

TOURIST PERCEPTION OF THE ARTWORKS OF CONSTANTIN BRÂNCUȘI, FROM TÂRGU-JIU, ROMANIA

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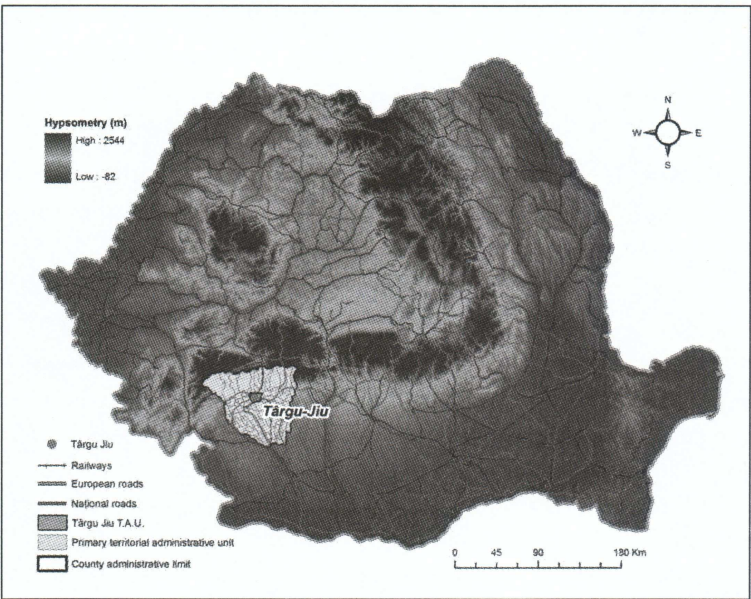
Abstract: Constantin Brâncuși was a Romanian sculptor who was born in 1876, in Hobișa, a village close to Târgu Jiu. During his life, he created works of monumental art, mostly during his internship in Paris. Among his works, nationally and internationally recognized are Infinity Column, Table of Silence, Kissing Gate and Magic Bird, these creations being relocated in central area of Târgu Jiu between 1937-1938, the measure ordered by Gorj Women's League, led by Arethia Tătărescu. Due to this fact, the city has become more popular thanks to a permanent flow of national and international tourists attracted by originality and expressiveness of the great Romanian sculptor's works. Being exposed outdoors together, it creates a true "tourist pilgrimage" throughout the year, but it is impossible to express numerically. The fact is that tourists who visit Târgu Jiu come from all over the world, and without these masterpieces the city would not have known the international fame it enjoys today.

Key words: Brancuși, Târgu Jiu, Romania , tourist attraction

INTRODUCTION

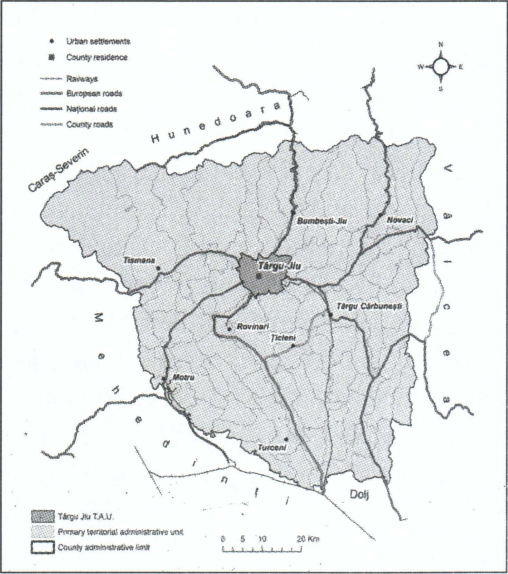
"Three milestones to measure, in Europe, the history of sculpture: Michelangelo, Twanna, Brancusi", that is what the English literary critic Sir Herbert Edward Read said in 1962. With reference to the most famous Romanian sculptor, Mircea Dinescu noted: "Brancuși is Leonardo da Vinci, being the second universalist spirit of Europe, after 400 years! He was also an artist, engineer, architect, geometer, meta-physicist, wise philosopher and moralist". Resonance of Brancusi's name was expanded in Switzerland too, where the writer Carola Giedion-Welcker mentioned that "to frequent Brancuși (in his shop) does not mean only to meet with a great artist, as often as the light of aphorisms' brilliant artistic intentions arrow or the birth of any sculptural works – but to get close to a wise". The artist who managed to eternize in stone and in bronze and to reveal the primary essence of things, interfering in their luminous waves, great ideas (nature and space, history and the Universal Time), was born in 1876, on 19th February, in Hobița village, located 24 km from Târgu Jiu. He discovered his talent during his studies in Craiova, where he was able to achieve a violin of various materials.

Figure 1. National territory contextualization of Târgu-Jiu Municipality



The most important works of this humanist philosopher are: *Prayer*, *Sleeping Muse*, *Lady Bird*, *Magic Pakhira*, *Toward the Baby*, *The Endless Column*, *The Table of Silence*, the last three being located in the municipality of Târgu Jiu.

Figure 2. Contextualisation of the Târgu Jiu County-level



The main urban centre of Gorj County, first mentioned in 1406, lies at an average altitude of 650m, Târgu-Jiu-Câmpu Mare, bordered to the West and Northwest of crimping hills and the administrative-territorial unit of the base and the villages of Iezureni, Preajba Mare, Drăgoieni, Romanian, Slobozia, Bârsești, Polata and Ursați. It lists a population of approximately 98,000 inhabitants, spread over an area of about 11 ha. Traversed by the European route E79 (Filiași-Saban) and DN67 (Drobeta Turnu Severin-Râmnicu Vâlcea), the locality disposes of 158 miles of paved roads, the streets representing 47.7%.

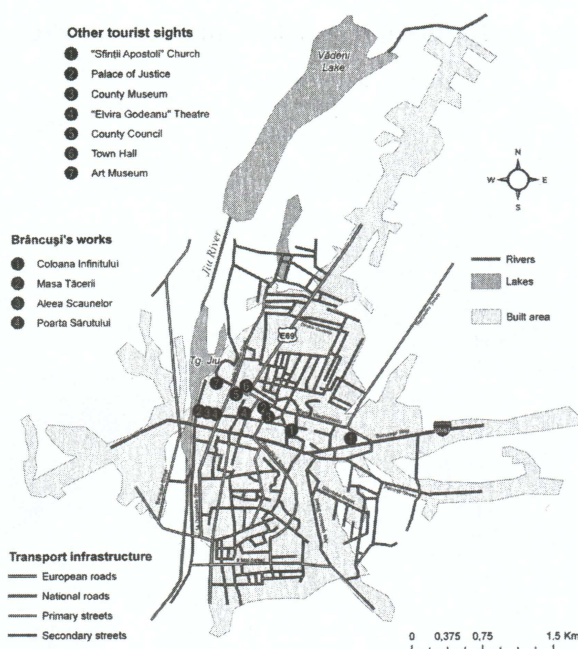
The touristic phenomenon of Târgu Jiu is based on the existence of anthropogenic objectives, particularly on Brancusi's works that can be found on the UNESCO's World Heritage list, and this part of the tourist offer also lists the primary attractions nearby: Ethnographic Museum Curtișoara, the monastery Tismana, Monastery Polovragi.

Table 1. Tourist Attractions in Târgu Jiu

Nr. Crt.	Primary turist offer		Derivated tourist offer	
	<i>Natural potential</i>	<i>Anthropic potential</i>	<i>Events with tourist attractiveness</i>	<i>Recreational facilities</i>
1.	River Jiu	The Table of Silence	Festivalul "Mărțișoare folclorice"	National Olympic Center
2.	Vădeni Lake	Cher Alley	"Zilele Elvira Godeanu"	Municipal Stadium
3.	Târgu Jiu Lake	Kiss Gate	Artistic events of the artistic ensemble "Doina Gorjului"	Multifunctional Hall
4.	Debarcader Lake1	Church "St. Apostoli"	My House of handicrafts fair	3 bazine de înot
5.	Debarcader Lake 2	Church "Sfinții Voievozi"	The handicrafts of the children	Tennis court
6.	Debarcader Lake 3	Church "Adormirea Maicii Domnului"	The Romanian popular artisans fair	Handball court
7.		The Endless Column	Autumn Fair of Gorj artisans	Basket court

8.		Justice Palace	Christmas Frot	Volley court
9.		County Museum	“Drăgoieni Forest” Fair	Football court
10.		Elvira Godeanu Theater	“Daffodils Meadow” Fair	
11.		County Council	Daffodils Feast	
12.		Town Hall	National Festival of folk music and ballad „Kissing Gate“	
13.		Art Museum	International Festival of Visual Arts “GorjFest“	
14.		Memorial House of “Ecaterina Teodoroiu”	Romanian Folk Song Festival “Maria Lătărețu“	
15.		Tudor Vladimirescu Statue	Beer Festival	
16.		Statue of “Gheorghe Magheru”		
17.		Mausoleum of “Ecaterina Teodoroiu”		
18.		Sculpture camp “Constantin Brâncuși”		
19.		Memorial House of “Iosif Kober”		
20.		Memorial House “Dimitrie Măldărăscu”		

Figure 3. Territorial distribution of major anthropogenic tourist attractions in the city Târgu Jiu

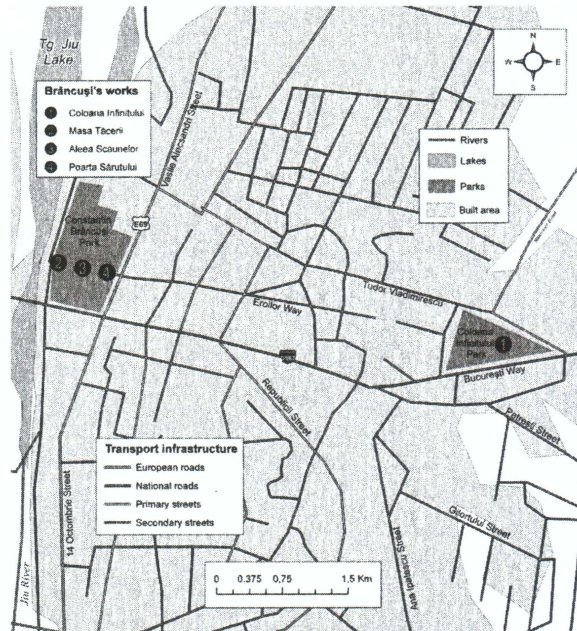


Analyzing the information given in Table 1, the conclusion that is being outlined refers to the fact that the type of tourism which has a real chance of affirmation is cultural one which can attract tourists *motivated by culture* (segment reduced numerically, but favorably in terms of trade, because they have high incomes), those *inspired by culture* (represents tourists attracted by cultural and heritage sites recognised internationally) and those *attracted by culture* (constitute the segment of tourists making a day stay for visiting the cultural sights).

The type of potential cultural tourists that can visit Târgu Jiu lists those who prefer to visit the historical and architectural monuments, museums, religious places and those who prefer art theatres, concerts, art galleries, events such as festivals, carnivals and venues with literary connotation. According to the information gathered on the site in Miami, with the exception of Brâncuși's works, there are 7 tourist attractions with high degree of authenticity, but items that are at the bedside of the tourist phenomenon, which is an important component of social and economic life of the municipality taken into study are represented by the monuments made by Constantin Brâncuși, works which were the result of the biggest Romanian sculptor: "I don't ever give the first shot until the stone there told me what to do. I wait until the inner image fixed firmly in my mind... Sometimes I wait weeks until my stone speaks. You have to look deep inside of it carefully: do not look at any appearance... I remove as much as possible appearances" (Mocioi Ion,

Brancuși: Ansamblul sculptural de la Târgu-Jiu, Comitetul pentru cultura și arta al judeșului Gorj, pag. 83).

Figure 4. Teritorial Repartition of Brancuși Creation

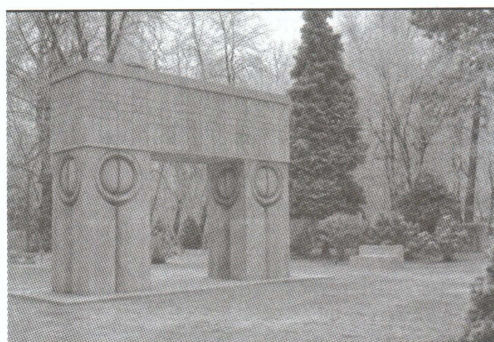


“Endless column”, considered “spiritual testament” of Brancuși, has a height of 29.33 meters and consists of 16 rhomboidal modules, each having a height of 1.8 metres. The monument is built on a foundation of concrete with length and width of 5 m, capable of sustaining the weight of 860 kg. Originally called “The never ending gratitude”, the monument was inaugurated on 27th October 1938, and the number of the modules symbolically represents the year 1916 when Romania entered World War I.

“Table of silence”, made of travertine, has a diameter of 2.15 m and a thickness of 0.43 m, and at the foot, the diameter measured 2 meters and thickness of 0.45 m. Around the table there are 12 seats arranged circularly which were initially closer and grouped by two. The monument represents that symbolic place where Romanian soldiers had to attend, for establishing tactics for battles, and seats whose forms are similar to those of hourglass, symbolically measured time, and its number, 12, recalls the number of the Apostles or the 12 hours on the CW.

“Gate of the Kiss”, made of travertine in 1938, is 5.13 meters high and 5.45 m long, each column is 1.69 m wide, in the middle of them being the symbol of the Kiss (two halves of a circle). Like Arc de Triomphe, the monument symbolizes the triumph of life over death. It is located at a short distance from the “Table of silence”. Both monuments symbolize double transcend of heroes: they gave their lives for the motherland, but they remained alive for eternity.

Figure 5. Gate of the Kiss



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/dordebrancusi?fref=ts>. 20th January 2014

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

Terrain phase

The terrain phase consisted of collecting geographical data through observation, analysis and measurement of some elements on the ground. In general, the main activity was based on shaping the outline map on which the natural and anthropogenic sites in Târgu Jiu are located, but also items belonging to the derived tourist offer. In addition, there photos of all items that were found on the draft map were taken. Within this phase an opinion poll was carried out in which an attempt was made to shape tourists' perception of Brancuși's Opera.

Office phase

The analysis assumed office analysis of the tourist phenomenon in Târgu Jiu, components with high degree of attraction which combines authenticity. After this method, the conclusion which was outlined is that the most suitable type of tourism that holds great chances to assert is the cultural one.

The graphic method consisted of creating illustrations of three major attractions of the city (Gate of the Kiss, Table of silence, Endless Column) and diagrams that correspond to each question from the questionnaire. The cartographic method was used in GIS technology, QGIS instrument. The first release was aimed at rendering the territorial distribution of the main anthropogenic tourist attractions (according to the data collected on the site in Târgu Jiu), highlighting at the same time the transport infrastructure and limited surface hydrographic network. The second support to maps was to represent the layout of monuments made by Constantin Brâncuși, the defining elements of touristic phenomenon of Târgu Jiu municipality.

The survey coincided with the completion of a questionnaire which included 7 questions (4 open character, 2 open and 1 open-mid) that aimed at outlining the importance of Brâncuși's works collected from the respondents who had the opportunity to visit Târgu-Jiu.

Despite the fact that the work of the sculptor presents a high degree of authenticity, and their existence bodes well in terms of the modern tourist attractions impressive when looking at the size, shape, age, degree of specificity, the questionnaire seeks to underscore the actual perception of visitors to highlight the importance of Brâncuși sculptures amongst all the attractions of Târgu Jiu.

Questionnaire

Good day/evening! My name is Tudorache Claudia and I'm a PhD student at "Babeș-Bolyai" University. In order to elaborate a study on tourist perception of works of Constantin Brancuși from Târgu-Jiu, please have the courtesy to reply to some questions. I assure you of the confidentiality of your answers. !

Your age:...

Section A.

1. Do you practice tourism?

a. Only in the vacation periods or legal holidays (Christmas, New Year, Easter, 1st may, 1st December)	b. Another period
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2. Have you ever visited the city of Targu Jiu?

a. Yes	b. No
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3. What elements of the tourist heritage have you been most impressed by?...

4. How important do you think are the works of Constantin Brancusi, for the city of Targu Jiu?

a. Very important	b. Important	c. Almost Important	d. Least important	e. Not at all important.
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5. Do you consider that the opera of Brâncuși represent an important economic support for the municipality of Targu-Jiu? Please answer with arguments.....

a. Yes.....	b. No.....
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6. Are you satisfied with the promotion of tourism/ancient?

a. Yes	b. No
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7. What improvements would you make to promote the "Brancusian" tourism?.....

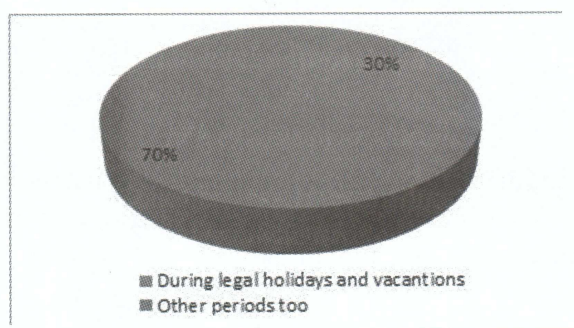
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire was sent to approximately 100 respondents, of which only 20 answered. The tourists perception of the art-works of Brâncuși from the municipality of Târgu-Jiu tried to shape the development of a study based on the survey.

The questionnaire contains seven questions that were addressed to 20 persons.

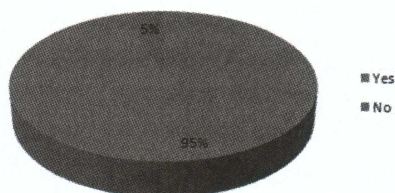
Through the first question "Do you practice tourism?", 6 respondents claimed that they used to travel only during periods of leave or holidays, while 14 expressed the pleasure of making travel on other occasions.

Figure 6.



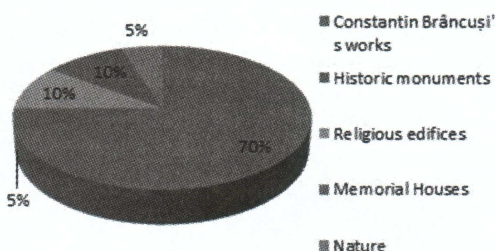
As regards the second question "Have you ever visited Târgu-Jiu?", all those questioned gave a positive answer, with the exception of one.

Figure 7.



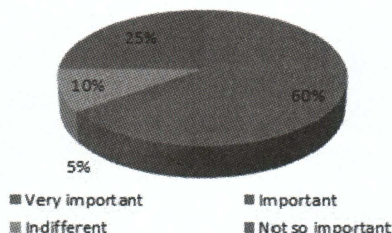
The third question, “What elements of the tourist heritage have impressed you?”, is open-ended, giving the tourists freedom to offer more tinted answers. The received feedback is diversified, but as regards the quantitative side, the majority of interviewees were attracted by the works of Constantin Brâncuși as it was expected.

Figure 8.



As regards the fourth question, “How important do you believe are the works of Constantin Brâncuși for Târgu Jiu?”, most people believe they are very important, considering their uniqueness and authenticity.

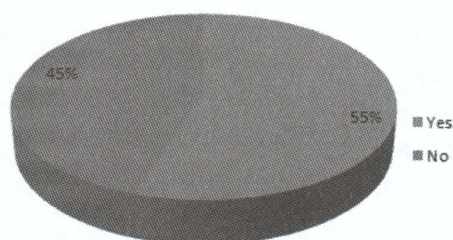
Figure 9.



The fifth question, “Do you think that Brancuși’s works represent an important economic support for Targu-Jiu? Please give arguments for the answer”, presented divided opinions. Almost half of the respondents consider that these attractions have not represented a substantial financial gain for the municipality yet. In the

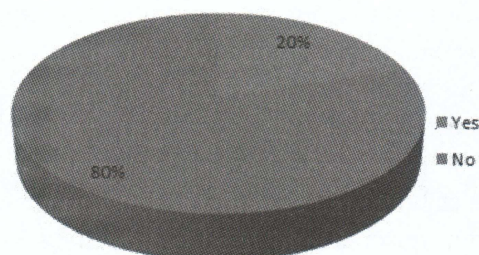
semi-open question some arguments for positive responses have referred to the constructive aspect of the sculptor's image at international level and the unique character that his works possess. Also, most respondents believe that the greatest opportunity to exploit these attractions is to integrate them into a tourist route along with other tourist attractions from the city and its environs.

Figure 10.



With reference to the sixth question, “Are you satisfied with the promotion of “Brâncușian” tourism?”, the majority of interviewed people gave a negative response, being of the opinion that these attractions, despite their immense tourist value, are not sufficiently well promoted, therefore cannot constitute a genuine financial potential.

Figure 11.



Question no. 7, “What improvements would you make for Brâncușian tourism promotion?” has garnered diverse ideas which prove to be very important, if these proposals are coming from some tourists who have taken note of the tourist phenomenon in Târgu Jiu. Most of the recommendations have made reference to the development of promotional materials and information such as brochures, pamphlets, maps based on the festival devoted to the works of Constantin Brâncuși. Also, the inclusion of the relevant monuments into several thematic tourist routes, which cover both objectives in Târgu-Jiu, its environs and Gorj County landscape, were suggested, as well as a workshop in which some miniatures of the great sculptor's works will be created for being put up for sale.

CONCLUSION

Regarding the methodology used and the main instruments with which an attempt was made on the perception of the works of Brâncuși from Târgu-Jiu by tourists, it is considered that this paper aimed successfully at highlighting the importance of these economic and tourist operators, and aspects of the reality of the phenomenon studied. In this sense, the majority of the respondents were impressed by the art of the great sculptor, but due to poor promotion, it has not played the role it deserves in the urban center of economy and tourism yet.

The problem of promotion action is considered to be an extremely delicate from the point of view that three-fourths of interviewees gave negative responses to this issue, and there will always be a need to improve the process of connecting them. According to the responses, the works of Brâncuși should permeate, undoubtedly, at the base of the local tourism pyramid, so the development of tourism in Târgu-Jiu is in full compliance with the quality and quantity of promoting these unique attractions.

The respondents put emphasis on the issue of promoting his works of animation, they enhanced the idea in the case of question number 5 in which interviewees consider that these elements of the tourist heritage present the only economic potential.

In addition to shape perception of tourists bound for the importance of Brâncuși's opera, through the conducted survey the presented study combined a series of ideas, recommendations regarding the improvement of tourism promotion based on the sculptor's art. Thus, tourists expressed an opinion that may coincide with their wish to have another way of familiarization with these monuments. Conclusive in this sense are the recommendations concerning the materialization of promotional materials (leaflets, brochures, maps) based on implementation of a festival, the inclusion of the relevant monuments in several thematic trails (national, local), to cover both objectives in Târgu-Jiu, not only its environs, but also to found a workshop for creating miniatures of the great sculptor's works to be put up for sale.

In conclusion, despite the undeniable artistic value of Brâncuși's work, despite the UNESCO World Heritage belonging, these monuments are not visited by many tourists, because they are not promoted very well, and the lack of information leads to insufficient tourist gains. In this way, the interest in visiting the city should increase, due to the existence of these anthropogenic attractions with approved importance and uniqueness of the works in question that are more precious than the others from external environment. Another conclusion refers to a poor general potential tourist diversification of accommodation capacities, in which the dominance of hotels is noticed.

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