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**THE FACULTY OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY**

**THE ERUDITE SCHOOL „ISIDOR TODORAN”**

# **MARAMUREŞ- “THE COUNTY” OF THE ORTHODOX PILGRIMAGE**

## **BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE THESIS**

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**The Focus languages and key -words:** Maramureş, county, pilgrimage, pilgrim, religious tourism, wooden church, pilgrimage's centre, traditional culture, people culture, spiritual background, rural landscape, Maramures cultural landscape;

## SUMMARY

The Maramureş, because of its specific conditions: a relative geographical isolation in the North of the Carpathians, mountains with deeply thick forests and who have favoured a real culture and art of wood, a climate with hard winters and difficult roads, a historical continuity of the free Dacians, has generated an original and extraordinary culture, had preserved the values and the traditions into a manner of life who has surprised and attracted, in the same time.

Situated in the Northern-West of Romania, having an elongated shape, the district of Maramureş has got a variety of relief forms. There are in an approximate equal proportion mountains, hills and depressions. The Highest area includes the chains of the volcanic mountains Oaş, Gutâi, Țibleş and that of the Maramureş and Rodnei mountains. The hills and piedmonts area has medium altitudes between 400-900 m. The Maramureş depressions, of Lăpuşului, of Baia Mare, of Chioar and of Copalnic are those where are settled the most of localities. The some passes make the links with the neighbouring regions.

The hydrographic network of Maramureş is very reach. The main rivers are: Tisa, Iza, Mara, Vişeu, Lăpuş, Vaser, Săsar, Someş. Their flow is influenced by the river feeding. From the touristic perspective the rivers have lots of trumps: they have an essential landscaping role, for the practicing of the fishing and other sports, for the good working of the peasant installations. The lakes are extremely various from the point of view of its genesis. There are glacial, periglacial, salt mines, pools/puddles, peats, of anthropogenic dam, all with a remarkable touristic potential. The Springs of the mineral water there are in a huge number, according some sources, over 100 in the entire district. We find about all the hydrochemical types and they can be put to good use economically and balneary, too. The water surfaces changes the landscape conferring it more attraction.

The great majority of the touristic activities practiced in Maramureş, especially those of the religious tourism, are setting up in the free air/outside, so depending of the weather. It is about the landscaping effect of the seasons, as well as, the positive or the negative influence of the human element, creating comfort or discomfort. Each climate element is important: temperature, precipitations, wind, cloudiness, sun radiation, having an effect on the touristic setting up.

The Maramures climate is a moderate-continental type, different according to the forms of the relief. In a mountain climate, in a hill one and in the under climate of the depressions. The precipitations are between the highest in our country, about 70 % from the district. The circulation of the westerly air masses causes the intensification of the precipitations, milder winters, summers with plentiful rains and electric discharges, and in winter it's feel the presence



of the polar and under polar masses of air. The climate's elements constitute in Maramures therapeutical midways by the obvious improvement of the health state. The Ionized air from the mountains regions causes a state of well being.

Because of the presence in equal proportions of mountains, hill and field, in the Maramures geographical background we meet a variety of ecosystems and terrestrial and aquatic species. The Vegetation is influenced, as it is known, by the variety of the relief, by petrography, by climate elements. It is altitudinally tiered, with the typical species for each floor. The Forest vegetation, the woods, is that who determinates the peculiarity of the entire Maramures landscape. The hardwood floor and the white wood floor is supplemented by grasslands and meadows, by peats and under alpin vegetation. We mention the presence of the edible chestnut tree in the Baia Mare depression..

The Vegetation is the basic element of the landscape, gives it particularity individualizes, increases the attraction of the region. By the forest's cleaning it is exerted an anthropogenic pressure against the environment.

The rich golden and silver resources from the region have imposed that the Maramures mining activities make from this the most important area of Romania for the exploitation of the complexe ores. Nowadays, after the closing of the mines, the results of these activities are still maintained. It stopped also, for a long time ago, the extraction of the salt, reserves who made well known the region, in past.

The importante Maramures areals are afforested, the abundance of the wooden materials having it contribution to the development of a wooden civilisation, achieving an important artistical refinement. The local architecture reflects the craftsmen's skilfulness and touches the top by the wooden churches and the marvellous gates.

In Maramureş, as well as in other zones of Romania, the occupations and the traditional professions reflect the peasants's vision about the spiritual and material life, being an important attraction by itself. The Nature is the source of ispiration and the raw material, too. The Way how these professions and occupations are practiced, the used tools, the made products represent a raid in the history, a return in time.

The Agriculture is the main activity for the Maramures people. The agricultural landscape, imposed by the relief and the climate features, but also by the human presence, has an important role in the defining of Maramures land, as an important touristical region. The Agriculture is one of subsistence, even an archaic sometimes, the agricultural activities characterizing the cuntryman from Maramures and drawing visitors' attention. The land cultivation and the animal husbandry are both in the local tradition. Many agricultural activities have been lost, such as the planting of the hemp, and other are ready to desappear, such is the sheepherding.

The ingenious technical installations, realisations and result of the popular genius are extremely various. Lots of them are made only by wood, even in the mechanical parts, and are manual activated or by the power of the water. The Oloinites where the sunflower seeds are crushed, whirlpools, „archaic washing machines”, traditional mills have been semnifically

reduced in the last period or even disappeared for ever in some villages.. The Modernis and the urbanization of the peasant life have determined deeply changes passed in a lively rhythm, causing the disappearance of a style of life.

The Handcraft products has an important place in the cultural patrimony of the region. The Craftsmen from Maramures always are presents with their creations at the fairs from our country. Their objects have a functional and an artistic value, being a prove of the extraordinary people culture. The Maramures habilities are seen from their hand made products, the textile objects have a special technical of colours obtained by technics of natural painting. The present symbols, include geometric grounds, vegetable, zoomorphe and antropomphe. The Testimony of the skilfulness and of the talent are the people clothes, stylish and sober, with elements preserved from the Dacians' garments. In Săcel there is preserved the red and enameled unceramics, with archaic decorations and ornaments, also the technics of work identical with those from the 3-rd and the 4-th centuries, deriving from the Dacian period.

The Traditional aspect of the Maramures rural settlements is determined by the developed activities, by the geographical isolation, materials used in the buildings, by the tumultuous history. They represent a return in time and give an incimparable identity to the region.

The Maramures traditional village is stil alive. People's life from here is kept in a tightened connection with the environment and it is marked by the faith, rituals, traditions and customs. Deep spiritual, the people from Maramures demonstrate this spirituality in every personal or communitary event, charged symbolically and mystically, archaic, simple and charming, most of it kept from the Dacian period. The Time is mesured here according to the Christian calendar with signs formed by the holidays and the fast periods, people guiding their activities also after the agricultural and Easter calendar, adopted to the rhythm of the seasons, fact confirmed by the different festivities.

The Establishments carry the imprint of the civilisation that they take part to, „the wood civilisation”. The Establishment is situated related to the road, neighbours, vally, cardinal points, space coordinations which make an organized spiritual fonction after constant rules and customs. „The Museum in free air” that was the name given to the Maramures village, unfortunately this typical aspect is going to be lost. The wooden houses have 1-2 rooms and „ șatră” or „ târnaț”, a kind of verandah. Other annexes are the stable, the shed, the other kind of shed, the well. The Yard is closed, surrendered by wooden fence or wicker. The Technic of the wooden processing and the building is the same for houses and churches. The Inscriptions show the year, the name of the owner and eventually the master. The inside is simple, with useful, wooden objects, benches, hope chests and with handmade textiles.

„The rustic Arches of Triumph”, the wooden gates, as they were named, have won their fame by the proportions, sizes and ornaments. From historical point of view, in the Maramures of the 18th century, most of the nobles had the privilege, means the rights to build high gates. These were called „nemeș”. The „Portieșii” didn't have this right, they could made a little gate named „vraniță”. After the exit from the Austrian and Hungarian influnce, almost the all people

from Maramures have built gates. The Gate delimites the familial universe, constitutes an obstacle against the negative energies, protects the family from diseases, makes the passage from the neutral space of the road to the sacred one of the establishment. To make afraid, it were sculpted antropomorphic faces and other traditional and symbolic ornaments, having mythical meanings. Nowadays, unfortunately, by the opulence, by the abundance of the decorations, by the sizes, it is close to the kitch.

The Wooden churches and the gates, are the brand of Maramures. They are exceptionally technical-architectural realisations, with a particular esthetically refinement. In contrast with the rest of the Europe, the whole architectural, plastical conception is unic. The Churches have a personal peculiarity, they are original buildings, reflect a strong local imprint. For that have been cooperated a complex of natural facts, by the abundance existence of the forest, and historically due the restrictions for the building of the faith places by rock. Their importance is a spiritual one, a cultural, scholastic, social, strategical, economical and esthetical, too. The Wooden churches have been situated in higher areals, many of them being removed, rebuilt, modified. They have a simple planimetry and the same ornamental grounds found at the gates and establishments. The buildings masters are local ones. They have evolved in time, with a personal style which has been extended to the regional architecture with differences according to the „ethnographic county”. The Wooden churches are memorially in the Maramures County. In The Lăpuș County they have long verandahs and porches. In the Chioar County there are specific domes and framings. In the Codru County they are reduced as dimensions, but well proportioned, with rich inner ornaments and the ornamental verandah.

„The Researching” Of the God Empire (Matthew 6,33) in the proper meaning, but also in the figurative one, this is the description of the pilgrimage. The Pilgrims try to discover in their temporary life the eternal life, to build a bridge between the earth and the sky, between the spiritual and the material world. To be a pilgrim means to go in foreign places with the spiritual aim for discovering Him, The God or for coming close to Him..

The word „peregrines”, „for and bright Latin language, means over the field, territory, country and has the signification to wander, to miss far and away and characterizes a traveller who goes from his native places into another country. In The Old Testament the pilgrimage was a ritual which had been realised at the end of the travel. „Peregrinus” becomes „pelegrinus” in The Middle Age receiving the signification of a traveller who goes to a holy land. Nowadays we take part in a new modification of the meaning of the word „pilgrim” who becomes a religious touriste visiting religious objectives.

In the orthodoxy the pilgrimage is a liturgical act when the person, looking the God, the sanctify, makes a sacred travel, where a spiritual renewal happened. By the pilgrimage the faith becomes stronger and stronger having as a consequence the confessional increment of the pilgrims. It is considered as a very efficient possibility of confession who brings together into a fellowship people from different mediums, each one with his characteristics, who influences each other with an intercultural effect.. The Pilgrimage is an pedagogical act, a real school of faith, an educator of patience and a teacher of prayer. The pilgrim undertakes a missionary act, when at

his return he brings at his home all that he has learnt. We can talk about an economical impact because the pilgrims offer homage, money, as a sign of his /her gratitude, satisfaction. The Pilgrimage is a research and a discover of the God, a prophetic action that symbolizes everybody's meeting in the God's Empire. More and more in nowadays, the pilgrimage has become a religious tourism, a travel to religious objectives with a minimum confessional implication.

The World Confessions has been representing the rituals of the pilgrimage since the very ancient times. We can even remark the „universality of the pilgrimage” with typical characteristics for the historical periods and local cultures.

In The Old Testament the single time when man doesn't look for God is when he spends with Him in the Garden of Eden. After the moment of Adam and Eve's falling, there is a researching, each generation trying to reconnect and to find Him. Avraam is the only who answers to the God's calling, he leaves his home and travels in the unknown places with faith, pilgrimages until he arrives at the Promis Land. The Exodus of the Ebrews from the Egyptian slavery during forty years puts on their history the three pilgrimages holidays which are kept until today.

Jesus Chrit, Himself has participated to the pilgrimage at the Temple from Jerusalem at the age of 12 and during his public activities. Together with the Apostles he travels. Observes that he is on the path and he is the Path, the Truth and the Life. After Resurrection He accompagnies Luca and Cleopa. He is discovered in the Eucharistic mystery of the Breaking Bread. Chirst the pilgrim accompagnies in the church all people that are looking for Him travelling to the eternal life of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The history of the Christian pilgrimage has it beginnings by the description in the year 333 after Jesus Christ of a pilgrimage to the Holy Lands, made by an anonymous pilgrim, fact which is mentioned in the work Ad Loca Santa. There are presented in other narrations: in the period of the primary church as well as in Eusebius from Cezareea, in Egerya in the happy eronim, some common elements namely: the participation to the Holy Liturgy, the reading from the Holy Scripture, prayers and meditations. We observe in time also a diversification of the places for pilgrimage to the Holy Lands adding the monasteries from Egypt, the cities of Rome and Constantinople, Greece. These is firstly a result of the religious liberty given by the decree from 313 from the Medalliom of the holy emperor Constantine the Great.

People set out in pilgrimage driven by very different aims and motivations.. I have identified 15, the most frequent of them are those of spiritual renewal, for strenghtening faith, to resolve some difficult problems, for repentance or gratitude.

For trying a pilgrimage classification I used the similiary criteria as for the religious tourism by the researchers from the geographic area. After their ancienty, the used means of transport, after the travelled distance, purpose, visited places, how they have been organized, number of participants. These are some of the classification criteria of the pilgrimage.

The pilgrimage starts with a distant preparation, then an appropriate one material and spiritual. The Pilgrims Pelerinii keep fast, pray, confess, ask the blessing from their confessor,

but they also inquire, make their luggage. Travelling the road is another stage of the pilgrimage when he/she prays for himself/herself, for the family, for others. Grace brings people closer, gives the joy by the Jesus Christ's presence, advises and reconciles. In the return the pilgrims' souls radiate the joy of meeting holiness. Sharing with others their experience, they become themselves missionaries. The Pilgrimage changes man's life making him to share in a sacred time and space, a foretaste of eternal life. By the Pilgrimage the spiritual life is invigorated, faith is strengthened, is a factor of unity and maintaining the national identity.

During the pilgrimage there is a succession of moments, a series of ritual actions which strengthen the faith: the church is surrendered, icons and holy relics are touched, there are sprinkles with holy water, participation at the holy services.

Sooner or later the effects of the pilgrimage are observed when this is over. The fruit are of a spiritual nature, but they can be material, too. Besides the spiritual effects, even in the social plan, the pilgrimages strengthen the unity between people. It is a real missionary event when we influence each other transforming us into a complex way. The Pilgrimage is an efficient mean of pastoral care, perhaps insufficiently used in our parishes.

The Pilgrimage in Romania has known from the ancient times a dynamic and a development. It reflects the Romanians' state of religiosity. Besides the traditional places for pilgrimage from Moisei, Nicula, Iassyi, Bucurest have been annexed new ones from Bârsana, Prislop.

To come in the help of the priests to organize some pilgrimage I have stored some practical advices concerning the preparation of one from the luggage until the rules of behavior.

The research of the pilgrimage is important from lots of aspects. It is a complex action, reflects the society and helps to its understanding, shows generally the proportion between the tradition and innovation, of the church, especially, mirrors the influence of the modernity on the ecclesiastical community and of the religious feeling. Religiosity is subjective, and the pilgrimage is an act of the individual and collective religiosity. Reflects the actual Romanian society from the political, cultural, economical point of view, it is necessary for the knowledge and interpretation of this religious fact.

People from Maramures have a special piety for The Mother of God, that's why, at the holiday for her falling asleep, every year, clothed in folk costumes, they go to the monasteries: Moisei, Rohia, Bârsana, Habra, Oarța being the most important centres of pilgrimage from this area.

The Specifics of the Maramures pilgrimage consists in the setting up of some special processions that we no longer meet them with such magnitude and extension of the phenomenon anywhere.

The Pilgrimage in Moisei has been dated since 1672 from the sanctification of the wooden church by the Holy Bishop Sava Brancovici. The Monastery of Moisei, one of the most important Romanian centre of pilgrimage, gathers at his patron saint, in 15th of august, at Holyday Falling asleep of Mother of God, between 30000 and 40000 believers, coming to celebrate the Mother of God. The Pilgrims, led by the village priest, carrying flags and icons on

their hands, dressed in popular holiday clothes, moves on foot, over considerable distances, about 50-60 km, singing hymns, prays. The Procession consists on approximately 50 people there can be 2 or 3 groups in the bigger villages. In the yard of the monastery meet at least 20-30 processions. When they arrive inside the yard, the pilgrims surround the church 3 times, singing religious songs. Enter the church and worship in it, then lay the flags and icons in a landscaped space. Watch and pray or sing all night, on the Eve of the Holyday. At the end of the Agape of the Holy Liturgy regroup again in the procession, surround the church like they do at the beginning, then they go away to their localities. Arrived in the village, they also surround the parish church, worship, put the flags and the icons on their space until the next procession. The whole community is waiting for them and welcomes them with enthusiasm.

The second representative centre for the Maramures people is the Monastery of Rohia from The Lăpuş County. Even if the localities of this area are smaller, at Rohia, too, there come in the 15th of August until 20000 believers. Here, besides the processions who are organized, there is the tradition that for the important holidays the people from an appropriate village with their priest, every year, prepare the food for all the pilgrims who come to the monastery, remembering the Christians Agapes from the Apostolic Age.

The Monastery of Bârsana, attested in 1390, abolished in 1791, and refined in 1993, has its patron saint „The Council of the Holy Apostles”. The Architect Dorel Cordoş under the direct guidance of Most Holy, worthy of mention, Iustinian Chira and of His Holiness Iustin, of Maramureş and Sătmar he conceived a monastic ensemble with a special artistic sense and with a remarkable stylistic unity. The Communion and the catholicity of the 12 Apostles are rendered at a symbolic level by the 12 buildings which house the museum, the summer altar, the bell tower and others.

Due to the special artistic qualities, their values and uniqueness, eight wooden churches from Maramureş have been included on the list of the UNESCO Patrimony since 1999, emphasizing their importance and special role.

„The Culture changes landscapes, and the landscapes are the living expression of culture” said Nassouer in 1995. As their names said, coming from Latin, *paessagio*, are a territory that can be embraced at a glance.

The Identity of the Maramures rural space has been altered going slowly towards a loss of it. This is determined by the diversification and the modernization of the agricultural activities, by the urbanization of the rural life and the chaotic architecture. The traditional elements disappear gradually. They are losing their specificity by the absorption, by depopulation, by migration or aging, due to the lack of urban arrangements. The Maramures rural medium suffers deep modifications. The Traditional communities are vulnerable more than ever. The Young generations are alienated from the traditional village associating it with the poverty. Solutions for keeping will be the supporting ones, restrictive architectural rules, education to raise awareness of value. Conservation and perpetuation of the rural space it can be achieved by supporting a more intensive tourism.

The environment where the people are living influences them not only at the material level, but also at the spiritual level, energetic and vibrational. Many Romanian philosophers developed the wave environment theory the vibrational space which they found on the teaching about the uncreated divine energies a perfect overlap. It creates mental spaces that are imprinted on the people who inhabit that territory and manifests itself in popular culture.

„Counties” are ethnographic mental spaces which preserves faith national consciousness, language, traditions, occupations and customs, folklore and dress..It radiates the local material and spiritual values.

Maramureş is a mental space with unique and original characteristics the keeper of traditional values, a life style that attracts and influences those who come in connection with it. In the world tourism the cultural tourism is a large-scale movement characteristic of today's society facilitated by globalization and free movement. The Religion is inextricably linked to the universal culture. This why the religious tourism is as old a form of tourism as it is today. The Evolution and perspectives of religious tourism are dynamic, being able to talk about a pilgrimage industry with market studies, marketing, forms of development in various associations and organizations, including within the Romanian Orthodox Church .

Because that the touristic objectives are principally the religious ones, the development of the religious tourism it is an important desideratum for the district of Maramureş. Projects and development programs for this type of tourism are needed, of networks that capitalize on the tourism resources that will eventually lead the flourishing of other economic branches.

Maramureş is an attractive county by the natural space and the cultural patrimony, but its potential is not fully exploited. The Concept of integrated tourism that has the religious tourism at its centre is the most appropriate for the Maramureşi. Firstly it is necessary to identify all the material, cultural, human, economic, infrastructure resources. Then, they must be interconnected and operated in an integrated way covering all the areas. The peasant culture, the regional identity, traditional specialities and local products are important elements of touristic offer that allows the individualization of a region and obtaining some independence.

The necessity of an united and integrated system, for the coordination of accessible, cheap, well-organized public transportation is an important issue. Also essential are the implementation of modern means of information and communication, which would allow profiling and promotion of well defined regional identity such as a sigle, a logo, a motto. The material space has to be protected to not influence negatively the tourism, biotopes, protection made through education and information. The traditional occupations and the folk craftsmen, the use of the local construction materials, of the architectural style specific to the area, is very important to be preserved.

Folk tradition and people clothes, folk art and culture must be exploited for tourism without bringing them closer to kitch. Applying marketing strategies centered around religious and rural tourism would be important for Maramureş. Preserving and protecting the environment and cultural heritage through use and development is an important project of Maramureş.

The particularly diverse, numerous and valuable religious touristic patrimony is specific from the Romanian space. Against the backgrounds of these resources, we can talk about real areas and religious touristic zones.. Among these, Maramureş stands out, its anthropic frame is in symbiosis with the natural frame in an unique and a confusing way, a specificity that confers the title of „county ” of the pilgrimage or in the modern language „the country of religious tourism”.

The Impact of the religious tourism against the districtual and local development brings to our attention the integrated tourism and the sustainable development. Both are done by preserving the attractive potential. This can only be done by applying measures: communities education, promotion projects, public politics, encouraging legislation, clear regulations.

The misunderstanding and the non-implementation of a complex programs to keep Maramures as a standard of religious tourism in Romania and Europe, can irreversibly destroy the cultural, material and spiritual heritage ,by destroying the Maramures regional identity, by excessive modernization and a misunderstood globalism..

Maramureş, by its natural and cultural landscape, represents an extraordinary space, whose unique vibrations attract and impregnate those who cross it, giving them an intense vital force. It is a mixture between the physical-geographical framework, extremely tender and the human one the people of Maramures, descendants of the free Dacians, with their customs and traditions, give the region authenticity and value.

Those who wander through Maramureş gain a return to the ancestral simplicity of life to true values, to the connection with nature, with others and with God.