled by the Portuguese, and have a total population of about 236,000 inhabitants, with more than half living on the main island, São Miguel. On the other hand, while Tristan da Cunha Island was discovered in the early 16th century, it has been inhabited only since 1810 by a handful of people, reaching about 250 inhabitants nowadays in the only settlement, Edinburgh of the Seven Seas. The other islands in the Tristan da Cunha Archipelago are not inhabited, except for the staff of the weather station on Gough Island, usually including 6 people.

Several hypotheses have been drafted to explain the causes for these climatic dissimilarities. Among the contributing factors to the warmer climate in the Azores, one may list the smaller distance to the nearest continental landmass, the land mass of the islands themselves (as the Azores are much larger than Tristan da Cunha), the location of the Azores in the area of the North Atlantic High, with more stable weather and a higher amount of sunshine hours compared to Tristan da Cunha, where westerlies prevail, and, not in the least, the influence of the Gulf Stream in the case of the Azores. The larger amount of precipitation in the case of the Tristan da Cunha Archipelago may be due to their location on the southern flank of the South Atlantic High, which causes a higher degree of cloudiness and therefore more precipitation. The altitude may also be a factor, as both archipelagos feature volcanic mountains rising above 2000 metres, providing a barrier for the air masses and orographic precipitation, especially on the windward side of the islands.

The paper analysed each of these factors, in an attempt to better explain the existing differences.

Results and discussion

The first factor to be taken into consideration is the distance to the nearest continental landmass. The Azores Archipelago is much closer to both continents, to the East (Europe) and West (North America), compared to Tristan da Cunha, because the Atlantic Ocean is narrower in its northern part. Taking into account the largest island in the Azores, São Miguel, the shortest distance to Europe (Portugal) is 1430 km and the shortest distance to North America (Newfoundland) is 2450 km. By contrast, Tristan da Cunha Island is 2790 km away from the nearest point on a continent, Cape Town in Africa, and 3950 km away from Mar del Plata in South America (Argentina). Therefore, the distance to the nearest continental landmass is almost double in the case of Tristan da Cunha Island, which has an impact on the average temperature. Even more, given the distribution of the landmasses on Earth, predominantly in the northern hemisphere, it is well-known

that average temperatures in the northern hemisphere are higher than those in the southern hemisphere at the same latitudes. In the specific analysed case, it is obvious that Eurasia and North Africa to the East, as well as North and Central America to the West, in the case of the Azores, are much larger in area and have a bigger impact than the southern half of Africa to the East and the southern half of South America to the West, in the case of Tristan da Cunha. Furthermore, the North Atlantic Ocean contains many other islands, such as Greenland or Iceland in the North, Madeira and the Canary Islands to the East and South-East of the Azores, while the South Atlantic has fewer islands, and much smaller, such as Saint Helena to the North of Tristan da Cunha, Bouvet Island to the South-East, Falkland Islands and South Georgia to the West and South-West (fig. 1).

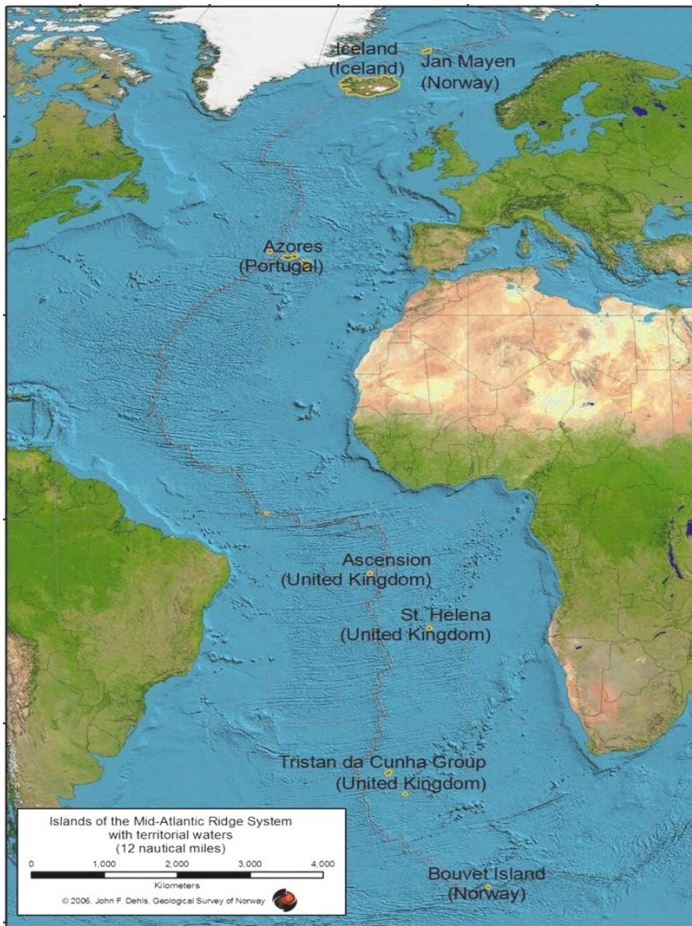


Fig. 1. Location of the Azores and of Tristan da Cunha on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge.
Source: UNESCO (2023)

The second factor to be considered is the land mass of the archipelagos themselves. It is worth noting that the Azores cover a total area of 2,351 km², which is more than 11 times the area of Tristan da Cunha Islands, which only cover a total of 207 km². In fact, the largest island of the Azores, São Miguel (759 km²), is almost 8 times larger than Tristan da Cunha Island, which only covers 98 km², and almost four times larger than the entire Tristan da Cunha Archipelago (table 1). This is significant for the manner in which the total land area may affect the climatic elements. Tristan da Cunha Islands are very small and therefore their land mass has a low impact on climatic elements, whereas the Azores are larger and their impact is more significant.

Table 1. Area, population, highest points and basic climatic elements of the Azores and Tristan da Cunha islands

Island	Area (km ²)	Population (2021)	Highest point	Height (m)	Average temperature (°C)	Annual precipitation (mm)
Azores						
São Miguel	759	133295	Pico da Vara	1103	17.8	1053
Pico	447	13883	Montanha do Pico	2351	17.5	1109
Terceira	402	53244	Serra da Santa Bárbara	1021	N/A	N/A
São Jorge	238	8373	Pico da Esperança	1053	N/A	1259
Faial	173	14334	Cabeço Gordo	1043	17.4	962
Flores	142	3428	Morro Alto	915	17.7	1666
Santa Maria	97	5408	Pico Alto	587	18.4	730
Graciosa	61	4091	Pico do Coirão	402	17.4	845
Corvo	17	384	Estreitinho	720	17.5	1145
Tristan da Cunha						
Tristan da Cunha	98	238	Queen's Mary Peak	2062	14.8	1681
Gough	91	6	Edinburgh Peak	910	11.5	3069
Inaccessible	13	-	Cairn Peak	449	N/A	N/A
Nightingale	3	-	High Peak	370	N/A	N/A

Data source: Instituto de Meteorologia de Portugal and NOAA for the climatic elements; various web sources for the area, population and highest points.

Another factor taken into account is the location of the islands in relation to the main anticyclones of the Atlantic. The Azores are located in the area of the North Atlantic High (Davis *et al.*, 1997), also known as the Azores High (Falarz, 2019; Cresswell-Clay *et al.*, 2022) or the Azores-Bermuda High, an area of high pressure over the subtropical North Atlantic which is very important for the climate and weather of the eastern coast of North and Central America

(Chase, 1951), as well as for Europe and North Africa (Rashid, Iqbal and Hussain, 2012; Yadav, 2021; Ummenhofer, 2022). The position and strength of the North Atlantic High varies throughout the year. Especially in summer, it is located in the area of the Azores and its presence is associated with stable weather, more sunshine hours (a total of 1738 sunshine hours annually on São Miguel Island) and higher temperatures as a result. In winter, the Azores are usually North of the North Atlantic High, in the area where the westerlies are predominant, bringing more precipitation (Trewartha and Horn, 1980). By contrast, the South Atlantic High (also known as Saint Helena High) is weaker and has a limited impact on the climate and weather of Tristan da Cunha Islands (Venegas, Mysak and Straub, 1997; Lübbecke *et al.*, 2014; Sun, Cook and Vیزی, 2017; Reboita *et al.*, 2019). In summer, the South Atlantic High is supposed to move southwards, covering the area of Tristan da Cunha Islands, but this seldom happens, and therefore the average number of annual sunshine hours (1498 on Tristan da Cunha Island and only 1429 on Gough Island) is lower than in the case of the Azores. Tristan da Cunha Islands lie most of the year on the southern flank of the South Atlantic High, in the area where westerlies prevail almost all-year round, a feature materialized in the data regarding the total amount of precipitation (which is higher than in the case of the Azores) and the total number of sunshine hours (lower than in the case of the Azores), causing a higher degree of cloudiness and directly affecting the average temperatures as well (Baker *et al.*, 1964; Dickson, 1965; Ljung, 2007).

The Gulf Stream also influences the temperatures in the Azores (Carvalho *et al.*, 2020; Meirelles *et al.*, 2022). The Gulf Stream brings warm water from the Gulf of Mexico along the eastern coast of North America before crossing the North Atlantic, divided into two branches: the North Atlantic Current, to the North of the Azores, and the Azores Current, to the South (Gould, 1985; Klein and Siedler, 1989). Both currents bring warmer waters in the area of the Azores from West and South-West, which determine higher average temperatures. By contrast, Tristan da Cunha Islands are located in the area of the cold South Atlantic Current, flowing eastwards, that has a negative impact on average temperatures in the area (Höflich, 1984; Barnes *et al.*, 2021).

The altitude is also important, as both archipelagos are volcanic in nature and feature high mountains, over 2000 metres above sea level. In the Azores, the only such mountain is Pico (2351 m) on Pico Island, the second largest island in the archipelago. It is more than twice higher than any other summit in the Azores, with most of the other islands having the highest altitude in between 700 m and 1100 m. Pico da Vara (1103 m) on São Miguel Island is the second highest summit in the Azores.

The highest point on Tristan da Cunha Island, Queen Mary's Peak, reaches 2062 m on a much smaller island, involving steep slopes around the island, which make landing difficult. In the same archipelago, the highest elevation on Gough Island is Edinburgh Peak (910 m).

Both in the Azores and in Tristan da Cunha, the mountains provide a morphological barrier to the air masses generally coming from the West, involving orographic precipitation, especially on the windward (western) part of the islands. The amount of precipitation caused by the morphological features of the islands is proportional to the height of the mountains, the length and direction of the mountain range (if there is any) and the gradient of the slopes. However, mountains in the Azores and Tristan da Cunha do not form lengthy ranges, as they are usually single volcanic cones, which may or may not be connected to other volcanic cones on the same island – as it happens, for instance, on São Miguel Island in the Azores. It comes out that the amount of orographic precipitation is therefore determined mainly by the absolute height and the gradient of the slopes. Data regarding precipitation (Instituto de Meteorologia de Portugal, 2001) indicate that the average multiannual amount of precipitation at Lagoa do Caiado, on Pico Mountain (Pico Island) is 4697.8 mm/year, which is more than 4 times the amount of precipitation on the same island at sea level. On São Miguel Island, the same average amount reached 3197.3 mm/year on Monte Escuro, about 3 times higher than the values at sea level on the same island.

Similar, and even higher amounts would be recorded on Queen Mary's Peak on Tristan da Cunha. The steepness of the slopes in the southern archipelago in almost all islands (Tristan da Cunha, Gough and Inaccessible), except for Nightingale Island, also contributes to a higher amount of orographic precipitation than in the Azores. The site of the weather station on Tristan da Cunha Island in the only settlement, Edinburgh of the Seven Seas, in the North-West of the island, involves a location on the windward side of the island, where precipitation is more abundant. The area around Sandy Point, in the East of the island (on the leeward), has higher average temperatures and lower amounts of precipitation. This is also proved by the existence of fruit trees, forming a small orchard near Sandy Point, which would not survive in the harsher conditions around Edinburgh of the Seven Seas, in North-West, as there were several unsuccessful attempts to plant trees closer to the settlement or even within it (Mackay, 1963).

The height of Pico in the Azores and Queen Mary's Peak on Tristan da Cunha allows for snow cover in winter months, on the upper side of the mountains. However, temperatures never reach freezing point at sea level in the Azores or in most islands of Tristan da Cunha. The only island where negative temperatures have been reported in winter is Gough Island (Tristan da Cunha Archipelago),

where there is a record low of -2.7°C . This is due to the southernmost location of this island, beyond 40°S , which also explains the persistence of snow in the higher areas around Edinburgh Peak (910 m) in winter. However, data from the weather station on the island's south-eastern coast indicate average lows above 6.5°C in any month, while negative temperatures occur very rarely.

Conclusions

The climatic comparison between the Azores and Tristan da Cunha archipelagos in the North and South Atlantic respectively shows that the average temperatures in the Azores are between 3°C and 6°C higher than in Tristan da Cunha, while the amount of precipitation is consistently higher in Tristan da Cunha, despite their location at almost the same latitude and in the same ocean. Among the factors that contribute to this situation are the closer and larger continental landmasses in the case of the Azores, the larger area of the Azores as a whole, the stronger and closer North Atlantic High in the case of the Azores, compared to the South Atlantic High for Tristan da Cunha, the stronger impact of the westerlies in the case of Tristan da Cunha, the warm North Atlantic Current and the Azores Current, in contrast to the cold South Atlantic Current. Both groups of islands are volcanic in nature and feature several mountains that act as a barrier to the air masses, generating orographic precipitation as well. However, the number of sunshine hours is much higher in the Azores, which is also consistent with a higher average temperature and a lower degree of cloudiness compared to Tristan da Cunha Islands.

All these climatic characteristics are relevant for human life on these islands. The Azores have been probably inhabited since early medieval times, probably by Norse people, as suggested by recent research (Gabriel, Mathias and Searle, 2015; Raposeiro *et al.*, 2021). They also appeared on medieval maps and atlases, before their official discovery and settlement by the Portuguese in the 15th century (Raposeiro *et al.*, 2021). Since then, the Azores have had a rich economic and social life, and their population has steadily increased, reaching more than 200,000 inhabitants, spread across the islands. Except for Corvo Island (which is easily reachable by boat), every island of the Azores has an airport and there are many flights connecting the islands with the continent (especially mainland Portugal) and between them, and there are connections by boat as well. Apart from the very strong relations with Portugal, to which they belong, the Azores have also been well connected to other European countries, and to the Americas, especially the USA, Canada and Brazil, with important emigration and immigration flows (Rocha, de Medeiros and Ferreira, 2011; Rocha, Ferreira and Mendes, 2011).

Tristan da Cunha Islands, on the other hand, were only discovered in the 16th century. The isolation due to the large distance from any continent, the lack of any natural harbour, the steep cliffs and rocky shores which made them almost inaccessible for landing parties, as well as the harsh climatic conditions, contributed to the idea that the islands were uninhabitable. Nevertheless, three people settled on the main island in 1810, and one of them survived until 1816 when the British Crown officially annexed Tristan da Cunha and established a military garrison, which only lasted for a year. However, some of the soldiers remained and therefore the small community continued to grow throughout the 19th century, in very difficult conditions. There were several attempts to evacuate the small population from the island, but each time some of the inhabitants refused to go (Mackay, 1963). There was continuous habitation on Tristan da Cunha until 1961, when a volcanic eruption forced the entire population to be evacuated to the United Kingdom, but most of the islanders came back in 1963, when it was safe. Nowadays, there is a community of (only) 238 islanders and a few others who have temporary jobs on Tristan da Cunha. The other islands are uninhabited, except for the weather station crew of (usually) 6 people on Gough Island. None of the islands has an airport or an airstrip, so the only possible access is by boat, which comes once a month or once in two months from Cape Town (South Africa), with a very limited capacity for passengers, no more than 12 in most occasions (Tristan da Cunha Website, 2023). The archipelago is part of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom, but connections to Saint Helena Island (the governor's seat) or to the United Kingdom are poor, and are available only through Cape Town. The weather conditions, especially very powerful winds, render the construction of an airport impossible on Tristan da Cunha.

As a result, one may conclude that climatic conditions, along with other factors, contributed largely to the social and economic development of the Azores, on one hand, but impeded the same kind of development on Tristan da Cunha, on the other hand. The two archipelagos, while located at the same latitude and in the same ocean, have had a contrasting fate.

REFERENCES

1. Baker, P.E., Gass, I.G., Harris, P.G., and Le Maitre, R.W. (1964), *The volcanological report of the Royal Society Expedition to Tristan da Cunha, 1962*, Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A, 256, 439-578.

2. Barnes, D.K.A., Bell, J.B., Bridges, A.E., Ireland, L., Howell, K.L., Martin, S.M., Sands, C.J., Mora Soto, A., Souster, T., Flint, G., and Morley, S.A. (2021), *Climate Mitigation through Biological Conservation: Extensive and Valuable Blue Carbon Natural Capital in Tristan da Cunha's Giant Marine Protected Zone*, *Biology*, 10, 12, 1339.
3. Carvalho, F., Meirelles, M., Henriques, D., Navarro, P. (2020), *Alterações Climáticas e o Aumento de Eventos Extremos Nos Açores*, *Boletim Núcleo Cultural Horta*, 29, 95-108.
4. Chase, J. (1951), *The Bermuda-Azores High Pressure Cell; its surface wind circulation*, Technical Report no. 20, Office of Naval Research, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Massachusetts, 53p.
5. Cresswell-Clay, N., Ummenhofer, C.C., Thatcher, D.L., Wanamaker A.D., Denniston, R.F., Asmerom, Y., and Polyak, V.J. (2022), *Twentieth-century Azores High expansion unprecedented in the past 1,200 years*, *Nature Geoscience*, 15, 548-553.
6. Davis, R.E., Hayden, B.P., Gay, D.A., Phillips, W.L., and Jones, G.V. (1997), *The North Atlantic Subtropical Anticyclone*, *Journal of Climate*, 10, 4, 728-744.
7. Dickson, J.H. (1965), *Biology of the Tristan da Cunha Islands. Part I. General Introduction*, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B (Biological Sciences)*, 259-275.
8. Falarz, M. (2019), *Azores High and Hawaiian High: correlations, trends and shifts (1948-2018)*, *Theoretical and Applied Climatology*, 138, 417-431.
9. Gabriel, S.I., Mathias, M.L., and Searle, J.B. (2015), *Of mice and the "Age of Discovery": the complex history of colonization of the Azorean archipelago by the house mouse (Mus Musculus) as revealed by mitochondrial DNA variation*, *Journal of Evolutionary Biology*, 28, 1, 130-145.
10. Gould, W.J. (1985), *Physical oceanography of the Azores front*, *Progress in Oceanography*, 14, 167-190.
11. Höflich, O. (1984), *Climate of South Atlantic Ocean*, in: van Loon, H. (ed.), *World Survey of Climatology*, Elsevier, Oxford, 195 p.
12. Instituto de Meteorologia de Portugal (2001), *Climate Atlas of the Archipelagos of the Canary Islands, Madeira and the Azores. Air Temperature and Precipitation (1971-2000)*, Agência Estatal de Meteorología.
13. Klein, B. and Siedler, G. (1989), *On the origin of the Azores Current*, *Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans*, 94, C5, 6159-6168.
14. Ljung, K. (2007), *Holocene climate and environmental dynamics on the Tristan da Cunha island group, South Atlantic*, Doctoral thesis (compilation), Quaternary Sciences, Department of Geology, Lund University.
15. Lübbecke, J.F., Burls, N.J., Reason, C.J.C., and McPhaden, M.J. (2014), *Variability in the South Atlantic Anticyclone and the Atlantic Niño Mode*, *Journal of Climate*, 27, 21, 8135-8150.
16. Mackay, M. (1963), *Angry Island: The Story of Tristan da Cunha, 1506-1963*, Rand McNally & Co., New York, 288 p.
17. Meirelles, M., Carvalho, F., Porteiro, J., Henriques, D., Navarro, P., and Vasconcelos, H. (2022), *Climate Change and Impact on Renewable Energies in the Azores Strategic Visions of Sustainability*, *Sustainability*, 14 (22), 15174.

18. Raposeiro, P.M., Hernández, A., Pla-Rabes, S., Gonçalves, V., Bao, R., Sáez, A., Shanahan, T., Benavente, M., de Boer, E.J., Richter, N., Gordon, V., Marques, H., Sousa, P.M., Souto, M., Matias, M.G., Aguiar, N., Pereira, C., Ritter, C., Rubio, M.J., Salcedo, M., Vázquez-Loureiro, D., Margalef, O., Amaral-Zettler, L.A., Costa, A.C., Huang, Y., van Leeuwen, J.F.N., Masqué, P., Prego, R., Ruiz-Fernández, A.C., Sanchez-Cabeza, J.A., Trigo, R., and Giral, S. (2021), *Climate change facilitated the early colonization of the Azores Archipelago during medieval times*, PNAS, 118, 41, 1-7.
19. Rashid, S.A., Iqbal, M.J., Hussain, M.A. (2012), *Impact of North-South Shift of Azores High on Summer Precipitation over North West Europe*, International Journal of Geosciences, 3, 992-999.
20. Reboita, M.S., Ambrizzi, T., Silva, B.A., Pinheiro, R.F., and da Rocha, R.P. (2019), *The South Atlantic Subtropical Anticyclone: Present and Future Climate*, Frontiers in Earth Science, 7.
21. Rocha, G.P.N., de Medeiros, O.H.R., and Ferreira, E. (2011), *Profiles and Pathways of Immigrants in the Azores*, Government of the Azores, 224 p.
22. Rocha, G.P.N., Ferreira, E., and Mendes, D. (2011), *Between Two Worlds: Emigration and Return to the Azores*, Government of the Azores, 228 p.
23. Sun, X., Cook, K.H., and Vizy, E.K. (2017), *The South Atlantic subtropical high: climatology and interannual variability*, Journal of Climate, 30, 9, 3279-3296.
24. Trewartha, G.T., and Horn, L.H. (1980), *An Introduction to Climate*, McGraw Hill, 416 p.
25. Tristan da Cunha Website (2023), Joint Website of the Tristan Government and the Tristan Association, <https://tristandc.com>, last accessed on 12 January 2023.
26. Ummenhofer, C. (2022), *Unprecedented Expansion of the Azores High due to Anthropogenic Climate Change*, European Geophysical Union General Assembly 2022, National Science Foundation.
27. UNESCO (2023), *The Mid-Atlantic Ridge*, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/504/>, last accessed on 12 January 2023.
28. Venegas, S.A., Mysak, L.A., and Straub, D.N. (1997), *Atmosphere-Ocean Coupled Variability in the South Atlantic*, Journal of Climate, 10, 11, 2904-2920.
29. Yadav, R.K. (2021), *Relationship between Azores High and Indian summer monsoon*, npj Climate and Atmospheric Science, 4, 26.

THE TOURIST EXPLOITATION OF THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF OCNA MUREȘ – AS A FACTOR OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC WELL-BEING AND AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE MAJOR IMPACT CONSEQUENCES INDUCED BY FLOODS IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

Ileana-Cristina VASILIȚĂ-CRĂCIUN¹

ABSTRACT. *The Tourist Exploitation of the Cultural Landscape of Ocna Mureș - as a Factor of Socio-Economic Well-Being and an Alternative to the Major Impact Consequences Induced by Floods in the Anthropocene.*

Human society, as an integral part of the environment, is subject to the consequences of the various specific natural phenomena and processes. Similarly, human intervention exerts its own impact on the environment, the influences being reciprocal. In the Anthropocene, the current geological period of Earth's existence, some phenomena, through their way of manifestation, can produce dramatic changes in certain environments, consequently being categorized as dangerous by humans. In the temperate zone, these include: earthquakes, landslides, large-scale storms, floods, prolonged droughts, fires, pollution, epidemics, etc., with various causes, from natural to anthropogenic or mixed. In the context of the increasingly significant phenomena related to climate change, the concerns in the field of the cultural landscape were naturally joined by those related to the study of the impact of various risks within it. As a research area, the surface of the city of Ocna Mureș, closely linked to the middle course of the Mureș River, lends itself to the investigation of the impact of these types of risks connected with the evolution of the local cultural landscape. Numerous floods have occurred over time causing immense damage to the city and, at the same time, brought substantial changes to the elements of the environment and the cultural landscape as a whole. The perpetual decline of the local economy, especially of the mining and processing industry, starting from the 1990s until recently, can facilitate the emergence of the opportunity for tourism capitalization of the cultural landscape, marked to a large extent by

¹ *Romanian Academy, Cluj-Napoca Branch, Geographic Research Center, Republicii Street, 9, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, e-mails: ileana.vasilita@academia-cj.ro*



the existence of the salt resource; all this in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and careful management of potential environmental risks. These basic aspects regarding the risk of floods and the opportunity for the tourism exploitation of the local cultural landscape, stated previously, shall be analysed, argued and highlighted in the paper.

Keywords: *cultural landscape, Ocna Mureș, floods, tourism exploitation, Anthropocene.*

1. Introduction

This research aims to explain the meanings of the main terms such as: *landscape, cultural landscape, anthropocene, climate change, risk*. We also consider that this explanatory approach is relevant for supporting the general vision considered for the analysis of the theme exposed above.

2. Concepts and Terms

2.1. From Landscape to Cultural Landscape

Recent studies specific to the fields of “landscape and cultural landscape, increasingly emphasize that both terms must be understood as social constructions that may vary individually, culturally and over time. Their meaning is the result of a perception of physical space learned through social mediation, which is modified by individual experiences, opinions and emotions” (S. Heiland, 2019, p. 652).

It is well known that “until a few thousand years ago, nature was solely responsible for the image of the Earth’s surface with its spontaneous or long-term changes” (G. Siegl und M. Schermer, 2012, p. 59). Human intervention, in all its aspects, has progressively shaped, over time, the natural landscape, leaving its unique social imprint, the result residing in a specific cultural landscape. The meanings of the two terms are still “open to different conceptual contents, interpretations and attributions of meaning, which can be arranged in pairs of opposites (Backhaus and StremLOW 2010; Gailing and Leibenath 2010, 2011; Heiland 2006, 2010; Hokema 2013; Kuehne 2006, 2013, 2018; Leibenath 2013)” (quoted by S. Heiland, 2019, p. 652). The variety of opinions is highlighted by the multitude of studies in this field and their results.

In an increasingly globalized world, as we perceive it today, it is obvious that the social component has played a major role and continues to do so. Therefore, “the cultural landscape has over time increasingly replaced the natural one, and each new cultural element introduced is changing the content of the original landscape, both on a physical, palpable level, and on a relational and functional level. [...] The cultural landscape is an expression of the cultural heritage, as was declared in the European Convention on the Landscape (2000), which can strengthen the regional economy through an efficient exploitation of its various resources”, (Camelia-Ina Gavra, 2013, p. 25), as a direct expression of social accumulations throughout history.

The impact of the social interference on the global environment “has now become so large and active that it rivals some of the great forces of nature in its repercussions on the functioning of the Earth system” (Steffen, Grinevald et al., 2011, p. 842) (quoted by W. Haber, M. Held, M. Vogt, 2016, p. 9).

At the same time, the recent rapid technological and socio-economic evolution, which began with the historical moment of the Industrial Revolution, brought significant changes “on the landscape, influencing developments such as population growth, industrialization or revolutionary innovations in transport and agriculture that took place almost simultaneously. Compounding processes do not allow for monocausal explanatory models. In addition to old influencing factors such as settlement or traffic, new ones have been added, for example tourism” (G. Siegl and M. Schermer, 2012, p. 67).

Change appears according to social needs in real time throughout the human existence in the Anthropocene. From this point of view, it can be concluded that “dynamic change is one of its constitutive properties” (L. Gailing, K.-D. Keim unter Mitarbeit von A. Röhring, 2006, p. 13).

2.2. Perspectives on the Anthropocene

Officially, according to geologists, for the last 11,000 years, man has been living and working in the age called the Holocene. Starting from antiquity, throughout time, various people have been concerned with deciphering the mechanisms of production of phenomena and processes specific to Earth. Along with the diversification of the ways of intervention of the anthropogenic factor in the environment, the concerns for the debate about the place and role of the human factor in the environment have also intensified.

Among the first to highlight the human ability to make considerable changes to the environment was the French Comte de Buffon (1707-1788), who claimed that “people can exert an influence on the climate in which they live and are able to influence the temperature as deem appropriate” (Ch. Schwägerl, 2017, p. 12), although it is “Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) who can be

considered the pioneer of the Anthropocene. With the establishment of geography as a discipline, he created a framework for analyzing physical, geological, biological and social processes together” (Ch. Schwägerl, 2017, p. 12). Similar concerns had “Ernst Haeckel, the founder of scientific ecology and Antonio Stoppani, an Italian geologist and priest who wrote about the Anthropocene epoch in the 1870s (Steffen, Grinevald et. al 2011, p. 843-845, Zalasiewicz et al, 2010)” (W. Haber, M. Held, M. Vogt, 2016, p. 8).

History highlights a landmark in the use of the term. “Biologist Eugene F. Stoermer used the term *Anthropocene* informally as early as the 1980s. But it wasn’t until an international meeting of Earth system researchers in 2000 that Paul J. Crutzen proposed supplementing the Holocene, which dates back to the end of the last glacial retreat, with a new geological epoch of the Anthropocene (Crutzen and Stoermer 2000). The real breakthrough came with the publication of Crutzen’s (Crutzen 2002) *Geology of Mankind* in the journal *Nature*” (W. Haber, M. Held, M. Vogt, 2016, pp. 8-9). Inherently, scientific debates have risen around the meanings of the term currently in use. According to some opinions, it “can be understood essentially as global pollution of the environment and changes in the material cycle resulting from the industrial revolution or even from the end of the Second World War” (H. Gebhardt, 2016, p. 28), sometimes in relation to the phenomenon of globalization, “this applies to global environmental challenges such as climate change, but it also applies to economic relations or international geopolitics. From a global perspective, we live in a world characterized by rapid changes in technology, environment, science and political systems” (H. Gebhardt, 2016, p. 29).

Both Crutzen & Stoermer (2011) and Steffen et al. (2011) divided this period, marked by the anthropogenic factor, into three distinct stages starting with the one between the start of the Industrial Revolution and 1945, as the beginning of social development, followed by the period after the Second World War, until now, distinguished by the acceleration and expansion of all elements, processes and phenomena related to the anthropogenic component. The third stage refers to the present time, a stage of full awareness of human intervention on the environment and at the same time a stage that demands concrete decisions and actions in this regard, sometimes by establishing “environmental protection as a new policy field with its own authorities, offices and laws” (W. Haber, M. Held, M. Vogt, 2016, p. 10).

Moreover, Ch. Schwägerl, 2017, p. 12, is also of the opinion that “behind the cumbersome term nothing less than a geological revolution is hidden. Man becomes a geological actor. What we are doing on, in and with the Earth is so profound and long-lasting that scientists want to declare a new Earth epoch to follow the current Holocene”.

The central idea that fully expresses the characteristics of the name *Anthropocene* can be distinguished, namely the supremacy of human intervention on the natural environment in its direct relationship with it.

2.3. Climate Change and the Risks Associated with them – Consequences of Contemporary Human Action

Although the Earth has experienced various major changes throughout its history, produced naturally, the multiple, intense and continuous human intervention of the Anthropocene turns out to be roughly similar in magnitude to the natural ones, with major global impact. Climate warming and its multiple consequences is currently the main concern of human society, increasingly subjected to associated risks. “In order to combat the effects arising from this problem, measures are being taken on a global and national level with the objective of limiting global warming to less than 2°C, and limiting the associated risks. According to the 2018 Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], some effects of climate change could be avoided by limiting the global temperature increase to 1.5°C compared to the pre-industrial period” (Cristina Humă, 2019, p. 18). This way, “the current, fast and ample rhythm in which they are produced, constitutes the major challenge of our epoch. Taking action to combat climate change is a central concern of the international community, as climate change, through its multiple and irreversible consequences, shapes the human existence, the future of civilization and the planet” (A. Bulgaru - coord., Daniela Albu, Anca Moț, Maria-Beatrice Berna, 2020, p. 11). These topics played a central role in various conferences, materialized through various agreements such as **the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement of 2015** (the first global agreement to combat climate change).

At national level, combating the effects of climate change has become a priority through the “National Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the period 2022-2030 with the perspective of 2050” (SNASC) and the “National Action Plan for its Implementation” (PNASC). These ensure the revision of the “Strategy on climate change and economic growth based on low carbon emissions for the period 2016-2020”, approved by Government Decision no. 739 of October 5, 2016, published in Official Bulletin no. 831 of October 20, 2016, regarding the adjustment and the development of a new Action Plan (First version of the National Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the period 2022-2030 ..., p. 2).

Climate change is directly related to various risks with potential negative consequences on the natural and anthropogenic elements of the environment. “There are multiple criteria of risk classification. According to the genetic criterion, which is the most frequently used, most researchers accept three

large categories of risks: technological, social and natural, which in turn present several types” (V. Sorocovschi, 2002, p. 57). Of these, in the Anthropocene period, the risk of floods is notable for their frequency of occurrence and often for their inherent negative consequences. “Precipitating events of stronger intensity have become more frequent in recent decades in Romania (Busuic et al., 2017) with the increased frequency of floods (Croitoru and Minea, 2015), Romania already being reported as one of the countries that are most prone to floods from Europe (Pollner et al., 2010)” (cited by Mihaela Caian et al., p. 2).

3. Ocna Mureș. Location and Physical-Geographical Characteristics

The main characteristics of the local cultural landscape are revealed through its natural and cultural elements. The analysis of the local natural particularities, highlight the conditioning elements of the social component and implicitly of the cultural landscape, as a bilateral construct.

The analysis of the topographical map shows the geographical location of the town of Ocna Mureș in the form of hilly land and alluvial surfaces in the north-eastern part of Alba County, on the left bank of the middle course of the Mureș River. Its bounds are the Alba Iulia-Turda Corridor to the west, the Mureș Corridor to the north, the Ciungii Hills (Nejoapa Hill) to the southwest and Banța Hill to the south.

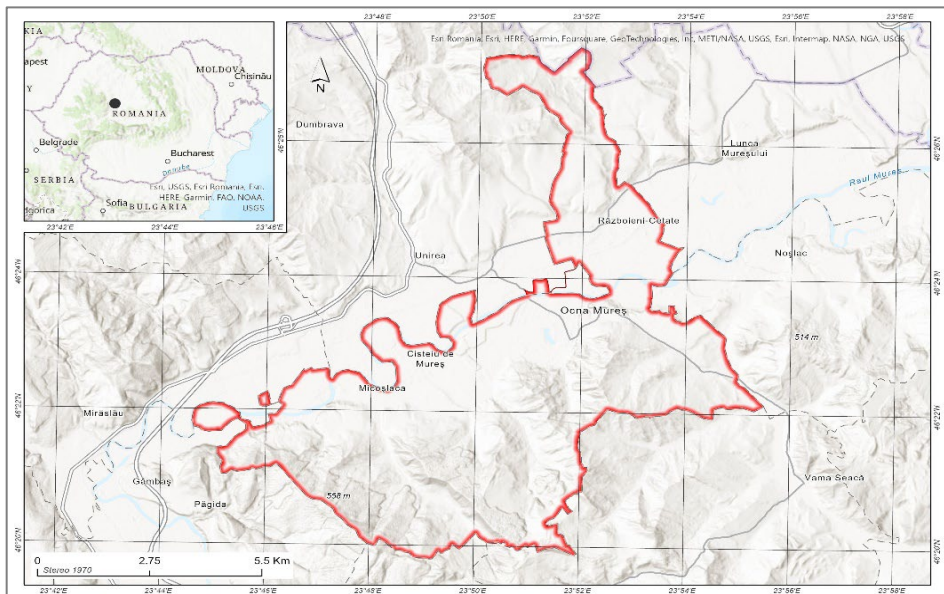


Fig. 1. Ocna Mureș City Map

As far as the administrative structure is concerned, in addition to the urban area, the city also includes the following localities: Uioara de Sus, Uioara de Jos, Cisteiu de Mureş, Micoşlaca and Războieni-Cetate.

The landforms found on the territory of the city of Ocna Mureş and in its vicinity are characterized by variety, including areas of lowlands, hills, plateaus and valleys. Along the Mureş River there is an upland (altitude 264 m above sea level), stretching from the foot of the terrace on which the Uioarea de Sus neighbourhood is settled and evolving to Cistei. Hills surround the city, in a semi-circular shape, from the southwest to the northeast, with the Nejoapa Peak standing out – on the border between Ciunga and Ocna Mureş, with extensions towards Banţa Hill whose highest peak is the Gurguleu Peak (524 m – the highest altitude of the land). The hills of Banţa are at the base of the vast “Larga Plateau” whose eastern edges lean against the slopes of Spalnaca (P. Petcu et al, 2009, p. 116).

The analysis of the main climatic parameters includes this location in the transitional temperate continental climate, the multiannual average temperature being 9.2 degrees C, while the precipitation averages 520 mm/year. The average values of temperature and precipitation show the influence of the foehn winds specific to the Mureş Corridor, located to the east of Apuseni Mountains (V. Arghiuş, Al. Ozunu, 2005, p. 185).

The hydrography is shaped by the course of the Mureş River which has an average low discharge slope, which makes it meander and create small sandy beaches. The annual flow, at Ocna Mureş, is 71 m³/s (N. Dobra, 1996, p. 8).



Fig. 2. The Mureş River

The man-made saline lakes that exist today (Lacu Minelor Romane, Lakes Iosif, Francisc, Ferdinand, etc.) owe their existence to a natural hazard represented by the overflowing of the Mureș River in 1913, followed by the flooding of the long-exploited salt mine galleries, and the collapse of their ceiling.

In Ocna Mureș, on the right bank of Mureș as well as in the neighbouring Farău area, there are regosols (young soils, formed on silty deposits - sands, loess, clays, marls, etc.), and brown, clay soils exist in the built-up area of the city. The hills to the left of the river are made of Tertiary slates, and in the Mureș valley there are alluvial soils that were formed by repeated floods. Salt reserves are abundant under the town - Ocna Mureș being the only town in Alba County where this mineral is exploited. In the depths of the Banța Hill, “there are significant exploitable reserves of bentonite (clay sedimentary rock, composed of hydrated, colloidal aluminium silicate)” (N. Dobra, 1996, p. 9). Its exploitation brought along cultural elements under the form of a quarry.

The observation of natural elements of the biosphere highlights the existence of spontaneous flora and fauna specific to the latitudinal position of the studied territory and the altitude at which it is found. In the category of shrubs, the blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), dog rose (*Rosa canina*) stand out, and of the deciduous trees, oak (*Quercus robur*) and walnut (*Juglans regia*). As the altitude increases, we find a mix between these deciduous trees and pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) etc. It is a suitable environment for the evolution of some animal species closely related to the lowland and forest-steppe area, dominated by insects, birds and fauna that mostly comprises hunting species.

Consequently, the high degree of natural favourability associated with the existence of the salt resource supported the early habitation of this territory and its gradual shaping, the local cultural landscape taking shape through the permanent accumulation of specific anthropogenic elements.

4. Brief History

Relevant aspects of the city’s historical evolution have left their various marks, either less seen in the local cultural consciousness, or obvious, directly through distinct elements integrated into the cultural landscape.

The town of Ocna Mureș is one of the most ancient localities in Romania (N. Dobra, 1996, p. 4), its history being “closely linked to the presence of salt and its exploitation” (I. Chintăuan, Ioana-Cristina Chintăuan Marquier, 2022, p. 34). Over time, the resource encouraged the appearance and territorial expansion of the settlement above a “giant cube of salt, shaped like a bell, that stretches over an area between Banța Hill and the bank of the Mureș River. The top of the deposit, the upper part of the bell, “pokes” the ground less than 500 meters

under the present civic centre of the city, where, almost 2000 years ago, the first Roman galleries were excavated and where the Dacians discovered salt” (Melania Hanciu, 2002, p. 25).

The settlement is “mentioned in a document for the first time in 1203, with the name Uioara, then on January 13, 1280, in a deed of exchange of estates, and in the 17th century as *castrum et oppidum*. The locality began to develop especially after 1791, when the systematic exploitation of salt started” (D. Ghinea, 2000, p. 892). The extended period of salt extraction in various forms - culminating in the systematic one, in the galleries - was interrupted in 1913 by the overflowing of the waters of the Mureș River and the flooding of the mines. Mining resumed later, in 1952, through an innovative method, adapted to the new conditions, of extracting salt in solution, with the help of probes, a process that enriched the cultural landscape with new elements.

5. The Tourist Elements of the Cultural Landscape in Ocna Mureș

The analysis of the elements of the cultural landscape relevant from the point of view of tourism and ready to be capitalized accordingly is based on their uniqueness and functions within the whole.

The existence of mineral resources such as salt, high-concentration chloride-sodium mineral waters or anthropogenic ones, introduced during the history of local society, which serve tourist, recreational or curative purposes, facilitated the emergence of a specific infrastructure and finally a cultural landscape opened to tourism.

The versatility of this resource has facilitated the development of a third sector of the local economy by exploiting the salt baths as a tourist destination. Their establishment “was determined by the facility of supplying high-concentration sodium chloride mineral waters, coming from the local salt mines. Initially, the baths were set up on a different site than the current one, in a wooden building, with very modest equipment” (N. Dobra, 1996, p. 99). After 1910, the baths were functional at a level corresponding to the historical era of development, but from the the 90s until now they have fallen onto progressive decline. Recently, the baths have been rebuilt on a different location, hence future opportunities for local socio-economic development.

The Treatment and Leisure Centre in Ocna Mureș that we have nowadays means “a touristic complex with spaces for leisure, fitness room, restaurant, treatment rooms, medical recovery, beauty salon, spa equipment and products, shops, and cosmetics, swimming pool, playgrounds for children, sports fields, etc.” (I. Chintăuan, Ioana-Cristina Chintăuan Marquier, 2022, p. 43). All these “facilities highlight the therapeutic qualities of the treatment with salt from Ocna Mureș” (Laura Arăboaei, 2006, p. 43).



Fig. 3. Ocna Mureș Treatment and Leisure Resort

This resort offers a vast array of treatments, for: ENT conditions, diseases of the peripheral nervous system, bone malformations, obesity, trauma, degenerative rheumatic pathologies, etc.

The saline lakes, which appeared on the site of the former exploitation galleries, complete the local cultural landscape. In the context of tourist activities, they also make a difference as landscape elements, a testimony of the consequences of the local floods in the Anthropocene.

In addition, “the Banța forest, which is a real dendrological, flora and fauna reserve, stands out as an ideal leisure space, a destination for picnics and hiking. The Teleky Castle (dating from the 10th - 11th centuries), features a park with paths and trees, among which acclimatised species, some of them dendrological rarities; the ruins of the Romanesque Church (1300); The Union Oak, which was planted in memory of the Union of 1918” (P. Petcu, et al, 2009, p.118); cultural-folkloric activities that illustrate traditions, customs and other such elements of local culture.

6. Tourism Exploitation - As a Factor of Socio-Economic Well-Being and Alternative to the Consequences Induced by Floods

Tourism, as a phenomenon, represents a “form of valorization in a special way of natural resources and human heritage, which in the last century became an economic branch with a major impact on the contemporary world” (N. Ciangă, 2006, p. 11), with special social and environmental implications, being

“generated by the human need for knowledge, recreation and physical/psychological therapy within a demanding civilization, but with superior material possibilities for the majority of the population” (P. Cocean, 2007, p. 15).

Tourism is also in “close connection with the development of society, representing, today, one of the most profitable segments of the world economy, its most outstanding features being: dynamics, effervescence, motivational diversity and a polychrome palette of forms of manifestation” (H.- V. Conțiu, 2012, p. 12).

The cultural landscape in its entirety or in part, through the elements with potential tourist functions, have become the object of the field of tourism, conceptually or even practically. This way of valorisation represents a form of human activity relatively friendly to the environment, in agreement with the recent requirements regarding its protection. It is also a source of increasing well-being and a way to preserve local cultural elements from time immemorial, as landmark elements for local identity.

Thus, the recent economic changes that led to the decline of the local economy in Ocna Mureș could become the seeds of socio-economic relaunch by facilitating the emergence of the opportunity for tourism capitalization of the cultural landscape, defined to a large extent by the existence of salt as local specific resource.

The situation at Ocna Mureș is special, on one hand due to the fact that the massif of salt is located in the centre of the urban space, and on the other hand because the exploitation of salt through kinetic dissolution (wells) continues even now. For these reasons, the tourist component was secondary, the main concern being that of protecting the vicinity of the lakes induced by exploitations (M. Alexe 2007, p. 241).

The revitalisation of balneary tourism, practiced intermittently since its beginning until now, is brought into discussion. The local salt resource can be exploited according to the principles of sustainable development, in a non-intrusive and non-polluting manner, but with medium and long-term socio-economic benefits for the local community. A concrete proof in this sense is the conclusion of the partnership between the Alba County Council and Ocna Mureș City Hall, regarding the use of the current salt baths.

„Taking into account the fact that the town of Ocna Mureș is located in a mono-industrial area affected by restructuring processes, the spa complex therefore offers the possibility...” (P. Petcu, et al, 2009, p. 119), “to the development of tourism which will act as an integrating force, able to spark the development of other sectors, thus improving the standard of living” (Fotiadis, 2009, quoted by Carmen Bodea, 2014, p. 14) of the city’s inhabitants. The creation of new jobs and, at the same time, the reduction of unemployment, the preservation of

elements of the local cultural landscape and their integration into the tourism package for capitalisation, can also be counted among the benefits of tourism in the area.

The desired economic evolution needs to be correlated with the evolution of natural and anthropogenic elements in a sustainable dynamic balance, in accordance with global trends regarding environmental protection.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Gabriel Nicula for the help with the GIS analysis.

REFERENCES

1. Alexe, M. (2007), *Studiul lacurilor sărate din Depresiunea Transilvaniei*, Teză de doctorat, Universitatea "Babeş-Bolyai" Cluj-Napoca, Facultatea de Geografie.
2. Arăboaei, Laura (2006), *Valenţele terapeutice ale factorilor de cură din staţiunea balneară Ocna Mureş*, E:\PANGEEA\6 PANGEEA\10, Editura Aeternitas. (source: http://pangeea.uab.ro/upload/111_09%20Araboaei%20L%20%20valentele%20terapeutice.pdf).
3. Arghiuş, V., Ozunu, Al. (2005), *Fenomene de risc asociate exploatării sării în perimetrul urban Ocna Mureş*, în *Riscuri şi catastrofe nr. 2 (an IV)*, Editura Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă, Cluj-Napoca.
4. Bodea, Carmen (2014), *Rolul turismului în dezvoltarea rurală. Strategie de dezvoltare a turismului în Beliş, judeţul Cluj, România*, Revista Transilvană de Ştiinţe Administrative, 1(34)/2014, pp. 10-24. (source: <https://rtsa.ro/rtsa/index.php/rtsa/article/view/469/466>).
5. Bulgaru, A. (coord.), Albu, Daniela, Moş, Anca, Berna, Maria-Beatrice (2020), *Schimbările climatice şi impactul acestora asupra drepturilor omului*, Editura I.R.D.O., Bucureşti.
6. Caian, Mihaela, Mic, Rodica-Paula, Corbus, C., Angearu, C.-V., Matreata, M. (2021), *Extreme flood modeling and mechanism over Crisul Alb basin in Romania*, Catena 196 (2021) 104923, Elsevier. (source: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0341816220304732>).
7. Chintăuan, I., Chintăuan Marquier, Ioana-Cristina (2022), *Transilvania, Ocne şi saline, Stabilimente şi amenajări balneare*, Editura Născut Liber, Bistriţa.
8. Ciangă, N. (2006), *România. Geografia turismului*, Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca.
9. Cocean, P. (2007), *Geografia turismului*, Ediţia a II-a, Cluj-Napoca.
10. Conţiu, H.-V. (2012), *Bazele geografice ale fenomenului turistic*, Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca.

11. Dobra, N. (1996), *Ocna Mureș, monografie*, S.C. „Altip” S.A., Alba Iulia.
12. Gailing, L., Keim, K.-D. unter Mitarbeit von Röhring, A. (2006), *Analyse von informellen und dezentralen Institutionen und Public Governance mit kulturlandschaftlichem Hintergrund in der Beispielregion Barnim*, Materialien Nr. 6, Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin. (source: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/44174993_Analyse_von_informellen_und_dezentralen_Institutionen_und_Public_Governance_mit_kulturlandschaftlichem_Hintergrund_in_der_Beispielregion_Barnim).
13. Gavra, Camelia-Ina (2013), *Peisaje culturale în Munții Metaliferi*, Edit. Risoprint, Cluj-Napoca.
14. Gebhardt, H. (2016), *Das „Anthropozän“ – zur Konjunktur eines Begriffs*, HDJBO | 2016 | Band 1 | Artikel 3 | 28. (source: https://www.geog.uni-heidelberg.de/md/chemgeo/geog/human/gebhardt_anthropozan.pdf).
15. Ghinea, D. (2000), *Enciclopedia Geografică a României*, Ediția a II-a, revăzută și adăugită, Editura Enciclopedică, București .
16. Hanciu, Melania (2002), *Ocna Mureș riscă să fie inundat de ape sărate*, Pangeea, Issue Year: 2/2002, 2, pp. 25-26, Edit. Aeternitas. (source: <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=463133>).
17. Haber, W., Held, M., Vogt, M. (2016), *Das Anthropozän im Spannungsfeld zwischen Ökologie und Humanität, Einführung*, in *Die Welt im Anthropozän*. Erkundungen im Spannungsfeld zwischen Ökologie und Humanität, Oekom, München.
18. Heiland, S. (2019). *Kulturlandschaft*. In: Kühne, O., Weber, F., Berr, K., Jenal, C. (eds) *Handbuch Landschaft. RaumFragen: Stadt – Region – Landschaft*. Springer VS, Wiesbaden. (source: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-658-25746-0_52).
19. Humă, Cristina (2019), *Acțiuni de răspuns la consecințele și riscurile asociate schimbărilor climatice asupra calității vieții*, Calitatea vieții, XXX, nr. 1, 2019, p. 17–41. (source: <https://www.revistacalitateavietii.ro/2019/CV-1-2019/02.pdf>).
20. Petcu, P., Călin, I., Vich, Al. (2009), *Organizarea spațiului geografic in zona Ocna-Mureș*, Pangeea, Issue Year: 9/2009, 9, pp. 115-122. (source: <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=525028>).
21. Schwägerl, Ch. (2017), *Die Diagnose des Anthropozäns in Anthropozän- ein neuer Blick auf die Erde als unseren Lebensraum* Tagung, 25. / 26. September 2017, Nationalparkverwaltung Kärnten, Herausgeber: Kärntner Nationalparkfonds Hohe Tauern 9843 Großkirchheim, Döllach 14 Österreich. (source: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331311786_Was_bedeutet_das_Anthropozan_fur_uns_als_Gesellschaft).
22. Siegl, G. and Schermer, M. (2012), *Kulturlandschaft woher? Rückblick: Wie Landschaft sich im Lauf der Geschichte entwickelte und welche Kräfte dies bewirkten*, in *Wir LandschaftMacher. Vom Sein und Werden der Kulturlandschaft in Nord-, Ost-, und Südtirol*, (Bozen). (source: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258375280_Kulturlandschaft_woher).
23. Sorocovschi, V. (2002), *Riscurile hidrice*, in *Riscuri și catastrofe* (Editor: V. Sorocovschi), Editura Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj-Napoca.

24. ***Prima versiune a *Strategiei Naționale privind Adaptarea la Schimbările Climatice pentru perioada 2022-2030 cu perspectiva anului 2050 (SNASC)* și a *Planului Național de Acțiune pentru implementarea Strategiei Naționale privind Adaptarea la Schimbările Climatice (PNASC)* (source: http://mmediu.ro/app/webroot/uploads/files/SNASC_SEA_2022.pdf).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AXES RELATED TO ROMAN CAMPS IN BISTRIȚA-NĂȘĂUD, CLUJ AND SĂLAJ COUNTIES IN ROMANIA

Ioana Irina GUDEA¹

ABSTRACT. *Archaeological Axes Related to Roman Camps in Bistrița-Năsăud, Cluj and Sălaj Counties in Romania.* The current research has a desire to launch the concept of archaeological tourism on the territory of Romania. The goal is to make tourists aware of the many discoveries made over the years and to create a form of self-contained tourism. We identified 2 main tourist axes of the Roman camps in Bistrița-Năsăud, Cluj and Sălaj counties, camps that once belonged to the territory of Dacia Porolissensis. The role of these axes is to create a notoriety of the archaeological destinations and to reduce the transit type tourism. Through institutional cooperation these areas could become points of regional and national interest.

Keywords: *tourism, archaeology, heritage, tourist axes, Roman camp, Dacia Porolissensis.*

Introduction

It is known that Romania is a country with a very rich archaeological cultural heritage and traces of human existence can be found since Antiquity. The presence of many archaeological sites and uniqueness elements from all over the country can favour a significant growth of a niche of tourism with high potential. The archaeological heritage is a broad concept, being represented by the set of archaeological real estate listed in the National Archaeological Repertory and also by the movable property, objects and traces that attest the human presence.

¹ *Babeș-Bolyai University, Faculty of Geography, Doctoral School of Geography, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, e-mail: ioana.gudea@yahoo.com*



The current research focuses on the connection between two different disciplines, which nonetheless share common elements. For the purpose of the paper to be better understood it is necessary to clarify the two terms, tourism and archaeology (Lawrence and Collins-Kreiner, 2018). A more general definition argues that archaeology is a discipline that studies human activity in the past through analysis of cultural material and data left behind and discovered. Archaeology as a science is defined from several points of view and there are a lot of various definitions, but its purpose remains the one to reconstruct the previous way of life through the left evidence such as artifacts, architecture and many other objects. Since the 21st century, archaeology has become a complex study based on ideas and techniques derived from related disciplines (Renfrew and Bahn, 2005). Cultural tourism has a variety of definitions depending on the purpose of the tourist's destination and motivation. However, a definition that is relevant to this study was given by the World Tourism Organisation and defines it as the activity that people manifest in the meeting of their need for diversity and knowledge in order to raise the cultural level of the individual giving birth to knowledge, experiences and meetings (Richards, 2003).

Materials and Methods

The current research targets the camps along the Limes in the Dacia Porolissensis region which has a high potential of tourism development. A Roman camp represents the fortified military camp in which a military unit classified in legions, regular auxiliary troops with 500 soldiers, 1000 soldiers or irregular auxiliary units were stationed (Isac et al., 2013). Almost all Roman camps underwent 2 stages of construction: the wooden phase and then the stone phase. The process of building the camps in Roman Dacia began under the rule of Trajan (106 AD) and further consolidated under Hadrian, Antoninus Pius and the rule of the Severus. They were abandoned after the Aurelian retreat in 274-275 AD.

The starting point is in Bistrița-Năsăud County: the Roman camp in Ilișua. The axis goes then to the camp situated in Cășeu in Cluj County and then in Sălaj County, where there are 2 camps with a great significance for archaeology and tourism: Porolissum and Buciumi. From Porolissum the axis develops a southern direction, it goes to Buciumi and it ends at the Bologna camp in Cluj County.

The research methodology of this article is based on two directions: the tourist function of the archaeological sites and the development of tourism through the tourist zones and the creation of the archaeotouristic development

axis. In order to determine the tourist function of the archaeological settlement the methodology required the analysis of the tourism related statistical data provided by the National Institute of Statistics of Romania and the data collected from the field analysis with physical trips to locations. The development axis model was intended to highlight the strong relationship that tourism and archaeology have. The archaeotourism axis of the Roman camps on the limes from Dacia Porolissensis from Bistrița-Năsăud to Sălaj and to Cluj County can be a strong starting point in the development of archaeological tourism. The main goal is to reduce transit tourism and transform it into a stationary tourism in order to reduce seasonality.

Built with the idea of defending the empire, the purpose of a camp was to provide protection and safe conditions for military soldiers in their 20-25 years of service, until they became a 'veteranus' (Isac et al., 2013). The structure of the camps is a generic one, which was largely respected in every defensive construction in Dacia. In addition to their military and defense role, they became more important from an administrative and economic point of view. Around them started to develop networks of settlements which were built to provide food and equipment.

Being outside and open to the general public throughout the year, the archaeological settlements can feel the imprint of the season because in the cold season it is more difficult to visit some of them. As far as the climate is concerned there is a moderate continental influence by the western atmospheric circulation (Isac, 2003). In the case of the camps of Ilișua and Cășeu, the local topoclimate is influenced by the presence of the Someș River, thus winters being moderate-harsh and the summers hot.

The Roman camp of Ilișua – Arcobadara

Ilișua is a village located in Uriu (a commune on the E58 European road, DJ171 county road) in Bistrița-Năsăud County. It is located in the lower basin of Someșul Mare river, 20 kilometers upstream of its confluence with Someșul Mic. In this basin, due to the important tributaries of this river, a road has been created since antiquity which was pointed out by a series of archeological discoveries (Gaiu and Zăgreanu, 2011). The camp of Ilișua is placed in a strategic point with a good visibility and control over the communication axes which was the reason why the Romans built here this camp with a defensive role.

The camp was the main Roman defensive base in the northern part of Dacia, being composed of a large network of burgus and watch towers. A civil settlement, temples, baths, workshops, houses and a cemetery were developed around the camp.

The Roman camp of Cășeiu – SAMVM

Cășeiu is located in the N-W part of Cluj County on the national road Cluj-Dej-Baia Mare (DN17/E58). The camp is located 1.5 km from the village and 300 m from the Someș River (Isac, 2003). The settlement area is located at the interference of three geomorphological units: Ciceului Hills to N-E, Gârbăului Hills to the W and Dejului Hills to the S-W. The closest height is represented by the Măgura Hill (419m) from where there is a very good visibility of the entire settlement. The hydrographic system played a very important role in the location of the camp and military settlements. The camp is exactly positioned at the confluence of the Someșul Mic with Someșul Mare, which at Dej forms the Someș (Samus) which passes by the camp and by the civil settlement.

The SAMVM camp was part of the northern portion of the defensive system represented by the northern limes of Roman Dacia, with the Someș River as its axis where the camps of Tihău, Livezile and Orheiul Bistriței were also included. A military vicus attested in inscriptions under the name of SAMVM was born around the camp, but the full name does not appear as such but it is implied from the inscriptions that the name refers to both the camp and the vicus (Isac et al., 2013).

The Roman camp of Bologa – RESCVLVM

The Roman camp is located on the left side of the Crișul Repede River between the localities of Morlaca and Poieni at a short distance from the discharge into the Crișul Repede of the Sebeș River, also called Săcuieului Valley. The distance from the national road is about 1.5 km (Gudea, 1977). The traces of the camp can be seen very well on the ground and on all its sides. One can see a ca. 2.5 meters high wave against the ground outside and inside.

In the first phase, between 108-118 AD, the camp was part of the N-W sector of the defensive system of Dacia province together with the advanced line of towers and small fortifications in front of the camp (Gudea, 1977). After 118 AD it was part of the western sector of the border of the province Dacia Porolissensis. Together with the above-mentioned elements of defence, the strategic tasks were to control the traffic along the Crișul Repede Valley and to stop the attempts to enter it from the West.

The Roman camp of Buciumi

At the feet of Meseș Mountains and at their extremities, the Romans placed a series of well-chosen camps connected by a well-organized network of roads and with an advanced line of towers. Within the system of fortifications in the

North-Western sector of the limes, the Buciumi camp occupies a very important place being located halfway between Bologa and Tihău; these are the southern and northern ends of the limes (Chirilă et al., 1972). The Meseș Mountains create an accentuated curvature in this area and the Buciumi camp is in the middle of it.

The camp is located north of the current village between the confluence of two secondary streams, namely Lupului Valley and Mihăiesei Valley, both flowing into the Agrij Valley. The land on which the camp is built is dominated by several higher hills in the immediate vicinity and between the camp and the summit of Meseș Mountains there are a series of other hills (Măgura Sângeorzului, Dealul Flămând, Măgura Boznei) that hide part of the mountains (Chirilă et al., 1972).

The location of this camp was chosen due to the possibility of controlling both the advanced line of the observation towers in the Meseș Mountains and the passers-by directly connected with the Bologa camp and last but not least due to the connections with the camps on the northern border of Dacia Porolissensis (Găzdac and Pripon, 2012).

The Roman camp of Moigrad- Porolissum

The archaeological site of Porolissum is spread over several villages: Jac, Brebi, Moigrad, Ortelec and Stana (all in Sălaj County) but the main access to the camp is from Moigrad due to the access roads built here and the bulk of discoveries are visible on the territory belonging to Moigrad village. At the southern end of the village there is a chain of hills that delimits the archaeological territory of the village to the north and northwest: Porcarului Hill, Comorii Hill, Ferice Hill, Ursoaie Hill and Goroniște Hill. To the south and east of these hills, in the middle of a basin formed by valleys, rises a high massif, named the Pomet Hill. The Roman camp is located about 200 meters from the last houses of the village and at a distance of 3.5 kilometers from the road Zalău-Creaca-Jibou.

The Roman military complex at Porolissum is located on the northern border and it constituted the basis of the defensive system of Dacia in its north-western part. Within this complex, there were 2 camps of major importance: the Pomet camp and the Citera camp having both strategic and tactical role. Within the Porolissum complex, the camp on Pomet was the largest and most important fortification, a military base. Due to its grandiose dimensions and totally out of the ordinary position, this camp can be seen as a reference fortification (Gudea, 1977).

Results

The tourist phenomenon in the villages to which the ancient settlements belong

In order to outline an image of the tourism within each archaeological site, the analysis of the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics of Romania were used and relevant indicators were chosen such as: number of tourist structures, existing accommodation capacity, accommodation capacity in function, number of tourist arrivals and overnight stays. The purpose of this approach was to identify if there is a tourist movement and if the villages are transited or visited. This data set helps to create archaeotourism axes in the context of sustainable development.

The first step in this analysis was the identification of the tourist reception structures and the accommodation capacity in operation within each village where the Roman camps are situated. The precise number of tourist units cannot be given due to the lack of owner declaration which ought to be introduced in the national record system.

Table 1. Tourist units in the targeted localities

No	Locality	County	Year	Agro-tourism pensions	Tourist Villas
1	Uriu	BN	2021	2	-
2	Cășeiu	CJ	2021	2	-
3	Poieni	CJ	2021	11	1
4	Buciumi	SJ	2021	2	-
5	Mirșid	SJ	2021	1	-

Due to the geographical and hydrographical advantages of the neighbouring localities, the village of Poieni offers good opportunities for the development of tourist services. The vicinity of the Valea Drăganului Reservoir, of a well preserved early medieval settlement, as well as the archaeological discoveries at Bologa make tourism more present on the territory of this commune.

There is a very low number of tourist units in the village of Mirșid in spite of its proximity to the Porolissum complex and the conservation works within the complex. Another cause for this reduced number of tourist units might be the proximity of the village to Zalău, where accommodation conditions for tourists are far better than in a village.

In order to determine the type of tourism practiced in the reference villages, the number of tourist arrivals and the number of overnights stays were analyzed, having as reference point the accommodation capacity in operation (Table 2).

Table 2. Accommodation capacity in operation

No	Locality	County	Year	Agro-tourism pensions	Tourist Villas	Accommodation capacity in operation
1	Uriu	BN	2021	2	-	6580
2	Cășeiu	CJ	2021	2	-	8760
3	Poieni	CJ	2021	11	1	55917
4	Buciumi	SJ	2021	2	-	509
5	Mirșid	SJ	2021	1	-	5840

According to tables number 3 and number 4 a trend of transit tourism is identified, as tourists spent one night, but no more than 2 within the tourist units (Buciumi, Cășeiu, Ilișua). The data provided by the National Institute of Statistics of Romania report that in the case of Mirșid, where the Porolissum camp is located, the arrivals and overnight stays were non-existent. From the available official sources that were available, it was found out that the existing tourist unit did not work during the whole year of 2021.

The tourist reception structures are not used to their maximum capacity, which can be less encouraging for entrepreneurs and stops them from developing businesses for the prosperity of tourism.

Table 3. Tourist arrivals

No	Locality	County	Year	Tourist arrivals
1	Uriu	BN	2021	643
2	Cășeiu	CJ	2021	476
3	Poieni	CJ	2021	7568
4	Buciumi	SJ	2021	175
5	Mirșid	SJ	2021	-

Table 4. Tourist overnights

No	Locality	County	Year	Tourist overnights
1	Uriu	BN	2021	1012
2	Cășeiu	CJ	2021	497
3	Poieni	CJ	2021	16912
4	Buciumi	SJ	2021	351
5	Mirșid	SJ	2021	-

In order to encourage the development of the tourist phenomenon it would be necessary to take certain measures which could contribute to the increase of tourism activity. These should increase the sustainable capitalization of the existing ruins, their promotion in various attractive ways, the creation of a main archaeoturistic axis followed by secondary ones, to develop and encourage a regional and national cultural interest for archaeotourism.

Archaeoturistic axes and development zones

The three counties discussed here (Bistrița-Năsăud, Sălaj and Cluj) could assure good conditions for archaeological tourism development as the interweaving of the anthropological heritage with the natural conditions highlights a true tourism potential. The Roman camps in these three counties hide in themselves real treasures whose potential have not been yet capitalized. Having their potential been made evident, they could constitute premises for the creation of the main tourist axes.

Starting from these premises, 2 major axes were created: Ilișua-Cășeiu-Porolissum and Porolissum-Buciumi-Bologa. These archaeoturistic axes were developed on two geographical ones: from East to West (Ilișua-Cășeiu-Porolissum) and from North to South (Porolissum-Buciumi-Bologa). The direction of these axes can be reversed, they work in both directions.

For a good functionality of the axes in the present conditions for archaeotourism development it is necessary to develop tourism in a somewhat unitary manner, following common development objectives. The development and function of tourism are in close interaction with the human factor: in the manner the tourist manages his visit and his relation to the environment. Further the axes should be well connected to the regional infrastructure system. To develop the tourism and the functionality of the axes, a series of development objectives were proposed:

- Development through the connection of the axes to the regional infrastructure system

The access to the targeted camps in this research is favorable and easy because most of them are on a main national road being signaled to a more visible extent (Porolissum, Buciumi) but Ilișua and Bologa are less visible to a potential tourist. The access roads are either European, national or county paved roads. Moreover, the sites are connected between them by road ever since they have been built.

The railway line is an advantage in the development of the axes. Even if the railway line does not cross directly all the localities where the Roman camps are, it is at short distances, for example: the main electrified railway crosses near Ilișua; a station is at Halta Reteag which is about 8 km from the camp. In Cășeiu the main electrified railway passes the village with a station at Halta Cășeiu; Bologa has a non-electrified railway that crosses the village along the European road E60. The camp is at 800 meters from the station. From Dej to Zalău the non-electrified railway reaches the railway junction in the town of Jibou, from where a secondary branch of the railway goes to Zalău. From Zalău the access to the camp of Porolissum (11 km to the N-W) and the camp of Buciumi (11 km to the S) is only by land which means public transportation, rent-a-car etc.

In this case, there are also 2 railway routes that interconnect the camps: the Ilișua-Cășeiu-Porolissum-Buciumi axis and the Ilișua-Bologa axis. There are direct rail links between these camps. For Buciumi and Porolissum the stop is at Zalău, from where other means of transportation are needed.

- Tourism development by increasing the number of tourist units

In order to reach the ideal form of tourism it is necessary to reduce the transit type of tourism and 'one day-visits'. One of the factors that can contribute to this phenomenon is the presence of the tourism supply. The existence in small numbers or even the non-existence in certain areas can lead to a low degree of tourist satisfaction and directly affects the tourist traffic in the area. Accommodation and public catering are basic tourist facilities that have a decisive role in the time the tourist spends there.

The quality of the services offered is necessary to meet the expectations of the tourists. Unfortunately, the tourist phenomenon within the localities where the Roman camps are located is reduced for several reasons: the lack of promotion and interest, but also due to the small number of tourist units. Out of the total number of units with accommodation function in every locality, not all of them have public catering function. Although in some areas there is still a tourist movement, the units are not designed to function in relation to the

existing potential. The development of tourism and raising the potential of the archaeotourism axes can be done by attracting investments in the construction of new units or the reconstruction of the existing ones by rethinking all aspects related to capacity and functions. In addition to the basic facilities such as accommodation and food services, there are no leisure services that have a role in animating the stay.

- Development of archaeotourism axes through constant promotion

Unfortunately, at present, there is no major campaign for promoting the archaeological tourism in our country. In large sites such as Sarmisegetusa Ulpia Traiana, Tomis, Callatis, where there is interest and investments for such activities, there are local promotion campaigns.

The most promoted camp among those targeted in the archaeotourism axes is the complex of Porolissum, followed by the one in Buciumi. In the case of the other settlements, the promotion is minimal or non-existent.

The promotion must result from institutional cooperation, with the involvement of public authorities together with entrepreneurs in the private field and the development of local, county and regional tourism projects. The channels and materials necessary for the promotion must be high-quality, with information in several international languages and with many suggestive images and tourist offers.

Conclusions

The development of archaeotourism in Romania should start with taking into account the existing tourist potential, by drawing up a map of the places of interest, noting their stages of development as well as their growth from an economic point of view. Their economic development would generate positive impressions about the localities through which the axes pass and their results would be visible in both the social and the environmental fields.

In order to be acknowledged and be visible on national level, this type of tourism should be included in the historical and archeological tourist routes. If this has been achieved, hopefully there will be investors, there will be an increased number of tourist units with an improved activity and more facilities in the visited sites. With such measures taken, transit tourism and seasonality could be given away and a proper independent tourist activity could be created.

REFERENCES

1. Buršić-Matijašić, V., Matijašić, R. (2016), *The management of archaeological heritage in Istria County*, in Urošević, N., Rakitovac, K.A. (eds.), *Models of valorisation of cultural heritage in sustainable tourism*, Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Pula, 2017, pp. 177-190.
2. Chirilă, E., Gudea, N., Lucăcel, V., Pop, V. (1972), *Castrul roman de la Buciumi*, Muzeul de Istorie și Artă, Zalău, pp. 7-9.
3. Costea, M. (2011), *Development of Tourism in the Transalpine Area. Premises and possibilities*, Forum geografic. Studii și cercetări de geografie și protecția mediului, Volume 10, pp. 329-340.
4. Gaiu, C., Zăgreanu, R. (2011), *Inscripții și piese sculpturale din Castrul Roman de la Ilișua*, Editura Accent, Cluj-Napoca, pp. 7-12.
5. Găzdac, C., Pripon, E. (2012), *Castrul auxiliar de la Buciumi*, Editura Mega, Cluj-Napoca, pp. 11-15.
6. Gubam, D., Nomishan, T. (2020), *Archaeology and Tourism in Nigeria: An Overview*, Journal of Tourism and Heritage Studies, Volume 9, pp. 91-101.
7. Gudea, N. (1997), *Das Römergrenzkastell von Bologa-Rescivlm/ Castrul roman de la Bologa-Rescivlm*, Congresul Internațional de studii asupra Frontierelor Imperiului Roman, Zalău, pp. 7-12.
8. Gudea, N. (1997), *Das Römergrenzkastell von Moigrad-Pomet. Porolissum 1/ Castrul roman de pe vârful Pomet- Moigrad. Porolissum 1*, Congresul Internațional de studii asupra Frontierelor Imperiului Roman, Zalău, pp. 7-12.
9. Gudea, N. (1997), *Der Meseș- Limes/Limesul de pe munții Meseș*, Congresul Internațional de studii asupra Frontierelor Imperiului Roman, Zalău, pp. 7-12.
10. Isac, D. (2003), *Castrul roman de la Samvm-Cășeiu*, Editura NAPOCA STAR, Cluj-Napoca, pp.18-23.
11. Isac, D., Găzdac, C. (2007), *The auxiliary forts from Samvm (Cășeiu) and Gilău*, Editura Mega, Cluj-Napoca, pp. 9-11.
12. Lawrence, N.K., Collins-Kreiner, N. (2018), *Visitors with their 'Backs to the archaeology' religious tourism and archaeology*, Journal of Heritage Tourism, Volume 14, pp. 138-149.
13. Marcu, F., Isac, A., Isac, D., Cupcea, D. (2013), *Peisajul geofizic al așezării de la Samvm și al frontierei romane a provinciei Dacia*, Editura Mega, Cluj-Napoca, pp. 4-6, pp.14-16.
14. Renfrew, C., Bahn, P. (2005), *Archaeology: The Key Concepts*, Routledge, London and New York.
15. Richards, G. (2003), *What is cultural Tourism?* in van Maaren, A. (ed.) *Erfgoed voor Toerisme*, Nationaal Contact Monumenten.
16. Wendrich, W. (2003), *Archaeology and Sustainable Tourism in Egypt: Protecting Community, Antiquities and Environment*, in Agnew, N., Bridgland, J. (eds.), *Of the Past, for the Future: Integrating Archaeology and Conservation*, Getty Publications, Los Angeles, California, pp. 184-190.

BUILDING TOUR-GUIDING SKILLS DURING THE ESP COURSE. TOURISM STUDENTS' VISION OF THEIR POTENTIAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Roxana MIHELE¹, Cristina BOLOG²

ABSTRACT. *Building Tour-Guiding Skills During the ESP Course. Tourism Students' Vision of Their Potential Professional Development.* Faced with an abundant array of professional paths to follow upon graduation, some of them not even in their own domain, many tourism students steer their future career towards tour-guiding. After all, being paid to travel the world and meet new people is not at all a bad start to the hospitality industry. However, a tour guide's role is a very complex one: from facilitating the transmission of cultural/ historical/geographical information to mediating communication in a pluricultural space; from physically leading the tourists' group through the meandering city streets to solving tourist-host linguistic misunderstandings, to name just a few. A plethora of communication and soft skills are involved in exercising this job and in preparing students to practice it to the highest standards possible. The current presentation endeavors to delineate the skills and activities an ESP teacher should focus on for best preparing the students for this job. In this respect, the teacher's perspective has been generously influenced by the students' own perceptions on their potential new career and the knowledge they extracted from their specialism courses.

Keywords: *tour guiding, mediating communication, facilitating pluricultural space, cultural ambassadors, communication and soft skills.*

¹ Babeş-Bolyai University, Faculty of Letters, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, e-mail: mihaela.mihele@ubbcluj.ro

² Babeş-Bolyai University, Faculty of Geography, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, e-mail: cristina.bolog@ubbcluj.ro



Introduction & Theoretical Background

The devastating aftermath of the Covid pandemic can still be felt today in the tourism sector across the world, and the vicinity of a terrible war near Romania's borders has not helped the local hospitality industry recover to its pre-pandemic levels. To illustrate this, we can mention that according to the OECD 2022 study of the tourism trends and policies, post-pandemic Romanian tourism followed global decreasing trends: from a 2019 pre-pandemic 3.0 % contribution to the GDP and a 6.3 % contribution to the total employment, figures fell to a 6.1 % contribution to the total workforce and a 61 % decrease in international arrivals at the borders in 2020 (OECD, 2022, p. 342). The silver lining to this situation is that the government, national tourism associations, companies and the larger public realized just how important tourism is for a nation's economy and how many jobs are tightly related to this sector. In a country that still has considerable untapped potential in this domain, the necessity to have well-trained and well-educated tour guides cannot be underestimated. This aspect is also doubled by the tourism students' manifest interest in following such a career, which leads both specialism teachers and specialized foreign language teachers to investigate how they can best prepare their students for such a career path and, in particular, how can *English for Tourism* courses help students get the precise skills and competencies they need to successfully navigate the labor market.

Although not realized by the larger public, the tour guide profession is an old one, even in ancient Greece the precursors of the tour guides leading people to temples and oracles were divided into two categories "the *Periegetai*, or 'leaders around' and the *Exegetai*, or 'explainers'. Herodotus writing around 490 BC, noted the gullibility of travelers and their exploitation by many clearly less than professional guides" (Jafari, 2000, p. 584). Since then, the arrival of the *Grand Tour* in the 17th and 18th century refined the duties of the guides that became almost like tutors taking care of the young aristocrats in their charge who completed their education by travelling abroad (*idem*). Today this career requires in many countries formal education and/ or training and a formal certification in many places. Jafar Jafari even mentions that the role is often associated with that of an entertainer or amateur at historic sites offering a "historical interpretation of the site while acting out roles in appropriate period costume" (Jafari, 2000, p. 584). The modern-day attractions' visitor management checklist sets for the tour guide an explanatory role (to provide information about the sight, the history of the place, the culture of the local population), but also a controlling role, like that of a warden whose task is to role model

responsible behavior, “controlling the behavior of tourists at the destination, [...] the guide may inform the visitor of expected modes of behavior and remove or chastise tourists who do not conform” (Holloway et al., 2009, p. 493). Next to this protective dimension towards the sight, tour guides also embody the role of leaders selecting the attractions for the tour, setting the timing for each visit. They also work as the unofficial public relations officers for the destination, enhancing the image of the attraction by delivering captivating spiels and thus raising the tourists’ awareness of the importance of the visited places (*idem*).

Specialist literature has underlined the multiple roles a tour guide has to embody nowadays. In the sphere of tour management, a guide can have a *leadership* role that is group focused which can be either *instrumental* like navigating, providing physical access, group organizing / management, or it can be social like *entertaining* the group, managing the group dynamics and tension. In the sphere of experience management, guides also can have a *mediatory* role facilitating engagement and learning on an individual level. This can also take two forms: *interactionary* which creates connections, interactions with the locals and other tourism specialists, or guides can also have a *communicative* role by giving information, interpreting, mentoring (Weiler, Black, 2015, p. 22). In the third sphere of destination or resource management guides can have interpretative or role-modelling roles that help promote sustainable tourism (Weiler, Black, 2015, p. 28). Studies also have noted that nowadays the main role of a tour guide has shifted from mere provider of information and geographical orientation to that of a mediator, interpreter of both culture and knowledge, facilitator or broker of intercultural communication.

The key roles played by guides fall into one of three spheres: instrumental (tour management), mediatory (experience management) and interpretive/sustainability (destination/resource management). Generally, there has been a shift from guides playing largely an instrumental role to playing multiple roles. [...] In virtually all guiding contexts, guides can mediate or broker visitors’ physical access, encounters, understanding and empathy [...]. The guide’s role as a mediator in each of these domains can be positive as well as negative; that is, the guide can facilitate but can also constrain access, encounters, understanding and empathy. (Weiler, Black, 2015, p. 42, 43)

The study proposed by this article revolves around the qualities, skills and competencies required from tour guides, abilities that can be practiced and improved during the specialized English courses offered at university. The skills brought forth by many studies as currently necessary during the recruitment process and while being employed are also the skills our tourism students have

indicated as the ones they would like to practice more during English courses. When provided with extensive lists of skills and activities that they had to choose from for classroom practice, the students' answers positively correlated with those proposed by tourism specialists, indicating the high level of awareness tourism students have in what concerns the requirements they would have to fulfill in their future career.

The skills needed for any job, especially when it comes to customer service domains can be divided into hard skills – specific to a certain job (also called the technical expertise), and soft skills or interpersonal skills that help any employee better relate to their employers, colleagues and customers, regardless of the professional domain (also called transferable skills). The modern tour guide must be a multi-skilled individual, capable of sharing information with the tourists in a captivating way, in creating a memorable holiday experience, thus ensuring the promotion of the destination they visit. Their “front-line staff” status, as “unofficial ambassadors of their countries, tourism companies, tourist destinations and employers” (Kapa et al., 2022, p. 1351) require an outstanding moral profile, revealed through qualities such as authenticity, trustworthiness, a sense of humor, a positive attitude, courtesy, professionalism, willingness to help the customers, as well as intellectual qualities – being knowledgeable about tourism and cultural matters, being open-minded, a life-long learner willing to improve and update one's information on a constant basis (*idem*). To such a moral and intellectual profile, one must add the ability to transmit effectively the above-mentioned information by using communication and intercultural communication skills, the capability to plan and organize efficiently tours, the ability to mediate work-related tense situations with/ between colleagues, hosts and tourists. These people skills can be considered to be at the foundation of excellent customer care, an essential part of tour guiding. Here we can quote the advice G.E. Mitchell gives tour operators and travel agencies:

A host who forms a good opinion of your community is the most valuable asset to your country. That opinion cannot be bought. It must be earned for outstanding service. [...] Satisfied customers return for repeat visits and recommend your services to their friends. Dissatisfied customers [...] generate bad publicity for the tour company and results in complaints and demands for refunds. (Mitchell, 2005, pp. 20, 21)

Guides and tourists alike usually belong to different cultural, social, religious and ethnic backgrounds which makes communication skills, both in their productive (speaking) and receptive (listening) forms essential for

“higher levels of tourist satisfaction, destination loyalty and positive word-of-mouth advertising” (Kapa et al., 2022, p. 1352). Since tour guides help build a positive destination image through the ways they manage to offer “an interpretation” of the place, and the manner in which they help erase differences and diffuse (potential) conflicts, reinforcing communication skills – the core of foreign language courses – is essential for them. Not only do they need to make themselves understood, to give explanations, to transmit information, to captivate audiences through exquisite speaking skills, but they also need to refine their listening skills for understanding requests, questions, foreign accents. Good customer relations are built on timely and effective feedback which in turn requires notable listening skills.

Important topics for their communication skills include appropriate vocabulary and idiom usage, using grammar correctly based on the story, using correct word order and conjunction, clear pronunciation of words and sentences, intonation in the presentation, punctuation in storytelling, fluent storytelling. (Chanwanakul, 2021, p. 2)

Considering the important part communication plays in this domain, one should not forget that beyond verbal communication, proficient guiding skills are also experts in non-verbal communication. Gestures, movement, body position, eye-contact, facial expression, are an essential part of oral interaction and most importantly, these vary across cultures, an aspect guides should not forget! (Department for Education and Skills, 2007, p. 26) Their usage in storytelling, an essential part of presentation skills, can make or break a guide’s success in captivating audiences, gaining their trust, eliciting empathy and sympathy for the history and life of the local community. For example, keeping in mind that a story can be said from three different positions: the speaker’s viewpoint, the audience’s viewpoint, and the neutral observer’s viewpoint (‘the fly on the wall’) can be a useful technique to master (Bradbury, 2006, p. 16). Knowing they can switch from one position to another, they can add depth to their storytelling, they can avoid confrontation or conflict which arises from cultural differences and diverse expectation horizons that tourists might have. Using such techniques and presentation skills helps tour guides create opportunities for interaction which can bridge cultural differences as illustrated in Figures 1 & 2.



1.



2.

Figures 1 & 2. Tour guide at Heidelberg Castle (Germany) dressed in period costume and presenting the history of the building & the lives of its rulers, from the point of view of a 17th century household chambermaid who knew both the public and the most intimate details regarding her masters' lives. A captivating, guided tour into a far-away epoch and land, warmly appreciated by a multicultural group of visitors from 10 different countries. (Photos from the personal archive)

The key role of both verbal and non-verbal communication abilities is also underlined by the training manuals tour guides receive. Next to these skills, leadership or group management skills, tour research, planning and design abilities are also necessary to ensure the success of the holiday experience. Moreover, guides need to handle well accidents and emergency situations even by improvising and being flexible (Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality, 2021, p. 71). The practice of these skills is less suited to language classes, yet effective communication and interpersonal capabilities are crucial for them. The afore-mentioned source also emphasizes the attentiveness guides should place on cultural sensitivity and intercultural awareness:

Different cultures may hold different views or interpretation of sites, historical events and customs. What may be funny and interesting to one group, may not be funny and interesting to another, due to past experiences, education, nationalities or even personalities. Historical events may also have different resonances for different people and 'facts' should be presented sensitively. (Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality, 2021, p. 79)

Tour guides' role as chief observers of tourism performance in a destination as local ambassadors, cultural brokers and even informal promotional agents has been continuously underlined in specialist literature: Aloudat et. al (2020), Woodward & Carnegie (2020), Donbak (2020). When mediating between ever changing groups of tourists with constantly different backgrounds and expectations, "all tours are a negotiation, continuously created and recreated" (Woodward & Carnegie, 2020, p. 70). In their *Tour Guiding Research. Insights, Issues and Implications* (2015), Weiler and Black have noted that today's tour

guides' most cherished role seems to be that of intercultural mediators / culture brokers that exhibit a role-model behavior that tourists are gently encouraged to follow. They can mediate empathy through storytelling, thus being able to touch upon sensitive, controversial issues otherwise "untouchable" like slavery, apartheid, climate change, poverty, xenophobia, discrimination. With a view to bridge cultural divides, in their interpretation techniques guides often may use local proverbs, analogies, metaphors, similes and humor, maybe even to support or gently criticize the destination's social/ political/ economic order. Noteworthy is the less discussed political role of a guide: by their choice of information, by their selection of what the tourists can see or experience or have access to, tour guides can shift between a positive to a negative interpretation and mediation of the destination.

The mediation itself comes in many shapes and sizes: "Social mediation involves acting as a go-between, linking visitors to the local community, facilitating access to tourist sites and ensuring that the host environment is non-threatening for the visitor, while cultural brokerage involves connecting visitors with host cultures on an intellectual (cognitive) level" (Weiler & Black, 2015, p. 32). Since mediation is not a block concept, the roles of the tour guides necessarily have to be multifaceted. Through their various tasks, guides can mediate physical access or encounters / interactions, but they can also broker understanding which means cultural access or empathy which refers to emotional access (*ibidem*, p. 34).

The mediator role of the guides is intimately connected with their communicative one, and interpretation is the main instrument guides use to bridge gaps between cultures. However, this tool involves more than just transmitting blunt information, because it is a process that harbors emotional and intellectual connections between tourists and the attraction or the local community, it "aims to reveal meaning and relationships rather than simply communicate factual information" (*ibidem*, p. 50). Tour guides are cosmopolitans par excellence, since they operate in multiple cultures. The techniques they use to transmit the meaning inherent in each resource can range from various non-verbal communication items (facial expression, gestures, etc.) to storytelling, drama performances and role play. All these help guides to build their intercultural skills and abilities:

In addition to being interpreters, guides must be effective intercultural communicators. To do so, guides require competence in languages, the ability to explain or interpret culture, an appreciation for cultural difference and for what is, and is not, appropriate to communicate; interest and a willingness to find a common ground, social-interpersonal competence such as respect; and enough pride to act as an ambassador for their culture. (Weiler & Black, 2015, p. 69)

These remarks bring forth the English teachers' duty to allocate time in their curriculum and classroom practice to building students' mediation and pluricultural repertoire, as they are generously described and provided by the *Common European Framework of References for Languages*³ (the upgraded 2020 edition) – the foreign language teachers' foremost guideline that sets the descriptors for the various levels of competence students can achieve. The CEFR recognizes the need for those engaged in mediation to have a well-developed emotional intelligence that would allow for empathy towards other viewpoints or emotional states. Learning how to cooperate, to diffuse delicate situations or even tensions, how to deal with “otherness”, how to identify similarities and difference and build on them is needed by all students nowadays, evermore so by those who will work in the hospitality industry. In tourism cross-linguistic interaction and mediation is mandatory, and this involves social, plurilingual and pluricultural competence as well:

“Mediating communication” aims to facilitate understanding and shape successful communication between users/ learners who may have individual, sociolinguistic or intellectual differences in standpoint. The mediator tries to have a positive influence on aspects of the dynamic relationship between all participants. [...] Mediating communications is thus primarily concerned with personal encounters. (CEFR, 2020, p. 91)

According to the CEFR oral mediation may be easily equated with interpretation in its multiple forms (simultaneous, consecutive, informal), and functions as one of the main goals of foreign language learning. Language specialists like Maria Stathopoulou (2015) also admit the necessity of mastering this ability in plurilinguistic and pluricultural milieus (most communities where tourism is developed can be said to be characterized by this cosmopolitan trait). When mediating, the guide uses more than just the multiple linguistic resources he/she has, cultural resources are also tapped into, because guides bring their own point of view to what they are mediating. It is not just simple translation from one language into another, the guide's “own voice” can be found in the spiels he/she delivers:

Retaining his/her own identity and participating at the same time in two cultures, the role of the mediator is to make the target audience understand information that otherwise would be impossible to understand. [...] The practice of mediation [...] is regarded as an important aspect of

³ The various types of mediation activities, concepts and strategies are described in the CEFR (2020) chapter 3.4. (pages 90-121), while the plurilingual and pluricultural competence is dealt with in chapter 4 (pages 123-128).

human intercultural communication. In today's multilingual and multicultural contexts, being able to cope with multiple intercultural experiences and to mediate effectively seem to be a prerequisite for individual's successful participation in them. (Stathopoulou, 2015, pp. 34, 39)

By all accounts, practicing presentation and storytelling, using mediation techniques to communicate effectively between cultures, practicing speaking and listening in a foreign language and enhancing students' intercultural awareness fall well within the scope of specialized language courses. This puts language teachers in a privileged position to help students prepare to become excellent tour guides.

The Study

The motivation to investigate the students' perceptions regarding the importance of developing tour-guiding skills during the 'English for Tourism' course stems first from the empiric, classroom observation of the students' constant interest in a sparse number of tourism jobs (among which, that of a tour guide) and from the limited characteristics of the Romanian tourism labor market. In the context of a highly dynamic and changeable society and economy, it only seems natural for an English tutor and for a tourism one to look into the precise skills that are required by the recruiters and the abilities' profile for the most sought-after jobs. Romania has not yet reached its full potential in developing tourism as one of its most important economic boosters, and one of the areas that still require well-trained, knowledgeable professionals is the tour-guiding domain. A large array of attractions, events, and destinations are in dire need of an attentive, careful, and up-to-date promotion that can be supplied only by well-educated and enthusiastic tour guides. Tapping into the students' needs for a specific set of abilities and activities that could be developed during the English course was a necessity considering the above-mentioned reasons.

Data Collection and Analysis

The present article uses as a starting point the results of a questionnaire that was sent to the 1st year students specializing in the Geography of Tourism (at the Faculty of Geography) and the 2nd year students specializing in Cultural

Tourism (at the Faculty of History) from Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The survey was sent online, using the Google Forms format, to the 127 students enrolled in the two faculties at the beginning of the academic year and received 81 responses. The study was carried out over a period of two weeks in March and April 2023 and comprised a quantitative questionnaire based on 13 multiple-choice questions and an open-ended query.

Sampling

According to the sociometric measurements of the target group, the overwhelming majority of the respondents are young freshmen aged 18-20 years old (75 students out of a total of 81 respondents) and just 6 of them are slightly older, aged 21-25 years old. Most respondents were female (57) and for the occupational status, 67 mentioned being unemployed, only 5 of them declared having a job and 9 mentioned working as a volunteer. When considering the ones who declared being employed, the biggest percentage (40%) indicated already working in tourism, 25% chose the educational system and 10 % the retail industry, the rest of them mentioning other domains such as: public administration, sport and a students' association. The results are not surprising as the survey was directed toward young students that have just entered the higher educational system and for the most part are busy attending courses and seminars, having little time for pursuing a job at this level. Their inclination for the tourism domain and for working with the customers (the retail industry) is nonetheless visible even now, at the start of their academic training.

Main Findings

1.Picking a Tourism job as both a passion and a source of material fulfillment

Despite the drawbacks that tourism as an industry suffered post-Covid, the current students' interest in pursuing a related job seems to be less affected. Asked what professional path they ideally expect to follow, half of respondents (42 out of 81) professed their passion for the domain, regardless of the job they could get. Almost 20% (16 students) pointed out that they would rather start their own business in Tourism at some point in the future, even though right now they would like to work in a more profitable domain. Only 8 students

mentioned they would work in Tourism provided they found a well-paid job. The remaining 15 students either preferred a job in the educational system teaching geography and/ or tourism (8 of them) or they simply mentioned preferring a lucrative job in any domain.

Given a wide array of 16 jobs in Tourism they could choose from in the future, the students' top three choices were: being a travel agent (option picked by 27 students out of 81 respondents), being a tour guide (option picked by 19 respondents) and being a flight attendant (10 respondents). The rest of the options, in decreasing order were: being a receptionist (7 students), being a tour operator (6), being a tourism consultant (5), being a holiday representative or a chef (2 each), or being a hotel entertainer, a TIC clerk or a sports instructor (1 each). All of these jobs involve considerable customer care abilities but for the first three choices, working with an international clientele, quite often in a foreign country and being up to date with the latest developments in the industry, is paramount. The ideal candidates for these top three jobs must have exquisite communication skills in their mother tongue and at least one foreign language, so the English teacher's role in better preparing the students for their career should not be underestimated.

Considering their second favorite professional option – becoming a tour guide – students motivated the appeal this job has mostly through their passion for travelling and the financial benefits it would bring. “Getting the chance to visit places otherwise unreachable to you” was picked by 48 students as their first reason and “Getting paid (accommodation, meals, some expense) to travel” was picked as the second option by 46 students. The third reason to choose this job was for the students the idea that they will get a “dynamic, flexible job that doesn't keep you stuck in an office” – option indicated by 39 students. As it can be noticed in Figure 3, the other reason to become a guide were in decreasing order: “Having the chance to work and live abroad” (32 students), “Having the chance to interact with diverse tourists from around the world” (23 students), “Having the chance to earn a lot of money” (22 students), “Being your own boss as an independent tour guide” (19 students) and “Having the chance to work in an international environment” (18 students). Not surprisingly, the results point toward young people's need to have financial support from a company in their endeavor to discover the world and learn more about destinations and attractions and toward Generation Z's flexible and dynamic attitude, ready to adapt easily to new countries, new people, new challenges.

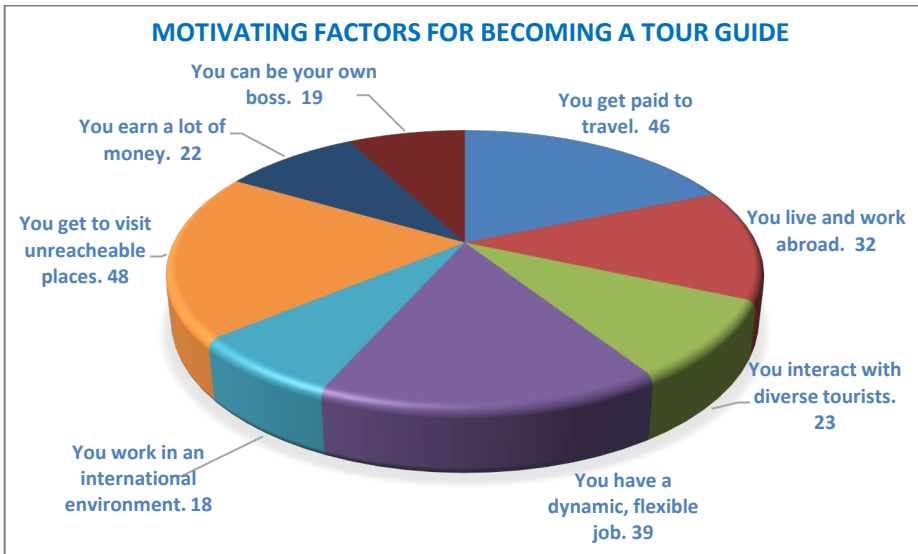


Fig. 3. Students’ choices of motivating factors for becoming a tour guide. The figure shows how many of the total of 81 respondents picked a certain reason as their favorite top three ones.

2. The tour guide’s “new” role as an intercultural mediator/ destination ambassador

As discussed in the theoretical background, the roles a tour guide has to play are multiple, complex and interrelated. The students are also aware of the heterogenous set of skills they will have to master if they desire such a job. As illustrated in Figure 4, their top choices for the roles a tour guide has to embody, range from the very traditional “a presenter of detailed information about the attraction” picked by a large majority of students (62 out of 81), and that of “an entertainer” chosen by 51 students to a new role, in tune with the changing times, that of “an intercultural mediator between the local hosts and the (foreign) travelers, indicated by 38 students as being one of their top three choices. This choice points out the fact that students have become observant, attentive to the particulars of the society they live in. Having more access to information and foreign holidays than the previous generations, they are conscious of the cultural differences of the people they interact with. Understanding that a guide has to explain differences and make accessible and accepted by the tourists both new information about the attraction as well as information about the local customs, values, lifestyle is a great step forward toward bridging cultural gaps and silent conflicts.

The students pointed out in smaller numbers, that a guide also must be “a problem-solver” (33 students) as he/ she is the first one tourists would turn to for help. He/she must be today “a cultural ambassador for the attraction” (29 students) since on the effectiveness and attractiveness of the tours offered would depend the informal promotion of the attraction among other tourists by word-of-mouth. Last but not least, a guide needs to be “a daily program organizer” (28 students) as the route for the day, the attractions to be visited, the timing of the visits, the frequency of breaks, the places to stop for a meal or a comfort break, the rooming lists, etc. – all depend on the guides’ excellent organizational skills. What is surprising in the respondents’ answers is the fact that the students have noticed the latest changes in this job’s description parameters, and they have noticed how important the mediator role is in this world of heightened interconnectivity and globalization that often brings conflict and misunderstanding. The “soft power” type of promotion for an attraction that a guide performs by delivering an appropriate spiel, by drawing the tourists’ attention to the history, the culture, the values a certain place embodies can sometimes be more effective than an aggressive and repetitive tv campaign. The “personal touch” a guide offers to the experience of discovering a place may make most tourists repeat the visit or describe it in glorious terms to their relatives and acquaintances.

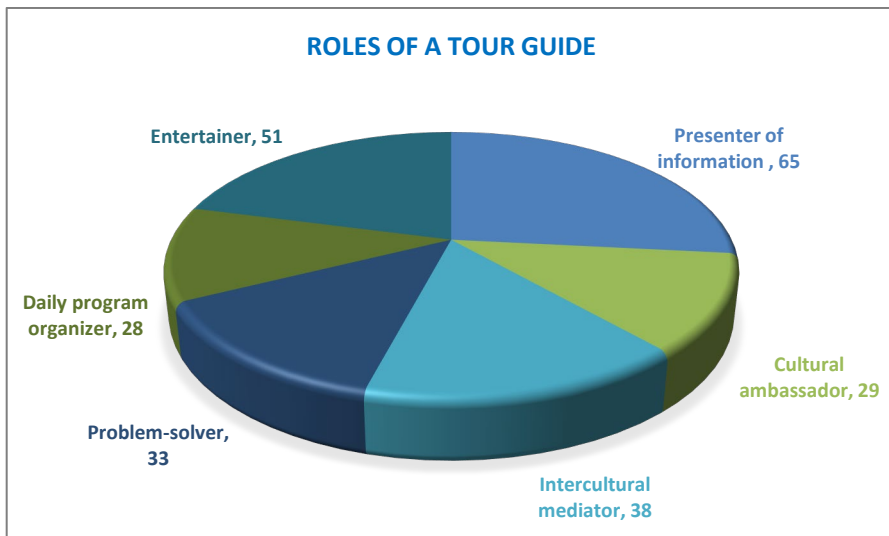


Fig. 4. The roles a tour guide has to embody according to the students. The figure shows how many of the total of 81 respondents picked a certain role as their favorite top three ones.

Knowing that such skillful guides need some precise qualities to perform the afore-mentioned roles, is important especially for recruiters, but students are well aware that having the right set of qualities and skills equals with success in finding the desired job. Asked which are the top five most important qualities a tour guide must have, students have indicated being “sociable/ friendly” as their first choice, picked by 85.2/%, being “communicative” was chosen by 70.4%, being “flexible/ open-minded” was preferred by 66.7 %. Being “knowledgeable about the attractions, local culture and people, the terminology to use” and “punctual” were their fourth and fifth options (chosen by 63% of the students, respectively 60.5% of them). Other options, in decreasing order of importance for the students were being “polite/ courteous”, being “charismatic/ charming”, being “presentable/ well-groomed”, “reliable/ dependable”, “entertaining/ artistic bent”, “physically fit, with a lot of stamina” and lastly, being “proactive”. These qualities that reveal an ideal portrait of a communicative and sociable tour guide correlate with the next findings regarding the skills that tour guides have to master to do their job to the best standards.

In determining how to modulate the teaching of specialized English to the particular necessities of the job market today, or even to those of a specific job students would like to have in the future, the foreign language tutor must know very well the duties that a tour guide (in this case) will have on his/her employment contract and tightly connected to these, the skills recruiters look for. As noted in the introduction, specialist literature points out an array of skills that fit very well the skills language courses have been developing for decades. Even though at the beginning of their education in the academia, and having relatively little experience with all the tourism stakeholders and their requirements, students have nevertheless correctly identified some of the most important skills they would need for becoming a tour guide as illustrated in Figure 5. Asked in the survey to pick their top five choices for the most important skills a guide must have, our tourism students have opted for the first place with an equal number of choices (61 students out of 81 respondents) “presentation skills including storytelling” and “communication skills for explaining the daily program, interacting with the locals, other experts and tourists”. Their second choice was “organizing skills” picked by a majority of 53 students (65.4% of respondents), then “foreign language skills” indicated by 51 students, “problem-solving skills” indicated by 44 students and “listening skills for better understanding and helping tourists” preferred by 34 students. Some of these are considered transversal skills that are useful in a plethora of domains, but some are clearly in the scope of the English courses at the university and can be easily practiced there.

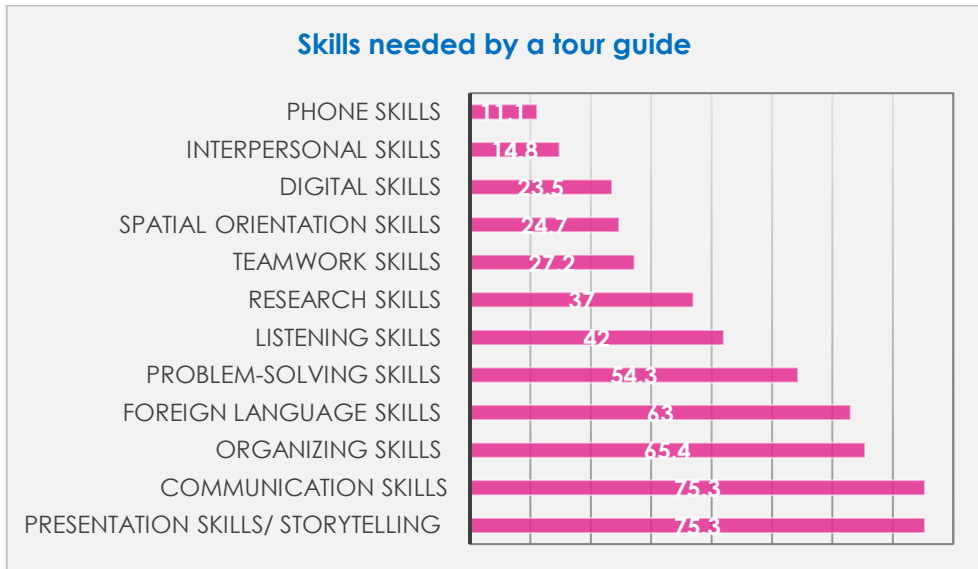


Fig. 5. The skills needed by tour guides in their daily work according to the students. The figure shows the percentage of students that picked a certain skill as being one of their top five ones.

The other skills offered by the survey's question and chosen to a lesser degree were, in decreasing numbers, "research skills for being up-to-date on information about attractions and local culture" (30 students), "teamwork skills" (22 students), "spatial orientation skills" (20 students), "digital skills for searching information online and liaising with the home company or other companies" (19 students), "interpersonal skills" (12 students), "phone skills" (9 students). According to specialist literature, all of these skills are needed on the ground, when conducting tours, however, just a few of these can be routinely practiced during the English course to ensure professional success later. As a result, the next questions of the survey dealt with the skills and activities that English courses should focus on to better equip the students with knowledge and abilities they would surely need in their profession.

3. The focus the *English for Tourism* course must place on fostering communication and mediation

The duty of any dedicated language teacher in the higher educational system is to better prepare the students for the specific domain they are willing to follow, and even to carefully arm these students with the precise skills they

will have to demonstrate during the recruitment process for a specific job. Just teaching them general English or even specialized terminology for a certain domain is not enough by today's standards of a highly competitive labor market. Therefore, considering the skills tour guides need for their job, and considering the limitations imposed by the particulars of a specialized English course, the next question of the survey dealt with the skills the "English for Tourism" course offered at Babeş-Bolyai University could focus on to make students ready to meet the demands of the tourism company managers.

Asked about the skills the specialized English course needs to focus on to better prepare them to be an ideal tour guide, students' top 5 options from a list of 8 skills were as follows: "speaking skills (for answering questions, explaining the daily program, interacting with the locals, other experts and tourists)" which was preferred by 81.5% of students as illustrated in Figure 6. Second came the "listening skills for understanding and identifying requests/problems / the need for specific information", picked by 69% of students. Their third option was "Public speaking/ presentation skills (e.g. for Power Point projects, storytelling)" – 67.9%. Next came "specialized terminology for various types of tours and attractions" which was indicated by 60.5% of students as being very useful and the fifth option, picked by 51.9% of students was "problem-solving skills". Obviously, according to these options and knowing the profile of an ideal guide, an English tutor's effort should be concentrated on developing the students' oral communication skills (for both reception and

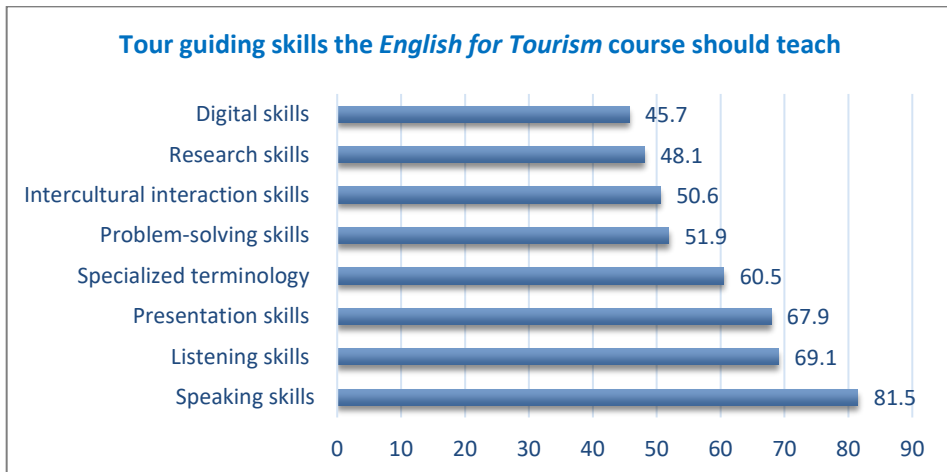


Fig. 6. Students' perception of the skills the English for Tourism course should help them acquire. The figure shows the percentage of students that picked a certain skill as being one of their top five ones.

production) that can help them better provide information and interact with guests and tourism experts. The other options, in decreasing order were: “intercultural awareness and intercultural interaction skills” (50.6%), “research skills for being up-to-date on information about attractions and local culture” (48.1%) and “digital skills for searching information online and liaising with the home company/ other companies” (45.7%). It is to be noted that most of these skills were picked by more than 50% of the respondents, the differences between results were narrow, indicating that all are considered to be important and useful for this specific line of work – tour guiding.

Another aspect that would help delineate the trajectory an English tutor would have to follow to give top-notch preparation for the students wanting to become tour guides refers to the actual activities that can be practiced during the practical courses to enhance the acquisition of the afore mentioned skills (see Figure 7). As illustrated in the next figure, Figure 7, students’ top five favorite activities during the English course, in view of the preparation for becoming a guide were: “reading texts about the differences between cultures and interacting with foreign tourists” preferred by 50 students out of 81 respondents; “speaking activities for practicing answering requests/ explaining problems/ suggesting solutions” (49 students); “going out in the city to actually practice presenting attractions in English (maybe in collaboration with other tourism professors)” (45 students mentioned this); “listening activities for understanding foreign accents” (43 students); “practicing more vocabulary exercises for specific terminology” (41 students).

What seems to be surprising here is their first choice that demonstrates interest not necessary in reading skills but in indirectly acquiring intercultural awareness and interaction skills. Throughout the English course so far, the students’ attention has been drawn repeatedly to the idea that they have to be careful when interacting with tourists coming from different countries, with a different culture and background and to the fact that for a career in tourism they need to research constantly the appropriate way to behave and talk to these guests. Their first choice to this particular survey question seems to indicate they have already internalized this requirement for better tour guiding. At the other end of the spectrum, it comes as no surprise that students would rather practice on site, outside, in the city, the attractions’ presentations as they would benefit from the feeling that everything “is for real” as they would say. The students’ other options for English course activities were in decreasing order: “listening activities for identifying tourists’ needs (requesting information, complaining, etc.)” picked by 39 students; “presenting a Power Point project about a favorite destination/attraction in front of the class” (32); “writing description of attractions; writing stories about (historical) events” (30); “role-play exercises

(tour guide-tourists)” (21); “online exercises that use both digital skills and communication skills” (21); “online search for specific information and discussing/ debating it with colleagues” (17); “creating personal websites for self-promotion as tour guide or for promoting personal tours” (14).

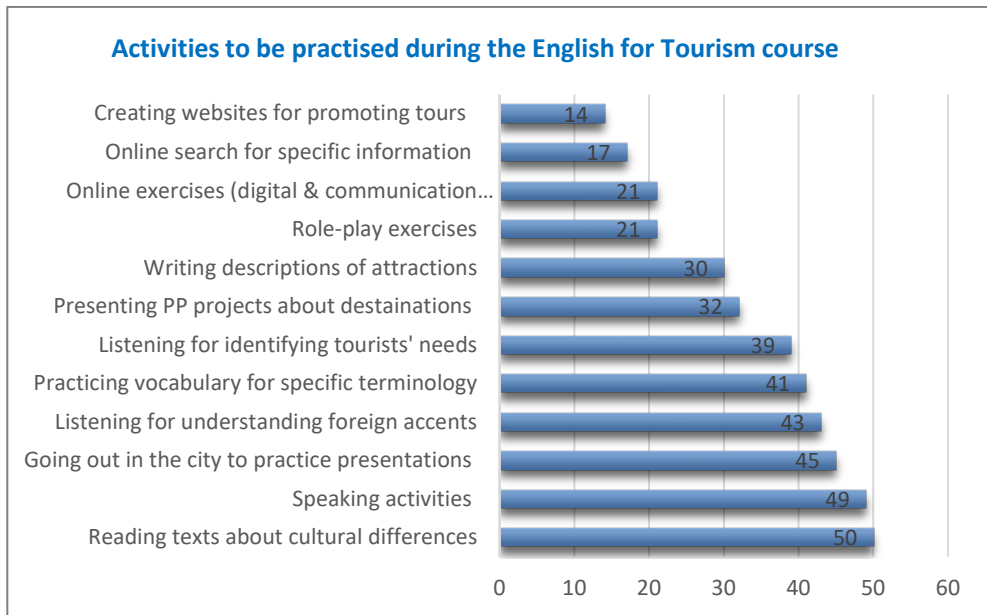


Fig. 7. Students’ perception of the activities the English for Tourism course should focus on to help them be better tour guides. The figure shows how many of the total of 81 respondents picked a certain classroom activity as their favorite top five ones.

Similar to the previous survey question’s results, the close number of respondents that picked their favorite five English classroom activities and the fact that more than half of the respondents indicated the same options, demonstrates the students’ predilection for practicing more oral communication and intercultural skills under different formats.

Asked in what way can the English course and the university in general better prepare them for becoming excellent tour guides, the students’ responses to the only open-ended, qualitative question were illustrative of the diverse points and tasks a specialized language course needs to tackle in order to provide the students with the best possible training in their domain. One student said: “I mean I think we can learn here how to be more charismatic and

how to entertain the tourists”. [student 1]⁴ Another one pointed out that: “The specialized English course of this faculty can help me greatly understand the terminology used in tourism, and also help me understand the people of foreign countries and their various cultures and beliefs”. [student 2] Others mentioned that:

I think that the English course/University could prepare me for the job by teaching me how to use proper terminology when presenting attractions, maybe trying some role play to get us more accommodated to the task of presenting an attraction, and also doing more speaking exercises to improve vocabulary. [student 3]

The English course can help me improve and prepare me for this job by learning [sic!] about cultural diversity and the differences around the world so there’s no cultural shock, by focusing more on speaking and spelling activities and I believe public speaking activities can also help us students, as many of us have a fear of public speaking. [student 4]

Conclusion

Being in the privileged position to open the door to a fascinating professional path for the students, both language professors and specialist ones should cooperate better to maximize the transmission of knowledge, specialized terminology, technical expertise as well as the soft skills young people need today. English teachers need to provide students with more opportunities to practice (on site) tour guiding skills during language courses, maybe even with the collaboration of specialism professors. Teachers need to collaborate better across domains and to reconsider their curriculum planning by keeping an eye on the requirements of the labor market. As far as students are concerned, they should practice more intercultural communication and presentation/ storytelling skills / activities if they desire to have a successful career in tour guiding. Their professional future will also benefit from having a better understanding of their mediator role in a cosmopolitan hospitality industry.

⁴ These quotes are taken verbatim from the answers provided by the students at the last survey question.

REFERENCES

1. Aloudat, A.S., Black R., Strut C. (2020), *Tour Guides' Perspective on Their Work and Life: A Case Study of Jordanian Tour Guides*, in Yildirim G., Ozbek O., Kilinc C.C., Tarnic A. (Eds). *Cases On Tour Guide Practices for Alternative Tourism*, IGI Global, Hershey, pp. 18-38.
2. Bradbury, A. (2006), *Successful Presentation Skills*, Kogan Page, London & Philadelphia, 3rd Edition.
3. Chanwanakul, S. (2021). *Effectiveness of Tour Guides' Communication Skills at Historical Attractions*, International Journal of Entrepreneurship, Vol. 25, Issue 4S, retrieved On May, 4th 2023 from: <https://www.abacademies.org/articles/effectiveness-of-tour-guides-communication-skills-at-historical-attractions-12795.html>
4. Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality (2021), *Travel Agency and Tour Guide Operations. Study Guide*, BPP Learning Media, London.
5. Council of Europe (2020), *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment – Companion volume*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, available at www.coe.int/lang-cefr
6. Department for Education and Skills (2007), *Improving Speaking and Listening Skills. A Practical Guide for 'Skills for Life' Teachers*, DFES Publications, Nottingham.
7. Donbak, E.R. (2020), *Tourist Guides as Representatives of Sustainable Tourism*, in Yildirim G., Ozbek O., Kilinc C.C., Tarnic A. (Eds). *Cases On Tour Guide Practices for Alternative Tourism*, IGI Global, Hershey, pp. 39-53.
8. Holloway, J.C., Humphreys, C., Davidson, R. (2009) *The Business of Tourism*, Prentice Hall, Pearson Limited, Essex, The Eighth Edition.
9. Jafari, J. (Chief Ed.) (2000), *Encyclopedia of Tourism*, Routledge, New York.
10. Kapa, M.G., de Crom, E.P., & Hermann, U.P. (2022), *An Exploration of Tourist Guides' Competencies to Create Memorable Tourist Experiences*, GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites, vol 44, No. 4, pp.1350–1358. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.44421-953>.
11. Mitchell, G.E. (2005), *How to Start a Tour Guiding Business*, The GEM Group, Ltd, Charleston.
12. OECD (2022), *OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2022*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/a8dd3019-en>
13. Stathopoulou, M. (2015), *Cross-Language Mediation in Foreign Language Teaching and Testing*, Multilingual Matters, Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto.
14. Weiler, B., Black. R. (2015), *Tour Guiding Research. Insights, Issues and Implications*, Channel View Publications, Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto.
15. Woodward, S., Carnegie E. (2020), *Student Guides as Mediators of Institutional Heritage and Personal Experience*, in Yildirim G., Ozbek O., Kilinc C.C., Tarnic A. (Eds). *Cases On Tour Guide Practices for Alternative Tourism*, IGI Global, Hershey, pp. 55-73.

IN SEARCH OF BIRTHPLACE OF SRI CHAITANYA: PART I. A STUDY ON HAGIOGRAPHIES UP TO 17TH CENTURY

Balai Chandra DAS¹

ABSTRACT. *In Search of Birthplace of Sri Chaitanya: Part I. A Study on Hagiographies Up to 17th Century.* This paper delves into the exploration of the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya, the Indian saint and founder of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Sri Chaitanya's teachings and his message of love and hope have transcended boundaries and influenced people worldwide, particularly through the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). Despite the global reach of Gaudiya Vaishnavism today, a longstanding debate has persisted since 1894 regarding the actual birthplace of Sri Chaitanya: Nabadwip or Mayapur. This study focuses on analyzing hagiographies and literature published up to the 17th century to shed light on this debate. Through a geographical lens, the research concludes that Nabadwip was indeed the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya, but the exact location within Nabadwip remains unknown. To address this challenge, the paper recommends future research directions that employ a multidisciplinary scientific approach, including archaeology, geology, geomorphology, and botany, supported by state-of-the-art dating techniques.

By undertaking this comprehensive investigation into Sri Chaitanya's birthplace, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the historical and cultural significance of Nabadwip and contribute to understanding Sri Chaitanya's life and legacy. Moreover, the paper underscores the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration to uncover the truth behind historical claims and emphasizes the need for scientific methodologies to complement traditional sources in resolving historical debates.

Keywords: *Nabadwip, Mayapur, ISKCON, Birthplace of Sri Chaitanya, Mahaprabhu.*

¹ *Department of Geography, Krishnagar Government College, Nadia-741101, West Bengal, India, e-mail: drbalaidaskgc@gmail.com*



1. Introduction

After the Sena dynasty, Turk invaders with the single objective of plundering threw Bengal's political, economic, social, and spiritual life into a chaotic state. For about three centuries, despotism ruled Bengal (Mukherjee 1984). At this anarchical state of Bengal, saviour Sri Chaitanya advented in Nabadwīp on 14th March of 1486 (Mukherjee 1984) or on 18th February 1486 (Srila Saccidananda Bhaktivinoda Thakura, <https://wisdom.yoga/sri-chaitanya-life-precepts/>) or 27th February 1486 (Chaudhuri 2004a, b) at Nabadwīp. Dejected and demoralized people saw the rays of hope in the clarion call by Him. The poorest of the poor and the lowest cast the society got the most fervent embrace of Sri Chaitanya and for the first time, other people looked at them as fellow human beings (Mukherjee 1984). Sri Chaitanya's call for personalized devotion to Krishna (De 2018) gained unprecedented popularity and Gaudiya Vaisnavism spread amongst Hindu cast hierarchies (De 2018) and even amongst other religions abroad (Bryant and Ekstrand 2004). His love for humanity breached every artificial barrier and flooded parts of every continent of the world. Sri Chaitanya's personality, philosophy, and teaching (Kapoor 1977) ascension him from a regional pundit (well-versed Sanskrit Teacher) to a global saviour philosopher. So, every concern related to Sri Chaitanya has its global appeal (Bryant and Ekstrand 2004).

It is unanimously well-known that Sri Chaitanya was born in Nabadwīp on the bank of the river Bhagirathi. Since the inception of the Sri Nabadwīp-Dhama Pracarini Sabha in 1894 at Mayapur (Dev, 2004), the seed of debate on the exact place of birth of Sri Chaitanya germinated and began to grow to immeasurable proportion. Two groups, *Nabadwīp* and *Mayapur*, demand their favoured places as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya. The controversy is still raging strong, in most cases, having no logical points of demand. Both the groups present some supernatural kinds of literature, composed by themselves or coined haphazardly from irrelevant religious literature, to support their demand (Prabhupada 1980; Bhakti Purusottam Swami 2010; Tridandiswami Srimadvaktivigyan Ashram Maharaj 2017; Bhaktivinad Thakur 2017). The combined effect of the absence of literature on a vivid description of the town, unclear history and the ever-changing geography of Nabadwīp made room for doubt regarding the exact place of birth of Sri Chaitanya (Nakatani 2003). The debate was incepted from '*Bhakti-Ratnakar*' composed by Narahari Chakrabarty in the 18th century. The book mentioned 'Mayapur' which added another dimension to the debate.

Mukherjee (1984) mentioned that "*There are two distinct schools of Vaisnavites pleading for two different present villages to be declared as the 'true' birthplace of Sri Caitanya*". Kedarnath Dutta (2 September 1838 – 23 June 1914), a

Gaudiya Vaisnava guru of the late 19th and early 20th century, well versed in Sanskrit religious kinds of literature, was a deputy magistrate in early life (Vidyaratna 1976; Dev 2004; Fuller 2005). He coined the term 'Mayapur' from 'Bhaktiratnākaraa' of Chakrabarty, Narahari (1760s/b) and renamed a Muslim-dominated village 'Meyapur' or 'Miyapur' as 'Mayapur' (Ray 1954, Dev 2004, Mukherjee 1984, Chaudhuri 2004, Rarhi 1894, Mukhopadhaya 1934). Meyapur was in a rural mouza 'Ballaldighi' (J.L. No. 14) on the flood plain of river Bhagirathi located to the North-North-East of Bhagirathi-Jalangi confluence at 23°29'23''N and 88°28'57'' E (Das 2014). Being disgusted with the then aberrated situation of Vaisnavism in Nabadwīp (Mukherjee 1984) Sri Dutta established Mayapur-based 'Sri Nabadwīp-Dhama Pracarini Sabha' in 1883 (Nakatani 2003; Mukherjee 1984) or 1894 (Dev 2004). It seems that the 'Sri Nabadwīp-Dhama Pracarini Sabha' was established in 1894 not in 1883 because in 1894 Sri Dutta retired from government service (Nakatani 2003) and his family shifted to Mayapur (Dasa 1999) and it is likely that he could devote himself to spirituality only after retirement. However, his industrious and organized nature (Hopkins 1984) brought learned society and other Vaisnava scholars under his leadership and gave every possible effort to prove Mayapur as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya (Chaudhuri 2004a, b). In 1893 he declared 'Yogapitha' as the site of the advent of Sri Caitanya (<https://iskcondesiretree.com/page/yogapitha-birthplace-of-lord-gauranga> retrieved on 31.03.2020) and 'Yogapitha' temple was erected there in 1934. A meeting was held in January 1894 (Majumder 1995; Dev 2004) at Krishnagar A. V. High School under his patronage to have every possible support from the learned elite society of Krishnagar and other places. The schools of Vaisnavites pleading Mayapur as the birth-pace of Sri Chaitanya, publicized a concept, that during the 1740s (150 years before 1890), the then Nabadwīp was swallowed by the river Bhagirathi and residents resettled at Kulia (present Nabadwīp) on the opposite bank of the river Bhagirathi (Chaudhuri 2004a). Therefore, they preached that Nabadwip town at present is not on the site of the original Nabadwip! It is sited at Kulia and Mayapur is the true site of Nabadwip.

After all these initiatives by Kedarnath Dutta, the opponent group feared losing the importance of Nabadwīp (Mukherjee 1984) and smelled conspiracy of deleting the ever-going belief and history of Nabadwīp as a birthplace of Sri Chaitanya (Dev 2004, Chaudhuri 2004a). Sri Braja Mohan Das, an engineer in early life, came to Nabadwīp from Bṛndābana in 1916 (Chaudhuri 2004a). He searched for the true birthplace of Sri Chaitanya and collected pieces of evidence in favour of a village 'Ramchandrapur' located to the north of Nabadwīp town. Subsequently, many erudite scholars (Chaudhuri 2004a; Bhattasali 1937) accepted his findings. And the debate Nabadwip versus Mayapur sprawled. Sir Jadunath Sarkar (1932), the eminent Indian historian, also advocated excavating the site of Dewan (finance secretary) Ganga Govinda

Singh's temple which is said by tradition to lie buried near Sri Chaitanya's birthplace to give the debate Nabadwip vs Mayapur a final settlement. Therefore, identifying the site of Sri Chaitanya's birthplace became an important historical and archaeological issue (Sarkar 1936) of the time.

In these circumstances, tools of geographical study of river-channel oscillation and reconstruction of the then palaeo-channels with the help of satellite imageries, old maps and literature could be a great step towards the solution of the issue. The present study employed its endeavour in this particular direction.

2. Materials and Methodology

Three distinct types of approaches were adopted for this study. *First* of all, pieces of literature related to Sri Chaitanya and his life published before the 18th century were analyzed. *Secondly*, information gathered from the literature was synchronized with geography. *Finally* tried to reconstruct the then geography of Nabadwip and to locate the birthplace based on information from Gaudiya Vaisnava literature.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Nabadwip

'Nabadwīp' headquarters of Community Development Block (C.D. Block) Nabadwīp in the district of Nadia, West Bengal, India. The extension of the town is from 23°23'10''N to 23°25'55''N and 88°21'20''E to 88°22'34''E. As a centre of Sanskrit learning and philosophy, Nabadwip was famous in medieval India even before the advent of Sri Chaitanya (1486 – 1533 AD). **Nabadwip is fondly called the 'Oxford of Bengal'**. The Navya-Nyāya school of logic reached its peak here with the efforts of some well-known philosophers. The word 'Nabadwīp' means new island (Naba = New, and Dwip = Island) or Nine Islands (Naba = Nine, and Dwip = Island) (Chakrabarty, Narahari 1760s/a, Minhaz 1260) or New Lamp (Dwip = lamp) or Nine Lamps. If the objective of a scientific study is to search a geographical place and its characteristics in its name, it is rational to discard the last two meanings 'New Lamp' and 'Nine Lamps'. Although the town Nabadwīp and its surrounding areas were dissected into three or four parts by branches of river Bhagirathi and Jalangi during the historical past but never split into 'nine' to be meant for 'Nine Islands'. Rather it could be more rational from the viewpoint of fluvial geomorphology to call it a 'New Island' (Hunter 1908a, p-73). Because it originated from the deposition of

sediment brought down by the Bhagirathi-Jalangi system and subsequently people inhabited that newly formed island (an extended bar or char). Although the word 'New' used in this context is not considered from a geological time scale. Allison et al (2003), from their extensive sedimentological study of the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta, showed that rather the eastern part of the delta is much newer than that of the western part (Figure 1).

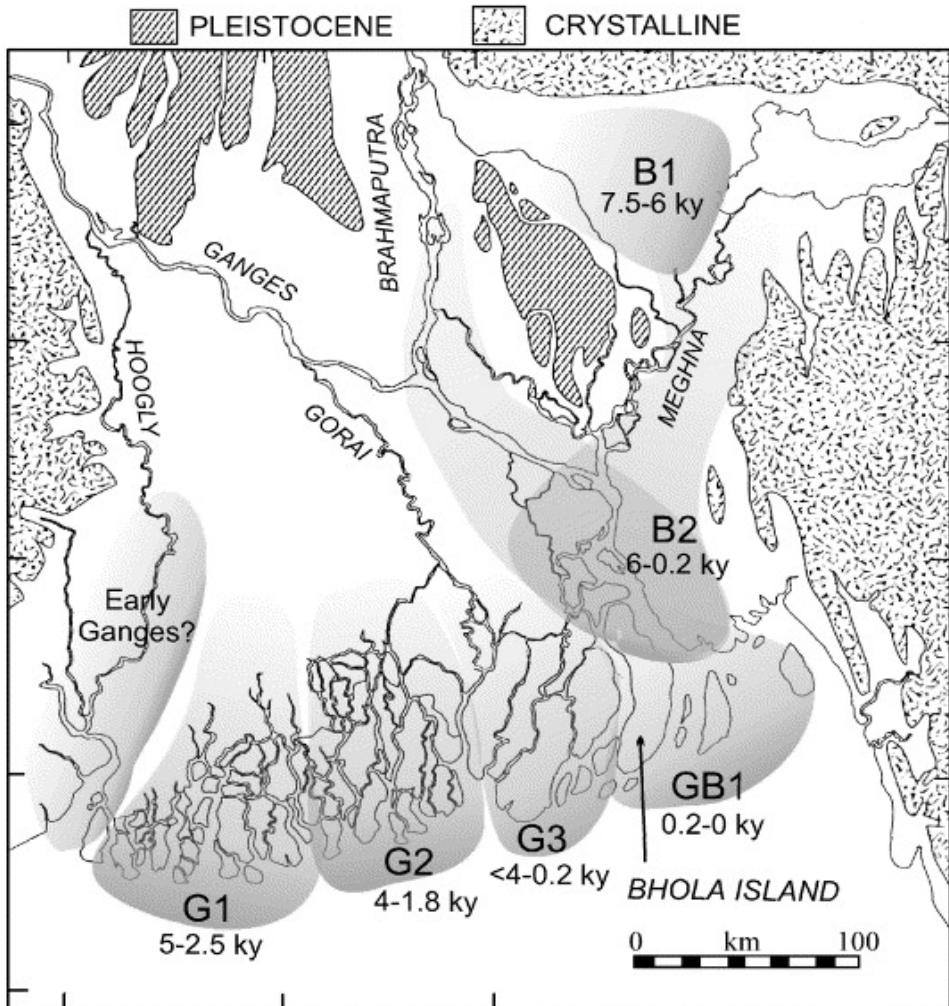


Fig. 1. Map of the pathways and timing of the phases of late Holocene growth of the lower delta plain associated with the Ganges (G1, G2, G3), Brahmaputra (B1, B2), and combined Ganges -Brahmaputra (GB1) (Allison et al 2003)

Although the town Nabadwip was under the impact of channel oscillation and partial attack of the river Bhagirathi and Jalangi, yet never swept away completely (Chaudhuri 2004; Dev 2004). Nakatani (2003) quoting information from Garrett (1910) and Mukherjee (1984) mentioned that the present town of Navadvip had been formed during the colonial rule because the *'Bhagirathi river once had a westerly course and about the beginning of nineteenth century the flow changed and swept the ancient town (Navadvip) away'*. But Chunder (1869) 41 years before Garrett, mentioned that the then Bhagirathi river was flowing through the 'Old Nuddea'. This 'Old Nuddea' indicates that although the river Bhagirathi and the river Jalangi have significantly changed the geographical setup of the town Nabadwip but never swept away the town completely. Mentioning the banyan tree at Pora-maee, he noted that it was at least 100 years old. From 1607 to 1890, different Rajas of Nadia patronized Brahmin pundits of Nabadwip and donated lands, and promoted Śakti worship there (Chaudhuri 2004, Mallik 1911). Raja Girishchandra (1802-1841) of Krishnagar made two big temples at Nabadwip, one for stone-made Kali and the other for a big Shiva Linga (Basu, Nagendranath, 1898). All these indicate the traditional and glorious existence of Nabadwip over 500 years. Nakatani (2003) in his work mentioned that *'According to Mukherjee (1984: 35), there was no reference to the name of Mayapur or Navadvip in any contemporary literature at the time of Caitanya. They appeared only in the early eighteenth century when Narahari Chakrabarty named and described Navadvip and identified Mayapur as the birthplace of Caitanya in his work Bhaktiratnākara (Mukherjee 1984: 35)'*. Murari Gupta was 6 years older (<https://gaudiyahistory.iskcondesiretree.com/tag/murari-gupta/>) than Sri Chaitanya. He composed 'Srikrishna-Chaitanya-Charitamritam' in 1513 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murari_Gupta). In several Prakram, Sargas, and Couplets in this book, he mentioned Nabadwip as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya. Many authors (Narottamadasa 1566-?; Sen Biśārada 1770; Chakrabarty, Mukundaram, 16th Century; Ray 1753) prior and contemporary to Narahari Chakrabarty mentioned Nabadwip.

3.2. Mayapur

Mayapur is a new village established during the last decade of the 19th century (Nakatani 2003). The location of the Srila Prabhupada Puspasamadhi Mandir of the ISKCON at Mayapur is 23°25'24"N and 88°23'18"E. The Yogpeeth temple claimed as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya by the Mayapur school of Vaisnavites is located at 23°26'18"N and 88°23'33"E.

Kedarnath Dutta, Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector of the then Nadia District of British colonial India, was an eminent scholar in Vaisnava literature. He was a scholar in many languages including Hindi, Oriya, English,

Persia, Urdu and Sanskrit (Mukherjee 1984). He intended to lead his retired life as a Mohanta (Vaisnava Saint) and left no stone unturned to have recognition from Vaisnavas of Nabadwip. But as Kedarnath Dutta was from non-Brahmin family, so Mohantas of Nabadwip did not accept him as Mohanta (Dev 2004; Chaudhuri 2004). But a man with huge potency, he did not give up. He coined a term 'Mayapur' from 'Bhaktiratnākaraa' by Narahari Chakrabarty (1760s/b) and founded 'Mayapur' as the birthplace in a village Miyapur in the Mouza of Ballaldighi (J.L. No. 14). He discovered the site of the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya in Mayapur by the way of revelation in a dream (<https://gaudiyahistory.iskcondesiretree.com/srila-bhaktivinoda-thakura-biography/>) and in a mythical way (Nakatani 2003, Rup-vilasa Dasa Adhikari 1989: 162-69; cf. Tridandi Sri Bhakti Prajnan Yati Maharaj 1994: 47-48). A remarkable but questionable occurrence took place regarding pointing out the exact site of the birthplace. The story is told thus: Srila Jagannatha Dasa Babaji Maharaj, aged 142 (Chaudhuri 2004a), who was unable to walk and had to be carried in a basket, made an eldritch revelation about the birthplace. In an extraordinary turn of events, he leapt out of the basket and began dancing and singing, directing everyone's attention towards the sacred birthplace. (<https://egaudiyatresuresofbengal.com/>)!

At the end of the 19th century, Mayapur suddenly popped up in the scenario of Nabadwīp and amongst Gaudiya Vaisnavas. And, the uninterrupted knowing of 400 years that 'Nabadwīp is the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya' was first stumbled in 1894 by the purposive interpretation of couplets of 'Bhaktiratnākaraa' (Dev 2004; Chaudhuri 2004; Majumder 1995).

After 400 years from the early 16th to the end of the 19th century, the geographical landscape of the Nabadwīp region had been thoroughly changed. A significant part of the town Nabadwīp had been eaten away by rivers leaving a part of old Nabadwīp. So, the exact site, where Sri Chaitanya advented, was really untraceable. Dutta took the opportunity of this opacity, *'no one even correctly knew the identity of Mahaprabhu's birthplace'* (<https://www.thegaudiyatresuresofbengal.com/2018/01/08/635/#:~:text=No%20one%20even%20correctly%20knew,royal%20asiatic%20society%20of%20London>) and discovered Mayapura in an eldritch way (<https://gaudiyahistory.iskcondesiretree.com/srila-bhaktivinoda-thakura-biography/>) (Nakatani 2003). One midnight when Kedarnath Dutta was meditating on the rooftop at Nabadwīp, saw a palm tree at 'Meyapur', (meaning the village where Muslims dwell) to the north-east on the opposite bank of the river Bhagirathi emitting effluence light and he discovered and declared that place as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya (Rup-vilasa Dasa Adhikari 1989: 162-69; cf. Tridandi Sri Bhakti Prajnan Yati Maharaj 1994: 47-48). Prior to declaring

it as the birthplace and site for the construction of the Yogpeeth temple, Dutta, who had the privilege of serving the colonial ruler, diligently conducted research and gathered all accessible literature and government records. These sources seemingly substantiate Meyapur as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya and seek to transform Meyapur into Mayapur. (Basu, 1937; Mukherjee 1984: 45; Swami 1996: 262). For the establishment Sree Mayapur post office, the solicitation was made on 28th August 1929 to the Post Master General (Ray 1982) and afterwards, Mayapur came into official existence (Majumder 1995).

3.3. Continuation of the civilization at Nabadwip since 13th century

Some scholars and religious gurus opine that old Nabadwip, sited on the eastern bank during Sri Chaitanya's period, was erased out by the oscillation of the river Bhagirathi and Jalangi about the beginning of the nineteenth century (Mukherjee 1984; Nakatani 2003; Swami 1996: 262) and the present Nabadwip is a new town formed on the western bank of the river during colonial rule (Nakatani 2003). But the continuation of the settlement of the Nabadwip is recorded in different kinds of literature (Bijayarāma Sēna Biśārada 1771; Chakrabarty, Narahari 1760s/a,b; Ray, Bharat Chandra 1753), government and other records (Barlow and Yule 1682; Garrett 1910; Hunter 1876, 1908b; Pertsch 1852; Blochmann 1875) and maps (Van den Brouck 1666; Rennel 1788). It is apparent that the geography of the Nabadwip settlement was altered several times by the oscillation of the river Jalangi and Bhagirathi but the civilization never completely deserted or disappeared or ruined. It maintained a hereditary flow to date.

Mukherjee (1984) in his article, used the term 'new Navadvipa' 8 times and deliberately tried to prove that Nabadwip town to the west of present-day Bhagirathi is a new town having no heritage link with Sri Chaitanya and the then Nabadwip. He commented: *"After Nadia city gradually decayed, initially by the ravage and neglect of the Turk rulers, and later by the change of course of the Ganga through centuries, the new Navadvipa town gradually grew up on the other side of the river during the British period. Some surviving para or Nagar of the old city degenerated into small villages"*. But in the same article, he admitted that the true or old Nabadwip city has partly (not completely) been eaten away by the river Bhagirathi. *"Old Navadvipa city has partially been eaten away by the changing course of the Bhagirathi (Ganga) and during 18th-20th Centuries under the British rule the present Navadvipa city has been built anew on the western bank of the changed course of the Ganga"*. Again, he says that the city grew anew. The statements seem to contain controversial content.

In the 2nd half of the 13th century during the reign of Mughisuddin Tughral, the treasury of Nadia was looted (Chaudhuri 2004, P-19). Sri Chaitanya was born in Nadia or Nabadwip in the 15th century. Acharya Singha (1498), son of Sri Chaitanya's teacher Bishnudas Pundit, wrote a note on Mālatī-Mādhava and mentioned 'Nabadwip', his residence, was a pleasant and peaceful place during the reign of Ala-ud-din Husain Shah. During this period Raghunath Shiromani composed 'Digdwipika' (Bhattacharya 1951). Murari Gupta (1513) in his Kadca also mentioned Nabadwip as a pleasant place for learned Brahmins (Prakram 1 & 3, Sargas 1 & 4, Couplets 16, 4. <https://archive.org/details/MurariGupataKadca/page/n95/mode/2up> and <https://archive.org/details/MurariGupataKadca/page/n265/mode/2up>). The wooden idol of Sri Chaitanya, worshipped by Biṣṇupriyā (wife of Sri Chaitanya), was crafted by Banshibadan in 1513 AD (1435 Śākābda). This idol is currently worshipped in Nabadwip town and its date of sculpture can be observed on the idol's base.

Kavi Karnapura, (1542) in his book 'Sri Chaitanyacharitamrita Mahakavyam' mentioned that Sri Chaitanya advented in Nabadwip (https://archive.org/d/kcc_mahakavyam/page/n19/mode/2up).

In the 17th century, Raghav Ray (1632-1683), the King of Nadia, '*...having set up at Navadvipa a statue of Ganesha, he began to erect a building of bricks which should contain a phallus of Mahadeva. When, however, this was but half-finished, he expired*' (Pertsch W. 1852. Chapter VI, P-20). This incomplete work at Nabadwip by Raghav Ray was completed by his son Rudra Ray (1683-1694) (Pertsch W. 1852. Chapter VII, P-20). Chaudhuri (2004) mentioned that it appears from old documents, that in 1780 Maharaja Krishna Chandra donated land to a Brahmin of Nabadwip (<https://archive.org/details/KshitishVamshavaliCharitam/page/n21/mode/2up>).

Nabadwip is also shown as Neddia in his map drawn in 1666 (Van den Brouck). In 1682, Hedges visited Nabadwip and noted "*December 29 – We lay to at Nuddia, only ye Point of Cassumbazar Island, and after our boat had eaten, rowed all night, and ye next morning by 2 o'clock were past Sanctapoor*" (Barlow and Yule 1682).

Tirtha Mangal of Bijayarāma Sēna Biśārada (1771) sketches the Nabadwip on the west bank of the river Bhagirathi. The couplet describes the upstream journey of the merchant's vessel as–

চলাচল চলে নৌকা নদ্যা বাম ভিতে।
 তেমুয়নি দিয়া নৌকা পড়িল খড়াতে।
chalāchal chale noukā Nadya bām vite
temuyani diyā noukā porila kharyate.

Basu (1915 <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.298280/page/n25/mode/2up>) opined that Tīrtha Maṅgala Kābya was written, during 1770. During that period, Nabadwip was populated by 1700 eminent brahmins scholars and many more people proportionately (<https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.298280/page/n23/mode/2up>).

শতের শত ব্রাহ্মণ আছে নদ্যার ভিতরে।

আর কত কত লোক কে বলিতে পারে।। (Couplet. 1018)

Śatēra śata brāhmaṇa āchē nadyāra bhitarē.

Āra kata kata lōka kē balitē pārē. (Sēna Biśārada, 1770. Couplet. 1018).

Chunder (1869) quoted “*From the temple of Choitunya we had to pass through a deserted quarter, where a hardly discernible trace of debris was pointed out as marking the site of Agum Bagish’s adobe*”. About the banyan tree at Pora-mae, Chunder (1869) said that “*The banyan tree is at least a hundred years old. It is proved that the river has not encroached upon this quarter of old Nuddea*”. Therefore, even in 1745 (1845-100 years), Nabadwip was sited at the place where it is now. During the 1840s also, Nabadwip was continuing as a centre of education. About Nabadwip as a realm of learners, Chunder said “*Half, at least, of what one hears about the learning of Nuddea, is still found to be true*”. Chunder (1869) also visited Kali established by Raja Krishna Chandra at pora-mae tala, a number of Tols or seminaries, and mentioned Sreeram Shiromonee’s tole. The implication of all these is the continued existence of the town of Nabadwip from the 15th century to the 1840s.

Dewan (finance secretary) Ray, Kartikeya Chandra (1876) of Nadia Raj wrote ‘Kshitish Banshabali Charit’ where he noted that during his time, there were 17 Tols in Nabadwip. He also mentioned that during the period of Ballal Sen, river Bhagirathi was on the west and south of Nabadwip while river Jalangi was to the east of Nabadwip with their confluence at Goalpara, 2 krosh (6.44km) south of Nabadwip, and that point of confluence was known as Trimohini. This statement complies with maps of Van-den-Brouck and Rennels, in which the Jalangi-Bhagirathi confluence is shown at Ambona near Samudragarh.

Therefore, it is clear from the above-discussed testimonials that since the 13th century, before the birth of Sri Chaitanya, there was a continuous mention of the city of Nabadwip in the name of Nuddeah/ Nuddea/ Neddia/ Nooddia/ etc, a well-populated learned town, all along the centuries up to the 18th century, and which was never associated with the name ‘Mayapur’ before Bhaktiratnākara came into the scenario.

3.4. *Hagiography on Sri Chaitanya's birthplace*

In a true sense, there is no authentic historical and geographical account of the town of Nabadwip. So, dependency on religious literature, abundant on religious centre Nabadwip, is a compulsion. Under this section, available literature on Sri Chaitanya and Nabadwip have been arranged chronologically and analyzed them to illuminate the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya.

3.4.1. *Murari Gupta (1480-1540)*

Amongst religious literature and hagiography on Sri Chaitanya, 'Sri Srikrishna-Chaitanya-Charitamritam' the earliest one was authored by Murari Gupta (1513). Murari Gupta (1480-1540) was contemporary to Sri Chaitanya and had an intimate lifelong relationship with Sri Chaitanya. The foundation of his poetic hagiography of Sri Chaitanya primarily rests on personal encounters and direct experiences. So, his work could be considered as the most reliable and authentic source of Sri Chaitanya's life and living. The book is arranged in descending orders of Prakram (No. 4), Sarga (No. 78), and Ślōka (couplet). In several Prakrams, Sargas, and Couplets in this book, Nabadwip is mentioned as the birthplace and residence of Sri Chaitanya but nowhere in any context mentioned the name Mayapur (https://archive.org/details/20201009_20201009_2214/page/n91/mode/2up).

স নবদ্বীপবতীষু ভুমিষু দ্বিজবরৈরভিনন্দিতো হরিঃ

নিজপিতুঃ সুখদো গৃহে সুখং নিবসন বেদষড়ঙ্গসংহিতাম॥

Sa nabadbīpabatīṣu bhūmiṣu dbijabaryairabhinanditō hariḥ
nijapituh sukhadō grhē sukhaṁ nibasana bēdaṣaṅgasanhitāma.
(Sarga-1/Couplet-3/p-1)

[Meaning: Applauded by the best of the brāhmaṇa community within those lands comprising Navadvīpa, Śrī Hari dwelt happily in the home of his father, giving him great happiness. He then studied the scriptures embracing the six branches of the Vedas.]

নবদ্বীপ ইতিখ্যাতে ক্ষেত্রে পরম-বৈষ্ণবে

ব্রাহ্মনা: সাধব: সান্তা: বৈষ্ণবা: সৎকুলদ্ভবা:

Nabadwīpa itikhyate kshetre parama-vaishnave
brāhmaṇa sādhaba sāntā vaisnavā satkulotbhabā.(Prakram-1/Sarga-1/Couplet-16/ p-4)

[Meaning: There is a famous Vaishnav land named Nabadwip where Brahman, saint, santa, Vaishnav are from the honest clan.]

গচ্ছতাং জাহ্নবীতীরে নবদ্বীপং মনোরমম

মাতরং পরয়াভক্ত্যা মম নাম পুরসরম।।

gachha tang Jāhnabī tire Nabadwīpangmanaramam.

Matarang paraya bhakta mama nama purasaram. (Prakram-3/Sarga-4/Couplet-4/ p-174).

[Meaning: Go to that pleasant land Nabadwip on the bank of the river Janhabī (Ganga) and with deep respect tell my mother in my name.]

3.4.2. Kavi Karnapur (1524-?)

The next authentic book 'Sri Sri Krishna Chaitanya Charitamritam Mahakavyam' by Kavi Karnapur (1542) was also composed in 1542 (Chaudhuri 2004 P-22). He was also contemporary to Sri Chaitanya and authored the book based partly on direct experience and partly based on hearing and earlier work of Murari Gupta. In the first couplet of this poetic hagiography, he mentioned Nabadwip as the place of the advent of Sri Chaitanya.

জ: শ্রীবৃন্দাবনভূবী পুরা সচ্চিদানন্দ সৈঁড়ো

গৌরাংগিণী: সত্রীশ শ্রুচিণী শ্যামধামা ননর্ত।

তাসং সসবদ্রূহরতরপরিম্ভসম্ভেদত কিং

গৌরাঙ্গ: সন্ জাতি স নবদ্বীপ মালম্বমান:।।

ja sri Brindavanbhubi purā saccidananda Sandro

gourangibhi sadrisashrucibhi shyamdhama nanarta |

tasang sasabdritatarapariranbhasambhedata king

gouraango san jayati sa Nabadwipamalambamana।। (Sarga-1/ Couplet-1).

[Meaning: Is dark-complexioned Sri Krishna, condensed form of truth, consciousness, and bliss, who formerly danced with ladies of fair complexion in Brindavana and turned into fair-complexioned by the deep hugging of those fair ladies, living in Nabadwip?]

In the Sri Chaitanya Chandrodaya drama, Kavi Karnapur (1568) again mentioned that Sri Chaitanya was born in the house of Jagannath Mishra and Sachi Devi of Nabadwip, and he nowhere mentioned Mayapur in this book also.

Nabadwipe jagannatha namno misra purandarat

jatah sacyam kumaro 'yam mama karmani krntati. (Act-1/ Couplet-44)

[Meaning: Born in Nabadwip as the son of Sachi Devi and Jagannath Mishra Purandara, this boy has cut my work into pieces.]

In the 1st, 15th, 18th, and 19th couplets of Shri Gaura Ganoddesha Dipika, Kavi Karnapur (1576) again mentioned Nabadwip. Particularly in the 19th couplet, it is clearly stated that ‘taking the name Vishvambhara, the Supreme Personality of Godhead accepted residence in the town of Navadwipa’ (https://gaudiyahistory.iskcondesiretree.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Kavi_Karnapura_Sri_Gaura_Ganodesa_Dipika.pdf).

3.4.3. Prabodhananda Saraswati (16th century)

Prabodhananda Saraswati, another Vaishnava poet of Kasi, composed ‘Chaitanya Chandramritam’ https://archive.org/details/chaitanya_chandramrita_bengali/page/n15/mode/2up (<http://www.harekrnsna.de/caitanya-candramrita.htm>) where he sharply mentioned that ‘the Supreme Personality of Godhead (Sri Chaitanya) has mercifully appeared in the town of Navadvipa’ (Chapter-1 & 7/ Couplet-1 & 62). Moreover, in chapters 9 and 12, and in couplets 104, 105, and 140 he mentioned and praised Nabadwip.

3.4.4. Lochanadas Goswami (1520-?),

Lochana Das, another Vaishnava author composed ‘Chaitanya Mangal’ in 1537. The book was based on the diary of Shri Murari Gupta (<https://gaudiyahistory.iskcondesiretree.com/locana-dasa-thakura-2/>), his personal experience, and information gathered from his *guru* Shri Narahari Sarkar Thakura (Chaudhuri 2004a). In Sutra Khanda of this book, Lochanadas Goswami wrote-

শ্রী মুরারিগুপ্ত বেঝা বৈসে নবদ্বীপে।

নিরন্তর থাকে গোরাচাঁদের সমীপে।।

Sri Murarigupta bejhā boise Nabadwīpe

nirantar thāke Gorāchānder samīpe. (Sutrakhanda/ p – 5)

[Meaning: Sri Murari Gupta always stays near Gorachand (Sri Chaitanya) at Nabadwip.]

ত্রিজগৎ প্রদীপ নবদ্বীপে উদয় কৈল করুণা-কিরণ পরকাশে

অনেক দিনের ঐত ভকত পিয়াসী ছিল ধাওল প্রেম প্রতি আশে।

trijagt prodip nabadwīpere uday koila, karunā kiran parakāshe.

onek diner jata bhakta piyāsi chila, dhāolo prem proti āshe. (Sutrakhanda/ p – 9)

[Meaning: The lamp of trijagat advented in Nabadwip and radiated beam of mercy. And bhaktas who were long been deprived rushes towards Him for the hope of love.]

সন্যাস আসয়ে নবদ্বীপ ছাড়ি যায়
সন্যাস করিলা প্রভু ভারতি সহায়।।

sanyasāsaye Nabadwīp chhāri jāy

sanyaskarilā prabhu bhārati sahāy. (Sutrakhanda, p-8)

[Meaning: For renunciation Lord (Sri Chaitanya) leaves Nabadwip and took sannyas from Keshava Bharati.]

এথা লক্ষ্মী শচীদেবি নবদ্বীপে আছে।।

etha Lakshmi Sacidevi Nabadwīpe āche. (Ādikhanda, p-128)

[Meaning: Lakshmi (first wife of Sri Chaitanya) and Sacidevi (mother of Sri Chaitanya) is residing in Nabadwip.]

সব অবতার সার গোরা অবতার

তাহাতে নদীয়া পুর প্রেমের প্রচার।।

sab abatār sār gorā abtār

tāhāte nadiāpur premer prachār. (Ādikhanda, p-151)

[Meaning: The core of all avatar Gora spreads love in Nadia.]

দেখি অন্য অবতার সঙ্গী সব কান্দে

নবদ্বীপে অবতার হইলা ব্রজ চান্দে।।

Dekhi anya abatār sangi sab kānde

Nabadwīpe abatār haila braja chānde. (Madhyakhanda, p-166)

[Meaning: Seeing the advent of Gorachand in Nabadwip, associates of all other avatar cries.]

All these couplets of Goswami, Lochanadas (1520-?) mentioned Nabadwīp as the residence/ birthplace of Sri Chaitanya.

3.4.5. Krishnadas Kaviraja Goswami (1496-1588)

Goswami, Krishnadas Kaviraj born in 1496, only 10 years younger than Sri Chaitanya, composed 'Chaitanya Charitamrita' in 1557 based on information from Murari Gupta, Swarupa Damodara, and Guru Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami (1494–1586). In this book (Goswami, 1557), Nabadwīpa was mentioned as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya. Many other localities were also mentioned in the book but nowhere had it uttered the place name 'Mayapur'.

শ্রীকৃষ্ণচৈতন্য নবদ্বীপে অবতরি
অষ্টচল্লিশ বৎসর প্রকট বিহরি॥

Śrīkṛṣṇacaitan'ya nabadbīpē abatari
aṣṭacalliśa baṭsara prakāṭa bihari. (Couplet-7, Chap. 13, Ādi lilā)
[Meaning: Sri Chaitanya advented in Nabadwip and lived a life of 48 years.]

কত নাম লইব যত নবদ্বীপ বাসী
সভারে মিলিলা প্রভু কৃপাদৃষ্টে হাঁসি॥

kata nām laiba jata Nabadwīp bāsi
savāre milila prabhu kripā driste hānsi. (Couplet-152, Chap. 3, Madhya lilā)
[Meaning: How many names should be utter, rather he smiled with mercy to every inhabitant of Nabadwip.]

যত লোক আইলা মহাপ্রভুরে দেখিতে
নানা গ্রাম হইতে আর নবদ্বীপ হইতে॥

jatalok ailā mahāprabhure dekhite
nānā grām haite ar Nabadwīp haite. (Couplet-154, Chap. 3, Madhya lilā)
[Meaning: People who came to meet Mahaprabhu from different villages and from Nabadwip.]

3.4.6. Narottamadasa (1566-?)

Narottamadasa (1566-?) also mentioned Sri Chaitanya's residence as Nabadwīp.

ভজ পতিত উদ্ধারন শ্রীগৌর হরি
শ্রীগৌর হরি নবদ্বীপ বিহারী॥

bhajo patita uddhārana śrī gaura hari;
śrī gaura hari Nabadwīp bihārī
(<http://kksongs.org/songs/b/bhajopatitauddharana.html>).

[Meaning: Worship the savior of the fallen Sri Gaura Hari, the breveler of Navadvipa.]

নন্দের নন্দন হরি
জগৎ ভরিয়া প্রেম দিলা॥

nander nandan hari

নবদ্বীপে আলো করি

Nabadwīpe ālo kari

jagat bhariya prem dila (Narottamadasa1566-?).

[Meaning: Son of Nanda, Hari (Sri Krishna) enlightened Nabadwip and the whole world.]

3.4.7. *Brindavan Das (1507-1589 CE)*

From the viewpoint of geographical importance, the Chaitanya Bhagbat of Brindavan Das (1507-1589 CE) is somewhat different from all other hagiographies earlier to him, where everyone only mentioned Nabadwip as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya. It is Chaitanya Bhagbat, where Nabadwip is not only mentioned as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya but a little geographical detail of the town is also provided here. The route which was followed on the day of marching Kazi's house by Sri Chaitanya and his followers is well described in this volume. In several khanda, chapters, and couplets, Brindavan Das praised Nabadwip for being the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya.

নানা স্থানে অবতীর্ণ হইলা ভক্তগন।

নবদ্বীপে আসি সবার হৈল মিলন।।

nānā sthāne abtirna hoilā bhaktagan

Nabadwīpe āsi sabār hoila milan. (Couplet-53/ p- 68/ Chap.2/ Adikhanda)

[Meaning: Devotees descended in various places. Came to Navadwip and meet everyone.]

নবদ্বীপে হৈল প্রভুর অবতার।

অতএব নবদ্বীপে মিলন সবার।।

Nabadwīpe hoila prabhur abatār

ataeb Nabadwīpe milan sabār. (Couplet-54/ p- 68/ Chap. 2/ Adikhanda)

[Meaning: As prabhu descended at Nabadwip, therefore all the devotees gathered at Nabadwip to meet.]

নবদ্বীপ হেন গ্রাম ত্রিভুবনে নাই।

এই অবতীর্ণ হৈলা চৈতন্য গোসাঞি।।

'Nabadwīp' hena grām tribhubane nāi

jahin abtirna hoilā Chaitanya gosāin. (Couplet-55/ p- 68/ Chap.2/ Adikhanda)

[Meaning: There is no village in tribhuban comparable to Nabadwip where Sri Chaitanya descended.]

3.4.8. *Rupram Chakraborty (17th Century)*

Chakraborty, Rupram (17th Century) in Vandana Pala of his 'Dharma Mangala' mentioned that Sri Chaitanya was born in Nabadwip.

জম্বুদ্বীপ সার পুরি বন্দো নবদ্বীপ
পতিত পাবনি গঙ্গা পাহার সমীপ ॥

jambudwipesārpuribandyoNabadwīp

patitpābanigangājāhārsamip. (Chakrabarty, Rupram 17th Century)

[Meaning: Worship Nabadwip along which the river Ganga is flowing and which is the core of the Jambudwip.]

কলিকাল আইল বিষম অন্ধকার।
নবদ্বীপে হও গোরাচাঁদ অবতার।।

kalikāl aila bisam andhakār

Nabadwīpe hao Gorachānd abatār. (Rupram Chakrabarty 17th Century).

[Meaning: Kalikāl (era of Kali) came with intense darkness. O Gorachānd (Sri Chaitanya), descend to Nabadwip.]

শুনিয়া ব্রহ্মার বাক্য দেব নারায়ণ।
নবদ্বীপে জন্ম লইতে করিলা গমন।।

suniyā brohmār bākya deba Nārāyan

Nabadwīpe janma loite karilā gaman. (Chakrabarty, Rupram 17th Century).

[Meaning: Hearing Brahma's appeal, Lord Narayan goes to Nabadwip to take birth.]

3.4.9. Churamani Dasa (17th Century)

Gaurānga Vijaya of Dasa, Churamani (17th Century) states that 'Madhavendra Puri's worship satisfied Krishna and he appeared before him and said that he would be born very soon as the son of Jagannath Mishra and Sachidevi in Nabadwip. Sri Chaitanya was born at a very auspicious moment when the city of Nabadwip was in a fit of pious excitement' (<http://gaurangabhakti.blogspot.com/2013/12/gauranga-vijaya-rare-book-by-chudamani.html>).

3.5. Synchronizing hagiography and geography

As already stated in the earlier section, the geographical account of the town Nabadwip and its surrounding is better represented in the hagiographic works of Brindavan Das, Uddhab Das, and Narahari Chakrabarty. The following section synchronizes the historical information of this three Vaishnava literature with the geography of the then Nabadwip.

3.5.1. *Chaitanya Bhagbat and the then geography of Nabadwip*

In the 16th century, Brindavan Das (1507-1589 CE) crafted the literary masterpiece known as 'Chaitanya Bhagavata.' Divided into three khandas (sections) - Adi khanda, Madhya khanda, and Anta khanda - the book offers a comprehensive account. Within the 23rd chapter of the Madhya khanda, an intriguing episode unfolds when Sri Chaitanya boldly marches towards the residence of the Kazi, defying his imposed laws. It is within this context that Brindavan Das vividly describes the routes of marching and geographical layout of the then Nabadwip in a series of couplets spanning from verse 298 to 498. In 1509, Sri Chaitanya took renunciation in December. About 3 to 4 months before his renunciation, Sri Chaitanya and his troop marched to Kazi's residence probably in October 1509 (Chaudhuri 2004). And the route of marching as stated in 'Chaitanya Bhagbat' is as follows-

গঙ্গা তীরে তীরে পথ আছে নদীয়ায়।

আগে সেই পথে নাচি যায় গৌর রায়।।

Gangā tire tire path āchhe Nadiyāy.

āge sei pathē nāchi jāy Gour rāy. Couplet-298/ P- 799/ Chap.23/

Madhya Khanda

[Meaning: Paths of Nadia are on the banks of the river Ganga and Goura Ray (Sri Chaitanya) dances and moves pioneering the team on that path.]

আপনার ঘাটে আগে বহু নৃত্য করি।

তবে মাধাইর ঘাট গেলা গৌর হরি।।

āponār ghāte āge bahu nritya kari

Tabē Mādahir ghāt gelā Gour hari. Couplet -299/ P- 799/ Chap.23/

Madhya Khanda

[Meaning: Dancing a lot at first in His own ghat, Goura Hari moved to the ghat of Madhai.]

বারকোনা ঘাটে নাগরিয়া ঘাটে গিয়া।

গঙ্গার নগর দিয়া গেলা সিমুলিয়া।।

Bārkonā ghāte Nāgoriyā ghāte giyā

Gangār nagar diyā gelā Simuliā. Couplet -300/ P- 799/ Chap.23/ Madhya

Khanda

Madhya Khanda

[Meaning: Through Barkona Ghat, Nagariya Ghat and Ganganagar, presently Bharuidanga (Mukherjee 1984), Sri Chaitanya went to Simuliya.]

নদীয়ার একান্তে নগর সিমুলিয়া।
নাচিতে নাচিতে প্রভু উত্তরিল গিয়া।।

Nadiyār ekānte nagar simuliyā

*Nāchite nāchite prabhu uttarilā giyā. Couplet -348/ P- 801/ Chap.23/
Madhya Khanda*

[Meaning: Prabhu (Sri Chaitanya) danced and reached Simuliya, at the farthest end of Nadia (Nabadwip).]

Defeating Kazi, Sri Chaitanya took the return path to come back to His house and visited the following places.

অনন্ত অর্বুদ লোক সঙ্গে বিশ্বম্ভর।
প্রবেশ করিলা শঙ্খবানিক নগর।।

Ananta arbud lok sange biswambhar

*Prabesh karilā Shankhabanik nagar. Couplet -428/ P- 805/ Chap.23/
Madhya Khanda*

[Meaning: With an innumerable number of people, Biswambhar (Sri Chaitanya) enters the village of conch product sellers.]

এই মত সকল নগর শোভা করে।
আইলা ঠাকুর তন্তুবায়ের নগরে।।

Ei moto sakal nagar shobha kore

*Ailā thakur tantrabāyer nagare. Couplet -433/ P- 805/ Chap.23/
Madhya Khanda*

[Meaning: This way delighting all the villages, Thakur (Sri Chaitanya) came to weaver's village.]

সর্ব মুখে হরিনাম শুনি প্রভু হাসে।
নাচিয়া চলিলা প্রভু শ্রীধরের বাসে।।

Sarba mukhe hari nām suni prabhu hase

*Nāchiya chalilā prabhu sridharer bāse. Couplet -436/ P- 805/ Chap.23/
Madhya Khanda*

[Meaning: Hearing *hari nām* from all, Prabhu (Sri Chaitanya) smiles and moves dancing towards Sridhar's house.]

জল পানে শ্রীধরেরে অনুগ্রহ করি।
নগরে আইলা পুনঃ গৌরাঙ্গ শ্রীহরি।।

Jal pāne Sridharere anugraha kori

*Nagare āila puno Gouranga Srihari. Couplet -494/ P- 809/ Chap.23/
Madhya Khanda*

[Meaning: Taking water from Sridhar and making him pleased,
Gouranga Srihari came back to the town.]

সর্ব নবদ্বীপে নাচে ত্রিভুবন রায়।
গাদিগাছা পাড়পাঙ্গা মাজিদা দিয়া পায়।।

Sarba Nabadwipe nāche tribhuban rāy

*Gādigāchā Pārdāngā Mājidā diyā jāy. Couplet -498/ P- 809/ Chap.23/
Madhya Khanda*

[Meaning: Lord of *Tribhuvan* dances all over Nabadwip and moves
through Gadigacha, Pardanga, and Majida.]

From this description of marching different areas of Nabadwip, one can grasp the most probable outlook of the site of the house of Sri Chaitanya and the then historical geography of the town Nabadwip (Figure 2).

From the above description of the onward and return journey for *nagar parikrama* (marching) and from the study of available maps it is found that- i) there is no spotting of Sri Chaitanya's Ghat, Madhai Ghat, Barkona Ghat, Nagoriya Ghat, Conch sellers' village, weavers' village, and Sridhar's house on available maps; ii) Ganganagar (presently Bharuidanga), Simuliya (presently Bamanpukur), Gadigacha, and Majida are spotted on modern maps. So, based on these two kinds of information, we can't locate the site from where Sri Chaitanya started his journey. But it appears crystal clear that in his return journey for coming back home, He moved at least 7km south up to Majida. But if Sri Chaitanya's house was at 'A' marked on the map 'b', then on return journey from Kazi's house, why did the procession move south up to Majida seem irrational. Another thing that appears from the presently known relative location of Ganganagar, Simuliya, and Majida is that Sri Chaitanyas' house was somewhere to the South-south-west of Ganganagar.

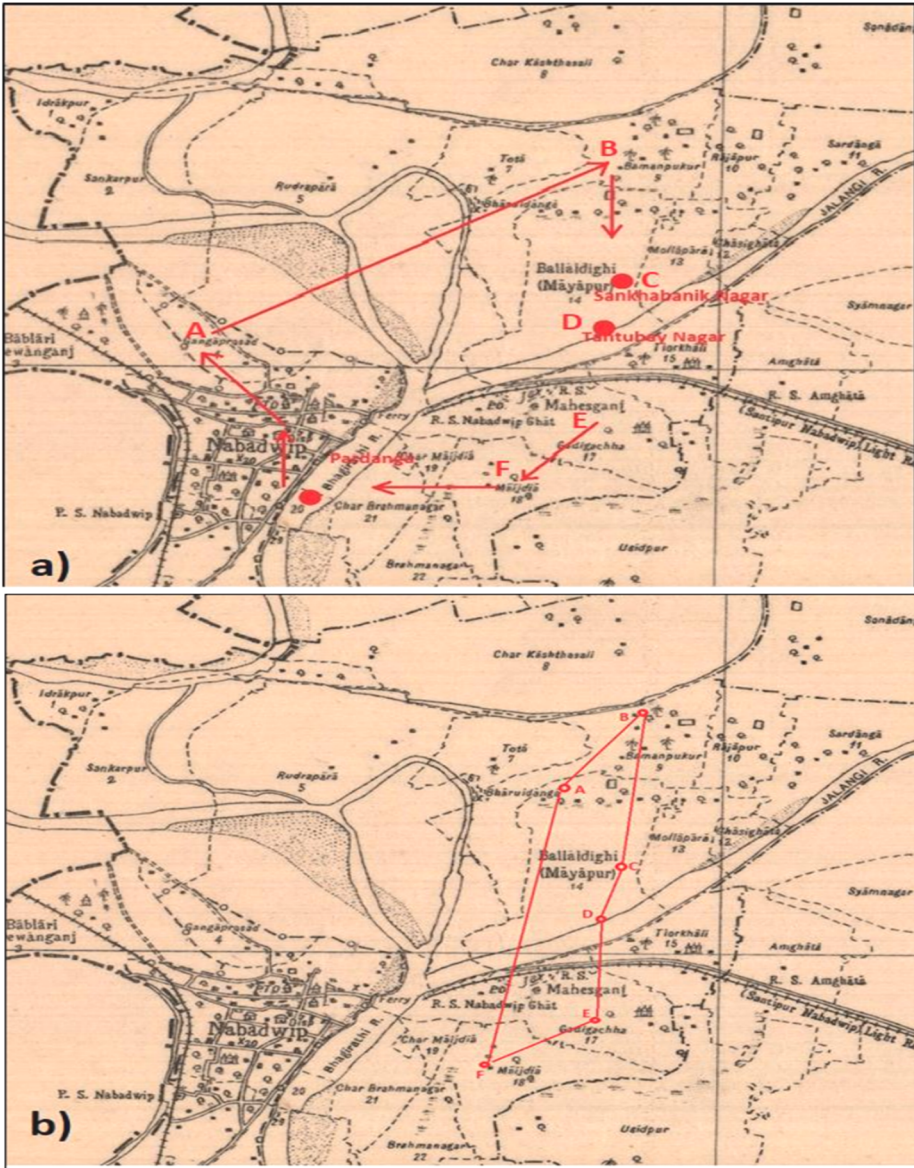


Fig. 2. Marching of Kazi's residence by Sri Chaitanya and his followers as narrated in Chaitanya Bhagbat. Alphabets A-F showing places He visited. A= Birthplace of Sri Chaitanya, B= Kazi's residence (Sri Chaitanyas own ghat, Madhai Ghat, Barkona Ghat, Nagoriya Ghat, and Ganganagar lies in between A and B) C= Conch seller village, D= Weavers village, E= Gadigachha, and F= Majida. (a). As is claimed by Nabadwip school and (b). As claimed by Mayapur school (path marked on Police Station Map of Nabadwip, surveyed in 1917-21 and published in 1931).

3.5.2. *Uddhab Das and the then geography of Nabadwip*

Resident of Brindavan, Uddhav Das was contemporary to Sri Chaitanya (Mukhopadhyay, Harekrishna 1934; Choudhury 2004). Uddhav Das in one of his Padābali, drawn the detail picture of paths taken by Sri Chaitanya and his followers on the day of marching Kazi's house. In a song, he described the path as follows (Figure 3).

এদিনেতে গৌরহরি কাজীরে দলন করি, নবদ্বীপে করিলা ভ্রমন।
 চারি ঘাট উত্তরিয়্যা গঙ্গানগর গ্রাম দিয়া পরে জলাশয় সুশোভন।।
 জলাশয় ঐশানেতে চাঁদকাজী করে স্থিতে সিমুলিয়া নাম সেই স্থান।
 কাজীরে দলন করি ভক্ত সঙ্গে গৌরহরি দক্ষিণ দিশা করিলা গমন।।
 সংকীর্তনে মত্ত হৈ শঙ্খ তন্তু পল্লী দুই মহানন্দে করিলা ভ্রমন।
 শ্রীধরের গৃহ হৈয়া গাদিগাছা মাজিদা দিয়া পশ্চিম দিশা পারাঙ্গা স্থান।।
 তাহার উত্তর দিয়া রাজ পন্ডিতের গৃহ হইয়া ভক্তগনে মহাসুখী করি।
 বায়ুকোনে কিছু দুরে গঙ্গার দক্ষিণ তীরে নিজ গৃহে গেলা গৌর হরি।।
 উত্তরেতে নিজ ঘাট তার পূর্বে মাধাইয়ের ঘাট নিকটেতে শ্রীবাস অঙ্গন।
 তাহার ঐশান্য কোনে বারকোনা ঘাটনামে পাহা হয় শুক্লাবরাশ্রম।।
 তার উত্তরে কিছু দুরে নাগরিয়্যা ঘাট বারে তার উত্তরে গঙ্গানগর গ্রাম।
 এ উদ্ধব মন্দমতি শোধিতে আপন মতি নগর ভ্রমন বিরচিল গাণ।।

Jēdīnētē Gaurhari Kāzīre dālāna kari
 Nabadwīpē karilā bhramana.
 Chāri ghāṭa utāriyā Gaṅgānagara grāma diyā
 pāre jalāsaiy susabhāna.
 Jalāsāya oissānētē Chānd Kāzī kare sṭhitē
 Simuliyā nāma sēyē sṭhāna.
 Kāzīrē dālāna karī bhakta sanē Gaurahari
 dakṣhiṇa ḍisā karilā gamana.
 Saṅkīrtanē matta hai saṅkhā tantu pallī duyō
 mahānandē karilā bramana.
 Śrīdharera griha haiā Gādigācha Mājīdā diyā
 pāsacima diśā Pāradaṅga sṭhāna.
 Tāhāra uttara diyā rāja paṇḍitera griha hyāya
 bhakta ganē mahāsukhī kari.

Bāyu kōnē kicu durē Gaṅgāra dakṣhiṇa ṭire
nijā grihē gēlā Gauṛa hari.
Uttarētē nijā ghāṭa tāra purbē Mādhāyēra ghāṭa
nikatētē Śrībāsa aṅgana.
Tāhāra anśan'yā kōnē barakōnā ghāṭa nāma
jāhā hai suklāmbaraśrama.
Tāra uttarē kichu durē nagariyā ghāṭabārē
tāra utaṭārē gaṅgānagara grāma.
E udadhaba mandaōmati śōdhitē āpana mati
nagara barmaṇa biracilā gaṇa.

[Meaning: The day on which Sri Chaitanya defeated Kazi and roamed Nabadwip, first passed by four ghats and then by Ganganagar village where was a beautiful water body. Kazi's residence Simulia was to the North-East of the tank. Defeating Kazi, Sri Chaitanya (Goura Hari) along with his followers, chanted and moved south by localities of traders of Shankha and Tantu. From there He went to Sridhar's house and moved towards Gadigacha and Majida. From there moved west to Pardanga. To the north, via the house of Pundits of King's courtyard, moved North-West to His own house and His followers were very much happy. To the north of His residence was own Ghat to the east of which was Madhai's ghat. Sribas's house was nearby and to the North-East of which was Barkona Ghat. Near this Ghat was the Ashrama of Suklambar. To the north of it was Nagariya Ghat and further north was the village Ganganagar. This bad-minded Uddahb composed the song of circumambulation of Nagaras for purifying his own mind].

This pada (song) indicates the house of Sri Chaitanya must be to the northern part of the present Nabadwip town. But there is ample scope for doubt about the authenticity and age of this script. First, the script of the song appears only in a few pieces of literature (Harekrishna Mukhopadhyay, 1934; Chaudhuri 2004) of recent times, long after the debate was raised. Second, its vivid description along with route directions to support Nabadwip as the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya attract doubts about its authenticity. However, search by the present author for the authenticity of the lyrics might have limitations.

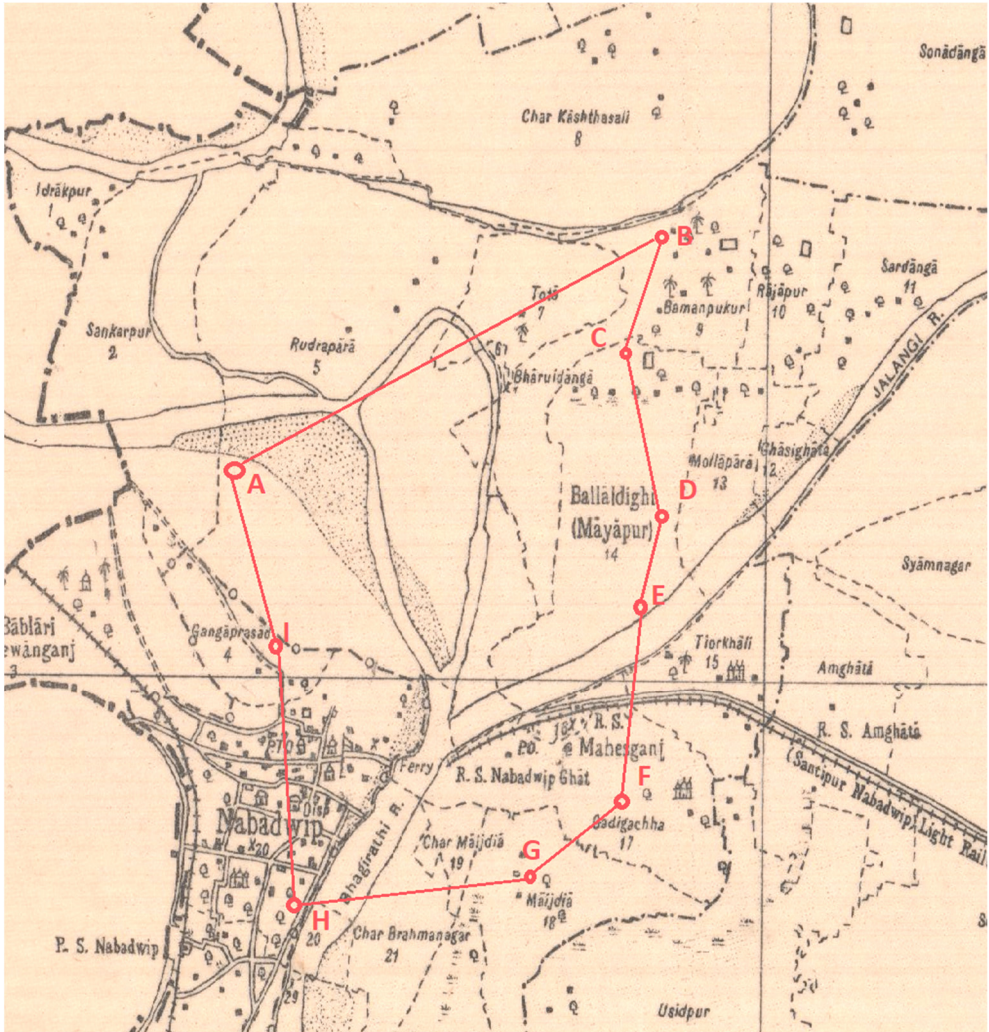


Fig. 3. Marching of Kazi's residence by Sri Chaitanya and his followers as narrated by Uddhab Das's Pada. A to I indicating Approx sites of A= Sri Chaitanya's Ghat, B= Kazi's residence, C= Large pond, D= Conch seller's village, E= Weavers village, F= Gadigacha, G= Majida, H= Pardanga, I= Sri Chaitanya's House (path marked on Police Station Map of Nabadwip, surveyed in 1917-21 and published in 1931).

4. Conclusion

Nabadwip/ Nadia/ Nadiya/ Nuddeah/ Noodeah is a place of age-old history and legacy. Although the geospatial and socio-economic-cultural setup of the town has changed significantly but never completely lost its inheritance to date. Channel avulsion and channel migration of river Bhagirathi and Jalangi have eaten away a part of the town especially from its north. Yet a part of the land of old Nabadwip has been there and the town has been continuing its cultural heritage as a centre of learning.

From the analysis of the available literature and documents, it is apparent that the name 'Mayapur' was projected on a rural Muslim village 'Miyapur' or 'Meyapur' during the last decade of the 19th century by Kedarnath Dutta. There was no association of glorious heritage or history with the place name Mayapur before the 20s of the 20th century. What Bhaktiratnākara wanted to mean by 'Mayapur' keeps opening the discourse. Whether it means a site within Nabadwip or an allegorical word to mean mundane hallucinated site for heavenly activities, is yet to be solved. The present study underscores the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration to uncover the truth behind historical claims and emphasizes the need for scientific methodologies of state-of-the-art dating techniques in collaboration with fluvial geomorphology, geology, botany and archaeology to complement traditional sources in resolving historical debates.

Although the exact site of the house of Sri Chaitanya is not yet pointed, yet it is beyond any question that Sri Chaitanya was born in Nabadwip. So, unless the exact site is discovered/ established by sufficient proof, none should doubt millions of devotees over the world showing possibly a fake place and saying false cock and bull stories. Rather, wherever the site is, the greater Nabadwip can go hand to hand for the truth.

After hagiographies is the era of geography recorded in maps with reliable scales and bearings. And I will discuss the next geographical history of the town based on those maps and records in Part-II as a continuation of this research.

5. Acknowledgement

Debabrata Das digitized all mouzas of six C.D.Blocks. Suresh Paul, Subrata Sarkar, and Poly Haldar made ground verification of different sites at and near Nabadwip. Dr. Aznarul Islam and Suman Deb Barman provided valuable suggestions for the enrichment of text and visualization. I express my deep gratitude to all.

REFERENCES

1. Acharya Singha, Madhab (1498). Mālatī-Mādhava Tika. (c.f. Bhattacharya, Dineschandra. 1951. P-100. <https://archive.org/details/dli.bengal.10689.19574/page/n13/mode/2up>
2. Allison, M.A., Khan, S.R., Goodbred Jr., S.L., & Kuehl, S.A. (2003). *Stratigraphic evolution of the late Holocene Ganges–Brahmaputra lower delta plain*. *Sedimentary Geology*, 155(3-4), 317-342. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0037-0738\(02\)00185-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0037-0738(02)00185-9)
3. Barlow R. and Yule H. (1682). *The Diary of William Hedges, Esq. (Afterwards Sir William Hedges) During his agency in Bengal; As Well As on His Voyage Out and Return Overland (1681-1687)*. Transcribed for the press, with introductory notes, etc. by R. Barlow. Esq. and Illustrated by Copious Extracts from Unpublished Records, etc. by Colonel Henry Yule, R.E., C.B., LL. D., President of the Hakluyt Society. Vol. I., London. P-133. <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.181650/page/n32/mode/1up>
4. Basu, Nagendranath (1898). *Biswakosh* (in Bengali). Vol. 9. P-633-640, Telipara, Shyampukur, Biswakosh Karjyalay, Kolkata; *Biswakosh*, Chapter-3, P-460. <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.289394/page/n639/mode/2up>
5. Basu, Satyendranath (1937). *Sri Gourangadever Janmasthan* (in Bengali). Sriguranga janmavhumi Nirnay Samiti, 18/1 Fakirchand Mitra Street, Kolkata.
6. Bhakti Purusottam Swami (2010). *Sri Nabadwip Parikrama*, Mayapur Media, Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International, P-258.
7. Bhaktivinad Thakur (2017). *SrinabadwipdhamMahatyam*, Mayapur Srichaitanya Math, P-1-84.
8. Bhattacharya, Dineshchandra (1951) *Bangalir Saraswata Abadan*. (in Bengali). Bangiya Sahitya Parishad. Kolkata-6. P-100. <https://archive.org/details/dli.bengal.10689.19574/page/n113/mode/2up>
9. Bhattasali, Nalini Kanta (1937). *Nadiyar Itihaser Kayekti Samasya*. Bharatvarsha Patrika, Chattopadhyay, Ramananda, ed. (1345). Baishakh Sankhya, P-48-56.
10. Bijayarāma Sēna Bisārada (1771). *Tirtha Mangal*. In Bengali. Kolkata. <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.298280/page/n55/mode/2up>
11. Blochmann H. (1875). *Geographical and Historical notes on the Burdwan and Presidency Divisions of Lower Bengal with Preliminary Remarks by District Officer of the 24 Parganas and Jessor*. P. 349 – 389. In Hunter W. W. (1875). *A Statistical Account of Bengal. Vol. II. District of Nadiya and Jessore*. Trubner & Co. London.
12. Bryant, Edwin; Ekstrand, Maria, eds. (2004). *The Hare Krishna Movement: The Postcharismatic Fate of a Religious Transplant*. NY: Columbia University Press. ISBN 0-231-12256-X.
13. Chakrabarty, Mukundaram (16th Century). *Kavikankan Chandi*, 2nd Edition, India Press Limited, Allahabad, Kolkata, 1921, <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.336804/page/n1/mode/1up>
14. Chakrabarty, Narahari (1760s/a). *Nabadwip Parikrama* (in Bengali). Ed. Nagendranath Basu (1909). Bangiya Sahitya Parisad Mandir, Kolkata. P-100. <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.477834/page/n3/mode/1up>

15. Chakrabarty, Narahari (1760s/b). *Bhaktiratnākara* (in Bengali). Edited by Sri Rasbihari Sankhyatirtha, Published by Sri Ramdev Mishra, 2nd Edition, Murshidabad, Baharampur. https://ia801604.us.archive.org/1/items/BhaktiRatnakar/bhakti_ratnakara_bengali.pdf
16. Chakrabarty, Rupram (17th Century). *Dharmamangal*, Vandana Pala, Chaitanya Vandana, <http://www.milansagar.com/kobi/dharmamangal/kobi-dharma.html>
17. Chaudhuri, Jajneswar (2004a). *Chaitanyadev O Samakalin Nabadwip*. In Bengali. Nabadwip Puratattva Parishad, Nabadwip.
18. Chaudhuri, Jajneswar (2004b). *Yugasrasta Srichaitanyadeva*. In Bengali. Nabadwip Puratattva Parishad, Nabadwip, P-8.
19. Chunder, Bholanath (1869). *The Travels of a Hindoo to Various Parts of Bengal and Upper India*, Vol. 1, London, N. Trubner & Co. 60 Patelnoster Row. P- 23-35. Visited Nabadwip on 20th February 1845.
20. Das, B.C. (2014). *Impact of In-Bed and On-Bank Soil Cutting by Brick Fields on Moribund Deltaic Rivers: A Study of Nadia River in West Bengal*, The NEHU Journal, Vol XII, No. 2, July - December 2014, pp. 101-111.
21. Das, Brindavan (1507-1589 CE). *Chaitanya Bhagavata*. <https://archive.org/details/ChaitanyaBhagavat/mode/2up>
22. Dasa, Churamani (17th Century). *Gaurānga Vijaya* (<http://gaurangabhakti.blogspot.com/2013/12/gauranga-vijaya-rare-book-by-chudamani.html>)
23. Dasa, Shukavak N. (1999). *Hindu Encounter with Modernity: Kedarnath Datta Bhaktivinoda, Vaiṣṇava Theologian* (revised, illustrated ed.), Los Angeles, CA: Sanskrit Religions Institute, ISBN 1-889756-30-X.
24. De, Aniket (2018). *Unforgetting Chaitanya: Vaisnavism and Culture of Devotion in Colonial Bengal*, South Asian History and Culture, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19472498.2018.1535556>
25. Dev, Shantiranjan (2004). *Kathamukh*. In Chaudhuri Jajneswar (2004), *Sri Chaitanyadeva O Samakalin Nabadwip*, Nabadwip Puratattva Parishad, Nabadwip, p-a.
26. Fuller, Jason Dale (2005). *Bhaktivinode Thakur and the transformation of religious authority among the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas in nineteenth-century Bengal* (PhD). University of Pennsylvania. UMI Microform 3179733.
27. Gaeffke, P. (1984). *Identity and division in cults and sects in South Asia*. In Proceedings of the South Asia Seminar (Vol. 1). Dept. of South Asia Regional Studies, University of Pennsylvania.
28. Garrett, J. H. E. (1910). *Bengal District Gazetteers Nadia 1910*.
29. Goswami, Krishnadas Kaviraj (1557). *Chaitanya Charitamrita. Kolkata* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krishnadasa_Kaviraja
30. Hopkins, Thomas J. (1984). In Utz, David A.; Gaeffke, Peter (eds.), *Identity and division in cults and sects in South Asia: Proceedings of the South Asia Seminar, 1*, Philadelphia, PA: Dept. of South Asia Regional Studies, University of Virginia, OCLC 15365193.
31. Hunter WW (1876). *Statistical Account of Bengal* (Vol. I).
32. Hunter WW, C.I.E., L.L.D. Director General of Statistics to The Government of India (1908a). *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*. Volume XVIII. *Moram to Nayagarh*. New Edition. Oxford at the Clarendon Press. P-73.

- <https://archive.org/details/TheImperialGazetteerOfIndia-Volume18/page/n285/mode/2up>
33. Hunter WW, C.I.E., L.L.D. Director General of Statistics to The Government of India (1908b). *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, DK Publishing House.
 34. Kapoor, O.B.L. (1977). *The Philosophy and Religion of Śrī Caitanya: The Philosophical Background of the Hare Krishna Movement*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal.
 35. Kavi Karnapura (1542). *Sri Caitanyacaritamrita Mahakavyam*.
https://archive.org/details/kcc_mahakavyam/page/n19/mode/2up
 36. Kavi Karnapura (1568). *Sri Caitanya-Candrodaya Act One*, Text-23.
https://ebooks.iskcondesiretree.com/pdf/Gaudiya_Books%20/Kavi_Karnapura/Kavi_Karnapura_Sri_Caitanya_Candrodaya.pdf
 37. Kavi Karnapura (1576). *Sri Gaura Ganodesa Dipika*.
https://krishnath.org/Library/Goswami-books/Kavi-Karnapura/Kavi_Karnapura_Sri_Gaura_Ganodesa_Dipika.pdf
 38. Kshitisha Bansabali Charitam. *A chronicle of the family of Raja Krishnachandra of Navadwipa*, Bengal, Berlin. 1852. pp-155.
 39. Lochana Das (1537). *Chaitanya Mangal*, Ed. Ramanarayan Vidyaratna (1299), Baharampur,
<https://archive.org/details/4990010051913ChaitanyaMangalSuttrakhanda/page/n8/mode/1up>
 40. Majumder, Satyendralal (1995). *Sri Chaitanya JanmasthanBitarka tar Truti o Samadhan* (in Bengali), Nabadwip, p-1-57, https://archive.org/details/sri-chaitanyas-birthplace-nabadwip-vs-mayapur-by-satyendralal-majumder_202004
 41. Mallik Kumud Nath (1911). *Nadia Kahini, Ranaghat*, In Bengali. P-241
 42. Minhaz Kazi (1260). Cited from Chaudhuri, Jajneswar (2004a). *Sri Chaitanyadev O Samakalin Nabadwip*, Nabadwip Puratattva Parishad, Nabadwip, P-
 43. Moreno H.W.B. (1918). *The Paikpara and Kandi Raj*. Calcutta, Printed and published by H.W.B. Moreno at the Central Press.
 44. Mukherjee N.P. (1984). *A Study for Sri Chaitanya's Birthplace*, Indian Journal of Landscape Systems. Vol. 7, No. 11, <https://gosai.com/writings/a-study-for-sri-chaitanyas-birthplace/>
 45. Mukhopadhyay, Harekrishna (1934). *Śrīcaitan'yēra samayēra nabadbīpēra sthitisthāna banāma miyāṃpura prasāṅga. Bhārataparṣa, 1341 baṅgābda*, Vol: 1. Issue: 3. *kārttika māsa*, P: 698-703
 46. Mukhopadhyay, Harekrishna (1934). *Śrīcaitan'yēra samayēra nabadbīpēra sthitisthāna banāma miyāṃpura prasāṅga. Bhārataparṣa, 1341 baṅgābda*, Vol: 1. Issue: 3. *kārttika māsa*, P: 698-703
 47. Murari Gupta (1513). *Srikrishna-Chaitanya-Charitamritam*, Sanskrita Pustak Bhandar, Kolkata, 2009. <https://archive.org/details/MurariGupataKadca/mode/1up>, (Prakram-1/Sarga-1/Couplet-1)
 48. Murari Gupta (1513). *Srikrishna-Chaitanya-Charitamritam*, Sanskrita Pustak Bhandar, kolkata, 2009. <https://archive.org/details/MurariGupataKadca/mode/1up/>
 49. Nakatani Tetsuya (2003). *A Sacred Place or Tourist Spot? Rediscovery of Sri Caitanya's Birth Place and the Development of Mayapur as a Mass Attraction Site*, Journal of the Japanese Association for South Asian Studies, 15, P-113-141.

50. Narottom Dasa (1566-?). *Bhajo Patita Uddharana Sri Gaura Hari*, <http://kksongs.org/songs/b/bhajopatitauddharana.html>
51. Pertsch W (1852). *Kshitish Vansavali Charitam*. Ed. & translated By Pertsch W (1852). Berlin. <https://archive.org/details/KshitishVamshavaliCharitam/page/n123/mode/2up>
52. Prabhupada, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami (1980). *Lord Chaitanya His Life & Teaching*, ISBN-978-93-83095-97-1, The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, P-1.
53. Prabodhananda Saraswati (16th century). *Chaitanya Chandramritam*, <http://www.harekrnsna.de/caitanya-candramrita.htm>
54. Rahri, Kantichandra (1891). *Nabadwip Mahima* (in Bengali, 1298).
55. Rarhi, Kantichandra (1894). *Nabadwip Tattva* (in Bengali). 1st Ed. Kolkata. P-24.
56. Ray, Bharat Chandra (1753). *Annadamangal*. Cf. Choudhury, J. (2004). *Sri Chaitanyadev O Samakalin Nabadwip*, in Bengali, P- 5-7.
57. Ray, Rajarshi Srijuta Sharadindunaryan (1982). *Chitre Nabadwip*, Mayapur Srichaitanya Math, 7th Edition, P-42.
58. Rennel M.J. (1788). https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/85/1776_Rennell_-_Dury_Wall_Map_of_Bihar_and_Bengal%2C_India_-_Geographicus_-_BaharBengal-dury-1776.jpg
59. Sarkar Jadunath (1932). In Mayacchanna Mayapur, Sukumar Majumder. Cf. Chaudhuty.2004
60. Sarkar Jadunath (1936). Unpublished article of Kanailal Ghosh. Cf. Chaudhuty.2004
61. Sen Biśārada Bijāyārāma (1770). *Tīrtha maṅgala*. Ed. Basu, Nagendranath (1915). *Baṅgiya Sahitya Parisad Mandir*. Kolkata.
62. Swami, Mahanidhi (1996). *Appreciating Navadvīpa Dhama*. New Delhi: no data on publish.
63. Tridandi Sri Bhakti Prajnan Yati Maharaj (1994). *Three Apostles of Gaudiya Vaishnava Movement*. 2nd edition. Madras: Sree Gaudiya Math.
64. Tridandiswami Srimadvaktivigyan Ashram Maharaj (2017). *Srichaitanya Lilamrita*, Mayapur Srichaitanya Math, P-1-103.
65. Van den Brouck (1666). https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Van_de_Brook%27s_map.jpg
66. Vidyaratna, Paramananda, (1976). *Shrila Bhaktivinoda Thakur* (in Bengali), Mayapura. Pp. 7-22.
67. West Macott, E.V. *The Territorial Aristocracy of Bengal*, Calcutta Review, Chapter VI, Pp. 6-7.

THE REFLEXIVE APPROACH TO TRUTH IN HUMAN GEOGRAPHY: LESSONS FROM PROFESSOR VIRGIL-ACHILES GÂRBACEA

Virgil-Achiles GÂRBACEA¹, Alexandru-Sabin NICULA^{1,2}

ABSTRACT. *The Reflexive Approach to Truth in Human Geography: Lessons from Professor Virgil-Achiles Gârbacea.* This paper presents an Interview with the renowned Professor Virgil-Achiles GÂRBACEA, one of the very few visionaries who have understood and embraced the new research paradigms recognized at the international level within the scientific spectrum of Geography. Designed within a matrix of semi-open collaboration, the research questions aimed to explore the professor's perspective on the nature, perception, and construction of truth and weaknesses within human geography and within the specific context of Romania. The professor emphasized the importance of a critical and reflexive approach to the concept of truth in the field of human geography. He highlighted that truth and its weaknesses in this context are influenced by multiple social, cultural, and political variables. Furthermore, the professor acknowledged that human geography is a constantly evolving discipline, and understanding truth in this field requires a dynamic perspective and adaptability to societal changes. We underscore that the issue of truth and its weaknesses in this field is complex and fluid, and comprehending it necessitates a critical, contextualized, and open approach to dialogue. Additionally, a reflexive approach to the social and political construction of truth within the specific context of Romania is essential.

Keywords: *truth, weakness, human geography, critical approach, knowledge, Romania.*

¹ Faculty of Geography, Babeş-Bolyai University from Cluj-Napoca, Romania

² Centre for Mountain Economy CE-MONT, "Costin C. Kirişescu" National Institute for Economic Research, Romanian Academy. Corresponding author: Al.-S. NICULA (sabin.nicula@ince.ro)



S.N.: *Dear Professor Gârbacea, I will begin by respectfully thanking you for the constructive academic discussions that we have had for more than a decade and that I feel honoured every time. They have, without a shadow of a doubt, contributed to the consolidation and development of the personal knowledge horizon, both in Geography's epistemological confine as well as in new research paradigms. Furthermore, I wish to share the excitement and fulfilment for the fact that you are a **Model Professor**, whose Informal Teachings have influenced me as well during the last decade. And I say informal because I did not have the honour of participating in your classes during my student years.*



*Professor Ph.D. Virgil-Achiles GÂRBACEA
Babeş-Bolyai University, Faculty of Geography*

V.G.: Thank you, Sabin, for the opportunity provided by this Interview. Our discussions are always constructive and focused on hot topics in the field of Human Geography, which makes me interested every time.

S.N.: *Can Geography provide pragmatic solutions for today's problems? Which are the strengths and weaknesses of Romanian Geography?*

V.G.: The old geographic school of teaching put a lot of emphasis on description, and the curriculum was almost exclusively focused on providing information necessary for teaching preuniversity classes. The curriculum no longer focuses on the preparation of didactic classes, with multiple directions, even *specializations*, as in Territorial Planning, Cartography, Geography of Tourism³ and Hydrology-Meteorology. Academia as well as research saw the increasing development of spatial modelling within GIS, thus considerably enriching the field through quantification, statistical analysis, remote sensing, application of dendrochronology in geomorphology, geographic risk and hazard assessment, environmental sustainability, territorial planning and organization, territorial resource assessment

³ The students from this specialization say they study Tourism, not Geography.

and management (demographic, habitat, touristic, etc.), experiments using cutting age technology and employment of the most modern methods in discovering absolute ages. Furthermore, several geographic research centres and publications were established.

Unfortunately, both geography faculties as well as preuniversity classes and professors still teach Regional Geography based on the existing continents: Europe, Asia, *America*, Africa, Australia, Oceania (only the small islands of the Pacific, and maybe including New Zealand) and Antarctica. In developed countries, the focus shifted to large global regions (for instance, North America – encompassing only Canada and United States of America, with Alaska included; Latin America and the Caribbean; North Africa and the Middle East; Sub-Saharan Africa; Oceania, including Australia). From this point of view as well, (Regional) Geography is several decades overdue. Geographic regions (“continents”, states) are taught mechanically and monographically, following a *rigid structure* containing geology, relief, climate, hydrography, vegetation, soils, fauna, population and settlements, economic geography. The structure is also present in school manuals (a sad example is the 6th grade manual which presents the countries of Europe in such a manner). Many decades have passed since the last edition of “Géographie universelle”, where territorial units were defined according to specific geographic features, where, among others, the climate and human geography characteristics could constitute the essential elements and were thus properly showcased. The curriculum of Geography (Ilovan *et al.*, 2019) contains too many classes tackling the Regional Geography of subunits or countries from every continent, including the Physical Geography of Romania, The Human Geography of Romania and the Regional Geography of Romania, which can lead to the proliferation of descriptiveness, especially when subdivisions are presented following a rigid scheme, which I have already mentioned, without emphasizing the relations between geographic components. In many states with strong geographic studies, this is almost unthinkable.

Most often, students read only the class notes. Many geography faculties fail to check the knowledge accumulated through other means (compulsory reading, a written course or optional bibliography). Taking into account the reality, we believe that long term education including preuniversity studies mostly takes place in a *formal framework*, especially when it comes to knowledge verification. Surprisingly, the Minister of Education announced on TV news that the results (simulation) of the National Assessment of March 2021 are more than encouraging (65.5% at the Romanian language and literature written examination, 59.97% in mathematics), emphasizing *student performance*. Not mentioned was that a third of the students had not attended the exam due to improper conditions, that the supervision (I wonder how effective it was?) had

been done by the same school's teachers (all directors aiming for the best results), that the audio-video equipment had not worked properly or had not even been used, and the tasks had been undemanding (at a Geography examination, the students had to name only four natural resources found in Russia). Furthermore, the final National Assessment and Baccalaureate examinations had deficient audio-video supervision (not even considering the fact that no one asked to review the footage). This explains how a student declared on TV, after the Baccalaureate, that: it was very easy as we had a very "smart" colleague who gave us all the answers. When it comes to final written papers, cheating is a generalized phenomenon, tolerated by teachers and directors. It is thus clear why we ranked last in Europe at the December 2019 PISA tests, with 44% functional illiteracy. This shows us that we are far from a proper human resource reform.

Another negative aspect is that some Geography faculties do not encourage the *individual work* of students, that is the assimilation of knowledge through other means than class notes. In reality, students *do not study*. We are light years away from what Mihail Eminescu said, that he is emboldened by an: "*unbounded desire, a thirst for study, a mind awakening*".

Another major problem is the manner in which *knowledge evaluation is conducted*. Examinations are mostly just a written paper (I do not refer to multiple-choice exams, which also have their own flaws). The task almost always involves a sub chapter or a part of course, the resolution being a *reproduction*, without any mention of relations among the elements. There must be synthetic subjects, where the student should make use of *select information*, which can be found in different chapters of that particular class, and then adapted to the proposed subject! The examination must test *cognitive levels*, not the ability to reproduce something.

The answer to whether Geography can provide pragmatic solutions to today's problems is at least a partial yes: through Geographic Information Science (G.I.S.), through natural risk and hazard analyses and their consequences, to the complex negative effects of climate change (coral reef contraction for instance), through planning, statistical methods, map applications, the map being an indispensable tool for the comprehension of current events (conflicts, political instability, the prediction of social and natural elements that influence pandemics), as well as through research on sustainable development, fragile rural environments, maintaining the authenticity of the Romanian village, territorial nanostructures.

Taking into account paleo-climatic data, such as the worldwide effects of glacial and inter- glacial periods, when ocean levels changed by tens of meters, leading among others to inversions that modified the extension of land masses. Taking into account global warming, which could, even with the slightest rise in sea

levels, flood considerable tracts of land (such as coastal plains, usually intensely populated and urbanized), lead to the impossibility of using current harbours, flooding beaches in all marine resorts, atoll disappearance, etc. *Geographic studies could shed a light on the territories affected by such phenomena.*

S.N.: *I remember that five years ago we had a discussion and you mentioned that you had never been active as Ph.D. coordinator within the Geographic Doctoral School, a fact that left me speechless, especially taking into account your scientific and academic work. Could you please state the reasons behind this decision?*

V.G.: I believe that, at this moment, there are too many professors at the Doctoral School of Geography. During my professional career, there were fewer (in Romania). I also believe I did not meet the necessary requirements, including suggesting themes poignant enough for the current and future directions of geography to doctoral candidates.

S.N.: *What does **Model Professor** in the field of Geography mean to you?*

V.G.: In any field it is adamant to have a *rich scientific research activity*, a large part of it aimed at the classes taught. Thusly, the content of the class will mostly correspond with the results from your own research. Each class should change its material every year such a thing is possible (and highly desirable). Some years could focus on certain aspects, while some years on others. Likewise, in some occasions, professors could introduce the newest international or even national trends, which also incurs an opening towards novelty, or their latest scientific breakthroughs. *I believe that scientific activity is the most important requirement for a faculty member.* It is also necessary to have a personal publication (a course) containing (in a proper volume) *the basic elements and aspects* of that class, later required for the exam. Add to the above mentioned a sufficiently high level of demand and the necessary pedagogic and communication skills, short of an actor even. The education one practices should be collaborative (this is why student relations and mutual respect are crucial). Finally, I would like to emphasize a correct usage of two methods, which at first seem at odds with each other: technology and traditional teaching.

S.N.: *Were you ever influenced by such Model Professors during your professional geographic formation? Please share some of your views and experiences during your bachelor and especially doctoral studies, where we all know Professor Tiberiu Morariu, considered by many to be one of the greatest Romanian geographers, was your scientific supervisor.*

V.G.: During my formative years (bachelor and Ph.D. studies, the start of my university career), my Model Professor was Gheorghe Pop, in terms of teaching as well scientific research. His classes were impeccable, and his scientific activity precise, superior to others, which put me on the path of rigorousness. Other professors include Valer Butură, who taught the Geography of Continents, and I tried to follow his example as best I could, especially when it came to teaching. I was also guided and influenced in my research by geographer Vintilă Mihăilescu, who I have personally met and had professional collaborations with (including field research). I studied his works with great interest and admired the results of his outstanding and prolonged scientific activity. When it comes to professor Tiberiu Morariu, *I choose not to associate myself with the admiration contained by the question*, despite the fact that some geographers, even exceptional ones such as Grigore Posea, expressed approval and commendation, evoking enduring memories from the time he had been his Ph.D. student. *He did not contribute, neither in content nor in theme and ideas, to many of the books and published scientific papers where he almost always appeared as first author.* I say this fully aware of the situation, from my own personal experience. When it comes to the class he had taught for tens of years (Geomorphology), one thing is certain: he never published it. Certain *essential aspects* regarding classes could have been explained by the colleagues from the University of Iași (unfortunately, Professor Constantin Martiniuc, who taught the aforementioned class, passed away).

From the first days of my Ph.D. studies, my coordinator (professor Tiberiu Morariu) told me that one of the fundamental research objectives was to define the enlarged Bistrița Valley as it exited the mountains and that I need to prove that this is in fact *an old valley of Moldavian Bistrița*, after going through catchment process. As further presented in a chapter of my thesis, the characteristics of the valley in that particular are marked by geomorphological erosion processes in the Sarmatian deposits, which are much more brittle than the eruptive ones in the mountain area, and then by the accumulation of alluviums in the most extended terraces. All this took place during the Quaternary, while the presumed catchment took place much earlier, thus disproving the idea. I do appreciate however the seriousness displayed by professor Tiberiu Morariu during my Ph.D. studies (thoroughness in preparing and conducting examinations).

S.N.: *Professor, our numerous meetings led me to reach the conclusion that you are an indisputable defender of the truth (analysed in a true ontological matrix) even though you have frequently dealt with issues and ideas that exceed the conceptual confines of Geography. I do wish that your ideas on such matters see the light of day as soon as possible.*

V.G.: This reinstatement of the truth, in Geography (Geomorphology, Regional Geography) as well as in many other fields, has always been *the endgame* in my activity. In my Ph.D. thesis⁴, I have argued convincingly enough, with the help of samples taken in the field (a mere example) that there is no geomorphological unit named Călimani Piedmont, despite it being put forward (declared) by one of the country's top tier geographers. I can also recall the disapproval of some inconsistent explanations regarding the process of river deepening which contributed to the creation of river terraces or the invalidation of published false claims on deep-seated landslides ("glimee" in Romanian), regarding their age or the processes that had created them.

Outside of geography, I have identified (and wrote in detail about) thousands of situations where the truth is actually very little known. Among them:

- Herodotus non-truncated views on the Thracians;
- the outcome of the battle of Călugăreni (including from the perspective of the definition of victory put forward by the illustrious Carl von Clausewitz), when the army led by Michael the Brave – made inclusively of mercenary forces – faced the advanced units of the Ottoman army, the fact that the Ottoman Empire *never actually wanted to conquer the Romanian voivodeships* (providers of taxes, bribes and many other enticements, a far superior advantage than a costly Ottoman administration), the chance of Walachia (and partially Moldavia) to have been located in Istanbul's sphere of influence, one of the world's main urban centres;
- the fact that in 1600 there was no drive for the unification of the Romanian states, the idea of a national state being born much later;
- the statue on top of Trajan's column and the reason why the column was never torn down;
- the psychology of the Romanian people (taking into account the publications of Dumitru Drăghicescu and Constantin Rădulescu-Motru);
- the place held by the "King" (Gheorghe Hagi) among the world's top football players;
- the colour of the Romanian flag and so on, things that only a handful of people know the actual truth. I will detail only two cases: *one religious* and another from the *world of sports*.

1. The religious case

There are more than two billion Christians (roughly a third of the world's population) that celebrate Christmas on 25th December. The birth of Jesus Christ

⁴ PhD thesis: Dealurile Bistriței. Studiu geomorfologic (The Bistrița Hills. Geomorphological study).

is one of the most important dates in Christianity. In fact, Jesus Christ, if he ever existed⁵, was not born on this date, neither the year, nor the month (the season), nor the day were in line with reality.

The season (month)

a) When Jesus Christ was born, the shepherds were in the field, tending to their flocks (Luke 2:7-8), if we believe the Gospels. In Judaea, the month of December was cold and damp, sometimes even with snowfall, as depicted in Pieter Brueghel's painting (1566) (paleo- climatic studies have determined that, 2000 years ago, the climate in the area was very much similar to that of today) and consequently the shepherds must have taken their animals to shelters during the night. It is highly unlikely for them to be in the field during the night, with their animals, in that time of year. Therefore, most sources agree that this event (the birth) did not take place in winter, between November and February (The Interpreter's One Volume Commentary states that the birth could not have occurred in December), but between March and October. According to *The Complex Book of American Holidays, volume Festivities*, the account of Luke "suggests Jesus was born in summer or early autumn" (Myers, 1972, p. 300).

⁵ There is *no historical proof* of the existence of a person named Jesus Christ. No historical record from that period mentions such a person making miracles or being crucified, dying, and resurrecting. The Gospels and the Bible are not historical documents. The Gospels were written by anonymous writers, long after the period in which Jesus Christ had supposedly lived. These writings are riddled with errors, contradictions, translation errors, rewrites, omissions. An American author, Michael B. Paulkovich, who analysed the writings of 126 historians from that particular period, found no clear evidence that would attest the existence of the Saviour (the Christian one, as there have been many saviours across the ages) (Daily Mail, 2014). Paulkovich concludes that Jesus Christ is a mythological figure. Flavius Josephus, the Roman-Jewish historian, who wrote the "Jewish Wars" in 95 CE, lived in Japhia, a mile away from Nazareth and had never heard of Jesus. History has countless information on other religion founders (Buddha, Luther, etc.). Broadening the scope, Stephen Hawking once said: "There is no God, I'm an atheist. Religion believes in miracles, but these are not compatible with science" (Villa-Vicencio, C., 2021, p. 15). Similar ideas come from Albert Einstein: "For me, the word *God* is nothing else but an expression and product of human weakness and the Bible" (Kleinknecht, 2019, p.152) (referring to the Old Testament, which comprises the Jewish religious doctrine). "For me, Judaism, like every other religion, is an expression of primitive superstitions" (Mainstream Weekly, 2022) wrote Einstein, from Princeton University, New Jersey, in a letter to philosopher Erik Gutkind, a year before his death (18 April 1955). It is time to say that there have never been any miracles, despite what the Church tries to prove. Taking the consideration, the percentage of people who do not believe in supernatural powers, in different countries (New Zealand 35%, Germany 40%, South Korea 40-50%, The Netherlands 42%, Czech Republic 59%, Norway 72%, Denmark 80%, Sweden 85%) (Der neue Fischer-Welt-Almanach, 2014, p. 238; Zuckerman, P. (2007, p. 56), it is clear that these are the most developed countries on the planet (with one exception, part of the Western world). It can be said that the mutual can be true as well.

b) When Joseph and Mary travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be registered, they had already been married and Mary was pregnant (Luke 2: 1-4). The distance between Nazareth and Jerusalem is roughly 105 km (65 miles), and Bethlehem is approximately 10 km (6.2 miles) south from Jerusalem. It would have taken them more than a week to cover that distance on foot. Romans did not hold censuses in winter, when temperatures were below freezing and the roads in poor condition, which would have made it difficult for anyone to travel. Jesus may have been born on 15th Tishri (the seventh Jewish month), on the first day of the Sukkot, which corresponds to the month of September.

c) The conjunction of Jupiter and Venus occurred on the 17th June. “The Star”, which suddenly appeared, became extremely bright, thus placing the phenomenon during summer and not winter.

d) According to Jewish tradition, Jesus was born on the holy day of Rosh Hashanah (Tom Ternah) in September (on 15th Tishri – the seventh Jewish month, the first day of the Sukkot).

The day

The date of 25th December is said to have been adopted around 350 AD as the celebration for Christmas, by Pope Julius I, for a smoother transition from the old polytheistic religions to Christianity. This was not very well received by the old Christians and the custom was temporarily abandoned, only to be reinstated in 400 AD. 25th December is never mentioned in the Bible as the day Christ was born or that such an event even took place in winter. Likewise, the word “Christmas” does not appear in the Gospels, unlike the word Passover/ Easter. Consequently, 25th December is not a representative date for Christianity or Jesus Christ. Christians admit that winter customs and traditions are linked to the pagan celebrations of Roman Saturnalia and Sol Invictus (from Mithraism). According to Biblical Archaeology Society (2022), the establishment of 25th December has been a compromise with paganism. It is however an example which backs the idea that tradition is not a precise criterion for establishing the truth. The year does not correspond because it is very well known that Herod the Great died four years before our age, that is before Jesus; if we presume that this event occurred at the end of Herod’s reign and life, it took place 5 or 6 years before the traditional Christian date (view of many specialists who connected the birth of the Saviour with Herod’s reign). Regarding the day He was “born”, Mithra was also born on 25th December (Mithraism being a pagan religion predating Christianity). But before Mithra, there was Horus, the son of virgin Isis (other virgins gave birth as well:

Buddha, who died 400 before our time, was born from the virgin Maya, on 25th December, Attis/Atys of Phrygia was born of the virgin Nana, on 25th December etc.). It is surprising how unimaginative religion creators were; there have always been miracle doers, people who have walked on water, cured deadly diseases, there have been Saviours, teaching people, preaching (Buddha at 12 years of age, after being baptized in water, Mithra feeding 500 people with one bread, there were crucifixions and resurrections after three days), Osiris, the protector of Ancient Egypt was also born on 25th December. Some claim that Krishna, a Hindu deity, was born on that date as well.

Dan Brown (2003) declared that Christianity has nothing genuine. It is said that there are almost 200 coincidences between the events in the life of Horus and the life of Jesus Christ. This day had a special significance for the ancient populations in the northern hemisphere, being connected with the winter solstice, as one of the moments after this astronomical phenomenon when the day was longer and sunlight more intense. Primitive people were scared when the Sun disappeared. Shamans, witch-doctors, priests invoked the gods and of course offered sacrifices, and “thus” the negative tendency subsided. *It was a rebirth of the Sun.* People have always venerated the Sun and solar deities: Egyptians, Babylonians, and Persians. The cult of the Sun can also be found in cultures from the southern hemisphere, for instance the Incas. The flag of Uruguay for example depicts the Sun.

2. The case from the world of sports

It is known that at the 1976 Olympic Games of Montreal, Nadia Comăneci received the first 10 in the *history of gymnastics*. “The first 10 in the history of gymnastics” (without further details) belongs to Romanian Nadia Comăneci. This achievement took place on 18th July 1976”. A newer report mentions that there have been 35 years since the first 10 in *gymnastics*. “On 18th July 1976, a 14-year girl astounded the world of sports with an unparalleled performance: a perfect 10”. In fact, the first 10 in history *was not actually the first one, the truth being somewhat different.* During the Canada – Romania gymnastics showdown, which took place in Kitchener in *February 1976* (won by Romania), *Nadia got six 10s.* The first one being at the vault. New York’s Madison Square Garden held a gymnastics tournament named “America Cup”, celebrating United States bicentennial. “Madison is on its feet, chanting. A few seconds ago, the contestant finished *the routine.* For the double vault, double screw, for the acrobatic cascade, for the “swan song”, for the Waterloo, for the Fred Astaire worthy stop frame” (Ioan Chirilă).

- *the electronic board reads 10.*
- date *29th March 1976* (more than three months before the Montreal Olympics)
- the gymnast: *Nadia Comăneci.*

And still, such facts are almost unknown. I would like to point out that everything in mentioned was the *truth*.

S.N.: *Which are the current greatest threats to Geography?*

V.G.: A worrisome situation is that geography is not perceived as a science the same way physics, biology and others are in some states. There are cases where the preuniversity education encompasses a reduced number of classes for this *discipline*, even associating history with geography and sciences. Some developed states do not even have geography faculties, while a series of geographic concepts are studied in other fields, such as Earth Sciences, Environmental Studies or even incorporated into other sciences or faculties (for example Geomorphology is included in geology as external dynamics). The geomorphological evolution of the Scubland territories, North-Western United States was done by a geologist; similar situations can be found in Italy and other countries.

Likewise, there is too strong a convergence between Population Geography and Social Sciences, between Economic Geography and Economic Sciences, between Urban Geography and Urbanism. Compared to our own Geography of Tourism, Economic Science faculties have a more refined course on tourism management, graduates having a “wider” opening in the work environment. In short, the greatest threat to this field of study is the *loss of identity*.

Geography is a not an encyclopaedia and the current descriptiveness must be avoided at all costs, as it is totally anachronistic. This includes *monographies* as well since they are over-represented among geographic papers. Romanian geography made a mistake by almost entirely separating itself from the environment when Romanian schools invented Environmental science as an independent field many years ago. This rarely takes place in the West. The environment is one of the central themes of geography.

In a way, geography risks becoming a theoretical science, and consequently lose the necessary depth for an applied science (including due to an exaggerated focus on regional geography, of land territories). However, as Dragoş Şimandan has already stated, I do not exclude a focus on Geographic Theory as *a consolidation program of metatheoretical research* with important positive effects on the future of geography. One of geography’s main problems is that of *unity*, as geographic fields are now over-fragmented, even though research largely tackles limited subjects.

S.N.: *What should decision makers (from universities and research-development) do to connect the internationally recognized geographic paradigms?*

V.G.: Research and innovation are the engines of development. It is expected that the Education system create *superior human resources* and a reform of this is needed. We must start at the basic level as previously said, from encouraging *the individual work* of students as well as *knowledge assessment*, to inspiring brilliant students and then stimulating the first years of their professional service, taking into account that young people such as Dragoş Şimandan, Raularian Rusu, Ciprian Corpade, Titus Man, Lucian Drăguţ, Florin Pendea, Sabin Nicula (some of them being former students of mine) have considerably contributed to geographic science and its development, including the requirements stated in this question. The aim, as previously stated, is to achieve an upsurge of individual work and a novel way of evaluating knowledge.

I truly believe, alongside Dragoş Şimandan, that one of the core problems of geography is that of *unity*. It is crucial to have a course on general geography. In the current situation of geographic fragmentation, a geographic theory as a *research programme* provides the basis for development and consequently should have a larger share of the curriculum. General geography must not be regarded as a mere introductory course at the start of one's geographic education, but as a development of the general theory of the terrestrial shell, a coordinator of the entire "tree" of geographic disciplines. Earth must be viewed globally, its fullness must be highlighted, and *zonality* must be treated as geography's most important concepts. A wider scope is needed as well, by creating mathematical, graphical, complex *methods*, that present the reality of the geographic content. Furthermore, *international relations must be continually cultivated*, including the development of interdisciplinary research projects with scientists from other countries (some centres such as Suceava, Timișoara or Bucharest already do that). The endowment of geography libraries with foreign books, including recent works on different branches of geography, is below the level registered in other fields of study.

S.N.: *Here is also a hot topic, increasingly circulated in the press: the new regionalization of Romania ...*

V.G.: In Romania, there is only one level of administrative-territorial organization from the level of communes, towns, and municipalities (LAU2) up to the national level, which is the counties (NUTS3). The new administrative-territorial organization is primarily motivated by financial reasons, as it would lead to a smaller budget for mayors' salaries and the entire administrative apparatus.

They aim to reduce the number of counties to lower the financial burden. It is claimed that NUTS 1 and NUTS 2 exist, although they do not have the same functionality as in other medium-sized or large countries in the EU. The proposed counties are not within the limits intended by the EU for NUTS 3 in terms of area and population, as they are much bigger. Without an official structure to govern the territories, it is necessary to have an administrative-territorial organization similar to the ones in medium-sized and large countries in the EU because that is the only way to organize activities within our country's territory effectively. I believe it is necessary for the organizational structure of the three NUTS levels to be as simple as possible, not burdening the budget, and granting more rights to the regions. Reducing centralization and granting increased rights to the main sub-regions would make sense in the future.

S.N.: *Thank you for your answers and I wish you good health and success in your research activities!*

S.N.: Sabin, it was a pleasure ... as always! Thank you, too, for the opportunity to make my research activities, which concern me constantly, even more popular.

REFERENCES

1. Biblical Archaeology Society, (2022), *Herod's Death, Jesus' Birth and a Lunar Eclipse*, available at: <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/jesus-historical-jesus/herods-death-jesus-birth-and-a-lunar-eclipse/>, (acc: 06. June 2023).
2. Brown, D. (2003), *The Da Vinci Code*, Doubleday.
3. Fischer Weltalmanach Redaktion (2014), *Der neue Fischer Weltalmanach*, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt.
4. Gârbacea, V.-A. (1956). *Dealurile Bistriței. Studiu geomorfologic (The Bistrița Hills. Geomorphological study)*, Faculty of Natural Sciences-Geography, Ph.D. thesis.
5. Ilovan, O., Dulamă, M. E., Nicula, Al.-S., Benedek, R., Păcurar, B., & Răcășan, B. (2019), *Assessment of the Regional and Human Geography Curricula at Babeș-Bolyai University*, In V. Chis, & I. Albulescu (Eds.), *Education, Reflection, Development – ERD 2018*, vol 63. *European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences* (pp. 339-348). Future Academy, available at: <https://www.europeanproceedings.com/article/10.15405/epsbs.2019.06.42>
6. Josephus, F. (2018). *The Jewish Wars: History of the Jewish War and Resistance against the Romans*, Simon & Brown House.
7. Kleinknecht, K., (2019), *Einstein and Heisenberg: The Controversy Over Quantum Physics*, Springer.

8. Mainstream (2022), *Albert Einstein on God, in his letter to Erik Gutkind (1954)*, vol. 60, no. (50-51), available at: <https://mainstreamweekly.net/article12625.html>, (acc: 06. June 2023).
9. Myers, R.J. (1972). *Celebrations: The Complete Book of American Holidays*, Doubleday & Company Books.
10. Oldale J. (2012). *Doktor Oldale geographisches Lexicon*, Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag.
11. Paulkovich, M. (2014), "*Jesus NEVER existed*": *Writer finds no mention of Christ in 126 historical texts and says he was a "mythical character"*, available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2776194/Jesus-never-existed-Writer-finds-no-mention-Christ-126-historical-texts-says-mythical-character.html>, (acc: 06. June 2023).
12. Villa-Vicencio, C., (2021), *Living between Science and Belief: The Modern Dilemma*, Wipf and Stock Publishers.
13. Zuckerman, P. (2007), *Atheism: Contemporary numbers and patterns*, in Martin, M. (ed.), *The Cambridge companion to atheism*, Cambridge University Press.

BOOK REVIEW

Stancu, Marcel, 2019, *Omnibus, tramvai, troleibuz: transportul public electric în Sibiu și în România*, 388 p., Editura Honterus, Sibiu



Simbolistica copertei volumului

În 2019 a văzut lumina tiparului în condiții tipografice de excepție, lucrarea ***Omnibus, tramvai, troleibuz: transportul public electric în Sibiu și în România***, Editura Honterus din Sibiu, sub semnătura inginerului Marcel Stancu, un subiect rarisim abordat în România, așa cum re-

marcă prefațatorul volumului, academici-anul Dorel Banabic: „În literatura română există puține cărți care să trateze istoria transporturilor și a mijloacelor de transport din România. Domnul inginer Marcel Stancu vine să umple un gol în acest domeniu...” (p. 1).

Născută dintr-o pasiune ardentă, de lungă durată, cartea domnului Marcel Stancu este un minunat exemplu de dublă dăruire: profesională, pe de o parte, și pentru locul natal: Sibiu și întreaga Țară Românească, pe de altă parte. Cercetările autorului s-au materializat în această minunată lucrare care impresionează atât prin studiul exhaustiv asupra evoluției transportului public electric în Sibiu și în România, cât și prin trimiterile punctuale numeroase și variate asupra a ceea ce a avut legătură cu acesta. În plus, o iconografie de excepție: imagini ale mijloacelor de transport, instalații tehnice, orașe și edificii emblematice, personalități, hârtii de valoare istorice (acțiuni), afișe, reclame, diverse înscrisuri, hărți și schițe, completează în mod fericit textul. Avem astfel în față un caleidoscop al apariției și evoluției transportului public electric, a personalităților publice și private și a varii instituții care și-au adus contribuția la acest fel de transport, dar și a unor evenimente care se



racordează cu acesta. Astfel, volumul este și un memento legat de această formă de transport public electric, creație a geniului uman, materializat în omnibuz – ca predecesor neelectric al acestuia, tramvai, troleibuz și autobuz electric, autorul subliniind în chip magistral contribuția sibiană și românească deopotrivă în domeniu.

Cartea abundă în informații, multe inedite, ca și multe din imaginile pe care autorul le-a descoperit în cercetările sale desfășurate de-a lungul timpului, urmare a neobositei sale munci de cercetare și de redactare, pe care acum, iată, le oferă în mod debordant, cu generozitate, publicului larg. Avem astfel în față un volum de excepție ca tematică, informații și iconografie.

Subiectul este de mare actualitate fiindcă, urmarea extinderii spațiilor urbanizate, a aglomerării populației în marile orașe, transportul public a devenit vital și obiect de studiu pentru găsirea celor mai optime forme pentru fluidizarea lui.

Structurată în trei părți cu XXII capitole, volumul are tot aparatul critic al unui volum științific: rezumat, tradus în mai multe limbi străine, indici: onomastic și toponimic, mulțumiri adresate unor varii instituții și personalități din țară și din străinătate (biblioteci, arhive, muzee ș.a.), care i-au pus la dispoziție date, informații și imagini legate de subiect (a căror surse sunt citate într-o lungă listă), recunoscătoare mărturisiri, interviuri realizate cu diverși specialiști și reprezentanți ai unor societăți de transport.

Bibliografia este punctuală, axată pe tematica abordată; ea cuprinde autori și titluri din literatura de specialitate românească și străină, cu precădere germană. La sfârșitul volumului, un corpus extins de „Anexe”: Lista rețelelor de transport public electric din România, inclusiv Basarabia!, Lista producătorilor de mijloace de

transport electric, Lista principalelor rețele de tramvai din lume, Lista abrevierilor, prin urmare tot instrumentarul unei lucrări de factură științifică.

Partea a I-a este dedicată „*Transportului public în lume*” din perspectivă istoricistă-evolutivă, începând de la transportul urban neelectric – omnibuzul, tramvaiul cu cai și apoi cel cu aburi, urmat de acela electric clasic – tramvaiul electric care a debutat în 1879 la Berlin, urmat la scurt timp de troleibuzul electric inventat de savantul și industriașul german Ernst Werner von Siemens, inaugurat în 1882 tot la Berlin, urmat de tramvaiul electric urban în 1883. Partea a I-a se încheie cu abordarea transportului urban electric neconvențional, cu informații aduse până la anul 2017.

Partea a II-a – „*Transportul public urban în România*” descrie apariția și evoluția acestuia în spațiul românesc, începând de la cel neelectric, inaugurat în 1860 la Lipova (Arad), respectiv tramvaiul cu cai, până la autobuzele electrice introduse în uzul transportului public românesc în 2018, la Cluj-Napoca. Spre final, partea a II-a cuprinde un interesant capitol (VI) referitor la fabricile de vehicule pentru acest gen de transport din spațiul geografic românesc, începând cu aceea a lui Johann Weitzer din 1891 de la Arad și încheind cu Electroputere VFU Pașcani (2013), precum și capitolul „*Muzee de transport public*”, în care, sunt prezentate Muzeul gloriei de muncă din Chișinău (ce limbă română stâlcită de ocupantul sovietic!) înființat în 1974 și ale muzeelor din Ghioroc (Arad, 2006), „Corneliu Mikloși” din Timișoara (2007) și al Regiei Autonome de Transport București (2011).

Un imens „arsenal” fotografic/imagistic este atent folosit în demonstrarea apariției și dezvoltării acestui gen de transport public, probând alinierea provinciilor

geografico-istorice românești și a României întregite la această evoluție similară cu a țărilor avansate, până la instaurarea comunismului și apoi, ruptura care ne-a decuplat de la această evoluție, care se vede cu ochiul liber: ingerința sovietică nefastă marcată prin așa-zisul „ajutor frățesc” de tip cominternist, modele vetuste, hidoase chiar, calitatea lor tehnică îndoielnică, supraaglomerarea mijloacelor de transport în comun, în sumă: o lume abrutizată... Auto-rul nu a omis să includă în această evoluție orașele noastre „pierdute”, Cernăuți și Chișinău, nădăjduim că doar vremelnic....

Un capitol interesant este dedicat fabricilor de vehicule pentru transportul urban electric, începând cu aceea a lui Johann Weitzer din Arad, precursora ASTRA, a Tramvaielor comunale din Timișoara și a Uzinei de Reparații Atelierele Centrale (URAC) din București, înființată în 1912, întreprinderi ulterior naționalizate de regimul comunist republican instaurat prin forță de URSS, în 1948. Sunt prezentate cititorului și alte întreprinderi de profil, printre care Fabrica Malaxa din Craiova, o subsidiară a celei din București, înființată de inginerul Nicolae Malaxa (1884-1965), – același care a înființat și dezvoltat una din perlele industriei românești interbelice, Uzina Malaxa din București, catalogată de industriașii lumii de atunci, ca una dintre cele mai moderne fabrici din lume! – naționalizată și devenită Electroputere Craiova din 1949.

Partea a III-a „*Transportul public electric în Sibiu*” (pp.145-335) este cel mai extins și, desigur, la fel de bine documentat și ilustrat ca și precedentele părți. Ne încântă deopotrivă textul succint care abundă în informații, însoțit de imagini sugestive: vederi vechi, edificii emblematice, personalități locale și străine, albume de familie – ale familiilor de lucrători din ateliere

și instituții, transportatori locali de marcă, hărți, grafice, hârtii de valoare istorice (acțiuni), instantanee din marile lucrări de infrastructură și de echipare a teritoriului, începuturile unor întreprinderi/firme, inclusiv simbolistica unor permise și bilete de transport local ante-, inter- și postbelice. Nu lipsesc o serie de „reconfortante” trimiteri care încântă și lămuresc cititorul, referitoare la: Pădurea, Hanul și Lacul Dumbrava, Octavian Goga și tramvaiul din Rășinari, Rășinării în audiență la Guvern ș.a. O impresie aparte face descrierea epopeii edificării tramvaiului spre Rășinari, cu tot ce a însemnat el: finanțare, dezbaterea asupra oportunității și utilității lui, construirea, festivitatea inaugurării, naționalizarea etc. Centru al Mărginimii Sibiului – areal geografic cu populație românească autentică, izvor nesecat de românism pur și ardent, legătura Sibiului cu Rășinari prin intermediul tramvaiului a preocupat elitele sibiene, ea fiind dată în folosință în anul 1948 pe traseul Sibiu-Hanul Dumbrava-Rășinari. Cu titlu personal, pot afirma că și eu am fost pe acest traseu într-una din după-amiezile unei zile de duminică de „învoire” din timpul efectuării stagiului militar la Sibiu (1978/1979), și am fost plăcut surprins de farmecul și pitorescul traseului, dar și de utilitatea lui, dat fiind faptul că în orașul meu natal, Brașov, nu întâlnisem un așa mijloc de transport public.

Epoca a fost surprinsă de autor nu fără o fină ironie, în capitole precum – „*Lozincile și realitatea*”; tramvaiul din Sibiu, ca și acela din Chișinău au fost „victimele” „*Îndreptarului Pamfilov*” (un personaj străin de plaiurile noastre), îndreptar aplicat transportului sibian în perioada stalinistă, descris în cap. XVI – „*Declinul, decăderea, speranțele, dezastrul și demolarea tramvaiului*” (pp. 265-280), cu imagini ale

dezafectării și extracției căii de rulare din cartierele „de Jos” și „de Sus” ale Sibiului.

Mai puțin reușită este afirmația din titlul capitolului „*Plăgile României interbelice*”, în care, „*pentru a descrie haosul politic intern în care, încet și sigur, se scufunda țara în perioada interbelică*” (p. 246), autorul aduce ca argument faptul că „*este suficient să spunem că, doar în deceniul 1928-1938, în România s-au succedat nu mai puțin de 25 de guverne!*” (*idem*). În această logică imperfectă, ce să zicem de „*haosul politic intern*” din Spania din acea vreme care a dus la un război civil? Dar la acela din Italia care, în 1922 a condus la instaurarea regimului dictatorial fascist? Dar Franța, zguduită de polarizarea dintre dreapta și stânga, cu consecințe majore asupra viitorului ei, respectiv a capitulării sale în iunie 1940 în fața invaziei naziste? Dacă ne racordă la aceste situații, parcă n-am stat chiar așa de rău, cu toată democrația noastră „șchioapă”, iar economia noastră duduia!

După 1945, odată cu înlăturarea de către URSS a guvernului democratic legal constituit al generalului Nicolae Rădescu, situația noastră internă a degenerat rapid și catastrofal, pe toate planurile... Revenind la Sibiu, nu chiar întâmplător Sigmund Dachler, director al Uzinei Electrice, și-a înaintat demisia, urmat fiind și de directorul tehnic, Karl Henrich, personalități de prim-rang ale orașului care au lucrat cu profesionalism, atașament și loialitate pentru orașul lor! De altfel, autorul însuși le prezintă parcursul profesional de excepție în slujba comunității, ca și al altora, de altfel!

Tocmai când își putea demonstra utilitatea în perioada crizelor petroliere succesive postbelice, „specialiștii” comuniști au desființat tramvaiul sibian, optând pentru troleibuz, introdus și la Mediaș, al doilea oraș industrial al județului. Astfel, apare

după „*perioada autobuzelor*” (1969-1983) în transportul comun sibian, aceea a troleibuzului, începând cu anul 1983 odată cu inaugurarea a două trasee de transport în comun cu troleibuzul în orașul de pe Cibin. Troleibuzul a rezistat și după anul 1989, în așa-zisul „*deceniul second-hand*” (p. 288), adică al cârpelilor de tot felul, al încercărilor eșuate de modernizare, acceptând finalmente tot felul de ajutoare, binevoitoare de altfel, care a durat până în 2009 când, la 14 noiembrie, s-a consemnat obștescul sfârșit al troleibuzului la Sibiu, cel din Mediaș rezistând până astăzi!

Din tramvaiul sibian, „*după dezafectările din anii 1966-1974, supraviețuise doar linia Cimitir-Hanul Dumbrava-Rășinari*” (p. 280), care a menținut în stand-by posibilitatea utilizării acestui mijloc de transport local specific Sibiului, identitar așa afirma eu, care a supraviețuit până în 2008-2011, autorul descriind prin citate sugestive din presa vremii „*agonia tramvaiului din Rășinari*” (p. 306-308), până la repornirea lui, survenită în anul 2018.

Ultimele două capitole, „*Transportul public electric din Sibiu: încotro?*” (pp. 312-316) și „*Cântecul tramvaiului de altădată*” (pp. 317-335) conțin idei, reflecții, propuneri privind acest mijloc de transport public pentru Sibiu, apelând la opiniile unor specialiști, precum ing. Jens Kielhorn sau propunând și alte mijloace: autobuzul electric, trenul urban electric. Sunt prezentate inițiative, precum aceea materializată în Muzeului industriilor din Sibiu, comparat cu muzeul similar din München; practicarea turismului feroviar la recomandarea unor inimoși inițiatori, precum Joachim Stübben; promovarea cunoașterii industrișilor locali și a realizărilor lor, precum Andreas Rieger; cunoașterea patrimoniului industrial sibian și acțiunea reușită de reconversie a acestuia, ș.a.

Ținând cont de faptul că tramvaiul electric din Sibiu era al doilea din Europa la momentul inaugurării lui în 1905, dar al șaptelea din România, cercetătorul concluzionează, pe deplin justificat: „*Tramvaiul – simbolul județului!*”! (p. 334).

Pasionatul inginer Marcel Stancu și-a materializat rodul cercetărilor amănunțite legate de transportul public în Sibiu și în România într-o frumoasă lucrare care face cinste oricărei biblioteci. Ea impresionează, pe lângă datele și informațiile strict legate de apariția și evoluția transportului public electric din spațiul geografic românesc, prin referirile multiple, uneori surprinzătoare și inedite, la variile conotații ale acestuia. Minunatul volum-album a fost scris cu determinarea specialistului dublat de pasiune pentru reliefaarea acestui interesant subiect, cartea fiind o pledoarie frumoasă și totodată o dovadă că România și oamenii ei nu vin din fum, că au un trecut minunat și din această perspectivă, cu realizări impresionante, unele chiar de pionierat în domeniu, care ne oferă sentimentul confortabil al apartenenței la o cultură

tehnică locală și națională de excepție, prestigioase. Pe lângă valențele informaționale, volumul impresionează și prin iconografia bogată, sugestivă și, de cele mai multe ori, inedită, care vine în completarea textului.

Recomand cu căldură acest minunat volum, care are o largă adresabilitate: în primul rând locuitorii Sibiului care, citindu-l, vor cunoaște evoluția mijloacelor de transport public electric în orașul lor, care îi conferă o identitate singulară în cuprinsul României, dezvoltându-le sentimentul apartenenței la un oraș cu vechi tradiții tehnice, cu un patrimoniu material și imaterial de excepție; volumul este util specialiștilor din varii domenii care se pot documenta citindu-l, ca urmare a bogăției de date și informații pe care le conține, inclusiv iconografice; finalmente, el este o carte de vizită care impresionează în mod plăcut pe cititorul de orice specialitate și de oriunde ar fi el, pe documentaristul avid de imagini, pe tinerii care iau cunoștință cu elemente ale identității noastre, deopotrivă.

Alexandru A. PĂCURAR

*Departamentul de Geografie Umană și Turism
Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca*

BOOK REVIEW

Radosav, Doru, 2022, *Transilvania are forma inimii: istorie și peisaj în spațiul transilvănean al secolului al XVIII: percepții, sensibilități, reprezentări* [La Transylvanie a la forme du cœur : histoire et paysage dans l'espace transylvain au XVIII^e siècle : perceptions, sensibilités, représentations], 399 p. + illustrations, éditions Școala Ardeleană, Cluj-Napoca.



Symbolisme de la couverture du volume

C'est aux éditions Școala Ardeleană qu'a vu le jour en 2022 cet ouvrage d'envergure qu'est *Transilvania are forma inimii: istorie și peisaj în spațiul transilvănean al secolului al XVIII: percepții, sensibilități,*

reprezentări [La Transylvanie a la forme d'un cœur : histoire et paysage dans l'espace transylvain au XVIII^e siècle : perceptions, sensibilités, représentations], signé par le professeur Doru Radosav.

Structuré en sept chapitres accompagnés d'une introduction, d'une bibliographie et d'illustrations, le volume continue la série que l'exégète Doru Radosav consacre à ce thème du paysage et de ses aspects fondamentaux envisagés dans une perspective historiciste en ce qui concerne la définition, les éléments constitutifs, la perception et l'interprétation, les classifications etc. En plus de ses mérites scientifiques, l'ouvrage a également la qualité d'être un manifeste d'amour sans bornes pour la Transylvanie, une déclaration qui ne se limite pas aux mots, mais, voilà, se matérialise par ce livre.

Originaire de la région du Banat, formé à l'École clujeoise d'histoire sous la direction de l'académicien Pompiliu Teodor, l'historien Doru Radosav est une figure triplement emblématique de la ville de Cluj : en tant que professeur à l'Université Babeș-Bolyai, il a ouvert de nouvelles voies de recherche ; en tant que directeur de la Bibliothèque universitaire pendant une longue période, il a mis les bases

du développement de cet établissement (numérisation des collections de périodiques, extension des locaux etc.) ; en tant que « membre de la cité », il est une présence active dans la vie culturelle et civique de la capitale transylvaine, avec un discours effervescent, riche en idées, et avec un appétit pour le débat hors du commun. Il faut dire aussi que ce fils du Banat aime et promeut passionnément l'espace culturel transylvain, confirmant ainsi le vieil adage populaire roumain qui dit que c'est l'homme qui donne de la valeur aux lieux !

Déroulées au fil de nombreuses années, ses études sur les paysages transylvains sont parvenues à un raffinement des idées supérieur. Elles rattachent la Transylvanie et son paysage à d'autres régions européennes, y compris du point de vue du discours et de la représentation. L'amour, exprimé dès le premier énoncé – *La Transylvanie a la forme du cœur* – est aussi le fruit d'une prédestination : le prénom de l'auteur, Doru, a son origine, d'après certains, dans le mot roumain « dor », qui signifie, selon le *Dictionnaire de la langue roumaine*, « un fort désir de revoir quelque chose qu'on chérit » – la Transylvanie, « de revenir à une activité préférée » – celle d'étudier les livres anciens et la phénoménologie qui comprend la notion de « paysage », « l'état d'âme de celui qui tend, aspire à quelque chose » – le cas échéant, à l'analyse à plusieurs niveaux des paysages transylvains jusqu'à épuiser leurs connotations et à les relier à l'Europe. D'autres sont d'avis que ce prénom vient du nom grec *Theodoros*, qui se traduit comme « don de Dieu ». Dans chacun des deux cas, la prédestination est plus qu'évidente et, si on met les deux ensemble, cette prédestination n'en est que plus évidente !

Dans son « Introduction », l'auteur met en contexte sa démarche consistant à décrire « le rapport homme-nature-paysage en tant que modèle de vie et de projection culturelle de la réinsertion de l'homme prémoderne et moderne dans le paradis perdu de la nature et du paysage » (p. 7). Ce faisant, il se concentre sur ce qu'il appelle « le sentiment de la nature chez l'homme du XVIII^e siècle » dans le riche espace physique et culturel de la Transylvanie dans une perspective physiographique aussi bien qu'ethnico-religieuse, avec leurs retombées respectives. L'auteur se penche aussi sur la manière dont ce binôme a été valorisé par l'historiographie, étant donné que le thème a été constamment abordé, avec des hauts et des bas inévitables, dictés par l'évolution de la pensée et des mentalités. L'interprétation de la nature et du paysage en historiographie – Doru Radosav en fait la démonstration impeccable par ses nombreux renvois à des auteurs et à des ouvrages de référence – est extrêmement complexe, en raison des manières dont les deux sont perçus et représentés ainsi que du paradigme contextuel, tous ces éléments se réunissant pour constituer le « moment » historique. On peut donc définir cette interprétation comme une « histoire du sensible » (Alain Corbin) dont la finalité est une « histoire de la connaissance de la nature » ! D'autres approches du rapport nature-paysage existent et sont identifiées par l'auteur, par exemple dans le thème « littéraire de la nature », le thème « frugifère », dû à la perception physiocrate sur la nature (p. 9) ; le thème « monographique », caractérisé par « la prééminence des orientations socio-économiques du paysage » (p. 10).

C'est au XVIII^e siècle que remontent « la première tentative de l'homme de se placer en harmonie avec la nature » (p. 11) ainsi que « la convergence entre la réalité de la nature et du paysage avec leur perception et leur représentation » (idem). Ignoré pendant un moment à cause des conflagrations qui ont ébranlé l'humanité, le sujet nature-paysage regagne, dans la deuxième moitié du XX^e siècle, l'attention des chercheurs, qui privilégient une perspective fonctionnelle-morphologique spécifique aux différentes ethnies. Ainsi, notre auteur avance l'idée de « l'identité ethnique du paysage » (p. 12), forgée par ces ethnies avec leurs manières de transformer et de représenter la nature. Devenu élément de la culture suite à la « cultivation » de la nature, le paysage « extrait sans arrêt ses sources de convergence et sa dynamique affine qui relie la nature à la culture » (p. 14).

Aborder le rapport entre la nature, l'homme, le paysage et l'histoire dans la Transylvanie du XVIII^e siècle implique, affirme l'exégète, « des sensibilités, des perceptions et des représentations » (p. 14). Il identifie plusieurs modalités d'analyse et de reconstitution, comme, par exemple, « le paysage-métaphore, d'inspiration biblique et religieuse ; le paysage-regard, présent au niveau des transpositions iconographiques et artistiques » ; « le paysage-nature, avec ses conditionnements géographiques [...] ; le paysage-mémoire [...] comme les figements toponymiques, cartographiques ; le paysage-utopie, dans le cas des jardins et des parcs aménagés » (p. 14).

Le « paysage-métaphore » est déchiffré grâce à la « clef » offerte au XV^e siècle, dans l'essai « De venustate mundi et pulchritudine Dei », par Dionisie Cartuzianul. Ce dernier y montre que « le monde

réel, physique, naturel et terrestre est plein de *venustas* (charme), tandis que la beauté (*pulchritudo*) n'appartient qu'à Dieu » (p. 15). La nature et le paysage sont envisagés dans la perspective ouverte par la pensée théologique de Thomas d'Aquin, de l'*integritas* (dans *Summa theologica*), « l'intégrité ou la perfection *proportio sive concordatio* (proportion ou concordance) et *claritas* (lumière) » ! (p. 17). Dans ce cadre conceptuel, l'auteur souligne « la métaphore des fleurs, des jardins et des vergers, utilisée pour rendre la sensibilité religieuse », avec toute la richesse symbolique correspondante, et il identifie ces éléments dans les écrits et les représentations des Transylvains Iacob Popa de Ludișor-Făgăraș en 1780, Rusalin Iancovici de Biniș (région de Caransebeș) en 1806, Radu Duma de Brașov en 1774, et d'autres, dont il cite des formules suggestives, extraites des notes fugaces, mais concentrées, qu'ils avaient faites en marge de livres et d'autres textes. Ces renvois sont la preuve que l'auteur connaît en profondeur le domaine du livre ancien, sa vieille et constante passion. « La métaphore de l'endroit de construction et du paysage urbain » et « la nature, le paysage coparticipatif et les vécus de l'homme » (pp. 27, 31) sont abordés dans le même registre. L'endroit de construction, par exemple, est vu dans une perspective qui tient de la géographie physique et symbolique ou charismatique, il est vu comme un lieu « consacré » (p. 28), qui « accumule tous les paysages de la rencontre avec le divin » (apud A. Manolescu), idée illustrée dans l'ouvrage par la description de l'endroit où est bâti le monastère Margina (dans le Banat). Pour l'espace urbain, l'auteur utilise un exemple tiré de *Istoria Troadei* [Histoire de Troie] de 1817 et renvoie ainsi à l'image de la ville dans les

livres populaires roumains. Il parle aussi du paysage urbain du XVIII^e siècle, où « l'homme de sentiment » (p. 31) commence à établir des liens entre ses vécus et la perception lyrique du paysage. Les exemples sont tirés de la chronique *Plângerea Sfintei Mănăstiri a Silvaşului din Eparhia Haţegului, din Prislop* [Plainte du saint monastère de Silvaş, éparchie du Haţeg, à Prislop] de 1762, texté signé par Nicolae Popovici-Horga (1801), ainsi que des « entrées impériales des membres de la maison de Habsbourg en Transylvanie et dans le Banat », avec ces « apparitions » de l'empereur. Ce sujet a été traité *in extenso* dans *Arătarea Împăratului: intrări imperiale în Transilvania şi Banat (sec. XVIII-XIX). Discurs şi reprezentare* [L'Apparition de l'Empereur : entrées impériales en Transylvanie et dans le Banat (XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles). Discours et représentation] (2002, éditions Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca), volume qui prouve la préoccupation constante et profonde du professeur Doru Radosav pour la conceptualisation du message, sa mise dans un contexte territorial et historique. De nombreuses illustrations suggestives sont fournies et accompagnées de nuances divers, tel « le vécu hédonique de la nature », décrit dans un texte transylvain remontant à 1741.

L'auteur identifie le « paysage-regard » tout d'abord dans les transcriptions visuelles du paysage « réel ou fictionnel » trouvées dans des écrits transylvains du XVIII^e, mais aussi dans le paysage proprement dit observé depuis le porche de la maison ou depuis un point d'observation panoramique – le « paysage-panorama ». Élément complémentaire du « discours iconique », la transcription visuelle du paysage réel ou fictionnel, dépendante de l'état spirituel, émotionnel, ainsi que du vécu individuel

de celui qui regarde, assure « le passage du paysage-métaphore au paysage-regard » (p. 41). L'auteur constate que « le regard en tant que visualisation du paysage devient échappée » ! Le paysage acquiert des connotations / des significations variées : le concept de paysage, le paysage comme espace, comme finitude ouverte et comme espace extérieur (p. 41). Celles-ci sont merveilleusement rendues par « la série de gravures et de graveurs du XVIII^e siècle » de l'Imprimerie de Blaj, « représentative du point de vue de la culture roumaine transylvaine » (p. 42) avec toutes ses composantes – christiques, hagiographiques et anecdotiques – que l'auteur a identifiées chez Petru Papavici, Sandu Tipograf, Andrei Zugrav ou Petru Tekeld, imprimeurs ou peintres artistes, aussi bien que dans des écrits qu'il commente succinctement et met en lien avec ceux d'autres auteurs européens, une démarche qu'il appelle « une mise en espace et une mise en paysage [...] liées à la 'phénoménologie' de l'être-dans-le-monde » (p. 49).

Pour l'espace culturel roumain, l'auteur utilise la formule si suggestive et compréhensive « le porche et la 'belle perspective' » (p. 51), qui met en valeur deux éléments de l'architecture locale : le porche de la maison paysanne et le porche de l'église en tant qu'espaces « libéralisés », ouverts au monde et, en même temps, au regard. De nombreux autres exemples sont évoqués : belvédères, kiosques, édifices de culte et édifices princiers situés sur les domaines des familles Bánffy, Teleky, Brukenthal. Certaines de ces constructions sont inspirées de bâtiments des Principautés roumaines, conséquence des relations et des mentalités communes aux populations vivant des deux côtés des Carpates, de la « nouvelle

sensibilité » qu’avaient acquise les élites au XVIII^e siècle et qui s’était concrétisée dans des « maisons pour regarder ». Les exemples cités sont des édifices et des scènes peintes typiques des différentes confessions transylvaines : les églises de Rozavlea et Ieud, les monastères Prislop, Toplița et d’autres encore, où les scènes peintes « mettent en valeur les modalités iconographiques du paysage-regard » et transmettent « une sensibilité tonique, optimiste, de l’homme du XVIII^e par rapport au monde et à la nature », car le paysage où se déroule sa vie est « métamorphique » (p. 59).

Le courant, l’idée de « paysage-panorama » apparaît au XVIII^e siècle, qui confère « à la peinture baroque de Transylvanie une sensibilité débordante pour le paysage » (idem). Ce dernier est rattaché au portrait, tel celui du juge royal Lucas Hirscher réalisé par Gregorius de Brașov, ou ceux d’Adám Batthyány, d’Alexander Jablonski ou d’Ioan Haller. Plusieurs types de paysages y sont représentés : le « paysage-méditation », comme dans les portraits de saints (Adalbert, Gérard, François Xavier) et de saintes (Élisabeth, Marguerite) ou dans les fresques des monastères Arbore et Voroneț ; le « paysage-affabulation » des peintures de Ștefan Tenețchi ; le « paysage-métonymique » ou le « paysage-biographique » ; le « paysage-topographique » de la fin du XVIII^e, qui consacre la « série de *vedute* », comme celles du château de Criș et du château Wesselényi de Jibou, celles du Tchèque Franz Wrabetz au château de Uioara et la collection *Vues exceptionnelles de la Principauté de Transylvanie* du peintre Franz J. Neuhäuser.

Le processus de la « transcription scalaire » de l’échelle 1 : 1000 à l’échelle 1 : 100000 a mené inévitablement, affirme l’auteur, au « paysage-panorama »,

qui réunit « deux métaspatialités », urbaine et paysagère, fréquentes dans les illustrations qui reproduisent la physionomie de plusieurs villes transylvaines, comme Sibiu, Cluj et Târgu Mureș, au XVIII^e siècle. Et l’auteur de conclure : « Le paysage-regard ouvre le monde du XVIII^e, lui propose un horizon, une direction, un temps moderne, où ‘l’horizon d’attente’ devient de plus en plus important par rapport à ‘l’espace de l’expérience’ ; c’est un temps du progrès encourageant, d’un avenir ouvert, où *‘progressus est in infinitum perfectionis’*, pour reprendre la formule de Leibniz, est retemporalisé, devenant un avenir ouvert » (p. 74). La retemporalisation de l’avenir « ouvert et encourageant, progressiste et prospère » voit la nature comme « favorable, frugifère, hédonique et amicale », le paysage-regard étant « l’expression d’un tel temps et d’une telle perception et vision sur le monde naturel » (idem).

Le « paysage-nature » présenté et analysé dans le Chapitre III, le plus étendu (pp. 75-238), est révélateur de l’effervescence des idées composant l’architecture du débat. Dès le début, l’historien situe le sujet dans un contexte théorique et méthodologique, le rattache à des idées, à des principes, à des énoncés, au rapport entre la géographie et la géographicit , à des analyses et à des modèles de prestigieux auteurs roumains et étrangers : Alexandru Zub, Ciprian Mihali, Alexandru Duțu, François Dosse, Christian Delacroix, Patrick Garcia, François Hartog, Philippe Poirrier, Jean-Marc Besse, Crane Brinton, Gianbattista Vico et d’autres. Doru Radosav a une approche exhaustive de l’idée de paysage, avec ses significations et ses connotations, celui-ci étant l’élément « qui structure les perceptions et les représentations de la nature,

de même que leur déroulement historique » (p. 81). Il décrit également l'émergence de la notion de « paysage » au XVIII^e à partir du baroque et jusqu'aux Lumières ou de la *Staatenskunde* à la nouvelle *Naturgeschichte*. À travers les sources retenues – cette fois, des auteurs allemands : Samuel von Pufendorf, Christoph Cellarius, Rheinart Koselleck –, il fait une incursion dans l'évolution de ce concept en tant que repère physique, quantitatif et qualitatif. J'avoue avoir été épaté par cette analyse épistémique exhaustive. L'auteur prend en compte les valences géographiques évolutives « de la construction, de l'aménagement et de la représentation de l'espace » (p. 96), y compris en Transylvanie, région à laquelle il réserve, naturellement, une place de prédilection, plus exactement le sous-chapitre « Transilvania: o țară peisaj » [La Transylvanie : un pays-paysage] (pp. 110-176), où il présente et caractérise brièvement des auteurs et des ouvrages. En plus d'offrir un grand plaisir et un réconfort intellectuel, la lecture de ces pages donne la mesure de la formidable érudition de l'auteur, unique, j'oserais dire, en Roumanie. Doué d'un énorme savoir, Doru Radosav ne se limite pas à présenter la Transylvanie comme un « pays de paysage », mais approfondit l'analyse comparative dans le sous-chapitre III.5, « Configurații peisagere comparative: Transilvania, Ungaria, Slavonia, Croația, Dalmația, Galiția și Lodomeria » [Configurations paysagère comparées : la Transylvanie, la Hongrie, la Slavonie, la Croatie, la Dalmatie, la Galicie et la Lodomerie], qui prouve, si besoin était encore, la connaissance exhaustive du phénomène dans l'espace géographique environnant et, surtout, le rattachement de la Transylvanie à ce dernier. Bien sûr, cette merveilleuse

effervescence d'idées se succédant rapidement est accompagnée par un foisonnement de renvois bibliographiques et de citations remarquables.

Le dernier sous-chapitre, III.7 – „Dacia și dacismul – vârste istorice ale peisajului transilvănean” [La Dacie et le dacisme – âges historiques du paysage transylvain] démontre, j'oserais affirmer, de manière apothéotique l'identité irréfutable de cette province géographico-historique roumaine que Marina Lupaș-Vlasiu (*Aspecte din istoria Transilvaniei* [Aspects de l'histoire de la Transylvanie], 1945, p. 11) appelait « le cœur de la terre roumaine » et « noyau », au sens de région « pivot » de la Roumanie. L'exégète Doru Radosav prépare le terrain de cette démonstration en s'arrêtant sur les éléments « lieu, paysage, identité » du « paysage patrimonialisé, particularisé, idéologisé » qu'assument certaines collectivités humaines européennes, qui ont donné naissance à des mythes paysagers et à des profils identitaires dans la construction de leur identité nationale. L'auteur montre, par exemple, que « la patrie, dans sa qualité d'*alma mater*, est personnifiée en une série de personnages féminin : Britannia (pour l'Angleterre), Marianne (pour la France), Svea (pour la Suède) » (p. 189) et, j'ajouterais, *Ileana* (pour la Roumanie), tout comme elle se cristallise en une série de régions identitaires ou matrices, dont le paysage « est idéal en tant que paysage culturel ». C'est le cas de l'Île-de-France, de la Castille, du Rhin et, pourquoi pas, de la Munténie pour la Roumanie, où c'est Bucarest qui a reçu le rôle d'unificateur, de leader, un rôle que synthétise si bien le poète Adrian Maniu (« Muntenia » [Munténie], dans *Cartea Țării* [Le Livre du Pays], 1934, p. 57). C'est

autour de ces provinces-matrices que « se structurent la nationalité et l'identité statale » (p. 195). C'est ainsi que naît le « paysage-patrimoine » ! Pour la province géographico-historique identitaire roumaine qu'est la Transylvanie, le « paysage-patrimoine » est mentionné comme exemple relié à la *Dacie*, et, dans le discours, il est relié au *dacisme*, concepts auxquels l'exégète Doru Radosav consacre une ample description (pp. 201-238). Leurs « âges historiques » donnent sa note identitaire *sine qua non* à la Transylvanie, cette « province-pivot » ou ce « noyau dur » de l'espace roumain allant de la Tisza jusqu'au Dniestr, des Carpates boisées jusqu'au Danube et à la mer Noire.

La Transylvanie – « *Dacia Septi Collis* » (p. 234), la Dacie des sept collines – est entourée de montagnes – „*corona montium cingitur*” (Iordanes, *Getica*) – et, « dans une géographie symbolique, élaborée de manière livresque », affirme le professeur Radosav, elle se caractérise « par des stabilisations septénaires, visant le *paysage naturel* (les montagnes), le *paysage historique* (les sept ducs) et *l'habitat* (les sept cités) » (p. 238), qui « donnent toutes un sens au lieu » en associant « des éléments mythologiques, réels, symboliques, géographiques » (idem), autant de composantes de « son cadre permanent, identitaire » !

Dans le Chapitre IV – « *Peisajul metamorfic* » [Le Paysage métamorphique] –, l'auteur démontre que « la littérature du XVIII^e siècle consacre définitivement le paradigme de la symbolique septénaire du paysage transylvain » (p. 239) par des textes qui « convergent vers le paysage métamorphique d'inspiration ovidienne ». C'est un paysage symbolique pour la Transylvanie, l'expression d'une profonde « continuité culturelle » depuis

Ovide jusqu'à nos jours. L'auteur met l'accent sur l'Humanisme, la Renaissance ainsi que sur les Lumières du XVIII^e siècle. L'auteur nous présente ici des écrivains et leurs ouvrages, dont des citations suggestives sont retenues pour certifier la construction de l'image du paysage métamorphique identitaire transylvain sous le signe du chiffre 7 !

Le Chapitre V – « *Peisajul patrimoniului* » [Le Paysage-patrimoine] – est l'occasion pour l'auteur d'aborder « les figures paysagères des nations » et de situer la Transylvanie, avec ses paysages typiques, en rapport avec d'autres territoires. Plusieurs éléments de comparaison sont à l'œuvre : l'aspect spatio-culturel ; la forme – *La Transylvanie a la forme du cœur* – et son symbolisme commenté de manière pertinente ; la représentation cartographique – le « pouvoir des cartes », caractéristique convaincante, avec des renvois intéressants et surprenants, qui prouvent que l'auteur a consulté de nombreuses cartes et qu'il les aime ; « l'invention du paysage », là où les éléments de ce dernier sont déficitaires (la montagne, la plaine, le fleuve), avec des exemples suggestifs pour le contexte de la région étudiée. Ces illustrations dénotent une connaissance vaste et profonde de la géographie transylvaine. Par exemple, l'auteur écrit au sujet de la plaine : « La plaine de Transylvanie était une région pauvre en eaux et qui a été déboisée aux XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles à causes des tendances envahissantes de l'agriculture extensive, ce qui fait que, en ce qui concerne l'économie et le rapport de l'homme avec l'environnement naturel, la région était sous le signe de dégradations continues. À partir d'une telle réalité, des rapports pernicieux homme-nature, la cour de Vienne décide de la nécessité

de boisement et d'un nouveau régime sylvicole. » (p. 301). Enfin, la guerre des Kouroutz ou la révolte de François II Rákóczi, qui a passé par le feu la Transylvanie de 1703 à 1711, est l'occasion pour Doru Radosav de mettre en relief le « paysage intérieur », celui que percevaient les Kouroutz, et un « paysage extérieur », celui perçu du dehors par les soldats fidèles à l'empereur. Les deux sont décrits brièvement et étayés de citations illustratives.

Le « paysage physiocratique » (Chapitre VI), composante du discours paysager de la société « ordonnée et cultivée », apparaît au XVIII^e siècle. Au centre de la vie économique, il place la terre et l'agriculture. En conséquence, on donne une « visibilité maximale » au sol, au sous-sol et au paysage cultivé et ordonné, c'est-à-dire physiocratique, ce qui a des retombées dans tous les secteurs de la vie, notamment dans celui de l'éducation et de « l'ordre naturel », dont les doctrines physiocratiques appartiennent à des théoriciens parmi lesquels Honoré-Gabriel, comte de Mirabeau, Nicolas Baudouin, Carl Friedrich von Baden, Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours, François Quesnay. Ceux-ci prêchent « le retour à la nature, à l'agriculture, le seul domaine qui pouvait engendrer le progrès et le bien-être », et aux richesses minérales du sous-sol. Ils militent pour l'éducation de la classe paysanne, l'amélioration des transports, le tout sous le signe d'une « idéologie de l'ordre » (p. 314), ce qui a les effets les plus variés, par exemple, le fait de privilégier la structure régulière et rectangulaire des localités plutôt que celle radioconcentrique dont « le centre était l'église et la place centrale » (p. 314). Ainsi, de manière tout à fait surprenante, analyse et exemples à l'appui, l'auteur identifie en rapport avec le courant

d'idées promu par l'administration viennoise : une *altissima spectatio*, représentée par le « paysage thérésien » et le « paysage joséphien », dans lesquels se sont concrétisées les interventions des deux monarques agissant depuis la « hauteur du pouvoir » ; le « paysage économique », résultat du regard d'« en bas », conséquence de la mise en œuvre du projet d'organisation en zones fiscales en fonction du profil économique local, un projet de détail et de précision ; le « paysage silvestre », après la reconsidération de l'attitude envers la forêt, qui devient *silva prohibita* et dont la mise en valeur se fait rationnelle ; enfin, le « paysage minéralogique », la troisième composante du paysage, à côté de celles agraire et silvestre, une trinité qui constitue le paysage de type physiocratique. La Transylvanie a été bénie : on lui a fait don de ce « paysage minéralogique », dont elle a pris connaissance grâce au Jésuite Johann Fridwaldszky. Dans son ouvrage *Mineralogia Magni Principatus Transilvaniae* de 1767, ce dernier montre que « Dieu a généreusement octroyé à la Transylvanie des 'utilités publiques', des richesses, l'espoir de tous les pays » ! (p. 333). Cette époque est favorable à la constitution de collections minéralogiques, de collections de curiosités et de musées de toutes sortes. La Transylvanie s'est parfaitement intégrée dans ce courant européen d'idées et d'actions, comme l'indiquent les nombreux exemples de l'auteur. C'est la période où émerge aussi une « littérature physiocratique », que l'exégète Doru Radosav analyse par « thèmes et applications », qu'il illustre abondamment à travers des exemples européens et, bien sûr, transylvains. Ce faisant, il démontre, de façon subliminale, que la Transylvanie fait figure honorable de ce point de vue.

Le Chapitre VII – « Peisajul-utopie, peisajul-memorie » [Le paysage-utopie, le paysage-mémoire] –, le dernier, est, pour l'auteur, une occasion de faire des exercices d'analyse ainsi que de construire, à l'aide des éléments de « l'imaginaire jardinier », « le paysage-utopie » ou le jardin comme espace idéal pour « rencontrer la diversité et l'immensité » du monde végétal (p. 352), espace matérialisé dans les jardins et les parcs. Ces jardins « utopiques » sont, considère l'auteur, des lieux de mémoire, car, véritables « jardins historiques », ils sont l'expression de l'art mnémotechnique qui consiste à inscrire le temps dans l'espace, pour reprendre les termes de Jean-Marc Besse, et amènent au premier plan des penseurs-auteurs, des paysagistes et des jardins célèbres avec leur symbolisme compliqué et ingénu. J'oserais renvoyer à la perception et au rôle du jardin dans l'apaisement du moi de Dinu Pillat – « Dans les jardins aussi, poussent d'innombrables mondes » – à « l'aspiration de Dinu Pillat vers le parc, vers le jardin, vers le Paradis » (Carmen Brăgaru, « *Și în grădini cresc lumi nenumărate*. Aspirația lui Dinu Pillat spre parc, grădină, Rai. » [« Dans les jardins aussi, poussent d'innombrables mondes. » L'aspiration de Dinu Pillat vers le parc, vers le jardin, vers le Paradis], in Câlția, Ștefan, 2016, *Jardins pour Dinu Pillat*, p. 47).

Finis coronat opus. Le volume finit par des réflexions sur la vallée de la rivière de Mureș, comparée de manière juste à la vallée de la Loire, étant, elle aussi, un espace de prédilection pour les « châteaux, les jardins et les parcs de Transylvanie ». Ceux-ci ont été construits pendant des siècles et sont aujourd'hui en ruines, après avoir traversé un « désert idéologique » qui avait ignoré la beauté et

découplé la Roumanie et ses provinces géographiques et historiques du courant d'idées et d'actions de l'Occident – *Ex Occidente lux* – auquel nous appartenons de droit ! Quel aurait-été leur sort si la désertification n'avait pas eu lieu ? Un splendide ensemble de châteaux, de palais, de manoirs entourés de jardins magnifiques, où des gens meilleurs, bien meilleurs, auraient trouvé leur inspiration !

La bibliographie (pp. 371-399) réunit un nombre impressionnant d'ouvrages et de fonds d'archives consultés. Elle est intéressante parce qu'elle comprend, d'un côté, des volumes représentatifs de la littérature de spécialité roumaine et surtout étrangère traitant de la problématique si complexe et si actuelle du paysage, envisagée dans une multitude de perspectives, et, d'autre côté, un important corpus d'ouvrages anciens, de livres anciens, qui passionnent le professeur Doru Radosav et dont il a magistralement extrait et classé typologiquement les références au paysage. Il y a également puisé des citations pittoresques et... remarquables par leurs sonorités archaïques, des citations extrêmement actuelles !

Le volume se clôt avec la reproduction de treize images (gravures, icônes, portraits, *vedute*, cartes) qui illustrent des éléments du paysage et de son évolution dans l'espace géographique transylvain.

Nous nous trouvons devant une étude originale, grandiose, je dirais même que nous sommes devant un chef-d'œuvre du genre. Il est rare que soit publié en Roumanie un tel travail, fruit de raffinements et de sublimes réussites, pendant une longue période, d'un volume énorme de connaissances, fruit aussi de la passion immense de l'auteur pour ce sujet du paysage avec tout ce qu'il

sous-tend : connotations, perception, évolution, représentation, classification, discours etc. Le style est raffiné et alerte, effervescent et parsemé de références à des domaines variés, dont la littérature, l'art, le discours, la cartographie, la géographie etc. Le lecteur avisé lira l'ouvrage avec plaisir, car il lui fournira le confort intellectuel des connexions qui émergent et/ ou se vérifient au cours de la lecture. Pour les géographes, le présent ouvrage est d'une importance majeure, parce que, dans leur domaine, le paysage est le résultat de la combinaison des éléments du

cadre naturel avec les éléments anthropiques, y compris sociétaux ; or, l'analyse de l'exégète-professeur Doru Radosav offre une perspective plus ample, intégratrice. C'est pourquoi toute analyse / étude géographique visant le *genius loci*, c'est-à-dire l'identité et la mémoire du lieu / territoire, doit tenir compte de ce merveilleux volume de 399 pages qu'est *Transilvania are forma inimii: istorie și peisaj în spațiul transilvănean al secolului al XVIII: percepții, sensibilități, reprezentări !*

Alexandru A. PACURAR

*Département de géographie humaine et Tourisme
Université Babeș-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca*