

## HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE PĂTÂRLAGELE DEPRESSION: LANDSCAPE AND SETTLEMENT TO 1945

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**Abstract:** *Historical Geography of the Pătârlagele Depression: landscape and settlement to 1945.* This paper attempts to reconstruct the process of settlement and agricultural development in a Subcarpathian district where the substantial land resources of the Buzău valley are complemented by the extensive hillsides and high structural surfaces. The latter have been seen as a potential refuge area, especially in the context of the invasion period when the Subcarpathians are widely assumed to have played a sheltering role. However the paper finds little evidence to support this and instead points to the role of monasticism in Medieval times as well as a process of 'roirile pastorale' to create a remarkably dense settlement network complementary to the principal villages in the valley that have been documented since the sixteenth century. After 1800 the cartographic evidence points to a sustained phase of secondary settlement as population growth and economic development intensified occupation of the landslides and high structural surfaces, with pressure maintained until the Second World War. Since then a process of resettlement and consolidation in the main valley has been evident. The paper investigates the contrasting potentials of the local landscapes and illustrates the development process with reference to toponomy.

**Rezumat:** *Geografia istorică a Depresiunii Pătârlagele: peisaje și așezări la 1945.* Această lucrare își propune să reconstituie procesul dezvoltării așezărilor omenesti și agriculturii în regiunea Subcarpaților, acolo unde resursele bogate ale văii Buzăului sunt completate de pantele extinse și marile suprafețe structurale. Cea de-a doua a fost considerată ca o potențială arie de refugiu, mai ales în contextul perioadei invaziilor când Subcarpații se presupune că au jucat un important rol de apărare. Oricum, lucrarea prezintă puține dovezi pentru a susține acest lucru și mai degrabă puncte

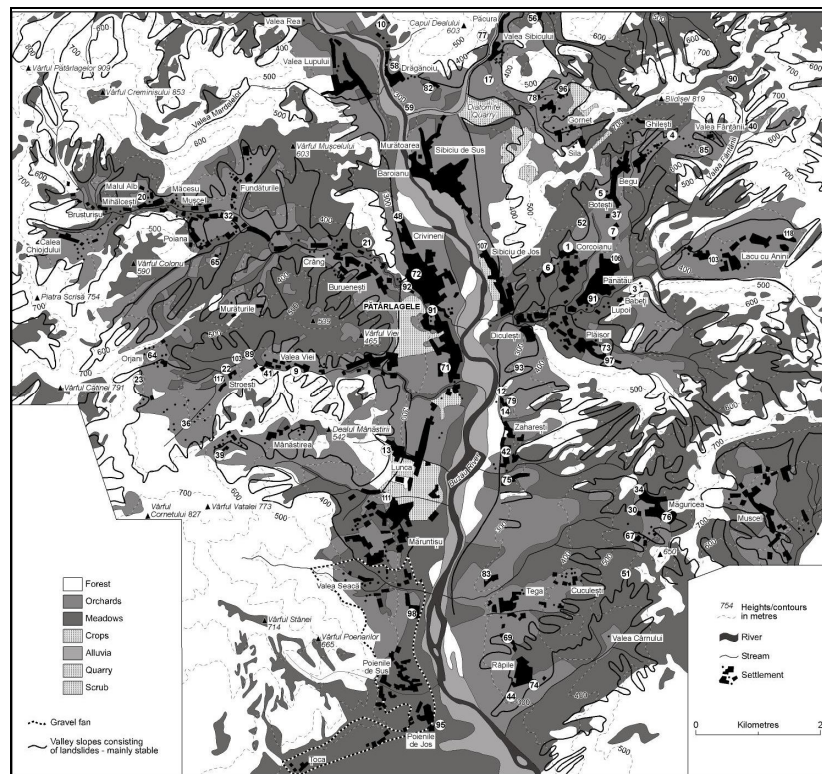


privind rolul vieții monahale în epoca Medievală, precum și un proces referitor la „roirile pastorale” pentru a crea o rețea densă de așezări, complementară principalelor sate din valea care a fost documentată începând cu secolul al XVI – lea. După anul 1800, evidențele cartografice susțin o fază de așezări secundare precum creșterea populației și dezvoltarea economică ce au intensificat ocuparea alunecărilor de teren și a suprafețelor structurale înalte cu o presiune menținută până în perioada celui de-al doilea Război Mondial. Încă de atunci, a fost evident un proces de reinstalare și consolidare a așezărilor din aceeași vale. Lucrarea investighează potențialul contrastant al peisajelor locale și ilustrează procesul de dezvoltare făcând referire la toponimia locului.

**Key words:** *agricultural history, landscape, Pătârlagele, settlement, Subcarpathians, toponymy*  
**Cuvinte cheie:** *istoria agriculturii, peisaj, Pătârlagele, așezare, Subcarpați, toponimia locului.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This is a study of the historical geography in the upper part of the Buzău valley in the Subcarpathians: an area first so-called by Mrazec (1899) in connection with rivers and depressions in northern Oltenia but extended eastwards to the outer section of the Curvature Carpathians (Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** *The landscape of the Pătârlagele Depression*

Typically for this region, it is an area of strong contrast between Pătârlagele and other Buzău valley settlements (comprising the core of the depression where the earliest settlements were founded) and the margins consisting of landslides and high structural surfaces: the latter have little to offer capitalist agriculture yet they provided valuable support for subsistence communities that flourished in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as 'alternative' socio-economic systems to the commercial activity based on core settlements supported by the relatively rich agriculture of the Buzău terraces and a modern infrastructure of road and rail communications along the main valley. We set out to trace the development of this coexistence to the beginning of the communist period which has been examined elsewhere (N.Muică & Turnock 1997; in press; also N.Muică et al. 2000a; 2000b). We define the area in terms of the recently-declared town of Pătârlagele and its constituent villages along with the commune of Pănătău although we also (refer to the villages of Gura Bâscii (otherwise known as Poenile de Jos) and Țoca that were transferred to Cislău commune in 1912). To supplement the sparse documentary record we make much use of oral evidence; particularly with regard to a very rich toponomy.

The study takes off from assumptions made about the long history of Subcarpathian settlement – a point emphasised by Petrescu-Burloiu (1977, pp.139–40) in a survey of the Buzău Subcarpathians as a whole. This is justified to some extent by archaeological evidence but reinforced by the opportunities for shelter during the invasion period. The possible use of the area as a refuge is brought out by the name Vf.Cămăruței ('the peak of the little room' using the diminutive of form of 'camera') which relates to a small cave traditionally seen as a refuge (on the eastern edge of our area) used during the invasion period. There is also a monastic tradition for this remote outpost of the old Saac county (transferred to Buzău in 1845) which could have stimulated colonisation in the Medieval period. But this should not justify assumptions that the whole area was effectively settled in early times because we argue for a pre-1800 primary settlement system that was restricted to the core of the depression and that far from there being a post-Medieval/Early Modern 'descent' from the higher ground (as has been proposed for high surfaces of the Carpathians) there was a secondary settlement process that operated in the reverse direction. And it is this late colonisation of the landslides and high surfaces that forms a major part of the paper. It was driven to some extent by the estates worked by resident feudal dependents known as 'clăcași': in return for access to land for their own subsistence they were bound by the 'clacă' to work a stipulated number of days for the owner (until feudalism ended in Cuza's time - 1864 - and labour contracts were substituted until the 1923 land reform). Monastic estates typically used Roma slaves ('robi'), but there were also many independent peasants or small rural owners, especially in the hills where they owned enough farmland and forest to support their families and enjoyed a certain status from so doing. Such peasants would cherish a family history linked back to a 'moșnean' (plural 'moșneni') usually starting with a regime of co-proprietorship of a joint estate: 'moșiei devălmășe a satului'. Both systems operated in the Pătârlagele Depression which forms a transition zone between the estate system to the south and the independent peasantry to the north. Thus Petrescu-Burloiu (1977, Fig.47) sees Pănătău, Pătârlagele and Zaharești marking the southern limit of an area of 'moșneni' settlement; giving way to 'clăcași' and mixed 'moșneni/clăcași' settlements characteristic of the lower Buzău valley.

## 2. THE REGION IN CONTEXT

Since the turn of the nineteenth century, bringing strong central government and a modern infrastructure (including the railway which arrived in 1909), Pătârlagele has become inextricably linked with the outside world despite a continuing high level of self-sufficiency through subsistence farming and local handicrafts. Although the locality had no significant mineral wealth to attract in-migration (though diatomite was worked above Sibiciu de Sus to make building blocks at Pătârlagele in communist times and there was some earlier interest in 'chihlimbar' while oil springs provided lubricant for cart axles, the oil and lignite workings elsewhere in the region stimulated some migration at this time (Baranovsky & Ștefănescu 1964). And despite the proximity of the Carpathian frontier with Hungarian territory in Transylvania (hence the military detachment stationed at Pătârlagele until after the First World War) the area saw a number of Brașov traders in transit and there is a mention of Benga village in this context (Manolescu 1965) although it is probably not the Benga closest to Pătârlagele. Moreover, German influence (possibly linked with Teutonic Knights) has been held to account for the 'Peter' element in old names for Pătârlagele. However, of much clearer relevance is the 'Ungureni' phenomenon – relating to settlement by Romanians from Transylvania under Hungarian administration – since transhumance movements emanated from this area while some shepherds and others came to settle permanently in the area, as they did in other parts of the Curvature Carpathians (Donat 1966). As will be noted elsewhere, the villages of Sibiciu de Jos and Sibiciu de Sus have been linked with migrants from Sibiu while one interpretation of the village named Râpile highlights the the settlement of Rupeni (from Rupea in Transylvania), while Iorgulescu (1892, pp.378-9) wrote of the role of 'coloni' from Transylvania in the development of Pănătău after they had tried their luck at Begu and Sibiciu. Unfortunately there are no firm dates but the best evidence comes from V.Viei where the villages of Valea Viei and Stroești, known from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries respectively, were known as Valea Viei Pământeni and Valea Viei Ungureni until the beginning of the twentieth century.

Although there are no documents, the latter village developed as a string of now-derelict hamlets – geared to pastoral farming - extending from a small core area (Stroești) to Șoghiorani, Chelărești, Vasiloiu and Ivănești lying in sequence up the valley. Meanwhile, despite the emphasis on 'Pământeni' Valea Viei was not without its own history of Transylvanian settlement since a tradition of 'moșneni' colonists settling in the narrow valley (menaced by erosion and landslides) is very much alive today – confirmed by Petrescu-Burloiu (1977, Figs.46/47) – while names including 'Brașoveanu' (i.e. coming from Brașov) and Petrache Basta (a Szekler or Hungarian name) are remembered. The settlers brought vines from Transylvania – providing good fruit but not much juice – that were established on Dl.Viei and Dl.Mănăstirii at Mocanca (another name linked with the colonists) according to Zaharescu (1923) and confirmed by local opinion (Tr.Popescu and I.Mihalcea) quoting from an undated document held in the parish church: 'Ardelenii au adus vie și au plantat pe versantul sudic al Dl.Viei (Oprea Gavriloiu) dar și chiar pe versantul nordic al Dl.Mănăstirii, pe Mocanca (nume arătând populație din Ardeal) era 2,000 sq.m vie un soi de vie cu bobul cărnos (Mihălcescu din Valea Viei)' It is also recalled that oxen were used to pull a 'car: mai greoi și mai lent dar bun pentru greutăți mari'. However it is curious that the Valea Viei people evidently tried to project themselves as an

authentic local community through the clear distinction between ‘Valea Viei Pământeni’ (the present Valea Viei) and ‘Valea Viei Ungureni’ which may have been settled by later Ungureni settlers. And interestingly local historian Tr.Popescu recalls that the Braşoveanu family changed their name to Gavriloiu to emphasise their identity as ‘Pământeni’ rather than ‘Ungureni’: evidently an important distinction even though there must have been cordial relations between the two villages with the Valea Viei church serving both communities. Meanwhile, a possible ‘Ungureni’ connection has been made with the hamlets of Băjăni at Corcoianu and Bejani at Zahareşti since both names indicate fugitives or refugees. However while Bejani does not fit the theory, being a ‘clăcaşi’ community, Băjăni is certainly a possibility for Ungureni immigration since vines were also established on the hillside above the village.

As regards more localised contacts there have obviously been links between Muşcel and the Bâsca Chiojdului valley: hence the village name Calea Chiojdului; also between Lacu Anini and Valea Fântâni and the Bălăneasa/Murătoarea valley via Punga and Bălăneşti respectively; as well as the contacts in the Buzău valley in the Cislău (south) and Nehoiu (north) directions. However, through Cocora (1979, pp.60-7) we know of land ownership links between Sibiciu de Jos/Sus and the Gura Teghii area in the Bâsca Rosilii valley (northeast of Nehoiu) suggesting that this area formed the periphery of pastoral activity based on the Pătârlagele Depression. ‘Moşia Sibiciu’ existed in the Bâsca Rosilii valley according to a document of 1515 (confirmed by another of 1534 by Voevod Vlad of Vintila Vodă) and the owners were evidently responsible for the settlement there through the original sheep folds and shelters. We also have the ‘hrisov’ of Voevod Radu Leon in 1674 – alluding to the old inherited land (‘ocinile moştenite’) of Radu and Stroe with their ‘ceata’; also Bordi Bocan, Stoică Drăgănescu and Dragomir Samuel with their ‘ceata’ from Sibiciu de Sus, as well as Stoica Tarcov and Radului with their ‘ceata’ from Sibiciu de Jos. Cocora (1979, p.84) also refers to a document of 1684 linking people at Sibiciu with land at ‘Bâsca Rusilii’ and ‘Muntele Tegăi/Căşăucăi’. A land sale in 1835 by people from Sibiciu de Sus to others at ‘Păltinişu din Bâsca Rosilii’ is also recorded; while in 1839 a request for a market (i.e. fair), to be held on the feast day of Sff.Apostoli şi la Vinerea Mare at Gura Teghii (referred to as Sibiceni de Jos), came from the peasants of Sibiciu who presumably still had interests in the area (Penelea 1973, p.154). The record ends at this point although it is worth noting the tradition at Valea Lupului concerning the nineteenth century in-migration of families from Gura Teghii, as well as the lowlands close to Istriţa. While both seem unlikely sources of significant movement (certainly insufficient to provide a plausible origin for the village) there is in the former case an interesting hint of possible return migration to the Pătârlagele area. But overall we are left with a fascinating prospect that the Pătârlagele Depression may have been a core of early settlement which not only ‘exploded’ within the immediate locality (as described below) but also affected surrounding areas within the Subcarpathian zone through colonisation (initially through transhumance) by people from Sibiciu and perhaps other primary villages of the area. And if this extensive pastoral territory was once a basic component of the economy of the Pătârlagele depression – lost in the process of settlement and population growth in the nineteenth century – the allocation of land in the plain after the First World War can be seen as a belated response to a crisis situation previously handled by migrant labour, ‘ţuică’ sales and the intensification of agriculture through agro-terraces and

maximum exploitation of the landslides, not to mention the hazards of settlement on unstable ground.

### 3. OUTLINE OF THE TERRAIN

The Pătârlagele Depression is part of the 'vorland' of the Curvature Carpathians: an internal Subcarpathian area near the mountains that is typically developed in Miocene sediments, in contrast to the external Subcarpathians adjacent to the plain with lower, gentler slopes developed in Pliocene material. But due to an inversion the Pătârlagele relief resembles the latter with the Pliocene sediments, including Villafranchian gravel on Cornet peak (827m) while Istrița (747m, overlooking the plain) consists of Miocene limestone. This area always used to be regarded as mountainous e.g. Iorgulescu (1892, p.79) refers to 'Munții Pânățului' and Dicționarul Statistic (1912) sees Pătârlagele as a 'regiunea muntoasă'. The Subcarpathians are certainly lower than the Carpathians proper (the highest points in our area being 909m for Mș.Pătârlagelor and 827m for Cornet on the right side of the Buzău; and 819m for Bli-dișel and 725m for Mu.Chiliei on the eastern side) while the slopes are generally gentle. But especially for the Curvature Subcarpathians between the Dâmbovița and Șușița rivers, the erosive processes are more intense when compared with the more resistant rocks of the Carpathians proper. Moreover, the relief and climate together give rise to several forms of mass movement (Bălțeanu 1976). Landslides occur on four to five degree slopes given the alternation of hard-cemented sandstone with clays and marls. They are almost impossible to control, being a function of this complex geology and the instability arising from the continuing tectonic activity accompanied by the downcutting of the Buzău river (C.Muică & Zăvoianu 1996, p.210). More restricted but more spectacular are mudflows which are most likely to break out (a) where marl outcrops between vertical sandstone and (b) especially in spring after heavy rainfall following the loss of stability arising from winter freeze. They move downhill like glaciers with the fastest movements perhaps 20–40m daily, with a depth of 5–20m (relatively shallow on the steeper slopes). Finally, torrential rain and heavy run-off also give rise to major flood hazards, resulting in damage to the infrastructure and to cropland that may be covered by a thick layer of sand and gravel. Mean discharge in the Buzău Subcarpathians is 13t/ha/yr; but rates of over 50 have been recorded, although pine forest (with some acacia, ash and 'cătină' i.e. buckthorn) helps to slow down erosion; also alder on landslides where there is sandy material. Fortunately flood risks have been reduced by the Siriu barrage and similar works in the Bâsca catchment, linked with the generation of hydroelectricity but the land remains highly unstable and well over half the sloping land is prone to landslides and mudflows. This section will attempt to summarise the basic characteristics in order to provide a context for a complex settlement history which provides part of the justification for regarding this area as a particularly interesting natural laboratory.

#### 3.1. The Valley Bottom

The lowest part of the Pătârlagele area is the Buzău river: at 250m near the confluence with the Bâsca Chiojdului (northeast of Cislău) and some 300m. at the confluence with the Valea Lupului brook – a difference of 50m over just 10km i.e. 5.0m for each kilometer on average or 5.0 per cent (steeper where there are hard rocks and the river flows swiftly e.g. at the 'puntea pe șufe' near Zaharești and again in the Valea Lupului/Drăgănoi

area further north). On both sides of the river there are banks – consisting of alluvial sand, gravel and even hard rock – that were often flooded in the past: hence the young ‘zăvoi’ vegetation (riverside coppice comprising *Salix* sp. and *Populus* sp.) used as a poor quality pasture or ‘crivină’. Above this lies a 6-7m terrace with good soil for agriculture, followed by a 30-35m terrace on the right side only between the Mușcel stream at Pătârlagele and Valea Gornească (north of Mărunțișu) with the same basic material (visible on the left side of the road from Pătârlagele to Valea Viei) but covered with a thick layer of fine material with some stratification evident through local intercalation of sand (noticed on the left side of the Mușcel stream below Mușcel village) that is probably a legacy of the last loess period since it is not alluvial gravel. On the right side of the river south of the Gorneasca valley, there are many torrential gravel fans showing much variation in size and evolution. The Mărunțișu fan is the oldest, with the gravel layer nearly destroyed (while the rest retain a fine eolian deposit in part): the origin of the old torrent lies east of Vf.Parului (or Vf.Haiului on recent maps). The fan of V.Seacă is extensive with a thick layer of gravel because this valley originated in the Villafranchian deposits of Cornet hill and three steps/levels (like river terraces) can be seen although the slope is always quite gentle (typical for torrential fans). The Purcăreața fan is also extensive and young with a thick gravel layer: it is the site for much of Poienile village although agriculture is difficult because of the dry soil. The Buzău has cut into both the Valea Seacă and Purcăreața fans so that they now appear as river terraces as Weymuller (1931, p.629) observed. Between Cornet hill and the Bâsca Chiojdului there are again many young torrential gravel fans, especially on the left side of the lower Bâsca Chiojdului.

### **3.2. Lower Hillslopes and Landslides**

Above the torrential fans, steeper slopes extend to the hilltops, but from Tega on the left side of the river a step can be seen along the slope particularly at 475-500m on Dl.Cornetului, perhaps reflecting the presence of clay. But from the Sila-Gorneasca valley northwards to the mountains is another situation: the hills of Dl.Mănăstiri and Dl.Viei (with 30–35deg. slopes) face east, but in the valleys – V.Silei-Gorneasca south of Dl.Mănăstirii and V.Viei to the north – there are great landslide surfaces, some very unstable with intense erosion so much so that the water of the Gorneasca is almost always very turbid. In the V.Viei basin there is (a) an upper part with relatively gentle slopes and a extensive area of young, clayey and superficial landslides (with some salt, especially on the left side of the V.Viei stream) but also while an old landslide tongue on which Stroești village is situated; while (b) the lower part is narrow and menaced by steep slopes with old landslides, with serious consequences when the 1940 earthquake damaged property including the church: indeed with the recent cutting of a meander below the village the danger is now increased because the river profile has been steepened. In the Mușcel valley there are many landslides that vary according to form, dimensions, age and stability. In the upper part, with a mountainous character, the landslide tongues are similar to glaciers, with great contrasts between the hillslopes and the landslide surfaces. At Fundăturile there are some old suspended landslide fans and in the Maloteasa valley there is also an old suspended tongue, with some young landslides lower down. On the left side of the Mușcel there are traces of old landslide fans such as ‘La Arie’, visible from the right side of the valley above Crâng. Between the Mușcel stream and Valea Lupului there are many landslide fans above the 6-7m river terrace, united at the base but

providing clear and varied relief: some are very young, like the I.Ciuciuului (also the most extensive) with a mobile tongue above the fan resulting in some hydrographical modification (N.Muică 1977, p.105): this landslide is also poor for agriculture (whereas the others are very good) because the soil is rich in salt and is only just beginning to evolve: a slow process in the case of marl. Above the landslides the hillslopes are steep (30-45deg. but vertical in places), reflecting the geology, with some higher terrace fragments indicative of an old developed relief.

On the left side of Buzău the situation is somewhat different because there are no gravel fans but only landslides: once again extremely variable according to the composition and inclination (near-horizontal to vertical) of the geological deposits. At the southern limit the Cârnu valley has only young, mobile landslides which threaten the now-deserted hamlet of Valea Cârnuului. West of this valley is Dl.Seciu with old relief on the higher ground contrasting with small relatively indistinct landslides on the southwest slope below Râpile, while to the northwest beyond Iz.Pâclelor there is a great landslide surface with two distinct sections: (a) a higher area with the settlements of Cuculești, Poduri and Tega that includes some lakes like Lacu'al Mare and V.Teghii as well as large rocks transported by landslides (some 15m depth) like glacial erratics (e.g. Pt.Lată and Pietrele lui Novac south of Zaharești); and (b) an area known as Bliidișei: the lower part of the slope extending from Poduri northwards to I.Chiliei (north of Zaharești) with the surface describable as 'văluriță' (with waves or corrugations) due to landsliding. There is a uniform, gentle (3-5deg) slope to the Buzău across an old, stable landscape (from before the last loess age) with a good agricultural soil comprising Ț.Teghii and Ț.Poduri in contrast to the instability of the higher ground demonstrated by the destruction of the upper part of Tega village by landslides in 1970. Another distinctive feature of this zone, lying near the edge of the alluvial plain, is a small island on undislocated rock, wooded and surrounded by landslides like a glacial nunatak, similar to the situation on landslides above Calea Chiojdului.

From Iz.Chiliei northwestwards to Iz.Șughîței, the lower part of V.Fântâni and the Pânățau stream, the situation is different again. The hillslopes are almost in complete concordance with the geological layers inclined at 13-15 deg. There are landslides on these slopes but they are not very thick and not so clearly visible in the relief. But to the north and northwest, on the contrary, there are steeper slopes of 35-45 deg. (even 90deg), often with the name 'mal/maluri' (a very old word in the Romanian language, abbreviated Ma: see the appendix) with young soil or without any soil or vegetation at all. Slopes extend uninterrupted from the hill summits to the watercourses as in the case of Dl.Pânățaului on the left side of the Pânățau stream and the northwest part of Dl.Plăișorului on the left side of the Plăișor brook; with landslides on the lower southeastern part of Dl.Plăișorului. Only to the west of Slabi, on the left side of the Sila, is there a great landslide tongue fed by material from the north at Pn.Silei with Podișor higher up. Another interesting case is Dl.Plăișorului with an old landslide tongue – destroyed by erosion in its frontal part –between I.Plăișorului and I.Croitorului and reminiscent of the old torrential gravel fan of Mărunțișu already referred to. Moving on towards the Sibiciu stream, landslide fans and tongues occur frequently on the lower hillslopes e.g. V.Fântâni with landslides on the strata inclined as much as 35deg. with steps (reflecting resistant strata) that provide sites for the settlements of Begu, Corcoianu and Ghilești. Even the landslide surfaces are more inclined because of the high content of sand or even sandstone blocks.



Westwards, above the 6-8m terrace of the Buzău between Sibiciu de Jos and Sibiciu de Sus, there are many landslide fans: all clearly recognisable with some united in the lower part while others are suspended. Heading towards the Sibiciu stream there are three basins. The first is Gornet, with a remarkable 2.5km landslide tongue and a great fan/delta in the lower, frontal part on the right side of the Sibiciu stream causing hydrographic modification (N.Muică 1977, p.109). It supports the settlements of Sila and Gornet above - and formerly Burduşoaia lying just below (equivalent to Valea Cârului in the south of the area) - since the land is good for agriculture despite the instability. The second is Fulgoaia, also with a 2.5km landslide tongue (but including many branches) flowing very slowly to the Sărăţel valley and its confluence with the Sibiciu brook. This landslide originates at a col southwest of Blidişel on the other side of the summit from Ghileşti with much source material supplied especially from the four 'groape' (little valleys). Lower down, the landslide tongue is almost a kilometer wide and is difficult to delimit given the many recent 'rupturi' but it then narrows to accommodate a gorge southwest of Fulgoiu (only 200m wide but more than 500m long) while the valley widens below the gorge and the landslide fan develops with the hamlet of Păcura on the right side and Măţara on the left: only this lower part is good for hay and pasture with fruit trees around the hamlets. The third is Sărăţel (or Goşa): very extensive with origins near the Predeal col (north of the V.Fântâni source) and near a confluence of the two tongues at B.Sărată is the salt spring sourcing the Sărăţel (or salt brook). Just below this, another landslide tongue arrives from the I.Dulce valley – the sweet little brook (i.e. without salt) – on the right side. With many landslide branches and recent 'rupturi' the landslide area is again difficult to delimit exactly. Below the confluence area the Sărăţel narrows considerably and the landslide material is transported by water. Indeed both the Fulgoaia and Sărăţel basins are quite similar to the upper part of the V.Viei basin with mobile landslides and salty land suitable only for pasture and hay. The basins are separated by hills: Mu.Borduşoaie left of the Gornet basin, Mu.Roşilor between the Gornet and Fulgoaia basins, Fulgoiu between the Fulgoaia and Sărăţel/Goşa basins and finally Goşa hill to the right of the Sărăţel basin. Immediately above the landslide zone is steeply sloping terrain known by the natives as 'chichilaie' (abbreviated Ch) with 30-40deg. slopes (or steeper) where thin soil carries woodland or a pioneer vegetation.

### **3.3. Hilltop Remnants of Old Relief**

On both sides of the Buzău the highest ground comprises fragments of an old mature relief linked with the high terraces of the Buzău and other rivers cutting across geological layers of varied resistance and inclination. On the right side of the Buzău, on the hill Mş.Pătârlagelor, above C.Crivinenilor, with terrace fragments at 180-200m., we have a very clear legacy on the eastern slope of an old developed landscape with a gently-inclined (3-5deg) surface facing the Buzău valley and carved in vertical geological layers. Again, the fragments (limited by steep slopes) on the southeastern part of the Dl.Viei summit are linked with old terraces although here there is no surface of uniform inclination but rather some near-horizontal area of agricultural value separated by low summits reflecting the vertical geological layers. Another example concerns the eastern part of Dl.Mânăstirii (south of V.Viei) where the remnant of an old surface appears as a slope between two old terraces: although very limited in extent there is some clarity through the old soil visible in some 'precipices' on this slope: on the western part of Dl.Mânăstirii there are remnants of Villafranchian gravel; some of them in a

highly modified form with a reddish or reddish-brown colour. Other evidence of old relief comes from Dl.Colon and Pl.Muşcelului, on the right side of V.Muşcelului, while on the other side of the Buzău the best site is Presvale with steps occurring consistently in the 500-650m. band. The economic significance of this old relief is demonstrated by names indicating agricultural use: Poduri (at Corcoianu) and Luncă (at Begu) as well as 'La Inuri' (plural) that refers to flax-growing, combined with evidence on the ground through agro-terraces especially above Corcoianu (where maize is still grown in the vicinity). At the very highest level on Bliðişel there is a little horizontal surface cut into geological strata inclined to the south (with a 25-30deg. slope) whereas on Dl.Seciu above Râpile the surface coincides with the disposition of the geological strata inclining gently to the west.

### 3.4. Soil Vegetation and Land Use

Many of the soils are of indifferent quality (like the brown soils found on sands and sandstone and young rendzinas), while salt marls, from which the thin soil layer has largely disappeared, are largely abandoned from the agricultural point of view. However there is a mosaic-like structure reflecting the complex geology with varied structural characteristics and lithological sequences. Five levels of natural potential have been recognised: very good (7.3 per cent); good (20.4 per cent); average (50.3 per cent); poor (7.8 per cent); and very poor (14.2 per cent). It is important that farmers operate with these potentials in mind although at times of heavy population pressure in the past even the poorer soils have been pressed into service. The natural vegetation is beech ('fag') woodland on north-facing slopes and 'gorun' (*Quercus petraea*) on south-facing slopes: these trees are close to their respective limits at Pâtârlagele and hence the contrast is accentuated. But well drained land attracting strong sunlight is likely to support a local silvosteppe vegetation. The area used to be covered largely with a multi-layered deciduous mesophile forest: an ecosystem of great stability and productivity, capable of efficiently protecting the soil against sheet wash. 'On lower altitude sunny slopes it was the durmast that prevailed while at heights of over 700m and on shaded slopes there lay the beech forest and occasionally mixed forests of durmast and beech' (C.Muică et al. 1993, p.136). Some xerophitic elements were also present on sunny slopes. But with human settlement 'the mosaic-like Subcarpathian landscape facilitated a multitude of soil uses' as forest largely disappeared (Ibid, p.137). The new mosaic pattern reflected the main scarp and dip slope features linked with a succession of *cuestas* - with woodland and agriculture - further differentiated by scarps and terraces on the dip slope giving rise to small areas of woodland, with former orchards (now poor grazings) and hayfields. There may be an alternation of sandstone and marl outcrops across a sloping surface: introducing a corrugated pattern - with minor *cuestas* - and contrasting landuses of woodland/scrub and pasture. An exception to the mosaic landscape can be seen on Dl.Viei and the ridge to Orjani. This is an anticlinal structure occurring between the sandstone of Bliðişel and the area south of V.Viei. The area is affected by salt and gypsum/sulphate and is not good for crops or trees. Some oak has been found on salty ground (rare enough to warrant consideration for a nature reserve). Some fruit trees survive where is only a little salt but growth is retarded.

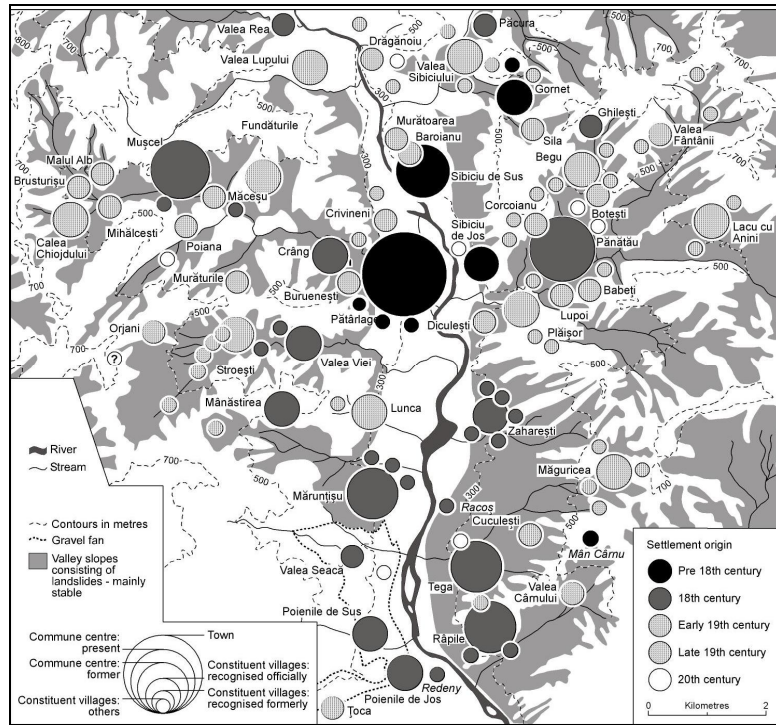
The prime agricultural land ('*îarină*') comprises the river terraces, especially those along the Buzău. While sands yield only a thin soil, there be some amelioration through material in suspension: note the alluvial deposits on top of vertical sandstone/sand deposits on

the riverbanks in Pănătău and Pătârlagele. The result is acceptable cereal land, especially in the case of the two extensive terraces at Pătârlagele. Since the valley land must be used as intensively as possible for crops, haymaking is restricted and 'fin de lunca' has to be supplemented by 'fin de deal' although the latter is tougher and of generally poorer quality. Agriculture used structural surfaces in the past and while the dry thin soils are generally marginalised today, evidence of their former use is well-preserved through agro-terraces. Some maize is still grown on the high ground at Orjani and Valea Fântâniî with stable land and mature soil. Although the varieties used today do not ripen so readily on the higher ground, sandstone areas that are typically forested can be cultivated given a good aspect. And where the sandstone structure is conducive to a series of terraces, north of Plăișor for example, there would certainly have been utilisation for fruit trees and pasture in the past. But there is a legacy of soil degradation arising from intensive use under heavy population pressure. Through erosion the soil becomes more compact and clayey; also drier (with less moisture retained) and poorer in nutrients (C.Muică et al. 1993, p.140). Even meadows carved from forest are vulnerable to soil erosion caused by torrents that displace nutrients down the slope. 'Cătină' (buckthorn) is very evident in areas of former cultivation where land is eroded (with calcium on the surface and degradation revealing the lower soil horizon). It marks the start of a return to woodland and offers some protection against erosion; also a decline in agriculture with resurgence now virtually impossible since the labour force is much reduced.

Intensive use of landslide surfaces has been a feature of the last few centuries. Many landslides have stabilised with their active phase as far back in time as the prehistoric period (indicated by the level of soil development). After major landslide activity, the soil develops relatively quickly (faster on sands and sandstones than on marls) because the water washes out the salt and creates a good agricultural soil. So the moist, young soils of stabilised landslides may be good for agriculture, although the risk of renewed instability can never be overlooked. The peasant's eye will select the most suitable of the gentler slopes that may be cleared for grazings and orchards – perhaps even for settlement, for although houses on relatively stable landslides may eventually be undermined (say once each century) they have advantage of access to forests and grazings. Sliding interrupts soil formation, but there is the value of soil mixing through landslides: note orchards typically situated at the lower end of landslides (while other trees easily take root in view of humidity e.g. *Salix* and *Alnus*). In V.Viei: progressive deepening of the valley has worked landslide material into terraces that are good for agriculture including fruit trees; though the land is not stable, given further excavation. There may also be fans of alluvial material where minor tributaries change course through landsliding and the old course can be used for fruit trees. Looking from Sibiciu de Sus across the Buzău three landslide fans can be seen in different stages of soil and land use evolution: the first with buildings, trees and cultivation; a second (still moving and threatening the road) with pasture as well as some fruit trees and a small enclosure for maize; and a third supporting only poor pasture.

#### **4. THE PRIMARY SETTLEMENT SYSTEM : PREHISTORY TO 1800**

Reconstruction is a difficult task given the sparsity of documentary evidence which allows us to pick up the threads only from the sixteenth century (Figure 2).



**Figure 2:** *The settlement system of the Pătârlagele Depression (numbers relate the codes used in Table 2)*

There are certainly vestiges of Prehistoric settlement to be placed alongside general assumptions of early settlement in the Subcarpathian region in general. There is archaeological evidence from the Cucuteni and Dacian periods e.g. Geto-Dacian evidence is claimed for the Gornet and Muşcel areas by Petrescu-Burloiu (1977, p.141) who also shows a cluster sites in the Buzău valley including Mărunţişu/Poienile de Sus, Mlăjeţ, Pănătău, Pătârlagele and Valea Lupului; while Gâlmeanu & Ionescu (2002) refer to Muşcel and Valea Viei. But this evidence does not provide clear indications of settlement, while the theory of a stronghold ('cetate') at Crâng - where one of the village neighbourhoods is so named - is undermined by the lack of any structural evidence at the top of a hill that has only the appearance of a Dacian stronghold. Yet since do have evidence for Pătârlagele from the sixteenth century (discussed below) it might well be expected that a Medieval feudal centre at this point would be complemented by a scatter of early 'segmented' communities in the Buzău valley and also – perhaps – in more sheltered locations like Begu, Gornet and Muşcel (with their respective zones of pastoral activity on the 'conac' or 'odaia' model) that might have been especially attractive during the Cuman/Petcheneg invasion period; yet the evidence points to relatively recent origins. Particularly anomalous is the case of Răpile whose impressive commanding site – with steep slopes leading down

to the Buzău river – have prevented any shift to the lower ground of the kind experienced at Mărunțișu, Valea Lupului and Valea Viei in modern times. Although Petrescu-Burloiu (1977) claims a fifteenth century origin there is no evidence for this. However we propose a fundamental distinction between the ‘exposed’ sites in the Buzău valley – good for accessibility yet vulnerable to attack by invaders – and those on the higher ground where the poorer though not insignificant economic potentials combine with the advantage of security that the Subcarpathians have always been renowned for. Hence the layout in Table 1 where Pătârlagele is complemented by an inner ring or cluster of low-lying villages and an outer ring that has developed on the higher ground. Contrasting settlement sites are highlighted by Petrescu-Burloiu (1977, pp.158–9) who sees river terraces providing a congenial environment with the largest villages as ‘satele de vale’ as opposed to hill settlements (‘satele de versant’) and others close to river sources (‘satele de obârșii’) or placed in the interfluvies (‘satele de interfluvii’), while distinguishing between those in small hollows (‘satele de gavane’) and others on surfaces (‘satele de plaiuri’). For each section there are population based largely on the settlements with official recognition (while the full list is quoted later in Table 2).

**Table 1. Pătârlagele Area: Households and Population 1830s-2002**

VILLAGE/ GROUP	1830s	1830s	1912	1912	1941	1966	1966	1966	1966	1992	2002
	Aa	Ab	A	Popn.	Popn.	Popn.	B	C	D	Popn.	Popn.
<b>PĂTÂRLA- GELE</b>	92	107	189	798	917	1453	11.6	14.9	73.5	2667	2544
Pănătău	54	56	194	794	858	862	71.7	17.9	10.3	772	736
Plăișor	16	16	92	425	472	419	73.7	13.4	12.9	253	214
Sibiciu/Jos	45	47	111	493	443	528	48.7	13.8	37.5	660	648
Sibiciu/Sus	72	73	134	586	614	770	50.7	25.1	18.3	984	915
V. Sibiciului	81	85	137	655	635	511	76.9	15.2	7.9	312	286
Zaharești	54	68	80	387	362	308	65.4	13.5	17.0	206	212
<b>IR(E)</b>	322	345	748	3340	4301	3398	64.3	17.6	18.2	3187	3011
Crâng	42	42	108	429	479	567	42.8	31.2	26.0	613	589
Lunca	.	.	65	295	385	430	52.8	17.6	29.6	451	427
Mărunțișu	53	73	190	778	944	1148	64.4	19.4	16.2	1156	1144
Poienile	67	73	77	332	369	347	62.1	19.2	18.7	377	355
V. Lupului	48	63	90	415	458	446	73.4	15.2	11.4	543	520
Valea Viei	57	57	102	421	521	616	49.8	15.8	34.4	514	506
<b>IR(W)</b>	267	308	632	2670	3156	3354	58.5	19.6	21.7	3654	3541
<b>IR TOTAL</b>	589	653	1380	6010	7457	6952	61.4	18.6	20.0	6841	6552
Begu	67	84	85	406	408	602	91.7	3.5	4.8	323	272
Gornet	36	49	92	404	442	305	69.4	24.7	5.9	40	24
Lacul cu Anini	.	.	66	294	352	401	90.3	3.6	6.0	186	167
Măguricea	.	.	48	245	316	335	93.1	1.6	5.3	177	167

Râpile	78	105	81	347	348	343	90.9	5.0	4.1	175	157
Tega	24	24	141	629	732	693	84.6	9.2	5.5	348	316
Valea Fântâni+ Fântâni+ Fântâni+	30	30	47	220	290	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>OR(E)</b>	235	292	560	2545	2888	2679	87.1	7.3	5.4	1249	1103
Calea Chiojdului	.	.	89	351	333	245	91.8	4.9	3.3	103	98
Fundăturile	37	43	55	223	280	245	86.0	3.5	10.5	203	216
Mănăstirea	.	.	74	298	327	300	73.5	9.5	17.0	108	97
Muşcel	66	69	107	434	486	691	80.3	9.4	10.2	566	536
Stroeşti	27	27	37	154	206	346	78.6	8.1	11.6	41	33
Orjani/ Murăturile+	49	49	45	181	265	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>OR(W)</b>	179	188	407	1641	1900	1827	81.2	7.7	10.9	1021	980
<b>OR TOTAL</b>	414	480	967	4186	4788	4506	84.9	7.5	7.5	2270	2083
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	1095	1240	2536	10994	13162	12911	65.4	13.4	20.2	11778	11179

A Households/Families; Aa Ditto – average of two figures; Ab ditto – higher of two figures; B Percentage of the active population working in agriculture; C Ditto industry; D Ditto services.

\*no figures available – Orjani included with Crâng; Valea Fântâni included with Pănătău.

+ settlements which are no longer recognised officially

Gura Bâscii is excluded except for the 1830s when it cannot be separated from Poienile de Sus.

Sources: Anon 1892; Colescu 1905; Census Data

#### 4.1. Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

Evidence for Pătârlagele comes through the 1637 date for the ‘boiar’ church of Sf.Trei Ierarhi which raises the possibility of a separate parish church before we hear of church rebuilding in 1780 when the two could have been combined. But there is also a reference to the Căndescu-Pătârlăgeanu family by the local leader (‘vornic’) Mihalcea (1600-1632) mentioning their home in the Căndeşti area (specifically Brad in the forested Nişcov valley) and their transfer to Pătârlagele where they assumed the name Pătârlăgeanu (Gâlmeanu & Ionescu 2002, p.70), while the family is also referred to by Stoicescu (1970, p.474). But Pătârlagele also attracts a reference in 1584 to the estate of Mihnea Postelnicu: ‘să le fie Pătârlage partea lui Mihnea Postelnicu’ (Roller et al. 1951, Vol.1 p.169) while earlier documents for 1554 and 1557 mention the village of Pătârlaci (Ibid, Vol.3 p.18) and ‘vâful Pătârlăgelului’ in 1584 as the hilltop i.e today’s Vf.Pătârlăgelor (Ibid, Vol.5 p.169). We also have the impression of a wider settlement core in the heart of the Pătârlagele Depression through references to Sibiciu de Jos and Sibiciu de Sus. In the latter case, Gâlmeanu & Ionescu (2002, p.71) claim a parchment (‘pergament’) for 1666, although we have not been able to assess its significance. But there are documents for 1669, 1679 and 1684, discussed by Cocora (1979, pp.68/84), referring to land transactions by local people in respect of their estate at Gura Teghii (already noted). For Sibiciu de Jos there is a 1669 document alluding to the old name of ‘Făşăiţi’ but, much earlier in 1583, another document mentions ‘Sibiceu’ for Sibiciu de Jos (Constantinescu 1941, pp.iii-iv). More specifically we

have a reference in 1515 for Sibiciu de Sus including the words: ‘până la hotarul Sibiceului’ (Roller et al. 1951, Vol 1 p.108); while a 1534 document sees the ‘voevod’ declaring Sibiciu as part of an estate: ‘dat-am această poruncă ... ca să fie lor Sibiciu părțile lor de moșie’ (Ibid, Vol.2 p.165). For 1568 there is a reference to the Fugești family denouncing two nephews with the names of Sibiu and Lera: ‘și așa au pârît Fugești pe nepoții lui Sibiu și ai lui Lera’ and again ‘poruncă domniei mele lui Sibiu cu frații lui’ (Ibid, Vol.3 p.267). And in 1584 Voevod Pătru’s declaration involves Ivan and Sibiu with their respective brothers: ‘dat-am domnia mea această poruncă pentru a domniei mele lui Ivan cu frații să și Sibiu cu frații să și’ (Ibid, Vol.5 pp.169-70). In all these cases the Sibiu name is being used in the sense of family groups or clans (‘cete de moșneni’) owning lands collectively i.e. ‘în devălmașie’ and so a settlement is clearly implied. The early use of the name ‘Sibiu’ has rather discredited the theory of a link with the Transylvanian town of Sibiu. Indeed Drăganu (1933, p.553) disputed this claim by saying that both Sibiciu and Sibiu are derived from the Slav name for the cornel tree (‘sibinieja’ in Bulgarian).

Complementing these low ground settlements we have Constantinescu (1967, p.90) on the Cârnu saga through the foundation of the monastery in 1536 by ‘hospodar’ Mircea Ciobanu and his wife Chiajna; although their marriage did not take place until 1546 and therefore the alternative scenario of construction during c.1559-68 by Doamna Chiajna and her son Petru (or relatives) seems more plausible. Given the comparison made between the Buzău mountains and the Greek monastic complex of Mount Athos concerning the proliferation of hermitages, it is quite possible that there was a basic cell at Cârnu – a ‘sihăstrie’ with a wooden church – existing from the fifteenth century or earlier, though this can only be a speculation. Meanwhile for Gornet we have a date of 1645-6 for a hermitage church (Stoicescu 1970, p.578) and we think that the document also refers to people owning land near the hermitage. This record has some incidental support from a legend relating to a former resident who claimed to have seen a manuscript on the history of Gornet describing activities by a monk who enjoyed local support for a cell established in c.1640 and subsequently replaced by a ‘schit’ in 1707 using local oak timbers. But Gâlmeanu & Ionescu’s (2002, p.70) claim of documentary evidence for 1515 is not substantiated. However we have now established evidence for Pătârlagele (also for the quarters of Pătârlagele to Jos, Pătârlagele de Sus and Prundeni for which we have no specific information), along with two inner villages and another two in the outer ring that have a primarily monastic function.

#### **4.2. Eighteenth Century**

This century is supported by relatively accurate map evidence from Specht (1790-1) and von Bauer (1778); also a remarkable phase of church building during what was evidently a period of relative affluence with population growth combined with a national and religious revival. For the Begu area in the outer ring we have the date of ‘before 1714’ for the Sf.Nicolae ‘schit’ at Ghilești (Stoicescu 1970, p.62) with relocation at Begu in the nineteenth century; which therefore makes Begu itself (and the oldest quarter of Băicuș) invisible until after 1800. All other references concern the central group. Valea Viei (‘Wii’ on the Specht map) built its first church in c.1760 when the adjacent quarters of Bărbulești (on the right side of V.Viei beside the Iz.Vladii landslides) and also Lemnărești were established. At Zaharești the church

of 1760 also provides an eighteenth century date for the constituent quarters: Bogdănești and Linie in the centre near the church, Bejani and Peste Izvor in the north and Pe Muchie to the south. We also have Specht's reference to 'Tega', as Zaharești was known at the time. At Poienile (de Sus) the 'pisania' provides evidence of a church finished in 1770, while Specht refers to 'Pojen' and other maps (1781 and 1790) use 'Poieni' and 'Kornet' respectively. Crâng church is dated 1790 while Mușcel's first church followed in 1799 (albeit with a cemetery before that) and this also secures an eighteenth century date for the constituent hamlets of Cătunul Bisericii and Gârla.

Mușcel church is remarkable since the relevant wooden beams were twice relocated within Saac county: first from Lapoș village in Buda commune (now in Prahova county) to Sibiciu de Sus in 1775 and again to Mușcel after a new church was opened at Sibiciu. We might add the case of Plăișor because although the church was built only in 1838 there is a cross dated 1793; but there is no other evidence to suggest the settlement existed at the time. By contrast, while Pânățau's church comes later still (1851) and the village does not appear on eighteenth century maps (or on Von Bauer's list) – while we discount vague claims of documents for 1700 and 1759, the cross dated 1790 could be linked with an old church (probably a cemetery as well) and oral evidence, retained by the present priest (Alexe Luchian), certainly insists on an earlier church – albeit unrecorded – similar to the first church in Valea Viei in general appearance and mode of construction (i.e. wattle and daub). Finally, the case of Mânăstirea also arises at this time although expansion falls essentially to the nineteenth century, probably through the movement of Roma slaves from Benga. For there is clear evidence of a 'schit' (sometimes referred to misleadingly as 'Schitul Mărunțișu') belonging to Vărbila monastery and lost by fire in the mid-nineteenth century. It is not known when the chapel was built but Stoicescu (1970, p.421) as an authority on ecclesiastical matters claims an eighteenth origin by virtue of a 'catagrafia' or inventory relating to the 'schit'. This document is undated but it is written in Cyrillic and Gavrilă Ștrempele, an expert at the State Archives where the document is held, considers that it is definitely older than 1800. Therefore we credit Mânăstirea with an eighteenth century origin and given the sheltered site of the village it is quite understandable that our principal documentary sources for the late eighteenth century should be silent in this case.

Turning to the map evidence we find that although Valea Lupului's first church was not built until 1817, we do have von Bauer's 'Walere' which relates to a small village community (otherwise known as Valea Rea or Hărhădău) hidden in a narrow well-wooded valley that gradually migrated towards to the confluence with the Buzău and became the new Valea Rea (on the northern side of this stream and now part of the town of Nehoiu) with Valea Lupului to the south. Meanwhile at Râpile (including Luntrari and Pe Față quarters at the southern end), where the first church is dated 1839, there a location on the Specht map of 1790-1 (but no name) and although there is no explicit mention of the village before Fotino in 1818-9 (Sion 1859), we are impressed by the large population present at Râpile in 1831-2: 105 families, comparable with 106 for Pătârlagele de Jos/Sus and 115 for Sibiciu de Jos/Sus. Tega's church was built in 1839 but this evidence is pre-dated by Specht's reference to 'Prowiczesti' while the virtually similar 'Provoizestie' appears in 1790. Mărunțișu is another interesting case. There was no church until 1853, but there are references on the Specht map not only to 'Mourunczisa' but also to 'Kornet' (for Valea Gornetului) in a forested area on the left side of the Gorneasca stream (which became Valea Tornetului on the Russian map of



1835/1853) and ‘Sekui’ (for Valea Seacă) to the south. So while Iorgulescu (1892, p.317) thought that the village did not originate until 1830-60, we believe that the map references are crucial; pointing to a core represented by ‘Mourunczisa’ and ‘Kornet’, eventually with a church on the edge of the forest (with some local opinion suggesting that it was actually in the forest); followed by expansion downhill to eventually incorporate Valea Seacă by the end of the nineteenth century. We also include the ‘clăcași’ quarters of Jitianu and Sibiesc.

Poienile de Jos church is dated 1859, but the alternative name ‘Gura Bâscii’ appears, crucially, on the Specht map of 1790-1 although Iorgulescu (1892, p.317) preferred a later time (1830-60). Finally, Valea Sibiciului is a very complex case. The church is dated 1892 and although there was definitely an earlier wooden church its date of construction is unknown. The village name was first recorded in 1818, yet Specht shows a settlement called ‘Treseny’: a name derived from ‘trestie’ meaning a common reed of the type commonly found on landslides that would be appropriate for the right side of the Sărățel brook (close to the confluence with the Sibiciu) opposite the village of Păcura (named after a local oil spring) that is documented from the 1870s but now deserted. Evidently Treseny is the primary settlement in this locality and a natural disaster such as a flood may have provoked a shift to the present Valea Sibiciului site (though we cannot be sure that this was not also occupied for a time in parallel to Treseny) with an adjustment at Treseny in favour of the young landslides on the opposite side of the Sărățel brook stream generating the reference to Păcura in the 1870s. Alternatively, a period of total desertion could have been followed by a reoccupation in the 1870s (with a significant population) when the oil spring was appreciated, along with the moist landslide material that is still used for hay and fruit.

In conclusion, we have a ‘primary’ network that includes all the present and previous commune centres (Mărunțișu, Mușcel, Pânăta, Pătârlagele, Sibiciu de Sus and Tega). There are also 10 villages recognised officially as statistical entities in administrative handbooks today: Crâng, Gornet, Mânăstirea, Poienile (double counted as Poienile de Sus) along with Gura Bâscii (Poienile de Jos), Râpile, Sibiciu de Jos, Valea Viei and Zaharești; also four others that formerly had this status: Ghilești (for the Begu area), Treseny with the later adjustment to Păcura (for the Valea Sibiciului area), Valea Rea or Walere (for the Valea Lupului area) and Valea Seacă close to Mărunțișu. Finally there are 21 other settlements that involve Mânăstirea Cârnu, various dependent hamlets – one for Gornet, two each for Mușcel, Râpile and Valea Viei; three each for Mărunțișu and Pătârlagele; and five for Zaharești – as well as two ‘lost villages’ that require comment. The first is Racoș shown between Tega and Zaharești on the maps of two foreign cartographers: Dirvaldt (1810) and Ruhedorf (1788); while the second is Redeny, close to Gura Bâscii, which comes up seven times between 1774 and 1797 (though not on Specht’s map) with four further references during 1809-28 using a range of other names: Redeni, Radenesti, Redenesi, Redenesti and Rednești that are all located close to the Buzău-Bâsca Chiojdului confluence. There is no trace of either village today and we believe that Racoș never existed since it appears only briefly through two foreign maps, one of which could have copied a mistake made by the other. But Redeny must be taken seriously and could have been abandoned in a flood (given its vulnerability at a major confluence) and rebuilt higher up as Gura Bâscii/Poienile de Jos. For we certainly know that adjustments occurred elsewhere through environmental change and other factors in the areas of Begu, Mărunțișu, Valea Lupului and Valea Sibiciului.

### 4.3. Inappropriate Claims

It is interesting to summarise the many other assertions made on the subject of settlement history because although it is highly probable that many villages are older than we have suggested speculation should be recognised as such. Some dates appear to be picked at random: thus Petrescu-Burloiu (1977, Fig 45) is evidently impressed by Râpile's site but claims a fifteenth century origin; while the seventeenth century tag for Gornet and Valea Sibiciului is equally mysterious. Angelescu (1999) thinks that Valea Lupului originated during 1200-1400 (and also argues for a dramatic 'descent' from an elevated pastoral location to the southwest of the present village) while Burlacu (1979) sees 'schituri rupestre' emerging at Begu and Valea Sibiciului during 1100-1500 and Iorgulescu (1892, p.334) supplies a speculative date of 1640 for the latter. More reasonably for Begu, Gâlmeanu & Ionescu (2002 p.283) claim an origin before 1700 and while 1714 is quoted for the first Sf.Nicolae church, an earlier date is by no means improbable given the name of the village as a sheltered refuge and the quality of the land in the vicinity. Nevertheless the claim is unsupported. Meanwhile the same authors (2002, pp.68-70) speculatively link Pătârlagele with 'Peterlager' and the presence of Teutonic Knights ('Cavaleri Teutoni') from Țara Bârsei during 1221-1241 after the Hungarian King Albert gave them part of 'Cumania' (land on the eastern side of the Carpathians). The 'Peter' element certainly appears in eighteenth century sources: Peterlacz is recorded by Specht and eight other cartographers from 1771 to 1790 use variations including Peterlasty, Peterlas (twice), Potirlas, Piterlas, Prteslas, Peterlacz and Peterlatz. But again there is no firm evidence. The 'Ungureni' saga prompted Iorgulescu (1892, pp.378-9) to credit such settlers with the founding of Pănătău in the seventeenth century after they had previously arrived at both Begu and Sibiciu. Indeed the arrival of 'Ungureni' has given rise to the assumption that Sibiciu de Jos/Sus were settled by people from Sibiu. This idea is now superseded by the idea of Sibiu as a personal name for two old Wallachian settlements with traces of old cemeteries but in this case the sixteenth century documents (already noted) discredit the whole idea of an Ungureni origin. There are some local legends to fuel speculation e.g. at Crâng (where the mythical Cetate has already been referred to) the village is linked with the tradition of a 'repaus' by Mihai Viteazul in 1599 and also the 'tabara' by one Petru cel Tânăr on a journey to Transylvania in the late Medieval period (Gâlmeanu & Ionescu 2002, pp.68-70).

Some documents are correctly quoted but without having clear relevance to a settlement e.g. 1584 for Valea Seaca and 1515 for Pănătău (Stoicescu 1970, p.472); the latter anomalously recycled as a 1415 source by Gâlmeanu & Ionescu (2002, p.282). But the source relates to a territory or estate ('moșie') with the judgement: 'și iară și să fie Pănătăul până unde se împreună cu hotarul Târcovului' which translates as a declaration of Pănătău's territory extending to the boundary with Târcov. And there is a further reference of the same kind in 1583 about the extent of the estate 'din apa Malu Dârstei până în Vf.Pănătăul' i.e. from the Malu Dârstei stream to Pănătău peak (Constantinescu 1941, pp.iii-iv). Gâlmeanu & Ionescu (2002, p.70) claim documentary evidence for Poienile in 1523 and indeed Roller et al. (1951, Vol. 1 p.179) mention Poiana Aldei and Poiana lui Gâltea, although without making it clear if these names relate to a village. Finally, for Zaharești there is a documentary reference to the locality through the old name in 1534: 'muntele și cheamă Tega' i.e. the name of the mountain

is Tega (Roller et al. 1951 pp.165-6); also in 1584: 'pentru Pătârlage și pentru Tega' (Ibid, 160-70) but the first clearly does not relate to a village, but rather an estate, while the second is unclear. A further category involves literal interpretation of the toponymy e.g. recalling the meaning of the name 'Mărunțișu' as a sum of money, the village has been linked with the Ottoman administration in the context of a Turkish fiscal 'office'; yet any notion of periodic visits by Ottoman officials to collect tribute relates to 'tents' which seem to have been pitched – logically – in the Gura Bâscii area at the confluence of the Buzău and Bâsca Chiojdului. Also in the Mușcel area 'La Mânăstire' is a location northeast of the hamlet of Brusturișu where a small depression with a southeasterly aspect certainly raises a possibility of an early monastic establishment (likewise the name 'Calugărite La' – at the nuns – known at Fundăturile in the same area; where there is also legend concerning the closure of a hermitage through malevolent local action which precipitated a curse on the village to which any local problem is now attributed). However this there is no firm evidence available and claims of a seventeenth century 'schitul Mușcel' now seem to have arisen from a confusion between the Mușcel near Pătârlagele and Muscelu Cărmănești in today's Colți commune (Constantinescu 1987, p.81). A similar confusion arises at Benga/Lunca with respect to a document of 1550 (Manolescu 1965, p.291) referring to commercial links with Brașov traders. But this probably concerns another village with the same name in the Cislău area.

## 5. SECONDARY SETTLEMENT: 1800-1945

Study of this period reveals an explosion in settlement which can be demonstrated by the map evidence when the 1916 'Nachdruck von der Kartographische Abteilung' (based on data for the 1890s) is compared with the von Bauer and Specht sources already mentioned. In addition the remarkably detailed Russian Map ('Harta Rusă/Ruseacă' (Anon 1853) allows us to discriminate between the earlier and later parts of the century. Whereas only 43 settlements were visible before 1800 (out of a total of 119), another 32 date to the first half of the century and 37 to the second, with just seven new settlements following in the whole of the twentieth century. There was clearly a rapid growth of population taking place involving both 'clăcași' and 'moșneni' communities (Table 1). First we have statistics relating to the number of families in 1831-2 (Anon 1892) while Baranovsky & Ștefănescu (1965) refer to Colescu's (1905) data collected in 1899 and published in 1905. These figures indicate that families increased from 1,614 (the average for 1831 and 1832) to 3,503 in 1899: an increase of 112 per cent which applied in both the inner circle of settlements close to Pătârlagele (growing from 1,167 families to 2,536 including Pătârlagele) and an outer ring that increased from 447 to 967 families. The latter's share of the total remained virtually unchanged (38.3 per cent in 1831-2 and 38.1 per cent in 1899) despite the high level of dependence on agriculture in contrast to the commercial growth in the main valley. Total population is known from 1912: 3,186 for the outer ring (38.1 per cent of a total for the district of 10,994), with further growth to 4,788 in 1941 (a slightly lower percentage – 36.4 – of the much larger district total of 13,162) before slipping back to 4,506 in 1966 (34.9 per cent of a total of 12,911). Only after this was there a significant change through cooperative farm resettlement policies which reduced the outer zone total to 2,270 in 1992 (19.3 per cent of a total of 11,778) and 2,083 in 2002 (18.6 per cent of a total of 11,179).

Predictably the 'outer ring' settlements seem to have been less nucleated than those of the inner circle since the priority was not the growth of central places but the needs of subsistence farmers seeking a niche in the age of capitalism – typically in relatively remote areas on landslides as well as fragments of 'mature landscape' on the higher ground (sometimes with suites of agro-terraces like those above Corcoianu). Indeed we would underline the quite remarkable situation in which the hillslopes – extensively covered with relatively fertile landslide material – offered much support to scattered subsistence communities comprising the core of an alternative socio-economic system to the emerging capitalism of the central zone supported by the rich agriculture of the Buzău terraces as well as a modern infrastructure based on road and rail communications along the main valley contrasting with the crude 'drumurile accidentate' (Petrescu-Burloiu 1977, p.146) on the higher ground, with erosion increased by deforestation that restricted woodland to the steepest slopes, as noted by N.A.Constantinescu (1938). This centre-periphery dualism would have been accentuated following the abolition of feudalism, leaving estate owners free to concentrate on commercial farming on the river terraces while much of the subsistence farming was transferred to the landslides. Although relatively remote and inherently unstable, intensive use of the hills was certainly maintained until alternative cereal lands were allocated in the Bărăgân as part of the 1923 land reform; continuing on a considerable scale until the collectivisation in the 1960s brought a measure of resettlement with expansion at Pătârlagele (as well as Mărunțișu, Pănătău and Sibiciu de Jos/Sus) balanced by decline in the hill villages: especially Gornet, Lacu cu Anin and Valea Fântâniî on the eastern side of the Buzău valley and Stroești and parts of Mușcel on the western side. Unfortunately, very little documentation is available to expand and illustrate this scenario of settlement advance and retreat over a relatively short period of time. Statistics relating to the former communes (Mărunțișu, Mlăjeț, Mușcel, Rușavăț and Sibiciu – also Tega for a short period – in addition to Pănătău and Pătârlagele) give only an overall picture while Iorgulescu's epic study of 1892 says little about local conditions, although it is a useful source for toponomy.

Of course we are not suggesting a clear watershed in 1800 between the primary and secondary phases of settlement. Petrescu-Burloiu (1977, p.145) refers to a seventeenth-nineteenth century expansion of agricultural land at the expense of woodland; guided by the potentials for settlement in an age of population growth boosted by Habsburg mercantilism in the imperial borderlands as Ungureni immigrants were able to negotiate a stake in 'moșneni' landholding and either join existing communities or establish new settlements in the hills as part of the ongoing process of 'roirile pastorale' or more appropriately 'roirile agricole' given the strong subsistence element. The nineteenth century trend is therefore an acceleration of what has been noted for the eighteenth century but with permanent settlement in landslide areas much more accentuated through fragmented settlement outside the main villages. All over the hills it seems that new land was being broken up as 'mosaics' of mixed agricultural activity extended across the landslide tongues which had previously seen only grazing and haymaking on the 'conac' model (without subsistence crops, plum trees and permanent settlements) as subsistence farmers sought a niche in the age of capitalism. The process was particularly evident on the eastern side of the Buzău where the landslides are most extensive e.g. the cluster of secondary settlements including Burdușoaia, Mățara and Peste Gârlă in the Sibiciu valley. There were also secondary settlements in the main valley including several close to Pătârlagele which could have been part of the commercial development of the core settlements that now witnessed a growth in

the number of tradesmen requiring smallholdings. But what does not quite fit into this picture is the additional settlement at Satu Nou (near the old Benga and named Lunca from 1968) where it is believed there was initially a Roma community linked with the Vărbila monastic estate. It seems unconventional in that new family farm holdings were carved out on some of the best agricultural land in the area where an estate system would surely have been more logical. But while Iorgulescu (1892, p.364) refers to a village of newcomers ('venetici') established in this 'new village' at the turn of the century and Ionescu (1977) writes about a new community formed in 1883 by families moving as free settlers ('însurăței') from the surrounding area (Orjani, Pănătău and Valea Viei) as family farms were provided for selected occupiers, there is a more likely alternative view insisting that it was not newcomers but only existing villagers who received smallholdings which did not seriously compromise the estate system.

Table 2 summarises the development of settlement by dividing the area into nine clusters: five on the east side of the Buzău and four on the west. Most of the primary settlements fall to Măruntișu (nine) Zaharești (seven), Pătârlagele (six) and Tega (five): total 27; while Sibiciu de Sus and Valea Viei have four each, Mușcel has only three, Pănătău two and Begu one: a total of 14. Overall the secondary settlements outnumber the primary by a ratio of almost 2:1, but with only 18 secondary settlements for first group and 60 for the second; there are a striking differences in the ratios: 3:2 for the first group and 1:4 for the second. The secondary settlements are quite widely distributed but for the nineteenth century the emphasis is very much on Begu with 17 (most in the later part with a particular focus on Valea Fântâni), Sibiciu de Sus with 12 (roughly balanced between the earlier and later parts), Valea Viei with ten (nine of them in the early part when the Stroești area was settled) and Mușcel with eight (of which six fall to the later part when the uppermost part of the valley - eastwards to Calea Chiojdului - was being occupied); along with Pănătău where there is an even split involving the immediate surroundings including Plăișor. The division between the two halves of the century is somewhat artificial and rests on the accuracy of the cartographic evidence. We cannot make significant distinctions apart from the accelerated development of capitalism in the second half and it may seem anomalous that in Valea Viei there is an emphasis on the early nineteenth century through the cluster of hamlets around Stroești while in the upper part of the Mușcel valley the string of settlements extending to Calea Chiojdului (including Brusturișu, Măcesu, Malul Alb and Mihăilești) all become visible only in the later part of the century. But there is difference between the mature landslides of Stroești and the younger landslides at the head of V.Mușcelului. Thus as population pressure grew it seems that progressively younger landslides - involving greater risk - were pressed into service. In contrast however the seven new settlements of the twentieth century phase - added for completeness - involve relatively stable and accessible sites used for resettlement in the communist period which lies outside the scope of this paper.

Table 2. Settlement Clusters

<b>EAST OF THE BUZĂU VALLEY</b>
<b>BEGU. Primary:</b> Ghilești (33); <b>Secondary A:</b> <i>Băicuș</i> (5), <u>Begu</u> (11), <i>La Cătină*</i> (37), <i>La Odae</i> (40), Valea Fântâniei (110), <i>Vasiloi</i> (117); <b>Secondary B:</b> <i>Arvunești</i> (1), <i>Băia</i> (4), <i>Băjăniei</i> (6), Botești (15), Corcoianu (24), <u>Lacu cu Anini</u> (38), <i>Mărăcineni</i> (52), <i>Poiana</i> (85), <i>Predeal</i> (90), <i>Slabi</i> (102), <i>Vlăicești</i> (118). <b>Total 18</b> <b>[1-6-11-0]</b>
<b>PĂNĂTĂU. Primary:</b> <u>Pănătău</u> (68), <u>Sibiiciu de Jos</u> (99); <b>Secondary A:</b> <i>Pe Crivină</i> (73), <u>Plăișor</u> (80), <i>Pripor*</i> (91), <i>Rotărie*</i> (97); <b>Secondary B:</b> Babeți (2), <i>Băcioi</i> (3), Diculești (28), Lupoi (45); <b>Secondary C:</b> <i>Balea</i> (7), <i>Țarină</i> (106), <i>Țarină de-din Jos</i> (107). <b>Total 13</b> <b>[2-4-4-3]</b>
<b>SIBICIU DE SUS. Primary:</b> <u>Gornet</u> (35), <i>Păcura</i> (66), <i>Păcura</i> (66), <i>Peste Izvor</i> (78), Sibiciu de Sus (100). <b>Secondary A:</b> Baroianu (8), <i>Mățara</i> (56), <i>Peste Gârla</i> (77), <i>Robu*</i> (96), <u>Valea Sibiciului</u> (115). <b>Secondary B:</b> <i>Bășcureț</i> (10), <i>Burdușoia</i> (17), <i>Drăgănoi</i> (29), <i>Mlăcile</i> (58), <i>Moara Sibicianului</i> (59), <i>Murătoarea</i> (60), <i>Sila</i> (101). <b>Secondary C:</b> <i>Podul Viei</i> (82). <b>Total 17</b> <b>[4-5-7-1]</b>
<b>TEGA. Primary:</b> <i>Luntrari</i> (44), <i>Mânăstirea Cârnu</i> (51), <i>Pe Față</i> (74), <u>Râpile</u> (94), <u>Tega</u> (105). <b>Secondary A:</b> <i>Păslari</i> (69). <b>Secondary B:</b> <i>Cuculești</i> (27), <i>Valea Cârnelui</i> (109); <b>Secondary C:</b> <i>Poduri</i> (83). <b>Total 9</b> <b>[5-1-2-1]</b>
<b>ZAHAREȘTI. Primary:</b> <i>Bejani</i> (12), <i>Bogdănești</i> (14), <i>Linie</i> (42), <i>Pe Muchie</i> (75), <i>Peste Izvor</i> (79), <i>Racoș</i> (93), <u>Zaharești</u> (119). <b>Secondary A:</b> <i>Dubrovești</i> (30), <i>Gorlani</i> (34). <b>Secondary B:</b> <u>Măguricea</u> (47), <i>Panaieți</i> (67), <i>Pe Pisc</i> (76). <b>Total 12</b> <b>[7-2-3-0]</b>
<b>WEST OF THE BUZĂU VALLEY</b>
<b>MĂRUNȚIȘU. Primary:</b> <u>Mărunțișu</u> (53), <i>Mărunțișu Jitianu</i> (54), <i>Mărunțișu Sibiesc</i> (55), <i>Poienile</i> (86), <u>Poienile de Jos (Gura Bâscii)</u> (87), <u>Poienile de Sus</u> (88), <i>Redeny</i> (95), <i>Valea Gornetului</i> (111), <i>Valea Seacă</i> (114). <b>Secondary A:</b> <i>Benga</i> (13), <i>Țoca*</i> (108). <b>Secondary B:</b> <u>Lunca</u> (43). <b>Secondary C:</b> <i>Satu Nou</i> (98). <b>Total 13</b> <b>[9-2-1-1]</b>
<b>MUȘCEL. Primary:</b> <i>Cătunel Bisericii</i> (20), <i>Gârla</i> (32), <u>Mușcel</u> (63). <b>Secondary A:</b> <u>Fundăturile</u> (31), <i>Măcesu*</i> (46). <b>Secondary B:</b> <i>Brusturișu</i> (16), <u>Calea Chiojdului</u> (19), <i>Malul Alb</i> (49), <i>Mihălcești</i> (57), <i>Murăturile</i> (61), <i>Poiana</i> (84). <b>Secondary C:</b> <i>Pâcle</i> (65). <b>Total 12</b> <b>[3-2-6-1]</b>
<b>PĂTÂRLAGELE. Primary:</b> <u>Crâng</u> (25); <u>Pătârlagele</u> (70), <i>Pătârlagele de Jos</i> (71), <i>Pătârlagele de Sus</i> (72), <i>Prundeni</i> (92), <i>Valea Rea</i> (113). <b>Secondary A:</b> <u>Valea Lupului</u> (112). <b>Secondary B:</b> <i>Buruenești</i> (18), <i>Cetate</i> (21), <i>Crivineni</i> (26), <i>Malul Alb</i> (48). <b>Total 11</b> <b>[6-1-4-0]</b>
<b>VALEA VIEI. Primary:</b> <i>Bărbulești</i> (9), <i>Lemnărești</i> (41), <u>Mânăstirea</u> (50), <u>Valea Viei</u> (116). <b>Secondary A:</b> <i>Chelărești</i> (22), <i>Copăcelul*</i> (23), <i>Ivănești</i> (36), <i>La Mânăstire în Țigănie</i> (39), <i>Orjani</i> (64), <i>Podosu</i> (81), <i>Potorăști</i> (89), <i>Șoghiorani</i> (103), <u>Stroești</u> (104). <b>Secondary B:</b> <i>Murea</i> (62). <b>Total 14</b> <b>[4-9-1-0]</b>

Secondary settlement is divided into three periods: A 1800-1850; B 1850-1900; C 1900-2000. Settlements in italic are those (generally small) settlements that never gained official recognition. Those underlined are the settlements officially recognised today e.g. in census returns. An asterisk denotes a secondary settlement which cannot be confidently allocated to the early or late nineteenth century. Numbers relate to those used in Figure 1.

Details are few and are often contradictory as the Lunca case indicates, but oral evidence indicates that Cârnul monastery settled 'clăcași' tenants on landslides at Valea Cârnului and also had an interest in similar surfaces worked by peasants at Măguricea where permanent settlement began at Dubrovești (shown on the Russian map) before expanding at the present Măguricea site by 1860 where a 'boiar' named Angelescu became involved in a land dispute with the monastery; with Iorgulescu (1892, pp.316–7) confirming that two landowners were involved. One of today's inhabitants (C.Stelică), who considers himself a fourth generation descendant of the original settlers, embellishes the 1864 reform (abolishing feudalism) and the subsequent award of monastic grazing and woodland. with the legend of Prince Cuza's overnight visit to the village after being refused shelter at the monastery when he arrived there in disguise. In the case of Fundăturile on the opposite side of the Buzău in the Mușcel valley, relatively stable landslides provided a soil that is good for fruit trees and crops, although the land is highly fragmented by erosion and much is now unproductive. The village is associated with a 'boiar' Ion Giurgiuveanu based in Pătârlagele which accounts for the traditional links between the two settlements (also reflected in the alternative name of Vallea Păterlaci in 1864 and Fundăturile's inclusion in Pătârlagele commune until transfer to Mușcel in 1925 - with a return to Pătârlagele when Mușcel commune was absorbed in 1968). Petrescu-Burloiu (1977, fig.45) confirms that Fundăturile was established in the nineteenth century by people from Pătârlagele de Sus which is consistent with Penelea's (1973, p.154) reference to a fair on the day of Sf. Michel sanctioned in 1839 at the request of the free peasants of Pătârlagele de Sus. Tr.Popescu, a native of the area, recalls the involvement of a relative of the founder (Cristof Iliescu) but there was evidently continuing support from the original 'boiar' family including help with the repair of the church at Fundăturile in 1913. So the landowner influence was evidently benign and it seems unlikely that the development of new settlements was exaggerated by 'clăcași' families fleeing landlord oppression since the model of settlement dispersal across the high surfaces of the Apuseni on the margins of the Zlatna domain hardly matches the much smaller scale of the Pătârlagele Depression. Moreover an exploitative landlord class hardly emerged in the Romanian Principalities until the Ottomans abandoned Phanariot rule in favour of native princes. And although labour demands were being raised before the end of the eighteenth century, the greatest pressures arose on the lowland cereal lands and we have no documentation that sheds light on social relations in Pătârlagele where it would appear that 'clăcași' peasants continued to perform services in return for smallholdings without pressure to become merely estate labourers.

Services tended to be sparse in the hill settlements. The first element in the infrastructure was the provision of churches where we have the Cârnul monastery in 1536 and the first church in Pătârlagele dated 1637. There was expansion of the network from 1750 (Sibiciu de Jos) followed by Valea Viei (1760, with Pănătău believed to be roughly contemporaneous), Poienile de Sus (1770), Sibiciu de Sus (1775), Zaharești (1760), Crâng (1790) and Valea Lupului (1817). Meanwhile in the hills there were further developments in the monastic tradition at Gornet in 1707 and Ghilești (for Begu) in 1714; followed by Mușcel in 1799 and Fundăturile in 1809; while it is also believed that there was a 'schit' for Vărbila Monastery at Mânăstirea by this time, if not significantly earlier, and there may have been an early church at Râpile (superseded in 1839). Further church building involved Plăișor and Tega in 1839, Măruntiușu in 1853, Poienile de Jos (Gura Bâscii) in 1859 and

Valea Sibiciului in 1892 though there was a definitely an earlier church, albeit of unknown date. By the end of the century Mănăstirea ‘schit’ had been lost by fire so the hill areas were clearly at a disadvantage even though distances to key villages were not excessive; albeit inconvenient in the case of funerals in the remotest parts of Calea Chiojdului, Măguricea (where a church opened in 1947), Stroești and Valea Fântâni. A schools programme started in 1839 for the main villages including Begu and Mușcel in the hills as well as Pănătău, Sibiciu de Jos/Sus, Valea Viei, Valea Lupului and Valea Sibiciului which feature in sources such as Damé (1894). Valea Fântâni followed in 1842 but it did not survive and only the central commune school was available in 1882. A school is mentioned in 1860s (‘Cuza’s time’) at Zaharești and in 1902 at Tega (previously dependent on the communal school at Rușavăț) although the latter had to use a private house until 1963 even though Tega became a commune centre in the 1920s (until it was absorbed into Pănătău in 1968). Fairs were held in the main valley settlements especially Pătârlagele (with several each year) but also Mărunțișu, Pănătău, Poienile de Sus, Sibiciu de Jos/Sus, Valea Lupului, Valea Viei and Zaharești. Meanwhile there was nothing for the high ground settlements except Corcoianu. Thus, once again the hill settlements were relatively poorly served with the additional disadvantage of difficult tracks and paths to reach the larger centres. Some villages in the valley had few services e.g. Benga (now Lunca) never had a church, school or fair but it was conveniently situated between Mărunțișu and Pătârlagele which were both well endowed.

A rather complex question is the development of community identity from a host of family-based colonisation projects; for there seems to have been a progression from individual farmsteads to wider groupings with names that gradually gained general approval. Thus Stroești appears to be the only name used after 1876 for Valea Viei Ungureni: originating as a cluster of hamlets – each related to ‘Ungureni’ settlers – which included not only the small Stroești core (the name gradually applied to the wider entity) but Chelărești, Ivănești, Lemnărești, Potorăști, Șoghiorani and Vasiloi as well. The names Murea and Podosu are also known (though not the precise locations of these farmsteads of which all trace has now disappeared) while Orjani – Valea Viei Orjani in 1874, derived from a family name with Hungarian resonance – remains on fertile land close to the watershed between V.Muscelului and V.Viei with its own identity, though it has civil and ecclesiastical links with Crâng and Stroești respectively. ‘Struggles’ over names seem to go beyond the arrival of ‘Ungureni’, for Petrescu-Burloiu (1977, Fig.48) mentions Drăgulești becoming Valea Mușcelului and Prăvățești becoming Tega (which was the old name for Zaharești) while the Szathmary Map of 1856 (Fligely 1864) suggests the simultaneous usage of Valea Lupului and Vallea Rea; also Fundăturile and Vallea Păterlaci as well as Murăturile and Vallea Ghicenului. An interesting transition can be seen from Benga to Lunca after the old village of Benga was enlarged by Satu Nou. Despite the clear distinction between Benga Veche and Benga Nouă, evident confusion was overcome in this case (as recently as 1968) by the use of Lunca as a means of achieving unification.

### **5.1. Early Twentieth Century**

As we have noted, the population continued to grow although the rate was now slower in the hills and their share of the total fell slightly. A small female majority, which has been characteristic of the whole area during the period of census returns was further emphasised (though male majorities remained at Măguricea, Mănăstirea and Mușcel.



Conditions improved with the 1923 reform which made more pasture and arable available to peasants within the Pătârlagele area, while allocating substantial cropland in lowland areas of Buzău county and further afield (Table 3). Despite the need to commute by cart or train this arrangement was of very great benefit. The season would start with a two-week visit in April (typically by ox-cart) taking seed, tools and food. The journey would take two or three days including breaks at overnight halting places ('dejugători') where the animals were unyoked to graze. Frequently used in this respect was Lunca Frumoasă following the first leg of the journey via Plăişor and Punga to the Cozieni valley which was a shorter route than following the Buzău valley through Cislău and Vipereşti. For security families would take their dogs and would often travel in groups. Weeding had to be done in the summer before the harvest was brought back by cart (or by train if the yield was high) again with much cooperation among families. Meanwhile the area continued to be highly self-sufficient making the fullest use of natural resources, with milling a good example. According to M.Stoenescu of Mărunţişu, several mills operated on the Buzău river until their destruction in the communist period: the mill of the priest Alexandru Ionescu stood at Bana on right side of the river in Mărunţişu; while another – owned by the priest's brother Ion Ionescu – was situated just above; and a third belonging to Ghiorghiţa Ionescu was sited in Poienile at the Cislău boundary. 'Mo.Butoeştilor', at the Mărunţişu-Pătârlagele commune boundary, was known to Iorgulescu (1892, p.315) and there were also three mills on the Buzău at Valea Lupului: Mo.lui Petrescu and Mo.lui Pătraşcu – both on a side channel ('iaz') on the right side – while Mo.Sibicianului was in a similar situation a little lower down on the left side but above Sibiciu de Sus.

**Table 3. Cereal land allocated to villages in the Pătârlagele Depression under the 1923 agrarian reform**

<b>EAST OF THE BUZĂU VALLEY</b>
<b>Begu:</b> Zăvoaia (Brăila); Padina and Scutelnici (Buzău); <i>Săveni</i> Mihail Kogălniceanu (Ialomiţa)
<b>Gornet:</b> Scutelnici (Buzău),
<b>Lacu cu Anini:</b> Zăvoaia (Brăila); Cioranca Movila Banului, Padina and Scutelnici (Buzău); <i>Săveni</i> Mihail Kogălniceanu (Ialomiţa) consolidated under communism at <i>Căldăreşti</i> Pogoanele
<b>Măguricea:</b> <i>Batogu</i> Cireşu and Bordei Verde (Brăila); <i>Căldăreşti</i> Pogoanele (Buzău);
<b>Pănătău:</b> Zăvoaia (Brăila); Cochirleanca, Mihăileşti, Padina and Scutelnici (Buzău); <i>Săveni</i> Mihail Kogălniceanu (Ialomiţa) consolidated under communism at Padina, <i>Căldăreşti</i> Pogoanele and Scutelnici (Buzău);
<b>Plăişor:</b> Zăvoaia (Brăila); <i>Florica</i> Mihăileşti and <i>Traian</i> Griviţa (Ialomiţa) consolidated under communism at Padina (Buzău)
<b>Râpile:</b> Padina (Buzău)
<b>Sibiciu de Jos:</b> Zăvoaia (Brăila); Mihăileşti, Padina and Scutelnici (Buzău) consolidated under communism mainly at Padina (Buzău)
<b>Sibiciu de Sus:</b> <i>Batogu</i> Cireşu (Brăila); Glodeanu Sărat and Scutelnici (Buzău); <i>Săveni</i> Mihail Kogălniceanu and Movila (Ialomiţa)
<b>Tega:</b> <i>Batogu</i> , Cireşu (Brăila); Padina (Buzău); <i>Căldăreşti</i> Pogoanele (Buzău); <i>Grădiştea</i>

Boldești-Grădiștea (Prahova) consolidated under communism at Padina, <i>Căldărești Pogoanele</i>
<b>Valea Fântâni:</b> Zăvoaia (Brăila); Cochirleanca and Scutelnici (Buzău); <i>Săveni Mihail Kogălniceanu (Ialomița)</i>
<b>Valea Sibiciului:</b> <i>Batogu Cireșu and Bordei Verde (Brăila); Glodeanu Sărat and Brăgăreasa Scutelnici (Buzău); Săveni Mihail Kogălniceanu and Movila (Ialomița)</i>
<b>Zaharești:</b> Zăvoaia (Brăila); Luciu and Padina (Buzău)
<b>WEST OF THE BUZĂU VALLEY</b>
<b>Crâng:</b> <i>Batogu Cireșu (Brăila); Padina (Buzău)</i>
<b>Mânăstirea:</b> Luciu and Padina (Buzău)
<b>Pătârlagele:</b> <i>Batogu Cireșu (Brăila); Padina (Buzău);</i>
<b>Poienile:</b> Largu and Padina (Buzău)
<b>Stroești:</b> Bordei Verde (Brăila), <i>Florica Mihăilești (Buzău) and Traian Grivița (Ialomița)</i> consolidated under communism at Padina (Buzău) and again in 1978 under ‘comasarea agro-industrială’ at Largu and <i>Căldărești Pogoanele (Buzău)</i>
<b>Valea Lupului:</b> <i>Batogu Cireșu (Brăila); Smârdan Brădeanu, Glodeanu Sărat, Florica Mihăilești and Padina (Buzău)</i> consolidated under communism mainly at Padina (Buzău) and again in 1978 under ‘comasarea agro-industrială’ at Cilibia and Luciu (Buzău)
<b>Valea Viei:</b> Bordei Verde (Brăila), <i>Florica Mihăilești (Buzău) and Traian Grivița (Ialomița)</i> consolidated under communism at Padina (Buzău) and again in 1978 under ‘comasarea agro-industrială’ at Largu and <i>Căldărești Pogoanele (Buzău)</i>
No data for Fundăturile, Lunca, Marunțișu and Mușcel

Notes: The list is based on the present county/commune system: Movila was formerly Vasile Roaită ; Scutelnici was formerly Meteleu. Places shown in italic are specific villages within the communes.

While little is recorded about the developments of the inter-war years, services did improve somewhat. Commune funds were available for church repair at Mușcel, Pătârlagele, Sibiciu de Sus, Tega, Valea Lupului, Valea Viei and Zaharești. However there were no new churches although projects were considered at Măguricea and Valea Fântâni with the former realised in 1947. But the school system was greatly developed. After 1918 a school served Fundăturile using the teacher’s house in nearby Gârla until a building was made available in the village in 1925. Mânăstirea got a school in 1923, although this may not have been permanent since the school that opened at Stroești in 1941 was also used by Mânăstirea children until better arrangements were made after 1945. Râpile was also endowed during the inter-war years as were Corcoianu, Gornet, Lacu cu Anini and Plăișor (whereas the network in the central zone was already adequate apart from one new opening at Crâng). Prefectura (1937) refers to several of these improvements, while also noting the finance from both the county and the relevant communes to support school repairs (as at Sibiciu de Jos) and a new school at Begu. But there were also gifts made by benefactors: the priest Tr.Georgescu provided land at Lacu cu Anini (Slabi), where the villagers provided the labour, while another priest Nicolae Negulescu gave land and money at both Corcoianu and Valea Fântâni. The net result was a network of villages with both a church and a school that included the hill settlements of Begu, Fundăturile, Gornet, Mușcel, Râpile, Tega and Valea Sibiciului; while Măguricea had a only church (eventually) whereas Corcoianu, Lacu cu Anini, Mânăstirea and Stroești had just a

school. Prefectura (1937) also gives some other interesting information about projects undertaken by the local administration during 1934-7. The work is divided into categories and begins with improvement of floodplain grazing ('izlaz') by dyking at Valea Seacă and by ditching and provision of five small bridges ('podulețe') at Sibiciu. Acacia trees were being planted and a nursery was reported in Mărunțișu commune. Work on the roads raised the issue of statutory labour ('clacă obștească') involving hand labour ('cu brațele') and transport ('cu carele'); the latter provided by men with carts. The roadwork involved ditching ('șanțuri'), consolidation with stone ('împietruiri'), repair of bridges, provision of footbridges, paving of sidewalks in Pătârlagele and Sibiciu de Sus as well as tree planting. 'Muncă obștească' is also mentioned in connection with upkeep of cemeteries and repairs to the 'casa premilitară' (presumably part of the national defence infrastructure). Pătârlagele hospital was completely renovated and a water supply provided for Tega. Finally, work was being done on the 'primăria' in all the relevant communes except Tega, while telephone lines were laid from Pătârlagele to Mușcel; also from Cislău to Mărunțișu.

## 5.2. Oral Evidence of Traditional Rural Life

While many villages were quite close to the commune centres and also to the services of Pătârlagele with its subprefecture and railway complex, life was particularly hard in isolated hill villages for there were serious landslide hazards and transport by horse or cart particularly difficult along narrow and sometimes very steep trackways. Valea Fântâniei may be taken as an example: a village on the eastern edge of Pănătău commune in close touch with Bălănești (now in the adjacent commune of Cozieni commune) with much intermarriage: family names included Cârstoiu, Coman, Ghinea, Gruia, Marcu, Mihai, Moisan, Oancea, Stanciu and Ursache. However, virtually all the people left for Pănătău and Pătârlagele early in the communist period (with just one house is still permanently occupied and a few others are used temporarily). Agriculture, which had to take account of wild animals that were relatively numerous at the time, involved first of all spring-sown cereals and potatoes: maize (still grown on a limited scale today) was restricted to surfaces with suitable soil and relief – generally on landslides e.g. below Bli-dișel and at Coman's lake, Predeal and the old village centre – and with the application of dung and manure. Livestock (especially cattle and goats) were also crucial to the village economy; with a 'stâna' at Predeal and another below Bli-dișel. The area was good for hay where there was natural vegetation but not where plantations were established. Fruit was very important (apples, cherries, pears, plums and sour cherries) with trees generally restricted to pastures and the boundaries between family parcels. The trees evolved mainly through natural selection (with very little grafting) and some trees were almost wild; while ripening generally occurred about two weeks later than on the low ground of Buzău valley. Plums ('Prunele grase') were dried for winter by the smoke and heat of a small fire over which the fruit was placed 'pe lojniță' (using a frame constructed from hazel twigs with the bark removed) and then laid out in room or 'în pod': not in a cellar where warm, moist air would damage the fruit. 'Bistrițe' plums (also known as 'Vinete') were used for preserves including 'poame', along with apples and pears. Apples were stored in cellars in wooden boxes but always with a vessel of water to keep the air moist and prevent the fruit shrivelling or becoming 'posmagi' according to the local expression. Meanwhile wild

apples would be stored in hay (even within haystacks in the gardens). Some hemp and flax was still grown, as in the other villages and processed to make yarn and clothing: Coman's lake was used for retting by the local people and by others living further to the east.

An important consideration in fruit growing was the production of plum brandy ('țuica') for domestic consumption but occasionally for barter transactions (Muică & Turnock 2000). With a family production of 200-300l in a good year (requiring about half a hectare of plum trees within a holding rarely larger than 5.0ha) their stocks were large enough to cope with poor years when plums were scarce. A thrifty farmer with plum trees in his garden and additional stock in the hills (perhaps in a small sheltered depression or 'padină') – making up a hectare of land out of a total holding of some 10ha – might well produce 1,000l of brandy. A farmer with particularly good orchard soils, loosened by landslides, might become a specialist distiller ('povarnagiu') producing up to 3,000l in a good year, while former estate owners would have controlled even larger stocks geared to the market. Some peasants might produce well beyond the capacity of their own holdings by buying fermented plums ('borhot') from neighbours. Indeed fermented fruit might well move between villages so as to transfer surpluses to settlements with relatively little fruit: hence the system of 'borhot' transport over considerable distances using a specially-adapted cart with a large wooden cask known as a 'cărător'. Distillers might also use this method of transport to return the residual material, known as 'boască' (left in the still after distillation of the 'borhot'), for use as food but also for treating sheep against pox ('gălbează) though stronger medicines were needed for treating cattle. Owners of stills would usually loan their equipment to poorer families on a daily basis in return for a rent amounting to about a tenth of the production. In this way most families could make enough brandy for their own needs, although households owning only a few trees would need to buy extra for celebrations. There was also some long-distance trade and some peasants from the area remember the carting of brandy from Pătârlagele as far as Feldioara and Sf.Gheorghe in southeastern Transylvania even before 1914. But since alcohol was a government monopoly, stills had to be licenced and in the case of commerce certificates had to be obtained from the local 'garda financiară' or fines might be imposed by officials making checks at county or urban boundaries.

Buildings in the area made full use of local materials. The base for the walls consisted of stones collected from alluvial deposits, small quarries or the riverbed. Except for the hill of Cornet where the local material was very good for use with cement, local sand and gravel is of limited value because of the salt and clay content (though locals are usually unaware of the problem). A hard oak beam ('talpă') would be laid above the stone layer and pillars were attached to this, with another hard beam ('cosoroabă') above. Vertical poles were inserted at 40-50cm intervals to provide a framework for the weaving of beech and hornbeam twigs: a process known as hurdling or 'grădele'. This structure would be surfaced with earth ('încărcat'). Alternatively, poles ('lanț' or 'laț') might be nailed horizontally at 20-40cm intervals and earth then plastered into the spaces with pigs' or goat's hair mixed in. This latter system continues in use while the former has virtually died out. In contrast to the situation in well-wooded areas, the timber crisis was such that wooden beams were rarely used except for churches: instead earthen bricks were placed on a stone base. The bricks were known as 'chirpici' (from the Turkish 'kerpic') consisting of earth and straw dried in the sun and widely used in the plains in the past (Academia 1996-8,

p.171). Obviously local forests were crucially important, not least as a source of work; especially since they were relatively small before the enlargements of the communist period by way of pine and locust tree ('salcâm') plantations to stabilise eroded areas. On the other hand wild animals were more numerous than today. Some woodland traditionally belonged to the villagers while much that was once owned by Vărbila monastery eventually became 'obște moșnească'.

## 6. EVIDENCE FROM TOPONOMY

Study of the toponymy proved to be very rewarding since a rich haul of material was collected orally to supplement the names used in books and maps. Of course it is not possible to establish the age of these names apart from the date of publications – thus Ma.Dârstei was referred to as early as 1583 although it attracted further references in 1881 and 1892. However the evidence does illustrate aspects of the settlement process and we therefore offer a representative selection from a total of some 650 placenames in addition to settlement names. The names are quoted in an abbreviated form that requires reference to the appendix. The prime agricultural lands continued to be the alluvial land known as 'lunca' (in the old sense of an agricultural surface) or 'țarină' found in every village to varying degrees e.g. Ț.Luncii at Valea Viei relates to the 25-30m alluvial plain – extending from the Mușcel stream to the Gorneasca east of Dl.Viei and Dl.Mănăstirii – made available under the land reform of 1923 and used especially for fruit trees (with cereals land provided simultaneously in the plain). On higher ground Luncă-Pe is the equivalent expression used by the people of Begu, while their neighbours at Corcoianu talk of Poduri-Pe for the same area. At Calea Chiojdului, Po.lui Huhui – the platform of Huhui – is a small horizontal surface northeast of Cp.Dealului north of Brusturișu; at Lacu cu Anini Plai-În means the tableland on the hill; and at Zaharești, Fășii-Pe means 'on the strip': referring to the structural surface below Potop's farm. Steps on these surfaces may be highlighted in view of the value of natural terracing: at Pânățau Șețu'al Mare/Mic refers to the great and little 'steps'. At Valea Lupului Pod-Pe, derived from the Old Slav 'pod', is used for the plateau or geomorphological terrace above C.Mică on what is otherwise a steeply-sloping hillside (currently used for fruit trees) and the same situation arises at Mănăstirea in respect of the small plateau or step on the summit between Cornet and Mu.Nițului; while at Lunca the name Pd.Po.Roșu – the forest of the red plateau – 1.00km.west of Benga Veche is a step-like feature on Benga hill (on the southeastern side of Dl.Mănăstirii) representing a small remnant of old relief. Tega people use C.Plaiului for their 'plai' above Cuculești below the summit of Dl.Cârnelui, while at Poienile Mu.Plaiului is used to mean the summit of the 'plai' with particular reference to a local trackway; and at Zaharești Fășii-Pe means on the strip: referring to the structural surface below Potop's farm. At Valea Lupului the term Cheie/Cheia (derived from the Latin 'claves') is in use for a sandstone gorge comprising the middle part of V.Rea with the depression of Pn.Cheii above, sculptured in clay and marl.

Structural surfaces typically have their own names that may reflect their agricultural potentials e.g. terraced lands at Comori and 'La Inuri' above Corcoianu (with former terraced vineyards – Vii-La – just below), Pn.Ulului above Râpile and Dl.Mănăstirii above

Fundăturile. Vf.Linței (Lința's peak) in Begu was formerly an agricultural surface thanks to a well-developed soil; likewise La Inărie ('at the flax') near Mânăstirea: such surfaces also offered good topoclimatic conditions with dry, fresh air in contrast to the depressions. But not all the high surfaces were well-endowed. Stoney ground was highlighted as unsuitable for intensive use, as with Mu.Pietrelor – the summit of the stones – which is a peak near Pânățau while Pt.Predealului – the stones of Predeal – points to a sandstone surface at the source of V.Fântâni that is actually on a 35deg. slope almost totally bare of soil and vegetation. Other references to rocky summits occur at Lacu cu Anini, Șerpăria: a place with snakes – on a rocky slope southeast of Vlăicești near La Dobrești brook; at Măguricea, Mu.Înaltă: a rocky crest above Mânăstirea Cârnu. Such summits typically support only a poor vegetation (if any) which names may emphasise e.g. Vf.Cătinei (791m) – buckthorn peak – for a hill near Stroești. By contrast, smooth summits may attract such names as Pleșuva – the summit with pasture – at Gornet; while Măguricea offers Muchiuliță La: at the little hill crest (diminutive of 'much'); Râpile includes Mu.lui Tudor Vlad: Tudor Vlad's summit with pasture; Sibiciu de Jos has Mu.Pridvalei: the summit of Pridvale, with a south-facing, gentle surface at the western limit of Ch.Corcoianului. Also fundamental is the distinction between north- and south-facing slopes. F.Begului is the south-facing slope of Begu; F.cu Gorâni is a sunny slope historically with evergreen forest at Lacu cu Anini; and at Râpile we have F.Cârnelui – the south-facing slope of Cârnu. On the other hand at Mânăstirea, Dostină or Doștina is a place on a north-facing slope (with the 'dos' element indicating the shaded side of Dl.Mânăstirii).

### 6.1. Valleys and Landslides

Conditions in the valleys are highly variable as regards the quality of the land: steepness, smoothness and the available moisture. A particularly rough valley may well be called a bad valley I.Rău at Mușcel and Stroești, or V.Rea at Toca and Valea Lupului (which also offers Fd.V.Rele: the bottom of the bad valley – a small depression in the upper part of V.Rea). Some valleys may also have reputation for coldness – hence V.Rece – the cold valley – at Mânăstirea in the upper part of a valley on the eastern side of Dl.Cornet (albeit with a good water spring); and Geroasa: the valley of the frost (derived from 'ger' meaning frost) at Măguricea. Water is often a problem in view of the many dry valleys: hence V.Seacă – the dry valley – at Pânățau and other places; while water sources are typically described in terms of their saltiness e.g. at Stroești we encounter Saramura or I.Sărat: meaning salt water or the salt spring (also Sărățel – a diminutive form indicating a little salt brook); and V.Sărături: the salt spring or valley. While such sources may be useful for cooking and pickling there are limitations for watering livestock and salt deposits on pastureland reduce the grazing potential. Landslides are typically distinguished by references to small surfaces e.g. Podișor (diminutive of 'pod') is used at Lacu cu Anini in relation to a large landslides, used for pasture and hay above Pn.Silei; also I/V.Podișorului – the valley of the small tableland – situated north of Pânățau is a typical valley influenced by landslides. There are also allusions to 'swollen land': a good example is Burdușoia derived from 'burdușit' (meaning swollen, loose or spongy) which is very appropriate for a landslide tongue of some 2.0km – with potential for crops, fruit trees, hay and pasture – that attracted a nineteenth century hamlet no longer in existence (though Gornet remains in the upper part of the tongue where there is some stability). Dutina is known in Lacu cu Anini as a forested

place above Vlăicești on a gently-inclined ‘waving’ surface, while at Zaharești, Bli-dișei means weaving land – alluding to the ‘waves’ of an old landslide used for fruit trees. There are many other names that highlight the scars, precipices or ‘tears’ as landslides pull away from the material that forms their source areas e.g. Ma.Fătului – psalm readers precipice (referring to a known psalm reader which is unusual since most references to people are now forgotten). Gârlici-Pe – literally meaning a cellar entrance (since ‘gârlici’ indicates such a feature in the usage for south Moldavia) – is an expression used to convey the idea of a small narrow ‘gorge’ with landslides situated between two prominent hillocks which protrude like ‘nunataks’ in the Stroești area. And reference should also be made to depressions or ‘hollows’ often highlighted as ‘Gropi’, occurring for example at Gornet in relation to four small valleys with pasture on landslides near the source of I.Fulgoiu northwest of Bli-dișel. Groapă-Pe – in the hollow – occurs near Pănătău.

Such hollows are relatively sheltered and all the more favourable for agriculture: hence the name Căldura/V.Căldurei 3.0km. east of Pănătău meaning a warm place – like a ‘groapă’ or valley of warmth (somewhat flattered by this name however): a small gently – sloping depression on landslides east of Mu.Icoanei used for fruit trees and pasture and particularly good for hay. At Begu we have G.Baciului - Baci depression derived from ‘băci’: a shepherd in charge of a sheepfold – for a small depression north of Sila; at Calea Chiojdului, Leurdiș/G.Leurdișului: the hollow/place of leurdiș (derived from the ‘leurdă’ plant: bear’s garlic – particularly suitable for a short, wide valley with landslides and a moist soil); also G.cu Salcie: the hollow with the white willow tree; at Mușcel, G.Dușilor: Duși’s hollow, north of Malul Alb lies in a valley cut in clay strata between vertically-inclined resistant but porous rock. At Râpile we have G.cu Scoruș: a hollow formerly with the service tree (‘scoruș’) – a dry valley with landslides; also I.Blidarilor indicates the brook of the bowls (from ‘blidari’) near Zaharești which could make sense as depressions in a landslide area. Roghina/Roghini-La refers to a small depression made by wild boar in an old landslide in the upper part of V.Mânăstirii (Cârnelui) holding an almost permanent supply of water. It was used historically by wild boar from a former forest and is still appreciated for use by livestock in dry summers. Indeed many hollows may hold small lakes often used in the past for retting flax and hemp. At Lacu cu Anini we have Lacuri-La – at the lakes – relating to four small lakes aligned northwest-southeast below Mu.Pănătăului summit southeast of Vlăicești. At Valea Viei the name Broșteanca (derived from ‘broască/broaște’ meaning a frog) is very appropriate for a place with moist soil in spring providing a good environment for frogs. Another case of dampness at Gornet is expressed through Mustoia – derived from ‘a musti’ meaning spread i.e. with soil spread – which is a small valley/agricultural surface (damp in spring) and used for fruit trees, hay and pasture.

## 6.2. Forest Clearance

There is much evidence of forest clearance, expressed in different ways but most commonly through the word ‘poiana’. Pn.Albului is Albu’s clearing on old landslides at Zaharești; Pn.Cheii is the clearing of the gorge referring to hay/pasture land on landslides in the narrow ‘cheia’ of V.Rea at Valea Lupului; and Pn.Hozii – Hosa’s clearing – is a long –

established and well-known clearing on old landslides used for fruit trees owned by local Roma at Mânăstirea (indeed during the communist period a local festival was held there just after Easter). But Curături-În/La means at the recently deforested land north of Corcoianu (Pănătău), while Lazu indicates farmland recently deforested (as at Lunca). Laz-Sub – under ‘laz’ – indicates land ‘recently’ deforested at Zaharești (though actually in the distant past) with use for crops or pasture implied by references nearby to ‘La Malaia’ and ‘In Stupini’; while Mu.Lazului (also in Zaharești) is a deforested summit now used for fruit trees, hay and pasture. Of course substantial areas of forest remain e.g. Pd.Brăduțului – Brăduțu forest – at Poienile; also Pd.Crețuleștii – Crețuleasca’s forest – northwest of Mânăstirea on the northeastern part of Vf.Cornetului and Vf.Vătaiei. But some names relate to former forests as at Râpile where Pd.Gorâniș refers to the evergreen forest of ‘gorun’ (*Quercus petraea*): a former forest on a south-facing slope on a low summit with dry soil (good for ‘gorun’) contrasting with the damp Mociornița favourable for ‘stejar’ (*Quercus robur*). Also Vf.Gorânului – the peak of the evergreen oak – recalls former woodland at Crâng (where the landslides are suitable for farming). But the opposite scenario arises with ‘Lazuri’ which appears in the Begu area with reference to a steep slope on Blidișel with degraded pasture that was replanted in the communist period as a pine forest (as were several other eroded surfaces in the area).

### 6.3. Cropping and Fruit Growing

Cereals used to be grown on unstable areas of young landslides now used only hay, pasture or forest e.g. on the left side of the Sibiciu stream north of Gornet (Fulgoaia/Goșa); the upper V.Viei basin (where some maize has been grown quite recently) and also Ț.Văii Vie east of Dl.Viei; Poduri above Corcoianu; the old ‘țarină’ in Pănătău village; and the ‘țarina’ below Tega. At Begu there is the reference La Orzari: ‘at the barley’ (now with fruit trees, hay and pasture), but much more common are the references to La Mălae, literally meaning at the maize but often intended as a reference to cereals in general: ‘mălai’ (maize cake); ‘mei’ (millet) and later American corn (‘porumb’). However there are complications because Mălaia/Mălaia-La/Pe – occurring in connection with a landslide and structural surface (presently with fruit trees, hay and pasture) at Lacu cu Anini 300m northwest of Slabi – has also become associated with cereal growing, although it is quite a different expression from Mălaele/Mălae-La and is actually meaningless. However, while Iorgulescu (1892, p.309) makes a clear reference to cereal growing with ‘La Mălae’ (indeed he also uses Mălaele Mici – the small ‘mălae’ – for an area near Zaharești that cannot now be exactly located), local experts using the dubious expression ‘Mălaia’ believe that it must be Iorgulescu’s version that is wrong! Former agriculture is also indicated: Vf.La Altoaie with: on the peak at the stock plant near Crâng, but even more convincingly by evidence of threshing at an ‘arie’ where the daught animals trampled the crop before the chaff was removed by the wind using a wooden shovel. Examples are: A.lui Mitu Pavel-La – at the threshing of Mitu Pavel – at Zaharești; A.Pe Muchie-La – at the threshing on the summit – relating to two places near Râpile with former agricultural surfaces on the higher ground. Particularly interesting are the two references to În Vf. la A.Lupenilor, meaning on the peak at the threshing place of the Lupeni people (i.e.inhabitants of Valea Lupului) on land that they owned on Vf.Mușcelului (hence the alternative name Mușcel-ÎnVf.Pe: on Mușcelul peak at the threshing by the Lupeni).



There are also references to flax and hemp: Inuri-La – at the flax (now an area of pasture north of Corcoianu), while Inul Dedului – Dedu’s flax – points to former cultivation above Valea Lupului on the left side of V.Mardale near the summit. There are clear references to fruit trees at Sibiciu de Sus through C.Pomilor – the the slope of the fruit trees – in an area of old landslide activity (1.0km northeast of the village) especially good for plum trees; and G.Pomilor (500m northeast) is the hollow of the fruit trees at La Cuptoare (while Cuptoare – După – after the oven – is probably a reference to the former practice of drying plums in an oven). At Begu, I.La Șapte Meri is the brook or spring of the seven apple trees; at Lacu cu Anini Meri – La means at the apple trees (a south-facing surface northeast of Vlăicești); at Valea Lupului Vf.Părului is the peak of the pear tree on a hill in the upper part of V. Rea; and at Mușcel Povarnă-La means ‘at the brandy distillery’: still in regular use at Mihălcești. At Pânățau, Vii – La – at the vineyard – relates to former landuse in the same area north of Corcoianu and at Sibiciu de Sus Po.Viei is a tableland with a former vineyard on a horizontal surface north of the village. But the best examples come from Valea Viei where Dl.Viei means vineyard hill – a reference to the extensive vineyards of the area prior to the phylloxera attacks; while V.Viei means vineyard valley and Pr.Viei – vineyard gate – recalls a former gateway giving entrance to Valea Viei village.

#### 6.4. Pasture and Livestock

There are many references to pasture: at Begu, Rotocol-La – the round area – is a gently-sloping surface with pasture on F.Begului; at Gornet Pleșuva – the summit with pasture derived from the Bulgarian ‘plesiv’ – is the peak of a small deforested hill. At Tega, Fânețe refers to hay produced above the ‘țarină’ on old landslides (less favourable for agriculture) extending westwards from La Berhuleasa and also Fâ.Mărunțișenilor – the hayland of Mărunțișu’s people – comprises the western slope of the Poduri ‘țarină’; and at Zaharesti, Mal-Sub – under the precipice – is a small asymmetrical valley with pasture and buckthorn scrub on landslides. On the opposite side of the Buzău valley, Fâ.Mare a Mușcelului (Pătârlagelor) is the great hayland of Mușcel: the large surface of Mu.Pătârlagelor used for hay but formerly for crops and fruit trees as indicated by the names ‘La Arie’ and ‘La Altoaie’. There are numerous references to sheep: at Măguricea Sn.Coceneștilor is the sheepfold of Cocenești (a nickname derived from ‘cocină’ meaning a pigsty); at Valea Fântâni Od.lui Dabija is Dabija’s sheepfarm (a reference to a rich family of Valea Sibiciului who used to have land northwest of Predeal that is now used only for hay); and I.Odăii is the brook of the sheep farm at Râpile. At Mărunțișu, V.Stanciului (documented in 1977) is Stanciu’s valley formerly with a sheepfold although it is not known if Stanciu was the shepherd. At Calea Chiojdului, I.La Surlă is a brook associated with a ‘surlă’: a conical shepherd’s refuge. Meanwhile, only a few names relate to cattle, although Vf.Juncului is the peak of the young bullock near Valea Fântâni and to the east of Vlaicești (Lacu cu Anini) Văcăria means hill grazing for many cows. The once common practice of having all the pigs in a village grazing on common land is recalled through Cotinețe La – at the pigsty – on the right side of V.Mardale/Mardare on the slope below the Mș.Lupenilor plateau at Valea Lupului; while at Poienile V.Purcăreața means swineherd’s valley. And an apiary belonging to the former Mănăstirea hermitage used to exist in Zaharesti on Dl.Stupinei: the hill of the beehive, while V.Stupinei means apiary valley and

Stupini – In means in the apiary (comprising a large area of undulating south – facing land below Lazuri where the apiary was actually situated: near the summit of Mu.Lazului).

### **6.5. Transport and Handicrafts**

The high ground needed trackways and footpath access. Linia is used at Predeal (Valea Fântâniei) for the cart track from Begu to the northern side of Mu.Blidişelului; while at Valea Lupului, Ps.Țiganului – Roma summit – relates to the hillslope falling from Vf.Muşcelului to V.Lupului with a former cart track for hay and other traffic coming from Muşcel (Lupenilor) to Valea Lupului. Wayside crosses exist at several points e.g. Cr.lui Talete – Talete’s cross – situated near the track connecting the Fulgoaia and Goşa clearings north of Vf.Blidişel near Valea Sibiciului. Traditional activities complementary to agriculture are also noted: G.Pietrarului’ – the stone cutter’s hollow – north of Crâng; I.Cojocarului’ – the furrier’s brook – at Valea Lupului and I.Croitorului – the tailor’s brook – at Plăișor. ‘La Rotărie’ occurs in the forest near Mărunțișu and also at Plăișor, referring to wheelwrights – from the Romanian ‘roată’ derived from the Latin ‘rota’; ‘La Strugărie’, encountered in the forest west of Mărunțișu, probably relates to work with a lathe (‘strungărie’); and from the Latin ‘doga’ comes the Romanian ‘doagă’ (a stave) known locally through ‘V.Dogarului’ west of Mărunțișu and ‘V.Dogăriței’ on the left side of Sărățel brook, indicating the valley of cooper and the cooper’s wife. Vf.Vădale provides a probable reference to weaving and its occurrence in woodland west of Mărunțișu completes an interesting set of references to rural crafts in what was formerly a ‘clăcași’ village without much land for agriculture. We also have Ma.Dârstei at Zaharești indicating the precipice by the fulling mill (alluding once again to the former importance of textiles).

### **6.6. Farmers and Landowners**

Many names survive which indicate specific domains – farms or estates. Mu/Vf.Michia (747m) – an alternative name for Mu/Vf.Pănătăului - means Michia summit or ridge and relates to the old estate of Michia in Cozieni commune (outside our study area) and is probably used by the people on the Bălănești side of the summit. Also in the Pănătău area is the name Popa Gheorghe-În/La – at the priest Gheorghe’s land (between Corcoianu and Mărăcineni) while we encounter Geroasa as an estate name at Măguricea, and the names of former owners e.g. Bozioreanu – indicating a link with Bozioru – at Begu. In the Stroești area Duru-La means at Duru’s farm’s (Duru being a Szekler from Transylvania) and C.Odăii – meaning the slope of the room – actually relates to the Duru family home: these domains clearly encompass high surfaces and landslides. At Măguricea, Stoenesti-La means the land of the Stoenesti family: a ‘waved’ agricultural surface currently used for hay and pasture; and at Tega Cârlig-La means ‘at Hook’s place’: land on an old landslide now used for fruit trees, hay and pasture; while Șughiița refers to a land holding at Plăișor.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

The paper has set out to review the historical geography of a Subcarpathian district with distinct centre-periphery contrasts. While the Buzău valley became a highway with

railway and national road access, hilly areas within a few kilometres could be reached only by paths and narrow trackways hazardous in bad weather. And there is still no sign of contrasts being reduced (except on a very selective basis) since landslides and mudflows still pose threats on a scale now unmatched by flooding hazards in the main valley which now enjoys the protection of the Siriu dam. Yet settlement in the hills remains substantial; standing as a legacy of pressure on the landslides and high surfaces by subsistence farmers, especially during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although there has always been a functional relationship in the Pătârlagele Depression between the valley core and the hill periphery, evidence does not suggest any significant permanent settlement in the latter area before the nineteenth century although the tributary valleys were being penetrated to the modest extent indicated at Muşcel, Pânătau, Valea Rea, Valea Sibiciului and Valea Viei. Instead there was pastoralism based on the ‘conac’ model along with woodland exploitation and a significant monastic tradition. By contrast the cartographic evidence points to major process of secondary settlement driven by population growth and the rise of capitalist agriculture on the main agricultural surfaces after an earlier eighteenth century phase of mercantilism in the Habsburg-Ottoman borderlands linked with waves of innovative Ungureni settlement that form part of the nineteenth century transformation. However while the social geography of this interaction is largely invisible, apart from the hints provided by rival ‘Pământeni’ and ‘Ungureni’ identities in Valea Viei, the established process of ‘roirile pastorale’ in the hills – extended as ‘roirile agricole’ – is illustrated by the toponomy which forms a major part of the oral evidence gathered for this paper and which we hope can be preserved through local cultural initiatives that might extend the existing folk museum at Muscel and the proposed rebuilding of the old ‘schit’ at Mânăstirea.

#### APPENDIX

In examining the toponomy it is necessary to introduce various types of feature for which the Romanian names are abbreviated. They are summarised here using the singular form with the indefinite article. A-Arie: threshing floor; B-Bâlcă: small water-filled hollow; C-Coastă: hillslope; Ch-Chichilaie: steep slope; Cp-Cap: hilltop; Cr-Cruce: cross; Cu-Culme: ridge; Dl-Deal: hill; Dp-Depresiune: depression; Ds-Dos: north-facing slope; F-Faţă: south-facing slope; Fâ-Fânează: hayland; Fd-Fund: bottom; Fg-Fag: beech tree; Fn-Fântâna: fountain; G-Groapă: hollow; Gâ-Gârla: marshy brook; I-Izvor: spring or stream; Lz-Laz: recently deforested area; M-Munte: mountain; Ma-Mal: precipice; Mo-Moară: mill; Mş-Muşcel: gentle slope with landslides; Mu-Muchie: crest or summit; Od-Odae: sheepfarm; Pd-Pădure (woodland); Pl-Plai: near-horizontal surface (perhaps with some undulation) on a hill or mountain summit; Pn-Poiana: clearing; Po-Pod: plateau or a step on a hill or mountain slope; Pt-Piatră: stone; Ps-Pisc: ridge or peak; Rp-Râpă: precipice; Sn-Stână: pasture station; Ț-Țarină: agricultural land.

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