Territorial Implications of Urban Development in the Towns of Dolj County between the 14th and the 20th Centuries

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Abstract: If in the past, churches and monasteries were those who had control over the cities and they looked after peaceful coexistence of their inhabitants and administrative problems of the settlements, cities are now administrated by the authority of Public Administration whose duties are assigned to some administrative units or other public bodies and the process started to have some totally different features compared to the past. The actual towns from Dolj are analysed chronologically based on cartographic documents and documents known since the 14th century (the period when it appeared the first documentary mention) until now, but the emphasis is put on their spatial evolution, landscape changes of the cities and dynamic expansion of the building fund.

Key-Words: towns, cartographic documents, spatial evolution, Dolj county

Introduction

The development and evolution of cities are marked by certain periods and historical data, which means an earlier or later appearance of the urbanization processes. The idea the present study starts from is the age of the towns from Dolj County and the way they have evolved over time and space, changing their features and position in the system of settlements.

As basic support of the achieved analysis we used documents provided by Dolj Department of the National Archives, which holds over 7,500 million documents covering a period of over five centuries. Thus, we were able to make an analysis of the evolution of the built-up area, as well as of land use within the old estates of the settlements. These are documents elaborated by the former rulers and voivodes’ chancelleries, namely Bănie and Căimâcânia from Craiova, by state administration and judiciary units. Other basic cartographic materials that we used are the topographic map at 1:25,000 and orthophotoplans at 1:5,000 made in 2005. These documents are required in order to render the spatial development of towns based on the comparison of the situation recorded in the 14th century and the current situation.

Spatial development of Craiova city

The plan of the city precincts from 1789 renders the valley with seven wells and another valley, which was later anthropogenically modified. The best-preserved buildings from this period are the old fair (which is still preserved today in the Old Market place), Purcarului Fountain (still functional) and Hurez Inn (Avram, 2010). There are also represented Obedeanu, Jianu, and Prisescu fountains, then Ulița Mare, the Chapel of Băniei House and the Fire Tower. The general appearance of the settlement was that of a fair or fairs gathered in the precincts of the settlement that was dominated by small shops; thus, in Craiova in 1832, there were 17 factories. During this period, Craiova had about 20,000 inhabitants. There were 4633 buildings, of which 3220 were houses, 26 churches, 11 schools, 60 factories and workshops. Of the total number of houses, 2500 belonged to the poor, with a single level or built below the ground level. In the 17th – 18th centuries, according to the city plans, the centre began at Madona Dudu Church and developed toward Băniei House, including Sf. Dumitru Monastery and the main street, called Ulița Marea or Unirea Street. After 1880, within the city, there are built many of the buildings that are still...
preserved in Craiova. At that time, the city had a population of 25,000 inhabitants.

The period between the two world wars can be characterized by a predominantly agrarian economy, a situation that has slowed down the process of industrialization and led to the development of a social class of large landowners, people who have invested their fortunes in stately homes, banks and commercial companies. After the Second World War, the area has developed many industrial branches including auto, food, chemical, building materials, drilling and mining industries, as well as aeronautical industry. In the first decades of the 20th century, the development of industry, commerce and banks has increased the number of the bourgeoisie and of its economic and political power.

Being a big city, Craiova exercises a zonal coordination function, being classified as a 1st rank city within the settlement system; it is the main cultural, education, health centre of influence, with all the required facilities. Together with its continuous economic and social development, there occurs a spatial development as well. Although demographically the city has been in decline in recent years, we cannot say the same about its spatial evolution. Initially, the expansion of the built-up area started in 70's, with the establishment of large industrial sites; then, it followed the 90's, when the promulgation of the property law in 1991, represented the fulfilment of a dream, more exactly acquiring a house no matter the means.

Later, in 1996, it was issued the General Urbanism Regulation, with abnormal provisions regarding the built-up space, which led to the expansion of the built-up area. With the opening of the real estate business in 1997, it also started residential development and the density of newly constructed homes increased, contributing to development of the city within the peri-urban areas. In 2007, with the accession to the European Union and the start of the so-called "era of innovation", the phenomenon of spatial development of the built-up area intensifies, being now an open phenomenon. From the calculations based on the data provided by the Bureau of Statistics on the growth rate of the built-up area in Craiova, we found that in only one year, the number of completed dwellings is of about 500. Consequently, what initially operated as a rural-urban fringe for the original urban core of the city during different periods of its evolution, it is presently considered a space that will be incorporated to the city or even a space that has already become urban.

**Spatial expansion of Calafat**

After its first attestation in 1424, Calafat retains its status of settlement that develops because of transit trade between our country and the Danube. Between 1502 and 1568, there appeared documents meant to reinforce the ford and customs of Calafat, as well as a series of documents about the division of the estate to multiple landowners and documents that certified that the customs of Calafat belonged to Tismana monastery.

The city plan shows that the precincts had a polygonal shape and compact structure, a characteristic that the town still preserves. In 1895, the urban area was of 131 hectares, while currently it reached about 280 hectares. At that time, the built-up area included a brick factory in the western part of the town, a place for timber processing, the gardens of the town estate, where Calafat Ballast Quarry presently functions; moreover, all the other spaces are nothing else but unused spaces or used in other purposes, which are now part of the town due to its extension. At that time, on the right side of the port, it was attested a garden on the bank of the Danube, presently, its place being taken by the Quay. On Calafat-Craiova road, at the town exit, there was the caserne of Calafat Regiment and Pulele Proprietăți, presently replaced by Stephen Milcu school group. If at the time the cemetery was located about 770 meters east of the city, today it is embedded in the built-up area, east of the Ring Road Avenue, and there are both completed and under-construction houses. Moreover, in the west of the town, on the 1895 plan, there appeared two lakes near the estate gardens, which were later drained and used as building space. The place where initially functioned the tile factory of the town was taken by the sugar factory, which is located near Calafat Thermoelectric Power Plant.

The analysis of the plan on the bend of the Danube emphasizes the activity of the river over 116 years, which induced changes in the structure of the islets as well. On this plan, we can observe there were three islets (Fig. 1) (Ostrofulul statului, Ostroful mare al Statului and Chichinețele) west of the town and two smaller islets in its eastern part. Currently, there is only one in the west, probably due to their union or their moving along the Danube.

West of Ciuperenci - Calafat road, there were the orchards and the coppice, covering an area of approximately 100 hectares, and three main streams entering the abovementioned perimeter. Over time, the streams were drained, the orchards disappeared.
and there was built a fishing pond, while the rest of the surface is still unused. The former coppice is no longer covering the same area as it is presently represented by a long strip near the river.

The spatial evolution of Băileşti town
Situated on the Bălăsău valley, the town evolved as an agricultural settlement where initially functioned four mills, an oil mill and a tannery. In the past, in Băileşti, due to policy of taking over a temporary field with a relatively small amount of money, there came a large number of people both from the neighbouring villages, from Transylvania or Bulgarians of Romanian origin established south of the Danube. A large number of Bulgarians returned in Bulgaria when the exemptions called "slobozii" were abolished by the "Organic Regulation". Thus, in a relatively short time, the number of people settling in the town increased, Băileşti having 99 families in 1829, 507 families in 1831, including 286 foreign, 590 families in 1838 of which only 169 foreign families, and, in 1898, it had 6507 inhabitants. In 1905, only 18 of the 8838 inhabitants belonged to other nationalities. It continued to develop as an agricultural town. The surface of the town has increased since 1910 from 610 hectares to 857 hectares at present (Fig. 3).

Later on, there appeared two agricultural enterprises with 13 state farms with agricultural – livestock profile, an enterprise for pig breeding and fattening, a combined feed factory and a farm equipment company. During the 70's, there were other plants in different branches of local interest, such as food, metalworking, construction material, furniture, etc.

The city plan shows that the precincts had a polygonal shape and compact structure, a feature that is still preserved, and the form of the houses is simple, with a single level. Those that have two or more storeys either belonged to
wealthier families in the past or are newly built constructions. Besides this, during the communist period were built several blocks of flats (Photo 1) but they lack the necessary municipal infrastructure.

The Plan drawn in 1910 (Fig. 5) mainly renders the agricultural and forest area of the settlement, as well as the river system and the main roads; otherwise, at that time, Filiaș was an important railway junction, which make the settlement earn the status of cereal town.

![Photo 1 Central area with blocks of flats and the main shops of Băilești town](image)

The plan of the town from 1911 presents the demarcation of the estate and its division on use areas, which mainly emphasize the aspect of its natural environment, the initial river system and the name of the valleys and summits (Fig. 4). After measuring Filiaș estate plan, we found an evolution of the built-up area of about 190 hectares, in the sense that, in the year 1911, the town built-up area was of 191 hectares and now it is about 390 hectares. The evolution of the built-up area mainly occurred during the 70’s when there were set up industrial sites and newly built spaces for living.

![Fig. 4 The plan of Filiaș estate in 1911 (source: the National Archives of Romania)](image)

Its importance grew further with the construction of the railway between Bumbești and Livezeni, which connects the south of the country with Petrosani basin, leading the city to another stage of development where industry prevailed (Badea, 1974). Until 1968, it was a commune, a district residence and it was declared town at the last administrative territorial division of the country. In 1966, it reached a population of 6988 inhabitants and, in 1973, to about 13,000 inhabitants. Outside the built-up area, mainly during the 70’s, there were built numerous enterprises and facilities, such as the Livestock Farm, Agropod Farm, Transformers Engines (1972), two mechanical plants in the north, a recreational area and an ash storage site. Besides these industrial units, there have also appeared food processing units (meat, milling, baking, beverage), given the existence of at least four livestock farms in that period.

In this context, the attractiveness of the town increase, exacerbating the housing crisis, as well as the crisis of jobs in industry as it was the main branch of activity in the town. The expansion of the built-up area generated noticeable changes, which can be observed at the level of the surfaces covered by green spaces, orchards, vineyards and forests.
The modification of the urban tissue through the anthropization of the natural landscape within the perimeter of Segarcea town

Between 1851 and 1855, it was drawn a plan of the settlement (Fig. 5), in which there were listed landowners’ properties, including Segarcea Monastery, which is presently called the Old Church, and other neighbouring settlements.

Fiind o zonă foarte bogată în cultura vieții de vie încă din acea perioadă, regele Carol I a înființat o cramă de unde puteau fi obținute diverse sortimente de vin.

Another plan of the area between Segarcea and Dranic made on the basis of a local research on October 9, 1900, shows that the settlement area was approximately 5 km², but it refers to both Segarcea and Dranic villages. After the villagers’ appropriation, the population of the became very heterogeneous. There were many agricultural surfaces north of Segarcea, where vineyards predominated. In 1921, Segarcea estate, property of the Crown, measured a total area of 66.3 km² of which 25 km² could not be expropriated and, in their turn, they were divided into several domains. Being an area with numerous vineyards, King Carol the first established a cellar where different types of wine could be obtained.

Once the land reform of 1864 was applied, the peasants from Segarcea were appropriated and released of the feudal obligations to which they were forced to by the administration of the estate. After 1877, namely at the end of the War of Independence, more than 500 families living on Segarcea estate were appropriated.

In 1968, the village was declared a city Segarcea (Fig. 6). Early twentieth century was marked by the presence of food and textile industry, and other branches appearing later.

Stațiunea de Mașini și Tractoare s.a.

At the same time, the socialist sector appeared in the town economy and privatized the Crown Domains, which became S.C. Cervinia S.A. (Photo 3); later, there were settled several enterprises that were specialized in local industry such as grain mill, oil mill.

Fig. 5 The plan of Segarcea estate between 1851 and 1855 (processed after the original plan provided by the National Archives)

Fig. 6 Structure of Segarcea town after being declared town (map achieved after the orthophotoplan 1:5,000)

Astfel au început să se desființeze secțiile de vinificație, iar producția obținută de pe terenurile viticole era transportată în centrele de vinificație mai mari.

If until a decade ago the main occupation of the inhabitants was wine production and the land works characteristic to viticulture, now their number has decreased due to mechanization. Thus, winemaking sections were closed and presently the grapes obtained in the region are transported to more important wine production centres.
Spatial changes imposed by urban sprawl in Dăbuleni town

In 1864, it was promulgated the Rural Law, which stipulated that the expropriated land to be allotted to peasants to a rate of 2/3, thereby recognizing the peasants’ pre-existing rights. The surface was different according to the number of cattle taken in property. Thus, they began to draw up plans rendering the land parcels divided according to the obtained property. In 1933, the new precincts of Dăbuleni estate had an area of 180 hectares. However, many peasants were not appropriated either because of ambiguities or abuse or because there were too few surveying engineers.

Being a deeply rural area and because the agricultural area was often flooded by the river discharges as the town was located near the Danube, after the drainage conducted during the communist period, the surface acquired adequate conditions for the development of an intensive agriculture. Thus, the main economic branch was agriculture, but what is quite surprising is the very low number of equipments used in agriculture; so, there was a plow at 7 hectares and a seeder to 239 hectares, while in the country, there were registered 5732 tractors.

Dăbuleni town experienced a rapid development not only spatially but also demographically. In terms of space, the town has expanded with about 170 hectares in almost 80 years (Fig. 7), while demographically, the town population grew by about 5,000 people for the same period, currently having 13,888 inhabitants. The shape of old houses does not differ from that of the modern ones. An ordinary household comprised a hut, totally or partially built underground, or a surface house with one floor, a place for storing the scarce wheat or corn reserves, agricultural tools - most of them rudimentary.

Mostly, the surface covered by houses and the characteristics of houses built during that period remained unchanged, except for small improvements that occurred afterwards. Instead, newly built homes easily change their style and architecture, pursuing a more modern model. At the same time, the blocks of flats built during the communist period do not have access to all municipal utilities and do not meet the standards imposed by the European Union.

In spite of all these, in the context of the accession of Romania to the European Union and the need to increase the degree of urbanization in the country, the settlement representing a local polarization pole was declared town. However, the lack of proper urban infrastructure is obvious, fact proved by the analysis in the field which indicated an aspect similar to that of a rural settlement.

Defining urban features of Bechet town

Bechet evolved from an ancient settlement located on the Danube bank, which gradually developed through the river crossing and exchange of goods. In the medieval times, the town was recorded as a settlement present on the site of the former locality, developing due to trade, and later, as a Romanian village where the Danube could be safely crossed and subsequently, here appeared a customs.
Bechet plan from 1895 highlights the fact that the peasants were appropriated and the settlement was no longer under the boyar dominion; this reveals how the town takes on a shape, starting from the centre, next to the church, with the most important roads linking the commune to the neighbouring villages due to the exchange of commodities and goods. The most important road arteries were represented by the roads to Ostroveni, Craiova, Caracal, and the road to the port (Fig. 8).

The plan of the settlement from 1900 shows that, within the precincts of the village, there were 600 housing estates of 2,000 m² totalizing 152 ha, 105 hectares of pasture, 35 hectares for the school, church, cemetery, city hall, health house and 12 wells and streets. In the unincorporated area, the surface of the settlement was divided into parcels totalizing 2,749 hectares, the school and church land with a total of 10 hectares, the aquatic surfaces with a total of 53 ha, the access roads to the parcels accounting for 37 ha and the main roads (11 ha). Thus, it results that the total surface reached 3,171 ha in 1900.

If in 1900, the area of the village was of 152 hectares, due to the increase of the built-up area, now it reached 318 hectares.

In Bechet, building extension occurred mostly in the southern part of town and most of the houses have just the ground floor and the first floor (Photo 5). There is a border crossing to Bulgaria. The transit is done by ferry between Bechet and the Bulgarian town Oriahovo (Photo 6). As it has a port and Sofia and then Greece can be reached relatively quickly, this is one of the routes preferred by most carriers to transit Bulgaria towards Greece and Turkey.

Conclusions

Developing for almost six centuries, Dolj towns are the proof of an ancient habitation process and of the diversity of social life concepts, marking through their evolution the stage of urbanization, stage that occurred together with the increase of their importance in the system of settlements.

There are emphasized, by means of old cartographic products and documents, data referring to the structure, features, size, number of inhabitants, form and land use of the settlements, since the 14th century until now. Thus, the analysis renders very well both the evolution of the built-up area of the towns and of the land use of the surfaces belonging to the former estates.

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