Abstract: If cities build culture, and culture builds cities, (this basic understanding has been vital in the revitalization of an increasing number of cities across Europe in recent years) then villages promote culture and creativity, and culture together with creativity promote villages. Therefore, it is generally considered that cultural tourism is specific only to cities, and that is why the purpose of this paper is to show that villages can be cultural tourist destinations.

Tourism and culture can be opportunities for generating cultural, social and economic benefits; they can encourage rural revitalization, can change the image of the villages and can raise their fame and reputation nationally, even internationally.

The city of Sibiu has experienced a great cultural development, after being European Capital of Culture in 2007, and this has had a profound impact on the later development of the villages in Sibiu County. The tourist villages on the Hârtibaciu Valley (Alțâna, Hosman, Nocrich, etc.) started being advertised as tourist destinations, only in recent years, compared to the villages in the well-known tourist areas of the county: Mărginimea Sibiului, Țara Oltului, etc.

Although tourist villages in Romania are not certified by the Romanian legislation, they are promoted by ANTREC, by local tourism associations, and through programs and projects as well.

Key-Words: ‘new tourism concept’, tourist village, cultural route, Sibiu, traditions

Motto: "The big attraction of Romanian tourism is the village. The village which knew how to preserve its traditions."

George Codrin Buliga - Tourist Guide

1. Introduction

Culture and tourism have a reciprocal beneficial relationship, which can consolidate the impact of attractiveness and competitiveness of the regions and the countries in their development. Culture is a more and more important element of the tourist product, which, also, creates distinctively on an agglomerated market, at a world level, new metamorphoses of the local, regional and national tourist product.

At the same time, tourism offers a very important means of consolidation of culture and the creation of incomes which can support and consolidate the cultural heritage, the cultural production and creativeness.

The creation of a strong relationship between tourism and culture can help new destinations become themselves more attractive and more competitive as places to live, to visit and to work or to invest in their sustainable development. [1] Thus, in the city of Sibiu, which was European Capital of Culture in 2007, culture and tourism have generated a strong cultural development and transformed the city into an international, cultural destination.

The Romanian city of Sibiu (or Hermannstadt in German) is a medium sized city in the Transylvania region. In common with cities elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe it has undergone considerable transformation since the restoration of democracy. Industrial restructuring caused unemployment growth and infrastructure was in need of renovation. In tackling these problems the city adopted a somewhat radical strategy compared to its regional...
neighbors, by making cultural development a spearhead in the transformation of the city. Sibiu has a long history of staging cultural events, and was a major centre for the counterculture during the Ceaușescu era. But the event that really re-launched Sibiu as a major cultural hub in Romania was the European Capital of Culture staged in 2007. This was the first European Capital of Culture (ECOC) to be held in one of the post-2004 EU accession countries, and it represented a major challenge in being organized just as Romania was joining the EU. In the case of Sibiu, however, tourism has also been particularly important, since Romania was being opened up to the EU and because the ECOC in 2007 represented a unique opportunity to develop an image for Sibiu internationally.

The ECOC aimed to develop a ‘new tourism concept’ in 2007, with the following aims:

- Promoting high-quality, ecologically sound, tourist experiences in Sibiu and the surrounding region
- Providing satisfaction:
  - tourists must enjoy their stay here; they must be so satisfied with their experience that they will be willing to tell others about the city.
  - we set out to integrate our tourism industry into an all-embracing concept, and connect it to a regional services network which operates at high standards.
- Intensifying Sibiu tourism marketing. In this regard, the activities had to include:
  - the promotion of our historical city centre,
  - developing a gastronomic and hotel industry of high quality, enhanced by an attractive calendar of cultural and artistic events,
  - the promotion and reintegration of the tourism market of our mountain resort at Păltiniș,
  - easy access to the sights and monuments in the region,
  - developing new forms of tourism: religious, scientific and cultural
- planning and organizing local, regional, inter-regional, national and international events.

The ECOC has given a substantial boost to the cultural sector in the city. According to Corneliu Bucur, Director of the ASTRA museum, the ECOC led to a boom in visitor numbers, which led to the museum introducing an extended visiting program, with visits between 10.00 and 03.00. Special lighting was installed to allow nighttime visitation. Growth in visitation to the Brukenthal Museum continued in both 2008 and 2009. This seems to indicate that the ECOC had the effect of increasing awareness of Sibiu museums in the domestic tourism market.

Table 1. Visits to the main museums in Sibiu, 2009 and 2010. Source: ATLAS Surveys in Sibiu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Museum</th>
<th>Visitor Numbers 2009</th>
<th>Visitor Numbers 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brukenthal National Museum</td>
<td>366410</td>
<td>372731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASTRA Museum</td>
<td>297190</td>
<td>230504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum of Painted Glass Icons, Sibiel</td>
<td>12730</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>676330</strong></td>
<td><strong>604235</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By 2009 the total of visits to the main museums in the city had reached over 670,000, but there was a slight decline in 2010, mainly due to falling attendances at the ASTRA Museum.

Over the longer term, the official statistics on cultural performances and visits in Sibiu County as a whole show that the supply of cultural events has grown significantly since 2001. The total number of cultural events grew by almost a third to 2009 and the number of spectators by 11%. Visits to museums grew by 200% over the same period.

Visitors from abroad were most likely to see Sibiu as a top cultural destination relative to other European cities, and the proportion of visitors listing Sibiu among the top 5 increased slightly in 2010. Looking at the ATLAS surveys conducted in other parts of Europe over the past few years, it is also clear that Sibiu has had a positive impact from the ECOC outside Romania as well.

Particularly in 2007 the external image of Sibiu rose very strongly, particularly as a result of the novelty value of a new European destination being exposed in the international media (this was a complaint voiced in Luxemburg in 2007, because there was a perception that Sibiu had obtained more media coverage with a smaller marketing budget than Luxemburg had generated).

Although Sibiu has not scored as highly in subsequent ATLAS surveys, it still has a much higher score than before the ECOC. One of the most immediate impacts of the increased visibility of Sibiu was a greater flow of domestic and international tourists. This impact was felt not just in the city, but also in the surrounding region:

- 2007, was the best opportunity to show also the values and history. In Sibiu and around Sibiu

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2 The Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS) was established in 1991 to develop transnational educational initiatives in tourism and leisure. http://www.atlas-euro.org/
also to find many things that draw in any way by tourists so that is still preserved a bit of tradition and the beautiful surroundings.

✓ this opportunity has been recovered fully, of brought many tourists, people of culture, both in the city of Sibiu, but also in its surroundings.

The program effects were fully felt, opening new horizons of rural tourism in the villages around Sibiu. [2]

Fig.1. Image of Sibiu as a cultural tourism destination. Source ATLAS Surveys in Sibiu 2007-2009

2. Problem Formulation:
Sibiu district has a rural tourist area that is renowned nationally and internationally, namely Mărginimea Sibiului. It was awarded the Golden Apple in 2009, which is the equivalent of "The Oscar" Award in tourism, and the village of Sibiel is representative of this tourist region. [3]

Hârtibaciu Valley is another area with great cultural tourist potential insufficiently promoted, the fortified churches representing a major tourist attraction of the villages here.

2.1 The “tourist village”: concept, typology and deficient legislation.
In fact, the tourist village is a well established rural settlement, preserving the values and ethno folk traditions and a rich history. Besides its own political, administrative, social, economic and cultural functions, it provides seasonal or year-round accommodation and food for tourists who visit it, in the itinerant tourism programs, with or without service table.

The minimum conditions that a locality must meet in order to become a tourist village include:

− location in an attractive, natural, pollution-free environment
− easy accessibility by road, rail, river or air
− general infrastructure (water, electricity, heating, sewage, communication routes)
− presence of representative ethno-folk traditions and values (folk architecture, craft sand handicrafts, ethnographic museum, folk festivals, folk traditions and customs)
− the presence of representative ethno-folk traditions and values (folk architecture, crafts and handicrafts, folklore and folk costumes, ethnographic museum, folk festivals, folk customs and traditions)
− the existence of rich tourism resources which can be valued by carrying out various activities: holiday recreation, walking outdoors, swimming and water sports, hiking, mountain climbing and speotourism, cultural activities or participation in cultural events taking place in the village, integration in traditional economic activities,
− the existence of households with a certain level of comfort provided by local resources, simple or complex (plumbing and bathroom, running water) and matching the existing classification standards, thus qualifying as rural tourist hostels.

The types and characteristics of such settlements vary from one country to another, depending on geographical and social conditions, on traditions, preferences, and on historical and cultural valences.

I present below a general typology of tourist villages in Romania, which can be found in some European countries with a tradition of rural tourism:

− ethnographic-folk tourist villages: Sibiel, Gura Râului (Sibiu), Putna (Suceava), Vaideeni (Vâlcea),
− tourist villages with artistic creation and handicraft, in these settlements, only itinerant tourism with cultural valences is practiced:
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Tismana (Gorj), Marga (Caraş Severin), Alţâna (Sibiu)
- climate and landscape tourist villages - appropriate for holiday tourism- Sibiel, Lereşti (Argeş)
- fishing and hunting tourist villages: Murighiol (Tulcea), Botiza (Maramureş),
- vine and fruit growing tourist villages: Recaş (Timiş), Lereşti (Argeş)
- pastoral tourist villages: Jina, Sibiel, Gura Râului (Sibiu), Văideeni (Vâlcea),
- tourist villages for practicing sports: Bran (Braşov), Murighiol (Tulcea), [4]
- villages with historical monuments, with works of art and architecture, of exceptional value, having national and international reputation: the Monasteries in Moldavia (Suceviţa, Putna etc.), in the Getic Subcarpathians (Aninoasa, Cozia, Tismana) and the fortified churches of South Transylvania (Biertan, Alţâna, Dealu Frumos etc.).

Many types of villages previously presented have clear-cut features, the same type of village could include characteristics specific to the other types of villages, the delimitation made being more theoretical. [5] For example, the villages of Tismana and Sibiel have specific ethnic and folk traditions but are, at the same time, framed within an attractive, natural landscape.

This classification is neither exhaustive nor comprehensive; we can also take into account other criteria or tourist attractions (spa villages, village museums, cultural villages), which demonstrates various possibilities for organizing and functioning of the tourist village in general. It is important to pin down the natural, cultural and historical feature, specific to each locality, to highlight and take them into account in the act of organizing, operating and promoting a rural area as "tourist village" in order to avoid uniformity, and monotony of rural tourism areas.

In Romania, the rural settlements with tourist function, namely, "tourist villages": are not certified through their own legislation and therefore have not been identified, organized, arranged and promoted. In rural areas, only tourist boarding is promoted, without even mentioning which ethnographic region they belong to.

The first tourist villages appeared in France since 1959 and are considered the most original form of tourism in the second half of the twentieth century. The Austrians propose the concepts of "recreational tourist villages" and "rest villages", certified after going through rigorous proceedings. No less important are the Swiss, the Germans, the Poles and the Yugoslavians who already have thousands of villages with tourist activity.

In our country, the idea of “tourist village” has undergone a short epic. In 1972, by order of the Minister of Tourism, 118 rural villages are selected in order to be included in the national and international tourist circuit.

Shortly thereafter, in 1973, by a similar order, thirteen rural settlements are declared, experimentally, tourist villages: Lereşti, Rucăr, Fundata, Sirnea, Sibiel, Râşinari, Tismana, Văideeni, Halmagiu, Bogdan Vodă, Vatra Moldoviţei, Murighiol and Sf. Gheorghe. By Decree 225/1974 accommodation of foreign tourists in private homes was forbidden, tourist villages thus becoming inoperative to international tourism.

However some of the tourist villages mentioned above have received derogation and were included in the folk cultural programs contracted by the Carpathian ONT (National Tourism Organization)-Bucharest, with various foreign companies. These were: Lereşti, Rucăr, Sibiel, Murighiol and Crişan, out of which only two have operated, namely Lereşti (Argeş), Sibiel (Sibiu). [6]

3. Solution Problem
Cultural tourism may be a chance of economic revival of the tourist area in the Hârtibaciu Valley, and in this respect, several programs and projects have taken place in recent years. One of the most important projects is the Cultural Itinerary of the Fortified Churches in Transylvania, and many villages along the Hârtibaciu Valley, are part of this European cultural route. Various cultural events take place as part of this program: cultural cocktails (classical music concerts, theater for children, photo exhibitions and film screenings) and brunches (which are usually held on the last Saturday of every month, in a special location, when the tourists enjoy cooking recipes from the local cuisine).

3.1. Alţâna- a cultural tourist destination included in the European cultural routes
European routes pass through Alţâna, which is one of the largest villages in the Hârtibaciu Valley. On July 26, 2010, the Information and Crafts Centre from Alţâna, was inaugurated in the village, in partnership with UNESCO Regional Office in Venice and within “The Cultural Itinerary of the Fortified Churches in Transylvania” project.
Gerendi House is home of this center, a recently restored historical building. Some of the objects collected by Stephen Vaida were exhibited and became useful here: looms, spinning forks, rolling pins and other utensils used, a long time ago, to make those wonderful fabrics that we boast today, especially in museums.

At the inauguration of the Centre, in all three rooms of the house, guests could see the eight girls supervised by "Aunt Silvia" working with the spinning wheel and the loom. They listened to group work songs specific to weaving, performed by the communal choir, and witnessed the joys of young children who attended a doll manufacturing workshop led by Silviu Fologeа. [7]

At the evangelical church, mezzo-soprano Claudia Codreanu and organist Inna Oncescu gave a concert of sacred music, entitled *In Te, Domine, speravi* that included music by Bach, Perosi, Schubert, Durante and Verdi. The concert of sacred music was listened to in silence, most auditors participating for the first time to such an artistic event.

Mihai Dragomir, representing the "Mioritics" Association[3], who was involved in the project, said at the opening that the establishment of this center with double functionality (heritage info point and traditional crafts center) is part of a program for promoting cultural tourism, which started four years ago. Through this program, information centers have also been set up in Sibiu, Sighișoara and Râșnov. The Center in Alșâna is the only one opened in a village, and the only one that promotes traditional crafts.

The Cultural Itinerary of the Fortified Churches in Transylvania was launched in 2009. In May 2010, the first Resource Center of the European Institute of Cultural Routes was opened in Sibiu, focusing on the cultural itineraries in South-East Europe. Cultural Routes have been launched as early as 1987 and have reached an annual figure of more than six million visitors of the 29 routes, promoted in all 50 member countries of the Convention of Cultural Routes.

The program aims at raising awareness of the Europeans on their cultural identity through cultural tourism of quality, exploring the heritage of different communities. The European Institute of Cultural Routes, based in Luxembourg, provides technical assistance in implementing itineraries.

The village of Alșâna has returned to the attention of fans of cultural cocktails on August 22, 2010. The program of this cultural cocktail was:

- Wilhelm Schmidts - organ (Wuertzburg, Germany)-Le Passe (re) compose music for organ of medieval and Renaissance inspiration
- Crenguța Hariton and Călin Torsan (Bucharest)-Stories with ears - texts and sounds for young and older children

Therefore, in villages such as Alșâna, culture has been converted into a commodity or product for tourism consumption. Nowadays, we can identify an intensive process of commodification of culture and cultural heritage. This is better understood if we look at how culture is managed with economic aims.[9]

Unfortunately, the advertising of Romanian tourist villages is done poorly, only by ANTREC[4] or by local tourism associations, without there being a specific national program for this purpose.

[3] Mioritics Association is an NGO working on the development and the promotion of active cultural tourism, as a means of regional development. To find out more visit www.fortified-churches.com

[4] ANTREC (National Association of Rural Ecological and Cultural Tourism) is an NGO member of the European Federation of Rural Tourism - EUROGITES. It was founded in 1994 and has 32 county branches and over 2,500 members active, volunteers and sympathizers.
The tourist village renders specificity, local or regional spiritual originality and therefore it must be promoted as a "tourist product". Therefore, it would be appropriate of ANTREC, or any other travel agencies, to include in their promotional materials the tourist village and the ethnographic area along with the agrotouristic pension, and not with the county, which as an administrative entity, may disappear, while the ethnographic reality will endure time and provides the brand image. It is also necessary to signal the tourist value of a village through a "tourist village" pictogram installed at the entrances to the village and the mayor's office.

4. Conclusions
The city of Sibiu continues to be a hub of cultural attractions, benefitting from the reputation gained after the "European Cultural Capital 2007". The ECOC program, the New Concept of Tourism - "The Cultural Itinerary of the Fortified Churches in Transylvania" - have opened new horizons for the cultural development of the tourist villages in Sibiu. Cultural tourism can be an opportunity for poorly developed tourist areas, such as Hârtibaciu Valley.

Hence, looking at the local rural tourism offer, we notice, easily, that the tourist destination - the village, the farm, the agrotouristic pension or the room in the cottage - is not the only tourist product, knowing that usually a destination includes more tourist products.

Consequently, the Romanian village with tourist vocation, included in tourist circuits, may be, at the same time, a component of several types of tourist products. It can be as follows: a summer holiday destination; a one-night stopover for a circuit of the Fortified Churches or Monasteries in Moldova or Oltenia; a workshop for folk-crafts acquiring; the initiation stage in the art of folk dancing or singing; the stage for listening to concerts of classical music, or for watching plays or movies.

[10]

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