

MUNTELE MIC AREA – REPRESENTATIVE ELEMENTS OF POTENTIAL

BALINT MARIA^{1*}

¹ „Aurel Vlaicu” University, Faculty of Food Engineering, Tourism and Environmental Protection, Romania

*Corresponding author's e-mail: balintmariamihaela@gmail.com

Abstract: Muntele Mic resort is located at an altitude of 1525 m. It was not until the 1930s that the Muntele Mic region began to be popularized. The region is suitable for weekend trips, tourism, skiing and recreation in an alpine climate and its proximity to the Banat centers, its beauty and altitude, admirably qualify it for the existence of an alpine resort, necessary for the population of the cities. “Due to the beauty of the region and the repeated trips to Muntele Mic by the officials of the Trams and the Timișoara Municipal Electric Power Plant, attention was focused on this corner of poetry and health of Banat.

Keywords: Muntele Mic, potential, capitalisation

INTRODUCTION

In our country, mountain regions represent a very important area from an economic point of view, and at the same time it is a region that must be protected. Mountain areas must benefit from a specific policy, defined according to sustainable development, which ensures the needs of the present, without compromising the chances of future generations. The aim is to establish equal living conditions between the populations of the more favored regions and the mountain ones, targeting all economic, social, cultural and environmental problems.[1-6,10]

The official beginnings of tourism activity in the Muntele Mic massif area date back to 1936. The proximity of this area to Banat urban centers, as well as the altitude, has sparked interest in tourism, skiing and recreation in the alpine area [14]. It was not until the 1930s that the Muntele Mic region began to be popularized. The region is suitable for weekend trips, tourism, skiing and recreation in an alpine climate, and its proximity to the Banat centers, its beauty and altitude, admirably qualify it for the existence of an alpine resort, necessary for the population of the cities.[7]

In tourism, in general, the weather is of particular importance. Considering this aspect Muntele Mic area is a privileged area, [9,13] where the snow lasts even 6 months per year. The massive precipitation coming from the northwest, as well as the low temperatures recorded during winter, make it possible to practice winter sports from November to May. The thickness of the snow layer in winter is on average 1 meter. The ski slopes have slopes for both beginners and advanced skiers. Currently, there are three slopes for skiing, named by tourists Valea Soarelui (easy level, approx. 1700 m long), Căldare (medium level, over 600 m) and Sub Teleschi (difficult level, approx. 1400 m), the ascent being made with two modern ski lifts, and more recently there is also a night ski facility.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main aim of the research is to present the representative elements of tourism potential from Muntele Mic area, using as research method the qualitative method and as source of information different sources.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Scorilo's Stones. A vestige preserved from the time of the Dacians, Scorilo's Stones represent a pagan altar located at an altitude of 1200 m on the northern slope of the Muntele Mic massif. On the Muntele Mic – Poiana Marului tourist route,[16] in the Scorilo Valley. According to legends passed down over the centuries, passionately told by local shepherds, Scorilo hid the treasure in a cave located here. The location of the cave in a rock formed by crystalline schists is difficult to accept, because natural caves cannot form in this type of rock. It is true that through a thorough investigation of the rock, a lateral room was found that seems to have been dug into the rock by human hands, a hollow used for centuries as a shelter by shepherds who climbed to Muntele Mic.



Figure 1. Scorilo's Stones

La Blide. A prehistoric – or perhaps ancient – monument unique in Romania is the one at the “La Blide” point (near “Pietrele lui Scorilo” in the Muntele Mic area) and is presented in the form of a slate slab on which three hemispheres in the shape of “blides” of different sizes were made by polishing. Such monuments on heights – which apparently had the role of altars where sacrifices and libations were practiced for various deities – are only found in Austria in South Tyrol.[14,15]



Figure 2. La Blide - Sheepfolds – Iglu

Turnu Ruieni. On the Turnului hill, only two kilometers from Turnu Ruieni and about ten kilometers from Caransebeș, you can see the ruins of a fortress shrouded in mystery, from which only an imposing tower has survived the battle with time.[17]

This tower also gave the name to the nearest locality, Turnu Ruieni, which it has faithfully guarded for hundreds of years. This ancient village, located in the heart of the Banat Montan, is the keeper of popular traditions dating back to long gone times. On the way to or from Muntele Mic, any lover of nature and beauty deserves to treat themselves to a little pampering, admiring the fantastic panorama that opens wide to the eyes, in exchange for a little effort due to the climb to the top of the hill.



Figure 3. Turnu Ruieni

St. Elijah's Monastery on Muntele Mic. The Muntele Mic Monastery was founded in 1939 with the construction of a wooden church in the resort of the same name, then a monastic body with 5 cells, a kitchen and a refectory. After monastic life here was interrupted during communism, the Muntele Mic Monastery was reactivated in 1991. The church is built of wooden beams on a stone foundation and a 1.5 m plinth. Inside, the walls are plastered and painted. Up to a height of 1.3 m, the interior walls are lined with thick plywood. It is divided into an altar, a nave and a narthex. The nave is delimited from the narthex by two strong wooden pillars, which also support the arches of the tower. In the narthex, all around, there are benches made of planks and thick plywood, used by elderly believers and the sick. It has a very tall spire, modeled after the wooden churches of Maramureș and the Apuseni Mountains, to facilitate the falling of snow in winter. The iconostasis is carved in oak wood by the sculptor Stefan Cajo from Timisoara, the same one who also carved the iconostasis of the metropolitan cathedral in Timisoara. The floor is made of fir planks, and the roof, including the spire, is covered with shingles. The church was consecrated by P.S. Vasile Lazarescu, Bishop of Caransebes, on May 1, 1940.[18]

The Hermitage of St. Elijah on Muntele Mic has become a place of pilgrimage for believers from the Caransebeș and Timișoara areas, who come in large numbers to celebrate his feast day, on July 20; for tourists in summer and winter, and for believers from nearby villages who live nearby.



Figure 4. St. Elijah's Hermitage on Muntele Mic
Source: own portofolio

The Cross on Muntele Mic, with 25 m high, fixed by anchoring to the ground on a metal platform, embedded in the rock, at an altitude of 1670 m has powerful projectors and a siren mounted on the cross.[8,11,12]



Figure 5. The Cross on Muntele Mic

Source: own portofolio

For hundreds of years (at least!) in the area of the Natura 2000 Site, the Țarcu Mountains have been the sheepfolds of the surrounding Banat villages. Maintained and repaired from generation to generation, they retain the circular stone shape, as they were built over 1000 years ago.



Figure 6: Țarcu Peak, Țarcu Lake, Pietra Ilovei, Cascadele Sucului

Source: own portofolio

The main tourist routes in the area are:

Route 1. Borlova Village (350 m) – Sebesel Valley – Priporu Rau - Voinii Fountain (1230 m) – Muntele Mic Tourist Complex (1525 m)

Time: 3 – 3 ½ hours

Marking: Red tape

Muntele Mic Tourist Complex (1525 m) - Jigoriei Saddle - Seroni Peak - Under Cuntu Peak - Cuntu Weather Station (1460 m) - La Sadovanu - Tarcu Peak and Weather Station (2190 m) - Plaiului Saddle (2065 m) - Suculetu Saddle (1909 m) - Scheiului Saddle (1886 m) - Nevoia Peak - Under Baicu Peak - Iepii Saddle (1727 m).

Time: 13 hours
Marcaj: Bandă roșie

Saua Iepii (1727 m) - Cusuturii Peak (Netis 2089 m) Bloju Peak (2161 m) - Stone Peak (2192 m) - Bistra Peak (2153 m) Under Petreanu Peak (1904 m) - Clopotiva Commune

Time: 5 -6 hours

Marking: Red band

Route 2. Poiana Marului Resort (650 m) - Cioaca Lui Baloi Mountain - Piatra Scorilei Peak - Under Muntele Mic Peak - Muntele Mic Tourist Complex (1525 m)

Time: 5 - 6 hours

Marking: Blue band

Route 3. Poiana Marului Resort (650 m) - Buza Nedeei Mountain - Bistricioara Peak (2005 m) - Nedeaia (Matania) Peak - Nevoia Peak

Time: 5 -6 hours

Marking: Blue triangle

Route 4. Poiana Marului Resort (650 m) - Mărului Valley - Bistra Mărului Valley - Pecineaga Valley Mouth - Paltinetu Mountain Peak (1469 m) - Bloju Peak (2161 m) - Custurii Peak - Zeicu Peak - Tomeasa Mountain - Gura Apei Lake Dam - Tomeasa Colonia

Time: 4 - 5 hours

Marking: Blue cross

Route 5. Poiana Marului Resort (650 m) - Bistra Marului Valley - Saua Iepii - Stana Corciova (1390 m) - Gura Apei Lake Dam - Colonia Tomeasa

Time: 6 hours

Marking: Red triangle

Route 6. Saua Suculețului (1909 m) - Prislop Peak - Prislop Peak (1962 m) - Capul Prislop (1839 m) - Saua Macile - Raul Ses Valley (connection to Godeanu Mountains, 1530 m)

Time: 1 ½ - 2 hours

Marking: Red dot

Route 7. Cuntu Meteorological Station (1460 m) - Poiana Strignoiu (1020 m) - Plesii Peak - Poiana Golesu (1170 m) - Poiana Fantanele (1050 m) - Poiana Padesu (900 m) - Varciorova Village (350 m)

Time: 4 -5 hours

Marking: Blue point

Route 8. Cuntu Meteorological Station (1460 m) - Poiana Strignoiu (1020 m) - Poiana Zloba (800 m) - Valea Raului Lung - Plopu Village (550m) - Fenes Village (400m) - Armenis Commune (350m)

Time: 7 hours

Marking: Yellow point

Route 9. Under Petreanu Peak - Petranu Sheepfold - Valea Mare - Gura Zlata Chalet

Marking: Red cross

CONCLUSIONS

The Muntele Mic area has a great wealth of cultural-historical values, a harmonious and diversified natural setting in terms of landscape, which responds to various motivations for travel and highlights the beauty and value of the mountain village. Based on these aspects, the valorization of the rural heritage of the mountain village, unaltered and located in an unpolluted space, is imperative.

When developing proposals for valorization of the tourist potential of the Muntele Mic area, it must be taken into account that tourism in rural areas in recent years is different, from several points of view:

- it involves a much larger tourist circulation;
- the penetration of tourism has acquired a much more important dimension as a result of the development of the automotive industry, which allows reaching destinations inaccessible to rail transport and especially does not focus only on regions with spectacular landscapes, expanding into rural regions of all types.

In order for a mountain tourism area of the Muntele Mic area to be capitalized and exploited rationally, criteria must be established for identifying rural settlements and determining the potential of the resources they have.

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