

HISTORICAL LANDMARKS REGARDING THE SPATIAL EVOLUTION OF CRAIOVA MUNICIPALITY

REPERE ISTORICE ÎN DEZVOLTAREA SPAȚIALĂ A MUNICIPIULUI CRAIOVA

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Abstract: The importance of this study resides in revealing the geographical, historical and cultural conditions in which Craiova municipality extended its territory, but also the level of development that generated it. The process of territorial extension signified the change in the relations between the city and its contiguous territory, especially during the last hundred years, emphasizing an urban reality full of discrepancies, the consequence of the stochastic way in which the urban dynamics took place towards the periphery.

Key words: historical evolution, spatial development, Craiova municipality

Cuvinte cheie: evoluție istorică, dezvoltare spațială, municipiul Craiova

1. INTRODUCTION

Craiova municipality lies on a vast amphitheatre, on the left escarpments of the Jiu river, connecting the North-Western part of the Romanian Plain with the Getic Piedmont, in the North-Eastern part of Dolj county, at 44°19'30" North latitude and 23°50'45" East longitude, at altitudes comprised between 70-75 metres in the West and 135-140 metres in the East.

With a total area of 8141 hectares in 2009, Craiova extended its geographical perimeter by including the villages situated nearby within the city's heartland according as its urban and economical development flourished: Popoveni, Bordei, Șimnicu de Jos, Mofleni, Balta Verde, Făcăi, Cernele, Izvoru Rece, Rovine; the major internal metamorphoses also refer to restructuring and assigning new functionalities to several spaces within the built-up area.

Representing the most important regional pole of nowadays Oltenia, Craiova developed at an important junction of commercial roads over the centuries; the role of commercial center marked the evolution of the medieval bourg towards the modern city.

In order to identify the stages that marked the spatial evolution of the city, there has been made a comparative analysis of the historical documents existent at

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Dolj County Headquarters of the National Archives, of relevant cartographic documents during the 18th and the 19th centuries, found at the Library of the Romanian Academy, but also by consulting the geographical bibliography.

2. THE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CRAIOVA MUNICIPALITY

2.1. *The very first traces of inhabitation*

The archaeological discoveries demonstrated the presence of the first human communities on Craiova's territory from Neolithic, about 6,000-2,500 B.C. (Georgescu et al., 1977, p. 8). These communities founded settlements in the Western part of Craiova, at Cârcea, Șimnicul de Jos, Șimnicul de Sus, in some central parts of the city, at Făcăi and on the right bank of the Jiu river, at Bucovăț; most of these settlements were also inhabited during the period previous to the Metal Ages (about 2,500-2,000 B.C.).

Subsequently, the archaeological and numismatic discoveries emphasized the presence of ceramics, utensils and weapons in the areas of: Șimnicul de Jos, Craiova, Făcăi, but also Podari, Cârlikei-Bucovăț, Bucovăț, Leamna, Ișalnița from the period going between the Metal Ages and the Bronze Ages and then until the Iron Ages; these evidences testify the permanence of inhabitation within this area, determining the becoming, crystallization and consolidation of the Thracic-Getic basis in the area.

Given its dimensions, one of the most important Getic-Dacian settlements in Dacia Malvensis was called *Pelendava* (later on *Pelendova*, if taking into consideration the denomination of the Roman civil settlement in Tabula Peutingeriana); the compound toponym was on the one side connected with the location in the Jiu river meadow (*peled-*, meaning *moist, to flow*), but on the other side hinting, by the suffix *-dava* (*settlement, village, place*), at the fortification from Cârlikei-Bucovăț. The archaeological traces prove that *Pelendava* subsequently entered under military influence and administration of the *pagus* in Răcari, while the Roman camp, together with the Roman road were placed near Mofleni and Bucova monastery (Tudor, D., 1968, p. 313).

Besides the vestiges of the ancient Roman *Pelendava* found in contemporary Craiova, i.e. Mofleni neighbourhood, there have also been villages of native Getic-Dacians, at Făcăi. Thus, the year 225 is considered to be the date of the first documentary mentioning regarding the oldest settlement within the heartland of the contemporary municipality (Tabula Peutingeriana).

In the years following 275, a peculiar phenomenon takes place in what concerns the spatial regrouping: while until the Roman Age the inhabitation nuclei gravitated towards Bucovăț-Mofleni area, during the post-Roman period they manifested a centrifugal tendency. The Northern extremity of the new Roman expansion (during Constantin the Great) is constituted by Brazda lui Novac, which could be traced at Leamna, in the forest of Bucovăț and also, in the North-Eastern and Northern part of the city.

At the end of the 4th century, the Hunnish and Ostrogothic people entered Oltenia and settled here until the first decades of the 5th century, while at the end of

the 6th century, communities of Slaves entered and settled Westwards from the Olt river.

Hence, before the documentary testification during Feudalism (June, 1st, 1475), the archaeological evidences can attest at Craiova the existence of a settlement that had clearly surpassed the rural stage, having a certain economic and administrative importance, becoming a genuine polarizing center which had commercial relations with the Balkan Peninsula and Western Europe due to its favourable location at the crossroads between Transylvania and Vidin.

2.2. The evolution of the city during the Middle Ages

Medieval Craiova's development was influenced by an obvious demographical growth and social division of labour force. As stated in the first mentioning of the locality, the estate of Craiova belong to Craiovești landowners.

The configuration of the city changes fundamentally during this period due to the development of Craiova as a bourg, the fair being initially located in Bucovăț area, but subsequently shifting towards the present Old Market of the city, at the intersection of the main commercial roads during that time: *Ocnei road*, descending from Ocnele Mari towards Craiova, following the road to Slatina, *the saline road*, *Vidin road* or *the hill road*, descending towards Calafat and *București road*. The commercial core of the city was located around the heights surrounding Elca Vale, placed in the present Old Market area.



Fig. 1. The boundaries of Craiova lordly estate – 1761, 1:80 000
(Source: Ciobotea D. et al., 1999, p. 31)

Given the social-economic development, Craiova was in an incipient urban stage; moreover, placing *Bănia* to Craiova at the end of the 15th century meant assigning the settlement, besides the economic functions, political and administrative ones, that would create the favourable premises first of all for its

demographic growth, polarizing the rural population gravitating around the city and furthermore, for its territorial extension.

As a consequence of the extensive character of the agriculture specific to this period, the perimeter of the medieval bourg included vast agricultural areas, mainly vineyards and orchards and especially in the Western and Southern parts of the bourg; they maintained their functions until the 18th century, as seen in Fig. 1.

Although lacking defensive walls or fortresses, Craiova represented a military and strategic nucleus during the Middle Ages, functions that were mainly exerted by the fortified churches and monasteries placed marginally.

2.3. Craiova at the beginning of the Modern period

In order to highlight the development stage of Craiova during this period, I have chosen to analyze relevant cartographic documents of the 18th and 19th centuries: Specht's Map, the Map of Schwantz, the Charta of Southern Romania (Szatmary Map).

During the first decades of the 18th century, Craiova developed in what concerns the urban public works, by building bridges made up of beams on the streets of the town and gutters used for the water supply system. But, in the same time, Craiova endured the ravages of the Turkish invasions and suffered from the baneful consequences of the Russian-Turkish war, which altogether slowed down the general development of the town.

For instance, the temporary demographic decrease is also obvious in the plan mapped in 1790 (Fig. 2) because of a series of roads crossing the town with numerous outbacks in the areas between them; București road, Calea Severinului and Amaradia Street were better populated. The old economic center of the bourg, the Old Market (in the South-Western part of the town) is represented as having only a few dwellings and constructions.

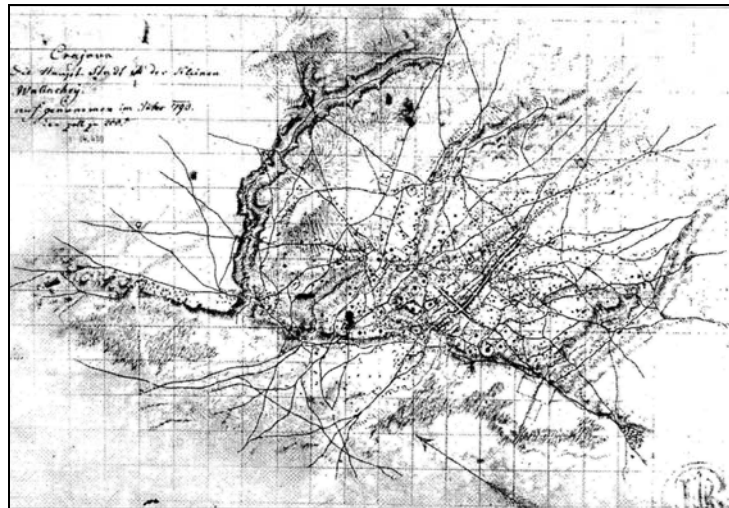


Fig. 2. The plan of Craiova, 1790
(Source: Ciobotea D. et al., 1999, p. 18)

Analysing the maps, it can be observed that Craiova ranked among some few urban settlements in Oltenia of that period, becoming one of the most developed towns, as a result of adding political, administrative and cultural functions to the inceptive commercial one. From a demographic point of view, statistics in 1735 declared a population of 4,000 inhabitants for Craiova, but it reaches 10,000-15,000 inhabitants in the period following 1821, i.e. 11,665 inhabitants in 1832 (Ciobotea D. et al., 1999, p. 23).

In *Specht's Map*, Craiova appears to be located exclusively on the left bank and on the first escarpment of the Jiu, the swampy meadow of the river, permanently exposed to flooding being avoided, constituting for the moment a spatial barrier, a topophobic area for the extension of the town towards the West and the South-West (Fig. 3); at that time, the characteristics of this location conferred a semicircular form to the town (Turdeanu Toşa, Ana, 1975, p. 146).



Fig. 3. The location of Craiova in a fragment of *Specht's Map*

The Map of Schwantz, on the other side, marks Craiova, together with Râmnic, as being part of *urbs* category and shows that the texture and the structure of the town was common for all the settlements of that time, the location of the dwellings being moreover determined by individual possibilities and not necessarily following a certain planning or systematization (Fig. 4). It can be distinguished a nucleus of the town with maximum agglomeration, from which the streets branch radially, with an absolutely anarchical distribution of the households.



Fig. 4. The representation and location of Craiova in the Map of Schwantz

During the 19th century, the town maintains as the main commercial center of Oltenia; in 1821, an extension of the town took place, also bringing an extension of the cultivated lands defavouring the forests near the town. The unsanitary huts dominance from the suburbs, the inadequate streets paving highlights the complex social stratification of premodern Craiova and increases the contrast between the urban slums of the city and its center (Fig. 5). In the internal structure of the city, the *slum* acceptance corresponded to the administrative division, this being part of a town during Ottoman period, in the 18th century; in Craiova including, their names were representative for the activities and main occupations of the residents or were crystallized around a church: Trăistarilor *Slum*, Tabacilor *Slum*, Cizmarilor *Slum*, Obedeianu *Slum*, Mântuleasa *Slum*.

In 1859, Craiova reached a population of 25,000 people and was bounded by eight barriers: Bucharest way towards Eastwards, Caracal and Calafat ways or Diului way Southwards, Bucovăț and Brestei Westwards, Cerneți or Severin towards the North-West, Amărăzii and for Vâlcea Northwards; Craiova was divided into three sectors: yellow, red, blue. It already started the process of modernization of the roads and building new ones, but the obvious development is seen beginning with the first railways.



Fig. 5. Some of the *slums* emphasized on the map of Craiova during the 18th-19th centuries (Source: Deaconu L., 1981, Annex)

On the Charta of Southern Romania, also known as Szatmary Map, it is already obvious a radial-concentric pattern and tentacular extension of Craiova, along the main communication routes in the mid-nineteenth century (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6. The representation of Craiova and its surrounding area in *Szatmary Map*

2.4. The end of the 19th century, a period of great urban metamorphosis

At the census of 1899, Craiova already numbered 45,597 inhabitants and went over an early stage of industrial development. In 1910, the total population was 51,404 inhabitants. Population growth caused an "illegal process of expansion of the town, by constructions" (Deaconu L., 2001, p. 183). The territorial expansion, the transformation of the access roads to the city and the location of the constructions in the outskirts were done arbitrarily, disregarding the existence of built-up lands used in agriculture or vacant lands.

In addition, the lack of sanitation, drinking water, the unpaved and narrowed streets, without any alignment or systematization and the large number of unhealthy dwellings, the lack of facilities or utilities and made up of low quality materials determined Craiova to be one of the leading towns when dealing with the number of tuberculosis or typhoid fever patients, but also a town in which architectural, urban and territorial progress were rather chaotic.

In the early twentieth century, with huge financial effort, there took place in Craiova several public works: draining Craiovița and Geanoglu ponds, water delivery from Gioroc source, with a flow of 8,000 cubic meters per day (thanks to engineer W.H. Lindley), the campaign of paving the streets (1901-1904), the expansion and modernization of street lighting, the alignment and systematization plan of the city which projected radial circulation arteries linking the central area to the peripheries of the city.

On the eve of World War I, Craiova numbered 50,000 inhabitants and excelled at a national and regional level through an intensive commercial activity and an incipient stage of industrial development (being a famous center of processing agricultural products, textile units, ceramics, woodworking, chemical products, agricultural machinery etc).

As Vintilă Mihailescu stated, "the desire for isolation and natural beauty" led to a territorial extensive development of towns in this period, standing out the presence of numerous lordly mansions in the settlements near Craiova: Craiovița, Podari, Șimnic, Mischii, Ghercești (Nicolae, I., 2002, p. 242).

In 1930, due to the infusion of modern development premises, the city's demographic trend emphasizes a population of 63,063 inhabitants, reflected by a territorial extension of the inhabited area of the city and a phenomenon of "agglutination" of nearby settlements; the villages declared suburban - Bordei, Ghercești Noi, Bariera Vâlcii, Craiovița, Lascăr Catargiu, Românești will become 30 years later, the city's inland areas, actual neighbourhoods.

2.5. Craiova during the second half of the twentieth century

Regarding the changes of the territory, following the Act of 1904 which provided a surface of 11,180 hectares of Craiova, in 1940, Craiova had 4,492 hectares. Subsequently, the Royal Decree no. 3,924 of 1975 established the extension of the city at 1,724 hectares and other 95 hectares comprised in suburban communes: Bariera Vâlcii, Bordei, Craiovița, Ghercești, Lascăr Catargiu, Popoveni, Mofleni. According to the General Urban Plan in 1990, Craiova municipality comprised 8141 hectares, of which 6765 hectares belonged to Craiova itself and 500 hectares to

Făcăi, Mofleni, Popoveni, Șimnicu de Jos, Cernele, Rovine, Izvoru Rece (Avram C. et al., 2005, p. 8).

From an administrative point of view and analysing diachronically, Craiova belonged successively to: Dolj county, *plasa* Jiului inferior (administrative unit) (1819-1831), Ocolu (1853-1861, 1864-1887), Amaradia-Ocol (1887-1908), Balta Verde (1908 -1943), Craiova (1943-1950). In the period 1950-1968, the city was part of Oltenia *region*, Craiova *raion* (Avram et al., 2004, p. 22).

In fact, the territorial expansion of Craiova is the result of important changes on the administrative map of the area. Ghercești Noi, for example, a commune founded in 1930, was part of *plasa* Craiova between 1930 and 1950; it was included in Craiova since 1950 (Avram et al., 2004, p. 290). Craiovița, a commune founded by the administrative law of March, 31st, 1864, was included in Craiova since 1965, just like it was the case for Făcăi, Popoveni. Cernele, a commune known as Troaca-Cernele after 1864, was abolished in 1871, its subunits being included to Breasta commune, also abolished in 1990, when it becomes an actual neighbourhood of Craiova, just as Izvoru Rece, Mofleni, Rovine (including the old village Troaca and Rovine), Șimnicu de Jos (since 1992).

During the second half of the twentieth-century, complex functional mutations restructured the peripheral area of the city manifested by the insertion of industrial platforms: the Chemical plant, Electroputere plants, 7 Noiembrie, the textile factory; this led to demographic growth due to a migratory increase realized by polarizing the labor force of the entire Oltenia, as a result of massive industrialization, but also to natural increase. Thus, on July 1st 1977, Craiova had 226,212 inhabitants, including suburban communes and concentrated 78% of the urban population of the county.

2.6. Current stage of territorial development of Craiova

Nowadays, Craiova has specific problems of housing construction dynamics in different peripheral areas of the city resulting from connecting unequal evolution of economic and social development within various parts of the city.

Given the uncontrolled spatial development of the city, in the peripheral areas, there are distinguished some spatial and socio-cultural differences between new residential areas outlined in the North and East, as compared with the old residential neighborhoods belonging to the South and West of the city (Fig. 7).

Thus, we can identify peripheral areas with predominantly residential functionality, resulting from the territorial expansion of Craiova and regrouping of some social categories, particularly with high incomes (Metro area, Selgros), dormitory suburbs, resulted from the installation of the external migrants coming to work on the industrial platforms (1 Mai neighbourhood, for example), tertiary peripheral areas, containing warehouses and having a predominantly commercial use (continuation of Calea București and Caracal arteries) and peripheral areas including marginalized groups (Roma community), grouped in the West and South-West of the city.

Because of the way in which the spatial extent of new residential neighborhoods took place, that have not pursued a systematic or organized

planning, the city's territorial expansion was made to the detriment of the industrial areas, now mainly under restructuring, but also by reducing the agricultural functional lands.

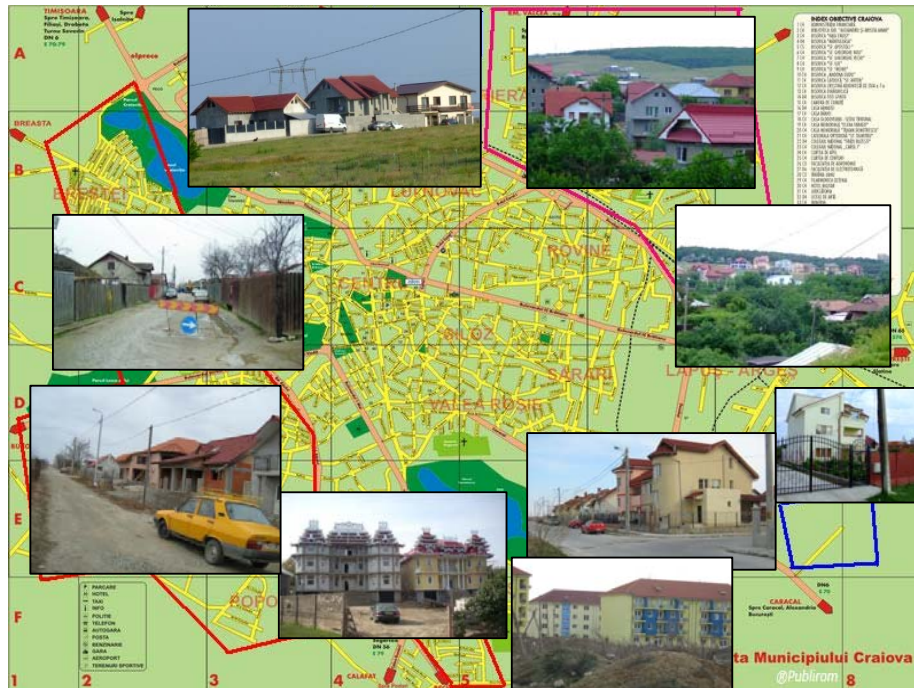


Fig. 7. Spatial and social-cultural discrepancies within the peripheral residential areas of Craiova municipality (Photos by Mara Cristina, 2009)

3. CONCLUSIONS

The territorial extension of Craiova took into consideration the structural heritage of the city, the economic, political and social urban factors which conditioned the formation of the medieval bourg at the intersection of main roads, the policies of the communist regime before 1989, with excessive emphasis on planning and massive industrialization. The agricultural profile of Craiova was maintained for a long time and constituted a slow down in the development of the city because of the lack of appropriate economic policies that could have given an impulse and could have capitalized Craiova according to its real economic possibilities.

In the future, local and decisional authorities should take into account the uncontrolled expansion of residential areas in the spatial development of Craiova, the existing contrasts in relation to various urban and social peripheral areas of the city, but also, a reorganization of the internal spaces within the structure of the city, functionally unclear or inconsistent (especially the restructuring industrial areas), in

order to achieve the sustainable development and a more judicious organization of the urban "organism".

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