

# Latgale Upland church everyday landscape in development and growth of region and society

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**Abstract.** This research has been made as a succession of different aspects of a landscape, a succession, which forms a connection. This connection leads to everyday landscape from global tendencies. The aim of the research – to identify the connection of the factors, which develop during the interaction between church landscape and culture, as well as political planning and society.

The influence of Europeanization and globalisation is like an exit factor when it comes to the transformation processes of church landscapes. In addition, these factors may be considered as a basic and large scale factor. The next level of researched factors – the interaction of planning and landscape. The planning forms a direct connection between church landscapes of Latgale Upland and the planning processes in European and national level. At the same time it involves connections of different scale and planning tendencies. Apart from landscape management and planning, the characterisation of landscapes has been considered in more detail, which has been selected as the next level of factors. When applied to landscapes of small measure, such as church landscapes, it is possible to apply and integrate the results of this method into the planning process of landscapes of larger measure.

Nevertheless, the most significant thing concerning the formation of a successful connection still is the involvement and participation of local inhabitants. The development planning must include all these levels and factors influencing the landscape. The church landscape serves as a reflection of the connection between global processes and local daily landscape. Church landscapes interacts with such social phenomenon as tourism. Therefore church landscape serves also as a feedback from an individual to the collective body and wider public.

**Key words:** everyday, characterization, development, sacral tourism.

## Introduction

This landscape study on the Latgale Upland is based on for already six years lasting research on the church landscapes in Latgale. The Latgale Upland is located on historically formed region in eastern Latvia, called Latgale. Church landscapes are an important part of the cultural history of Latgale. The sacred landscape of Latgale is unique; and by comparing the development history of cultural landscapes of Latvia, its development history of cultural landscapes is different [20]. And as it is typically to Latgale, it is possible to find there all of the traditional denominations (Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Old Believers) as well as the shrine of believers in Moses [11]. This study is designed as a chain of different aspects of landscapes which make a connection. This connection from the global trends leads to everyday landscapes and reflects its interaction with both individuals and broader community.

Small-scale and specific areas of landscape in opposition to large-scale landscapes require a special approach for landscape studying and method of characterization. It is necessary to adapt and adjust general methods to particular circumstances.

The aim of this study is to look at the chain of factors that form the interaction of churches with cultural landscapes, region and community. The formation of region is discussed as the interaction between the various groups of interest of a community.

Frequently the diverse landscape of the nature and cultural heritage of Europe is seen as an important economic value, providing recreational and tourism opportunities, as well as an attractive environment for living and entrepreneurship [15].

Awareness and promotion of the values of cultural landscape is the opportunity of a region to develop – tourism, preservation of the traditional cultural heritage, the ability to use environment for leisure, culture and education [25].

Usually everyday landscapes are those where the provided environmental values coexist with the functional load and therefore can be hidden for an ordinary observer. Landscape architects, architects and other professionals related to this field possess the ability to perceive and discover the hidden value of the landscape and its multifaceted potential.

## Results and discussion

### *Globalization - Europeanization – landscape*

Geography of religion describes sacred landscape distribution on a large scale. It is expected that in the future, the development of geographical religion is influenced by two processes – globalization and Europeanization [8]. Globalization would be expressed as a development of immigrant religions. People migrate, change the place of living, often bringing with them also their religion.

Europeanization in religion is expressed as the preservation of trends that are historically developed

in each country despite globalization. Historical development is continued by a country and the development of mutual interaction of the sacred power that is similar to the transformation of mutual interconnection of the various religious organizations.

Besides these two determining trends, there are other factors affecting the formation of a landscape. Globalization and Europeanization determine the vastness of factors that need to be included in the development planning of a landscape.

### **Planning - landscape**

As the next link of the chain is the interaction of planning and landscape. Planning can be divided by different levels ranging from global to local, thereby creating different levels of logical connection. Planning involves linking of different levels of planning, taking into account the overall planning trends.

Landscape planning and management is difficult because of the holistic nature of landscapes [1]. It is not uniform and does not have set limits, and may belong to many different owners. Linking and availability are required measures that are needed to be able to ensure a successful development of an area [1].

It is important to draw attention to the regional values of culture and their preservation in the context of the planning of the local territory and development programs. This is particularly important for the region of Latgale, where the cultural heritage is one of the main objects of tourist attraction. But it should not be forgotten that not only the church building itself, but also the area around it and the existing landscape elements in it also are of great importance.

Landscapes in the planning documents of areas in Latvia during the last decade have become a significant element. However, the scientific studies on landscape and the experience of scientists can still be considered as inadequate in order to be able to fully use a landscape for the development potential of a territory [14].

It is important not only to foresee the protection of visual aspects or development of a landscape in planning and development. Landscape does not consist of visual aspects only [19]. Protection, management and planning of a landscape must be able to encompass resources of a landscape, adjust individuals as well as the overall activity of a society. It is also important to create an enabling environment for entrepreneurs, as well as to provide a sustainable development of a landscape [23]. Not only economic, political, and cultural factors, but

also social factors are significant. The environment for living is needed to be developed not only for maintaining the values of the past, but also by taking into account the requirements existing nowadays, and wishes and intentions in future [27]. Also the rich cultural heritage of the city of Bucharest has to face the lack of complex approach. Legislation on conservation and protection does not cover all the territory but functions for individual buildings and, in some cases, areas adjacent to them. The legislation which would include other elements of the landscape does not exist [27].

The landscape has a holistic nature, hence integrated researches, planning and management is needed for a sustainable development. A variety of landscape measures are essential for the management and planning. Each planning level includes different landscape parameters with which it is necessary to work. Landscape characterization is one of the methods for landscape planning and development. By fulfilling all the steps of a method for landscape characterization [28] it is possible to use it for a wide variety of landscapes. Applying it to small-scale landscapes, the results can be integrated into a planning process of a larger scale landscape.

The fulfilment of the first stage of the method of landscape characterization in the development, which includes – definition of the aim, research of graphical materials and research of the area (Table 1), is followed by a reversible process of the characterization methods of landscapes – characterization, selection of the evaluation method and the application of the results of characterization. The last step of this method determines the importance and usefulness of landscape characterization. On the basis of a precisely and scrupulously carried out characterization it is possible to form classification of landscapes and interpret data, taking into account the scale and aim of landscape characterization. And after the interpretation of the data it is possible to create suggestions for the improvement of the condition of a landscape.

TABLE 1

Landscape characterization use in planning of development [Source: modified by author, 28]

Steps	Parts of the method	A detailed description of the method
1	Description	The direction of use of a landscape should be defined. The aim, scale, involved people and supporters are to be chosen.
2		Research of graphical materials, including factors related to the nature and culture, as well taking into account social factors. In this step it is possible to distinguish basic types of a landscape.
3		Research of the area where aesthetics, the factors of perception of the landscape and the comprehension of the disposition of a landscape is studied.
4	Usage of the results of the description	Classification and description. Creation of a map of the character of a landscape, description of the character and distinguishing between the basic characters.
5		Selection of a method for result analysis and interpretation of data.
6		Evaluation that is followed by suggestions for the improvement of the condition of a landscape, incorporation of the results in the planning politics, development of the strategies and guidelines of a landscape, suggestions for the development of a landscape.

### Landscape characterization – landscape

Already for a decade landscape characterization and the use of this characterization in landscape management has been used in a number of countries, for example, in England. Landscape is changing continuously as the landscape is dynamic, because it is affected by various and different processes. However, it is wished to change the landscape so that it does not lose its cultural value [6]. But the problem is as follows – to what extent and how to manage the transformation processes of a landscape correctly.

A number of scholars have expressed the view that there exists a necessity for new data on landscapes and methods for their obtaining [1, 9, 10, 36]. The method of data collection on area inspection similarly as to this study is connected with studying of specific situations [31] and rarely is used for large-scale territories. If a specific aim of characterization is not distinguished, this method is less effective for a large-scale landscape and is more useful for small-scale landscapes. But if the research is conducted for a small-scale landscape, it is quite difficult to integrate data in the overall development management of landscape planning.

In my opinion, there exists a way how to create a solid system for planning at all levels with a variety of scales of a landscape – there should be a unifying basic principles for the assessment of different types of landscapes. Therefore, it can be concluded, that there is a necessity for a different specification of landscape inspection according to the scale of a landscape space.

### People – landscape

It should be stressed that still the most significant thing is the desire and participation of the local people. Political forces can make decisions on spatial development of the region, but they will not work effectively without the involvement of the local people. For various reasons, nowadays in the

Fixation of elements is one of the results of the characterization of a landscape. The list of elements and their frequency of occurrence can serve as a good tool for planners in order to identify the usage at the particular period of time and intensity, as well as problems and deficiency [9]. By revealing the unstudied side of the landscape, planners obtain more detailed information and can perform spatial development management of a landscape that is attracted to a real life situation. If the aim of the landscape characterization is well-defined, then it can be used for various scales of landscape spaces. Landscape characterization is used for the management of cultural heritage on a large-scale landscape planning, for example, on the scale of Europe [6].

Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of landscape characterization for the planning of development is vast as it provides a comprehensive overview of the landscape. Landscape characterization promotes the understanding of the structure and changes, and provides on the theory based foundation for a suitable planning of development.

Landscape characterization provides information, not judgment. It does not identify good or bad landscapes, it provides parameters of the landscape character [6]. Using the landscape characterization along with other planning tools it is possible to make justified decisions on planning.

Latgale Upland one can find well-maintained church landscapes (Fig. 1, 2, 3) as well as abandoned and badly maintained churches and their surround areas (Fig. 4, 5).



Fig. 1. Photograph well preserved rēzeknes old believer church landscape [Source: photo by the author, 2011].



Fig. 2. Well preserved Bērzgale catholic church landscape [Source: photo by the author, 2011].

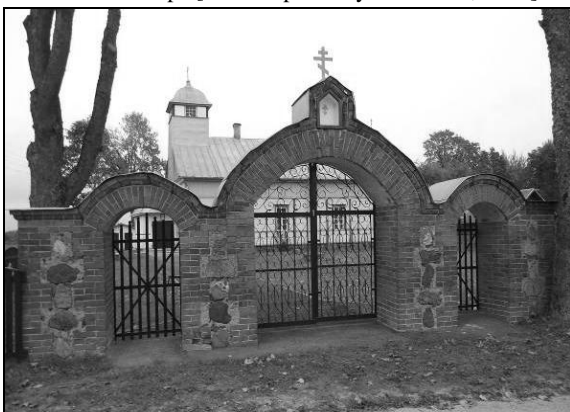


Fig. 3. Well preserved orthodox Moskvina church landscape [Source: photo by the author, 2011].

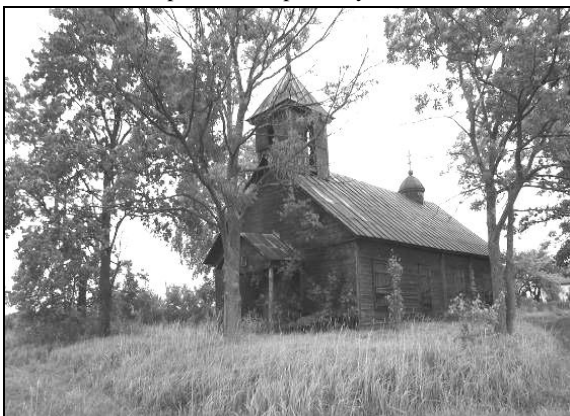


Fig. 4. Abandoned old believer Bondariski church and territory [Source: photo by the author, 2011].



Fig. 5. Ustroņu catholic church territory left without attention [Source: photo by the author, 2011].

The local people are the ones who live and form this environment [12]. Landscape creates the quality of life, but it is also important to remember that the protection of landscape, management and planning are directly connected with the society which is responsible for it [37]. The processes of landscape transformation are affected not only by the quality of landscape protection, management and planning, they also interact with the local society, its level of education and social activity. It is necessary to include the opinion of experts and society in the decision-making process on landscape management, as well as to conduct a survey of the local people as the perception of the place may vary in regions.

The evaluation of a landscape is based not only on the level of education and social status but also the place and its history of development are important influencing factors [17]. In the planning of landscape development all aspects should be connected and all the layers of the landscape should be comprehended as a complex interaction of a variety of different processes. Not only nature is a valuable resource, also the cultural environment is valuable [4]. Another facet can be seen here. If the landscape and its cultural and historical character are a value, then it is important not only for the local people and experts but also for visitors and tourists of a landscape on a larger scale. Thus, tourism becomes a stimulating factor for the maintenance and development of the place.

#### Tourism – landscape

According to Šļaka [29], spatial accessibility is limited by factors such as spatial desolation and vandalized buildings, the small sizes of the access paths and their invisibility. In addition, churches are not only spatially but also regarding to the level of information is of burdening availability [29]. Accessibility is needed for the development of landscape space [2, 3, 34]. The importance of accessibility is formed by increasing the polarization between the urban and rural environment.

It is believed that the ancient pilgrimage routes are closely connected with tourism nowadays [26]. A pilgrim and a tourist are concepts that have been developed long time ago [7] and according to the opinion of Vukonic – the meaning of these approaches become more similar [35]. While the Collins-Kreiner [7] in its research reveals that a pilgrim and a tourist can be seen as something similar only in situations when the trip includes visiting of religious sites.

Religion is not only the centre of life for many people but it is also affected by human migration and tourism. Religion is considered not only as a motivation to travel around one's own country but also to go on international trips [5, 13, 22, 30]. Sacred places can be divided into three groups: pilgrimage shrine, religious tourist attraction point; religious festival place [18]. Sacred places in Europe mostly fall into one of these groups [30]. The same division exists also in Latvia. Most of the church landscapes in the Latgale Upland are tourist attraction points as described in the official website of the Latvian Tourism Development Agency [32]. The basilica in Aglona, which also is located in the Latgale Upland, is a popular destination in Latvia for local and foreign tourists, and pilgrims, where hundreds of thousands of pilgrims every year arrive for the feast of the assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven (Fig. 6, 7).



Fig. 6. Aglona basilica in usual summer day, and during the 15 of August, with pilgrimage [24].



Fig. 7. Aglona basilica during the 15 of August, with pilgrimage [16].

Tourism that is connected with the cultural heritage can be considered as a social phenomenon [21]. Although a view exists that it is enough to feel [33], it is also important to see and take particular interest in this territory and objects. The researches of the field of tourism on cultural heritage have developed in various directions that are connected with architectural elements, elements of culture and nature [21].

### Conclusion

Such factors as globalization and Europeanization should also be taken into account for the planning on local scale. One should be aware that along with the protection of visual aspects, management and planning in planning and development, church landscapes should be comprehended as usable resource. But it is difficult to be aware of the church building as not the only resource but also the church landscape and its elements.

Landscape characterization is a method which can well integrate and evaluate elements of a small-scale landscape in that way ensuring the principles of succession in landscape planning. When protecting, managing and planning church landscapes one should remember how all of these activities should be focused, firstly, on increasing the quality of life of local residents. It will provide the feedback for the overall regional development.

In addition, the consciousness of the protection of collective traditions is connected with the social phenomenon – tourism that is dedicated not only to the attendance of churches but also to the church gardens and landscapes. In this way church gardens and everyday landscapes serve as a linking point for the individual with the collective and a wider society. These areas become not only a tourist attraction point but also a stimulating factor and resource for the development of the region and society.

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**Kopsavilkums.** Šis pētījums ir kā vairāku ainavas aspektu sasaistes secīguma pētījums. Šī sasaiste ved no globālajām tendencēm līdz ikdienas ainavai. Pētījuma mērķis – identificēt faktoru sasaisti, kas veidojas mijiedarbojoties dievnamu ainavai un kultūrai, kā arī politiskajai plānošanai un sabiedrībai.

Eiropēizācijas un globalizācijas ietekme ir kā izejas faktori dievnamu ainavu transformācijas procesiem. Turklāt šie ir uzskatāmi par pamata un liela mēroga faktoriem. Pētījuma nākamā līmeņa faktori – mijiedarbība starp plānošanu un ainavu. Plānošana veido tiešu sasaisti starp Latgales Augstienes dievnamu ainavām un plānošanas procesiem Eiropas un valsts līmenī. Tajā pašā laikā šie faktori veido dažādu mērogu un plānošanas tendenču sasaisti. Bez ainavas plānošanas un vadīšanas, arī ainavas raksturošana pielietojama vairākos aspektos, un tā ir izvēlēta kā nākamais sasaistes punkts. Pielietojot maza mēroga ainavām, kā, piemēram, dievnamu ainavām, to ir iespējams pielietot un integrēt šīs metodes iegūtos rezultātus ainavas plānošanas procesā arī lielākā mērogā.

Vēl joprojām vissvarīgākais šajā sasaistē ir vietējo iedzīvotāju iesaistīšana ar ainavu saistītajos jautājumos. Attīstības plānošanai jāiekļauj visi šie līmeņi un faktori, kas ietekmē ainavu. Dievnamu ainava ir kā globālo procesu sasaistes ar vietējām ikdienas ainavām atspulgs. Turklāt dievnamu ainavas veido sasaisti ar tādu sociālo fenomenu kā tūrisms. Tādējādi šīs ainavas veido atgriezenisko saikni no individuālā uz kolektīvu un tālāk uz plašāku sabiedrību.