



Article

The Assessment of the Authenticity and Conservation Status of Cultural Landscapes in Southern Transylvania (Romania)

Marioara Pascu ^{1,2} and Ileana Pătru-Stupariu ^{3,*} 

¹ The International Association for Landscape Ecology (IALE) Romania, 050095 Bucharest, Romania; marioara_pascu@yahoo.com

² Technical College “Dimitrie Ghika”, 605200 Comănești, Romania

³ Department of Regional Geography and Environment, Faculty of Geography, University of Bucharest, 010041 Bucharest, Romania

* Correspondence: ileana.stupariu@geo.unibuc.ro

Received: 6 December 2020; Accepted: 26 January 2021; Published: 1 February 2021



Abstract: The vernacular architectural style is on the verge of disappearing in Transylvania because of the depopulation of the Saxon villages of German origin as a result of massive migration to Germany. The nomination of Hărman cultural property on the UNESCO list is part of an international legal framework, and the Convention on the Vernacular Architectural Heritage protects this architectonic style because it represents the expression of a community’s culture, as well as its relations with the territory and cultural diversity. The proposed area includes a 63.47 ha perimeter of the historic centre of Hărman, consisting of a compact group of 260 houses and the entire fortified Evangelical Church. A buffer zone of 290.09 ha is included alongside this area. Thus, we propose that Hărman be nominated for the Cultural Evolutive Landscape Category under cultural criteria ii, iii, and v. The assessment of the authenticity and conservation status of Hărman cultural property was carried out by applying the following criteria: form and design, materials and substances, use and functions, and location and positioning, which apply to the tangible features of the landscape. Furthermore, the evaluation of intangible heritage was achieved by applying the following criteria: traditions, techniques and management system, language and other forms of intangible heritage, spirit, and feelings.

Keywords: vernacular architecture; authenticity; conservation; cultural heritage; village Hărman (Honigberg); Saxons; Transylvania

1. Introduction

According to the UNESCO operational guide, a cultural property complies with the authenticity conditions if its cultural values are honestly and credibly expressed through a range of attributes, such as “form and design, material and substances, use and functions, traditions, management techniques and systems, location and positioning, language and other forms of immaterial patrimony, spirit and sensation, and other internal and external factors” [1]. The UNESCO criteria target the assessment of the tangible as well as intangible patrimonial elements in the landscape. The immaterial aspects belonging to culture have an identity and memorial value [2] and they need special preservation, saving, and protection measures [3]. The Saxons’ culture can be observed at the level of the analyzed vernacular architecture, language and dialect, and building techniques, as well as of the interior of their houses, their products, and design [4]. The specificity of the Saxon architectural style developed gradually within the eight centuries of colonization of the southern part of Transylvania. It developed following the needs of people, with the historical, political, and economic events that influenced their life, as well as with their culture and specific lifestyle [5] and, based on this relationship between the

culture and the vernacular architecture of houses, it became an important instrument of promoting cultural sustainability [6]. Taking into consideration that most of the resilience is registered by the Saxon material patrimony [7] because of the high degree of preservation of the Saxon traditional houses and the fortified citadel of Harman, this becomes an important cultural resource, as well as an important factor in preserving the cultural memory and social knowledge, ensuring continuity [8]. The enrolment of Harman cultural property on the UNESCO list provides an important contribution to the increase of the resilience of the Saxon material patrimony [7] to the preservation of local culture and patrimony as a sustainability objective [9–12] towards the preservation of cultural diversity [9,13]. The nomination of the Hărman rural site on World Heritage List UNESCO is necessary for the preservation of the cultural identity and the territorial specificity [14] of the cultural property, considering these attributes are at risk of disappearing under the socio-economic impact and the landscape dynamics impact [15–19]. There is a risk of the appearance of fundamental rupture between the current structure of the landscape and the processes that shaped it in the past [20], if it is not soon given an international protection status to preserve the current heritage of the Saxons. The nomination on the UNESCO list shall increase the resilience of the historical center in front of the risk factors. The vernacular patrimony built in the historical centre of Hărman is subject to economic pressures and to the changes that affect the landscape in general, meaning that its heritages could be regarded as the only solution to ensure continuity, authenticity, and integrity. The nomination shall streamline and guarantee the preservation process for the quality of the cultural values of the Hărman cultural landscape, as well as ensure the international protection legal framework on a big land surface of 63.47 ha and a buffer area of 290.09 ha. Currently, the historical centre as a whole, as a compact and coherent center, does not benefit from protected status; only two singularly treated elements benefit from protection at the national level—in this case, the fortified church complex and the house on Dorobanți Street, no. 81. We propose nominating Hărman in the evolutive cultural landscape patrimony category under cultural criteria ii, iii, and v.

Criteria ii. Hărman represents a remarkable example in terms of vernacular architecture, monumental arts, and urbanism in a time frame that extends for more than eight centuries. The settlement represents a fusion of the Saxon vernacular architecture brought by the Saxon colonists from their area of origin, along with defensive elements in the form of fortified cities. The vernacular architecture reflects the social, economic, and environmental traditions [21], considering their economy was based on plant growing and animal rearing. The coherence of the style, the form and construction materials used, the functionality of the buildings and the annexes, as well as the expertise of the tradition informally perpetuated form the so-called vernacular style [22].

Criteria iii. Hărman preserves a unique and exceptional testimony of a disappearing cultural tradition. The Hărman rural site is a historical testimony of the Saxons' colonization process in Transylvania. The Saxon settlements became vulnerable under the impact of irreversible changes in the past two decades, and the cultural heritage of the Saxons could currently disappear.

Criteria v. The village preserves the marks of human intervention on the territory through the division of the lands, the central position of the fortress type church, and the spatial organization forming a coherent entity with historical value [23]. It also preserves the elements of a history marked by the invasions of the Turks and the Mongolians in the XII–XIII centuries [24], which caused the Saxon communities to adapt by building fortified churches.

2. Materials and Methods

The purpose of the research is to assess the authenticity and preservation stage of the Hărman rural site for the registration in the UNESCO world heritage in the evolving cultural landscape category. The research methodology is complex as it targeted the planimetry and geometry of constructions, construction system and materials used, use and functions, traditions, techniques and management system, language and other forms of intangible heritage, spirit and feelings, and state of preservation [25], abiding by the international requirements in this field from this point of view.

The research questions were as follows:

1. What is the degree of authenticity and preservation of the Saxon cultural heritage of Harman?
2. Can the cultural property of Harman be nominated on the UNESCO WHL?

2.1. Inventory

In the first stage, we performed the inventory of the Saxon buildings in the historical centre based on the Saxon homes map in Härman (Honigberg) from 1940, found in the archive of the Evangelical Parish. According to this map and to the information on site offered by Mr Hans Greff, in 1940, there were 331 Saxon buildings. Of the 331 Saxon buildings, 260 are currently preserved.

2.2. Analytical Sheets

The main data collection instrument on-site was the Saxon buildings authenticity state assessment sheet (Appendix A: Tables A1 and A2). In the absence of a standard UNESCO assessment sheet regarding the assessment of the landscape's authenticity status, we transposed the descriptive criteria in the operational guide (paragraph 82) in a multiple-choice assessment analytical sheet applicable to the tangible heritage. The criteria included the form and design of the analytical sheet (50 points). This criterion tracks if the combination of the specific elements that created the form, plan, structure, and style of the landscape in the past are also found in the present. We tracked whether or not the Saxon buildings preserve their initial forms if the traditional architectonic elements related to the shape of the roof, the shape of the windows and of the gate, the decorative elements, the volumes, the chimney and cellar, the attic, and the window shutters ventilation are currently preserved. Criteria: materials and substances (15 points). These criteria assess the preservation of the traditional materials and the physical elements at the vernacular architecture structure level. Through the combination of the construction materials used, the Saxons managed to develop a vernacular architectural style adapted to a series of requirements regarding resistance and durability, bioclimatic properties, health preservation, demographics, and tradition. In this context, the vernacular architecture of the Saxons has the mark of the cultural and ethnical factor. The traditional techniques used by the Saxon ethics reflect the best solutions checked in time for the local environmental conditions, such as the inclination of the lands, the wind direction, the Sun's position, and the presence of a water stream [26]. This criterion was used to check the preservation of the traditional materials at roof level (flake roof tiles), as well as the wood of the gates, windows, and shutters. Criteria: utility and functions (17 points). In the assessment of the authenticity state, we included the following items as criteria in the grid: the building keeps its original function; the building mostly lost its original utility and, through its architecture, preserves the marks of the past functions; and the building completely lost its functions and utility, partially preserving the marks of the past functions. Each landscape attribute has in the past performed a series of functions and utilities at the local and regional level and they evolved in time at the same time as a society. Some of these continued unchanged, obtained new functions, or fully disappeared. The shelter [24] and refuge functions [27] have disappeared; only the sacred space function remained and new functions appeared, such as historical, aesthetic, cultural-touristic, and symbolical ones.

2.3. The Visual Assessment of the Preservation State

Appendix A: Table A3 for the vernacular patrimony built with a focus on the physical state of the Saxon buildings. The following aspects were considered: the general aspect of the façade; the presence or absence of the cracks; the external plaster peeling off or not; cracks in the roof; and the urgency in performing significant repairs of the gate, facade, and roof.

2.4. In Situ Reconstitution, In Situ Observations

The historical age criterion (18 points) was one of the most difficult criteria to match in the buildings authenticity assessment process, with the official information sources being limited. In these conditions, we used the reconstruction of age-based on external elements such as the size of the house,

the position on the road axis, the width of the lot, the type of windows, the shape of the roof, and the construction materials [28]. The vernacular architecture was developed in subsequent execution stages starting with the XVIII th century until the XX th century, where each historical period meant the existence of architectonic peculiarities. Based on the analysis of the specific features for a period, of the benchmarking as well as of the existing writings inside or outside the building, and of the monographic sources as well as based on the information obtained from the owners, we restored on situ three categories of buildings according to their historical age. The first representative category is formed by houses built before 1850—these are smaller than those built after 1850, are not tall, have one or two big chimneys, and are located at the biggest distance from the road axis. The information collected from the owners helped validate and connect the theoretical bibliographic sources with the reality in situ. For example, the owners of the houses in Figure 1 confirmed that, on the second window beam, the year 1834 is registered, and the second one was dated according to the external inscription, which says 1840.



Figure 1. The Saxons' houses built before 1850 (Photo: Pascu M, 2018)

The in situ reconstitution needed careful examination of the architectonic peculiarities of the buildings with dates known exactly and their analysis compared with the remaining buildings; the information was also connected with that obtained from the local guide, Mr Hans Greff. Based on this, it was possible to establish the second age category corresponding to the period 1850–1900. As opposed to the first category, the planimetry and volumetrics of the building are much more elaborate; the roofs are taller and ridged, with slope brakes, triangle, or flattened pinion; and they are conceived in the form of a household complex and some have town influences (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Saxon houses build between 1850 and 1900: (a) details of traditional Saxon's house: planimetry, volume, roof shape, cellar ventilation, and original tiles—situated on the Avram Iancu street; (b) details of a traditional house: shape of the roof with pinion, cellar ventilation, tiles, gate model, planimetry, and volume—situated on Dorobanti street (Photo: Pascu M, 2018).

The third category is formed by the Saxon buildings built after 1900. These are big buildings, with heavy exterior decorations, with stucco on the facade [28], which keeps the proportion of the

shapes and the design, and bricks replace the river stone masonry. This criterion of the historical age is considered the most important; it is addressed to everybody and is accepted by everybody [29].

2.5. Cartographic Supports

The first wave of German colonists arrived in Transylvania during King Geza II, between 1141 and 1162 [30–32], but the highest intensity of the migrating phenomenon was registered between the XII and XIV centuries [32–34]. German colonists (Saxons) had administrative autonomy, as well as economic, political, and tax privileges, and maintained the socio-cultural traits of their native area (religion, language, dialect, social organization pattern, traditional activities, clothing and customs, and so on) [31,32]. They also created human dwellings with a particular shape. Regarding the origin of the Hărman name in the German Honigberg, many hypotheses were issued, including that according to which the name of the locality was brought by German colonists from their region of origin, identified in Germany by the name of Honigberg [35] in Bad Kreuznach (Figure 3), a hypothesis supported by Friedrich Teutsch as well [36].

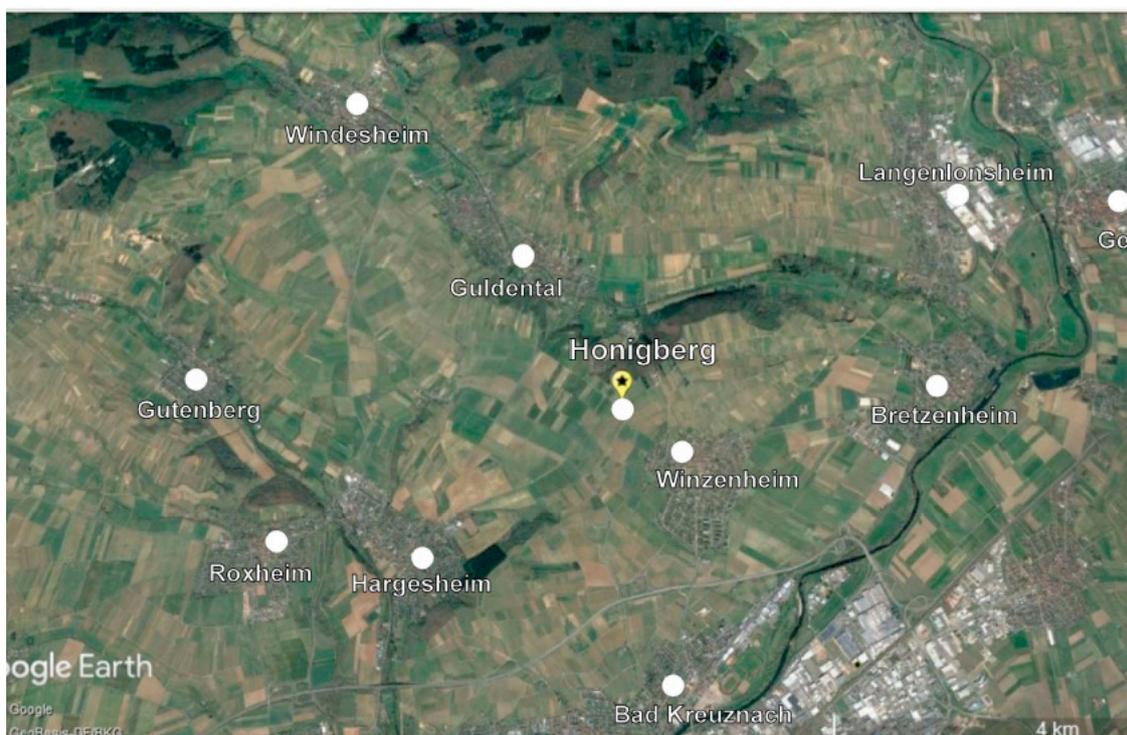


Figure 3. Honigberg toponym in Germany (Google Maps).

On the Josephine Map of Transylvania from 1769–1773 (Figure 4), you can notice the shape and structure of Hărman, with the main streets being easily found.

You can notice the relatively proportional spatial development, as well as the symmetry and the compact and parallel nature of the streets specific to the Saxon settlements from the XVII th century. One can notice the development of the settlement according to the Cardinal points; the past streets are still preserved today. These streets ensured the connection with the main commercial roads. On the Josephine Map of 1880, Hărman keeps the same form, with the difference that the territory of the village extends to the north, through the extension of the Andrei Șaguna Street, and a new street appears in the south, Gării Street. We note that the Hartman rural site patrimony, along with many other cases in Mediterranean Europe, has not been affected by the expansion of communication paths [25], but rather by the lack of public policies regarding the preservation of patrimony and education of the local population.



Figure 4. The Josephine Map of Transylvania from 1769–1773: (a) Hărman in 1769, (b) Hărman in 1773 (https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ridicarea_topografic%C4%83_iozefin%C4%83).

2.6. Questionnaires and SPSS Statistical Analysis

The degree of authenticity and preservation of the Saxon houses was subsequently correlated with the questionnaire method, meaning we used the cultural significance index to find out which is the measure by which this index could explain the results obtained upon assessing the authenticity and preservation stage of the material patrimony. Thus, the questionnaires were applied to 35 inhabitants. A series of values were associated with the main attributes of the Saxon's tangible heritage: historical, patrimonial, spiritual, aesthetic, symbolic, and economic. The respondents assessed the cultural significance of the Saxon tangible heritage through the answer choices: appreciate, are indifferent, or do not appreciate. The results obtained by the degree of authenticity and preservation were considered dependent variables and the results obtained regarding cultural significance were independent variables. Work hypothesis; H0—there is a connection between the two variables.

2.7. Intangible Heritage

Therefore, the criteria traditions, techniques and management system, language and other types of immaterial patrimony, and spirit and feelings [1] target the immaterial patrimonial element of the landscape, requiring an adapted methodology, which is the reason we used the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview. Criteria: traditions, techniques, and management system. The collective mind preserves some aspects regarding the rural management system, the agricultural practices, the traditional activities, and other immaterial customs. The cartographic and historical sources also register the special efforts made by the Saxons in building a system of channels that transport water from the Olt river (2 km away) to the citadel. The guides of the fortified citadel explain this detail to tourists, recreating the image from the past. The museum in the citadel recreates themes of some aspects in the life and traditional occupations of the Saxons in Hărman. Criteria: language and other forms of intangible heritage. Language is the ethnic self-identification factor, being the main instrument for transmitting culture, and in the geographical research, it is shown through toponyms [37]. Currently, the Saxon toponyms have been replaced with names of Romanian origin. The cultural transmission means were sensitive to the demographic phenomena and the role of the church and the school also became less significant [37]. The two institutions represented the main vectors of distribution of the Saxon culture and traditions and the role of the church became significantly less important. Criteria: spirit and feelings. This criterion refers to those feelings and experiences currently shown by the inhabiting population towards the Saxon heritage. Using a questionnaire, we assessed the frequency of the feelings local people show towards the Saxon heritage, targeting in particular the following: the feeling of belonging, the feeling of attachment, the memory, the regret for the departure of the Saxons from Hărman, and the historical feeling.

3. Results

3.1. Tangible Heritage

According to the inventory of Saxons buildings made on the base of the map from 1940 and the information on situ offered by Mr Hans Greff, in 1940, there were 331 Saxon buildings. Of the 331 Saxon buildings, 260 are currently preserved, while 71 were demolished or completely transformed, representing 21.45% of the total. After assessing the authenticity status based on Table A1, individually applied, building by building, it was noticed that, from the total of 260 Saxon buildings, 19.23% have an exceptional authenticity, 33.46% have a good authenticity, 31.92% average, and 15.38% low. The percentage of buildings in a low authenticity state is relatively small (15.38%), an aspect favorable to the nomination. Moreover, the weight of those with exceptional and good authenticity sums up to 52.69%. From a territorial point of view, the authenticity state is the following on the streets (Table 1, Figure 5).

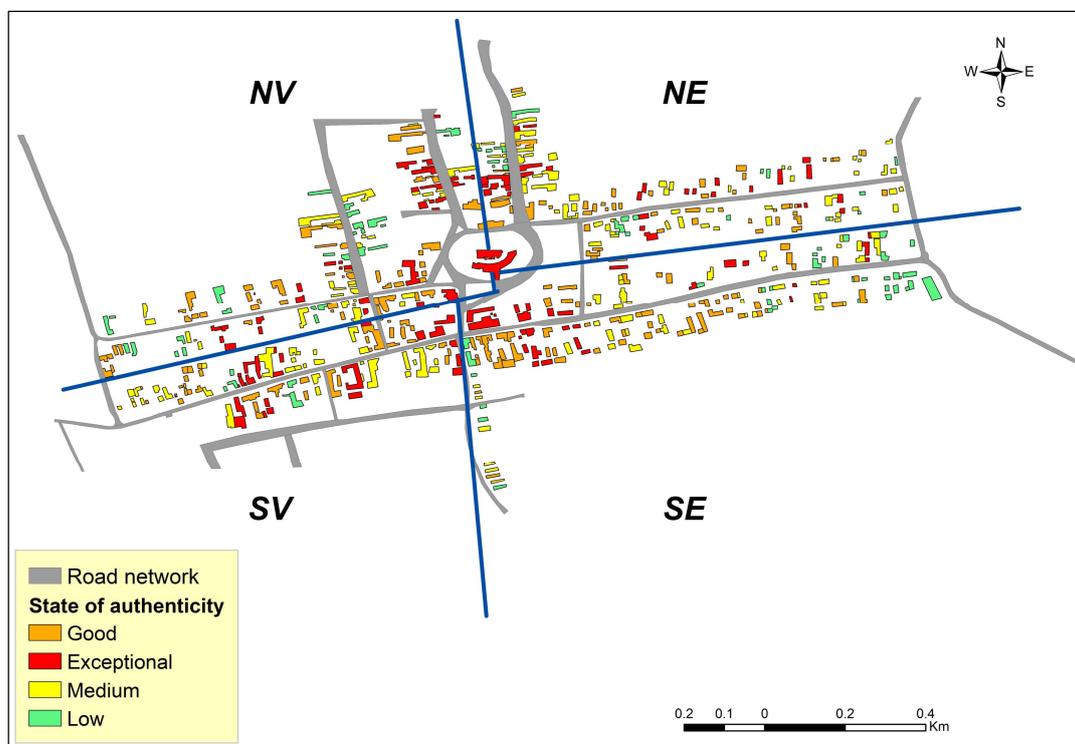


Figure 5. The territorial distribution of the Saxon buildings' authenticity state (map obtained through the vectorization of the cadastral plans L_35_76_C_d_1_IV_t, L_35_76_C_d_2_III_c, L_35_76_C_d_3_II_c, and L_35_76_C_d_4_I_c, and the personal inventory data) (Author: Pascu M, 2019).

Table 1. Territorial distribution of authenticity state of Saxons' buildings.

Street	Exceptional		Good		Average		Low	
	N	% *	N	% *	N	% *	N	% *
Mihai Viteazul	11	14.47	30	39.47	21	27.63	14	18.42
Ștefan cel Mare	10	18.86	18	33.96	18	33.96	7	13.20
Andrei Șaguna	4	21.05	3	15.78	9	47.36	3	15.78
Dorobanți	7	43.75	5	31.25	3	18.75	1	6.25
Avram Iancu-Pieții	11	30.55	15	41.66	5	13.88	5	13.88
Ecaterina Teodoroiu	1	7.69	3	23.07	5	38.46	4	30.76
Eremia Grigorescu	6	17.14	11	31.42	16	45.71	2	5.71
Gării	0	0	2	16.66	6	50%	4	33.33
Total	50	19.23 **	87	33.46 **	83	31.92 **	40	15.38 **

* the percentage value is calculated from the total number of buildings situated on each street, ** the percentage value is calculated for the total value of 260 buildings.

In relation to the spatial distribution of the degree of authenticity of the tangible heritage in the north-east region, a very high concentration of buildings with exceptional, good, and average authenticity was noticed, an aspect due to the following criteria: form (the original form of the roof, the traditional model of the tiles on the house, original size, chimney, ventilations, inscriptions, and ornaments), age, and functions. In the north-west of Hărman, we have also noticed a high density of the buildings with exceptional and good authenticity values determined by the following criteria: form and design (the original one for the roof, gate, windows, size, and planimetry), traditional materials (of the roof covering, windows), age (between 1850 and 1900), inscriptions, ornaments of the facades, and functions. The south-west and south-east sectors suffered the most transformation, so that the weight of buildings with average and low authenticity has higher values, as the criteria of construction materials (the traditional ones were replaced with modern ones) and shape (the traditional shape of the gate, of the windows disappeared, and so on) were not observed, new functions appeared—commercial, administrative, recreational, public catering, and so on. Still, half have high authenticity as the criteria shape (of the roof, windows), size, and age (all are from the 1850–1900 period) have been met. The south-east sector can be noticed through high values of authenticity as all buildings are very old (they all correspond to the 1850–1900 period); they also comply with some aspects regarding the design and form criteria, but the most vulnerable to changes were traditional construction materials, especially those used for gates, windows, and roof. We emphasize that the planimetry and value of the construction remained untouched.

The traditional construction materials most replaced were the flake tiles and wood. Currently, only 80 buildings still have the original tiles, representing 30.76% of the total, and most are located on the following streets: Mihai Viteazul (18), Avram Iancu (19), and Ștefan cel Mare (16). A total of 107 buildings maintained the traditional form and model of the gate, that is, 41.15% of the total, out of which 60 gates are made of wood, representing 23.07%, and 47 maintained the built access, but replaced the wood with sheet and wrought iron. It is considered that form and design increase the intrinsic value of the building, such as the aesthetic and cultural value [38]. It is noticed that, from a total of 260 Saxon buildings, 183 maintained the traditional shape of the roof, representing 70.38% of the total. The results show us that the local community appreciates the role of the heritage in local identity [39–41].

As a result of the on situ assessment, it was noticed that 68.84% of the total buildings analysed are in a very good preservation state, 23.46% are in a good state, 5.76% acceptable, and 1.92% in a degradation state (Figure 6).

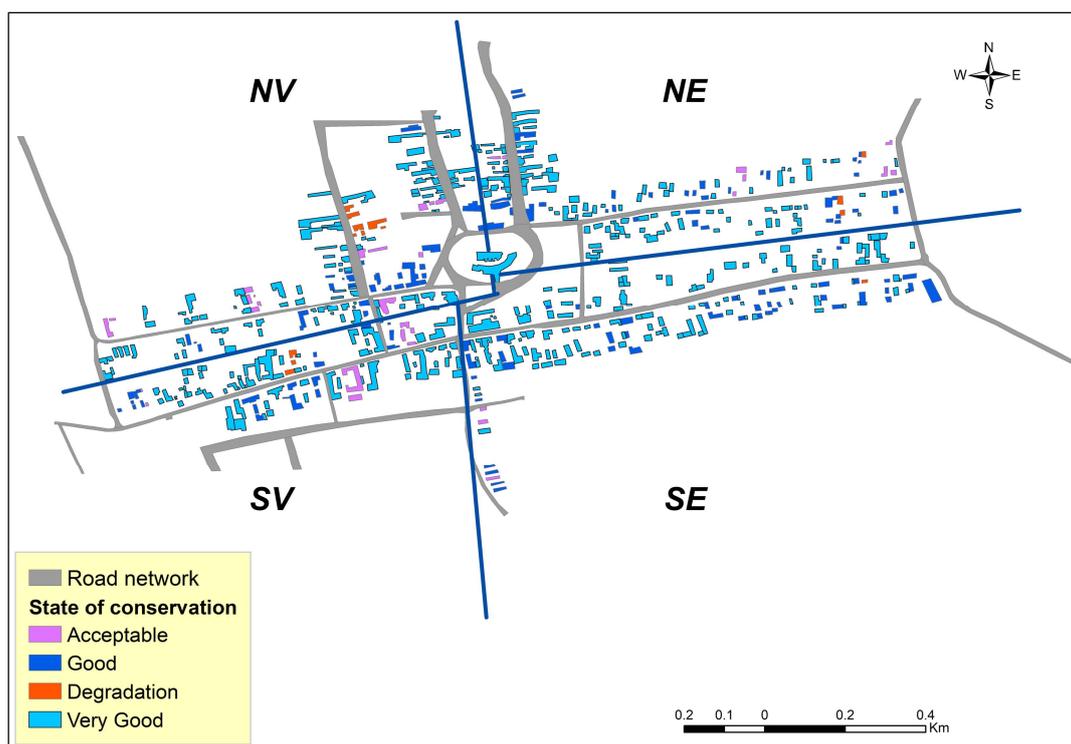


Figure 6. The territorial distribution of the Saxon buildings’ authenticity state (map obtained through the vectorization of the cadastral plans L_35_76_C_d_1_IV_t, L_35_76_C_d_2_III_c, L_35_76_C_d_3_II_c, and L_35_76_C_d_4_I_c, and the personal inventory data) (Author: Pascu M, 2019).

The factors that have contributed to the preservation of the authenticity of the material patrimony are the following: Evangelic church, Saxon’s diaspora from Germany, uncertain property rights of buildings during the communist period, group cohesion, and local community [7].

The SPSS analysis proved, through the Spearman correlation coefficient, that there is no strong connection between the two variables. The values of the Spearman coefficient registered the following values: -0.119 , which indicates a null correlation, and 0.268 and -0.323 , which indicate an acceptable correlation. In this case, we can talk about acceptable correlation between the results of the assessment of the patrimony and the number of interviewed persons, which do not appreciate and are indifferent to its values (Table 2, Figure 7).

Table 2. Spearman correlation.

			Heritage	Appreciate	Indifferent	Not Appreciate
Spearman	Heritage	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-0.119	0.268	-0.323
		Sig.(2-tailed)	0	0.779	0.520	0.435
		N	8	8	8	8
	Appreciate	Correlation Coefficient	-0.119	1.000	-0.927^{**}	-0.275
Sig.(2-tailed)		0.779	0	<0.001	0.509	
N		8	8	8	8	
Indifferent	Correlation Coefficient	0.268	-0.927^{**}	1.000	-0.012	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.520	<0.001	0	0.977	
	N	8	8	8	8	
Not appreciate	Correlation Coefficient	-0.323	-0.275	-0.012	1.000	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.435	0.509	0.977	0	
	N	8	8	8	8	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

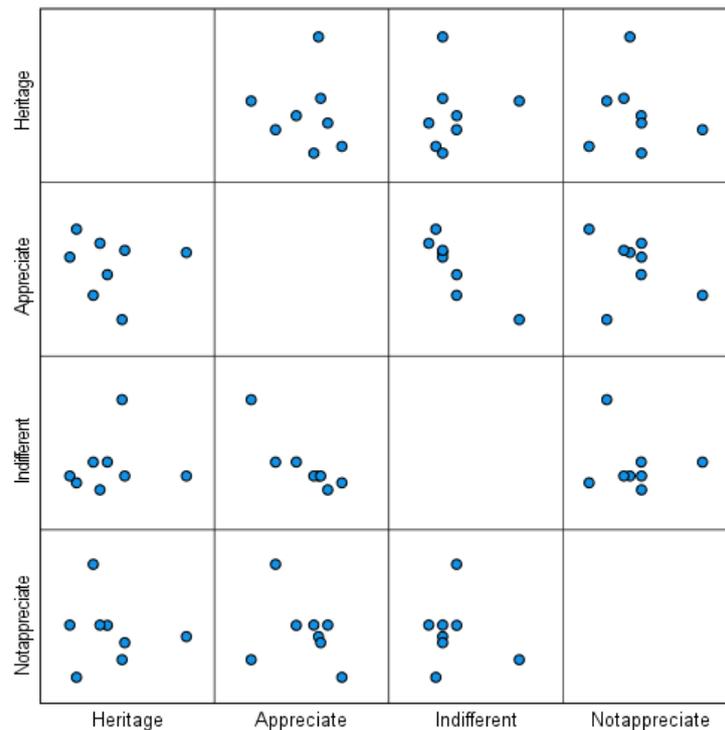


Figure 7. The graphic correlation between the variables.

3.2. Intangible Heritage

A series of immaterial components of the cultural heritage have continuity with a persistence degree on the level of the Saxon community, and we refer to the following: publications, newspapers, and magazines; the German language and Saxon dialect; culinary receipts, confirmation festivity of the youth, Saxon choir, agricultural practices, religious ceremonies, ceremonies, and practices related to the death cult; and religion ceremonies for Easter and Christmas, whose resilience, although low [7], confers Hărman cultural landscape its authenticity. The Saxon dialect and the German language are currently spoken by a small number of persons, around 50, and the German School with instruction in the language of the minorities terminated its activity as it did not have enough students. The whole responsibility related the perpetuation of the immaterial traditions belongs to the Evangelic Parish and to the Fortified Citadel. The administrative staff handles the promotion, preservation, and management of the citadel and of the evangelic cemetery, as well as the organization of cultural and religious activities and events (Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, Mother's Day, Harvest Day, Musica Barcensis, and so on). Currently, the following forms of immaterial patrimony are preserved (Figure 8): the Saxon choir, passing on the job of pipe organ repair man and producer; pipe organ concerts held in the fortified citadels in Country Bârsei from the series Musica Barcensis, publication in German; the museum opened in the citadel; the meeting of the Saxons from Hărman; and the annual attendance of the Hărman inhabitants at the Dinkelsbühl festival in Germany organized each year for the Whitsundite. The Saxon choir of Hărman is currently formed by 15 members. They sing at the religious mass and for evangelic holidays, and attend concerts in the country and abroad. In October 2018, they attended the Meeting of the Hărman inhabitants in Germany, which took place in Rothenburg ob det Taube.

The concerts of the series *Musica Barcensis* are organized each year between July and August in the fortified citadels in Rupea, Braşov-Bartholomew Church, Hălchiu, Sânpetru, Hărman, Vulcan, Prejmer, Ghimbav, The Black Church, Cristian, and Râşnov. The publication Story of the Hărman inhabitants/Honigberger Heimatbrief is an annual publication printed in Germany, also distributed in Hărman. Further, this publication became one with tradition owing to the diaspora, being continuously reissued from 1984. In relation to the criteria feelings and spirit, the results of the questionnaires

showed that 80% of the subjects show a strong historical feeling for the historical landscape, 71.42% regret the migration of the Saxons from Hărman, 68.57% have feelings of attachment and belonging, and 54.28% give a special importance to the memory of the Saxons and to their cultural inheritance. The feeling of belonging shown by the inhabiting population is the result of the socialization process between individuals, exceeding the ethnical limits or those imposed by birth.



Figure 8. Forms of intangible heritage: (a) choir; (b) Honigberger heimatbrief; and (c) Musica Barcensis (Photo: Chelu M and Pascu M, 2018).

4. Discussion

The purpose of the research was the evaluation of the authenticity and preservation of the Saxon cultural heritage and the most important segment of the Harman rural landscape, from the point of view of high resilience, density, and uniqueness of the exceptional heritage value represented by the historic center, which comprises a compact group of 260 traditional Saxon houses. This typology of the individual Saxon house is unique in Romania; it represents the expression of vernacular Saxon culture, along with the Hărman fortified fortress having a decisive role for nomination to the WHL.

1. What is the degree of authenticity and preservation of the Saxon cultural heritage of Harman?

The answer to the first research question is a positive one, as the results of the research highlighted that 84.61% of the total buildings have an exceptional, good, and average authenticity. Thus, the authenticity criterion according to UNESCO is reached, justifying the nomination. Still, we insist on the most frequent transformations that happened in relation to the authenticity of the Saxon material patrimony, analysed to bring attention to the future risks to which it is permanently submitted, on the need to benefit from a UNESCO protected status. The most frequent physical deteriorations were registered at the following levels: Franconian house model, the rooms belonging to the summer kitchen

were demolished, the chimneys were demolished, the cellar ventilation was obstructed, introducing elements not related to the style, widening the windows or turning two into one, the shape of the traditional gate model was destroyed either by removing the masonry or by increasing the size of the gate or both, shrill colours of the façade and of the roof, and by removing the ridged roof shape with dull fronton and pinion [42]. The owners either built an attic or another floor, or replaced the flake roof tiles with metallic tiles. Analysing by comparison the two categories of results regarding the authenticity and preservation state of the Saxon buildings, it was noticed that most owners constantly invested in the preservation of the buildings, the proof being that 92% are in a very good (69%) and good state (23%) (Figure 9).



Figure 9. Saxon's vernacular architecture (Photo: Pascu M, 2018).

Unfortunately, this very high percentage cannot be connected with the authenticity state or, better said, does not have a positive impact on the authenticity of the buildings, as only 19% of them have an exceptional state and 34% have a good one. The owners have preserved the buildings using new construction materials in an uncontrolled form, affecting the authenticity and integrity. Failing to apply actual measures for protecting and preserving the local tangible heritage, which target the observance of strict urbanism rules and of campaigns to inform the local population about the patrimonial value of the Saxon buildings, the owners have preserved them in a non-traditional manner, negatively influencing the authenticity state. The authenticity state of the Saxon buildings was not altered as a result of the financial shortages necessary for the preservation; on the contrary, the owners have invested a lot in performing inappropriate restoration works (for example, a wrought iron gate with opaque plastic mass background is much more expensive than a traditional wooden one). Still, legally, the owners did not violate Law no. 422/2001, as only the Fortified Evangelic Church Complex (church, chapel, tower, fortified premise, the fortification ditch) and the house on Dorobanți Street, no. 81 are found on list A of historical monuments classified at national level; the remaining buildings in the historical center of Hărman did not arouse the interest of the specialists and of the local authorities to be classified at national level. The same situation is found at level B of the list of monuments of regional importance; in it, Hărman has no building included for heritage because of the failure to classify them on lists A and B; the owners were able to interfere on the vernacular architecture without infringing any law. This situation over time increases the risk of irreversible degradation of the authenticity and patrimonial value of the Saxon buildings, a risk that could be diminished through the involvement of the local authorities in the heritage process of the historical center of Hărman and its nomination in lists A and B of the National Cultural Patrimony and WHL. The speed of the transformations in the landscape requires urgent measures. In 2016, we gave this group of buildings special patrimonial value because of their historical age (they are from 1820–1840) and the authenticity elements they preserved (Figure 10).



Figure 10. Road complex photographed in 2016: Str. Mihai Viteazu, no. 412 (beige—left), no. 413 (beige—middle), and no. 414 (white—right) (Photo: Pascu M, 2016).

After two years, in June 2018, this street front was changed, as can be noticed from Figure 11.



Figure 11. The same road complex in 2018: (a) No. 412 (beige—left), the wall between houses was turned into a gate; no. 413 (beige—middle), one floor was added and it was extended in length; (b) no. 414 (white—right) remained unchanged—landmark (Photo: Pascu M, 2018).

The image of the street front changed, as well as the volume–height ration, the proportions, and elevation of room no. 413. The following question is also legitimate: What should the owners have done in this case? Were there other solutions? Of course! Considering the significant length of the plot, the owners could have built a new building in the back of the yard in the area occupied before by the enclosures and completely maintain the integrity of the building facing the street. At the same time, the authenticity criteria from the perspective of material heritage (constructed authenticity) may contribute to the sustainable development of cultural landscape analyzed from the perspective of the reoccurrence of traditional lifestyle, revitalization of traditional activities, history and culture through the valuation of cultural patrimony, and tourist satisfaction [43].

2. Can the cultural property of Harman be nominated to the UNESCO WHL?

The answer is also positive for the second research question. The preservation stage of the analyzed material patrimony registered very high values; only 1.92% of the total buildings are in a degradation stage, which is the reason this UNESCO indicator, together with the authenticity one, is also met. In this context, we appreciate the special role played by the owners of this valuable cultural heritage in the appointing process, as holders of the authenticity and preservers of heritage values [44,45]. The high resilience of Saxon material patrimony when it comes to the preservation of its authenticity is due, to some extent, to the owners of these Saxon houses that wanted to keep their original traits, be they Saxon owners or those of another nationality. The owners most often invoke vernacular construction advantages and certain constraints dictated by them. Among the advantages, we note the following: the proportions; the size; the volume (even if more than 100 years old, the fact that they were oversized in the past makes them fit current needs); the construction technique of

Saxon houses (offers them a highly resistant structure to earthquakes and current climate change); the construction materials; and their method of combination—the Saxons combined stone, brick, clay mortar, and paste lime to ensure the resistance and rigidity of the buildings [46]. The architectural style developed by the Saxons in the XVII th and XVIII th centuries has such high durability that the owners came to appreciate its advantages in the modern day. We have observed a series of architectonic constraints that are actually disadvantages for the current owners, but favour the preservation of the authenticity of the village, including the following: closed street front comprised of a series of house pediments and yard walls that are connected and the positioning of houses on the street axis. These two traits that pertain to landscaping and the coherence of Saxon vernacular architecture are very hard to transform by the actual owners and would imply the complete demolition of the building. When the new owners changed the destinations of Saxon tradition houses, they resorted to their demolition as well, but only in exceptional cases. The owners of Saxon houses older than 1850 who were from poorer categories located at the outskirts of the historic center are more likely to destroy their integrity.

Unfortunately, the owners manage their patrimony alone; in Harman, specialists have never implemented projects with objectives included in some national strategies, such as the following: objective 5 of the National Strategy for Romania’s durable development, Horizons 2013–2020–2030, priority axis 1 in the Strategy for Culture, and National Patrimony 2016–2022 (SCPN 2016-2022). Without the help of specialists, as well as the involvement of local authorities and some NGOs without a national or international protection status, the owners will not succeed to manage this valuable heritage alone.

To support his candidature, we can use an international vernacular architecture model registered on UNESCO WHL, such as Holasovice historic village in the Czech Republic [23]. From our point of view, the rural site Hărman is much more valuable than the historical village Holasovice in the Czech Republic registered in WHL in 1998 because, unlike this, Hărman preserves not only the tangible heritage (vernacular architecture), but also the intangible one. Unlike the historic village Holasovice, whose historical and cultural tradition attributed to German settlers was abruptly interrupted after World War II by their expulsion [23], in Hărman, there lives a German community that continues to preserve its intangible heritage. Unlike the international model of Holasovice, whose evolutionary process was interrupted in the XX th century, Hărman can be nominated in the category of evolutive cultural landscape thanks to the continuity of cultural traditions, and the perpetuation of intangible heritage.

3. From theory to practice

This experience has taught us that the best results and conclusions are obtained only through the application of various research methods used in the collection of primary and secondary data; in our case, all the methods correspond to the purposes and objectives of the research. The inventory allowed the delimitation of the area submitted for nominalization, and the results obtained following the application of this method offered spatial and temporal information. The results could not have been obtained from other sources, with the one mentioned above being the only one best suited for the purpose of the research. From our point of view, the analytical sheet for the authenticity status as a method was compatible with the purpose of the research, as the assessment process for tangible heritage authenticity (of Saxon houses) should only be made using an analytical grid with clear evaluation criteria. Following the application of the analytical sheet, we obtained current, updated information for 2018 on the authenticity of the Saxon tangible heritage. The results obtained through the application of the marking grid may contain some errors, following the fact that some information was offered by owners, or it was obtained through empirical means. Regarding the method of in situ observations, this is frequently used by specialists in the field of heritage conservation, and we have adapted it to our reality in the field. The qualitative data obtained through the questionnaires [47] or analytical sheets were processed and interpreted statistically and cartographically. For the evaluation of the heritage values possessed by the cultural property Harman, we selected the questionnaire

method because it represents a popular and very useful tool in the evaluation of the population's perception [48]. The results obtained through the questionnaire method could not have been obtained from other sources, and these can be used by authorities [49]. At the same time, by applying this method, we acknowledge the special role that the local population plays in the process of preservation, protection, and management of the Saxon cultural heritage. In our case, some of the methods have had a complementary role, thus the in situ reconstruction was included in subchapter C (age) of the authenticity analytical sheet.

The achievement of this research has become really difficult at the moment of correlation between the UNESCO criteria and the research methods currently used within the academic field. The main challenge was to introduce the sociological, statistical, and interdisciplinary research methods to justify the UNESCO criteria as far as these have a descriptive feature and they primarily require some traditional descriptive methods. Moreover, we observed the lack of quantitative and qualitative indicators within the UNESCO specialized literature associated with the achievement of authenticity and preservation of the cultural property in order to be nominated for WHL. For this specific purpose, we used the analytical sheet for the authenticity in order to prove in a quantifying manner the achievement of the authenticity criterion. The percentages we achieved as result of applying this method can be considered as indicators of the authenticity. We consider as suitable the introduction of the modern research methods, as well as the qualitative and quantitative indicators, in proving the reach of the UNESCO criteria at the stage of enrolment on WHL.

5. Conclusions

The Saxon cultural landscape stands out through a powerful identity nature; it represents a cultural construction, both individual and collective [50], created over eight centuries. Following the fact that, on the level of the Saxon cultural landscape from the South of Transylvania, some factors have produced major changes to its traditional component [7], urgent protection and preservation of the cultural heritage of Saxons from Harman should be undertaken.

The results obtained after the assessment of the authenticity and preservation state of the Saxon buildings allow nominating the Hărman rural site to the UNESCO world heritage list.

The area proposed for international protection has a special importance for the history of vernacular architecture and of the plot, and it contributes to the overall image of the site [42]. It is estimated that, once the social construction of a landscape is interrupted, such as the case of the Harman rural site, the traits of a traditional rural landscape will be replaced with new ones, resulting in new processes [51]; therefore, the nomination of Harman to the list of UNESCO World Heritage would contribute to the saving of this cultural heritage.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, I.P.-S. and M.P.; methodology M.P.; software, M.P.; validation, M.P., formal analysis, M.P. and I.P.-S.; investigation M.P.; writing M.P. and I.P.-S.; supervision, I.P.-S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Data Availability Statement: No applicable.

Acknowledgments: The authors give special acknowledgments to all participating interviewees. The authors give special acknowledgements to anonymous reviewers.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A

Table A1. The assessment of the authenticity of the Saxon buildings in Härman.

Criteria and Subcriteria	Points
a. Form and design	
The initial shape of the roof	10
The traditional shape of the gate	10
The initial shape of the windows	5
The preservation of the cellar ventilation	5
The preservation of the architectonic details (decorations and shutters)	5
The cellar ventilation	5
The chimney	5
Preservation of the initial size and volume	5
b. Construction materials	
Roof material (tiles)	5
Gate material (wood)	5
Windows and shutters material	5
c. Age	
Building before 1850	10
Building between 1851 and 1900	5
Building between 1901 and 1945	3
d. Use and functions	
The building preserves its original function	10
The building mostly lost its original utility, but through its architecture, it preserves the arks of the past functions	5
The building has completely lost the original functions and utility, but through its architecture, it partially preserves the marks of the past functions	2
The building has lost its original functions and utility, its architecture was completely transformed	0
Total	100

Table A2. Grading scale.

Points	Authenticity
81–100	Exceptional
66–80	Good
50–65	Average
Under 49	Low

Table A3. Preservation state of the Saxon buildings.

Physical Description of the Building	Preservation State	Visual Assessment Regarding the Preservation State
The building is excellently preserved	Excellent	x
Is in good condition	Good	x
Is unacceptable condition	Acceptable	x
Bad state/degradation	Degradation	x

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