

THE ROLE OF VITICULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND MICROREGIONAL DIFFERENTIATION. COMPARATIVE STUDY: ALBA AND BISTRIȚA-NĂSĂUD COUNTIES

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ABSTRACT – In this paper, we analyze the components of vineyard cultural landscape, its role in differentiating micro-regional landscape and micro-regional identity formation, under theoretical and territorial aspect, taking into account two Romanian counties: Alba and Bistrița-Năsăud. The study focuses also on shaping the future evolution of the vineyard cultural landscape, following the proposals for its sustainable management.

Keywords: viticultural landscape, cultural landscape, territorial identity, territorial differentiation, viticultural micro-regions, Alba County, Bistrița-Năsăud County

INTRODUCTION

Cultural landscape has become the “[...] bearer of values, reflecting the work of generations that have followed in its construction, its image representing a show and a lesson about knowledge of nature’s understanding the complexity of relations between human societies and Earth’s functioning, while contributing to the definition of regional identity” (Atlas des Paysages de Haute-Savoie, 1997, p. 3) and is characterized by a “[...] particular geographical-historical evolution, cultural and linguistic particularities, the economic profile dominated by certain defining features, consciousness of belonging to a well-defined regional space etc.” (Popa, Bioteau, Pavel and Ișfănescu, 2007, p. 11). In this regard, we consider as enlightening the claim that “regional identity is the spirit and energy that comprise everything the region does and offer [...]” (Küster, 2008, p. 2); thus, its image relies on a set of specific elements, acting for the differentiation.

Natural and cultural elements (socio-cultural pattern, architecture, traditional occupations, crafts, etc.), in constant interaction and interdependence over time, sketch defining features that individualize, in regional terms, the present and future trajectory of regional development, subordinating to the typical political, economic, social and/or religious pre-existing contexts.

In this context, cultural landscape research as an element with special role in shaping regional identity implies interdisciplinary analyses designed to highlight particular elements, illustrating territorial differentiation. Data on items related to the natural resources, socio-demographic, economic, political, linked at temporal and spatial level, bring an added value for highlighting function and, hence, the type of cultural landscape.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

According to Cocean (2010, pp. 174-175), *landscape (landschaft)* is a concept formulated by Hommeyer (1805), used to define an area that is visually perceived. Later, its meaning was enriched by including natural (natural landschaft) or anthropogenic (modified/ cultural landschaft) features. *Cultural landscape* instead is a concept introduced by Otto Schlüter (1907), used to characterize territorial units such as geographical regions, in which the anthropogenic transformation is the decisive

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factor. *Regions* are further defined by the same author (2010, p. 175) as “systemic territorial units with organic articulated structure and functions”. At the same time, due to their ethnographic homogeneity and specificity (occupations, customs and traditions), geographical regions may exhibit the same type of cultural landscape, generating what Kaganskii (2013) rightfully called *cultural regions* (Cocean, 2014, p. 21).

In this regard, in the systemic vision, “[...] cultural landscape is a complex spatial entity, characterized by internal hierarchical organization, specific dynamics, relationships, characteristics and structure, of which genesis and persistence are conditioned by the existence of the human factor. In this connection, its global development is closely correlated with the dynamics of the numerous local spatial and temporal sequences which are characteristic (local cultural landscapes, regional cultural landscapes, etc.), highlighting specific ways of interaction between natural and cultural components” (Gavra, 2013, p. 25).

Thus, the heterogeneous expression of the involved factors, in a certain territory and time, explains the emergence and development of regional differentiation as inequalities between comparable places. The actions of certain factors are often antagonistic, the delicate balance being strongly disturbed by an unexpected event.

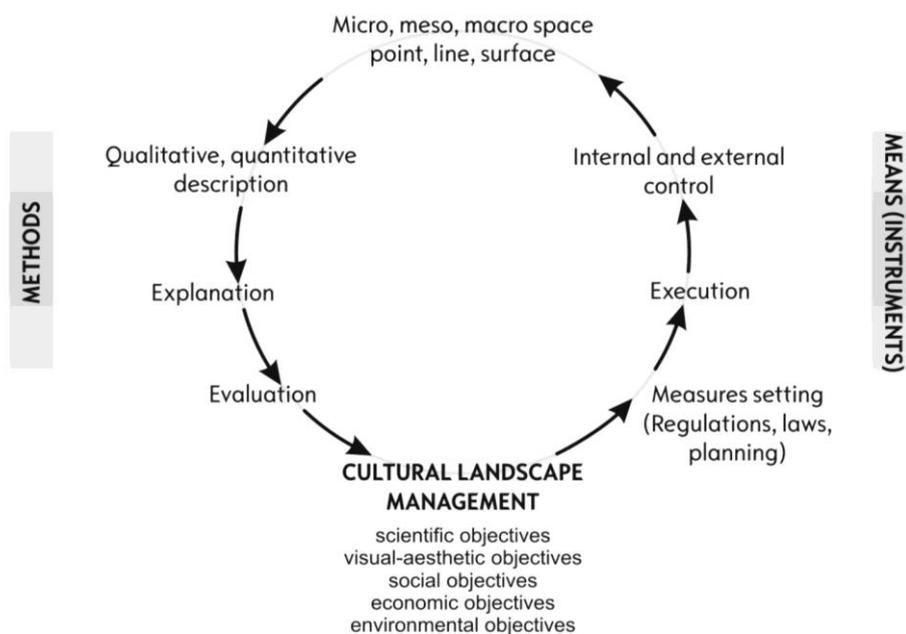


Figure 1. *The spiral of discussions*

Source: Egli (1996), cited by Schenk (2006, p. 102)

At micro-regional level, the formerly mentioned components “impresses territorial developmental pathways, local and regional strongly differentiated” (Benedek and Kurko, 2010, p. 77), which began to amplify in modern and contemporary period, after 1989, following the change of political regime. The occurred consequences implied profound changes, mainly social and economic. The replacement of the former planned economy by the market economy generated radical changes, fulminating developments in certain areas, but also irreparable decline in others, deepening regional differences.

An expression of culture, which imprinted the landscape of the region under study in a special way, is viticulture. Starting from the syntagma “the character of a landscape, the specificity of a space, which includes, not only the natural environment, but also social achievements, history and inherited vestiges that provides people connection with the space” (Wille, 2008, p. 42), we can say that viticultural landscape (as a result of the interaction and interdependence of local natural and

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anthropogenic factors) contribute to the micro-regional differentiation, representing, at the same time, a visible element of the concept of regional identity by its very capacity for self-representation and visual perception thereof.

Therefore, the viticultural landscape research is relevant to highlight a distinct evolution of these agricultural components, according to the natural and anthropogenic factors manifested over time, given the well-known tradition of these areas in terms of viticulture since the Dacian period.

Thus, in terms of methodology, the study was completed in three successive stages. The preparation phase included the formulation of research objectives, delimitation of the micro, meso and macro space, choosing the optimal research methods and means, consultation of bibliographic sources on the two areas under analysis, preparation of cartographic representations and field research conducted in order to obtain new and relevant information. The second stage involved quantitative and qualitative analysis of the collected data, as well as comparative analysis, explanation and assessment with the aim of pointing out the structure and functioning of the viticultural landscape. The last stage consisted in proposals to support the sustainable development, in competitive form, of this type of cultural landscape, according to the following steps: cultural landscape management, establishing measures for implementation and control.

VITICULTURE IN ALBA AND BISTRIȚA-NĂSĂUD COUNTIES. COMPARATIVE ISSUES

The physical and geographical peculiarities of the territory and those related to the anthropogenic component have shaped the specific circumstances for socio-economic development of Alba and Bistrița-Năsăud counties. On this line, the research involves a multidirectional approach to highlight, through positive attributes (the qualities of cultural landscape) and negative traits (the values of the whole that need improvement), a deep understanding of potential problems, opportunities and, eventually, identify specific strategies to follow.

Natural factors determining the formation of viticultural landscape

The analysis of geological and topographic maps reveals that the landforms in Alba County are grafted on a complex geological structure, including mountains (the Apuseni Mountains - in the northwest, the Southern Carpathians – in the south), which represent one-third of county's area, piedmonts connecting the eastern highland area (the Transylvanian Plateau), crossed by corridors and small basins. In the case of Bistrița-Năsăud County, according to Morariu *et al.* (1972, pp. 7, 12), landforms appear to be like a vast natural amphitheatre, indestructibly related to the Carpathian Mountains. The county is also bordered by several mountain peaks (Țibleș, Rodna, Suhard, Bârgău and Călimani), continued by hills (300-500 m), which outlined a high dispersion degree of plantations (crops). Vines development in a favourable context requires an imperious need to fulfil certain particular conditions (landform, climate and soil conditions), which generally impose plantations to be set up on the southern, south-eastern, and south-western slopes and along the valleys between the hills, where sunlight is optimal.

From a climate perspective, the analysed areas fit into the limits of the national specificity, with a temperate continental climate, characterized by the predominance of the western circulation and, to a lesser extent, of the south-western and north-eastern circulation, and sometimes with some slightly excessive nuances in the hillside and plateaus and moderate nuances over the mountain area. There is also a vertical climate zoning, emphasized by the average annual temperature. The general profile of the climate in the two areas (which highlights the manifestation of harsh winters, relatively warm and humid summers, continued with late autumns), decisively outlines favourable conditions for vines to complete their natural vegetation stages up to grape ripening.

According to the data provided by the National Institute of Meteorology, the average amount of rainfall in Alba County area easily exceeds 550 mm/year, in plateau areas and in the corridors (561.3 mm/year in Blaj, 568.7 mm/year in Sebeș), reaching high values in the mountains (1000-1400 mm/year in the Apuseni Mountains, 2000 mm/ year in the Southern Carpathians) and average values in mountain depressions (below 800 mm/year). In Bistrița-Năsăud County, rainfall reaches an average

of 650-700 mm/year in the valleys (715 mm/year in Beclean, 689 mm/year in Bistrița, 640 mm/year in Lechința, 635 mm/year in Teaca) and around 800 mm/year on top of the hills, with a maximum in May-August and a minimum in winter - when the predominant form of precipitation is snow (30-40 days/year) (ONVPV, 2011, p. 2). Along with rainfall, there is an optimal value of 60-80% relative air moisture, also suitable for vine growing.

The topographic and climatic variety and the heterogeneity of the geological substratum led to the emergence of a considerable soil diversity.

According to the soil map (Morariu *et al.*, 1980), in the eastern and south-eastern parts of Alba County (on a hilly and plateau relief), there are Haplic Luvisols, Eutricambosols, Albic Luvisols, Eutric Cambisols, Dystric Cambisols and Haplic Podzols (in mountain area). The soil mosaic is filled by Rendzic Leptosols, Rhodi-eutric Cambisols, Haplic Phaeozems, Gleyic Phaeozems and hydromorphic soils. In the case of Bistrița-Năsăud County (Soil Map, 1980), soils are characterized by a great variety of soil types and subtypes: Eutricambosols, Haplic Luvisols in association with Haplic Phaeozems, and Haplic Luvisols. Of the above, Eutricambosols, Haplic Luvisols and Haplic Phaeozems appear as the most favourable soils for growing grape vine, due to their medium texture, moderate acidity and the appropriate content of humus. Along with specific climatic conditions, soil proves to be the *sine qua non* condition of the development of viticulture and, hence of a characteristic cultural landscape.

The human factor – factor shaping the landscape

Human intervention on natural components, which evolved naturally, facilitated the sprouting and, subsequently, the becoming of the specific cultural landscape. Human interference in the natural areas, manifested in line with the demographic evolution, technological and intellectual capacity, meant modelling some types of cultural landscapes, defined by characteristic elements. So far, the overall territorial image requires the ability to detect territorial cultural landscapes with the human activities (cultural landscapes related to housing and husbandry, agricultural cultural landscapes, cultural landscapes related to forestry, industry, transport, tourism and leisure, and sacral cultural landscapes).

In this case, the particular natural conditions acted as a decisive factor in the emergence and evolution throughout time, mostly of the agricultural occupations. Demographic, scientific and technical progress also influenced their development in an ascending line, proving a gradual amplification, both quantitative and qualitative, of the agricultural elements and of the representative cultural landscape implicitly (a special place being occupied by the viticultural landscape).

Vineyards are therefore elements that distinguish the analyzed micro-regions, which evolved into a tradition marked since the Dacian period by the cultivation of grape vines and by wine production. In this respect, Strabo regarded the Dacians as skilled vine growers, a fact reinforced by keeping wine-related terms of Dacian origin into the Romanian language such as *strugure*, *butuc*, *curpen* (i.e. grape, vine stock, vine shoot) (Giurescu, 1969). Viticultural landscape has experienced considerable transformations, the development of the area occupied by vineyards not being linear. Except for short periods of decline, the Roman conquest, the colonization of the German ethnics (12th - 13th centuries) and nowadays marked the expansion of the specific cultural landscape by introducing new viticultural elements in the vineyard area (newly planted surfaces, buildings related to viticulture—e.g. vine cellars).

Qualitative and quantitative aspects of the viticultural landscape in Alba and Bistrița-Năsăud counties

At the macro-regional observation scale, in terms of quality, viticultural landscape represents a complex of hierarchically structured and specific elements, which are in close functional contact.

In its entirety, this type of landscape includes subassemblies (vineyards), territorially placed as surfaces comprising elements with common features that have evolved synchronously. “The rank of each structure (element, subassembly, cultural landscape) may vary depending on the topographic scale taken into account during the investigation” (Gavra, 2013, p. 28). For example, at local (micro-

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regional) level, a vineyard can be considered of higher rank (cultural landscape), while at regional (macro-regional) level, it is considered as just one element.

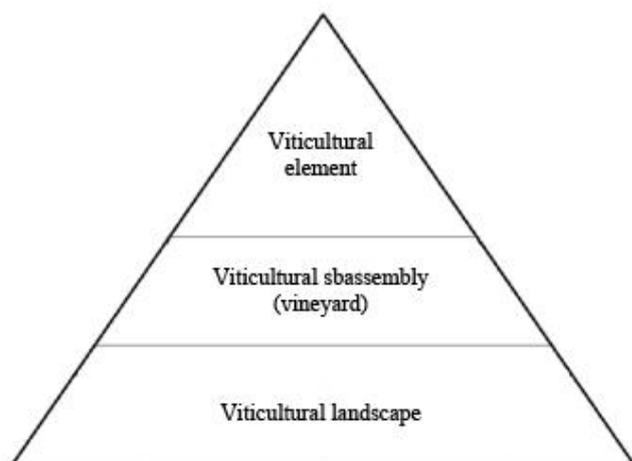


Figure 2. Internal hierarchical organization of the viticultural landscape at macro scale

Different ways of organizing grape vine cultivation takes different forms, from small parcels, like a mosaic arrangement, characteristic for households, to vast areas of regular shape filled with vines, representing the four representative vineyards of Transylvania Wine Region (classified according to Oșlobeanu *et al.*, 1991): Alba, Târnave, Aiud and Sebeș-Apold (in Alba County) and Lechința (in Bistrița-Năsăud County).

At the micro-regional level, this type of cultural landscape is highlighted by the characteristic elements that make their individual contribution to the configuration of the place specificity and the regional identity.

According to the classification criteria proposed by Glink, Meyer and Schottke (2007), which uses *the form* as support for ordering elements, three categories of elements belonging to the viticultural landscape have been identified in the area (in both counties) that can be classified into:

1. *Point elements*, represented in the landscape by concrete, metal or wood poles, 2.40 m high (60 cm underground and 1.80 m above the ground), aimed at supporting the wires to which vines are connected (Figure 3).
2. *Line elements* are highlighted by rows of trellis and grape vine (Figure 3), grassed areas separating two adjacent parcels (in the case of slopes, grass strips are wider than the usual distance between rows of 2.50 m in order to prevent soil erosion), grassless strips and driveways between rows.



Figure 3. Grape vine arranged on metal poles in Lechința commune, Bistrița-Năsăud County



Figure 4. Gârbova Wine Cellar. Alba County

3. *Area elements* are visible in the landscape as parcelled land covered by grape vine and buildings for processing, storage and marketing of wine products, individualized as traditional wineries and cellars that reflect the specific local craft (Figure 4). “These are

the most interesting elements and also the most visited in the oenological or viticultural tourism" (Cocean, 2014, p. 47).

Vine crops are usually located on slopes and have a rectangular, trapezoidal or irregular form. Those that are smaller belong to households and are located either between vegetable gardens, either on hilly areas suitable as plots (belonging to different owners), heterogeneous in size and shape, separated by green fences or grassed surfaces.

From a quantitative perspective, the valuation of local viticultural elements reveals the regional feature, outlined as the particular manifestation of a set of defining attributes such as the existence of visible typical elements, frequent and well preserved. Based on this, we were able to distinguish viticultural landscapes with three different degrees of reflection:

- strongly represented viticultural landscape (in which more than 10% of agricultural land is occupied by vineyards);
- moderately represented viticultural landscape (between 5 and 9.99% of agricultural land is occupied by vineyards);
- underrepresented viticultural landscape (between 1 and 4.99% of agricultural land is occupied by vineyards);
- highly underrepresented vine areas (between 0.1 to 0.99% of agricultural land is occupied by vineyards).

Strongly represented viticultural landscape (more than 10%) is exclusively located in Jidvei commune (Alba County), also characterized by a relative increase.

The category of *moderately represented viticultural landscape* (5 to 9.99%) includes communes from Alba County such as Crăciunelu de Jos and Valea Lungă (in 1990, the two communes belonged to the underrepresented viticultural landscape category), Cenade (previously included in the highly underrepresented vine areas) and the town of Blaj (with significant decreases during this period).

The category of *underrepresented viticultural landscape* (1 to 4.99%) includes areas that are mostly located in Alba County. Statistic research indicates both increases in Călnic, Ciugud, Rădești and decreases in Cetatea de Baltă, Dostat, Cricău, Gârbova, Ighiu. The downward trend is once again observed in the towns of Aiud, Sebeș and Ocna Mureș. Cut commune is characterized by the development of viticultural landscape in the context in which, in 1990, no vine-covered area was recorded compared to 2010.

A different situation was recorded in some communes from both counties, namely Branîștea (Bistrița-Năsăud County), Berghin, Lopadea Nouă, Mirăslău, Săliște, Sona (Alba County). The vine-covered areas increased slightly from 1990 when they were included in the highly underrepresented vine areas. On the contrary, Lechința commune (Bistrița-Năsăud) is characterized by a significant decrease from 1990 when it was included in the moderately represented viticultural landscape category.

In the case of *highly underrepresented vine areas* (between 0.1 and 0.99%), a increase was recorded in 2010 compared with 1990 both in Bistrița-Năsăud County (the communes of Budești, Galații Bistriței, Milaș, Petru Rareș and Urmeniș) and in Alba County (the communes of Blandiana, Cergău, Farău, Hopârta, Livezile, Unirea communes and the towns of Cugir and Teiuș). Areas belonging to the same category are visible in Cetate, Ciceu-Mihăiești, Mărișelu, Miceștii de Câmpie, Silivașu de Câmpie, Șintereag (Bistrița-Năsăud County) and Spring (Alba County), which have not been represented in statistics since 1990. This category also includes areas that have shown constant values during this period: Chiochiș, Nușeni, Șieu-Odorhei and Uriu (Bistrița-Năsăud County) and Meteș, Mihălț, Noslac, Ohaba, Pianu, Roșia de Secaș, Săsciori (Alba County). At the same time, there have been outstanding decreases in the communes of Teaca, Budacu de Jos, Matei, Șieu-Măgheruș, Șieut (Bistrița-Năsăud County), but also in the communes of Daia Romană, Galda de Jos, Sântimbru, Stremț, Vințu de Jos, Sincel and Șibot, as well as in the city of Alba Iulia (Alba County). Vineyards have entirely disappeared in Întregalde commune (Alba County), while in Chiuza, Dumitra and Livezile (Bistrița-Năsăud County) they have decreased so much that they cannot be assigned to the highly underrepresented vine areas category.

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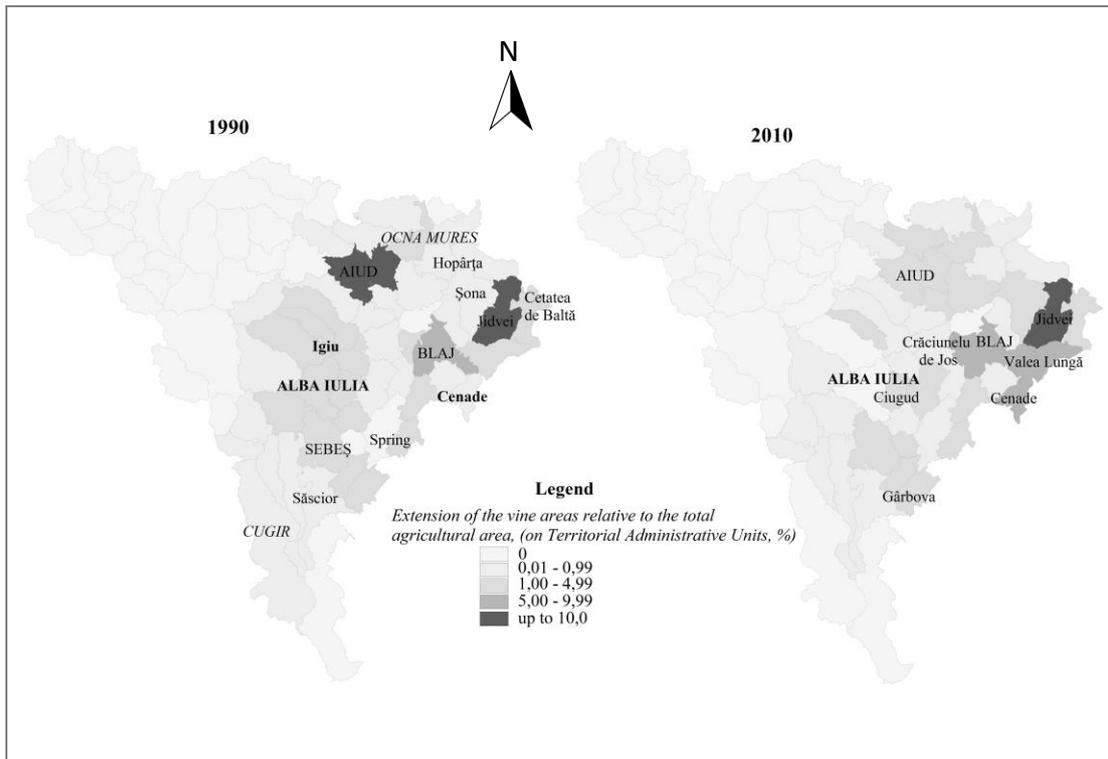


Figure 5. Vine growing areas in Alba County (1990, 2010)
Source: National Institute of Statistics

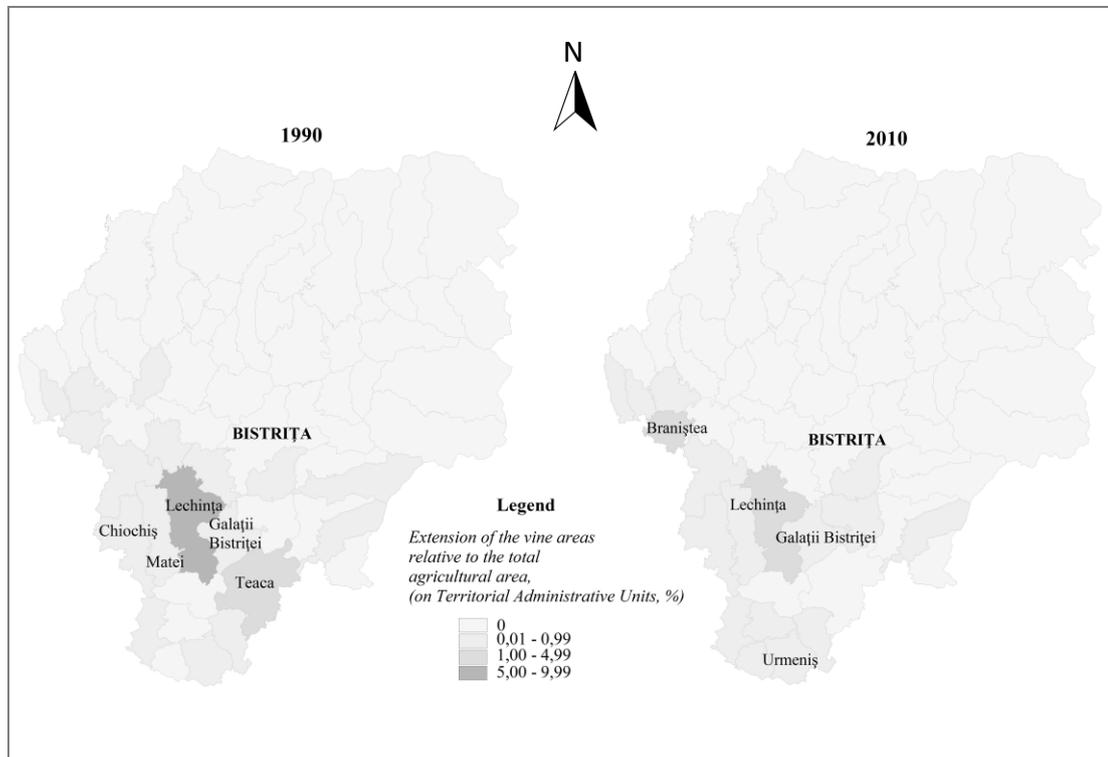


Figure 6. Vine growing areas in Bistrița-Nășăud County (1990, 2010)
Source: National Institute of Statistics

Discordant developments observed after analyzing the evolution of vine areas highlight both the expansion of viticultural landscapes and the decrease or even the disappearance of others. In the first case, the positive development trend is due to a set of factors such as accessing funds for agricultural development, investment, or engineering. In this case, the evolution followed two distinct paths: either by expanding the existing vine areas or by establishing new grape vine cultures.

In contrast, in many cases, the land retrocession to former owners (after 1990), who do not have financial capital and technology for development in the wine business, involved gradual degradation of the vine areas and sometimes their disappearance. The demographic decline in rural areas along with labour shortages have also a harmful contribution.

Concluding, at local level, the areas included, according to statistics, in the first two categories, are representative for the viticultural landscape. Those with values below 4.99% may occasionally perform this function for specific cultural elements concentrated in a relatively small area, otherwise, these extremely small areas (usually part of the household gardens) play only the role of cultural elements in the agricultural landscape.

Given that “disparities are always measured against a baseline and represent a deviation with respect to a normal situation” (Kurkó, 2010, p. 15), the quantitative analysis of the data presented facilitated the highlighting of the following characteristics of vine growing areas in the six vineyards identified in the territory, each having a number of localities, namely:

- 1) **Târnave-Jidvei** (Jidvei, Bâlcaciu, Căpâlna de Jos, Feisa, Veseuş, Cetatea de Baltă, Sântămarie, Tătărlăua, Şona, Sânmiclăuş, Lunca Târnavei, Biia);
- 2) **Târnave-Blaj** (Blaj, Veza, Mănărade, Petrisat, Tiur, Spăratc, Crăciunelu de Jos, Bucerdea Grânoasă, Sâncel, Iclod, Pânade, Valea Lungă, Glogovăţ, Lunca, Lodroman, Cenade, Mihălţ, Cistei, Cergău Mare, Cergău Mic, Lupu, Roşia de Secaş, Ungurei, Tău);
- 3) **Alba Iulia** (Alba Iulia, Barabant, Miceşti, Oarda, Ciugud, Hapria, Teleac, Berghin, Henig, Ghibom, Straja, Sântimbru, Totoi, Dumitra, Ighiu, Şard, Ighiel, Ţelna, Bucerdea Vinoasă, Cricău, Tibru, Craiva, Galda de Jos, Galda de Sus, Benic, Mesentea);
- 4) **Aiud** (Aiud, Ciumbud, Sâncrai, Gârbova de Jos, Gârbova de Sus, Gârboviţa, Lopadea Nouă, Ciuguzel, Beta, Băgău, Odverem, Ocna Mureş, Uioara de Jos, Unirea, Inoc, Silivaş, Hopârta, Mirăslău, Decea, Rădeşti, Leorint);

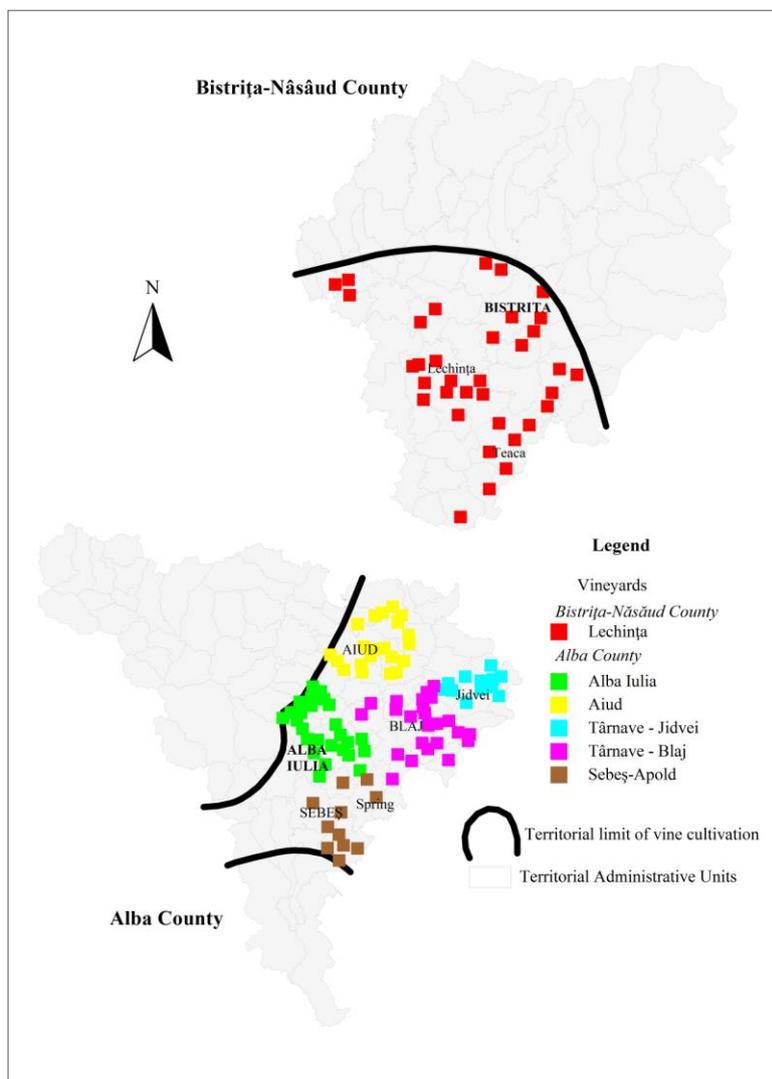


Figure 7. Vineyards in Alba and Bistrița-Năsăud counties

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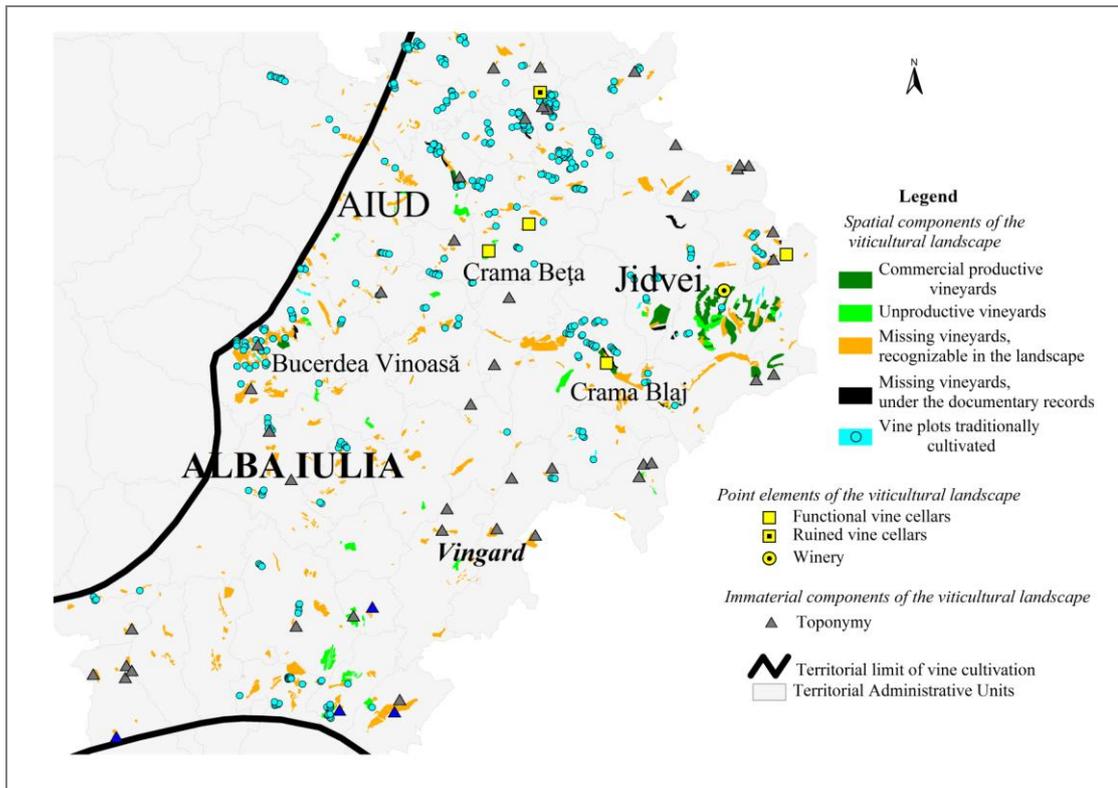


Figure 8. Vineyards in Alba County

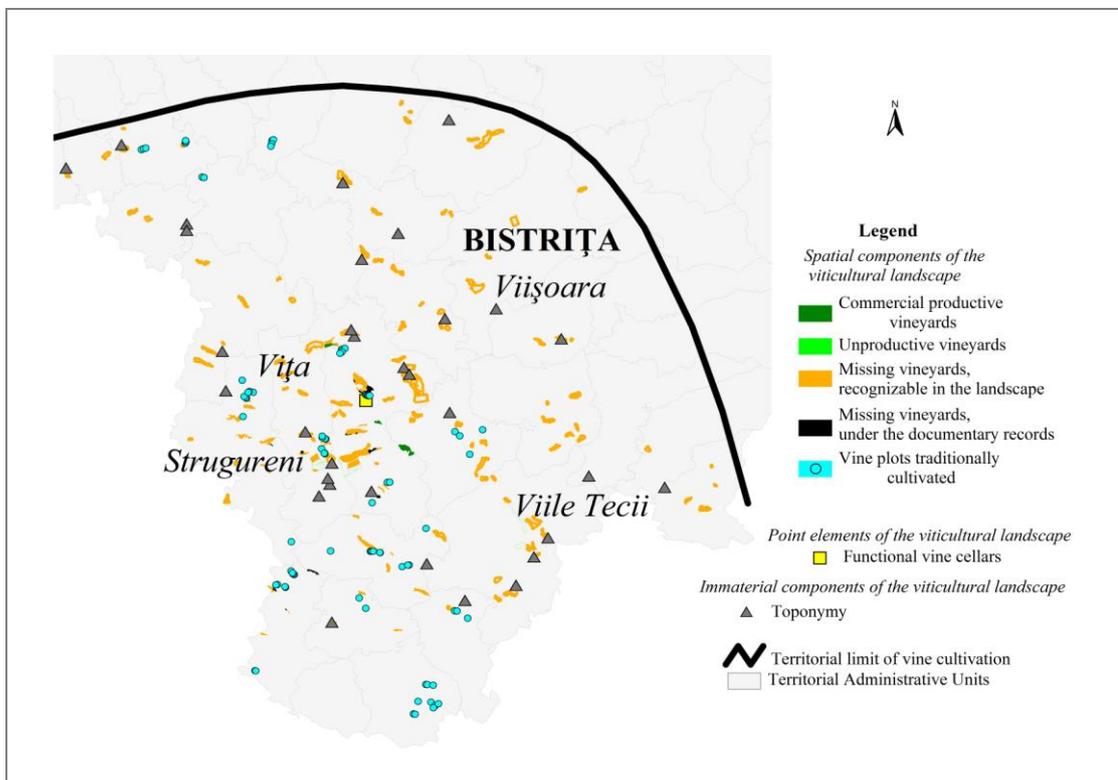


Figure 9. Vineyards in Bistrița-Năsăud County

- 5) **Sebeș-Apold** (Sebeș, Rahău, Daia Romană, Câlnic, Cut, Deal, Gârbova, Reciu, Cărpiniș, Vingard, Spring) (and 21 localities from Sibiu County);
- 6) **Lechința** (Lechința, Sângeorzu Nou, Vermeș, Sâniacob, Herina, Tonciu, Galații Bistriței, Matei, Corvinești, Enciu, Bidiu, Reteag, Petru Rareș, Braniștea, Șieu-Odorhei, Bretea, Uriu, Milaș, Teaca, Viile Tecii, Ocnîța, Archiud, Pinticu, Urmeniș, Sieu, Ardan, Posmuș, Șoimuș, Bistrița, Ghinda, Vișoara, Dumitra, Cepari, Jelna, Budacu de Jos, Livezile) (and 13 localities from Mureș County).

Commercially productive vineyards reveal the viticultural landscape, which is emphasized in particular by the Târnave-Jidvei vineyard, Alba vineyard (of a lesser extent) and by smaller vine areas from Lechința (Figures 8 and 9).

Unproductive vineyards refer to areas occupied by grape vines in various stages of decay. The impairment of these areas manifested constantly during the period 1990-2010 as result of the cessation of vine cultivation. This type of areas can be detected in Blaj, Aiud (Alba County), Teaca, Galații Bistriței (Bistrița-Năsăud County), etc.

The analysis of quantitative data highlights also a special category of cultural landscapes, namely the *missing vineyards*. This includes small missing vine areas and vineyards recognized in the cultural landscape, imposed by the increasing and successive degradation of representative elements, sometimes up to their full disappearance. Therefore, currently missing viticultural landscapes can be identified by the presence of embankments only or, in the case of no specific visible elements, the sample can be made based on documentary records exclusively.

Traditionally cultivated vine plots interspersed among local crops can be also distinguished. Because of their small size they cannot be included in the category of viticultural landscape but they can be considered viticultural elements of the agricultural landscape.

CONCLUSIONS

During the 10 years studied, some increase in vine areas was recorded in both counties. These larger vine areas need to be assigned new values through various economic development opportunities, designed to ensure increase in employment and, hence, an increase in the income of local people. In order to materialize this goal, it is necessary to increase awareness among the directly involved stakeholders on the possibility of accessing advisory services from specialized institutions such as the County Department of Agriculture, the Agency for Payments and Interventions in Agriculture (APIA), etc.

The opportunity to access funds (national or European) provided by the above-mentioned institutions can be extremely useful for the implementation of projects that contribute to the expansion or modernization of vineyards, modernization of processing technologies and the replacement of hybrid grapes with noble varieties. They can contribute to strengthening the role of these elements in the cultural landscape and of the agricultural function in the regional economy and, hence, to keeping the specific cultural landscape and the possible future paths of development.

A particular significance should be given to training and/or attracting specialists with skills in managing the existing problems, able to activate the role and the significance of protecting and shaping the viticultural landscape with the obvious purpose of perpetuating it. However, the precise determination of areas for wine growing activities (cultivation, processing, capitalization) in local urban planning documents constitutes a prerequisite to properly conduct the approach of stimulating sustainable wine growing practices.

In towns, despite a low extension of farmland, vineyards modernization actions and the facilities ensured by the local authorities to stimulate expansion of specific activities could boost the local economy by attracting investments in the sector and/or related fields.

As regards the viticultural landscapes which suffered significant territorial reduction, we consider that an accurate assessment of their current status is necessary in order to identify appropriate ways of intervention (legal, regulatory, administrative, economic, etc.) according to particular situations.

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The applied study of particular situations at the local community level may emphasize the need to implement concrete actions such as improving vine practices by upgrading equipment, revitalizing traditional practices to increase monetary income (including wine tourism activities), regulatory advice and guidance (legal and economic) - meant to facilitate activities in the field, supporting producers interested in developing environmentally ecological practices and wine products. All the above may contribute to the development of the local community in particular by creating jobs and attracting capital.

Starting from the premise that “cultural landscapes, which carry the evidence and memory, are not permanent [...], they are subject to change due to socio-economic development” (Wille, 2008, p. 42), in order to immediately achieve the aspirations briefly outlined above, it is appropriate to develop and implement a development strategy for the local community, in accordance with these aspirations. Moreover, the local decision makers should provide the best framework for attracting and supporting vine activities that will significantly contribute to strengthening this specific function. This requires the integration of the above measures in a coherent process conducted in “four basic steps, from diagnosis and assessment of the current state, then selecting the fundamental issues of development, defining development opportunities and threats (development scenarios), completed by the formulation of alternative strategies” (Gawróński, 2008, p. 219).

Therefore, the viticultural landscape in Alba and Bistrița-Năsăud counties is reported to be an organically structured landscape, with defining elements derived from agricultural activities, constantly performed since the Dacian period. It reflects regional uniqueness and imprints a specific trait to local, regional and national identity, highlighting the increasing of viticultural landscape areas in some communes. It also reveals massive damage to specific local landscapes as result of the action (single or combined) of anthropogenic factors (declining and aging population, giving up viticulture practices as result of unfavourable economic context and/or massive rural-urban migration and the increasing globalization). At the same time, this type of cultural landscape represents in itself a resource that can be economically exploited (including for tourism purposes), with special favourable repercussions in preserving regional and local cultural landscape.

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