

WESSELÉNYI DOMAIN OF JIBOU, A MODEL OF MULTISECULAR ARRANGEMENT

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ABSTRACT. – *Wesselényi Domain of Jibou, a Model of Multisecular Arrangement.* Nowadays the nobiliary domains arouse the interest of specialists from various field and tourists. The typical nobility constructions are attractive both by their residential function –including curias, castles and palaces in Transylvania - and by the economic function of annexes composed of: mills, barns, stables, riding houses etc. These domains functioned as command centres of territorial arrangements from Medieval Age, pre-modern and modern ages with implications on the economic and social progress of ages and administrative structures, but also subsequent development. Our study aims to make a presentation of the nobiliary domain Wesselényi in Jibou, aiming to the identification of functions and strategic arrangements for valorisation of the domain as irradiation models of welfare and multiple values, which became a multisecular standard by: emblematic characters, decisive actions carried out by these characters, in Transylvania, Hungary and the Habsburg Empire, to which the Principality of Transylvania belonged until the Great Union of 1918. The management of Jibou domain of Wesselényi family was carried out by various state institutions after the nationalization of 1945, stipulated by Law 187/1945, occasion of new arrangement and valorisation strategies which will also be presented.

Keywords: *arrangement, nobiliary domain, Wesselényi castle, Jibou, economy, botanical garden, brand*

1. INTRODUCTION

Following the Romanian accession to European Union, the main vectors of development directions in Romania are generated by the strategies elaborated and proposed to Ministry of Development and Public Administration by the National Territorial Development Commission, being the “scientific, consultative and advisory committee³”. The main objectives of these development strategies projected for a period of 20 years are set out in the Territorial Agenda of European Union, presented in 2007, in Leipzig, following the territorial cohesion by a “...polycentric development.., for a more efficient

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³ ***, Ordinance, 27/2008, for amendment and supplementation of Law 350/2001, on territory arrangement and urban planning

use of available resources..., from cultural, social, environmental and economic point of view⁴”, in a sustainable manner. The Commission’s document encourages the achievement of cohesion objectives by focusing the development strategies in global context on the consolidation of “regional identity”⁵ and local identity aspects, engaging in this approach all the categories of public or private developers.

The implementation of Territorial Agenda desiderata at national level is outlined by the Law 350/2001, regarding the arrangement of territory and urban planning, amended and supplemented by Ordinance 27/2008, being normative acts which are at the basis of elaboration of strategic development and arrangement documents by transposing and checking the strategies, policies, and programmes approved at national, regional, county, local, zonal and general urban level (PUG).

Starting from these considerations, the Wesselényi nobiliary domain in Jibou represents an incontestable landmark of development and multiseular identity at crossborder, regional and Sălaj County level. The castle and Dendrological Park are remarkable by age, architectural and geographical uniqueness, functions held in time, combined by collective symbolism.

The first information on the Wesselényi family and nobiliary domain in Transylvania is provided by the ennoblement act of the ancestor by the first name of Ferenc, dating back to 1584, who received Hodod walled city to which Jibou domain belonged, as reward for his bravery, devotion and his merits, from Stephanus Báthory, King of Poland and Prince of Transylvania, between 1576 -1586⁶.

The skills of leader, his bravery and nobility status, supplemented by the fine education from which benefited the descendants of Wesselényi Ferenc, facilitated the occupation of important functions in management and military administration in Transylvania and Hungary. Among the family members there were captains, palatines, governors, administrators or diet presidents.

It is worth mentioning that the autonomy of Principality of Transylvania⁷ dates back to 1541, being recognized and protected by the Ottoman Empire for the purpose of dividing the Hungarian Kingdom, and in 1699 it entered the Habsburg Empire, maintaining its status along with Croatia, Slovenia and Hungary.

The Hungarian society from Transylvania had the following structure: nobility, free peasantry, craftsmen, intellectuals and bondsmen.

The management regime of these domains with right of inheritance was specific to feudalism, in which the nobleman, vassal of sovereign, had the obligation to participate in

⁴ ***, *Territorial Agenda of the European Union*, Informal Meeting of European Ministers responsible for Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion, Leipzig, 24-25 mai, 2007, p.2, URL: http://www.mdrl.ro/_documente/dezvoltare_teritoriala/amenajarea_teritoriului/Agenda_teritoriala.pdf

⁵ *Ibidem*, p.3

⁶ Benedek Vasile, The life and political activity of Wesselényi Miklós, in *Acta Mvsei Porolissensis*, Zalău, Editura Porolissum, 2012 p. 215

⁷ Teritorial, Principatul Transilvaniei se referă nu doar la Depresiunea Transilvaniei, cuprinde, inclusiv, teritoriile situate la vest de Carpații Orientali, Parțiumul, iar în anumite perioade Banatul, sau chiar comitatul Bihor

nobiliary insurrection, in the service of the emperor and the agricultural labour was assured by the work of bondsmen, who had the possibility to receive and work for their own use the serfdom lands, for which they paid quitrent every year.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The investigation of the arrangement model of a nobiliary domain implies a thorough bibliographical and cartographical documentation in order to obtain a large volume of scientific and technical information. Along with these research methods for obtaining the information necessary for the development of the theme proposed we resorted to the:

- Analysis and interpretation of archive documents, the Wesselényi family fund in Jibou;
- Comparison of information from different bibliographical sources;
- Use of interview as a method of obtaining original information;
- Photographic documentation on the spot in the field trip visit;
- Observation and confrontation of information from bibliographical documentation with geographical reality.

3. HISTORICAL LANDMARKS OF SUBSTANTIATION AND GUIDING GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

In its long life in Transylvania, the Jibou branch of Wesselényi family was founded by the marriage of baron Wesselényi István (born 1674- died 1734) with Bánffy Kata (born 1684-died 1734), daughter of governor Bánffy György, who had as heirs of the domain: Wesselényi István (b. 1708- d. 1757), Wesselényi Miklós senior (b. 1750- d. 1809), Wesselényi Miklós jr.- boatman on the Danube (b. 1796- d. 1850), Wesselényi Béla (b. 1847- d. 1904), Wesselényi Ilona⁸.

Located in the perimeter of Solnocul de Mijloc County, the nobiliary domain of Jibou can be reconstructed based on archive documents, which contain along with the current administrative perimeter of Jibou town, ten neighbouring settlements in the North-East of Sălaj County.

The landform units which lay at the basis of development of nobiliary domain include the basins of Guruslău and Almaş-Agrij, at the confluence of Almaş and Agrij, and the main river, Someş, on the sector between Var and Jibou, completed by Someş corridor and Sărat brook, on the route Zalău-Jibou. The basin areas developed along North-South and East-West directions, represent a contact space framed by the "internal and external components of Someş Platform, make the passage from Someşan Plateau

⁸ Kardos Samu, *Báro Wesselényi Miklós élete és munkái*, Budapest, Editura Légrády testvérek, 1905, p. 2.

to the East towards Silvano-Someş Hills, in the West, separated by Jugul Intracarpatic⁹, subdivision, Culmea Prisnelului. Sărat brook represents a demarcation area between Silvano-Someş Hills in the North and Meseş Mountains in the South. This sector is also mentioned in the scientific literature by the name “Poarta Someşană” (Someş Gate) as it is on the path of penetration of oceanic air masses in the Transylvanian Basin, but also for an easier access by development of communication lines, railways and roads - DN 1H (Surduc), DJ 108A (Baia Mare).

The extension in area of the domain changed in time because of several factors such as:

- Release of serfs and their apportionment of property in 1848, with the serfdom lands by Wesselényi Miklós jr;
- Division of domain by inheritances;
- Agrarian reform of 1921;
- Confiscation of fortunes by nationalization after 1945, expropriated areas were occupied by the industrial platforms under development, or distributed to the new C.A.P. and I.A.S while the Dendrological park of the castle was later turned into a botanical garden;
- Retrocessions which include a part of lands and Wesselényi castle, which were given back in 2011.

4. ARRANGEMENT AND IDENTITY ASPECTS OF NOBILIARY DOMAIN

The first clues of presence of organization forms in the current urban perimeter of Jibou are provided by the archaeological investigations which showed the presence of artifacts and specific housing arrangements, “... from Bronze Age¹⁰”, but the archive documents report in 1219¹¹ the town with the name of „villa Chybur”¹², a small village which suggests the presence of households specific to that age, and since 1387¹³, it is mentioned with the graphology and phonetics of Hungarian similar to the nowadays pronunciation “Zsibotelke”¹⁴.

Having in view the archive sources available, the research is oriented to the identification and illustration of arrangement options of feudal property analysed.

⁹ Pop P., G., *Depresiunea Transilvaniei*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2001, p. 121, prelucrat

¹⁰ *** (2010), Ordonanța. Nr. 2361/2010, Annex-List of historical monuments 2010- Sălaj county, Ministry of Culture and Cultural Patrimony, in Official Gazette of Romania, year 178 (XXII), no.670 bis, 2010

¹¹ Chende-Roman, G., *Dicționar etimologic al localităților din județul Sălaj* (Etymological dictionary of towns from Sălaj county), Zalău, Editura Sylvania & Caiete Silvane, 2006, p. 192

¹² *Ibidem*

¹³ *Ibidem*

¹⁴ *Ibidem*

In over two centuries of direct management of domain by the descendants of spouses Wesselényi István and Bánffy Kata, "Jibou, of Wesselényi nobiliary family" became a true polarization centre not only at physical geographical level, but also from economic, cultural, social and ideological point of view.

Multiple polarity is generated by natural factors, but also by anthropogenic potential as a result of management and reformatory vision which will finally restructure the economy and the whole society, creating a solid base for the future development strategies.

The reasoning for arrangement of Jibou domain served the quality and nobiliary brand of Wesselényi family.

The historiographic research of nobility family of Jibou highlights two characters, outlining the character and temperament of Wesselényi Miklós senior, with Wesselényi Miklós jr., as two political personalities, cultured persons and reputed horse breeders.

In the light of our research, the nobiliary brand of Wesselényi family is described by their intellectual activity, highlighting the European Enlightenment to which adhere the two illustrious noblemen from Sălaj, keeping the general character of contemporary Hungarian nobility characteristic of the period between the last decades of the 18th century and the first decades of the 19th century.

The suppression policy adopted by the Austrian Court generated opposition among Wesselényi family, perpetuated from one generation to another.

Wesselényi Miklós sr. was one of the initiators of Cluj theatre, supporting materially and technically the step of cultural emancipation, translating and writing plays and organizing tours in Transylvania and Hungary.

During the life of Wesselényi M. sr., the residence of Jibou was turned into a cultural centre being visited to meet the reputable baron who recited in Latin, listened to csárdás, organized hunting parties and trained horses in his own stud farm.

In 1805, the writer and poet Kazinczy Ferenc, on the occasion of his first trip in Transylvania, was the guest of Wesselényi family. In Jibou, the writer met the painter Franz Neuhauser The Young¹⁵, who painted paintings which contained hunting scenes from the forests of Jibou and Maramureş Mountains.

The huntings of Jibou became so famous that they remained a brand for the family and the town, having continuity among the latest generations.

Wesselényi Miklós jr. participated in the hunting with his father, from a tender age. On one of the paintings made by Neuhauser, a hunting scene is captured in which Miklós jr. stands with the group formed by the hunting noblemen.

At maturity Wesselényi Miklós jr. resumed the tradition of his father, organized large hunting sessions, which lasted a period of three or four weeks, gathering around him the Transylvanian liberal nobility, with whom he formed an opposition group to the Government of Transylvania, appointed by Vienna.

Wesselényi Miklós jr. is known as a promoter of liberal Hungarian reformism in Transylvania, starting as an ideologist in his work "On Prejudice", in which he criticized the misconceptions of his contemporary society, opening the path to modernity. Thus, on the

¹⁵ B. Nagy Margit, *Reneszánsz és barokk Erdélyben*, Bucureşti, Editura Kriterion, 1970, p. 198

level of development of liberal nobiliary ideology by which he pursued the dissolution of serfdom and formation of a new status of the citizen, the residence of Jibou would become a brand of development, serving as the first nobiliary domain from Ardeal where serfdom was dissolved in 1848.

The nobiliary family brand is composed of elements characteristic of the Middle Ages, but due to the activities between the Enlightenment currents of Europe and the generation of liberal reforms, the arrangement model of Jibou domain becomes a sustainable project which may become a tourist attraction in Sălaj.

4.1. Premises of arrangement from the natural perspective

The implications of natural elements on the organization of activities and arrangement of material base necessary for a good administration are distinguished by introduction of zonality by altitude in the valorisation of geographical space from the management of the domain, and the following elements are decisive: landforms, climate, drainage, biogeographical and pedological aspects.

The first step in the selection of the ideal location for a “nobiliary household” consisted in the identification of the most favourable areas for assurance of vital functions in various ages of history, starting with the housing and defence functions, continuing with economic functions and adding the status and role functions.

Thus, the geographical space of Jibou domain is defined by hills with average altitudes which fall between 300 and 350 m, the maximum height is 437.4 m, recorded at Piscul Ronei, component of Prisnel Range. The depression areas, interspersed between the hills, have an average altitude of 200-250m, the marshes are present here and there, in meander sectors which accompany Someş River, which changes suddenly its flowing direction by the loop related to the section Cicomani - Turbuţa-Husia, from North-East, South-West to South-North direction.

The depression corridors are aligned in East-West direction, Sărat Brook - Someş Corridor, allowing the movement of oceanic air masses in this direction, and the North-South alignment of Almaş-Agrij basins, that separate Meseş Mountains in the West and Simişna-Gârbău Hills in the East, continuing to the North with Guruslău Depression. The depression is surrounded by: Prisnel Range in the East and Sălaj Range in the West, Sărat Brook in the South and Țicău Gorge in the North, an area which has a sheltered climate with annual average temperatures¹⁶ of 9-10°C, while across the domain the annual average temperature is 7-8 °C. The annual average rainfall quantities range between 650-700 mm/year or even below these values in the basin areas, while the amount of annual average precipitation is 750-800 mm/year in the higher landform units.

From a biopedogeographical point of view, we can see the presence of oak and beech forests mixed with other deciduous species on hills, being interspersed by secondary meadows. The soils are dominated by spodic soils suitable for the culture of cereals and clayish soils. The floodplains have alluvial soils with high fertility, suitable for vegetables with large extension in Someş flood plain in Jibou-Țicău sector, and terraces from the valley with natural typical hygrophilic flood plain vegetation, such as: willow, osier, alder tree etc.

¹⁶ Morariu, T., Sorocovschi, V., *Județul Sălaj*, București, Editura R.S.R., 1972, p.36

The extrapolation of information resulted from the examination of archive documents shows that in the domain a special attention was paid to territorial systematization, by making perimeter arrangement plans. The methods used and morphological aspects of towns and agricultural lands were cartographically recorded. The cartographic materials studied offer information on the structuring of built-up area and the method of use of agricultural space in Mirșid, and it illustrates for the vineyard of Rona, the size of vineyard plots from the climax of economic development of the domain, started by Wesselényi Miklós jr. between 1818 and 1850.

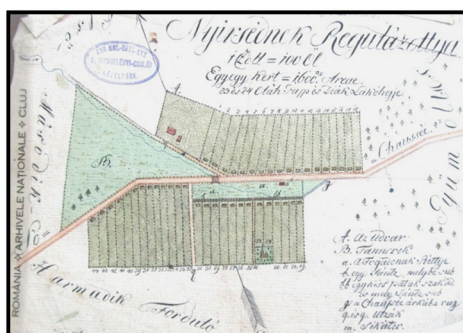


Fig.1. Arrangement plan of Mirșid village, 1821
(Source: A.N-S.J.Cj, fondul nr.250, dos. 33, f.7)



Fig.2. The vineyards of Rona, 1840
(Source: A.N-S.J.Cj, fondul nr.250, dos. 33, f.12)

The systematization plan of Mirșid village (fig.1), dating back to 1821, captures the display of households on the two sides of Zalău-Jibou traffic axis, forming a linear village composed of 44 households.

Mirșid domain presents a nobiliary arrangement similar to Jibou model where the annexes for breed horses are built in the vicinity of the mansion and a vast pasture stretches outside the nobiliary household, which illustrates the passion of the family and nobiliary brand.

The street layout located in the South of the main road, with 26 households, contains two central buildings with social functions, the church and the inn. The map shows that each household was surrounded by a fence and the existence of parish house and the Romanian priest shows that Mirșid was inhabited by a Romanian community, outlined by the existence of a single church with cemetery, behind the priest's garden and Mirșid administrator's garden, noted by the households with numbers 23 and 24. Their connection to the main road was made by a path. In the vicinity of the main road there is the inn which holds a pasture for the animals of travellers, spanning on an area as wide as 13 households, being crossed in North-West, South-East direction by a small brook which connects the two pasture fields.

The analysis of maps, including the Theresian ones, but also the archive documents inform about the use of lands, cereals (wheat, rye, oats), hemp and vegetables were cultivated in floodplain areas, the sloped lands were used for fruit-bearing trees (plum trees, apple trees etc), and the sunny slopes of Rona and Sălaj hills were areas with a sheltered climate, covered by the vineyards of the domain from where they obtained wines and champagne of good quality even for export. The viticultural map (fig. 2) of 1840

shows the earthmoving works on Rona Hill, which included 26 plots from where they obtained a production of "2000 wine buckets¹⁷" every year. The vines were permanently renewed. Interspersed with the vineyards, Rona Hill areas were delimited for the orchards of cherry and sour cherry trees, valorized under the form of fruits.

The secondary meadows of hilly areas resulted from deforestation because of the need for new areas of pastures and agricultural lands.

The floodplain and terraces of Someş River are developed on the left side of stream, concentrating most of the settlement towards Sălaj Hills. The former residence of Jibou domain was positioned and developed at the contact between the two landform units.

The vertical arrangement strategy of domain sets out the location of administrative centre, respectively the nobiliary curia and castle after the modernization on a high terrace of Someş River, which triumphantly emerges over the village, across Piscul Ronei (Rona Peak), offering at the same time a fairy tale landscape and protection from the floods and from possible attacks. In time the nobiliary residence was witness to the Ottoman attacks, the kurucz revolution of Rákóczi Ferencz II, in 1705, or even scenes of the 1848 revolution.

4.2. Optimization of the agrarian economy in the arrangement model

The functional organization of nobiliary domain implied a series of actions and techniques for efficient valorisation of available resources, targeting first of all the consumption and building of an administrative model according to liberal principles promoted by Wesselényi Miklós jr., by which the work of bondsmen became negligible, being substituted and completed by the work of day-labourers and specialists employed.

The militancy of Wesselényi Miklós jr. in Hungarian reformist liberalism of Transylvania, aimed at the gradual change of organization of feudal domains according to the English model, in capitalist domains based on market economy. By the modernizations carried out in Jibou, the baron managed to obtain higher productions in quantity and quality so that the annual wool production got to be delivered for export, to the Wodiner company in Vienna based on agreement in „...quantity of 100-120 măji, ... and conditioned that the whole quantity should be transported to Pesta...¹⁸”.

The increase of economic yield of the domain generated the necessity of modernization and arrangement of the road system, which had to deal with the heavy traffic of carriers with cereals and other merchandise for domestic and foreign markets.

The road ways separated the plots in exploitation, which represented a new landscape arrangement model in Transylvania in the first part of 19th century, being protected by ditches and plantations of fruit-bearing trees such as: apple trees, plum trees and mulberry trees, which were valorised in the breeding of silkworms. Thus, Wesselényi Miklós jr. managed to export a substantial quantity of silkworm cocoons on the Western Europe markets.

¹⁷ Benedek Vasile, *Aplicarea principiilor liberale pe domeniul Wesselényi din Jibou*, în *Acta Mvusei Porolissensis*, XXXVI, Zalău, Editura Porolissum, 2014, p 64.

¹⁸ Benedek, V., *Aplicarea principiilor liberale pe domeniul Wesselényi din Jibou*, în *Acta Mvsei Porolissensis*, XXXVI, Zalău, Editura Porolissum, 2014, p. 65

4.3. The Castle - an arrangement model

Prior to the ennoblement act of 1584, for the Transylvanian branch of Wesselényi family, Jibou domain was the “property of noble family of Jakcsi de Coșeiu, entered in state treasury¹⁹”.

In „oppidum” Jibou, fairs were organized and required the presence of an administrative centre or supervisory centre of activities, knowing that salt was transported on Someș.

By correlating the systematization plan of Mirșid village (fig.1), with the archive information and the revealed reality in the field research, we infer that on the hill of Jibou castle there was a curia with thirteen rooms. In 1719, the central body of Jibou castle was completed. It was later changed at certain intervals and received the final shape in 1879, date marked on the wall of B building.

With the second renovation of the old curia on the domain, in 1755, the “imposing stable²⁰” was built (fig. 4), being now located in the perimeter of the Botanical Garden, ornamented with the coat of arms of the family, exposed on the Eastern side of the masonry while the Southern wall was ornamented with the sculpture of Johannes Naghtigall, which represents a small stallion (fig. 3.), the passion and faiblesse of the family from ancient times.



Fig. 3. Sculpture of Johannes Naghtigall, external ornament



Fig.4. Inner image of D building

The inside room is spacious due to Romanic arches and the eight support pillars, sized for 28 horses.

¹⁹ Fejér Tamás, *AWesselényi család iratöröksége és az Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum Levéltára (Zestrea documentară a familiei Wesselényi și Arhivele Societății Muzeului Ardelean)*, în vol. 277 a *Caietelor Științifice din Transilvania - A Szilágyság és a Wesselényi család (14-17. század)*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Societății Muzeului Ardelean, 2012, p.296

²⁰ B. Nagy Margit, *Reneszánsz és barokk Erdélyben (Renesans și Baroc în Transilvania)*, București, Editura Kriterion, 1970, p.191

In parallel with the continuation of renovations of the nobiliary assembly of national interest and historical monument of architecture²¹, the works also include the renovation of the achievements of 1799-1810, such as the hothouses, the Dendrological Park, the penthouse and the riding house etc.

The castle was built in baroque style, having as architects people like Eberswhart Blauman, Franz Wrabetz and other local craftsmen, who obtained an architecture characterized by pavilions, a balcony carved in stone, an arch embellished with gliding pilasters and windows covered with window shutters.

Nowadays the external shape is kept in general, but there are small changes by incompliant repairs made before 1990, and other physical destructions.

The interior of the castle itself was defined by 40 rooms with different sizes, 21 on the ground floor and 19 on the upper floor. The knights' room and the ballroom are more special. With reference to the interior design we have information from the expense diary of Cserei Heléna, mother of Wesselényi Miklós jr., who ordered wallpapers from Vienna, contracted gold craftsmen and painters to achieve the interior architecture.

4.4. Arrangement and tourist functions

The castle and dendrological park, along with the hunting yards arranged in the forests nearby attracted cultured people, priests, politicians and foreign travellers because of the recreational and entertainment activities organized by the family for the guests. As recreational and mass cultivation activities, Wesselényi Miklós senior used to organize theatre shows which were carried out on a stage arranged in the dendrologic park. The idea of turning the English park of the castle into a botanical garden belonged to biology professor Vasile Fati, who rediscovered the microclimatic potential of the town favourable for the acclimatization of species from various areas of the world and started this activity in 1959. The first hothouses were built in 1801 by Wesselényi Miklós senior who purchased "120 lemon trees²²". Nowadays the botanical garden bears the name of Professor Vasile Fati and represents one of the most visited tourist attractions in Sălaj County.

It is noteworthy that now the castle is separated from the botanical garden and cannot be included directly as a tourist attraction open to the public, but the architectural splendour reflects on the landscape attracting amateurs of history and art or other visitors who take pictures in front of the architectural monument.

Among the future plans of Vasile Fati Botanical Garden, there are the purchase and integration of the castle in the circuit of tourist programmes offered to visitors.

The activities carried out in the botanical garden have a multiseccular tradition, having in view the innovative preoccupations of Wesselényi Miklós jr. regarding the acclimatization of species, the grafting of fruit-bearing trees, experimentation and

²¹ *** (2010), O. Nr. 2361/2010, Annex-List of historical monuments 2010- Sălaj county, Ministry of Culture and Cultural Patrimony, in Official Gazette of Romania, year 178 (XXII), no.670 bis, 2010

²² *Ibidem*, p.197

wide scale spread of cultures with productive yield, that is why he trained staff from different domains. These issues are found in the activity of botanical garden founded by professor Fati and his collaborators by transforming the Centre of Little Naturalists into a Biological Research Centre, assuring the continuity of multi-secular arrangement and establishing new objectives for the future.

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