FOREWORD



Inside of an old house in Rătești village.



Stone cross in the woods, Rătești village.

Foreword

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Between 2014 and 2017, as part of the interdisciplinary *GeoSust* project,[1] researchers from the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant explored the Buzău region, alongside the project's other partners. For three years, we—the nine researchers from the museum involved in the project—sought out customs, stories, histories, music, artefacts, items of traditional costumes, craftspeople and much more. Our main goal was to understand the connection between people and a particular place, the relationship between humans and nature, and how the natural and cultural resources of a well-defined territory are exploited.

We looked through dowry chests and delved into the hidden corners of our interviewees' memories. We tasted delicious food, the sort that only the housewives of the Buzău region know how to make. We shared in the joys and sorrows of the people in the villages we visited. We gathered stories about the good and bad places in the village, some so terrifying that just listening to them sent shivers down our spines. We thought about how we could support the work of the local people, so we lent a helping hand in setting up the "Time of Man" [in Romanian: "Timpul omului"] museum, which opened in 2015 in Mânzălești.

After three years, at the end of the project, we said what we had to say in the way we knew best: by organising an exhibition at the museum. This was the exhibition "The Buzău Region: Views, Meanings, Stories" (April–June 2017), which attracted nearly 4,000 visitors during the three months it was open.

We collaborated with the DigiWorld team, coordinated by Iulian Pană, on their documentaries dedicated to the region of the then-future Țintul Buzăului Geopark: the films "Fire," "Wood" and "Stone".[2] We continued to screen these documentaries at other events organised at the museum in subsequent years, to keep alive in our audience's minds everything we had shared about the magical land of Buzău

Towards the end of the project, we began writing the articles that are only now seeing the light of day in electronic form. The story behind these articles is a complicated one: starting with a single chapter written by all the authors together, for an anthology that was due to be published abroad, we ended up dividing the work and expanding on the subject matter in separate chapters. Always left until last amongst the many activities that have overwhelmed us in recent years, the volume has been patiently awaiting the day when it would be taken out of our treasure chest and shown to the world.

And so, here we are in the year of grace 2026, when the volume „Cultural Heritage in Buzău Land UNESCO Geopark" is published as a supplement to *MARTOR, The anthropology journal of the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant*. A pearl that had been hidden in a shell for many years, waiting to grow and shine.

We invite you to discover the stories told by the people of Buzău, those told by the objects and buildings their skilful hands have created, and also the stories told by the landscapes that define the region as a Geopark. And, last but not least, let us celebrate together the fact that, so close to us, there is a region where, amidst the turmoil of modern life, traditions are still cherished and kept alive.

I would like, first and foremost, to thank the authors of this volume for their patience. Listed in alphabetical order, the authors of the texts and the photographs illustrating the chapters are: Alexandru ANDRĂȘANU, Magdalena ANDREESCU, Anamaria IUGA, Maria MATEONIU-MICU, Cosmin MANOLACHE, Carmen MIHALACHE, Ana PASCU, and Ciprian VOICILĂ. I would also like to thank Răzvan-Gabriel POPA, co-editor of the volume, for his careful reading and the insightful comments he has made over the years on the texts we have written. I would like to thank those who, mostly as volunteers on the project, have provided photographs to illustrate the book: Bogdan ALTO, Rodica MARINESCU, Lila PASSIMA, Anca-Maria PĂNOIU, Răzvan-Gabriel POPA, Dragoș PÂRCĂLABU and Georgiana VLAHBEI. I would also like to thank my colleagues who helped edit this volume: Sorana-Cristina MAN and Oana RĂDOI. Without all their support, the book would probably have taken several more years to be presented to the public.

A special thought goes out to Alexandru ANDRĂȘANU, who persuaded me to get involved in the project when, back in 2012, he invited me to visit the Buzău region for the first time, whilst I was trying to convince him that Maramureș, my native region, is a place that deserves, too, to have a geopark.[3] As I travelled through the villages of Buzău that year, I finally confessed to him that I felt at home, because here too the people are welcoming, open and have wonderful stories to tell. That is why I must thank our extremely valuable interviewees for their openness, amongst whom a special place is held by: Ciprian CHIRICA, Andrei DRĂGĂNESCU, Rica LEU, Ioana MATEI, Mircea MICU, Amelia PAPAZISSU, Cecilia PETRESCU and Ioan ZOTA.

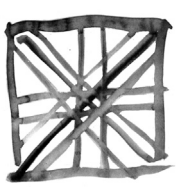
There is much more to be said about Buzău, as we have not been able to fit everything we discovered in the area into these pages, but we are delighted that we are celebrating together and reminiscing about the wonderful time we spent in this fairytale setting: the Buzău Land.

NOTES

1.The project "Applied research for sustainable development and economic growth in accordance with the principles of geoconservation: In support of the UNESCO Buzău Region Geopark initiative. GeoSust", was carried out between 2014 and 2017 by the Institute of Geodynamics of the Romanian Academy (coordinator), the University of Bucharest, the Geoecomar Institute, Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj, the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant, Telemarksforsking and the Norwegian University of Life Sciences—the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, as well as other partner institutions: Aurland naturverkstad, Gea Norvegica Geopark and the television channel DIGI World). The project was funded by Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, as well as the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, through the EEA Grants programme.

2. Documentaries directed by: Adriana Oprea, Anca Grădinariu and Iulian Pană, DigiWorld, 2017. More information at: https://www.digi-world.tv/documentare/tinutul-buzaului-20037

3. See the UNESCO Geopark candidate: Gutâi-Maramureș, initiated in 2024.





Welcome gesture, Beciu village.



Rocks on the road to Găvanu Monastery, 18th century monument.



Iconostasis of the Găvanu Monastery, 18th century monument.