

Book Review on “Rural Tourism – Treaty” by Puiu Nistoreanu and Marinela Gheres (coord.), C.H. Beck Publishing House, Bucharest, 2010

by

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Abstract. The main purpose of this paper is to promote the work of a great team and to offer to the academic society and not only, the results of this achievement. All the theoretical and practical views focus on making a rigorous inventory of all that means rural tourism, a field that grows each second and expands. Another main objective is to analyze the main characteristics of this field of interest (theoretical concepts, forms and activities, social and economical meanings, implementation and development), characteristics that are seen through two both a general view and a view that focuses on the relation between rural tourism and the Romanian village.

On the other hand, this research reveals more particular aspects applied on the example of Romania. Along with the issue of sustainable development, the results of this research tend to be useful for all projects and management strategies. They also target the entrepreneurs by integrating all rural activities in a complex vision that sustains development and preserving the rural society.

Key words: rural tourism, sustainable development, entrepreneurs.

JEL classification: R11

1 Introduction

Romania seems to be a country with a strong touristic potential, due to the variety, beauty and originality of the natural and anthropic resources. In the last period, a lot of writings have been published, all having the same goal: to remind us of this strong touristic potential and the methods to develop it.

One of the most recent writings published by C.H. Beck S.R.L is called *Rural Tourism – Treaty* and it is the result of a long collaboration between passionate researchers from prestigious University Centres from Romania, like Bucharest, Pitesti, Cluj-Napoca, Arad and Vatra Dornei. The treaty opens the gates to old values of the romanian people, to authenticity and unique touristic products.

The coordinators of this paper are two well-known personalities of this field of interest: prof. Dr. Puiu Nistoreanu and Conf. Dr. Marinela Gheres, seen as promoters of rural tourism in Romania. They brought together other personalities of the Romanian academies and formed a unique team: *Bănuță Mariana, Ciornea Raluca, Crăciuneanu Viorel, Firescu*

Victoria, Gogozan Alexandra, Hornoiu Remus, Isac Florin-Lucian, Plăiaş Ioan, Pop Iuliana, Rusu Sergiu, Săvoiu Gheorghe, Stanciu Mirela, Ţaicu Marian, Tănase Mihai-Ovidiu, Ungureanu Dănuţ, Vlad Iulian, members who gave to all those interested in this field, all of their research, knowledge and various information about rural tourism; what was born out of this collaboration surprises everyone due to the original perspective, the great amount of research and given solutions.

2 A new approach

When a field of interest is so complex and exciting for any eye, mind and soul and so tempting, economically speaking, that even the most authentic manuscript couldn't compress it, it becomes absolutely necessary to write something that is the result of optimum and unique research through its character.

2.1. Rural tourism and the Romanian rural space

Divided in 14 chapters, this piece of work approaches, in ascending line, points like rural tourism in Central, Eastern and Occidental Europe, the rural village and its symbols (wood, time, space, human-animal bonds) and then going towards the economic side of this form of tourism (economic theories, agrotourism and the economy, marketing of rural products) along with ecological aspects, so important for sustainable tourism. This new approach offers all readers a whole new vision towards rural tourism. Without wanting to discredit the authors, we should mention two of the initiators of rural tourism in Romania, The Village Museum and The Peasant's Museum, symbols which lived through time due to personalities like Ernest Bernea, his son, Horea and all the others who brought their contribution to this field, by adding value.

The results of the research, obtained after statistically analyzing the situation of rural tourism and using vital instruments such the questionnaire and the human developing parameter, outline the desire of all authors. We are talking about promoting a form of tourism that is unique in Romania, rural tourism and agrotourism, giving viable solutions for the development of the national economy by creating a personal system for sustainable development.

Rural Tourism – Treaty goes beyond an ordinary university course. It cannot be called a simple book because of the field, symbols and subjects approached. Rural tourism and agrotourism have been long debated in the last two decades; this is why some of the general information must be left aside and other aspects, exciting and new, must be explained. What is new, thanks to the authors is the fact that the reader will discover not only those fields of interest that are common to Romania, but also correlations to other areas that have the same rural tourism, which is the same as ours or different. This comparison can be one of the most important goals of this research because

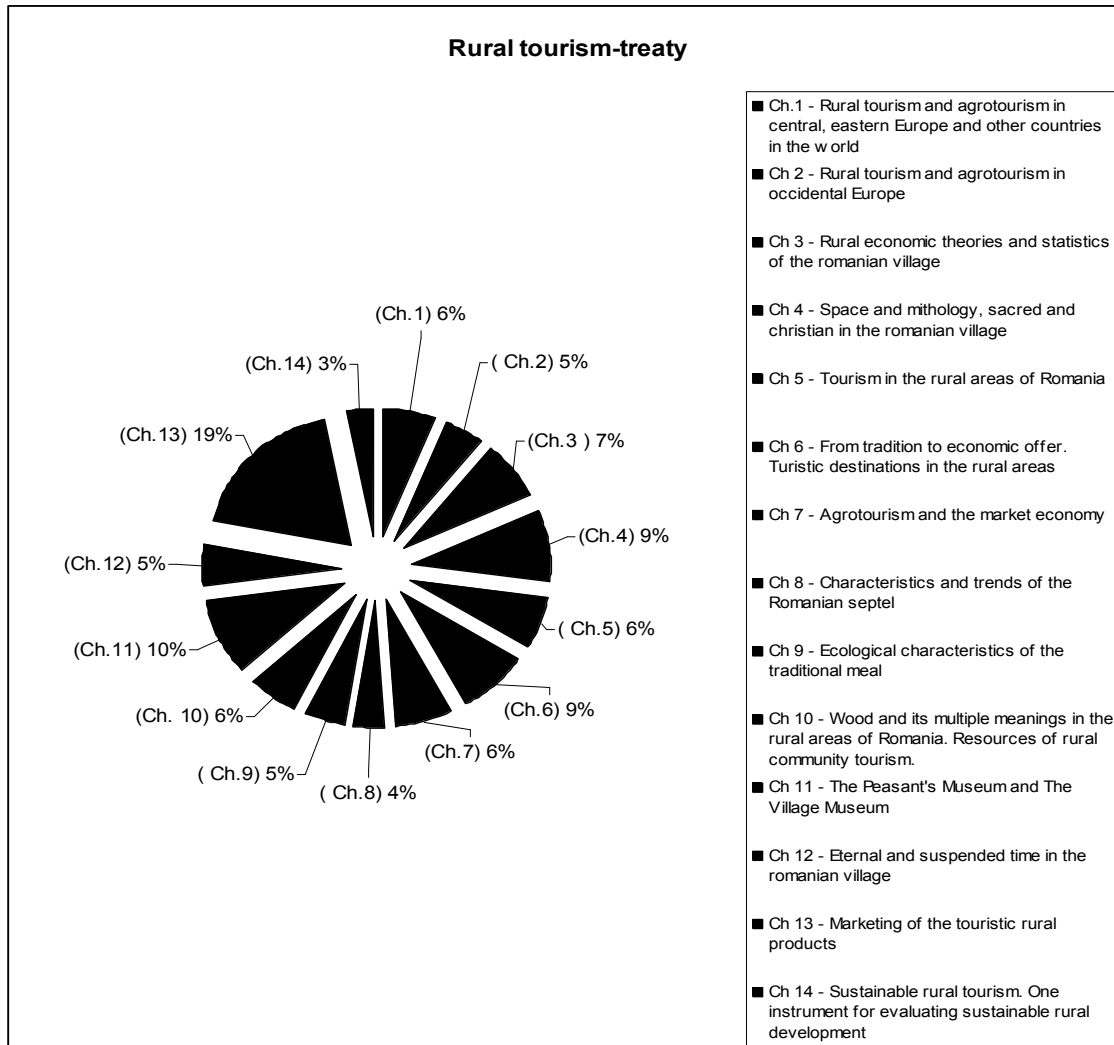
the book analysis and outlines the similarities and the differences between Romanian rural tourism and the one in other areas.

2.2. A treaty for entrepreneurs and consumers

The first chapter, Rural Tourism and Agrotourism in Central, Eastern Europe and other countries worldwide, illustrates different situations from countries like Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, SUA, China, Taiwan, Malaysia and Australia. The reader finds himself with a puzzle that he has to build even if the pieces seem impossible to relate. What similarities can be between the traditionalism of the Chinese culture and the variety of the American people, for instance! Well, there surprisingly have many things in common.

Moving closer to Romania, the second chapter, Rural Tourism and agrotourism in Occidental Europe, decides to analyze areas closer to our country. This part of the book deals with countries like Germania, Austria, Italia, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and others, each being unique. By proposing structures of this field of interest, campaigns, mottos and successful businesses, we can easily see how some countries are proud of their rural tourism. The reader can find out which country can say „*One tourist = one friend. Smile!*”

The Romanian village, recognized as sacred to all people, lets itself discovered in the *III* chapter, Economic Rural Theories and Statistics of the Romanian village. The exploring of this mystical place transforms the whole experience in a great expedition, powered by elements of sacred and profane. Who could refuse this invitation to abandon, just for a moment, the profane city and embrace the sacred village? These chapters show some programs not so well-known but very efficient. Miorita, for example, the famous sheep transforms itself from a legend to an expedition.



One by one, the chapters show the reader the way to the central theme of the book. The *V* chapter indicates the main coordinates of today's situation in rural tourism. The fact that the Romanian village has been transformed into a touristic product must not surprise us. The way in which the actual village and its inhabitants are affected is something that the book intends to clarify. Besides, let's not forget about the Romanians who are always happy with guests because they are unique hosts. Hospitality is an element encountered in Romania's rural area. The *VI* and *VII* chapters debate on the touristic product and the place gained by agrotourism in the general market economy.

We were talking earlier about how difficult it is for a research to encompass all the needed information and add new things. This treaty shows the link between rural tourism, agrotourism and the bond between man and animal, because we cannot forget about the strong feelings between the two, especially at the countryside.

Another important issue refers to food, which is considered crucial when it comes to satisfying those tourists who choose this form of tourism. Things like what should be served and what should be left aside, traditional meals to allure the tourist, all these can be discovered in the pages of the treaty. Slowly, we cross over to another important resource of the Romanian village, resource that made Romania famous:

the wood. Treated like precious gold, this material has come to live in the hands of many great craftsmen. This treaty invites all readers to smell the fresh wood from its pages...

The *XI* chapter describes the personality of the Romanian peasant, without whom the village could not exist. His way of being is described by two symbols, The Village Museum and The Peasant's Museum. This is how this treaty goes beyond an ordinary book, always sending invitations to smart readers. And if we have been already invited to reading, why should we not take the opportunity and travel back in time?

The time theme, which is debated in two chapters, tries to clarify some fundamental concepts, of eternal time and suspended time, concepts that are very interesting.

The last part of the treaty talks about the marketing of touristic products and sustainable rural tourism, two issues refer to in an authentic way. The *XIV* chapter ends this research with an invitation to take care of the next generation because it depends on how responsible the present one is.

It has already been decided that this piece of work can be a complex treaty and that it is more than a simple book. Once you read it you will feel richer in knowledge, you can verify personal information about the discussed subjects and you can accept points of view or debate ideas.

The most important thing is for you, as a reader, not to slip into dreaming because the pages are full of invitations to travelling. This is not a bad thing at all, as long as it helps you outline ideas about the Romanian rural tourism. Going through the pages of this treaty you accomplish to learn more with each subject.

The second goal of this piece of work is to offer to all entrepreneurs successful methods in order to maintain the authenticity of rural products and in the same time, adding quality, complexity and professionalism. Their offers will be unique and competitive and ready to stand up among rural products all over the world.

3. Conclusion

As a personal pint of view, this treaty brings an interesting concept in discussion, that of new folklore, created by merging rural literature with scientific research. If until today, we couldn't have observed a possible link between folklore and Romania's rural economy, this treaty brings along new dimensions of rural tourism maintained by old traditions. This is truly a brave attempt because this piece of work tries to change the mentality of a nation towards the greatest development resource: the exclusive Romanian spirit, forgotten, for too long. The treaty presents rural tourism like never seen before: original, exciting, mysterious, full of potential and giving the right methods through which all that has been promised in these pages, can come true.

Rural Tourism – Treaty has been designed on two dimensions, economic an folkloric: because of this, the public is expected to be formed not only by specialists but also by entrepreneurs, students, future scientists or just good books lovers. Regarding the actual style of the writing, the treaty stands at the edge between scientific and artistic and this makes it easy to read and perceive. Therefore, the text is, on one hand, scientific, because of the theme, concepts and domain (economy field) and artistic, on the other hand, due to the approaching style.

Why is it worth reading? Simply because we start to regain lost values, page by page, to remember about the touristic potential this country still has to offer, potential that has never been exploited at its true value. By not interfering with the future, the authors leave us, entrepreneurs an consumers of rural tourism, the possibility to reinvent the future, just following simple directions. Not only the products presented and the touristic destinations make the reader addictive, but also the pages of this treaty, which makes you read it again and again, always with new expectations.

It becomes important not only for the tourist but also for the entrepreneurs to learn all about rural tourism and to treat this part as a unique one. The consumer of rural tourism is different from all other consumers and the entrepreneurs must know all about their needs and expectations.

Once this happens, this field of interest can grow and expand. We are talking about sustainable development which is part of the general economic development.

The economic measures regard the touristic rural product, which is another special characteristic of rural tourism. The offer should be regarded separately and a profile of the consumer is required. The economic world is changing continuously and rapidly. In order to maintain the business, the entrepreneurs must find and use measures that allow them to expand.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 – RURAL TOURISM AND AGROTOURISM IN CENTRAL,

EASTERN EUROPE AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD..... 1

1.1. Rural tourism in Poland	1
1.2. Rural tourism in Hungary.....	3
1.3. Rural tourism in Bulgaria	5
1.4. Rural tourism in USA.....	6
1.5. Rural tourism in China. Rural tourism enterprises	8
1.6. Rural tourism in Taiwan.....	10
1.7. Rural tourism in Malaysia	11
1.8. Rural tourism in Australia. Australian ecotourism and Undara project.....	11
1.9. The theme of new experiences	12
1.10. Notes and bibliography.....	13

CHAPTER 2 – RURAL TOURISM AND AGROTOURISM IN OCCIDENTAL EUROPE..... 14

2.1. Rural tourism in Germany	14
2.2. Rural tourism in Austria	16
2.3. Rural tourism in Italy.....	17
2.4. Rural tourism in Belgium	18
2.5. Rural tourism in Spain	19
2.6. Rural tourism in Portugal.....	21
2.7. Rural tourism in Finland	22
2.8. Rural tourism in Ireland	23
2.9. Rural tourism in France	24
2.10. Rural tourism in Iceland.....	26
2.11. Notes and bibliography.....	26

CHAPTER 3 – RURAL ECONOMIC THEORIES AND STATISTICS OF THE ROMANIAN VILLAGE 28

3.1. Introduction.....	28
3.2. The cultural model and the economic rural theories	30
3.3. Today's rural economy in Romania.....	39
3.4. Notes and bibliography.....	46

CHAPTER 4 – SPACE AND MYTHOLOGY, SACRED AND CHRISTIAN IN THE ROMANIAN VILLAGE – ELEMENTS OF POTENTIAL TOURISTIC PROGRAMS..... 49

4.1. Introduction.....	49
4.2. Urban and rural mountain spaces – stability vs. nomadism and	

transhumance.....	52
4.3. Touristic rural programs, based on “ the path of the sheep”	57
4.4. The potential of a Romanian mythological tourism, of mountain rural origin	62
4.5. The need for statutory and architectural terms of reference regarding the pastoral epos in the Romanian mountains	66
<i>XXII Turism rural</i>	
4.6. Conclusions regarding touristic consequences on the village, focused on mythology, sacred and Christianity.....	69
4.7. Notes and bibliography.....	71
CHAPTER 5 – TOURISM IN THE RURAL AREAS OF ROMANIA.....	73
5.1. The Romanian village – a touristic product	73
5.2. Main motivations for choosing one destination or another.....	78
5.3. The surprising Romanian village, part of the cultural mix	81
5.4. The surprising Romanian village, part of the rural and urban mix	82
5.5. The hospitality of Romanian villages, promoter of the Romanian touristic offer	85
5.6. Notes and bibliography.....	89
CHAPTER 6 – FROM TRADITION TO THE ECONOMIC OFFER. TOURISM DESTINATIONS IN THE RURAL AREAS.....	90
6.1. Concepts	90
6.2. The evolution of tourism in the rural areas.....	95
6.3. The European tourism – short presentation.....	98
6.4. Types of rural tourism products used in Europe	99
6.5. Notes and bibliography.....	111
CHAPTER 7 – AGROTOURISM IN THE MARKET ECONOMY.....	113
7.1. Agrotourism, seen from an optimistic perspective	113
7.2. Principles and objectives of agrotourism.....	114
7.3. Specific characteristics of agrotourism.....	115
7.4. The analysis of tourism activities.....	118
7.5. A classification of guesthouses	123
7.6. Entrepreneurial exercises.....	130
7.7. Notes and bibliography.....	131
CHAPTER 8 – CHARACTERISTICS AND TRENDS OF THE ROMANIAN LIVESTOCK. THE TOURISTIC IMPACT OF THE LINK BETWEEN PEASANT AND ANIMAL.....	133
8.1. Introduction.....	133
8.2. Types of species, the results of animal domestication and tourists expectations	134
8.3. Connections between peasant and animal, crucial for today’s rural touristic impact.....	137
8.4. Notes and bibliography.....	142
CHAPTER 9 – ECOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF TRADITIONAL RURAL MEALS.....	144
9.1. Introduction.....	144
9.2. Malthus and his solution to overcome the economical crisis – “moral restraint”	146
9.3. Our daily food	150
9.4. Some rural and touristic implications derived from ecological food	152
9.5. Notes and bibliography.....	156
CHAPTER 10 – WOOD AND ITS MULTIPLE MEANINGS IN THE RURAL ROMANIA – RESOURCES OF CULTURAL TOURISM.....	157
10.1. Introduction.....	157
<i>Table of contents XXIII</i>	

10.2. The mix between crafts and the traditional religious part of the village	158
10.3. Elements of a specific touristic program for monasteries and hermitages situated south of the Carpathians, as main religious references for the rural areas of Romania.....	164
10.4. Notes and bibliography.....	172
CHAPTER 11 – THE PEASANT’S MUSEM AND THE VILLAGE MUSEUM –TWO ODYSSEYS AND TWO CORYPHEUS.....	173
11.1. Introduction.....	173
11.2. Ernest Bernea and the immortality of the “light chamber” atmosphere of the sociological Romanian school, in a fantastic museum, indispensable for rural tourism	174
11.3. Horia Bernea and The Peasant’s Museum or the indefinable miniature of the traditional Romanian village	186
11.4. Another museum for going back in time, different but connected to the village: king’s and noblemen’s courts – a medieval anthropologic touristic program	191
11.5. Notes and bibliography.....	198
CHAPTER 12 – ETERNAL AND SUSPENDED TIME IN THE ROMANIAN VILLAGE – ORIGINAL ELEMENTS PUT TOGETHER IN A PROGRAM WITH GREAT NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN IMPACT	200
12.1. Introduction.....	200
12.2. Time and calendar.....	201
12.3. The time and the calendar of the Romanian village.....	204
12.4. The eternal and suspended calendar of the Romanian pastoral village – a summary of methods for spending traditional and religious time	207
12.5. The suspended time of celebrations – the source of many pastoral programs.....	211
12.6. Notes and bibliography.....	213
CHAPTER 13 – TOURISTIC RURAL PRODUCTS MARKETING	215
13.1. The SWOT analysis	215
13.2. The marketing mix – analyzing the “7P”.....	216
13.3. The rural touristic product.....	217
13.4. The price of the rural touristic product.....	218
13.5. The distribution of the rural touristic product	220
13.6. Promoting of the rural touristic product	221
13.7. Notes and bibliography.....	260
CHAPTER 14 – SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM, AN INSTRUMENT FOR EVALUATING SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT	261
14.1. The human development index, a measure for sustainable development	261
14.2. Determining a concise index for sustainable development in tourism	268
14.3. Notes and bibliography.....	274

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