

TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH OF CULTURAL TOURIST RESOURCES IN THE ORADEA METROPOLITAN AREA (OMA), ROMANIA

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Abstract: Metropolitan regions/areas are NUTS 3 regions or a combination of NUTS 3 regions which represent all agglomerations of at least 250,000 inhabitants (Eurostat, 2021). Oradea Metropolitan Area (NUTS3ID RO111) was established in 9th of May 2005 and has a total number of 251.570 inhabitants. The purpose of the association is to stimulate and support the growth and prosperity of the area, focused on the continuous increase of the quality of life. Besides the economic boost, OMA emerged from the need for space and leisure expressed by the core urbanites

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and although the periurban area is teeming with valuable cultural resources, the latter being the focus of the current study, they are little known by many of the Oradea residents. In this purpose the cultural attractions of the rural OMA were inventoried, analysed and stored in an online open-access database so that tourists can enjoy them and entrepreneurs in tourism can use them as focal points for further tourist infrastructure development. The analysis highlighted the OMA periurban area with the highest cultural attractions' potential based on the National Methodology regarding the evaluation of the tourist potential in the basic administrative-territorial units.

Key words: cultural heritage, rural area, historical monument, art and popular tradition

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INTRODUCTION

Currently, there are few territories that do not try to capitalize on their heritage resources to attract tourists and their contribution to development (Lemaître, 2015) and in Europe there is a special focus on the rural areas. In the choice of the research territory, respectively a metropolitan area, the existence of a certain functional homogeneity regarding the general environment of the tourist activities was taken into account (Lemaître, 2015), but also the fact that the sustainable development of a peri-urban space such as that of the OMA is also based on the elements of tourist attractiveness.

The Oradea Metropolitan Area is a territorial system (founded in 2005 and extended in 2007 and 2010) consisting of 12 administrative entities (figure 1), respectively the Municipality of Oradea and the communes of Biharia, Borș, Cetariu, Girișu de Criș, Ineu, Oșorhei, Nojorid, Paleu, Sîntandrei, Sînmartin, Toboliu, which includes 42 villages.

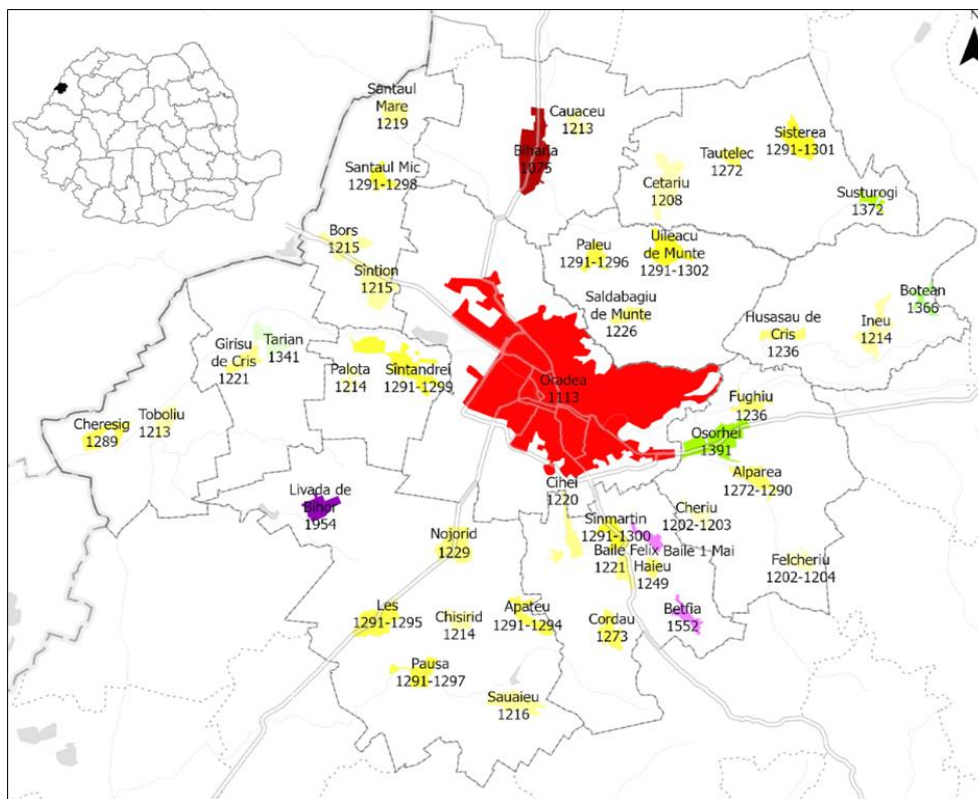


Figure 1. Oradea Metropolitan Area (OMA). Communes and component villages and the year of documentary attestation (in medallion O.M.A.'s position within Romania)

OMA occupies an area of 753.29 sq.km. and has a significant natural and economic potential (implicitly tourist). For the Romanian space, the village is the oldest form of collective organization of the habitat and throughout history has undergone many transformations and adaptations, but also “certain features have a great resilience over time, helping to define originality and cultural identity” (Popa, 2010).

Within Oradea Metropolitan Area, the 11 component communes are networked into economically integrated rural regions, the integration being based on a numerical population growth (Figure 2), on the existence of jobs and a developed infrastructure, on local development strategies with accentuated preoccupations for the protection of the environment and of the cultural heritage.

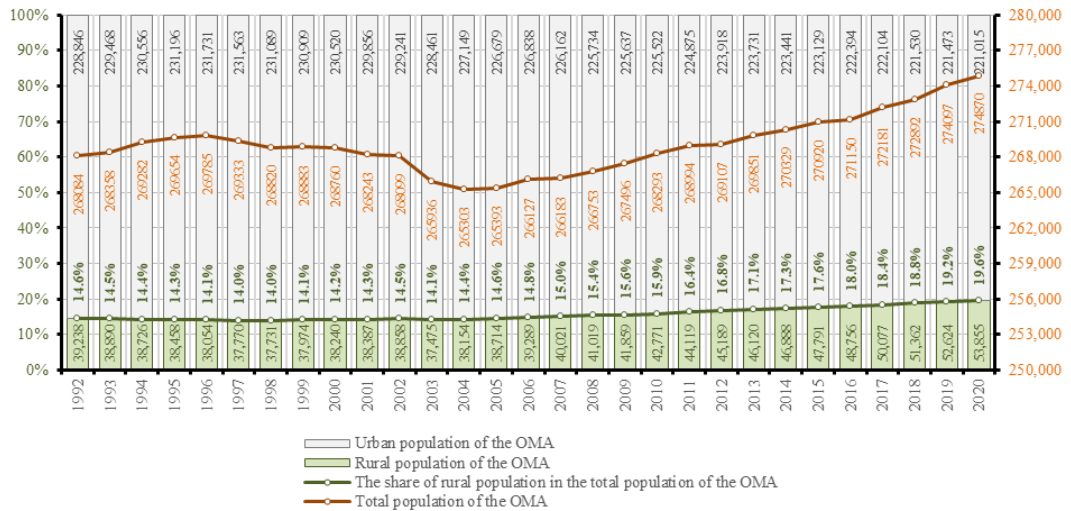


Figure 2. The evolution of total, urban and rural population from OMA between 1992-2020

Source of data: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/> (INS, 2021)

Some of the metropolitan communes have significant residential functions (the case of Sîntandrei, Sînmartin, Nojorid, Paleu communes where large residential neighbourhoods have been developed), others have a mixed economic profile, among them Sînmartin Commune where tourism services are highly developed (in Băile Felix and Băile 1 Mai spas).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study focuses on the analysis of the degree of tourist attractiveness of the communes that form the OMA, a premise for a functional reconsideration of the administrative-territorial units, the formation of a metropolitan belt of relaxation and tourist relocation in order to sustainably develop the human community in rural areas. Even the traffic during the pandemic period with Sars-Cov 2 demonstrates the importance of short-distance tourist sites in OMA, yet they are poorly capitalized in order to meet the need for safe relaxation of citizens or other visitors.

In carrying out the study we started from the idea that the cultural tourist heritage can be the central element of a tourism development strategy provided that there are valuable resources, and that these resources should be the object of an efficient capitalization (Lemaître, 2015).

From the point of view of the tourist functionality, the OMA is only partially a tourist destination. In recent years, the city of Oradea (metropolitan polarization centre), a good representative of the Art-Nouveau current, attracts an increased number of tourists from the country, but also from abroad, and in rural areas, Băile Felix and 1 Mai spas concentrate the largest number of accommodation in the country (Herman & Tătar, 2015), spas are well known in countries such as Hungary, Germany, Israel and France. However, the rest of the metropolitan area, although in

possession of many cultural tourist resources, is little known from this point of view, even for domestic tourists provided by the city of Oradea in the first place and by Bihor County (Hatos, 2020).

Functional reconsideration towards the sphere of tourism is based on a series of factors such as transport costs, travel cost, transport facilities, quality of infrastructure, spatial distribution of forms of tourism and, often, tourists are guided in choosing the destination by geographical proximity of the region to which they belong to and by the opportunity costs (Pascariu & Țigănașu, 2014). For the OMA at least one such functional-territorial reconsideration should be taken into account, in which culture is intertwined with tourism, so as to lead to a tourist relocation to less targeted sectors, but which have tourist potential (for example Cetariu, Paleu, Nojorid communes), where the natural setting harmoniously complements the archaeological and historical vestiges with customs and traditions. Thus, on the one hand, the anthropogenic pressure felt in the spas of Băile Felix and I Mai (from Sînmartin commune) could be reduced, on the other hand, tourists interested in wellness and spa could add other recreational cultural activities to their free program provided by the rural OMA. All this would actively support the format of activities oriented towards nature and especially rural culture, which would support the condition of sustainability in local tourism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Metropolitan areas turned out as recreational areas for the residents from the core of their spatial planning to the urban fringe due to accessibility from the time and money perspective, tourism expenditure being positively related to distance (van Loon & Rouwendal, 2017; Wu, Zhang, & Fujiwara, 2013). When dealing with metropolitan regions the sector of tourism stands out as one of the several development paths. In fact, tourism never occurs in a vacuum but its place is most obvious within broader regional development strategies (Brouder & Ioannides, 2014). Given their complexity, metropolitan areas require the coordination of both public and private investments and operations (Huybrechts, 2018).

In terms of their spatial organization, most studies focus on the idea of monocentrism based on concentric rings whose population density and activity decrease with moving away from the central city, while some other studies identify emerging trends of a scattered monocentric or polycentric spatial organization of the metropolitan areas (Salvati, Venanzoni, Serra, & Carlucci, 2016). The current study aligns to the idea of a monocentric planning of the metropolitan area referring to it as a recreational metropolitan belt (Tătar, et al., 2018; Wu & Cai, 2006). The natural and built heritage plays key roles in the development of metropolitan belts and their opening towards tourism. The built heritage and in particular its cultural assets are inherited from the past and irreproducible and stand as icons of local specificity and identity (Ilieș, Tătar, Dehoorne, & Ilieș, 2005) of the historical and cultural context (Caserta & Russo, 2002), so they require a sustainable capitalization for tourism given their vulnerability and fragile state. Such is the case of the many wooden churches, medieval towers and fortresses from the current study which can trigger visiting patterns from its core urbanites and eventually turn the metropolitan urban fringe into a tourist destination. A fundamental decision whether to visit or not a destination depends on the quality and quantity of its cultural and historical attractions (Caserta & Russo, 2002), which the Metropolitan Area of Oradea abounds in, with over 250 cultural attractions inventoried and analysed.

According to former studies (Herman & Tătar, 2015; Ilieș, Ilieș, Herman, Baias, & Morar, 2011; Ilieș & Josan, 2009), the spatial distribution of tourists in the metropolitan area is uneven, with a higher economic and environmental impact of tourism in a single commune, therefore this study aims to show and analyse the built heritage potentialities of all its constituent communes so as to prompt stakeholders along the area's future development to reduce pressure on a small territory and a single resource represented in the case of the OMA through the commune of Sînmartin (with Băile Felix and I Mai spas) due to its geothermal potential and divert flows evenly throughout its territory. The man-made heritage with touristic valences was mapped so as to have a holistic image of the cultural attractions that the hinterland has to offer so as to enhance the quality of life at the

periphery of the agglomeration and to foster a socio-economic development based on heritage preservation and enhancement (Huybrechts, 2018).

Given some of the inventoried cultural assets' perishability within the metropolitan area, sustainable tourism is meant to make optimal use and conserve man-made resources creating economic responsibility, social inclusion and environmental stewardship (Ilieș, Herman, Dehoorne, & Măduța, 2013), thus ensuring viable, long-term economic operations, with socio-economic benefits to all the involved stakeholders (Alpar Atun, Nafa, & Olgac Turker, 2019) either tourists, investors and the local community.

With the accentuation of urbanization, the regions that have a significant natural and cultural capital have become more and more well-known tourist destinations. However, the resources needed for tourism (i.e. quality of services, infrastructure, transport facilities, waste management, energy use, etc.) must be properly managed to have a positive impact on local communities and the environment. Currently, the development of transport infrastructure allows rapid access to recreational and short-stay areas, requested by the urban population, by creating new recreation facilities *near important metropolitan areas*, rural areas enjoying great attractiveness (Pascariu & Țigănașu, 2014).

As for the OMA, in the last 15 years it is on an upward economic trend, and among the developing economic branches, tourism is starting to occupy an important place. Summarizing the tourist resources of the natural setting with the anthropic ones, in the OMA a *relaxation belt* is outlined for the urban population of Oradea and for other visitors, many of them Romanian and foreign tourists.

Studies on OMA deal with various aspects, some of them directly or indirectly addressing the issue of sustainable development by capitalizing on tourism potential or highlighting specialized and sustainable tourism activities. For each administrative-territorial unit, but also for the metropolitan entity, there is a Local Development Strategy for 2014-2020 period. In 2007, a group of geographers from the University of Oradea published the Atlas of the Oradea Metropolitan Area (Ilieș, Tarța, & Moțoc, 2007), and in 2010 a group of historians from the same university published an album entitled Cultural Heritage of the Oradea Metropolitan Area (Ștefănescu, et al., 2010). The Federation of Metropolitan Areas and Urban Agglomerations of Romania presents the Oradea metropolitan area in the study entitled Polycentric Development Study (Federația Zonelor Metropolitane și Aglomerărilor Urbane din România, 2020).

Other works aimed for OMA the research of the Hungarian folk costume from Șișterea Village (Toth, 1977), the realities and perspectives of the tourist functionality (Ilieș, Tătar, Dehoorne, & Ilieș, 2005), the holiday tourism on the Oradea-Paleu-Cetariu-Șișterea axis (Dincă, 2008), a monography focused on sustainable development through ecotourism of Cetariu commune (Dincă, Herman, & Sztankovics, 2012), migration and demographic aspects (Filimon, Chiriac, & Filimon, 2017), but also an assessment of the natural environment in OMA and Natura 2000 sites in terms of tourist attractiveness (Linc, et al., 2019; Tătar, et al., 2018). The approach of OMA from a geographically complex perspective, in a representation through GIS instruments, also includes a paper derived from a doctoral thesis (Bucur, 2012). Then we must mention the works of a purely historical nature, of monography type, such as those of the communes of Sîntandrei (Iuhas, Filip, & Țărău, 2012), Girișu de Criș (Șipoș, Chiriac, & Moisa, 2016), Sînmartin (Țărău, Fazecaș, Marta, Huza, & Crăciun, 2008) and even of a village, as is the case of Ineu Village (Cordovan, et al., 2014).

The Archaeological sites enjoy the greatest scientific attention, there being numerous studies carried out by researchers of the Museum of the Land of Criș and University teachers from Oradea. Among these, the studies dedicated to the land fortress from Biharia (Dumitrașcu, Sfrengeu, Ardelean, Goman, & Crișan, 2014; Sfrengeu, 2010; Dumitrașcu, 1994) stand out, and about the medieval Cheresig Tower we find concentrated and concise information together with restoration proposals in another article (Marta, 2009). Crișan describes the Archaeological sites from Sînmartin Commune (Crișan, 2013), and in 2015 a study is published regarding the cemetery of the 15th century from Toboliu (Lie, Radu, & Fazecaș, 2015).

Other works touch tangentially on parts of the OMA, such as the works of: T Béczy, L. Borcea, N. Chidioşan, G. Crişan, S. Dumitraşcu, and V. Faur; M.S. Staşac; M.I. Stupariu; Ş. Baias; J.P. Carriere, L.A. Filimon, S. Guitel, C. Savourey, and E. Irincu; C. Morar, G. Nagy, M. Dulca, L. Boros, and K. Sehida, (Béczy, et al., 1974; Staşac, 2005; Stupariu, 2014; Baias, 2016; Carriere, Filimon, Guitel, Savourey, & Irincu, 2018; Morar, Nagy, Dulca, Boros, & Sehida, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

In the National Spatial Planning Plan (PATN) there is a section that refers to the tourist areas of Romania, the analysis being performed at county level, based on a score between 0-100 points. In this section, respectively PATN, section VI “tourist areas” (PATN, 2008) each evaluated tourist category received the score that can be found in table 1.

Table 1. The score granted for each evaluated category according to the Methodology of tourist heritage evaluation of basic territorial-administrative units (Annex A)

Category	Maximum score
A. Natural resources	25
B. Man-made resources/Cultural	25
C. Specific tourist infrastructure	20
D. Technical infrastructure	30
TOTAL	100

The current paper is part of a larger study that aims to analyse all the above variables. But the purpose of this study is exclusively to highlight the cultural tourist heritage of the rural OMA, so only section B of the PATN was analysed and thus were inventoried the following cultural attractions in rural areas of OMA: historical monuments of category A and B, archaeological buildings, public monuments; festivals, fairs, traditions and holidays; institutions of shows and concerts; repeatable cultural events. Each analysed item received a score according to the procedure in the methodology that we assigned to each cultural attraction inventoried, thus all totalizing no more than 25 points according to the table 2 below:

Table 2. The score granted for each evaluated category according to the Methodology of touristic heritage evaluation of basic territorial-administrative units (Annex A)

Man-made/Cultural resources	Score
Archaeological monuments	2
Architectural monuments	2
Public forum	2
Memorial houses	2
Museums	3
Public collections	2
Festivals, fairs, traditions, holidays etc	4
Traditional craft	4
Instrumental, coral or vocal-instrumental bands	2
Repeated cultural manifestations	2
Total	25

This assessment highlighted which rural commune of OMA benefits from the greatest cultural tourist heritage within the 11 analysed communes in order to sustainably disperse the tourist flow from the commune with the highest tourist consumption, respectively Sînmartin to OMA communes that have a high potential of authentic cultural tourist resources.

In a previous study, the degree of tourist attractiveness of the natural rural setting in the OMA (Tătar et al., 2018), determined on the basis of the “*Methodology regarding the evaluation of the*

tourist potential in the basic administrative-territorial units. Annex A” (PATN, 2016) and another study focused on the tourist attractiveness of protected areas in the OMA (Linc, et al., 2019).

For category B, *Man-made resources*, in the same Methodology we find allocated a maximum of 25 points out of 100 (the evaluation was performed by the Centre for Studies and Research in the Field of Culture). For Bihor county, in section BI (Evaluation of historical monuments of national and universal value), in the rural area were evaluated 21 communes out of 100 administrative-territorial units of Bihor county (less than 25%). Of these, 4 are in the OMA (Biharia, Girişu de Criş, Ineu, Nojorid). In section BII (*Man-made/Cultural Heritage Assessment*), for OMA only one commune was considered, namely Sînmartin.

Following the guideline of this methodology, in the present study we propose an accurate, up-to-date assessment of the cultural tourist heritage from each administrative-territorial unit of the OMA.

Each identified touristic resource is found in an ArcGIS Online document that is an open-access cloud-based mapping and analysis platform (Linc, et al., 2019) (Figure 3). This application allows to share content with other people, regardless of their location: <https://dgtatamd.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e05528e7d74a47ad999b4698fc8e64ed> (Figure 3).

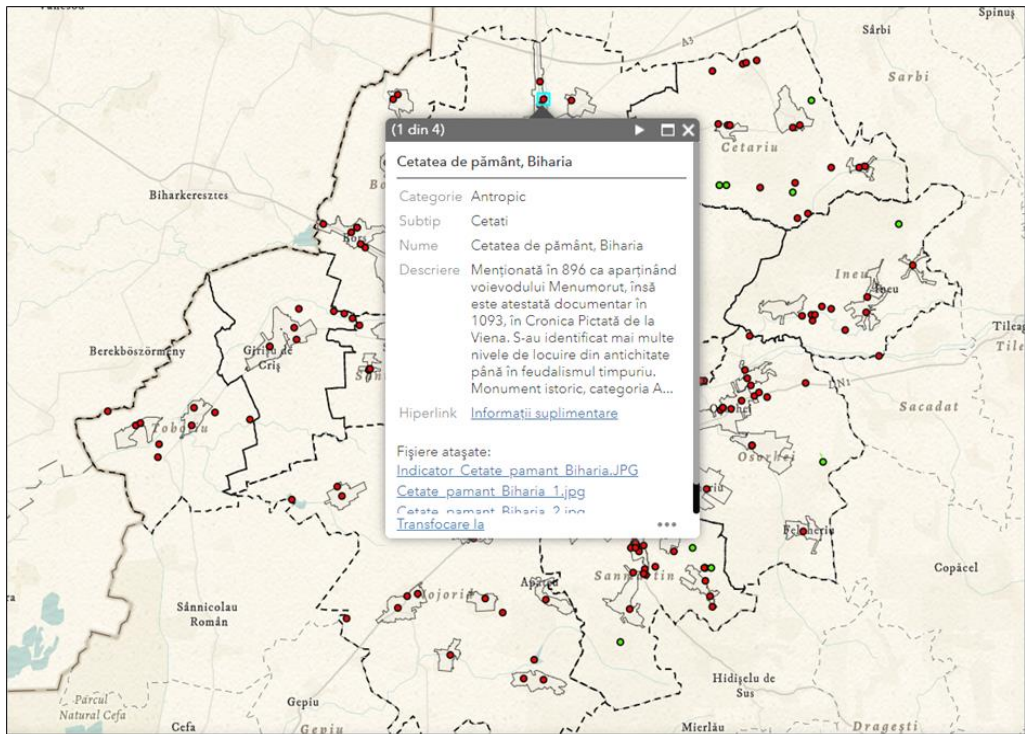


Figure 3. Cultural Tourist Heritage Database from the rural Oradea Metropolitan Area

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

OMA - the characteristics of the tourist patrimony

In a multi-ethnic and multicultural metropolitan area such as the OMA, the cultural tourist heritage is defined, by far, by the cultural-religious component.

The metropolitan area of Oradea is marked by the existence of numerous churches that are documented since the 15th century to the 21st century. For example, one can find the oldest church in Sînmartin commune (second half of the 13th century located in Băile 1 Mai in the village of Haieu), and the newest ones were built after 2000. However, the churches in the metropolitan area

(regardless of their antiquity and worship), are not coherently integrated in a tourist circuit, although some are places of pilgrimage.

Remaining in the sphere of history, on the territory of the OMA there are numerous historical vestiges that “include a wide range of constructions and material evidence belonging to millennia and past centuries” (Cocean, 2010) and that form archaeological complexes/sites. Out of the total of 60 Archaeological sites in OMA, most of them are located on the territory of Girişu de Criş (14) and Nojorid (12) communes. In addition, 34 of them (representing 56.7% of the total) are on the List of Historical Monuments (Table 3). Regarding the tourist capitalization of Archaeological sites (Figure 4), although they are mentioned in tourist resources in all development strategies, there is an impediment related to marking and signalling on site, their location being known only in the small circle of archaeologists who initiated the excavations respectively and by some villagers who participated in the excavations. Thus, their attractiveness is based more on a symbolic function, although the historical value is indisputable.

Table 3. Historical monuments of national and local interest in the territory of the OMA included in the List of Historical Monuments (LHM) (Ministerul Culturii, 2015)

Administrative-territorial unit		Historical monument			Period or year of foundation
Commune	Village	Type	Category LHM	Name	
Biharia	Biharia	Archaeological site BH-I-s-A- 00951	A	Biharia Earth Fortress	893 (1093)
Borş	Sîntion	Archaeological site BH-I-s-B-01010	B	Mănăstirii Hill	
Cetariu	Cetariu	Architectural monument BH-II-m-B-01129	B	Reformed Church	XIII century
		Architectural monument BH-II-m-B-01130	B	Roman Catholic parish house	1743
		Architectural monument BH –II- m-B-01131	B	Roman catholic church „Sf. Mary”	1804-1809
	Şişterea	Architectural monument BH-II-m-B-20238	B	Reformed church	Sec. XIII
	Şuşturogiu	Archaeological site BH-I-s-B-01017	B	Fortified settlement Dealul. Cristor/Cetăţuia	Hallstatt, Latène
	Tăutelec	Archaeological site BH-I-s-B-01022	B	“Cănepişte”	XI-XVI century
Girişu de Criş	Girişu de Criş	Archaeological site BH-I-s-B-00971	B	“La Rături”	
		Archaeological site BH-I-m-B-00971.01	B	“La Rături”, settlement	XI-XII century
		Archaeological site BH-I-m-B-00971.02	B	“La Rături”, settlement	Hallstatt, Coţofeni Culture
		Archaeological site BH-I-m-B-00971.03	B	“La Rături”, settlement	Transition to Bronze Age
		Archaeological site BH-I-s-B -00972	B	“Alceu”, fortified settlement	
		Archaeological site BH-I-s-B-00973	B	“Între poduri”	
		Archaeological site BH-I-m-B-00973.01	B	“Între poduri”, settlement	III-VI century
		Archaeological site BH-I-m-B-00973.02	B	“Între poduri”, settlement	I st Century B.C. - I st century A.C.
		Archaeological site BH-I-m-B-00973.03	B	“Între poduri”, settlement	Hallstatt

		Archaeological site BH-I-s-B-00974	B	“Pietroasa”		
		Archaeological site BH-I-m-B-00974.01	B	“Pietroasa”, settlement	XI-XIII century	
		Archaeological site BH-I-m-B-00974.02	B	“Pietroasa”, settlement	I st Century B.C. - I st century A.C., Latène	
		Archaeological site BH-I-s-B-00975	B	“Romon”, settlement	VI-VIII century	
		Archaeological site BH-I-s-B-00976	B	“Gherand”, settlement	IX-X century	
Ineu	Botean	Architectonic Monument BH-II-m-A-01120	A	Wooden Orthodox Church “Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel”	1721	
Nojorid	Livada de Bihor	Archaeological site BH-I-s-B-00980	B	“Între rechestişuri / răchitişuri”		
		Archaeological site BH-I-m- -00980.01	B	“Între rechestişuri / răchitişuri”, settlement	IV century B.C.	
		Archaeological site BH-I-m-B-00980.02	B	“Între rechestişuri / răchitişuri”, settlement	II-III century	
		Archaeological site BH-I-m-B-00980.03	B	“Între rechestişuri / răchitişuri”, settlement	Neolithic	
		Archaeological site BH-I-s-B-00981	B	“Cuptorişte”		
		Archaeological site BH-I-m-B-00981.01	B	“Cuptorişte”, settlement	X-XVI century	
	Nojorid	Nojorid	Archaeological site BH-I-s-B-00984	B	“Turceana” (Old cemetery)	XIII-XIV century
			Archaeological site BH-I-m-B-00984.01	B	“Turceana” (Old cemetery), location next to the church	XIII-XIV century
			Archaeological site BH-I-m-B-00984.02	B	“Turceana” (Old cemetery), Middle Age necropolis	XIII-XIV century
			Public Monument BH-III-m-A-01264	A	Octavian Goga’s bust	1984
	Păușa	Păușa	Architectural Monument BH-II-m-B-01184	B	Wooden Orthodox Church “Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel” and Great Martyr Dimitrie	1770-1780
	Oșorhei	Fughiu	Architectural Monument BH-II-m-B-01147	B	Reformed Church	XVIII century
		Oșorhei	Architectural Monument BH-II-m-B-01179	B	The Orthodox Church Assumption of the Virgin Mary	1710
Paleu	-	-	-	-	-	
Sînmartin	Băile Felix	Architectural Monument BH-II-m-B-01105	B	Apollo Thermal Pool	1900	
		Architectural Monument BH-III-m-B-01240	B	George Enescu’s Bust	1984	
		Architectural Monument BH-II-m-B-01104	B	Wooden Orthodox Church "Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel" brought from Brusturi village	1785	
	Haieu	Architectural Monument BH-II-m-B-01103	B	Cazino, 1 Mai	XX century	

		Architectural Monument BH-II-m-B-01157	B	The Orthodox Church Assumption of the Virgin Mary	XIV century, modified in 1857
	Sînmartin	Archaeological site BH-II-m-B-01203	B	Castle-former Premonstratens monastery	XIII century, modified in 1784
Sîntandrei	Palota	Architectural Monument BH-II-m-B-01182	B	Romano-catholic church St. Anton from Padova	1825
	Sîntandrei	Architectural Monument BH-II-m-B-01204	B	“Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel” Greek catholic church	1782, repaired in 1906, 1952
		Archaeological site BH-I-s-B-01008	B	settlement, „Podul Morii” site. Transition to Bronze Age	1825
		Archaeological site BH-I-s-B-01009	B	Archaeological site „Grădina de legume” point	
		Archaeological site BH-I-m-B-01009.01	B	“Grădina de legume” site	Hallstatt
		Archaeological site BH-I-m-B-01009.02	B	“Grădina de legume” site	Bronze Age
Toboliu	Cheresig	Architectural Monument BH-II-m-A-01133	A	Donjon from Cheresig, fortification	1289
	Toboliu	Archaeological Site BH-I-s-B-00972	B	Dâmbu Zănačanului	

Also, in Nojorid commune should be mentioned the existence of military fortifications of casemate type, part of the fortified western front, also called the fortified line Carol II, but these are not capitalized in any form in tourism, although there are some intentions. Two other *fortifications* are better known, namely the Earth Fortress from Biharia and the Cheresig Donjon, both having the status of historical monument category A (national importance), but, from a tourist point of view, these sites are also poorly exploited.

Unique *architectural buildings* can be found in Sînmartin commune (Apollo Thermal Swimming Pool in Băile Felix, Waves Swimming Pool in Băile 1 Mai, Băile 1 Mai Casino, Sînmartin Castle). An interesting anthropic resource is represented by the independent cellars of households from the Oradea Hills. Such cellars are found on the territory of the communes Paleu (28 cellars) and Cetariu (12 cellars) (Figure 10), but also in a neighbourhood of Oradea (Episcopia Bihor) (Dincă, et al., 2017; Linc, și alții, 2017; Tătar, și alții, 2017) and it represents a patrimonial element which is given only limited importance and is not capitalized at all through tourism.

The dams, closely related to the lake accumulations, represent sites with economic function, but in the background, there is also the tourist function. In OMA, a concrete dam and a hydroelectric power plant are located on the main river (Crișul Repede) in Fughiu (Oșorhei commune), but hydrotechnical constructions such as earth dams (with various heights) that have lake accumulations still exist in Nojorid communes (3 dams), Cetariu (3 dams) and Paleu (1 dam) (Figure 11). To these are added the dams of temporary accumulations (2 in Sînmartin Commune and 1 in Cetariu commune). Another constructive element that is comprised within the cultural heritage is given by the existence of the canals, very well-known being the Canalul Colector (Crișurilor canal) and the offtake of the dam from Fughiu.

To these are added 11 public monuments, two of which are classified as historical monuments (one of category A - the bust of Octavian Goga from Nojorid and one of category B - the bust of George Enescu from Băile Felix), the rest being dedicated to fallen heroes in the two world wars.

From the category of *human activities with tourist functions*, in the O.M.A. we find patron saints, sports competitions, numerous festivals that concentrate several thousand participants / tourists during the event. The folk elements identified in the O.M.A. are represented by customs, folk traditions, traditional dresses, games and songs.

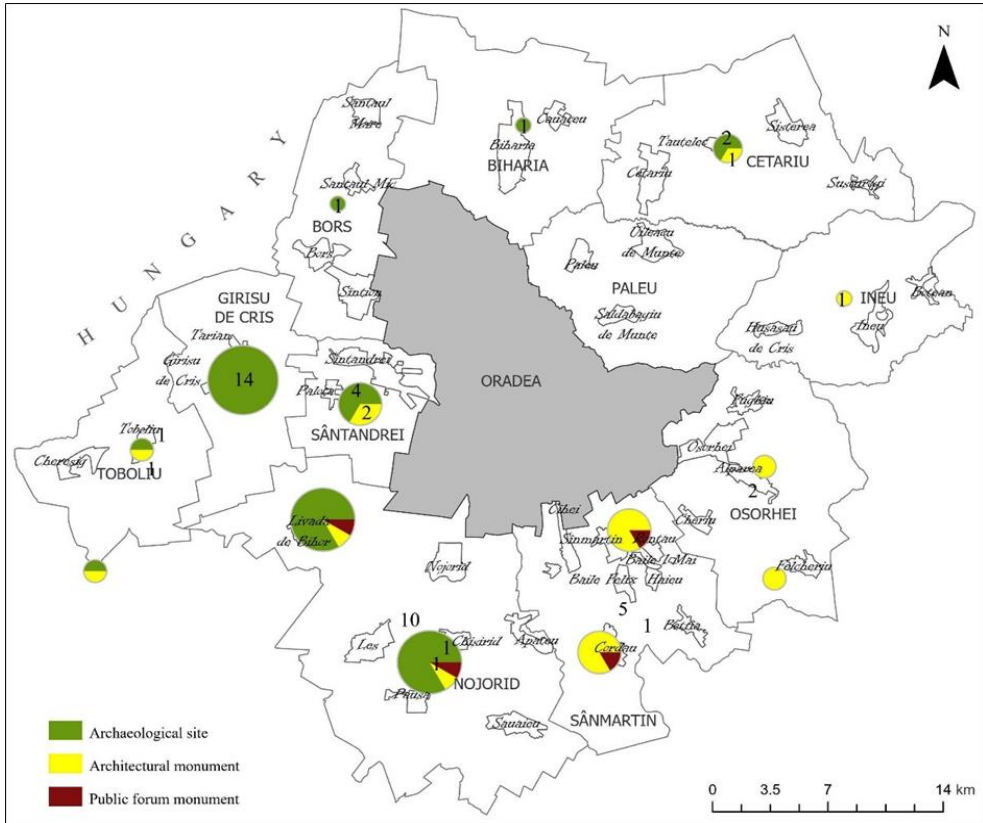


Figure 4. Map of archaeological sites and historical monuments within OMA

OMA – Evaluation of the degree of tourist attractiveness of anthropic resources

In the *Methodology regarding the evaluation of the tourist potential in the basic administrative-territorial units*, category B – man-made resources are assigned 25 points out of a total of 100. The structure of this category includes historical monuments of national interest, museums and public collections, folk art and tradition, institutions of shows and concerts, repeatable cultural events.

The section *Historical monuments of national interest* has 8 points in the previously mentioned evaluation methodology, which is distributed to some elements of archaeology, architecture, public monuments and memorial houses. The *Oradea metropolitan area* has an average of 3.57 points in this section. The communes of Nojorid with 6.5 points, Sînmartin with 6 points and Sîntandrei with 4 points stand out here. A numerical and graphic representation of the tourist potential expressed by the value of the historical monuments of national or local importance and of cultural heritage is found also in Figure 9.

Also noteworthy are the communes of Biharia with the quadrilateral earth fortress, Toboliu commune with Donjon from Cheresig (Figure 5), Ineu with the wooden Orthodox church from Botean village and Nojorid with the bust of Octavian Goga from the homonymous village, all monuments of category A (national importance).

There are many monuments of local importance (category B). We would like to draw attention to the churches, of which 9 have the status of historical monument category B (local importance) (respectively, 4 wooden Orthodox churches, a walled Orthodox church, a Roman Catholic church and 3 Reformed churches). Particularly important for Romanian culture are three other wooden Orthodox churches, monuments of popular architecture from the villages of Felcheriu

(18th century), Băile Felix (from 1785), Păușa (from 1770-1780) (Figure 6). To these are added the Reformed Church from Șișterea (13th century) (figure 6), the one from Cetariu (13th-14th century) and the one from Fughiu (18th century).



Figure 5. From left to right: Earth fortress from Biharia, historical monument, A category;
Donjon from Cheresig, historical monument, A category



Figure 6. From left to right: Wooden orthodox church from Botean (1721) (Ineu commune).
Historical Monument, A category; Reformed church from Șișterea (XIIIth century) (Cetariu commune),
Historical Monument, B category

Even if they are not classified as historical monuments, other metropolitan churches attract attention through their religious heritage content. Orthodox churches, regardless of antiquity, are decorated with frescoes, icons on glass, wood or canvas, beautifully carved iconostasis, have precious or rare objects of worship. For example, in the wooden Orthodox church “St. Mihail and Gavriil” from Păușa Village (Nojorid commune), on one of the icons of the iconostasis on the long right side, is painted Archangel Mihail, a painting dating from 1838. In the church “St. Mihail and Gavriil” from Fughiu village (from Oșorhei commune) there are several sacred books printed in Bucharest, Sibiu and Cluj (between 1723-1896), three being selected for the National Cultural Heritage. The current church was built between 1948 and 1954 on the site of an older church dating from 1690-1700, the remains of which have been preserved until 1952. And in the village of Cheri (from the commune of Oșorhei), in the Orthodox church there are old icons, painted in oil on wood and glass and some sacred books written in Romanian, but with Cyrillic letters. The church was built by Italian craftsmen between 1894 and 1896 on a river stone foundation.

Also, in this study we want to point out that in the village of Rontău (from Sînmartin Commune) still survives the “poor church of the poors” mentioned in the short story “Popa Tanda”

by Ioan Slavici, although it seems that there is the intention of demolition (a new Orthodox church was recently built behind it).

But the *Reformed churches* also attract attention. For example, in Cauaceu village (from Biharia commune), in the reformed church, the pulpit and the left balcony made in 1786 are kept, the service table from 1793 is still used today, and the organ and the clock mechanism (Figure 7) from the church tower are from 1916. In the village of Săldăbagiu de Munte (Paleu commune), in the reformed church (dating from 1791), under the pulpit is exposed the window of the medieval church (XII-XIII centuries) and some old coins found during the restoration.



Figure 7. From left to right: The clock mechanism from the tower and the organ of the Reformed Church in the Cauaceu village have been operating since 1916 (Biharia commune); The window of the medieval church and the coins from the Reformed Church from Săldăbagiu de Munte village (Paleu commune).



Figure 8. From left to right: Castle from Sînmartin, former Premonstratens monastery; Apollo thermal pool from Băile Felix; The Casino from Băile 1 Mai

Also, in the category of historical monuments of local importance, it should be mentioned that the territory of OMA it is dotted with archaeological sites, although not all of them can be found in the List of Historical Monuments (only 34 out of a total of 60). For example, in Sînmartin commune there are 10 such sites (only one is a historical monument), and in Girișu de Criș commune all 14 sites are historical monuments.

On the territory of Sînmartin commune there are several singular architectural buildings (of which 3 are historical architectural monuments illustrated in Figure 8): the Apollo thermal pool in Băile Felix, built in 1917, B category, historical monument; the castle of Sînmartin, in fact a former Premonstratens monastery (from 1784), B category, historical monument; the Casino from Băile 1 Mai, built at the beginning of the 20th century, historical monument, category B; the wave pool in Băile 1 Mai spa, considered the oldest pool in Romania, and the engine that generates the waves was built by the Austrians in 1896.

Public historical monuments are represented by two busts (Octavian Goga from Nojorid, A category historical monument and George Enescu from Băile Felix, B category).

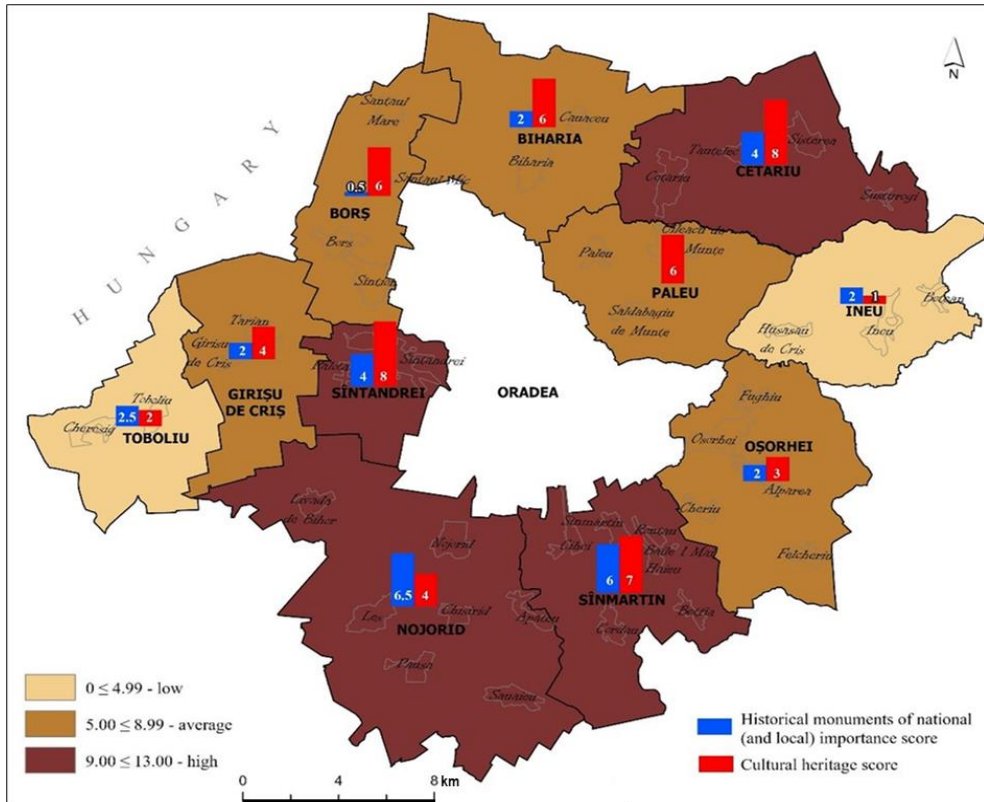


Figure 9. Map of the cultural heritage potential of the OMA expressed only by the score of historical monuments of national or local importance and cultural heritage



Figure 10. Independent cellars of households in the villages of Paleu (top left), Şișterea (middle), Tăutelec (top right and bottom left), and Cetariu (bottom right)

The *traditional rural architecture* and the age of the settlements are not taken into account in the Evaluation Methodology, although they certainly increase the tourist attractiveness of an area. In the *OMA rural settlements* are individualized by age (Figure 1), location in the territory (Oradei Hills in the north, and Tăşadului Hills in the southeast, Crişurilor Plain and its contact with the hills from OMA) and through the elements of traditional architecture. Picturesque through the territorial isolation are the communes Peştera and Fertişag from Cetariu commune.



Figure 11. From left to right: Dam and the lake from Paleu; Dam and the lake from Şauaieiu; The dam of the temporary accumulation from Băile Felix

Section B II - Assessment of cultural heritage refers to the existence of museums and public collections, folk art and tradition, institutions of shows and concerts, repeatable cultural events (table 4). OMA has an average score of 6 points. There are, in this section, 3 communes, respectively Cetariu and Sîntandrei with 8 points each and Sînmartin with 6 points (Table 4).

Table 4. Criterion B II. Cultural heritage assessment of the OMA
(Maximum score 17 points for each TAU, PATN Methodology concerning the tourist potential assessment in the basic territorial administrative units)

TAU	Locality	Museums and public collections (5 p)		Score	Art and popular tradition (8 or 4 points if repeated)		Score	Institutions of shows and concerts (Philharmonics, orchestras, instrumental, coral or vocal-instrumental bands, 2 or 0 points if already considered previously)	Score	Repeated cultural manifestations (2 or 0 points already considered previously)	Score	TAU Score
		Museums (3 p)	Collections (2 p)		Festivals, fairs, traditions, holidays (4 p or 2 p)	Traditional crafts (4 p)						
Biharia	Biharia	-	-	-	5 festivals 2 p	Traditional craftsman 4 p	6 p	-	-	-	-	6 p
Borş	Borş	-	-	-	6 festivals 2 p	Traditional craftsman 4 p	6 p	-	-	-	-	6 p
Cetariu	Cetariu	-	-	-	4 festivals 2 p	Traditional craftsman 4 p	6 p	1 traditional dance team 2 p	2 p	-	-	8 p
Girişu de Criş	Girişu de Criş	-	-	-	1 festival 1 p	Traditional craftsman 2 p	3 p	-	-	-	-	3 p
	Tărian				1 festival 1 p	-	1 p	-	-	-	-	1 p

Ineu	Ineu	-	-	-	2 festivals 1 p	-	1 p	-	-	-	-	1 p
Nojorid	Nojorid	-	-	-	1 festival 1 p	-	1 p	1 traditional dance team 2 p	2 p	-	-	3 p
Oșorhei	Oșorhei	-	-	-	4 festivals 2 p	-	2 p	-	-	-	-	2 p
	Felcheriu				1 festival 1 p	-	1 p	-	-	-	-	1 p
Paleu	Paleu	-	-	-	1 festival 1 p	Traditional craftsman 4 p	5 p	-	-	-	-	5 p
	Săldăbagiu de Munte				1 festival 1 p	-	1 p	-	-	-	-	1 p
Sinmartin	Sinmartin	-	-	-	2 festivals 1 p	Painter of icons Traditional craftsman Luthier 4 p	5 p	-	-	-	-	5 p
	Haieu (Băile 1 Mai)				1 festival 1 p	-	1 p	-	-	-	-	1 p
Sintandrei	Palota	-	-	-	1 festival 1 p	-	1 p	1 traditional dance team 2 p	2 p	-	-	3 p
	Sintandrei				1 festival 1 p	Painter of icons 2p	3 p	1 traditional dance team 2 p	2 p	-	-	5 p
Toboliu	Toboliu	-	-	-	1 festival 1 p	-	1 p	-	-	-	-	1 p
	Cheresig	-	-	-	1 festival 1 p	-	1 p	-	-	-	-	1 p
OMA Total		-	-	-	45 p				8 p	-	-	53 p
OMA Average					4.09 p		0.73 p					4.8 p

The sub-criterion **Museums and public collections** is accredited with 5 points. As for the OMA, in Cetariu village there is a private *ethnographic collection* with objects belonging to the Hungarian ethnic group, and in Biharia, inside the building on the shore of the pond there are also *old photographs and objects* from the village's past. These collections are open to the public without financial interest. Because the methodology does not clearly specify the content of the expression "public collection", in this sub-criterion *the score is 0*.

The intangible cultural heritage is a synthesis of all the phenomena of the traditional culture of Romanians and minorities in Romania and consists of traditions, customs, crafts, oral productions, myths. Regarding its quantitative evaluation, it should be noted that it is difficult to achieve, even if there are some criteria in the Evaluation Methodology, but we find that not many aspects are considered, to which is added the difficult quantification of intangible events. We further scored the attractions according to the guideline of the methodology (Table 4).

The sub-criterion **Popular Art and Tradition** (through the sub-criteria *Traditional Manifestations and Traditional Folk Crafts*), through methodology is awarded 8 points or 4 points if the component elements are repeatable. The OMA is present in this sub-criterion, because in each commune there are such manifestations. These include complex cultural events, known as "Commune Days" or "Village Day" which takes place annually in each administrative-territorial unit. Within them, artistic, sports, social, economic activities take place for a day or two (Table 3). The average score assigned is 4.09 points.

From the category of *human activities with tourist functions* (cultural events), in OMA we find *patron saints* (among which stands out the Kirchweih from Palota dedicated to St. Anton of Padua) and numerous festivals such as: Cabbage Festival in Toboliu and Borş communes (organized annually); Chestnut Days in Cetariu commune (organized annually); Grape ball in the communes of Borş, Oşorhei, Paleu (organized annually); Thermal waters festival (Sînmartin commune) (organized irregularly); Festival of young pastry chefs (Oşorhei commune) (organized irregularly); Wine Festival (Cetariu commune) (organized annually); The days of the Romanian-Hungarian friendship (Girişu de Criş commune) (irregularly organized); Ignatul (cutting the pig) (Oşorhei commune) (organized annually).

Artistic creation is represented by handicraft production and crafts, music, dance, dress, literary creation. *Traditional folk crafts* are poorly represented in the OMA. We find some folk craftsmen in the communes of Cetariu, Biharia and Borş (blacksmiths-horseshoes, folk weavers, plum brandy makers, rush weavers and twigs), Girişu de Criş (producer of cold pressed oils), Sînmartin (painter of icons on glass, weaver, horn violin makers), Sîntandrei (painter of icons on glass), Paleu (painter of icons on glass, sculptor of crosses). However, traditional household items made of ceramic, wood or metal (being inherited and preserved over generations) are frequently used in village households (Figure 12). To the crafts are added other activities with tourist potential, but which are not found in the evaluation methodology.



Figure 12. Household objects

Regarding the *traditions*, in the Orthodox churches' prayers are sung at the liturgical service and in all communes some calendar customs related to the birth of the Lord and the arrival of the new year are kept (religious or secular carols, Viflaim, mask games, etc.). We find wedding customs better represented in the Hungarian and German communities.

Costumes, games and songs have a special tourist value and differ depending on the ethnic composition. In the OMA, the presence of ethnic Hungarians and Germans includes a strong note of colour in the *traditional folk costume* (the communes of Cetariu, Paleu, Oşorhei, Borş, Sîntandrei), but they are displayed only on big holidays, feasts, weddings (Figure 14). In Romanian villages, only the elderly population usually wears the traditional dress. In the Evaluation Methodology, the folk costume is not found in the scoring grid.

In terms of occupational tourism resources, in the OMA we notice a presence very diluted by the proximity of the city of Oradea, maybe also by the western border of the country that

removed the villagers from the ancestral practices. The predominant occupation remained the cultivation of the land, but with modern means and equipment, but “the intercalation of cultures influences the aesthetics of the landscape during the flowering period” (Cocean, 2007). Add animal husbandry, beekeeping and viticulture, but with strong accents of modernity. Among the modern agricultural occupations, but with an interesting landscape impact, is the lavender culture from Borş and Cetariu communes, and Toboliu commune is very well known for cabbage cultivation. All occupations specific to the rural environment that already attract tourists, but which constitute a reserve of viable, sustainable tourist resources, are related to the specifics of the local traditional household.

In the sub-criterion **Institutions of performances and concerts** we find numerous philharmonics, orchestras, instrumental, choral or vocal-instrumental ensembles which are awarded 8 points or 4 if they have already been considered previously. However, these institutions often characterize the urban environment, not the rural one where there are only cultural homes that concentrate, in fact, rural cultural life.

In the Oradea metropolitan villages, *folk* music and traditional dance are transmitted through folk ensembles (i.e. in Sîntandrei commune there is a German ensemble and a Romanian one, in Cetariu commune a Hungarian ensemble (Figure 13), in Nojorid commune a Romanian ensemble, in Sînmartin commune a folk dance group of the school). Therefore, the average for the OMA is 0.73 points (Table 4).



Figure 13. From left to right: Traditional Hungarian folk costumes from Cetariu; Traditional German folk costumes from Palota



Figure 14. Clothing from the Romanian folk costume in Şuşturogiu village

The sub-criterion *Repeatable cultural events* is accredited with a maximum of 4 points or 0 if they have already been considered previously. Because cultural events have been previously scored, the score is 0.



Figure 15. Agricultural crops and livelihoods that define peasant occupations in the O.M.A.

From the Evaluation Methodology *sports competitions* were omitted in the Evaluation Methodology. In the territory of the OMA there are annual team competitions (in the communes of Borş, Cetariu and Oşorhei), cycling (Sînmartin commune), triathlon and rally (Paleu commune) or occasionally other sporting events, such as a boxing gala, WBC version from 2017 (Sînmartin commune). All these constitute potential tourist resources, especially if we are talking about a medium and long-time horizon, when we will talk about a true tradition of profile events.

CONCLUSIONS

To speak of an adequate expression from the perspective of the potential of attractiveness and tourist activities in any territorial unit means to identify and point out consistent tourist resources. Within the OMA this criterion does not reflect the “*Methodology regarding the evaluation of the tourist potential in the basic administrative-territorial units*” really the degree of attractiveness of the villages, but even at the country level we do not think it reflects the reality on the field.

In summary, the section Man-Made/Cultural Resources (total 25 points) applied to the OMA has an average of 7.68 points (Table 5), which includes the metropolitan area in the category of territories with a significant representation of what the offer means for different forms of tourism that are practiced and can be achieved in the local rural area. At the level of the component metropolitan commune, we find the best score in Sînmartin, Sîntandrei and Cetariu commune with

12 points, followed by Nojorid with 9.5 points and Biharia with 8 points. The rest of the communes accumulated between 3-6.5 points.

Table 5. Evaluation of cultural man-made resources in the O.M.A.
(maximum total score allowed: 25 points out of 100)

TAU	Locality with resources	Score historical monuments of national (and local) value Section B I	Score cultural heritage Section B II	Total score
Biharia	Biharia	2.0	6.0	8
Borș	Borș	0.5	6.0	6.5
	Sîntion			
Cetariu	Cetariu	4.0	8.0	12
	Șușurogi			
	Șișterea			
	Tăutelec			
Girișu de Criș	Girișu de Criș	2.0	4.0	6
Ineu	Ineu	2.0	1.0	3
	Botean			
Nojorid	Nojorid	6.5	3.0	10.5
	Livada de Bihor			
	Păușa			
Oșorhei	Oșorhei	2.0	3.0	5
	Fughiu			
Paleu	Paleu	-	6.0	6
	Săldăbagiu de Munte			
Sînmartin	Băile Felix	6.0	6.0	13
	Sînmartin			
	Haieș (Băile 1 Mai)			
Sîntandrei	Sîntandrei	4.0	8.0	12
	Palota			
Toboliu	Cheresig	2.5	2.0	4.5
	Toboliu			
Total OMA		31.5	55.0	86.5
Average OMA		2.86	5.00	7.86

The highest scores are generally explained by the care of local rural communities towards heritage elements of real historical value and certification of a kind of identity. These two references, respectively the value and the identity of the material and intangible heritage elements, raise the value of the territorial and human ensemble, creating premises for supporting a tourist attractiveness.

For Sînmartin, the maximum score is explained by the fact that the town has two areas of spa-medical tourist activities (Băile Felix and 1 Mai) that provide tourists interested in other tourist activities than the main ones, namely the discovery and the spotlight of a nearby heritage in terms of distance and highly customized.

The case of Cetariu commune's high score is explained by the happy combination between the existence of a strong rural character, the existence of an old heritage, the domination of the Hungarian ethnic element and the sense of preserving the old, but also the sufficient openness of the local administration. The case of Sîntandrei and Nojorid communes that have high scores is due to a historical heritage influenced by the proximity of Oradea and the western border of the country. The other communes, although collecting a lower score due to a slightly poorer thematic tourism register, are strong enough through municipal investments and administrative decisions on the road of sustainable affirmation of tourism focused on culture, history and cultural-historical heritage.

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