

# NEW WAYS TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE TOURISM THROUGH RESTORATION OF WOODEN CHURCHES FROM BUZĂU REGION

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## Abstract:

*With highlighting of the wooden churches from the sub-Carpathian region is possible to make projects of development and promotion of tourism in Buzău. Publishing a book of the wooden churches which presents the overview on architecture helps with the promotion of tourism by bringing new light on the full set, geographical specking it brings new territory to view. Advantage by placing wooden churches in the vicinity of hermitage caves from Buzău will attract even more interest of the large public for seed region.*

*Realizing a few projects of conservation-restoration of wooden churches which are declared historical monuments, will bring a local developing from a cultural-tourist view. A particular case is the wooden church "Saints Emperors" from the vicinity city Nehoiu which has rutier access, helps with the cost for restoration and number of viewers.*

*Through realizing interventions of conservation-restoration and placing it in a favorable aesthetic view, the monument can be used in a cultural-tourist circuit of international important and this way it can help with the growth of value of monuments and developing cultural-tourist with the final scope heightening the economy.*

**Keywords:** *Patrimony, Monument, Conservation, Restoration, tourism*

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In the socio-economic development dimensions is also contained the culture, part of the very societal tissue upon which it can be build strategies for sustainable development.

In the support of wooden churches, many of them abandoned, it can be developed rehabilitation programs, conservation and restoration that will bring out the beauty of the wall paintings and also the overall architecture, saving the historical monument.

The presence of the wooden churches on Buzău territories has been lasting for centuries as proof of the presence of villages from previous centuries and of the traditional customs from the Subcarpathian area, territory which used to represent a bridge between the three big Romanian provinces. The religious buildings preserved in the area represent the testimonials and the expressions of the cultural values.

The present study reflects on the 32 wooden churches which have been declared historical monuments on Buzău County List of Historical Monuments 2010 (CIMEC, “Information Center, Memory and Cultural Synthesis”, 1992, *Project List of Historical Monuments*, prepared by the Directorate of Monuments, Ensembles and Historical Sites), cultural-historical heritage, out of which three are of national importance, ranked as architectural monuments in group A and 29, with local importance in group B (Law no. 422 since 18 July 2001 \*\*\* Republished regarding protection of historical monuments, article 8, aligned 1).

In the past there were a greater number of villages which had wooden churches. Preservation of local Christian traditions imposed in a way, that each of the concentration of traditional peasant households must have a religious edifice. It is thus obvious that the raw material used for building houses, was also used for building churches, wood being

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present almost everywhere in the northern half of Buzău County. Many of the wooden churches have perished due to the rage of historical events, or natural hazards. But, shortly, this lost buildings, were rebuilt or renewed, as a proof of long-lasting orthodox cult, due to the will of the people to keep their establishment, continuing thus the transmission of history to the future generations.

Regarding this issue, being aware of the heritage's quality and importance property is recommended to keep what that we have, not to destroy, not to bring further damage and to bring to the fore these wonderful architectural jewels that enrich our culture.

After the development of conservation and restoration projects of mural within wooden churches existed in Buzau County and the documentation campaigns, at the monument it can be highlighted the forms of degradation and may determine proposals for interventions. Movements performed consecutively in 2013 and 2014 to a total number of fifteen wooden churches declared historical monument in Buzau made possible an awareness of those values. Images taken in situ have a unique value because their existence in other studies is unknown and therefore it was not possible to undertake a critical analysis of the current state of preservation.

On the whole, any strategy that takes into account the long-term preservation and maintenance of a wooden church should start from the methodology of their interventions and costs. The proposals will be achieved through the efforts of all interested groups, the beneficiaries of use, to the constructions' founders and also to the general public.

The economical measures which are taken into account are those establishing investment and production costs currently possible after restoration. From the cultural point of view, the gains are much higher since the tourist attraction regarded as invaluable historical testimony will live in the future and the economical growth will take place over a long period of time continuously contributing to the development of society.

Restoration of wooden churches supports the sustainable development of the national heritage and the culture sent to future generations. Through the culture and heritage that is part of it, we represent our history, past, present and future.

Over time were discovered important artifacts of human history, objects that belong to the Upper Paleolithic (35 000-10 000 BC) on the upper Buzau, Niscov and Bâscii Chiojdului (Burlacu, Octavian, 1979, *Geographical and historical atlas of the Buzău county*, Home county of Buzău of teaching staff, p. 87) proving the existence of man in the region from these times. Other artifacts, such as cave hermitages in Buzău Mountains attest the beginning of Christianity in the Romanian space from III - IV century, the area being known as monastic center with old tradition.

In the county of Buzau were found tools and weapons made of bones or carved stones in the hills along with ceramic objects from the Neolithic and Bronze Age belonging to the Boian, Gumesti and Monteoru cultures. The ruins of the Roman fort from Pietrosele and several other Dacian settlements are the testimony of civilization on this territory. Domestic activities of the people of Neolithic culture were animal growth and cultivation of plants, allowing the gradual transition to a sedentary lifestyle. The house building had natural devices arranged along the water, on high terraces, all located on the surface in the form of huts.

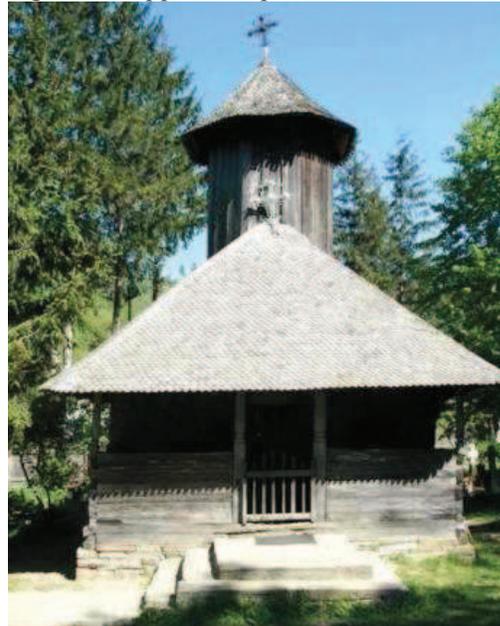
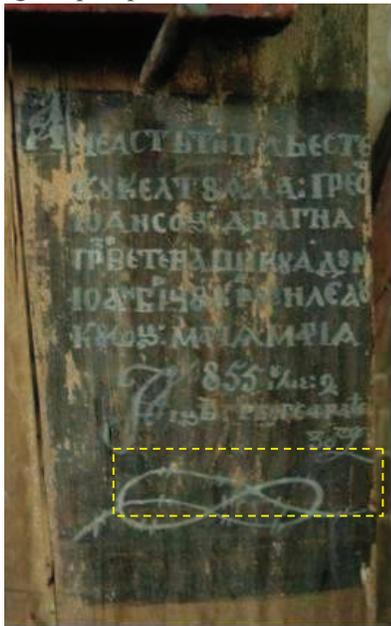
The presentation of remains and historical data of the county shows the importance and the value of this cultural area. The place and the role of culture in economic and social life will be changed after the accumulation of the data concerning the cultural sector, cultural institutions and even cultural offer, thus changing its ratio with the other socio-economic sectors. (Centre for Research and Consultancy on Culture, *Sectoral strategy of Culture an National Heritage for 2014-2020*)

Regarded as an economic force with a dynamic evolution in most EU Member States, as in Romania, culture is likely to generate economic growth. As an economic sector, it contributes significantly to GDP and provides many positive effects.

The wooden churches declared historic monuments bearing spirituality, meanings, identity, are an important factor in the sustainable development process, providing economic models based on cultural resources, tangible and intangible. Highlighting them through restoration and inclusion in programs of cultural identification, communication, information, accessibility will bring development of cultural infrastructure to the local and national community.

The economic analysis of conservation-restoration interventions on wooden churches from Buzau can be estimated based on a calculation of the rehabilitation costs. The estimation of these monuments brings support drafting conservation-restoration of wall paintings and the whole system. The development of the projects, in the first phase of the monuments of national importance, A classified, will bring a Culturally and tourism development helping to increase regional economy.

Near the city Nehoiu is placed a wooden church „ Saint Emperors Constantine and Elena” in the village Lunca Priporului. It has road access, the best case compared with other inaccessible, advantage in reducing the cost of restoring and increasing the number of visitors. The church was built in 1837 after the National Heritage Institute archives, and in 1823 after CIMEC list, but in an inscription on the iconostasis was written 1855 (fig. no.1). The church has not undergone any transformation, preserving the character of folk architecture through the small, beams made of building with traditional plan. The exterior is made of wooden porch on shaped pillars (fig. no.2), inside the first room, the narthex is a rather small space, having the partition wall with the nave by two free pillars and two anchored in the wall, the middle room or the nave and has a shape of square and polygonal altar. The roof is decorated with octagonal bell tower located next to the narthex, the carvings with harmonic lines of the porch rafters have an undeniable artistic value, and the existing shaped pillars and braces in the openings also support the plastic of the monument.



**Fig. 1.** The year it was painted the icons. **Fig.2.** The wooden church from Lunca Priporului..

Interesting is the indoor coverage system ranging from a straight horizontal plane through the ceiling made of boards of the porch and into the nave a polyhedral dome-

shaped canopy with eight curvilinear sides finished into a central ring. The altar is crowned by a cylindrical vault connected with the walls, trapezoidal in plan. The floor level is raised by a stone pedestal being paved with boards inside and stone in the porch.

All these technical elements bring a certain architectural authenticity that represents the work of craftsmen claiming tradition and culture. The cultural goods existing in these monuments are not artifacts and it can not be regarded as personal business, they are a cultural heritage with great or exceptional value, historical and documentary. Existing in situ, cultural goods have to live in an atmosphere of freedom, spontaneity and national character, which is why it is necessary conservation principle "in situ". By carrying out restoration and conservation interventions and highlighting, the monument may be placed in a cultural tourism circuit of national importance and this will help boost the economy.

Near the Lunca Priporului village is the Nehoiasu village in which the wooden church dedicated to the "The dormition of the Virgin" made in the period 1700-1710. The wooden church was originally isolated, but in time, by increasing the area, was included within the village.

The age village is known since the seventeenth century mentioned in documents of great importance, and the acts of freeholders established here bearing dates even old. The locality settlement is scattered hills formed from several villages. On this region has been developed a rich wood industry, it is mentioning that in 1892 the village had 58 saws. The territory offers parts and other natural resources through substances and mineral, untapped occasion to mention thermal spring Poiana Aries. Landmark in full development and with perspectives.

A good portion of the 32 wooden churches presented in the CIMEC ("Information Center, Memory and Cultural Synthesis", 1992, *Project List of Historical Monuments*, prepared by the Directorate of Monuments, Ensembles and Historical Sites) list on the territory of Buzău county are included in the protected area of other monuments - tourist attractions, placed at distances of several kilometers. Integrating these factors locally they bring benefit in development of the at county and even national tourism.

Stretched on Pârcovului valley (fig. no. 3) with a high number, cities that still exist today by an old wooden church are placed consecutively from the bottom to the mountain as follows: Lunca Frumoasa, Balanesti, Bozioru de Sus, Bozioru River, Gavanele and Nucu . In this area is included the complex of cave hermitages Bozioru - Nucu with medieval origin but also from the Bronze and Iron.



**Fig. 3. Buzău county map with the location of villages in which a wooden church**

Bozioru village owns in his area diversified points of tourism interest that constitute an favorable environment for social, economic and touristic development of the area. In the administrative component of the village exist: Bozioru, Buduile, Fisici, Gavanele, Gresia, Izvoarele, Nucu, Scaeni, Ulmet si Vavaluvile, four preserving, among other monuments, one old wooden church. Architectural monuments of local interest belonging to group B contained in localities Bozioru de Sus, Bozioru Rau, Gavanele, Nucu and Vavalucile are represented by the four wooden churches and the three memorial houses. Although they have a local interest, inheritance from the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century can be seen as the expression of individual identity of the area and the essential values that can form - together with monuments of national interest grouped A - a tourist center.

The sights can be constitute by wooden churches: "Holy Kings" from Bozioru River dating from 1841, " Virgin Mary's Birth " of Bozioru de Sus built in 1710, the former monastery Găvanele preserving wooden church "Assumption" in 1803 ; wooden church "Saint Nicholas" from Văvălucile raised in 1809 and wooden church "Entering Virgin Mary in the Church" in Nucu built in 1765.

The original form of the timber church " Virgin Mary's Birth" from Bozioru de Sus was limited to the western wall of the present nave, also including the open porch (fig. no. 4).

Details of the changes can be seen on the outside by adding wooden planks above the original railing. The final changes were aimed to increase the liturgical space within the church, given by the current open porch addition resulting in the increase of the number of parishioners. The porch is later added, its part of the monument without altering its originality ending as an aesthetic part of the plasticity of said monument construction. The strength beams from the bell tower show its originality ever since 1774 when the church was moved to the present location and rebuilt from its old material.



**Fig. 4. The wooden church from Bozioru de Sus.**



**Fig.5. The wooden church from Bozioru River**

Stages interventions for the wooden church „Holy Voivode” (fig. no. 5) in Bozioru River overlooking the constructive elements are vaguely known. A milestone in the changes is known between 1889-1911 when they performed repairs on the building and was repainted. In 1958 (INP, National Heritage Institute, archives, 1963 fund D.M.I, Direction of Historical Monuments, *Sheet of monument, Wooden Church from Upper Bozioru*, no. 10B 053, from 3.V.1963, checked by I. Șerban in 11.02.2003) there was a change of base, modifying the traditional look by replacing the old shingle roof with a new board.

The roof is crowned by two identical towers placed on a square section which is positioned on a common basis. Towers are built without a proper function they were only for decorating. Their dating seems to belong to the moment when the shingle roofing was replaced with the board.

Inside walls are painted in oil on galvanized sheet, probably in the interventions between the years 1889 to 1911. The nave retains the full picture sprawling down on the board, the other rooms are unpainted. A small number of religious scenes are preserved in the narthex. In 1963 in the forms for the designation of the monument the building was proposed to be classified as an popular architectural monument and later on to be included as a monument of historical value.

By restoring them is created on area of ten kilometers, five tourist attraction represented only by wooden churches, edifice that have not been introduced so far in the tours circuits.

Bozioru village preserves three memorial houses, Nicholas State house from 1923, Măncu house from 1924 and Stere Blăjel house from 1924, also near the village Nucu at distances of 2-7 km are placed cave hermitages in Bozioru Mountains, with 12 points of interest, most of them dated from medieval times, objective with national value classified in group A of historical monuments. Based on the existence of this two monuments with national interest, the cave hermitages and the wooden church "Assumption" of former monastery Găvanele, can be promote the other objectives with local interest.

Găvanele's former monastery church (fig. no. 6) is one of the few that keeps the shingles covering with wide clogged gutters, and wooden towers covered also in planks with vertical slats. It is assumed that the current old nave is open porch. Along with the whole church was covered with boards, and the altar, having all arcs accolade example of temple doors, anaphora and diaconicon. The church votive painting appears in current forms, except open porch pillars winding ridges and cut wood braces. The building construction is made from oak beams placed on a stone pedestal which is plastered and whitewashed, with the exterior clad with boards and battens, and the interior upholstered with icons painted on wood (fig. no. 6,7). Of course, along with the inclusion of former porch in the body church was added the common and small porch, and from the ex wall which separating the narthex from the nave which was points in the plane, has remained only the upper beam.



**Fig. 6. Wooden church from Găvanele's former monastery.**



**Fig.6,7. The wooden painting**

The location of the monument is on the road that goes to the village Nucu where it is the other wooden church, and then follows the road that reaching caves hermitages complex.

The restoration of the monument of architecture can achieve a targeted tourist route to visit. In this way it can contribute to the enhancement of cultural monuments and tourist development aimed at increasing economy.

It is important to protect historical monuments of national and universal value in Group A under the protection of the Ministry of Culture, a procedure that is part of the “strategy of economic and social sustainable development, tourism, urban and spatial planning at national and local level”.

With this population growth and regional economic development, hamlets became villages during the last century and today maintain this wealth of Romanian culture, small wooden church, which today may officiating religious habitat and services. Many of these wooden buildings were replaced or abandoned to the church wall, when material resources have enabled this change, a phenomenon often encountered in areas with developed infrastructure.

After analyzing the wooden churches in terms of density in the Buzau county, how widespread, the data, and even the dedication day are the defining characteristics who make specific buildings in the area. In describing the number and manner of wooden churches spread by Radu Crețeanu in 1968 is stated that the district Buzau included wooden church built between 1808-1810 (Crețeanu, Radu, 1968, *Wooden churches of Walachia*, Ed. Meridiane, Bucharest, p.6), which was not known how many. Although each village or commune and was composed by a church or two, it seems that the old wooden buildings have been preserved only in small settlements Orthodox communities with a high percentage of certification in the first half of the nineteenth century.

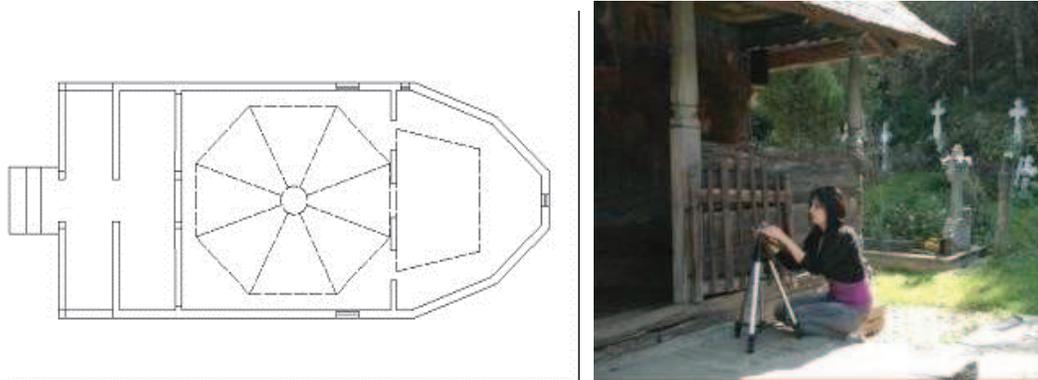
Inventory wooden churches and historical monuments analysis of the geographical area in order to achieve cultural tourism recovery programs for economic development brings a benefit in promoting tourism. Cultural resources are an important tool in the processes of regeneration and urban revitalization, as they are an essential part of the lifestyle of the individual and societies.

By highlighting and cataloging wooden churches in the Carpathian area can formulate strategies to develop and promote tourism in Buzau county. Promote tourism can be made by publishing a directory of wooden churches in which the description of architecture in general, both on the exterior and interior makes the whole assembly placed geographically image by presenting tourist route and other monuments in the area will highlight the *new territories* visit.

The advantage of the wooden churches locality near Buzau County cave hermitages will attract more public interest to explore the area. Highlighted as such, through awareness of these values unappreciated until now, will help build tourism circuit that will result in economic development.

In support of these wooden churches, many of them abandoned can develop rehabilitation programs, conservation and restoration that will bring out the beauty of the mural paintings and also the overall architecture, saving historical monuments.

Methodological program to achieve objectives is the inventory of wooden churches in consecutive trips monument technique for analysis of performance, state of preservation and conservation-restoration interventions proposal. For proper research will take shots, macro photography, recording pictures under UV light sampling to determine the pigments used, the surface of the monument for the determination, documentation specialist comic, humidity and temperature measurements to determine the indoor climate to conditions monument conservation, architectural plans (fig. no.8) made from measurements (fig. no. 9) and drawings. After summation of all data and analysis of the conservation status will develop draft conservation - restoration stating the diagnosis and specialized methodological suggestions that will be given to the approval of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.



**Fig.8. The architectural plan of Lunca Priporului church** **Fig.9. The measurements made in situ.**  
 (arh. Petru Darida, longitudinal section and plan made  
 by the architect Cherulescu, V., INP Archives)

For these types of monuments, *wooden church with interior paintings*, the restoration action does not end with the intervention itself. Their rare necessary periodic maintenance actions and treatment of the wood, which is known as a perishable material. Monitoring seasonal microclimate provides the necessary information that may cause interference on interior painting to ensure integrity.

Achieving awareness programs surrounding values in order to preserve national heritage and transmission to future generations is an objective sought can develop tourist area. The analysis and awareness of historic court can produce programs for education and enlightenment of the masses especially those residing in the surrounding area of the monument. The beneficiaries of use and locals in the area will know how to appreciate historical buildings, removing conception to demolish and rebuild, or remove the intention to take off the old painting and then to paint again. This way the people can be aware of the importance of monuments and their historical value. Making them worth by protecting, carefully preserve and promote can increase zone economy.

Preserving and restoring historic wooden churches declared will become the engine of regional development Buzău County and increasing of tourist's number who visit the region. This will achieve growth of national and regional identity by highlighting all European wooden churches, monuments representing tourism value. Promoting the image of Buzău County using natural wealth and national heritage, tourism segments that are complemented by spiritual heritage, cultural, universal heritage wooden churches bring sustainable tourism based on existing landmarks.

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