

## PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE BY LANDSCAPE PLANNING. CASE STUDY: CIOABĂ-CHINȚESCU KULA

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**Abstract.** The article analyses a possible landscape arrangement of the area surrounding the Cioabă-Chințescu Kula (Gorj County), a historical monument registered in the List of Historical Monuments as an architectural monument and a fortified house. The Kula requires restoration and consolidation works, but also enhancements by a proper framing in the surrounding rural landscape. The method consists of a park-type scenery proposal, around the Kula, based on landscaping principles.

**Keywords:** cultural landscape, park scenery, spatial planning, landscaping principles, protection measures.

**Rezumat. Conservarea patrimoniului cultural prin amenajarea peisajului. Studiu de caz: Cula Cioabă-Chințescu.**

Articolul analizează modul în care poate fi amenajată zona din jurul Culei Cioabă-Chințescu din județul Gorj, un monument istoric înscris în Lista Monumentelor Istorice ca monument de arhitectură, locuință de tip fortificat. Cula necesită lucrări de refacere și consolidare, dar se impune totodată și punerea ei în valoare prin încadrarea corespunzătoare în peisajul înconjurător. Metoda a constat în propunerea unei amenajări de tip parc în jurul culei, pe baza principiilor de amenajare peisagistică.

**Cuvinte cheie:** peisaj cultural, planificare spațială, decor de parc, principii de amenajare, măsuri de protecție.

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, most landscape research is based on the definitions provided by the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and the European Landscape Convention (ANTHROP, 2018). The UNESCO World Heritage Convention (\*\*\*. UNESCO, 1992) defines **cultural landscapes** as representing the “combined works of nature and of man”, “illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal”. In turn, the European Landscape Convention (\*\*\*. COUNCIL OF EUROPE, 2000) gives the following definition: “The landscape is an area, as perceived by humans, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and / or human factors”. It is noted that if in 1996 the UNESCO Convention considered the cultural landscape as a work of man and nature, a result of internal and external forces of different natures, in 2000 the European Landscape Convention looked at the landscape in terms of people’s perception of a particular area which resulted from the action of human and / or natural factors.

The importance of the theme proposed in this article – which links concepts such as *landscape*, *cultural heritage*, *cultural landscape* and *planning* – is based on the need of preserving and enhancing cultural heritage by enclosing it in an appropriate natural setting and by creating an appropriate cultural landscape. This is justified by the fact that in recent years the cultural landscape, considered to be the bearer of identity and heritage, has gained a central role both in the European agenda and in local and regional planning policies. Previous studies indicate that cultural and natural biodiversity and their conservation should be approached together (PETRIȘOR, 2010; 2011), and the conservation of biodiversity can be seen as an inspiration for preserving cultural heritage (HAMMA et al., 2018).

**The European context.** In the original form in which the **UNESCO Convention** concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (\*\*\*. UNESCO, 1972) was adopted, it refers only once to the *landscape*, namely then in relation to the cultural heritage, when it gives the definition of „group of buildings” which „because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the *landscape*, are of special value from the point of view of history, art or science”. 20 years have passed, since the “Guidelines for the Implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Universal Cultural and Natural Heritage” (\*\*\*. UNESCO, 1992) had shown that landscapes are a diverse and complex form of heritage, and that “is important that due attention be paid to the full range of values represented in the landscape, both cultural and natural”. Also, for the first time, reference is made to cultural landscapes.

In the European Union, landscape planning is generally based on the implementation of the principles of the **European Landscape Convention** (DE MONTIS, 2016). This Convention emphasizes the *conservation of the landscape*, meaning “actions to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape, justified by its heritage value derived from its natural configuration and/or from human activity”. In the literature, this convention is seen as “the first international treaty that refers exclusively to all dimensions of the European landscape” (ROE, 2013) and that refers at landscape not only as an element of heritage that must be preserved (natural or built), but it becomes the scene on which all other types of heritage operate (COSGROVE, 1993). According to some opinions (JONES et al., 2007), there are several interpretations of the European Landscape Convention, which can be seen from a legal perspective (OLWIG, 2007), in terms of public participation (JONES, 2007), educational (HERLIN, 2004), legislative or environmental (JONES et al., 2007) points of view. This Convention underpins the landscape conservation policies of European countries, which are thus becoming increasingly connected to cultural heritage policies (SCAZZOSI, 2004; MASCARI et al., 2009).

The European Landscape Convention established definitions regarding landscape protection, management and planning. Its implementation has significantly contributed to innovations in *planning* theory and practice. Many countries (France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Slovenia) have built landscape atlases in order to identify local landscapes on a large scale and to insert them into specific landscape units. Landscape atlases try to integrate objective and subjective descriptions associated with the collective imagination and feelings for places.

**Preserving the cultural landscape** requires an interdisciplinary approach (which includes history, art, geography, architecture and landscape architecture, archeology, anthropology, ecological and social sciences, urbanism) as well as the various uses of the landscape - in agriculture, forestry, industry (\*\*\*. UNESCO, 2009). This requires an integrated and unified approach to nature and culture management (\*\*\*. UNESCO, 2015). An example of the unitary conservation of cultural and natural heritage is Sassi di Matera (Italy), which is nowadays one of the main tourist attractions in southern Italy, by becoming a model of sustainable development in harmony with nature. The area, containing vestiges from prehistoric times, is today a special urban ecosystem, being promoted and recovered after 1986. The area is interesting for its biodiversity and landscape, and in 1990 the Matera river area was declared a Natura 2000 site. Matera is the perfect symbiosis between natural and cultural features, promoting the use of old construction techniques. This symbiosis could be done with the help of the local community and the legislative framework that integrated environmental and cultural management activities.

Territorial heritage, defined as the set of knowledge and territorial assets resulting from the co-evolution of human settlements and their environment, is based on the local communities living in that place (DEMATTEIS & MAGNAGHI, 2018). Here, the local heritage is closer to the local people which considers it from inside, as a place of memory (“lieux de memoire”), more than the national heritage, which is usually seen from the outside (NORA, 1989). This kind of local heritage returns the landscape to the local population and those who visit it.

Some researchers point out that the idea of landscape has an aristocratic perspective (OLWIG & OLWIG, 2002), but the meanings of the term landscape are multiple and have evolved over time. If it originally referred to “territory” or “scenery”, denoting a visual, decorative character, the landscape was later seen as a synthesis between the natural and cultural characteristics of a region, involving concepts such as *region* and *space*. Gradually, the landscape began to be approached from a social, philosophical and symbolic perspective (LOWENTHAL, 1975), the interdisciplinary landscape research being approached together with the historical and humanistic view (OSBORNE et al., 1998). With the identification of the main causes of the landscape change - urbanization, industrialization, expansion of agriculture - after the 90's increased interest in *landscape*, *cultural landscape* and “*sustainable landscape*” through a transdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach.

**Associating the landscape with the architecture.** The terms “landscape architect” / “landscape architecture” are derived from the French term “architecte-paysagiste”, used by Jean-Marie Morel in the early nineteenth century to distinguish between the one who designs traditional gardens and the one designing a new type of landscape, represented by the English garden, which had begun to be considered a modern garden, and the ceation of the great cultural, scientific, and intellectual transformations of the Enlightenment (DISPONZIO, 2014). It was not until 1860, when Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux took on the title of “landscape architect” (and “landscape architecture”) that this professional name began to be officially mentioned.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some authors saw landscape gardening as “an artistic combination of the beauty of nature and art (DOWNING, 1849).” Today, landscape architecture involves three areas of activity that overlap and address different levels of spatial scale (NIJHUIS, 2013): landscape planning, design and management. These activities require a multi-layered understanding of the landscape: its spatial structure, history, context, and the ecological, economic, and social processes involved. European documents, such as the new European Territorial Strategy (\*\*\*. COUNCIL OF EUROPE, 2020) explicitly state the link between landscape and cultural heritage on the one hand, and spatial planning / planning on the other (DE MONTIS, 2014).

**The national context. Romania** has signed 7 UNESCO cultural conventions, including the Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (\*\*\*. CONSILIUL PROVIZORIU DE UNIUNE NAȚIONALĂ, 1990). As a signatory to the Convention, it has undertaken obligations with regard to cultural heritage, including the identification and delimitation of cultural heritage assets in its territory and the adoption of specific policies to integrate the protection of cultural heritage into general planning programs. At national level, the protection of historical monuments is based on Law no. 422/2001 (\*\*\*. PARLAMENTUL ROMÂNIEI, 2001) which regulates the general legal regime of historical monuments. The law refers not only to the monument itself, but also to the protection zone around it, which will also be reflected in the urban plans of the localities where the monument is located and in the regulations related to the area, which will ensure “integrated conservation and highlighting the historical monument and its built or natural setting”.

The Cioabă-Chintescu Kula from Gorj County (Fig. 1) is on the List of Historical Monuments (LMI, provided by Law no. 422/2001) at position no. 367 and is considered to be a category A historical monument (of national and universal value), framed as a monument (m) of architecture (II). It is highlighted as “a fortified house of Kula type”, with the code GJ-II-m-A-09392. It belongs to the category: Kulas and in records appears dating from 1762, and from 1818 to 1825. The “Address” includes: locality: Șiacu village, Slivilești commune. In the Gorj County, according to LMI, there are 5 Kulas (architectural monuments), of which 3 are of A category. Of these, the Cioabă-Chintescu Kula is the oldest.



Figure 1. The Cioabă-Chințescu Kula from Gorj County (Source: INCD URBAN-INCERC).

The Kula is located on the Șiacu hill, facing the Slivilești, Bolboșilor and Trestioarei valleys, and has the shape of a tower facing north. The Kula has three levels, and the walls are thick, made of small bricks and have a two-storey ground floor.

According to the law, the Kula must be highlighted together with its protection zone in the spatial planning plans and urban plans of the administrative-territorial unit in which it is located, and any interventions must be made only on the basis of an approval of the Ministry of Culture or, as the case may be, by the decentralized public services of the Ministry of Culture. Among the interventions we mention research, conservation, construction, consolidation, extension, restructuring works as well as enhancement works that modify the substance or appearance of the objective, or arrangement of access roads.

The Kula is located on the public domain, in a rural public space. This is a multipurpose space: it can be a grazing area, and a gathering place for different events, it can have sports destinations (MUNTEANU, 2013). The ground around the Kula is covered with either grass or gravel, and the water drains through the grassy areas. The solutions for arranging the area where the Kula is located must be adapted to the place, with elements that integrate into the local landscape and architecture.

In the Kula area, the landscape is closely related to the human activities that take place around it and to the neighboring settlements, which have their own identity. The area where the Kula is located has its own specificity, having a specific character, different from other areas. Around it is an inhabited landscape, consisting of man-made land, represented by human settlements, and land transformed by man, especially for agricultural purposes; orchards, gardens, pastures and a preserved land, have remained un-modeled by man. Speaking of the specifics of the place where the Kula is located, it should be noted that its conservation and valorization is determined by many elements such as the traditional way of living, occupations, customs and traditions. The built environment is also determined by tradition - by certain materials and crafts.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research shows how the area around the Cioabă-Chințescu Kula can be arranged from a landscape point of view, both for the purpose of protecting the monument and for its visual capitalization in order to become a point of interest both for tourists and for the local community. The Kula needs repairs and for this some measures have already been proposed, but from a landscape point of view it must be arranged so that the cultural landscape it forms can be a quality one.

For this we used the principles of landscaping that were stated by Joshua Major in 1852 in his work „The theory and practice of landscape gardening” (MAJOR, 1852). Joshua Major (1786–1866) was an English landscape architect who designed important parks in his day. According to him, the natural and built elements of the landscape can compose the following sceneries (Table 1):

Table 1. Sceneries identified by J. Major.

Type	Characteristics
Grand Scenery	“Nature with bold, striking and majestic features of a vast expanse (mountains, cliffs, lakes)”
Romantic Scenery	“Nature in its wildest and most changeable form, varying in bold and sudden contrasts (steep cliffs, fast river, tangled forests and wild bushes)”
Picturesque Scenery	“Nature in its simplest form (hill, valley, stream, thicket, trees, cliffs)”
Beautiful Scenery	“Quiet and secluded nature, without sudden contrasts”
Rural Scenery	“The simplest and most common of all, in which should be placed a modest, unpretentious house, or a cottage”
Park Scenery	“It is composed of wood, water and pasture ground, so arranged cultivated as to combine benefit and comfort with pleasurable interest. It is attached to a county residence”

In order to fit into this classification, it can be seen that the perimeter around the Cioabă-Chințescu Kula is in a rural landscape and the principles of landscaping a rural landscape can help in our efforts to find a suitable landscaping of the area around the Kula, that should be arranged as to make it look like a park, by introducing “graceful and imposing trees over the smooth green pasture”. According to his principles of landscape gardening, the proposed park will be an important annex of the Kula, having as an important component the trees, as “indispensable objects in the landscape, the essence of a true landscape”. J. Major recommends the following trees, in the case of a park in a rural area: Common oak (*Quercus pedunculata*), Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Mountain elm (*Ulmus montana*), Field elm (*Ulmus campestris*), Mountain maple (*Acer pseudo-platanus*).

We chose this park-type landscape because it is a combination of the nearby agricultural landscape and the wild one in the distance. Obviously, a good landscaper will combine the utility of the park with harmony and beauty.

The principles of landscape gardening according to J. Major for arranging a park in a rural landscape are:

- The area around the construction must be of primary interest, and have a look as pleasant as possible to the visitor.
- The trees and shrubs in the park around the building should be grouped so that their natural shape and elegance can be seen from anywhere during walks.
- Trees of several kinds should form small groups, independent from the other species, and, associated with other different types, produce a variety of shapes and shadows.
- The park must contain paved alleys, which may lead to certain places. The road should be smooth and dry, with slight curves through the most interesting part of the park and without having a useless winding route.
- It is advisable to introduce wooden benches and chairs in the decor, having a rustic character, and if a stream or ravine intersects the path, a bridge would be very appropriate, but it is not recommended to introduce elegant architectural structures or structures made of metal.
- The monotony of the rural area should be interrupted by grassy meadows, mixed with patches and meadows of wild species introduced in various groups and quantities.
- The pasture must not have a rough or neglected appearance and must not have weeds.

## RESULTS

Applying the landscaping recommendations in the case of the Cioabă-Chințescu Kula, in order to offer a variety of scenery in its neighbouring park, we obtained the following results:

**Exterior arrangements.** Regarding the exterior design, local materials must be used: wood, stone, gravel or grass, not metal. The specificity and authenticity must be preserved through the desired arrangements, which must use local materials, with furniture elements such as wooden benches that must be made by local craftsmen.

**Framing the Kula in the landscape.** Like any construction, the Kula must be in natural connection with the landscape. If the space around the Kula is to be arranged, the authors of the present study consider that some considerations should be taken into account, such as preserving the existing plot, the optimal framing isolated trees and the use of traditional techniques and materials of the area where the Kula is located.

**Plants and shrubs.** The arrangement of the area around the Kula includes the creation of a park that integrates the Kula as well as possible in the local landscape and specificity. Between the Kula and the main road, plantations should not obscure the landscape or create areas of excessive shading. It is recommended to delimit the Kula with mixed hedge plantations from local deciduous species. Native plant species are recommended on planted areas.

The area around the Kula could be a meadow containing patches of Primrose (*Primula veris/officinalis*), wood anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*, which is suitable for shady places, including in the hill area), Wild Hyacinth, (*Campanula napuligera*), Violet (*Scilla bifolia*, which is relatively common in the spontaneous flora of Romania and is found mainly in the plain and hill area), Honeysuckle (*Lonicera caprifolium/Lonicera japonica*, popular as a plant ornamental in parks and gardens), Climbing Rose, *Prunus spinosa* (a hardy, thorny wild shrub that in the countryside is often integrated into wild hedges), Ulex (*Ulex Europaeus*, a year-round thorny green shrub planted as a hedge). All this “should be introduced in groups and quantities so varied as to prevent the slightest suspicion of artistic interference.”

In the light of the principles of park and garden design, the results show that the following deciduous trees can be planted: Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Linden (*Tilia cordata*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Birch (*Betula pendula*), Willow (*Salix alba*), Plum (*Prunus sp.*). In addition to the previously recommended shrubs, corn (*Cornus alba sanguinea*), Soc (*Sambucus nigra*), dogwood (*Ligustrum vulgaris*), Plum (*Prunus podus, spinosa*), rosehip (*Rosa canina*), and Willow (*Salix caprea viminalis*). Figure 2 shows a proposal for landscaping of the area where the Kula is located.

The grassy areas will contain existing species in the local grasslands in order to maintain biodiversity. However, it is known that mineral fertilizers should not be used, as they harm biodiversity and destroy local specificity (MUNTEANU, 2013; ROSA et al., 2021). The alleys between the plantations must also be paved using local techniques and materials - gravel, stone.

**Access roads.** The landscaping of the Kula area also involves the arrangement of roads and alleys around it. These traffic surfaces must be as permeable as possible, paved with stone or limestone, avoiding the use of concrete pavements, or asphalt. Asphalt should be limited to the main roads near the Kula, and care should be taken on road

slopes, stormwater runoff and embankments to avoid damaging asphalt in shady areas where water and ice stagnate, making the road difficult to use. Car traffic may raise dust on the existing improperly maintained roads closet to the Kula. Because there is a local road near the Kula, used simultaneously by people, cyclists, animals, carts and cars, it is recommended to limit the speed of cars. Care must also be taken when draining traffic routes, which must be done with vegetated ditches, which slow down the flow of water and reduce the risk of flooding. Before finishing, the collection of rainwater runoff must be considered. Roads must be maintained periodically by filling gravel and cleaning ditches.

**Pedestrian alleys** should be paved with natural materials, preferably river or limestone carving, of different colors, with simple geometric shapes. Paths should not be paved, but paving or weeding is recommended. If plantations are used to stabilize the roads, local species must be used. If in the backyard area the arrangement also includes a parking lot, there are also some recommendations here. Thus, the parking area should be made of compacted gravel from local materials, and not from concrete pavers or paved areas. The car park will be integrated into the vegetation. If a leisure arrangement is to be made, such as a kiosk or a terrace, they must be integrated in the context, and no artificial relief must be created. An optimal place must be chosen in which, through small adaptations of the existing land and minimal embankments, the coherence of the surrounding landscape is maintained. Vegetation with mixed species must be used here - trees, shrubs, deciduous trees.



Figure 2. Landscaping the Cioabă-Chințescu Kula according to the principles of J. Major.

## DISCUSSIONS

The article presents a type of cultural landscape, a combined work of man and nature and which needs protection together with its protection area, because it can also maintain the natural values of the landscape and the biodiversity of the area.

A historical construction, such as the Cioabă-Chințescu Kula, needs, in addition to historical knowledge, an analysis of its physical and symbolic relationship with the locality and the landscape in which it is located. The relationship between landscape and heritage conservation is a problematic one, especially because the landscape does not fit perfectly in the field of cultural or natural heritage. In most European countries the responsibilities at the level of ministries are different (also in Romania, the natural heritage is handled by the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forest and the cultural heritage by the Ministry of Culture). This division also exists under the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention, which distinguishes between natural sites, for which the assessment body is the IUCN, and cultural sites, under the care of ICOMOS - International Committee on Monuments and Sites.

The obtained results validate the hypothesis from which we started, namely the possibility of applying several principles of landscape arrangement in the area surrounding the Cioabă-Chințescu Kula, a historical monument protected by law. The Kula requires restoration and rehabilitation works, which should be followed by appropriate landscaping. The area proposed to be arranged is part of Kula area, which is also delimited on the ground by a protective fence.

The proposed arrangements, which aim at enhancing the Kula and its socio-economic and cultural integration in the life of the local community, represent a measure of protection and are in accordance with the provisions of Law 422/2001 on the protection of historical monuments. Being an integral part of the national cultural heritage, the Kula is protected by this law, and the protection measures that can be taken are carried out in the public interest, the interventions on the Kula may be a cause of public utility.

The landscaping and enhancement that we have proposed is considered to be an intervention on the Kula (art. 23 of the Law) and is done only on the basis and in compliance with the opinion issued by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage or, as appropriate, by the decentralized public services of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. The same is necessary in the case of permanent or temporary placement of fences or protective constructions or some pieces of fixed furniture, arrangement of access roads, pedestrian and roadways, signs, including in the protection area of the Kula. Of course, the same rules are applying in the case of major interventions on the Kula – its conservation, construction, consolidation or restructuring, in which case projects carried out by experts or specialists certified by the Ministry of Culture are required, in compliance with the requirements for quality construction work. Also, according to the law, the maintenance, conservation, consolidation, restoration and enhancement of the Kula belongs to the owner, respectively the City Hall of the Slivilești commune, and “its protection is a component part of the strategy of sustainable economic-social development, tourism and spatial planning, at national and local level.”

## CONCLUSIONS

The ensemble represented by the Cioabă-Chințescu Kula and its protection area, in which we assumed a park-type landscaping is a cultural landscape that reflects the interaction between man and his natural environment, the specific way of sustainable land use and a specific spiritual relationship with the nature. This ensemble needs protection in order to maintain or even enhance the natural values of the landscape.

For landscaping the area around the Kula, in the form of a park (or possibly a garden), certain species of ornamental plants, mostly native, shrubs and trees should be planted either in groups of the same species or with other species and the pleasing appearance of the décor should be enhanced. Finally, among the principles of development of the whole Cioabă-Chințescu ensemble that we have identified, we mention the need to arrange the landscape around the Kula in close connection with the human activities that take place in the area and with the specifics of the surrounding area. Landscaping requires the arrangement of roads and alleys near the Kula according to certain principles: stone or gravel pavements, the use of natural materials, grassing. The proposed park must be integrated as well as possible in the local landscape and specificity.

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