Abstract: The paper presents the results of several studies concerning urban landscape (types and evolutive tendencies) for various Romanian tourist cities. The study outlines that the natural and architectural urban tourist resource is generated by different urban landscape elements, not only the main tourist resource itself. One of the conclusions of the survey is that the landscape is one of the most important existent resources, but despite that is the most transformed element due to urban development pressures, especially within the existent urban landscape frame. In accordance with present development trends, the study outlines the main features that can characterise a landscape at urban level and the transformations that affected Romanian tourist destinations in the latest years.

A very important aspect of urban landscape is its complexity – being in the same time society’s living environment, a cultural, historical and economical context and further development matrix – spatially expressed at territorial level. The paper wants to formulate the main development principles that should be included in urban development policies in order to preserve the main landscape and architectural features of these tourist towns.

Due to the urban explosion of the latest centuries, new landscapes appeared, reflecting the new technologies and new social needs – like large communication infrastructures, intermodal nodes, industrial landscapes or media landscapes – belonging of the consumer society. We are dealing with a succession of landscapes – overlapped morphological and spatial structures – which reflects different relations between society and its living environment, creating contemporary contexts.

Keywords: Tourist destination; urban landscape; decoding landscape; urban morphology.

1. “Reading” the Landscape

From perceptive point of view the “Readability” of Landscape is a new term, defined by the authors, that means the ability of a Landscape to imprint specificity to its features, the ability to be perceived as unique or outstanding as well the qualities which makes it readable. This qualities are referring to its constitutive elements, that’s why becomes important the process of Landscape Decoding.

The Landscape contains information about its genesis, geographical and geological features, about the society that dwells the space, about its resources (which are the main elements that determines the landscape cultural character - through vernacular architecture, local specificity, building techniques, architectural style). The developing potential of a territory can be identified inside of the landscape - like the major natural elements, the roads, the limits, the spontaneous directions which links settlements, touristic, cultural, economic objectives, etc.

The process of urban development follows, in most cases, the potential direction of evolution which can be identified inside the landscapes. The last centuries changed the cities and the nature, using their resources, following the reason of economic development.

One of the locations characterized by deep transformations are tourist destinations Consequently, the landscapes (urban, rural, cultural) are subject of deep transformation of their features and contained senses, recent concerns looking to preserve their cultural and socio- economical values, attested by their existence.

At international level are used various methods and techniques designated to asses urban landscape evolution and transformations and the article is presenting main constitutive components of urban landscape, considered as structural elements and directly influenced by contextual transformations. Besides the traditional techniques of decoding landscape features, modern techniques include GIS tools (Petrişor, 2016), land use changes (Petrişor & Petrişor, 2018) and various photography tools (Kaußen, 2018: 374).

1.1. About Urban Landscape

Modern definitions of the landscape refer to its cultural sense: the landscape is the synthesis of space used as a collective space (Jackson, 1984: 5) or – as an extension of this definition – the space perceived by the population to whom it gives meaning and shape in accordance to their aims and objectives (Kizos & Spilanis, 2004: 322).
Urban landscape is formed by various elements with different inputs: natural environment, build environment, society as synergetic results of individual and collective actions.

In accordance to the previous definition urban landscape is the result of its uses, perception and symbolistic given by different individuals. Decoding the urban landscape becomes important in order to discover the main features that make it representative in accordance with people's perception (Popa, 2014).

1.2. Constitutive Elements of the Urban Landscape

Structural elements in case of urban landscape are those ones which are composing it and contribute to its organization by specific relations, being constitutive and essential for its structure.

We can distinguish principles constitutive elements (natural and anthropogenic), as most representative for aggregation of landscape units at urban level (based on homogeneity features) (Popa, 2014: 38):

- Urban Landscape Unit represented by homogenous elements, territorial extended-parcels, urban functional areas etc.
- Interruptions of the landscape unit - volumetric elements. Through their spatial configuration and territorial extension can become a structural element of the landscape
- Edge - Corridor - Boundary - Vector elements (anthropogenic or natural) - water courses, communications system and technical infrastructures
- Landmarks - singular identity presences in territory. If repeated can become structural elements.
- Boundary- Edge- characteristic for segregation of urban areas or switch from a functional area to another one

The classification considers that landscape elements (formal and structural) are overlapped (Bertrand, 1978). From this perspective, the inventory of the constitutive elements within urban landscape is limited at their classifications related to the role inside landscape unit based on R.T.T. Forman (1986) definitions.

Part of landscape morphology system are the urban topography, urban pattern, build and natural environment, colors, textures, densities, all of them overlapped with specific social features (Popa, 2014).

1.3. The readability of a Landscape

The landscape contains messages - about the living environment, climate, culture, society, history, degree of development. Reading the
landscape reveals different information transmitted directly to the observer. The landscape exists in the eye of observer, it must be seen to be understood and represented (Enache, 2012: 39).

Landscape morphology can be read/decoded using various urban elements: street systems, parcels, build environment (and the relation between build and urban gaps), natural elements.

An important element in order to define landscape structure is the territorial scale of the analysed landscape. Structural elements at territorial scale, at micro-scale constitute independent functional units; elements which constitute structural elements at micro-scale, are perceived as punctual ones at territorial level, without having a defining role. Analysis and interpreting should capture and discuss the set of constitutive elements, characteristic for a certain landscape, taking into account the scale.

2. The Landscape as a tourist resource

2.1. Landscape and urban heritage

Since ancient times, the urban identity was based on two elements: built heritage and natural landscape. Local landmarks - natural, historical or architectural, the surrounding nature (mountains, rivers, etc) were appropriated by the society, becoming symbols of their living environment.

The landscape - urban and natural - is one of the main features providing local identity, which can be generated by the natural structure, the spirit of the place, the spatial coherence, urban and architectural heritage.

Analyzing the urban landscape, we can say that the most important elements to determinate a powerful urban image are the topography of the area, the architecture/built environment, the urban assemblies.

In the globalization era context, the culture becomes the heart of the economic development, being also an element of local or regional identity. The culture and the heritage are the main resources for attractiveness of cities. In a society based on the access to the information, the culture must be accessible to everybody.

2.2. Landscape features of touristic cities

In case of touristic cities, the tourist resource itself can be part of the landscape (natural elements, local landmarks, constitutive elements of the landscape). If the tourist resource is different than the main landscape features, then its potential is enhanced by the landscape elements.

For example, in case of various tourist cities, the main features of landscape are related to the main tourist resource:
In case of Danube cities, the street system is oriented and imposed by the Danube location.

In case of Seashore cities, the build environment and plots system are tributary to the sea view.

In case of mountain cities, the parcels are primary related to the landscape, not to the streets system and the settlements development is marked by the place topography.

3. Decoding the Landscape

The urban landscape can be read and understood through the urban image, which must be seen beyond its functionality, concerning also the spatial qualities (directly perceived in everyday life, related to specific locations - like central areas, historical assemblies, protected landscape, etc), the physical objects (buildings, infrastructures, parks, etc), the space utilisation (the way that the space usage is adapted for its intended purpose). It is the cultural expression of the society.

The link between a community and landscape is expressed through individuals’ activities and the territorial behavior, in relation with two major issues – firstly, the type of economy and how the natural resources are exploited, and second – the type of the settlement and the manner the houses are build, from which derives both the population structure and the functional and aesthetical features of the buildings – the architectural style (Hărmănescu & Enache, 2016: 413).

The urban landscapes are composed of two different morphological bases - of the city and of the urbanization process. The cities keep inside their structures the evidences of their history. The urban history is a history of evolution, of changes, of particular situations, and every element is a link between certain stages (between different historical periods, between various architectural styles, etc).

Decoding the landscape means identifying history, symbols, meanings, local character, traditions and customs only by direct observation, understanding and appropriation.

3.1. Identity and Specificity of urban landscape

A discussion about identity in the contemporary world inevitable leads to aspects related to the globalization era, to cultural uniformity or social media. The urban growth and the information technology are the main causes of the urban identity loss, but also - in the same time - an unprecedented opportunity to promote local values. Thus, the urban identity in a globalized world is necessary to increase the local attractiveness (which
can be assimilated as urban brand), and to contribute to a competitiveness of the city in a global / regional context.

The urban identity is made up of the natural structure, the spirit of the place, the local character, the natural and urban heritage, the spatial coherence and vernacular or local architecture. The urban landscape becomes a mark, a brand; it must be understood, memorized and appropriated.

3.2. Augmenting the urban landscape using the cities elements of specificity

Lev Manovich defined in 2006 the Augmented Space as overlaying the physical space with the dynamic data.

Going further, recent researches used the term “augmentation” to describe the process of highlighting real, physical spaces through different strategies, in the context of globalization. The concept has to do, in this case, with the landscape identity and its elements of specificity. Although, landscape augmentations recreates or enhance landscape in accordance with tourist needs and perception (Mulla, 2017).

Augmenting the landscape, using the main features of the local context, should be part of local strategies to promote the tourism. The composing elements of a space - the “words” to be read in the process of decoding the landscape - are the elements which give the character and value, making the place unique. A scenographic approach will use this uniqueness to promote, to intermediate the lecture and the understanding of the landscape.

4. Conclusion

Landscape as read at a certain moment of time represents a complex result of its constitutive elements (structural, formal, socio-cultural) and describes a certain stage of evolution (as temporary state). Constitutive elements are subject to continuous change and time transformation, and they have the capacity to mean or represent something by different intrinsic features: formal (spatial), historic significance, activities, habits, people, emotions, sensorial aspects.

Also, in accordance with primary structure and existent resources and evolution landmarks, landscape evolved different with different classes of features, as shown for the tourist cities.

Latest researches in landscape decoding are taking into account the main elements: digital data sources for landscape dynamic assessment; type
of indicators used in order to assess landscape characteristics, landscape
dynamic and development problematic; possibilities to integrate different
niche targeted (sector) methods used to assess landscape in order to achieve a
comprehensive approach; possibilities to use and quantify non-technical data
(humanistic and art resources) in a landscape dynamic matrix; possibilities to
develop a trans-disciplinary indicators system in order to assess and manage
landscape dynamic.

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