

Romania's Cultural Heritage Sites Inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List



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National Commission
of Romania for UNESCO



Moldovița Monastery Church | Photo: Tudorel Ilie

ROMANIA'S CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES

Inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List

This booklet part of a series of three publications
of The National Commission of Romania for UNESCO illustrating the varieties
of national heritage inscribed in the UNESCO's Lists

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The 1972 UNESCO Convention

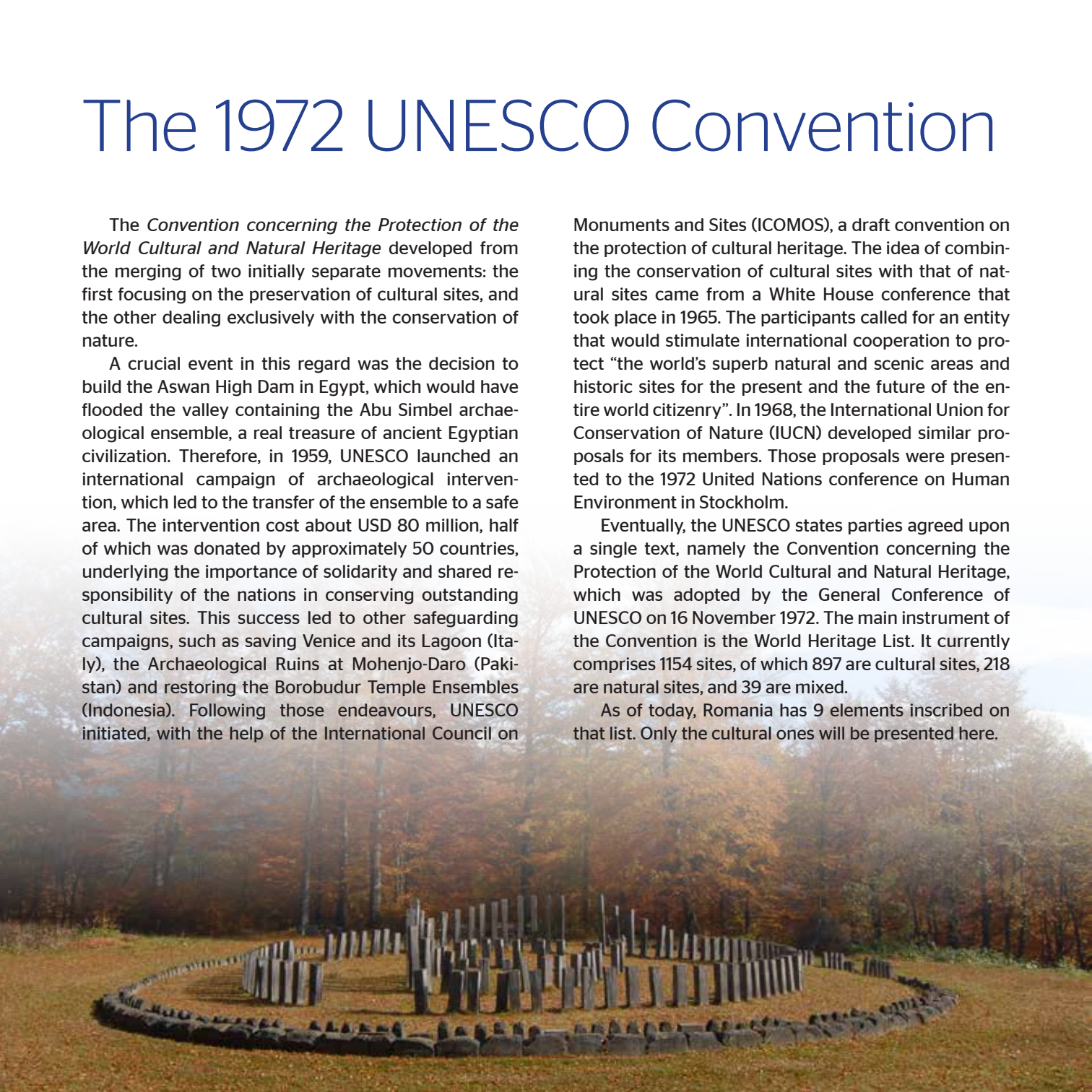
The *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* developed from the merging of two initially separate movements: the first focusing on the preservation of cultural sites, and the other dealing exclusively with the conservation of nature.

A crucial event in this regard was the decision to build the Aswan High Dam in Egypt, which would have flooded the valley containing the Abu Simbel archaeological ensemble, a real treasure of ancient Egyptian civilization. Therefore, in 1959, UNESCO launched an international campaign of archaeological intervention, which led to the transfer of the ensemble to a safe area. The intervention cost about USD 80 million, half of which was donated by approximately 50 countries, underlying the importance of solidarity and shared responsibility of the nations in conserving outstanding cultural sites. This success led to other safeguarding campaigns, such as saving Venice and its Lagoon (Italy), the Archaeological Ruins at Mohenjo-Daro (Pakistan) and restoring the Borobudur Temple Ensembles (Indonesia). Following those endeavours, UNESCO initiated, with the help of the International Council on

Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), a draft convention on the protection of cultural heritage. The idea of combining the conservation of cultural sites with that of natural sites came from a White House conference that took place in 1965. The participants called for an entity that would stimulate international cooperation to protect “the world’s superb natural and scenic areas and historic sites for the present and the future of the entire world citizenry”. In 1968, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) developed similar proposals for its members. Those proposals were presented to the 1972 United Nations conference on Human Environment in Stockholm.

Eventually, the UNESCO states parties agreed upon a single text, namely the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on 16 November 1972. The main instrument of the Convention is the World Heritage List. It currently comprises 1154 sites, of which 897 are cultural sites, 218 are natural sites, and 39 are mixed.

As of today, Romania has 9 elements inscribed on that list. Only the cultural ones will be presented here.





Fresco, Pătrăuți Church | Photo: Tudorel Ilie



Fresco, Pătrăuți Church | Photo: Tudorel Ilie

Romania's Cultural Heritage Sites Inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List

■ CHURCHES OF MOLDAVIA:

- The Church of the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist of Arbore
- The Church of the Assumption of the Virgin of the former Monastery of Humor
- The Church of the Annunciation of the Monastery of Moldovița
- The Church of the Holy Rood of Pătrăuți
- The Church of Saint George of Suceava
- The Church of Saint George of the former Voroneț Monastery
- The Church of the Resurrection of Sucevița Monastery
- The Church of Saint Nicholas and the Catholicon of the Monastery of Probota

■ MONASTERY OF HOREZU

■ VILLAGES WITH FORTIFIED CHURCHES IN TRANSYLVANIA:

- The Village of Călnic
- The Village of Prejmer
- The Village of Viscri
- The Village of Dârjiu
- The Village of Saschiz
- The Village of Biertan
- The Village of Valea Viilor

■ DACIAN FORTRESSES OF THE ORĂȘTIE

MOUNTAINS:

- The Dacian fortress of Sarmizegetusa Regia - Grădiștea de Munte
- The Dacian fortress of Costești-Cetățuie
- The Dacian fortress of Costești-Blidaru
- The Dacian fortress of Luncani-Piatra Roșie
- The Dacian fortress of Bănița
- The Dacian fortress of Căpâlna

■ HISTORIC CENTRE OF SIGHIȘOARA CITY

■ WOODEN CHURCHES OF MARAMUREȘ:

- The Church Presentation of the Virgin at the Temple (Bârsana)
- The Church Saint Nicholas (Budești)
- The Church Holy Paraskeva (Desești)
- The Church Nativity of the Virgin (Ieud-Deal)
- The Church Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel (Plopiș)
- The Church Holy Paraskeva (Poienile Izei)
- The Church Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel (Rogoz)
- The Church Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel (Șurdești)

■ ROȘIA MONTANĂ MINING LANDSCAPE

■ THE FRONTIERS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE - DACIA

■ THE MONUMENTAL ENSEMBLE OF TÂRGU JIU

CHURCHES OF MOLDOVA

Year of inscription 1993, additions in 2010

■ ■ THE CHURCH OF THE BEHEADING OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST OF ARBORE (1502)

The church dedicated to the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist, also known as the Arbore Church, is an Orthodox church built in 1502 in the village of Arbore, Suceava County, by hetman Luca Arbore. This place of worship is famous for the fresco mural painting of great artistic value, which adorns both the interior and exterior, made by the Moldavian painter Dragoș Coman. Worth noting among the scenes on the southern facade are the Hymn to the Apostles and the Siege of Constantinople by the Persians.

■ ■ THE CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN OF THE FORMER MONASTERY OF HUMOR (1530)

The Humor Monastery, dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin and to Saint George the Martyr, was built in 1530. The exact dating was made possible by the stone inscription at the entrance of this place of worship, which reads that the church was built in 1530 “by the expense and effort” of chancellor Teodor Bubuic and his wife Anastasia, at the behest of voivode Petru Rareș. The Humor Monastery is a complex architectural ensemble comprising the church dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and to St. George, built in 1530 and included on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1993, the ruins of the monastery houses dating from the 16th-18th centuries, the Tower of Vasile Lupu, built in



Moldovița Monastery Church | Photo: Tudorel Ilie

1641, and the Bell Tower from the 19th century. Built in the Moldavian style, it was adorned with fresco paintings, the predominant colour palette comprising various shades of red, a colour specific to this church.

■ ■ THE CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE MONASTERY OF MOLDOVIȚA (1532)

The Moldovița Monastery, dedicated to the Annunciation, was built in 1532 by Petru Rareș, son of Stephen the Great, and is one of the oldest monasteries. The interior painting, produced five years after the construction of the church, is an exceptional artistic document of the two reigns of Petru Rareș. One of the distinctive aspects of the Moldovița Monastery is the exterior

painting, especially that on the southern wall of the church, which has been preserved in good condition. The post-Byzantine style is dominant, with Gothic and Renaissance influences.

■ ■ THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY ROOD OF PĂTRĂUȚI (1487)

Dedicated to the Holy Rood, the church of Pătrăuți was founded in 1487 by the Moldavian ruler Stephen the Great. The edifice is thought to be the oldest church built by him which still retains its original form. This place of worship was designed to house an establishment of nuns that would care for soldiers wounded in wars. The exterior decoration is simple, with plastered walls, while the pictorial scenes on the inside depict biblical images such as the Cavalcade of the Holy Cross, the Lamentation scene, the Prophet Daniel and the Army of the Martyrs. The church's book of honour holds the signatures of important persons that have visited it over the years, among which one can find prominent names such as Nicolae Iorga or George Enescu.

■ ■ THE CHURCH OF SAINT GEORGE OF SUCEAVA (1522)

The “Saint John the New” Monastery served as the metropolitan cathedral of Moldavia (1522-1677) and is currently the residence of the archbishops of Suceava and Rădăuți (since 1991). It shelters the relics of Saint John the New, brought in 1589 from the church of Mirăuți. The monastery ensemble comprises 5 sites: the church of Saint George (1514-1522), which is on the UNESCO World Heritage List, the bell tower (1589), the vestry house-chapel (1629), the presbytery (19th century), and the monastic cells (19th century). The history of the monastery goes back to the time of ruler Bogdan III of Moldavia (1504-1517) who began the construction of a new church as a metropolitan cathedral in 1514. The

edifice was completed in 1522 by his son, Stephen IV (1517-1527). A theological school used to run in the monastery and various calligraphers, wood and metal engravers, miniaturists, as well as teachers of Greek and Slavonic used to work there.

■ ■ THE CHURCH OF SAINT GEORGE OF THE FORMER VORONEȚ MONASTERY (1488)

The Voroneț Monastery, often compared to the Sistine Chapel, is one of the most valuable works to





Probota Monastery Church | Photo: Tudorel Ilie

have been founded by Stephen the Great. The monastery church, dedicated to Saint George and included on the UNESCO World Heritage List, was built in 1488 in just 3 months and 3 weeks, a true architectural record for that time. Legend has it that Stephen the Great built this monastery as a sign of gratitude to Saint Daniil the Hermit (Daniil Sihastrul). After his defeat at Războieni in 1476, Stephen asked the hermit for advice, and the latter

advised him to continue fighting the Turks, predicting a great victory for the Moldavian ruler. The Voroneț Monastery was built in memory of that victory. The place of worship is best known for the fresco of the Last Judgment on its western wall, considered the most complex approach to this theme in Eastern Christianity.

■ ■ **THE CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION OF SUCEVIȚA MONASTERY** (1596)

The monastery was founded by the boyar family Movilă and was completed between 1583 and 1596. It flourished after ruler Ieremia Movilă (1595-1606) returned to the throne of Moldavia, when two new porches, several new houses and surrounding walls were added to the already built church. The walls are massive, being over 100 m long, 3 m thick and up to 6 m tall, with defensive towers. From this point of view, it is one of the best fortified monasteries in Moldavia. The church of this monastery ensemble, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, is characterised Moldavian architectural style of the 15th and 16th centuries. The painting was executed by brothers Ion and Sofronie, who painted scenes such as the group of ancient philosophers, the Siege of Constantinople and representations of the ladder of John Climacus. “The monastic church of Sucevița has undergone no significant alteration in the course of its history. It preserves with total integrity its original late 16th century architectural structure, and its set of mural paintings, both internal and external”, says the official description on the UNESCO website.

■ ■ **THE CHURCH OF SAINT NICHOLAS AND THE CATHOLICON OF THE MONASTERY OF PROBOTA** (1530)

The Probota Monastery was built in 1530 by the ruler Petru Rareș. The monastery church is dedicated

to Saint Nicholas as its patron saint. The building served as the royal necropolis of Moldavia in the 16th and 17th centuries, and it houses the tombs of Petru Rareș (1527-1538, 1541-1546) and Stephen Rareș (1551-1552), Lady Elena Rareș and other members of their family - a total of 21 tombs covered by tombstones with valuable epigraphs, including the tombstone of Lady Oltea, mother of Stephen the Great. The ensemble is made up of 6 sites: the Church of Saint Nicholas, dating from 1530, the “vestry house” and the ruins of the manor houses, built in the same year, the ruins of other buildings within the precinct, dating from the 16th-17th centuries, the corner towers from the 16th century, and the enclosure wall built in 1550.



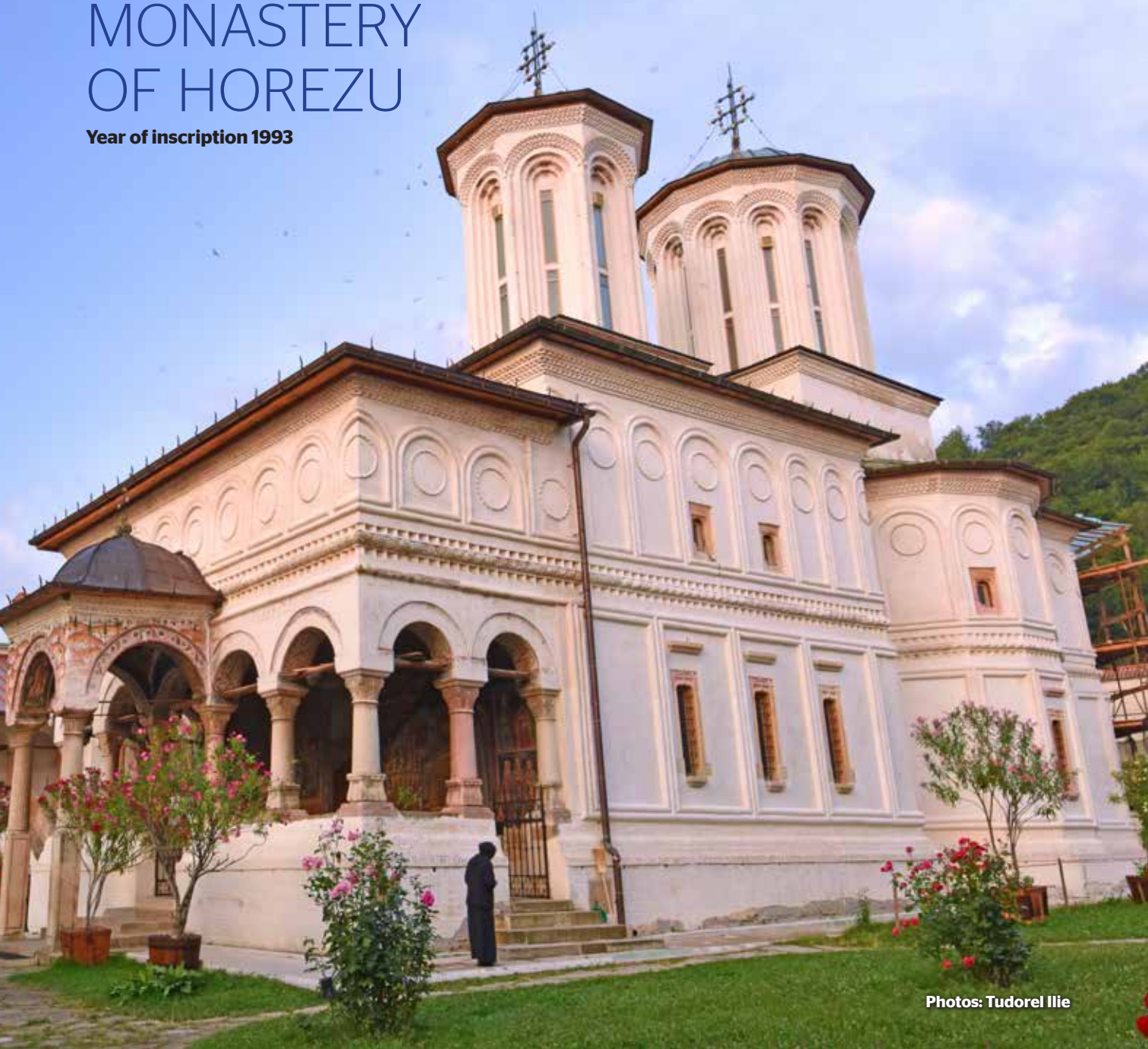
Sucevița Monastery Church | Photo: Tudorel Ilie



Suceava Monastery Church, interior | Photo: Tudorel Ilie

MONASTERY OF HOREZU

Year of inscription 1993



Photos: Tudorel Ilie

The Hurezi or Horezu Monastery is considered to be the most important construction founded by Constantin Brâncoveanu, ruler of Wallachia (1688-1714), and along with the hermitages that make up the monastic ensemble it is the most representative architectural ensemble for the Brancovan style. It was included in the World Heritage List in 1993.

The construction work began in 1690 and was entrusted by the ruler Brâncoveanu to his cousin Pârvu Cantacuzino. Later, it was continued by the steward (ispravnic) Cernica Știrbei. The monastery compound was built progressively: first the monastery church itself, located in the centre of the enclosure and dedicated to Saints Constantine and Helen, then the infirmary church, founded by Lady Maria, wife of Brâncoveanu, in 1696. Later, two hermitages were added: the hermitage of the Holy Apostles, founded by the abbot of the monastery, John the Archimandrite, in 1698, and the hermitage of Saint Stephen, founded by the ruler's eldest son in 1703. In addition to its architectural features, which are unique in south-eastern Europe, the school of mural and icon painting that ran in the monastery in the 18th century was renowned throughout the Balkan region.





Viscri Fortress | Photo: Cristian Radu

VILLAGES WITH FORTIFIED CHURCHES IN TRANSYLVANIA

Year of inscription 1993, additions in 1999

Seven localities are inscribed on the World Heritage List under this title, their common feature being the preservation of the historical structure and image, associated with the presence within the settlement of a fortified church that illustrates this architectural phenomenon typical of the Saxon villages in Transylvania. Although each fortified church involves a special defensive solution, they can be grouped into three types:

- ■ I. Churches with a fortified enclosure, typical of the flat area of Țara Bârsei (Bârsa Land), have their

defensive installations almost exclusively on the enclosure, whereas the church has little or no fortifications. The most authentic image of this type of fortification is provided by the fortified church of Prejmer.

- II. The fortified churches that are typical of the hilly areas have their defensive elements divided almost equally between the church and its enclosure. The churches were restructured: the side aisles were dismantled, defensive floors were built above the main aisle, the western tower was converted into a redoubt, and the choir was surmounted by a bastion. The church was surrounded by a fortified enclosure. The church of Valea Viilor and the triple enclosure of the church of Biertan are remarkable for the complexity of their defensive arrangements. At Viscri, the enclosure and the church are equally fortified, in the most harmonious way.
- III. Redoubt churches, which appeared at the end of the 15th century, are the last stage in the evolution of church fortification. The churches were equipped with a multitude of defensive installations from the outset, and the enclosure were less fortified. The first redoubt church was built in Saschiz in 1496.

This way of protecting communities by fortifying their churches was taken up by neighbouring Szekler settlements, the fortified church of Dârjiu being an example of this influence.

Towards the end of the 18th century, fortified churches lost their defensive function. However, they continued to be the focal point of community life, gathering within or around them the shared or special use buildings of the communities: the town hall, the confessional school, the community hall, the evangelical parish house and the preachers' houses. **(Source: the National Institute of Heritage).**



Câlnic fortified church | Photo: Tudorel Ilie



Prejmer fortified church | Photo: Tudorel Ilie



Biertan fortified church | Photo: Tudorel Ilie



■ ■ THE VILLAGE OF CÂLNIC

The Câlnic fortress is located in Alba County. Built around the middle of the 13th century, initially to serve as a nobleman's residence for the Kelling noble family, it was designed as a massive donjon surrounded by thick walls, with a tower towards the south and a gate tower on the northern side. The defence system was completed by a moat surrounding the fortress. The donjon is a massive two-storey tower with a wine cellar in the basement. Today, it hosts an exhibition that includes clothing items and traditional objects made of wood or clay.

In 1430, the fortress was sold to the peasant community of Câlnic. The peasants added another enclosure

wall, fortified the gate tower and constructed a chapel in the inner yard. The chapel still displays fragments of a fresco dating from the beginning of the 16th century, and the western side preserves the old wooden tribune with its decorative panels, painted in a floral style that is typical of Transylvania.

■ ■ THE VILLAGE OF PREJMER

The church is located in the village of the same name from Braşov County, Transylvania, and was built in the 13th century by the Teutonic Knights. The fortress surrounding the church boasts 3- to 4-metre-thick walls that reach 12 metres in height.



Călnic fortified church | Photo: Tudorel Ilie

On the inside, one can find habitable rooms embedded in the fortress walls. The rooms were used for storing food supplies and valuables, but became a shelter during war. It is worth noting that two of them were “schoolrooms”, which shows that education continued to be provided even in times of war.



Viscri fortified church | Photo: Cristian Radu

■ ■ THE VILLAGE OF VISCRI

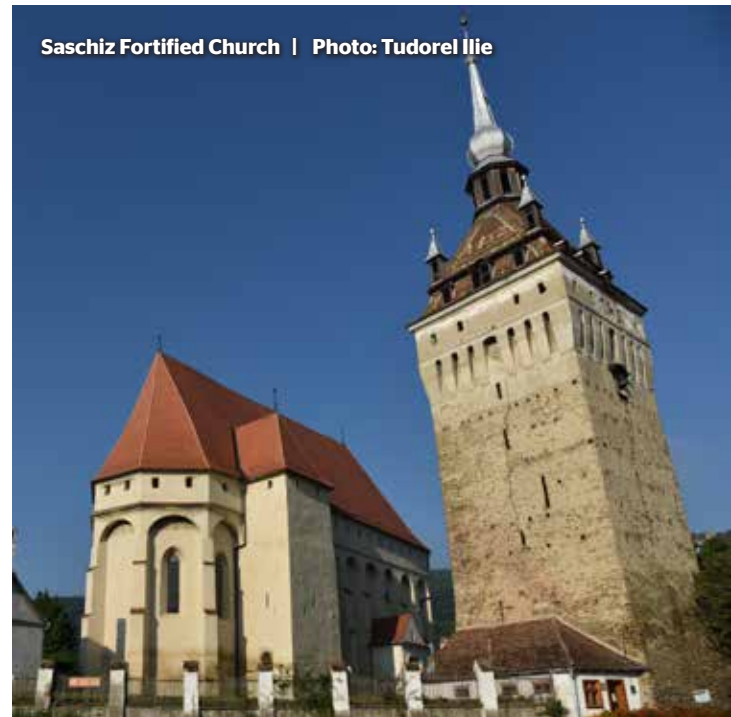
The church is located in the village of Viscri from Bunești Commune, Brașov County, Transylvania, and was built by Saxon colonists in the 13th century. At the time of their colonisation, the precinct held a small Romanesque basilica. Over time, it underwent several transformations. The current church of Viscri is a Romanesque church that was enlarged during the 16th

century and which preserves many valuable pieces of art. It consists of two bodies built with quarried stone and river stone, two towers and two bastions.

The two-storey museum inside the fortress exhibits a multitude of objects, such as: woven fabrics, items of furniture, traditional Transylvanian clothing, and hand-crafted objects from Viscri.

■ ■ THE VILLAGE OF DÂRJU

The church is located in the village of the same name, in Harghita County, and was built between the 13th and the 14th centuries. Initially a Romanesque basilica, the church acquired its current shape in the 15th century. Its frescoes, although destroyed for the most part, are of high value – they depict the legend of Saint Ladislaus. The defensive wall is 5-metre tall, whereas the church is 20-metre tall. Embedded in the structure of the fortification there are storage rooms where the peasants used to keep their food secure – cereals and meat.



Saschiz Fortified Church | Photo: Tudorel Ilie



Dârjiu Fortified Church, interior | Photo: Tudorel Ilie

■ ■ THE VILLAGE OF SASCHIZ

The Evangelical church in the village of Saschiz from Mureş County, Transylvania, was built in the 13th century. The former Romanesque church became a fortified church in 1493, in honour of king Stephen I of Hungary. The new church is a hall church that was built in Gothic style by using quarried stone; it is reinforced by 22 buttresses. The works were completed in 1525. The church tower, initially having a defensive function, resembles the Clock Tower of Sighişoara. The current aspect of the tower dates from 1832.

■ ■ THE VILLAGE OF BIERTAN

Biertan was one of the first localities to be inhabited by the Saxons of Transylvania, being mentioned in a document from 1224. The fortress was first referenced in a document from 1397.

The church is a hall church located at the very centre of the village. It was built between 1486 and 1524 and is surrounded by three rows of enclosure walls, with six towers and three medieval bastions. The altar was made by master craftsmen of Vienna and Nuremberg;

its 28 painted panels make it the country's largest altar. The pulpit is also impressive, as is the furniture dating from the beginning of the 14th century and decorated with Gothic ornaments. The sacristy door features a complex locking system with 19 locking points, made by Saxon craftsmen in 1515.

■ ■ THE VILLAGE OF VALEA VIILOR

The locality was first mentioned in a document from the 13th century, when the Saxons were beginning to colonise the area. The settlement was given several names over time: Wurmloch, which meant "snake hole" in German, or Baromlaka, which meant "cattle barn" in Hungarian. The name of "Valea Viilor" (Vineyard Valley) has been in use only since the 19th century. In the 14th century, works began for the building of a Gothic style church, which was later fortified in order to withstand the Mongols' attacks. The church of Valea Viilor preserves a valuable artistic heritage, which includes: the Gothic style wooden pews from 1528, the altar - created in 1779 by the sculptor Stephan Folberth of Sighişoara, the canopy above the pulpit (1746) and the organ (1708), the latter two being inspired by the Baroque style.

DACIAN FORTRESSES OF ORĂȘTIE MOUNTAINS

Year of inscription 1999

Designed as a system of fortifications against Roman conquest and built using a technique known as *murus dacicus*, with Hellenistic influences adapted to the specificity of the area, the six fortresses were constructed between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD. These Dacian fortresses display a unique merging of the local traditions with external cultural influences, both as regards the ancient building techniques and the ancient military architecture.

■ THE DACIAN FORTRESS OF SARMIZEGETUSA REGIA - GRĂDIȘTEA DE MUNTE

Sarmizegetusa Regia is the best known and best-preserved fortress of them all. The site stretches along approximately 4.5 kilometres (2.8 miles) and it was the capital of the Dacian kingdom starting with the second half of the 1st century BC.

It was also the main political, religious, economic and military centre of the Dacian world. Three types of archaeological vestiges can be found within the site: fortifications made out of limestone blocks; worshiping edifices, the most prominent one being the ande-site altar – a unique construction in Dacia; and civilian facilities, comprising the remnants of houses and workshops.





Dacian fortress Sarmizegetusa Regia - Grădiștea de Munte | Photo: Irinel Cirlănar



The Dacian fortress Costești Blidaru | Photo: Irinel Cîrlănu

■ ■ THE DACIAN FORTRESS OF COSTEȘTI-CETĂȚUIE

This reinforced fortress was of a strongly defensive nature, having the role of defending the access route to the Sarmizegetusa Regia fortress.

Two cisterns for water storage were dug inside the fortress - one on the eastern side, and the other on the western side of the plateau. There are also four temples, another important category of monuments that the Dacians erected there. Three of them were located on the outskirts, whereas the fourth was inside the fortress. All had a rectangular shape and wooden columns. The temple on the inside was demolished by the Dacians around the time of the second Roman-Dacian war, and part of the plinths were used to reinforce the rampant base. The fortress was completely destroyed during the second war waged by the Romans for the conquest of Dacia, which took place between 105 and 106 AD.

■ ■ THE DACIAN FORTRESS OF COSTEȘTI-BLIDARU

According to historians, the fortress was constructed in two stages. The eastern precinct was built first,

in the shape of an irregular trapeze with four rectangular towers at the corners. The entry gate was located in the south-western tower. Two more towers were built during the same stage, which took place most likely during the second half or at the end of the 1st century BC: one was located inside the fortification, and the other on the outskirts. In the second stage, which took place during the 1st century AD, the fortress was enlarged towards the west. It was destroyed during the second war waged by emperor Trajan against the Dacians, between 105 and 106 AD.

■ ■ THE DACIAN FORTRESS OF LUNCANI-PIATRA ROȘIE

The history of the fortress spans a century and a half, from its foundation - probably under the reign of Burebista - to the end of the Dacian kingdom. It fell into the hands of the Romans who were marching towards Sarmizegetusa Regia, coming from the Strei River Valley. The buildings were set on fire, the walls were torn down, and the fortress remained forgotten until the beginning of the 19th century. A unique artifact found



The Dacian fortress Căpâlna | Photo: Tudorel Ilie

there was the bronze mask of a feminine figure (known as “Bendis from Piatra Roșie”), very likely of Celtic inspiration. Along the bronze mask, archaeologists also discovered weapons and harness parts, as well as moulds for casting bronze objects.

■ THE DACIAN FORTRESS OF BĂNIȚA

Built between the 1st century BC and the year 106 AD, the fortress surrounded a watchtower that was used both as living quarters and for surveilling the area. The fortification comprises several buildings of military nature: enclosure walls, towers and fighting platforms, as well as ramparts made of stone, wood and earth, stretching along the terraces of the hill. Two large walls built in murus dacicus style were discovered there.

The archaeological materials discovered consist mainly of ceramic fragments originating from small vessels such as cups or mugs, but also from storage jars. Iron pieces have also been found, from building materials to weapons and tools, but somewhat fewer than at the other Dacian fortresses of the Orăștie Mountains.

Moreover, archaeologists discovered precious metal artifacts inside or around the fortress, such as a silver bracelet and fibula, coins and more.

■ THE DACIAN FORTRESS OF CĂPÂLNA

This complex military fortification belonged to the array of fortresses defending the fortress of Sarmizegetusa, where the administrative centre of Dacia was established. Its defences consisted in thick walls of chiselled stone that stretched across several terraces, surrounded by ditches and protected by a crescent-shaped earthen rampart. Historians believe that the Căpâlna Fortress was constructed during the reign of Burebista.

Various types of pottery were found within the precinct, especially cookware, but also clay moulds used for shaping vases or tools used for spinning wool.

The iron objects are numerous and varied: blacksmith tools (hammers, tongs, chisels), carpentry tools (axes, hatchets) and farming implements (ploughshare, hoes, sickles), construction items (nails, tacks, staples), everyday objects (pots, strainers, knives) or weapons (daggers, spear points and arrowheads).

HISTORIC CENTRE OF SIGHIȘOARA CITY

year of inscription 1999

Founded around 1190 and mentioned for the first time in a document of 1280, Sighișoara was originally a fortified fortress built by German settlers to guard the borders of the Kingdom of Hungary. It is the only city in Europe that has been continuously inhabited since its establishment to the present day.

Of the 14 towers, 4 bastions and a fortress wall that were gradually built until the 15th century, only 9 towers and 3 bastions are still standing today, bearing the names of the city guilds.

The landmark that dominates the fortress is the Clock Tower or the Tower of the Hours, a fortification built in the 14th century, with an impressive height of over 60 metres, which is distinguished by Baroque architectural details similar to those of the St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague. The clock that adorns the tower was brought from Switzerland in 1648 and is decorated with a number of mythologically inspired figures symbolising the seven days of the week.

Sighișoara houses not only the old fortifications, but also numerous religious buildings, among which the Church on the Hill, one of the city's most important monuments. Last but not least, the historic centre of the town hosts a number of craftsmen's houses that give the place a special charm, as well as the Vlad Dracul House, where some historians claim that Vlad the Impaler was born.



Sighișoara Citadel | Photo: Tudorel Ilie



Sighișoara Citadel, overview | Photo: Irinel Cîrlănar



The Church On The Hill | Photo: Irinel Cîrlănar



Street in Sighișoara | Photo: Irinel Cîrlănar

WOODEN CHURCHES OF MARAMUREȘ

Year of inscription 1999

■ ■ THE CHURCH OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE VIRGIN AT THE TEMPLE (BÂRSANA) (1720/1805)

The church of the Presentation of the Virgin at the Temple in the village of Bârsana was built in 1720, then relocated and rebuilt on a different site in 1805, a common phenomenon in Maramureș. The architectural technique used is that of beams assembled in the blockbau system. The interior was painted in 1806 by the master painters Toader Hodor and Ion Plohod, with strong Baroque and Rococo influences, which are also visible in the furniture inside this place of worship. From an iconographic point of view, one can notice scenes from the Book of Genesis and the Passion of Christ, which are very rich in details, as well as fragments of the Last Judgement.

■ ■ THE CHURCH OF SAINT NICHOLAS (BUDEȘTI) (1643)

The church of Budești-Josani, dedicated to Saint Nicholas as patron saint, was built in 1643 of oak and fir wood and is one of the most impressive places of worship, being designed to accommodate about 300 parishioners and having a monumental spire that stands 26 meters tall, surrounded by 4 smaller spires - a layout that is typical of stone religious buildings. The church holds a large number of wooden icons, most of them

dating from the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as an impressive collection of glass-painted icons. The church also houses the chain mail shirt of the outlaw Pinteș, who, legend has it, left his chain mail shirt and helmet in the care of the church after a battle with the Tartars. The movable icons and a series of commemorative icons were painted by Alexander Ponehalski in 1762, while the altar painting was done by Ianoș Opriș in 1812.



The wooden church from Budești, Josani | Photo: Tudorel Ilie



Bârsana wooden church | Photo: Tudorel Ilie

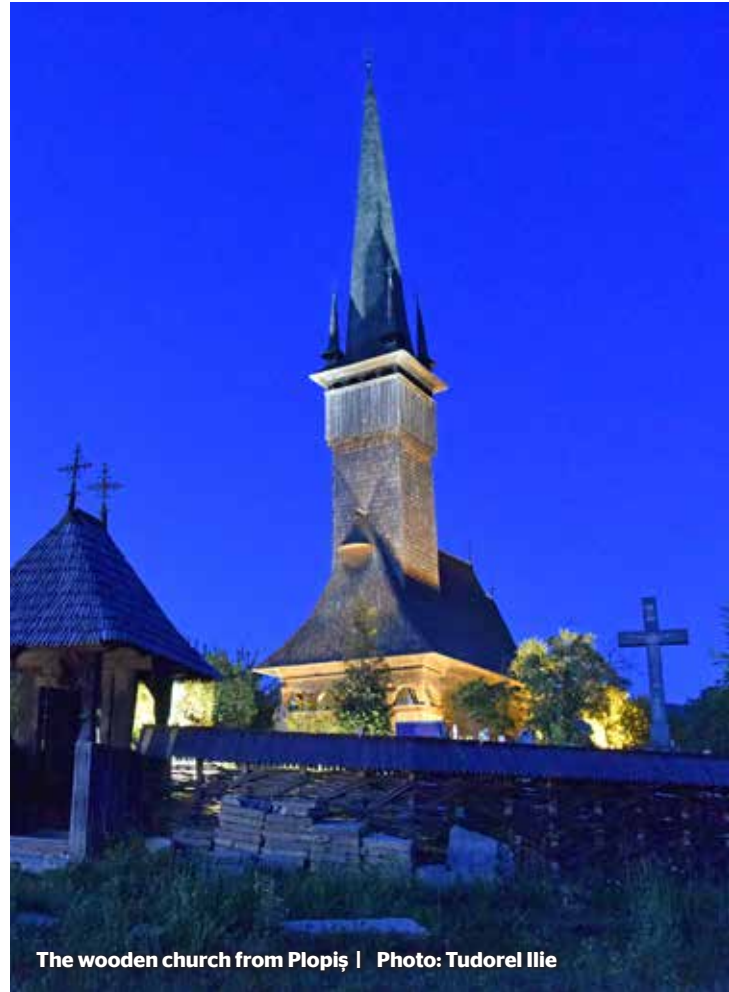


The wooden church from Desești | Photo: Tudorel Ilie

■ ■ THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY PARASKEVA (DESEȘTI) (around 1770-1780)

The exact year when this wooden church was built is not known, but historical indications place it in the second part of the 18th century, the most likely year being 1770 or, according to other authors, 1780. The expenses for building the place of worship were paid by the village leaders and their wives. There are some more inscriptions about the mural and iconostasis

painting. We learn from them that the main artist was Radu Munteanu, a local painter born in Ungureni, Țara Lăpușului (Lăpuș Land), who was assisted by Gheorghe Vișovan. This World Heritage listed church houses fourteen icons painted in tempera on wood. One of the icons, depicting Jesus Pantocrator, was painted in the 17th century, while the others are from the 18th century.



The wooden church from Plopiș | Photo: Tudorel Ilie

■ ■ THE WOODEN CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY OF THE VIRGIN (IEUD-DEAL)

(cca 1620)

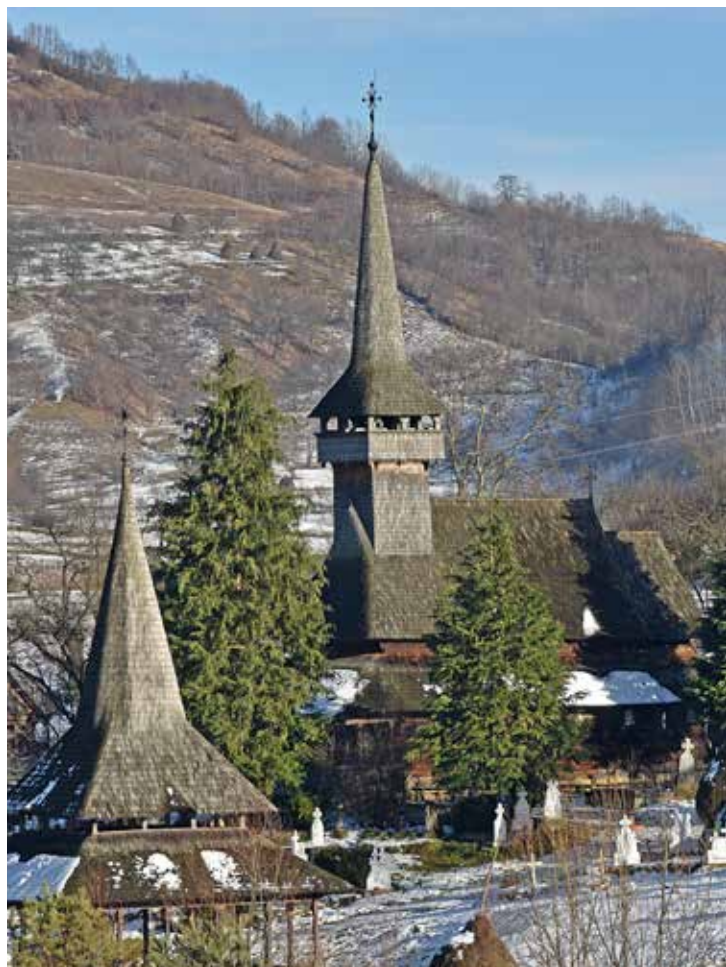
Ieud is known for its two wooden churches, but the one “on the hill”, built in early 17th century, impresses both by the diversity of its chromatic design and by its architectural ingenuity. The exact date of its construction has sparked much controversy. Based on a dendrochronological (tree-ring dating) study conducted by researchers from the Lund University in Sweden and the Icelandic Forest Research Institute, it has been established that the wood used for building the church was felled between 1610 and 1620. Compared to other wooden churches of the same period, the church of Ieud Deal (Ieud Hill) belongs to the category of large church ensembles. The interior was painted by Alexander Ponehalski, most probably in 1782. In the nave, the main theme is the Last Judgement, unfolding on the western wall. It was in the attic of the Ieud church that the Codex of Ieud (or Zbornicul de la Ieud) was discovered in 1921, a document that has caused controversy as some historians consider it to be the first piece of Romanian writing.

■ ■ THE WOODEN CHURCH OF THE HOLY ARCHANGELS MICHAEL AND GABRIEL (PLOPIȘ)

(1789)

The oak church of Plopiș, dedicated to the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel as patron saints, was built in 1789 on the site of an older church. Although the construction works were completed in 1798, it was not consecrated until 1811. According to a historical document, the consecration took place in the presence of the 49 families that had contributed to its construction. In addition to the document, there are also 49 coins attesting to this, each representing the contribution of one founding family. The wooden church of Plopiș was

painted in early 19th century and the paintings were signed by Ștefan the Painter, a master craftsman from Sisești. Today, only a few fragments of his painting are still visible: the Holy Trinity and scenes from the Passion Cycle and the Apocalypse, depicted on the nave vault. The plan of the Plopiș church is almost identical to that of the church in Șurdești, and the similarity between their architectural forms and interior decorations has led to the assumption that the two churches could have been built by the same master builder, Ioan Macarie.



The wooden church from Poienile Izei | Photo: Tudorel Ilie

■ ■ THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY PARASKEVA (POIENILE IZEI) (1604)

According to the World Heritage nomination file, the church in Poienile Izei dates back to 1604 and has undergone several phases of construction. The first phase is recognisable in the lower part of the walls and the square plan of the altar, a construction feature of the oldest wooden buildings. In fact, it is this very architectural detail that makes it unique in the group of UNESCO-listed churches. In the 17th century, the wooden walls were raised, the nave (main room) was covered with a semicircular vault and the interior was painted. The porch protecting the entrance was added later, around the first part of the 19th century. The church was painted entirely in 1794, according to the inscription at the foot of the nave vault, which unfolds along the southern, eastern and northern walls: “The painting of this holy church was begun during the lifetime of His Highness Emperor Franz and His Excellency Bishop Andrei Bacevski”. The main theme is the Last Judgement, which occupies the western and northern walls. The artistic inventory of this establishment also includes a table of oblation (liturgical furniture on which the worship vessels are placed), dated 1785 and decorated by the painter Radu Munteanu.

■ ■ THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY ARCHANGELS MICHAEL AND GABRIEL (ROGOZ) (1663)

The church is located in the valley of Lăpuș River and was built by the village community shortly after the Tatar invasion of 1661, an event recalled by the inscription on its entrance door: “since Transylvania was in bondage” (de când au fost în robie Ardelu). The church was painted in 1785, as indicated by the enduring inscriptions in the altar, made in Cyrillic characters by the



The wooden church from Rogoz | Photo: Tudorel Ilie

painters Radu Munteanu and Nicolae Man. The iconographic representations include themes from the Old and New Testament.

■ ■ THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY ARCHANGELS MICHAEL AND GABRIEL (ȘURDEȘTI) (1766)

The wooden church of Șurdești was built in 1766 by the master builder Ion Macarie and stands out for the impressive size of the tower over its entrance, which gives it a unique elegance. The height of the tower is approximately 54 meters, and the total height of the church reaches 72 meters, which places it among the tallest places of worship made of wood in Europe. The church celebrates its patron saint day on the day of the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel. The interior painting of the church dates from 1783. The altar was decorated by the painter Stefan, the nave by the painter Stan, and the pronaos was probably painted by an apprentice of the latter. In the cemetery surrounding the church there are several stone tombs in the Romanesque style, shaped as a sarcophagus.



The wooden church from Șurdești | Photo: Tudorel Ilie



The wooden church from Desești, interior | Photo: Tudorel Ilie

THE ROȘIA MONTANĂ MINING LANDSCAPE

Year of inscription 2021

The Roșia Montană nomination file was included in Romania's Tentative List in the autumn of 2016 and was officially submitted to UNESCO at the beginning of 2017. After a lengthy process, on 27 July 2021 the World Heritage Committee unanimously decided to include Roșia Montană both on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in order to point out the vulnerability of the site and the need for urgent protection measures.

The UNESCO documentation emphasises that Roșia Montană features “the most significant, extensive and technically diverse underground Roman gold mining compound currently known in the world, completed by ore-processing areas, living quarters, sacred areas and necropolises”.

Known under the name of Alburnus Maior during the Antiquity, Roșia Montană was a gold mining centre of Roman Dacia. The experts estimated that the Romans would have extracted several hundred tonnes of gold during the Roman domination of the region, which lasted for over a century and a half.

Today, approximately 7 km (4.35 miles) of galleries remain from the Roman mining system, as well as over 80 km (50 miles) of galleries dug during the medieval and modern eras.





THE FRONTIERS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE – DACIA (THE DACIAN LIMES)

Year of inscription: 2024

The term “limes” refers to the fortified frontier of the Roman Empire (limes romanus), which spanned, with some interruptions, almost the entirety of Europe, from the Dniester River and the Black Sea to Hadrian's Wall in Scotland.

The limes in the Roman province of Dacia is a complex defence structure built to protect the northern borders of the Roman Empire. This defensive system stretches over more than 1,000 kilometres and includes an impressive variety of military elements adapted to the local terrain and challenges.

Constructed at the beginning of the 2nd century AD, following the conquest and annexation of the Dacian Kingdom, Dacia's frontier did not survive the general crisis of the Roman Empire at the end of the 3rd century. It was officially abandoned around 270/275 AD, when Emperor Aurelian decided to withdraw the Roman army and administration from Dacia.

The remains of the Dacian Limes today stretch across the territory of 16 current counties in Romania: Alba, Argeş, Bistriţa-Năsăud, Braşov, Caraş-Severin, Cluj, Covasna, Harghita, Hunedoara, Mehedinţi, Mureş, Olt, Sălaj, Sibiu, Teleorman, and Vâlcea.

Among the 285 elements that make up the Dacian Limes, the following structures are included:

- Roman military forts (castra): These were fortified

camps where Roman troops were stationed. They were built in strategic locations along the frontier and were usually reinforced with walls and ditches. Examples of forts on the Dacian Limes include those at Porolissum, Apulum, and Potaissa.

- Watchtowers: Constructed on hills or other elevated points, these towers ensured the surveillance of the surrounding territories and allowed for the rapid transmission of signals between the forts.
- Earthen ramparts or defensive embankments: Sometimes reinforced with wooden palisades, these served to hinder enemy advances and delineate Roman territory.
- Military roads: These roads connected the forts and allowed for the rapid movement of troops along the frontier. They were vital for military mobility and supply lines.
- Civilian settlements: Developed around the forts, these were inhabited by soldiers' families, merchants, craftsmen, and other civilians who benefited from the army's protection.



Votive Statuette depicting the god Jupiter Dolichenus from Ilişua



Pilum (short spear) of a legionary



The Porolissum amphitheater | Photo: National History Museum of Transylvania



Castrum (marching camp) Pătru's Peak | Photo: National History Museum of Transylvania

THE MONUMENTAL ENSEMBLE OF TÂRGU JIU

Year of inscription: 2024

The Monumental Ensemble of Târgu Jiu, created between 1937-1938, represents the only large-scale work by Constantin Brâncuși (1876-1957) designed for public space.

The ensemble extends along a west-east axis that traverses the city, beginning at the banks of the Jiu River in Central Park, where the stone works - *The Table of Silence*, *The Alley of Chairs* and *The Gate of the Kiss* - are located. It continues along the Avenue of Heroes, which includes the Church of the Holy Apostles. It culminates with *The Endless Column*, constructed from cast iron and steel and placed in the middle of a park on a promontory.

The ensemble was commissioned by the National League of Gorj Women, under the leadership of Arethia Tătărescu, wife of Prime Minister Gheorghe Tătărescu, and was donated to the city. The inauguration took place on October 27, 1938.

The Table of Silence is the first element of the ensemble, located in Constantin Brâncuși Park on the bank of the Jiu River. It is a round stone table surrounded by 12 seats, symbolizing reunion and meditation. This element reflects the idea of silence and introspection, offering visitors a moment of reflection on the sacrifices made by heroes.

The Alley of Chairs connects The Table of Silence to The Gate of the Kiss. It is 121 meters long and has 30 hourglass-shaped stone chairs placed along its sides,

arranged in groups of three within each of the 10 niches.

The Gate of the Kiss, located on *The Alley of Chairs*, represents a modern triumphal arch. Through its simplicity and symbolism, it revolutionized the tradition of triumphal arches. Made of stone, it is decorated with repetitive geometric motifs symbolizing unity and eternity. This gate marks the passage to a new space, considered an expression of love and communion.

The Endless Column, also known as *The Column of Infinity*, is the central and most impressive piece of the ensemble. Standing 30 meters tall, the column is composed of a succession of rhomboidal modules made of cast iron and covered with bronze, fixed on a central steel axis. This structure symbolizes infinity, continuity, and supreme sacrifice, serving as a metaphor for the soul's ascension towards the sky. *The Endless Column* is considered one of the masterpieces of 20th century world art, uniting art with engineering in a revolutionary way.





The Gate of the Kiss



The Endless Column



The Alley of Chairs



The Table of Silence

Photos: Centrul Brâncuși, Târgu Jiu



Voroneț Monastery Church, mural painting | Photo: Tudorel Ilie



Sucevița Monastery Church, mural painting | Photo: Tudorel Ilie



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