

## STUDY REGARDING THE TOURIST POTENTIAL FROM THE AREA DANUBE GORGE

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***Abstract:** In the present paper is presented the tourist potential of the Danube Gorge area, a part of the Danube Gorge, situated between the Nera Valley and the locality Gura Vaii, which has enjoyed of a real appreciation from the people who choose to travel in this area, and which represents an area where the nature elements intertwines with the customs and traditions that are kept with holiness here. In this area tourists have the opportunity to visit natural and historical monuments, such as: Big Boilers, Small Boilers, Tabula Traiana, Decebal's Bust, Mraconia Monastery, Tri Kule Ruins and the Mraconia Tourist Complex.*

***Key words:** tourist potential, tourism, tourists, Danube Gorge*

### INTRODUCTION

The trip through the Mountain Banat is not fulfilled without visiting, on land or on the water the Danube Gorge, the most spectacular defile of the river. After beauty, if we were to look for a second attribute of Gorge, it would be diversity, from geographic and geological to historical, ethnic, religious and cultural. [9]

The natural tourism potential of the Danube Gorge, meaning "the totality of the physical and geographic elements from a territory that have the capacity to attract potential tourists" and which "by partially or totally combining the dominant features of the natural environment elements outlines quantitative and qualitative appreciations on the natural potential of a territory", is very rich. [5]

That is why some authors consider that the development of tourism implies the existence of a tourist potential which, by its attractiveness, to ensures the integration of a tourist area or region in the domestic and international tourist circuits and which to allows the access of the tourists through appropriate arrangements. [1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7]

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

In order to achieve this article we have consulted different bibliographic sources, as well as data obtained from the studied area. With the help of these data, we have been able to highlight the tourism potential from the area.

### RESEARCH RESULTS

The Danube Gorge or the Danube Gorge is a geographical region situated along the northern bank of the Danube, in southwestern of Romania. The region is limited by the Nera River to the west and by the Danube Boilers to the East, located on the territories of Caras-Severin and Mehedinti Counties. The largest settlements from the Danube Gorge are the Orsova municipality and the city of Moldova Noua. Also from the Danube Gorge are parte the localities Socol, Pojejena, Coronini, Garnic, Sichevita, Berzasca, from Caras-Severin County and Svinita, Dubova, Eselnita, Ilovita and Breznita-Ocol, communes from Mehedinti County. [14]



Figure 1. Danube Gorge Area [10]

Access in the area can be done by car or by boat. With the car access is made through:

- Timisoara, on DN57 Timisoara - Moldova Noua, there is also a bus running on this route.
- Drobeta Turnu-Severin from where it is followed the European road E70 up to Orsova (about 25 km) and then the national road DN57 to Moldova Noua (104 km from Orsova).
- Resita, from where the road goes to Oravita, and then DN57 through Naidas to Moldova Noua. In Pojejena locality, branches from DN57a county road, which heads to Divici, Bazias and Nera ponds.

"Gorge" is a word of Byzantine origin and means "a fortress situated at the mouth of a gorge". Lovers of nature will be delighted by the Danube Gorge, and they can see, on the one size, rocky hills with parks and nature reserves, with secular forests protected with plant varieties and unique birds in the world, and on the other size, the lazy thread of the Danube. [13]

The tourist potential is formed by the grandiose landscape formed by the Danube River and its gorge, by the diversity of the relief in the mountainous area, by the existence of special floristic and faunistic elements, many of them being included in a series of natural reservations, specific or mixed, having different stretches and which represent attractions points for scientists, but also for nature lovers.

The most picturesque part of the Danube Gorge is the town Orsova and the "Danube Boilers", which are located within the area of localities Eselnita and Dubova.

The "boilers" are divided - coming from Orsova - in **Small Boilers** (on the range of Eselnita locality), in the middle of which the picturesque valley of Mraconia is located, dominated by the bust of King Decebal dug in the rock, and the **Big Boilers**, beyond the Bay of Dubova, dominated by the heights of the Great Ciucarul.

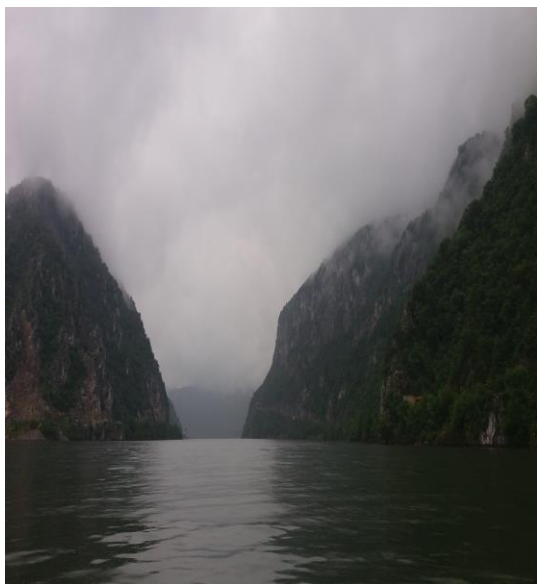
So in the following we will present the most important tourist attractions from the area of the Danube Gorge: Big Boilers, Small Boilers, Decebal Statue, Mraconia Monastery, Ponicoava Cave, Babacaia Rock.

**The Danube's Big and Small Boilers** stretch for almost 9 km and are separated only by Dubova Bay, a place where the Danube boils literally, a sensation that can only be experienced in the middle of the river. Here, water is forced to pass through the mountains. The width of the Danube in this area narrows to 180-250 meters and the depth reaches 100 meters. Extremely strong currents from the depths and crevices on the bottom of the water

give the appearance of a real boiling boiler. This area is declared in Europe as a unique monument of nature.

Between Plavisevita and the Dubova basin stretches on a length of 3.8 km the Big Boilers, formed by the Ciucaru Mare limestone massif (318 m), whose steep walls bordered the left side of the river and the Big Stirbatul (Veliki Strbac - 768 m), on the Serbian bank.

The flora from the Boilers area contains many sub-Mediterranean elements mixed with the Central European ones. At the base of the steep wall there are found the beech trees, hornbeam, or trilobate maple, Turkish hazel. In the sunny areas the sky grows, along with the fluffy oak, the wild lilac. Between the Dubova basin and Ogradena there are found the **Small Boilers** with a length of 3.6 km. These are made up of Ciucaru Mic Hill (313 m) and Stirbatul Mic Hill on the territory of Serbia (626 m).



**Figure 2. Danube's Big and Small Boilers**



**Figure 3. Statue of Decebal**

On the Romanian bank, at the catacombs of the Small Boilers, where the depth of the river is the highest, 120 m, there is a monument with great tourist importance, carved in stone between the years 1994-2004.

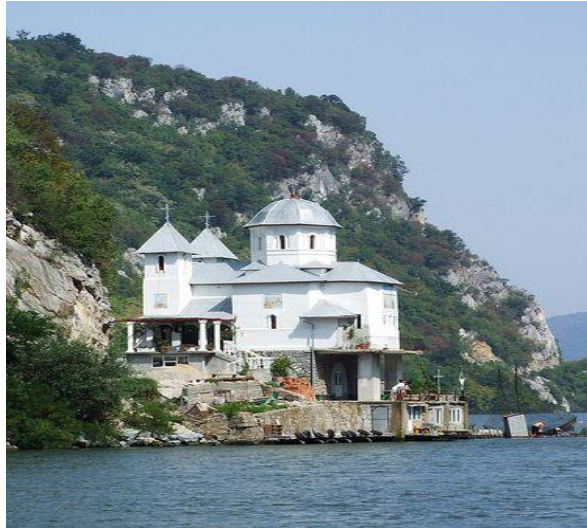
**The Statue with the image of Decebal** is 55 m high and 25 m wide. It was carved in the rock after the model of Mount Rushmore and is the largest statue from Europe: having just six yards less than the Statue of Liberty, with eight more than the Jesus Christ monument from Rio de Janeiro, and about 10 meters more than the legendary Colos of Rhodes. The idea of building this statue belonged to the Romanian businessman Iosif Constantin Dragan, a controversial amateur historian, and lasted 10 years (1994-2004) for that the 12 climbers-painters to finish it, realizing it costing him, finally, over one million dollars.

From the studies conducted in this area we can state that Decebal's Statue became the number one attraction of the Danube Gorge, being the most visited and publicized, both in the country and in Europe, here coming groups of tourists from most European countries. [8]

On the Orsova-Moldova Noua road, in the Mracona Valley near the commune Ogradena Veche, there is an ancient monastery called "Mracona". The old place is "hidden" in a picturesque place in front of the former Trajan's road on the Serbian bank, where "Tabula Traiana" is located.

**The Mraconia Monastery** was also known as the Monastery from the Danube Valley or Ogradena Veche, a nearby commune. The monastery has experienced all the strides of history, starting with the invasion of the invaders, foreign domination and it has been swallowed up by the waters. The present monastery is built on the site of the former Mraconia Monastery, built in the valley of the same name.

The original monastery was built in 1523, under the jurisdiction of the Episcopate of Varset by the governor of the border region of Caransebes and Lugoj, the ban Nicola Garlisteanu. The church received the patronage of St. Elijah the Prophet.



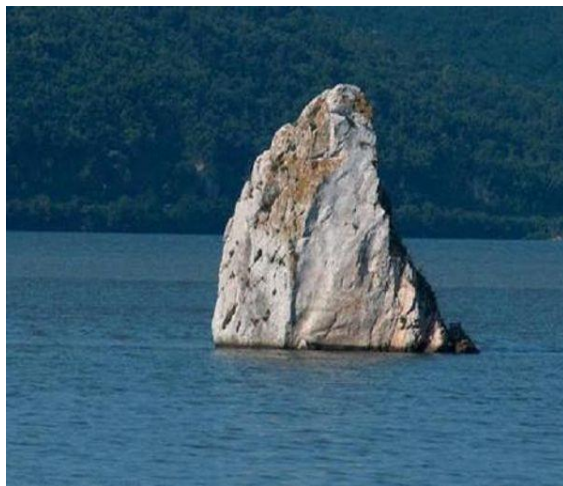
**Figure 4. Mraconia Monastery**

Source: [http://www.opiniatimisoarei.ro/clisura-dunarii-aflata-la-200-de-km-de-timisoara-declarata-cel-mai-spectaculos-defileu-din-europa\\_foto/06/08/2014](http://www.opiniatimisoarei.ro/clisura-dunarii-aflata-la-200-de-km-de-timisoara-declarata-cel-mai-spectaculos-defileu-din-europa_foto/06/08/2014)



**Figure 5. Poncova Cave**

**The Babacia Rock** or "The Rock of the Father" is located at 4 km from Moldova Veche, at the east entrance of Coronini locality and marks the place from where starts upstream the Danube Gorge. It is a rocky corner from the swampy waters of the river, which is now partly covered by water after the formation of the "Iron Gates" reservoir. From this rock (as well as other places of the Gorge), there are several legends narrated by several authors.



**Figure 6. Babacia Rock [12]**

In this article we have presented the most important tourist objectives, but these are not the only objectives that can be seen in the Danube Gorge. Let's not forget the Gornea village museum, Berzasca, the village from lake, Tricule fortress from Svinita, Drencova fortress, the Ladislau fortress or the one from Golubac on the neighboring shore and the journey can continue. [9]

We can say with certainty that there are not so many places in the world that are worth visiting, concentrated in a dream area, called the Danube Gorge.

The tourists who come in the area will be accommodated in agrotourist boarding houses on the banks of the Danube, this equipped with services and utilities at European standards. The owners of boarding houses organize hikes for tourists in the Iron Gates National Park, in order to admire the diversity of fauna and flora species, some of the species being endangered.

The accommodation structures at the Danube Gorge are mostly represented by tourist boarding houses, built relatively recently in the area, by cottages and villas that are smaller than the tourist boarding houses. They provide for tourists the highest degree of comfort, while also placing a great deal of emphasis on the diversification of the facilities offered.

## CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn from this article:

- spectacular from a geographic point of view, the Danube Gorge is very important from the point of view of biodiversity, with a large number of natural reserves, included in the Iron Gates Natural Park.

- residents from the area should be encouraged to access European funds to enable them to build agrotourist boarding houses with local specific and meet the demanding requirements of tourists.

- authorities should rehabilitate and modernize national road networks, in order to facilitate movement and access to areas of tourist interest;

- the area of the Danube Gorge is well represented, from the point of view of the number of accommodation structures existing here.

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