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Wonderful places in Romania



Peleş Castle

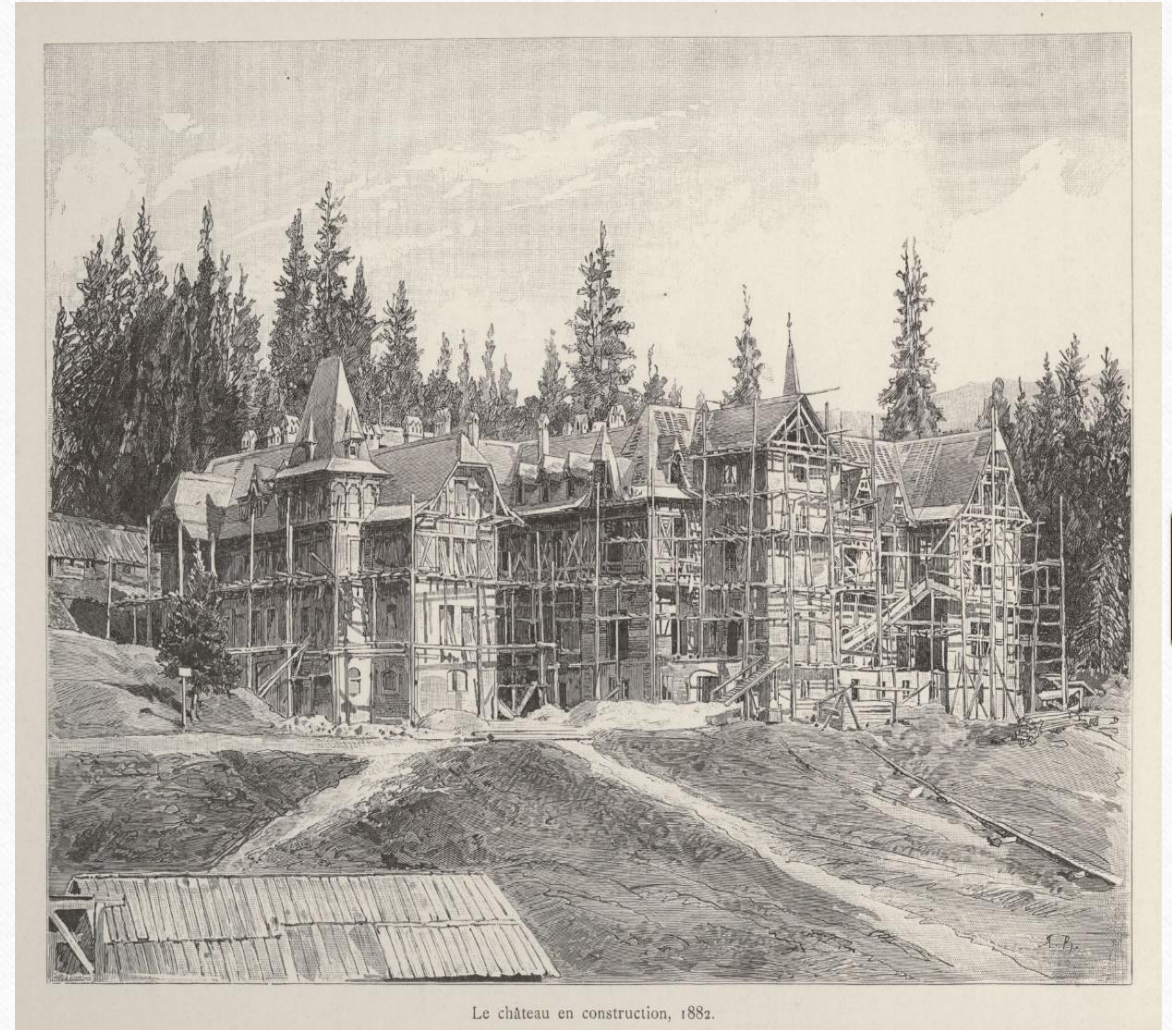
Peleş Castle in Sinaia, the summer residence of the Romanian kings, was built at the request of King Carol I of Romania (1866 - 1914), according to the plans of the architects Johannes Schultz and Karel Liman, and was decorated by the famous decorators J.D. Heymann from Hamburg, August Bembé from Mainz and Bernhard Ludwig from Vienna.

Peleş Castle can be considered the most important historical building in Romania, having a unique character and is, by its historical and artistic value, one of the most important monuments of this kind in Europe of the second half of the 19th century.



Prince Carol I, elected ruler of Romania in 1866, visits Sinaia for the first time in August of that year, remaining delighted by the beauty of those places. At that time, Sinaia was a small mountain village, called Podul Neagului. The ruler decides to build a castle in a secluded and picturesque place: Piatra Arsă.

A few years later, in 1872, he bought the land (1000 pogonas), and the works began in 1873, under the direction of the architect Wilhelm von Doderer. In 1875, the foundation stone of the castle was laid, under which several dozen 20 lei gold coins were buried, the first Romanian coins with the face of Charles I. In 1883, the official inauguration of Peleş took place, which the ruler saw as a "headquarters" of the new dynasty.



Le château en construction, 1882.



- Peles will then gain more and more importance, becoming the summer residence of the Romanian royal family, who spent quite a lot of time here, usually from May to November. Important political meetings were held here, such as the Crown Councils of 1914 (when Romania's neutrality in the First World War, which had just begun, was decided).

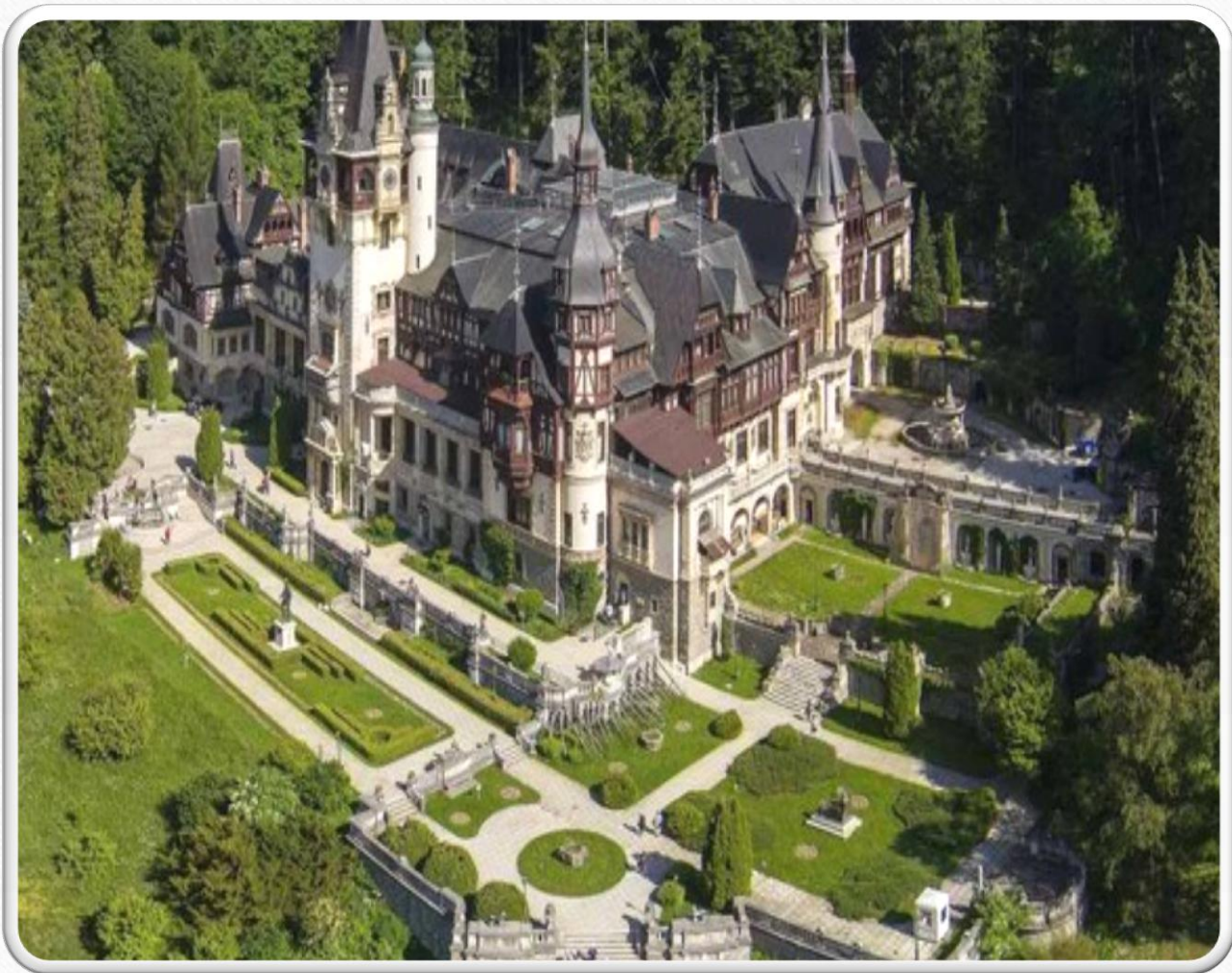
Even after its inauguration in 1883, Peles will undergo further changes, always expanding. The current form was reached only in 1914 (the year of King Carol I's death). The castle has 160 rooms and several entrances and internal staircases. The central tower measures no less than 66 meters high. In addition to the actual Peles, two more smaller buildings were erected in the area, Peleşorul and Foişorul.



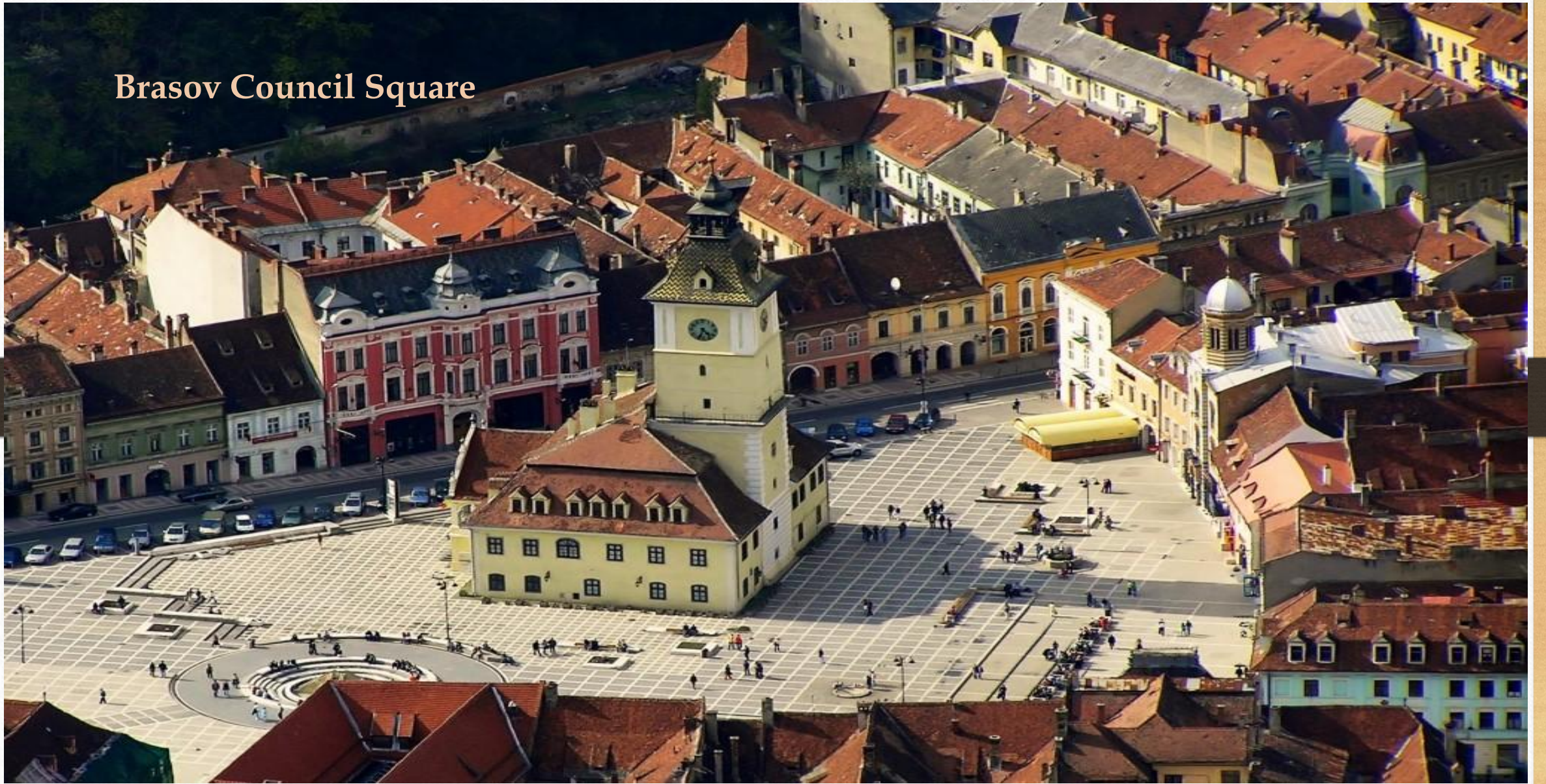
Pelesul also has a theater hall, with a small stage and 60 seats, plus the royal lodge. The castle had very modern facilities for the era in which it was built. For example, the glass ceiling of the hall of honor is mobile, being able to be operated by an electric motor. Since 1883, the castle has had central heating.



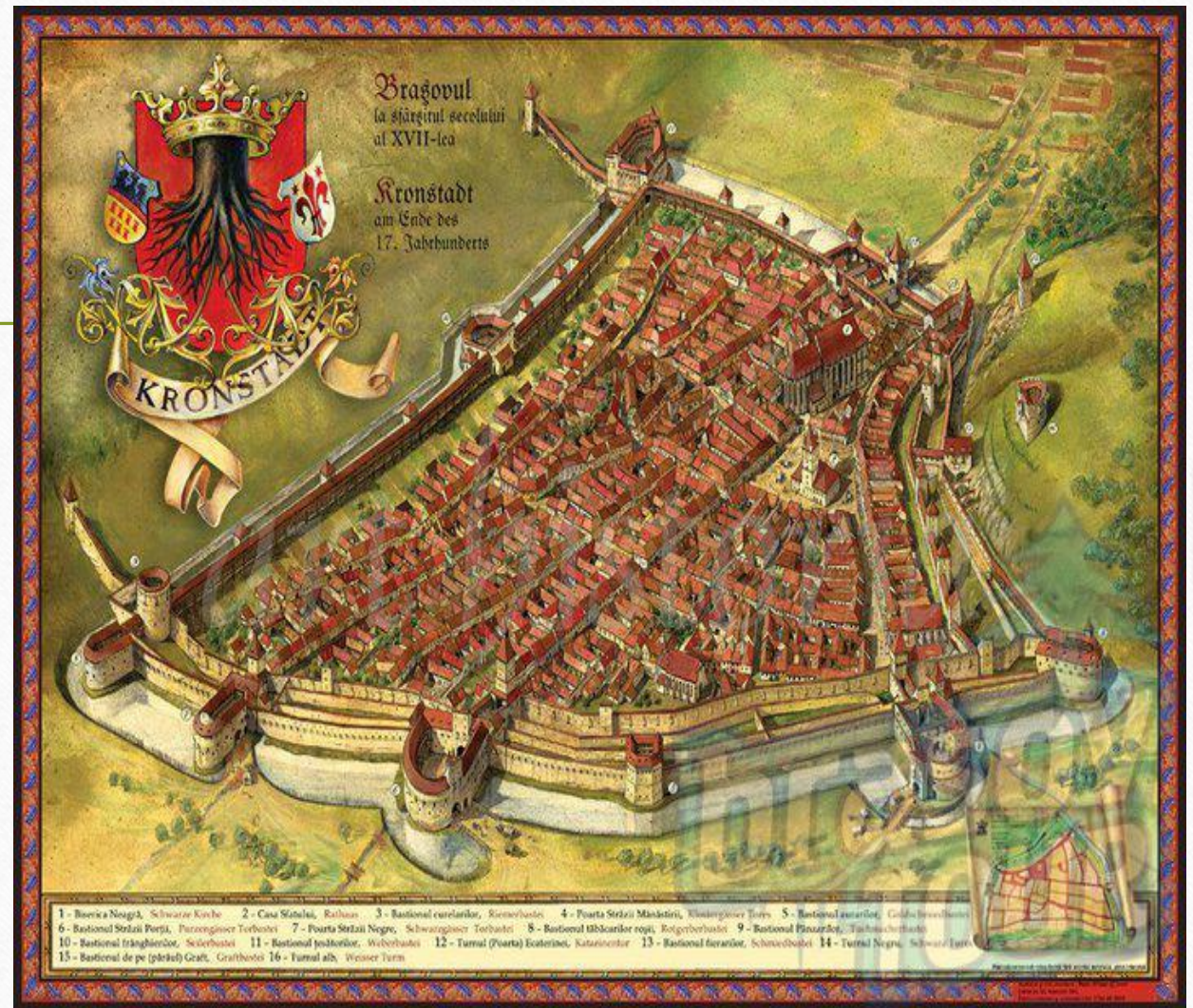
Peles had a special importance for the history of our country. Here, in 1893, the future King Carol II (1893 - 1940) was born. In 1921, in Foisor, his son, King Mihai I, was born. The castle will remain the residence of the royal family until 1948, when it is confiscated by the communist regime. In 1953, Pelesul will become a museum, but it must be said that it could be visited since the time of King Carol I. In 1990, Pelisorul is also open to the public for visiting.



Brasov Council Square

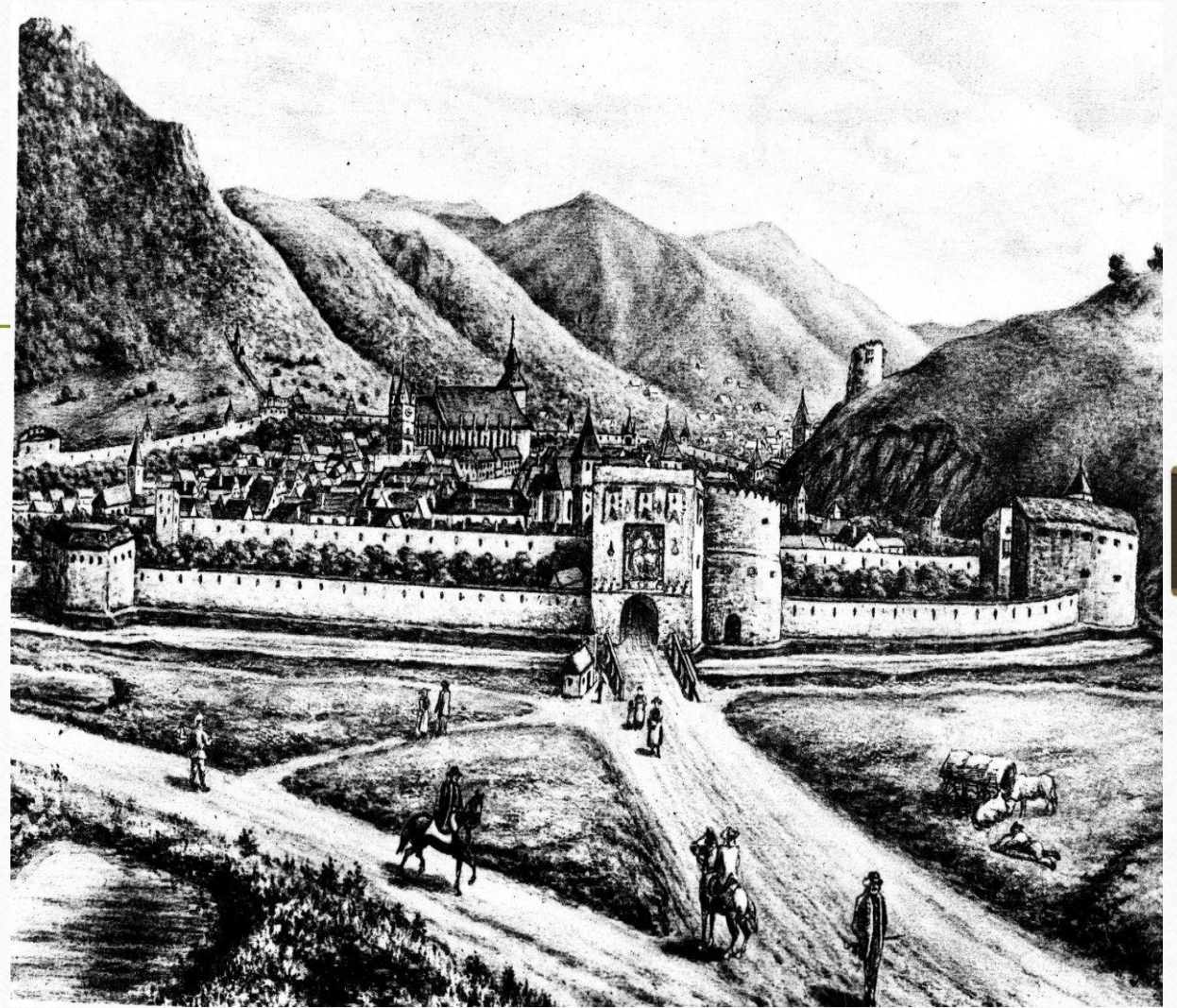


- The Council Square, located in the middle of the historical center of Braşov (Cetatea), has been an important commercial, social and cultural center over time. Starting from 1520, the Council Square in Braşov, called Marktplatz at that time, obtained the right to organize fairs. The square was reached via Vămii street (currently Mureşenilor), after passing through Porta Vămii, one of the oldest gates of the fortress fortifications. Carts with merchants' goods entered here, and on Vămii street, at no. 12, the customs functioned where taxes were paid for the products brought into the fortress.

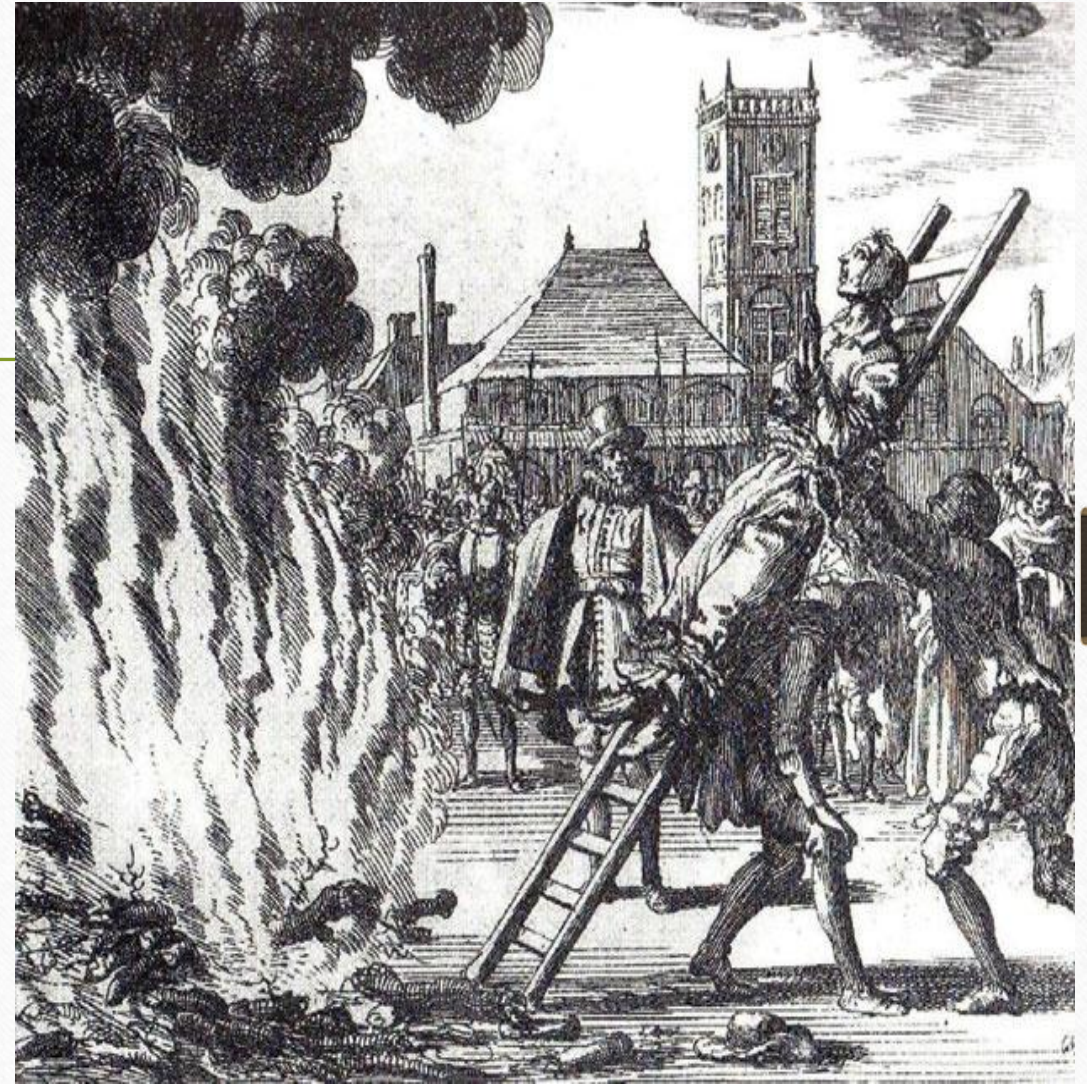


- Since the Middle Ages, Piața Sfatului gathers numerous Saxon, Hungarian and Romanian merchants on the occasion of fairs. Around the former town hall, (now the Council House), each merchant had to place his goods in a certain place, and the city officials had to make sure that these places were respected by the merchants.

- According to the description of the Italian traveler, astronomer and cartographer Giovanni Antonio Magini, around 1596 Brașov was "the emporium of all Transylvania", where they sold their goods, in addition to Saxon, Hungarian, Romanian and Arab, Greek, Turkish, Polish, and Italian merchants.



- In the Middle Ages, in Braşov, in Piaţa Sfatului, witches were judged. Starting with the 16th century, trials against witchcraft were held, which resulted in burning at the stake, immersion in water with weights tied to the feet, hanging or stoning. Women suspected of having a connection with Satan were thrown into the lake in front of the Prefecture at that time, with weights tied to their legs, to the delight of the public, who came to see if they would rise to the surface or not.
- If they survived, another ritual was applied: death at the stake or by gallows. Between the years 1621-1696, approximately 20 trials ended with a punishment.



- The imposing and medieval aspect of the square is given by the architecture of the houses that surround it, historic buildings dating back centuries. Some have undergone changes over time, but most have retained their original appearance.
- The Council Square, called for a short time during the interwar period Freedom Square , is probably the most well-known and visited place in Braşov. Various cultural-artistic events and outdoor concerts are frequently organized in the square

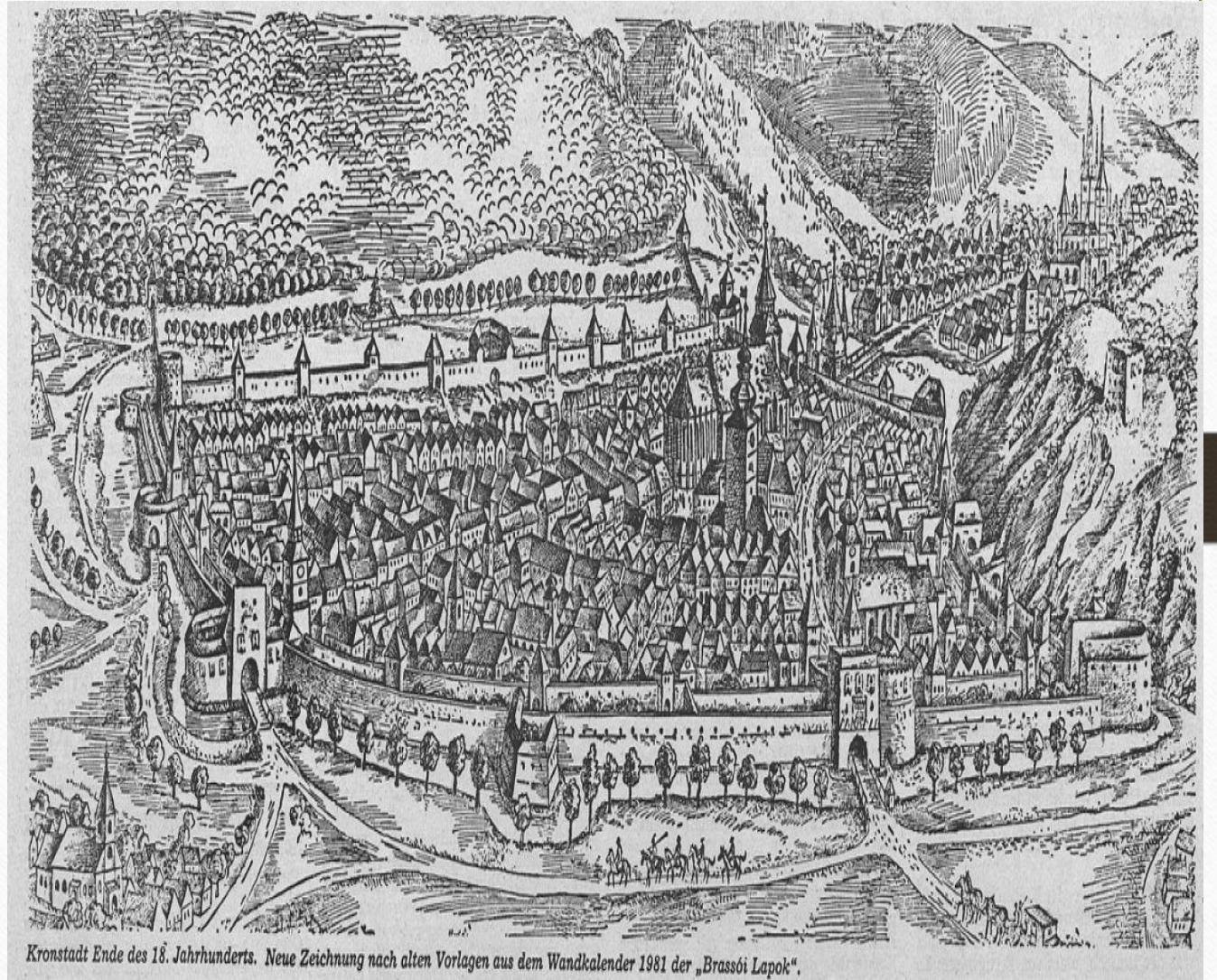


The Black Church



The Black Church from Braşov is one of the most representative Gothic buildings in our country, its construction was carried out in the 14th-15th centuries. It is considered the largest church in Romania, being also the largest place of worship in the Gothic style in Southeast Europe, receiving, at the time of its inauguration, the title of "The largest church between Vienna and Constantinople".

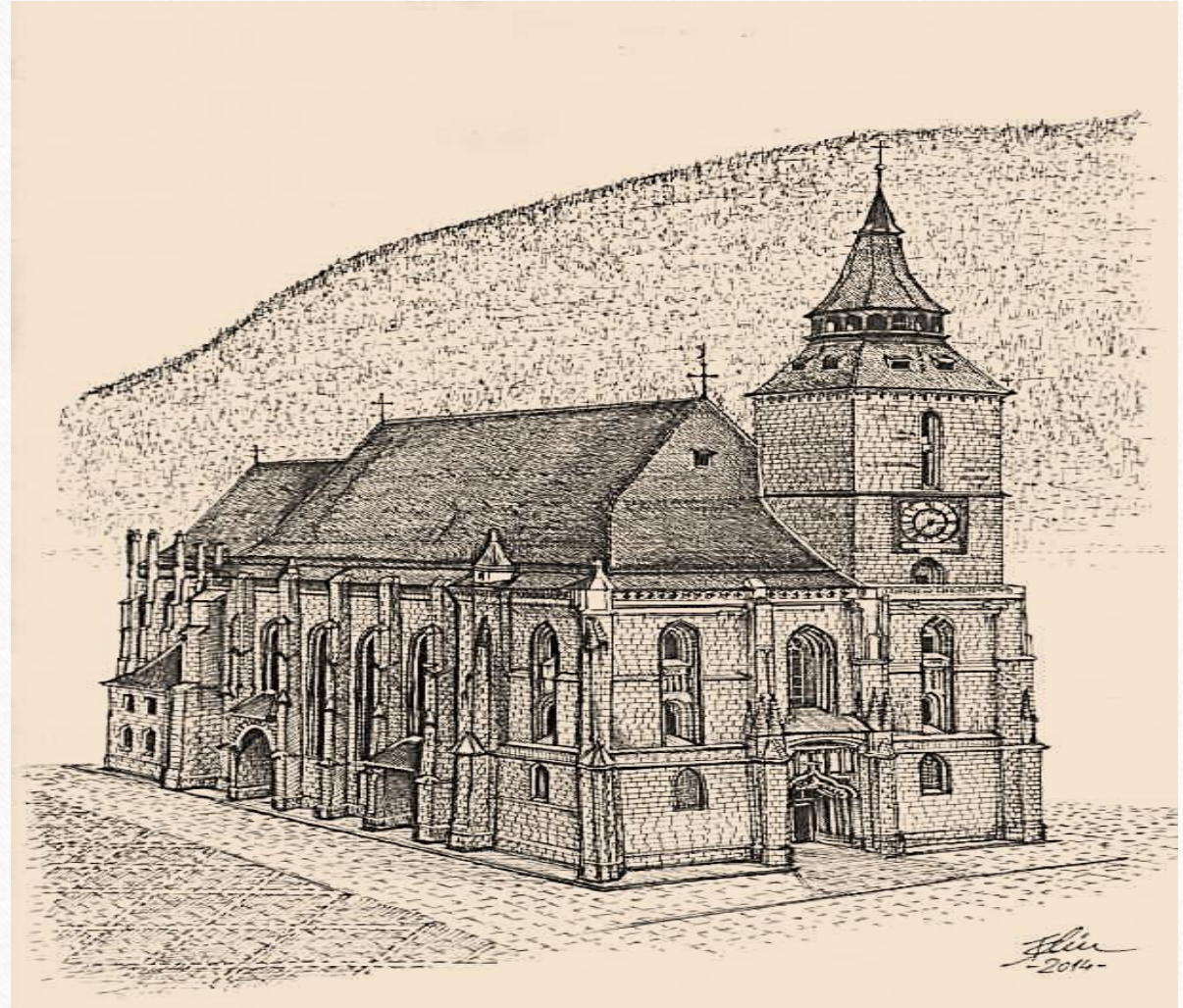
In 1383, the construction of the current church began, at a time when Braşov was experiencing a period of flourishing cultural and economic development, being the most important urban development on the border of Transylvania with Wallachia.



Kronstadt Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts. Neue Zeichnung nach alten Vorlagen aus dem Wandkalender 1981 der „Brassói Lapok“.

In 1421, the Ottoman invasion took place, and the work on the construction of the castle was stopped, all forces being directed to the construction and strengthening of the city's fortifications.

Later, the construction works were resumed but according to a much simplified project, so that after the great earthquake of 1471, the height of the southern tower was also revised, being raised to a lower level than originally thought.



In 1477, after 94 years, the construction works were completed, the church, originally Roman Catholic, built in Gothic style, receiving the patron saint of Saint Mary (Marienkirche), a fact attested even today by the fresco of Mary, located in the hall of the southern gate.

In 1499, the existence of an organ is documented, which at that time was one of the largest in Europe, and in 1514, a clock and the bells in the church tower were built.

After, in the first part of the 16th century, the Protestant Reformation entered Transylvania and spread largely thanks to the humanist and pedagogue Johannes Honterus (1498-1549), in 1542 the first Evangelical-Lutheran service was celebrated at the Black Church .



In the following 150 years, the construction was affected by several major earthquakes, requiring extensive restoration work, but thwarted by the great fire of April 21, 1689, which also engulfed the parish church, destroying the roof and the furniture inside. For a good period of time, the church remained in a state of ruin, with the roof and walls blackened by fire and smoke, a fact that gave the locality its popular name - "Black Church", a name that would be formalized much later.



The building measures 89 meters long and 38 meters wide, its considerable dimensions allowing for the participation of about 5,000 people in services. The total area of the church occupies 2500 m², the blocks from which the walls are built have a volume of 9000 m³ and the surface of the church roof measures approximately 4500 m².



Bran Castle



The Bran Castle is a historical and architectural monument, one of the main tourist attractions of Transylvania, being located in the Rucar-Bran Corridor, between the Bucegi and Piatra Craiului Mountains, 30 kilometers from Braşov. In the beginning it was built on a rock, to be a "transitory" fortress, with a strategic and military purpose, going to undergo numerous transformations over time, being erected by the Teutonic knights between 1211-1225. Later, with the passing of the years, the construction underwent important changes, such as the embrasures that served military purposes, were transformed into windows, and the rooms were painted with Saxon motifs.



The name of the castle comes from the Slavic language, where "brana" means gate. In fact, the fortress was originally thought of as a "passage" for the people of the area and beyond.

Over time, the castle was the property of several personalities, such as: Sigismund of Luxemburg, Mircea the Elder, Iancu of Hunedoara, Queen Maria. At one point the building was even owned by the state, i.e. the local authority of Braşov.



After 1948 the castle was abandoned, because the royal family was expelled from the country, but in 1956 it was reopened for visits as a museum.

The castle currently houses the Bran Museum, which is spread over four floors and exhibits collections of ceramics, furniture, weapons and armor.

In 2000, the Romanian state returned Bran Castle to Dominic de Habsburg and his two sisters, as heirs of Princess Ileana.



The first documentary attestation of Bran Castle is represented by a deed issued on November 19, 1377 to the king of Hungary, Ludovic I of Anjou. Through this document, the people of Brasov received the privilege of building a stone fortress in Bran.

The myth of Count Dracula is based on the fiction novel "Dracula", published in Great Britain in 1897, with the Irish writer Bram Stoker as its author. The characters in the novel "Dracula" are the result of the author's fantasy, but the deeds of Count Dracula and his end are based on popular beliefs related to the existence of evil forces, such as vampires or undead.



The ruler of Wallachia, Vlad Țepeș, was associated with Dracula, although historical data does not confirm his long presence at Bran Castle. However, the area is promoted through images of a vampire, who fed on the blood of enemies.

Bran Castle is known by tourists from all over the world as Dracula's Castle. This is also one of the reasons why it was included by CNN journalists in a top 10 of medieval castles.

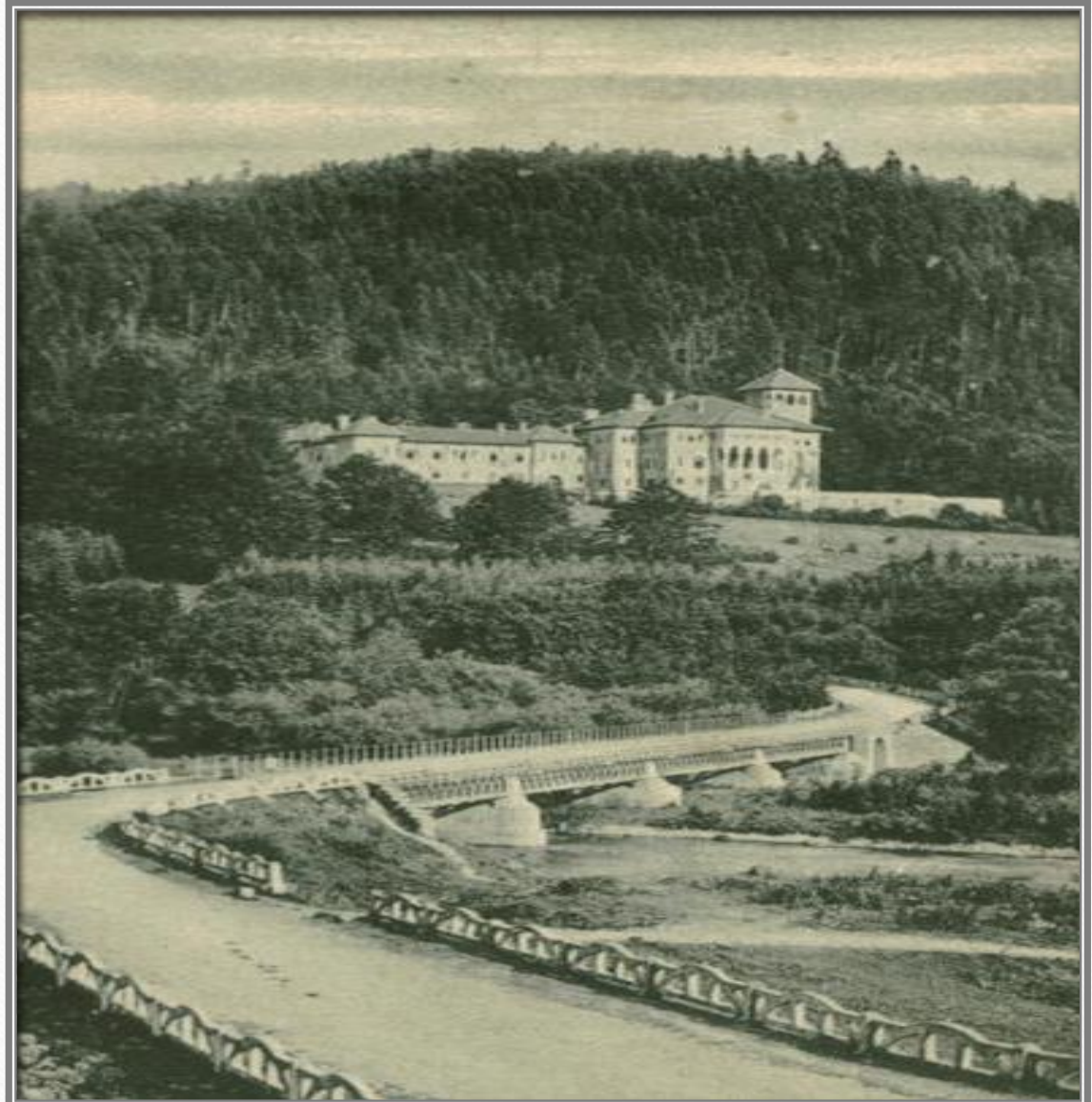


Cantacuzino Castle



Cantacuzino Castle from Buşteni city is a great architectural, historical, documentary and artistic value, was built in 1911 at the request of Prince Gheorghe Grigore Cantacuzino (Nababul), former minister of Romania between 1899-1900, 1904-1907.

The castle, built in neo-Romanian style, is surrounded by a park whose paths lead you to waterfalls, artesian fountains and a grotto. The building was made of stone and brick according to the plans of the architect Grigore Cerchez and covers an area of 3148 square meters.



Stained glass, stucco, consoles, ceilings with visible and painted beams, balustrades made of wood, stone or wrought iron, ironwork cast in bronze and richly ornamented, represent a mastery of the artistic craft. The fireplaces made of Albești stone, ornamented with polychrome mosaics, complete the atmosphere of a noble residence, increasing the value of the edifice.

The castle has a collection of heraldry representing the coats of arms of the noble families imprisoned with the Cantacuzinos and a frieze of votive paintings with the illustrious members of the Cantacuzino family from the mountain branch.



Rasnov Fortress



Râșnov Fortress is the fortified complex located on the limestone hill south of the city of Râșnov in Brașov County, one of the best-preserved fortified complexes in Transylvania. The oldest structures preserved to this day date from the 14th century, probably on the site of the wooden fortification erected by the Teutonic Knights at the beginning of the 13th century.



Râșnov Fortress, through its strategic position, controlled the access to Transylvania from the Râșnoavei Valley. Given the importance of the mountain passes to the southern Carpathian territories, the Bran road was also militarily supervised after the expulsion of the Teutonic knights, the Hungarian royalty entrusting the Râșnov fortification to the knights of the order of the Holy Cross. They were subordinated either to the committee of the Szeklers or to the voivode of Transylvania. Until the customs moved from Rucăr to Bran and the construction of the Bran fortress to protect the royal customs at the end of the 14th century.



A dark episode in the history of Râșnov and its city happened a century later, in 1718. A plague epidemic hit the Bârșe County then, and Râșnov, with 1,161 deaths, according to the lists drawn up by the Brașov magistrate, was the fourth locality from the area in terms of number of victims, after Brașov, Săcele and Prejmer. In the same year, a fire destroyed the entire city and reached the citadel, destroying houses in the inner courtyard and the chapel.

After the repair, the fortress was used again in the 18th century, but the earthquake of 1802 destroyed part of the towers. The last time the inhabitants of Râșnov used the fortress as a place of refuge was during the Revolution of 1848-1849.



Have a pleasant trip!

