

CHURCH LANDSCAPES IDENTITY IN THE COASTLINE OF SOUTH KURZEME

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ABSTRACT

Church buildings are visually expressive dominants of the landscape; however, the sacral landscapes have not been extensively researched. In order to reveal the character of church landscapes and its elements, a thorough appraisal of the selection of indicators, of their scale. A particular method of research has been employed for characterisation of the church landscape in Kurzeme, on the shore of the Baltic Sea and along the bay, synthesized by a way of such specific research method as imageability

Key words: church landscape, identity, character, Kurzeme coastline

INTRODUCTION

The historical development and architecture of the landscape of Kurzeme

A traditional coastal building unit is a fisherman's homestead, which consisted of several buildings group – a dwelling house, a barn, a fish cellar, a pigsty, a net shack, a fish smokehouse, a cattle-shed, a bath-house, a root cellar, and a summer kitchen. As a typical features it should be noted that fishermen lived in individual farms in the coast of Vidzeme, but they formed small villages in the coast of Kurzeme. These coastal fishermen's villages are a particular part of the coastal landscape identity and culture-historical objects of the national importance. The homesteads of the South Kurzeme and Vidzeme are characterized with the two-yards planning principle, which is divided into a “pure” yard with a barn and a “dirty” yard with a cattle-shed, a stable and a shed. Trees, bushes are planted in the “pure” yard; splendid flower-beds associated with fruit and bee garden are formed (Piekrastes apbūves..., 2011; Kultūrvēstures avoti..., 2008).

Until the 19th century dwelling houses were built of wood – logs of fir or pine. One-storey houses were built both for living and farming. The most popular was a log structure construction or pillar construction with a sill filling. A cladding of vertical planks or hewn beam was used to protect the wall from the weather conditions, reeds were also used for the cladding near the lakes. Boulders were used for foundations and in ovens. Gabled (ridged) roofs or multigabled roofs were covered with rye straw, reeds or wooden lath, less with the boards. In the 19th century, when economic freedom was gotten, stone building started to build, but strong traditions of wooden architecture still maintained. In the second half of the 19th century boulders started to be used for the construction of a cattle-sheds and stables, but bricks were used for a dwelling house building, woods were mostly used for barns. Livonian fishermen built smoke-houses –

summer kitchens, which were called small houses, out of the sawed boats. They were also also frequently used as a warehouse or a net shack – this building had become a sign of coastal recognition. Fishermen of Kurzeme formed so-called berth on the coast – boats were placed at the seashore, net shacks and fishing tools shacks were built, stake lines for fishing nets drying were formed (Piekrastes apbūves..., 2011; Kultūrvēstures avoti..., 2008).

Ancient Latvian traditions are associated with archaeological sites – Sacred Hill, Sacred Grove, Sacred Cave, Sacred Spring – these are not buildings, but these are landscapes that bear the symbolic meaning. The oldest sacred / holy place is located in the coastal zone – in the camp of Sarnate swamp, not far from Užava. Another cult places found in Kurzeme are Idols Mountains and Church Mountains. Sacred springs, where the water attributed to strength, should be mentioned as well.

The coast is rich with cultural monuments at the moment – including archaeological, historical, architectural, urban and industrial objects, as well as art objects. There are 338 national cultural monuments and 413 cultural monuments of local importance in total located on the coast (Valsts kultūras..., Piekrastes telpiskās..., 2010).

One of the integral parts of the culture-historical heritage is churches and church landscapes of the coast of Kurzeme, which have a special landscape identity.

The genesis of the architectural structure of Latvian church landscape

The development of architecture in Europe and around the world was very dynamic and various. On time changing, people again and again rebuild and build new churches, wishing to show their faith (Kaminska, Bistere, 2011). Each era discovers its own evidences that make humanity's living space culture-historically richer (Zilgalvis, 2012).

The beginning of the church building is dated with the beginning of the 13th century, when the Romanesque ruled in the beginning and then the Gothic style of the subsequent (Krastiņš, u.c., 1998). Starting with the middle ages, Latvia joined the Western Europe professional art scene.

On conversion of the population of Latvia to the Christian religion churches started to build in its territory. These were wooden churches in the beginning, later stone churches. Wooden churches continued to develop next to the stone churches, which appeared later. Church architecture and construction on the general influence of the historical events was formed with deep rooted traditions. Wooden churches building, in spite of different historical events, blossomed again and again (Kaminska, Bistere, 2011; Krūmiņš, 2003). In the middle ages churches were the buildings in which artistic styles were most clearly readable. At the end of the 13th century the early territories of the Libyans, Latgalian, Courland, Selonians and Semigallians formed the confederation of feudal kingdoms, called Livonia.

The dominant style in the end of the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century was historicism. This is reflected in the various buildings of that time, whereas the churches of the different confessions were made in different historical styles. This connection principle of styles and confessions, certainly, is not consistent, but the trend is very explicit:

Protestant churches in neo-gothic style;

Catholic churches mostly in neo-baroque, but also found churches created in neo-gothic and neo-Romanesque styles;

Orthodox Churches in the Russian Byzantine style.

In the period of Classicism major changes took place in the Latvian church architecture. Columns, pilasters, pediments and other elements brought them closer to the image of the ancient temple, changing the medieval appearance preserved for centuries.

Latvian architectural heritage of the second half of the 19th century till the beginning of the 20th century is rich and varied. This largely forms the culture-historical environment in which we reside daily. (Zilgalvis, 2012). Along with the rapid rise of economic and cultural levels in the second half of the 19th century eclectic entered in the architecture, intensive building of different types of buildings took place, followed by the beginning of the social 20th century with Art Nouveau (Avotiņa, u.c., 2004), churches a lot less were raised within this period. Within the period from 1918 to 1940 the attention in architecture was mainly focused on the school building and solving of apartments and urban issues (Avotiņa, u.c., 2004). Latvian cultural church environment is rich not only with churches of different architecture styles, but also with the fact that its forming was strongly influenced by

architects such as – F.B. Rastrelli, K. Häberlands, J.D. Felsko, V. Neimanis, V. Bokslafs, P. Kundziņš (Levina, 1999).

Landscape identity and religion

Church landscape with its dominant elements church and church garden is a multidisciplinary research object. On the influence of the modern globalization processes changes in the landscape are perceived as a threat in the whole world, it is noted in the European Landscape Convention, as well as geographer, who explore the holistic nature of the landscape, Mark Antrop's research (Antrop, 2005; European Landscape ..., 2000). On considering that church landscapes have been studied a little, it is important to carry out their fixation and characterization of today's situation. A detailed research of the current situation not only provides an insight into the genesis of the processes, but also helps to recognize the visual aesthetic qualities of the modern church landscape.

Cultural environment, including landscape, is a factor influencing the quality of life that is not only an integral part of the identity, but also the spatial development resource. Landscape and each of its elements is a reflection of the cultural heritage (General..., 1999; Mūcher, 2010; Peirce, 1979; Penning-Rowsell, 1981; Schama, 1995; Siliņš, 2008; Ziemeļniece, 1998) present cultural manifestation.

Landscape is the part of society identity; therefore it has to be researched in the context with the society. There is a causal link that between the regional or national scale and local scale the same landscapes may change their perception and understanding of the identity. Landscape changes for people living in a particular landscape are important because on changing the landscape the part of their daily lives disappears, places associated with emotions and memories vanish (Arnesen, 1998). Mihaels Houghs (Houghs, 1990). in his research uses the connection between geology and landscape identity. He considers that the landscape geology clearly shows close connection with culture expressions in the landscape – one of such landscape elements is architecture. The landscape geology is a reflection of the landscape identity in a longer time period – religions, objects generated under the influence of military and political events, different use of materials and symbolic meaning of objects (Houghs, 1990).

Different society groups and their cultural identity have a direct connection with the landscape, as it is confirmed by scientists from different fields (Gray, 2003; Hay, 1998; Stephenson, 2008; Stokowski, 1996). Landscape is characterized by a spatial expressiveness, as well as it contains social relations. Gatherings and performance of ritual activities promotes a sense of belonging to the place and society (Williams, 2012). The more important

are the measures of mental activities, the greater number of people it attracts. Therefore, the social meaning of the landscape expands. Besides, if the landscape is distinguishing, it reflects the region, as well as differences of the society (Peirce, 1979).

Changes of the landscape structure influence local population. The thing that is so valuable in the landscapes and gives the inhabitants the sense of place and identity is its local nature and uniqueness (distinctiveness) (Rippon, 2012). The foreign experience enters the landscape planning in rapid steps, as well as foreign law is implemented and adapted to the landscape planning system. Therefore, in order to ensure the conservation and development of the landscape local nature and distinctiveness, a fixing, inventory and exploration of this nature is as a starting point.

Religion and churches in Kurzeme

Christianity originally came in Kurzeme peacefully and gradually. A number of changes in the landscape and the culture as a whole started along with the arrival of the Christianity, for example, in North Kurzeme cremations that had previously been typically here had disappeared. Each region in Latvia developed differently. Kurzeme was hardly affected during the time of the Livonian and Polish-Swedish wars, therefore in the second half of the 16th century the pronounced formation of differences had already started in the Duchy of Kurzeme (Courland) (Avotiņa, u.c., 2004; Feldmanis, 2010). It should be noted that in the Duchy of Kurzeme (Courland) Latvian and Livonian cultures with before the Christian traditions stood close to the Western culture. Although there were little churches in the beginning, then in the second half of the 16th century the decision was accepted to establish in Kurzeme 70 church congregations and build or rebuild churches there (Avotiņa, u.c., 2004; Feldmanis, 2010). Many of these churches have survived to the present day and are the national cultural monuments. In Kurzeme, unlike other Latvian culture-historical districts, Christianity was not the only one that was more pronounced in common. During the time of the Duchy of Kurzeme (Kurland) Christian church was represented by Catholics, Lutherans, reformists (Calvin's teachings followers), Orthodoxies and Old Believers (Feldmanis, 2010). In the beginning of the 17th century paganism still had a major role in the Latvian spiritual life. Around the middle of the 17th century the uplift of the spiritual life was observed (Feldmanis, 2010). Latvians of Kurzeme tightly clung to the religion of their forefathers. The period of Baroque is very pronounced in the Latvian church landscape, but still it had left the most vivid features in Latgale with the really gorgeous, white baroque pearls. But there are found churches of baroque in Kurzeme – in Kuldīga, Liepāja,

Ventspils. The baroque of Kurzeme is characterized by the simple, ponderous external presentation appearance. In the beginning of the 18th century fever epidemic made a great distress to Kurzeme (Avotiņa, u.c., 2004; Feldmanis, 2010). In the 18th century Latvia was not still a united territory and different development continued in various different spheres of life in each of the culture-historical districts, including religion. The next important step in the development of the religion life after innumerable political changes was the law adopted in the twenties of the 20th century on Latvian church to be separated from the state. During the Soviet period the restriction of the Christian traditions and atheistic propaganda took place.

As a result of globalization and population migration in the 21st century not only sacred architectures significantly changed, but also the importance and function of its ambient territories and elements. Churches transformed from everyday landscape elements into spatial development resource in the sector of the economy such as tourism. The church as a cult building and landscape space around it in the beginning of the 21st century had started a new form of synthesis, in bringing a new additional value based on cultural traditions, craftsmanship and historical evidence storage and cognition.

In the period of the last half century church landscapes diminishing and equalization had not yet fully destroyed architecturally distinctive spatial characteristics of the local cultural landscape.

Landscape visual protection on the European level has become current along with an implementation of the European Landscape Convention. Ever since the middle ages the feature of populated area is the buildings of public nature, designed for people gathering, buildings for living and church along with the burial area – as the local religious focal point (Aston, Batsford, 1995) both in the visual aspect and in the spiritual and planning form.

The variety of church landscape in Latvia forms in total due to different circumstances of natural basis, as well as in formation of culture-historical stratification in the different history of each region. One of such examples is aizjomi of Jurmalciems which form a specific landscape.

Known as an aizjomi landscape, it consists of small, humanly made tilths on the seashore. These features are both physical elements and repositories of historical and cultural meaning. In one sense, through hard labor humans created the aizjomi landscape, adjusting the morphological and dynamic elements of the landscape and continually maintaining them. These human efforts made agriculture possible in the dunes, and in so doing they fashioned a means for producing a livelihood and, indeed, for sustaining life. The aizjomi landscape became a materialization of the people's

day-to-day life in the middle and late 19th century. (Stüre, 2009; 2012).

It is limited information available about church landscapes; therefore the determination of the landscape character is included in the fixation of the current state. In turn, determined indicators have been used relatively recently in the research. One indicator provides a little information so it is valuable to use of a system of indicators, where each of them would be representative, available, reliable and efficient (Bottero, 2011; Gabrielsen, 2003). More common use of indicators is for large-scale landscapes (European..., 2005; Stupariu, u.c., 2011; Swanwick, 2002), however, they can also be used in smaller areas (Swanwick, 2002; 2006).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Objects

The research area is the South Kurzeme – from Lithuanian border to the city of Ventspils. The objects of research are located in the research area the Lutheran, Catholic and Orthodox churches, as well as a Baptist prayer houses, hereinafter referred to as churches. The research includes 16 churches (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Research territory and objects

Starting with the Lithuanian border the landscape of Kurzeme seaside consists of territories included in

the districts of Rucava, Nica, Pāvilosta, Ventspils, as well as the territories of republican cities of Liepāja and Ventspils which are not discussed in this research. The landscape of churches of large populated areas are observed separately, because they include regional differences, but the clearest dominance, however, is the city building structure and its created space. Building tradition and styles in the city context are also diversified and multicultural as large settlements are more closely involved in trading and cultural network than the other regions of the territory. This research examines the part of Kurzeme till Ventspils.

Methods

Monographic or descriptive method, based on the existing as well as scientific knowledge and theory acquired during the research, was used for the theoretical foundation for the development, as well as for the compilation, the identification and interpretation of the results.

Several landscape research methods were used to characterize the church landscape of the coastline of Kurzeme:

- Imegability method;
- Descriptive inventory;
- Definition of the perception criterias of the landscape visual overall image.

Imageability method

The characterization of church landscape of the coastline of Kurzeme was carried out by the imegability method. After Kevin Lynch's thoughts imegability is a quality of a physical object, which creates a possibility to cause a strong impression in any observer (Lynch, 1960). This is a form, color or an arrangement, which contributes the formation of the widely recognizable, powerfully created, widely used mental image of the environment. Lynch admits that imageability could also be called as imegability or visibility, but in the sense that objects could not only be seen in a landscape, but also could be felt the environment. The term "imageability" is being used with the meaning of "legibility" (Markova, 2014).

Indicators of imegability in church landscape were defined during field surveys in 2012 and 2014 within the framework of the expedition, using aerial photographs as reference. An aerial photograph of the surveyed church landscape was prepared before going to the particular place. A detailed survey of each place was made on scouring the area and all access roads to analyze all the available view points. The place imegability schemes of the landscape of particular churches where this metode was used were made on the basis of aerial photograph to be able to clearly define the scope. On the other hand notably objects in the imegability schemes differ in which elements form the nature of the church landscape and landscape borders.

Imagability schemes are made in „AutoCad 2012” programm, using a variety of graphical tools, as well as inserting there the aerial photo of particular church landscape.

Descriptive inventory

A fixation of church garden elements of the coastline of Kurzeme, consolidation of the results and transformation to visual patterns were made by tying a quantitative method with a qualitative method. A descriptive inventory was used in the research of the garden landscape space and elements, which is widely used in the evaluation of visual resources (Arthur, et.al., 1977). Descriptive inventory includes a combination of quantitative and qualitative landscape evaluation methods on analyzing and describing their components.

The method of synthesis is used in the field research for the broadest possible collection of data, when separate elements of the research object are combined into a single whole, in order to study their interrelationships. The synthesis method is also used to interpret the data. Quantitative and qualitative indicators of the landscape are collected in the matrix used in the field research (Markova, 2014). Based on the experience of the previous research a matrix of survey and cartographic materials had been already prepared before the expedition using an electronic card system kurtuesi.lv. Survey matrix includes all the most anticipated parameters of the church landscape and elements of the church garden that would be useful for further research. On surveying the church gardens in the coastline of Kurzeme, there were fixed elements existing in every church garden. Later data obtained in matrixes were summarized in the "Microsoft Office Excel 2007" program.

Landscape characterization is identification of essential and distinctive characteristics and qualities. This is still a relatively new approach to display and interpretation of the landscape. Landscape characterization approach rooted in England (Clark, et. al., 2004; Swanwick, 2002), later it developed in Scotland, Ireland and in other places in Europe. Landscape characterization is considered as an effective tool in forming the comprehension of the importance of the landscape (Herring, 2009). It is possible to use it for variety of scales, from the international up to the local (Swanwick, 2002; 2006).

The reading of the landscape using the landscape indicators. The physical components of the landscape, related activities, its importance and symbolism are basic formative elements of landscape identity (Herring, 2009; Swanwick, 2002; 2006). The research focuses on the visible physical identity.

Perceptual criterias for the visual overall image of the landscape

Visual formative elements of the landscape identity are closely related with the human subjective perception where are separated several levels of perception – visual availability, scale, natural landscape, use intensity, diversity, consistency or harmony. Based on these theoretical visual perception levels of the landscape identity the visual survey matrix of the the landscape was designed, which served as the data collection, surveying the the research area. The survey matrix includes the total subjective visual evaluation of the landscape (Melluma, 1992; Krause, 2001; Forest landscape..., 1989; Swanwick, 2002; Ode, 2003; Nikodemus, Rasa, 2005; Hunziker, Kienast, 1999; Fisher, 1996; Ziemeļniece, 1998; Visual Resource..., 1984; 1986; 2008). There were determined following parameters for the subjective evaluation of the landscape: the visual availability, scale, topography, color, materials, texture, diversity, rarity, senses, movement, and natural landscape.

Based on the theoretical group of criterias determined to define the identity of visual landscape, each landscape type specifies the possible criterias that may be slightly different in the urban and rural environment. Determination of the perception criterias of the landscape overall image is described in the detail in the authors' previous researches (Ņitavska, 2012).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In general churches in the coast are distributed irregularly, differently, both clustering around the populated areas, and locating in a rural landscape. Churches are not found in the coastal landscape in the district of Rucava. In the district of Nica there are five churches located in the coastal area – Baptist and Lutheran churches of Jurmalciems, Lutheran church of Muiitnieki and Baptist and Lutheran churches of Skatre. There are six churches in the district of Pāvilsta – Lutheran church of Saraiķi, Lutheran church of Ziemeupe, Catholic church, Lutheran and Baptist churches of Pāvilsta, Baptist church of Ulmale. There are five churches in the district of Ventspils – Lutheran church of Labraga, Catholic church of Jūrkalne, Baptist church of Sārnate and Baptist and Lutheran churches of Užava. There are 16 churches in the survey territory in total, 8 of them are Lutheran churches, 2 Catholic churches, 6 Baptist churches. Most of observed churches are located in even though small, but still populated areas. Accordingly, other churches are located in the rural landscape, because large populated areas are not included in this reserach (Table 1).

There are observed church landscapes outside the large populated areas in the research, in this case, therefore, excluding Liepaja and Ventspils.

Table 1
Churches of the sea coast of the South Kurzeme

Nr.	District of Kurzeme coast	Church	Church location place
1	Nīca	Baptist church of Jurmalciems	Rural populated area
2		Lutheran church of Jurmalciems	Rural populated area
3		Lutheran church of Muižnieki	Rural landscape
4		Baptist church of Skatre	Rural landscape
5		Lutheran church of Skatre	Rural landscape
6	Pāvilosta	Lutheran church of Saraļķi	Rural landscape
7		Lutheran church of Ziemeupe	Rural populated area
8		Catholic church of Pāvilosta	Rural populated area
9		Lutheran church of Pāvilosta	Rural populated area
10		Baptist church of Pāvilosta	Rural populated area
11		Baptist church of Ulmale	Rural landscape
12	Ventspils	Lutheran church of Labraga	Rural populated area
13		Catholic church of Jūrkalne	Rural populated area
14		Baptist church of Sārnate	Rural landscape
15		Baptist church of Užava	Rural populated area
16		Lutheran church of Užava	Rural populated area

The research area is divided into: “rural landscape” – territory outside populated areas, not excluding that there might be individual residential or non-residential buildings located next to the church, “rural populated area” – villages and small populated areas, small towns.

Imageability

Imageability is essential characteristic aspect of the church landscape. Factor that affects the visibility of the church is the height of the church building and expressiveness of the church building bell tower as a dominant in the landscape. 6 of 16 churches are till 6 metres high and others mostly are only marginally above this height, thus do not exceed the height of the low-rise building. Church towers are not expressive component of the landscape. Perhaps church towers are not typical for these areas for not to mislead the shippers. Churches are typically located in the flat places and at the roadsides. Both of these factors contribute the poor visibility of the church landscape, because expressed distant view lines do not form.

The church landscape of the South Kurzeme coast differs markedly with miniatures church landscape spaces, where the church is not an expressive dominant, but often groups in the common building of the populated area, creating a single fishermen’s village landscape.

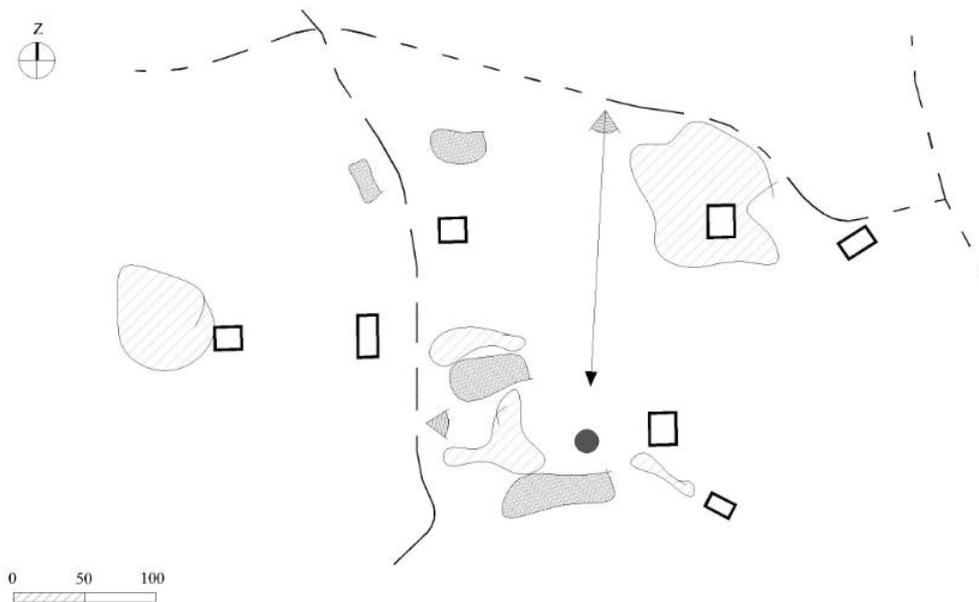


Figure 2. Baptist church of Jurmalciems

- dominant point – church;
- ▭ dwelling house
- ▨ tree structure;
- — main road axis;
- ▲ aizjomi;
- ▲ viewpoints;

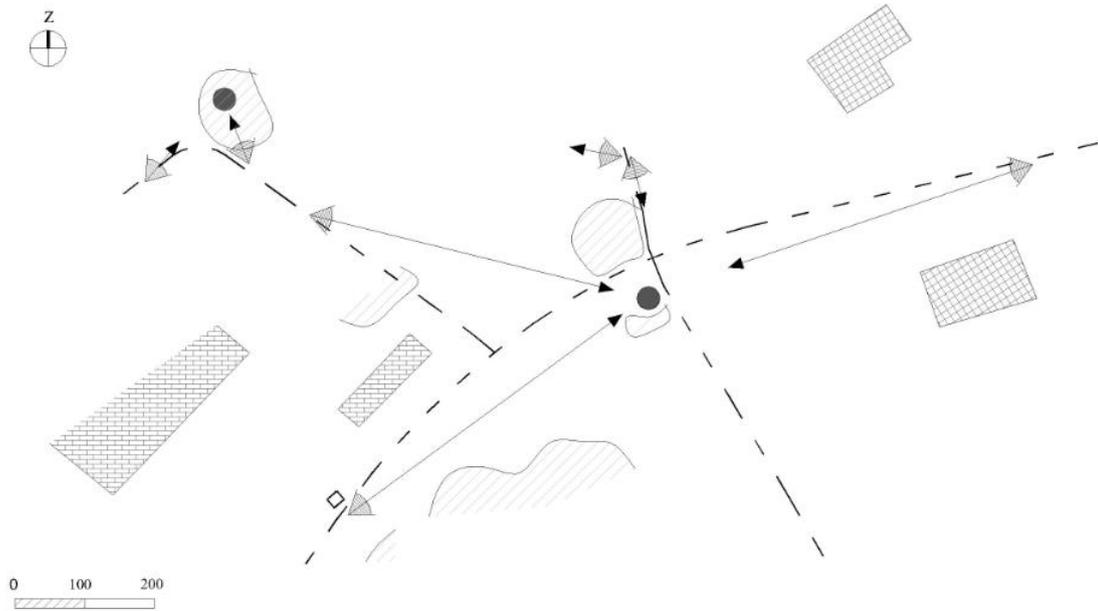


Figure 3. Baptist and Lutheran churches of Užava

- dominant point – church; low-rise building territory; viewpoints;
- tree structure; main road axis; dwelling house; industrial building

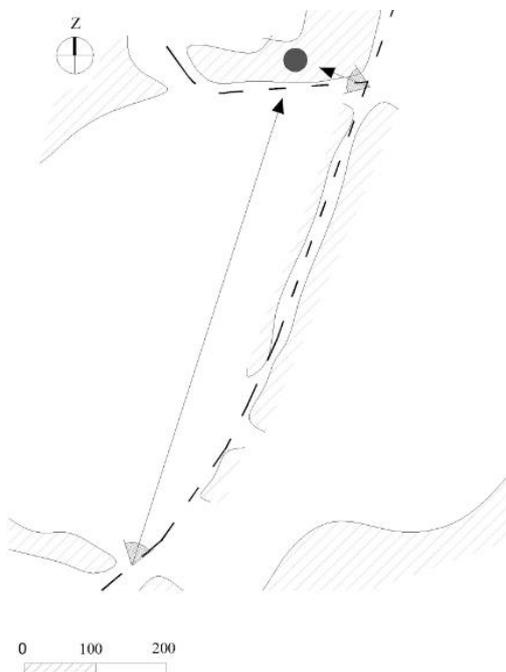


Figure 4. The Catholic church of Jūrkalne

- dominant point – church;
- viewpoints; tree structure; main road axis

For example, the landscape of the Baptist church of Jūrmalciems, where the longest view line, which is

formed, is about 200 m. This culture-historical church landscape is complemented by some unique cultural elements – aizjomi (Stūre, 2009; 2012).

The landscape of Baptist and Lutheran churches of Užava is a bit more away from the sea as the rest of the church landscapes examined in the research and radical differences are felt here. Churches are considered for the dominants of this landscape which compete with closely neighboured industrial and warehouse buildings.

The combination of low-rise buildings and the woody creates a peaceful backstage in the landscape. Both roadside plantings and private gardens greenery form the dense overgrown of the trees.

In spite of the large quantities of small church landscapes met on the coast, there are also church landscapes with a long viewlines in the South Kurzeme. Bright landscape dominant is the Catholic church of Jūrkalne. The church is both visible from a distance only from the south; it is hidden by crowns of mature trees from the rest of the building. Trees are both in the church garden and in the neighboured cemetery. Viewline from the south is about 700 m long.

Occurrence of elements in the church gardens

Church landscapes and church gardens in the Latvian regions are formed according to different principles. These differences reproduce regionally different historical development and traditions. In general church gardens of the South Kurzeme have

highly economic nature. There are household buildings, sheds and outdoor toilets in the church gardens. Symbolic elements are met a little in these gardens. And burials are only in one of the observed gardens (Table 2). The same situation is with the decorative plants. Perennials and in only minimal amounts are only in two of 16 observed church gardens. Garden structures are all asymmetric.

Table 2
The occurrence of elements in church gardens in the coast of the South Kurzeme

Nr.	Element	Occurrence of the element in the church garden, %
1	Outdoor toilet	75
2	Fence	62
3	Household building	62
4	Well	31
5	Small benches	25
6	Woody perimeter	19
7	Flgpole	13
8	Crucifix	13
9	Burials next to the territory of the church garden	6
10	Burials inside the territory of the church garden	6
11	Free-standing bell tower	6
12	Bicycle racks	6

The results of the percentage distribution of the occurrence of the elements in church gardens are rounded to the whole numbers to obtain greater transparency.

Occurred trees

There are mostly lilac shrubs in church gardens (Table 3). Pine-trees are also much used in church gardens and regarded as a typical element of the coastal church landscapes.

Table 3
Trees occurred in the church gardens of the coast of South Kurzeme

Nr.	Trees	Occurrence of the tree in the church garden, %
1	lilac	69
2	pine	62
3	linden	44
4	thuja	38
5	birch	38
6	maple	31
7	rowan	31
8	oak	13
9	fir	13
10	willow	6
11	elm	6
12	juniper	6
13	chestnut	6

Trees such as linden, birch, maple are considered as a typical for the whole Latvian landscape. Thujas are often used in Church gardens, as well as in cemeteries. An interesting is application of the rowan in the church garden, which is placed at the entrance of the territory. It is considered for reverberation of sacred pagan traditions in a sacral garden area. Other trees are used only in certain cases – willow, elm, juniper and chestnut.

The results of the percentage distribution of the occurrence of the trees in church gardens are rounded to the whole numbers to obtain greater transparency.

Criteria of the perception of the visual landscape overall image

The visual availability of the coastal church garden landscape of the South Kurzeme after the results of the research is narrow (43,75 %) and partly available (37,5 %), more rarely open and restricted (Figure 5). It is based on a coastal mosaic structures in rural areas or on a fully enclosed areas formed by coastal forests, as well as the small scale of the churches, and also that they mainly do not have a tower associated with coastal specifics, where high towers were not located not to mislead the shippers. It is proved by the landscape scale after the results of the research which in 50% of cases is small and in common in ~ 40% intimate (18,75 %) and close (18,75 %) (Figure 6).

In addition this visual limitation is also explained by the churches located in flat areas rather than a flat hill tops that elsewhere in Latvia - ~ 70% of cases the terrain is flat and ~ 20% flat with some rolling hills. Landscape colors are also estimated as nuanced (43,75 %) and neutral (18,75 %). The color gamut of the coastal church landscape is also closely connected with the used materials, which here is represented by a brick (in 8 cases), wood (in 7 cases), plaster (in 6 cases) and stone (in 3 cases). The texture of the landscape is generally fine (75 %) and more rarely rough (25 %).

The coastal church landscapes fundamentally are natural landscapes with some human-made elements (87,5 %), because they are mainly located in rural landscape (Table 1). Thus the landscape movement is also explained, which at the results of the research is defined as pacific (75 %) or dead (25 %). The prevalence of the natural landscapes and a distance of a people and civilization community created neutral (43,75 %) and pleasant (25 %) feelings. Comparing the church landscapes in other places of Latvia the coastal church landscapes in the South Kurzeme are relatively simple (68,75 %), that is in generally connected with traditions and self-restraint of the coastal population (Figure 7).

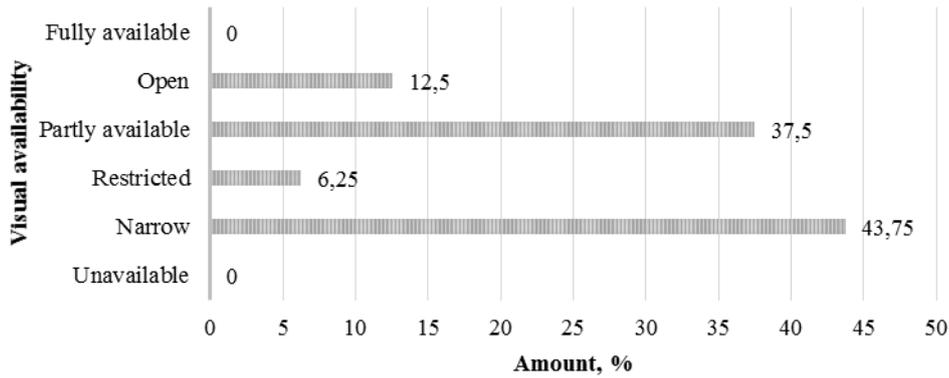


Figure 5. Visual availability

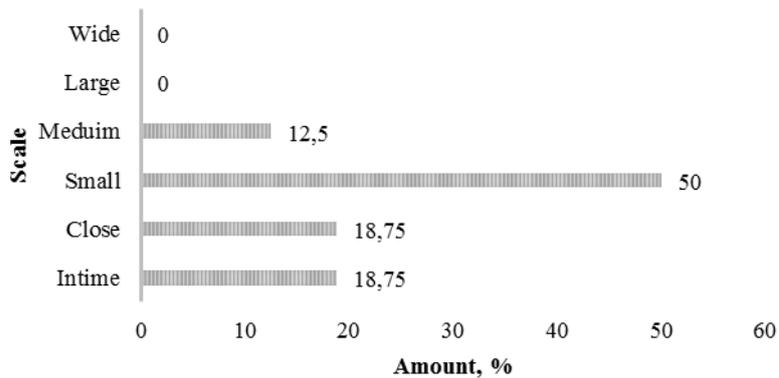


Figure 6. Landscape Scale

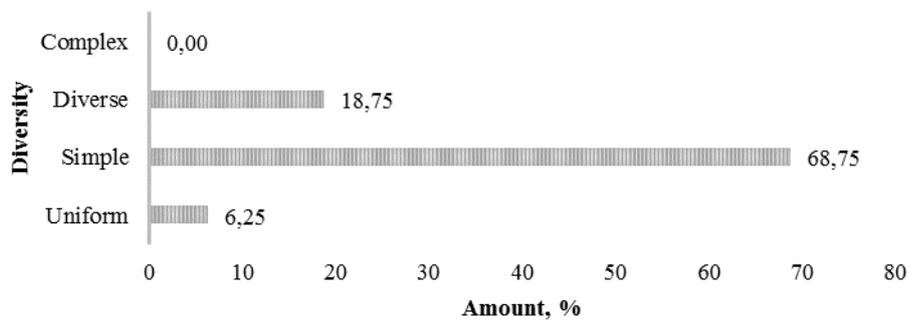


Figure 7. Diversity

On evaluating the coastal church landscapes they are defined as peculiar (50%) and typical (31,25 %), which in turn is connected on the one side with the the absence of the tower to the most of the churches and relatively simple architecture, but in return with a common readable elements that bring this typicality and common landscape features.

CONCLUSIONS

Coastal church landscapes of the South Kurzeme are one of the integral part of the coastal landscape identity and here it particularly brightly captures the identity of the landscape as a whole, through the

traditions, landscape nature and spatiality, through specific landscape elements and their types. On interlacing architectural traditions of Kurzeme with the nature conditions, special elements of the sea and sailing and functional necessity church landscapes got their peculiar character – small-scale, with close viewlines, unperceivable and neutral landscapes, which fit into a common landscape without standing out, just in nuances talking about the special function of the landscape, very restrained both in decorative elements and greenery.

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