

## ASPECTS CONCERNING AGRI-TOURISTIC POTENTIAL OF OSTROV VILLAGE, CONSTANTA COUNTY

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this paper is to highlight agri-touristic resources and their opportunities for revaluation, that would represent a landmark for sustainable economic development of Ostrov rural area. The research methodology is represented by bibliographic documentation and field research for the list of agri-touristic resources, in order to find solutions for sustainable rural management. The Ostrov village has a variety of agricultural resources, natural and cultural resources, which by association will emphasize the agri-touristic feature of this area. Thus, the area of Ostrov village offers optimal conditions for exploitation of agri-touristic resources and will be the starting point of a polyvalent agri-touristic route along Danube, as a solution for sustainable development of the rural community from South-Western Dobrogea.*

**Key words:** *environment, Ostrov, rural, sustainability, tourism*

### INTRODUCTION

Ostrov village is located in Constanta county, to the South-Western part of Oltina Plateau, on the right bank of the Danube, in Southern Dobrogea. The geographical location, traditional agricultural activities, the presence of natural and cultural resources, which confirm the human presence in this area since ancient times are factors that may provide touristic valences of Ostrov village. The purpose of this paper is to identify the agri-touristic resources of Ostrov village and capitalizing on their opportunities to develop sustainable this rural area.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Information about the touristic potential of the Ostrov village were obtained through bibliographic documentation and field research for inventory and evaluation of resources with agri-touristic potential, infrastructure, touristic activities with recreational and cultural character, to identify solutions of sustainable rural management. Being situated in a plateau area, it can be exploited the viticultural, fruit growing, beekeeping and agro-pastoral potential, but also the fishing or leisure, due to its geographical position, along Danube. [3,4].

The evaluation of agri-touristic resources was effectuated by its own methodology, based on the methodology for assessment of touristic potential in administrative-territorial units of Romania and the European tourism indicator system [6,7]. Thus, monitored indicators were grouped into four main criteria: *natural touristic resources, cultural heritage, farming and traditional products of local community, infrastructure* (general and specific). Each criterion is assigned a score, award level of appreciation being made by a process of evaluation by a total of 100 points (table 1).

Table 1.

No. crt.	Indicators	Scores
1	Natural touristic resources	25
2	Cultural heritage	25
3	Farming and traditional products of local community	20
4	Infrastructure	30
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

The value of the score obtained will rank the administrative-territorial unit according to the agri-touristic potential: *high potential* ( $\geq 76$ ), *medium potential* (51-75), *low potential* (26-50), *no potential* ( $\leq 25$ ).

Currently, it can see recovery opportunities of Ostrov village as touristic village, representative for Southern Dobrogea, that natural and cultural resources available, may cause touristic flows, that will contribute to relaunch the local rural economy [4].

### RESEARCH RESULTS

Ostrov village is located to 126 km West of Constanta city, on 3<sup>rd</sup> National Road, across the Danube to the North, and the connection with Calarasi county and Bucharest city. Located right in the place where the Danube enters integral in Romania, to 5 km from Silistra, the Bulgarian city, Ostrov village is placed in Southern Dobrogea Plateau, Oltina subdivision. The landscape is hilly nature, with altitudes up to 150 m (*Parapet Hill, Islaz Hill*), fragmented of short deep valleys (*Gagea Valley, Caldă Valley*), and terminated by river lake (*Bugeac Lake*). It is an area with features of steppe and forest-steppe, here are concentrated most forests of South-West Dobrogea, climatic conditions favoring a vegetation of Mediterranean type [2,8].

In a particular area by geographical location, it was expected that the diligently of its inhabitants are as, characterized by a remarkable practicality. Regarding occupations, inhabitants of Ostrov village have always practiced the agriculture. In the beginning the main occupation was cattle, fishing and beekeeping, due to the geographical location of the village on the left bank of the Danube, later, in the current settlement on the right bank, adding farming and less the trade and other services [8].

The plateau, slightly wavy, with gentle slopes and meadows have enabled the complex agricultural use. Favorable natural conditions were added actions of terracing the slopes and use amendments, so that the use of agricultural land, initially for cereals, sunflower and walnut oil, was diversified by planting grape-vines (8% of agricultural land) and fruit trees (4% of agricultural land) [5]. Pedo-climatic conditions are favorable to all branches of agriculture, but vineyard occupies an important place. The meridional agro-climatic potential from Ostrov area, allows the growth of plants that require more heat and light (kiwi, tobacco, castor oil, fig), it is recognized for different fruit-tree growing areas (apricots, peaches, plums, cherries) (table 2), both of the small farmers and the economic units. The high degree of insolation in the area, exposure terraced slopes, soil quality contributes to higher yields of grapes, quality wines and fruit.

Table 2.

## Orchards in Ostrov Area (ha)

Plum Trees	Apricot Trees	Peach Trees	Cherry Trees	Other Fruit Trees	Total
45	164	49	89	25	372

Source: Processed Data, INSSE, 2015 [6]

Ostrov Vineyard takes place on the Danubian side of Oltina plateau from South-Western Dobrogea and it is a model for those who want to produce table grapes (*Afuz Ali*, *Muscat de Adda*, *Muscat Hamburg*) (table 3), especially for raisins (*Sultanina*) and good quality wines, white (*Chardonnay*, *Muscat Ottonel*, *Pinot Gris*, *Fetească Regală*, *Sauvignon Blanc*) and red (*Cabernet Sauvignon*, *Merlot*, *Pinot Noir*, *Shyraz*). The main winery center is Ostrov, the other being Lipnita, Baneasa, Oltina, Aliman [4].

The Ostrov village has an attractive potential of livestock, concentrated in the households, represented by sheep and cattle, plus beekeeping and fisheries [1].

Table 3

## Vineyards in Ostrov Area (ha)

Wine Grapes	Table Grapes	Winery Nursery	Total
377	359	38	774

Source: Processed Data, INSSE, 2015

It is a village with a strong Dobrogea's tradition, the residence of ATU Ostrov (which comprises 6 villages), with an area of 167 km<sup>2</sup> and 5,034 inhabitants, mostly Romanian, more than half living in the Ostrov village (table 4), which has utilities (national road, water, energy, sewage system, fixed and mobile telephony, internet), that favors the development of agri-touristic activities.

Table 4.

## The ethnic structure of Ostrov ATU

Total (inhabitants)	Ethnic percentage of total inhabitants (%)					
	Romanian	Turks and Tatars	Lippovans	Aromanian	Rroma	Other ethnics
5,034	92.6	1	-	0.4	3.7	2.3

Source: INSSE, 2015

Such an area with landscapes of an Edenic beauty and full of history, a place where there have succeeded so many nations whose traces remain undeleted by time, it is proof that Dobrogea is a land that has opened its doors, as a good Christian, for every people, regardless of nationality or religion. Ostrov, the village situated at the confluence of two civilizations, the Roman and the Bulgarian has retained over time the traditions and customs untouched by the wave of modernity [8].

In terms of resources for agri-tourism, all of Ostrov area enjoys a rich cultural heritage represented by *Durustorum* archaeological site, the remains of *Păcuil lui Soare* Byzantine fortress and *Dervent* Monastery. To this was added customs and traditions of the local population, traditional folk costumes specific to Danube Plain and South Dobrogea, traditional architecture of the country houses, local cuisine, traditional local holidays and events.

Also, it has a significant natural touristic potential that offers the possibility of developing a sector with positive results for the local economy. It noted the striking similarity with the Danube Delta, by numerous river islands, with sinuous arms and dividing channels, created by the Danube, vegetation and fauna as in delta. However, the touristic activity is less developed, probably due to lack of accommodation. Predominant is the transit tourism, made by travelers passing through Ostrov to Bulgaria, through the

border point Ostrov-Silistra, or coming from Bucharest, cross the Danube by Chiciu-Ostrov ferryboat and go to the Black Sea Coast.

**Natural touristic resources:**

- The right arm of *Danube (Ostrov)*;
- The islands between secondaries arms of Danube (*Hopa, Pastramagiu, Ostrovul Vechi, Pacinul* - with areas can reach up to 300 ha);
- *Bugeac* Lake (river lake, bird protection area);
- *Esechioi* Forest (natural protected area).

The evaluation of natural touristic resources is appreciated by a total of 23 points out of a possible 25 points (table 5).

**Cultural heritage** is represented by:

- *Vicina* Byzantin Fortress from *Păcuiul lui Soare* Island;
- Archaeological traces of *Durustorum* Fortress;
- *Dervent* Monastery (with two Holy Crosses that grow from the ground, which are considered to have healing effects, and four Holy Name: *Izvorul Tămăduirii, Sf. Gheorghe, Sf. Parascheva, Înălțarea Sf. Cruci*);
- *Izvorul Tămăduirii* (spring with healing effects near the monastery, its legend twinned with Cristianity of Southern Dobrogea).
- *Domeniile Ostrov* Wine Museum (includes collections of archeology, art, ethnography);
- *Domeniile Ostrov* Camp of contemporary Art (paintings, sculptures, ceramics).

The evaluation of cultural touristic resources is appreciated by a total of 21 points out of a possible 25 points (table 5).

**Agricultural activities**, as support for the revaluation of traditional local products:

- viticulture (with *OSTROVIT Winery*), with an area of 774 ha;
- fruit grower (peach, apricot, cherry, apple, plum trees), with an area of 372 ha;
- experimental kiwi plantation on an area of 2 ha;
- beekeeping;
- sheep and cattle;
- fishing in the Danube River and Bugeac Lake.

The evaluation of *farming and traditional product* indicator is appreciated by a total of 16 points out of a possible 20 points (table 5).

**General and specific infrastructure** includes:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> National Road București-Călărași-Ostrov-Adamclisi-Murfatlar-Constanța and local roads linking other villages of Ostrov ATU;
- Ferryboat and small harbour on Danube;
- Border crossing to Bulgaria;
- Network connections (telephone, internet);
- Facilities (paved roads, water supply, sewerage network expanding, energy supply);
- *Curtea dintre vii* touristic Complex, in the *Domeniile Ostrov* : accommodation (48 places), restaurant, *Beciul Boierilor* Wine Cellar, equestrian complex;
- Other accommodation: *Dervent* Monastery (60 places), *Casa din Bugeac* Guesthouse (7 places), Pupil's Guesthouse of Ostrov High School (40 places, a possible hostel).

The evaluation of *infrastructure* indicator is appreciated by a total of 24 points out of a possible 30 points (table 5).

**Table 5.**

### Evaluation of agri-touristic potential of Ostrov ATU

No. crt.	Indicators	Scores	Weight in maximum value(%)
1	Natural touristic resources	23	92
2	Cultural heritage	21	84
3	Farming and traditional products of local community	16	80
4	Infrastructure	24	80
<b>Total</b>		<b>84</b>	<b>84</b>

By summing the scores from the four indicators gives a total of 84 points. Thus, the Ostrov village may be included in the category of villages from Southern Dobrogea, with a high agri-touristic potential, according to the own methodology.

Figure 1 shows the territorial distribution of resources with agri-touristic potential of the Ostrov administrative territorial unit.

Due to the existence of various touristic resources, in Ostrov area may practice the following forms of tourism: *agri-tourism* by capitalizing on local products (bee, fish, fruits and wine), *historical* and *religious cultural tourism*, *ecotourism* and *scientific tourism*, *leisure tourism* (fishing, hunting and water sports).

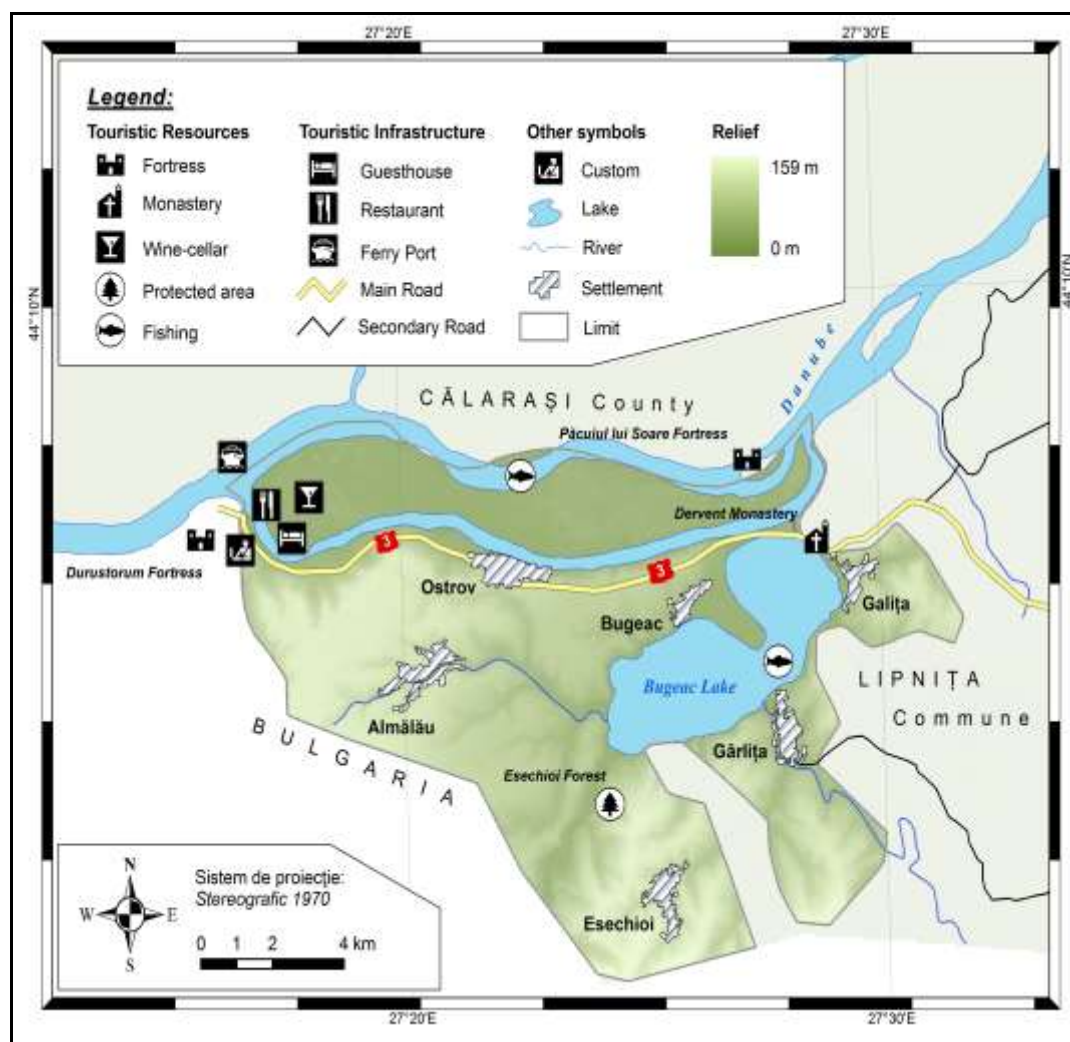


Figure 1. Touristic Map of Ostrov ATU

## CONCLUSIONS

The Ostrov village has natural and cultural resources that can highlight the local touristic potential, but lack of guesthouse and promoting village is a weakness.

The priorities of local authorities on the future development plans of the Ostrov village economy include strategies and projects for recovery of local heritage and touristic promotion.

The Ostrov village offers optimal conditions for recovery of agri-touristic resources, for organizing traditional guesthouses and may become the starting point of a polyvalent agri-touristic route along the Danube.

The geographical position, the access to a national road which links between the Capital and the Black Sea Coast, the Danube's wetland, historical, cultural and religious sights, Ostrov vineyard, beekeeping and fisheries resources, customs, traditions and local cuisine, all are landmarks for sustainable development of agri-tourism in the rural community of Ostrov area.

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