DESIGN ELEMENTS FOR PROMOTING TOURIST ATTRACTIONS CASE STUDY: ŢARA OAŞULUI MUSEUM (SATU MARE COUNTY)

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Abstract: The intensification of the tourist traffic, the multiplication and diversification of the tourism offer, both locally and globally, set new research directions for design in tourism, which is nothing but a higher form of communication in tourism from an aesthetic and functional point of view. The present study will come with a relevant practice example (Ţara Oaşului Museum, Satu Mare County) which will highlight several design elements used to promote tourist attractions.

Key words: tourist design, tourist attractions, museum, Ţara Oaşului

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INTRODUCTION

The Ţara Oaşului Museum is located in Ţara Oaşului, on the left bank of the River Tur, a right tributary of the River Someş. „Oaş Land, located in northwestern Romania, under the administration of Satu Mare County, is a well defined mental space that overlaps the territory of 12 communes (figure 1). The consciousness of belonging to the space called "Oaş Land" didn't appear just recently, but it was shaped over the centuries in the homonymic depression sheltered by the Oaş and Igniş Mountains" (Herman, 2012, p. 229). This tourist destination is accessible thanks to the national road DN19 Satu Mare - Sighetul Marmaţiei.

The history of the Ţara Oaşului Museum is a spectacular one, lost in the mists of time. We must mention the fact that this museum took shape due to a favourable conjuncture of events, with no initial strict thematic plan, decision or official order regarding the construction of such an institution of local, national and even international interest. It gained scientific and tourist value in time, especially during the last years, in the context of globalization which was leading to the disappearance of the Oaş civilization and with it the sense of belonging to this mental space called Oaş. „We all know and see every day that passes, and from the experience of other countries, that globalization does

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not always imply only progress. For example, its extension, with everything it implies, over an area which is not properly prepared to assimilate it, can lead to regression or in some situations even to the decline of that territory" (Herman & Wendt, 2011, p. 87). In this context, the museum has to take on this crucial role of keeping alive this rural universe of Oaş. The main elements that construct this rural universe are: church, household - house, stable, barn, other outbuildings, mill, pottery, smithery, etc. The key element missing from the landscape is the man, the Oaş man who is nothing but the maker of all the treasures listed above.
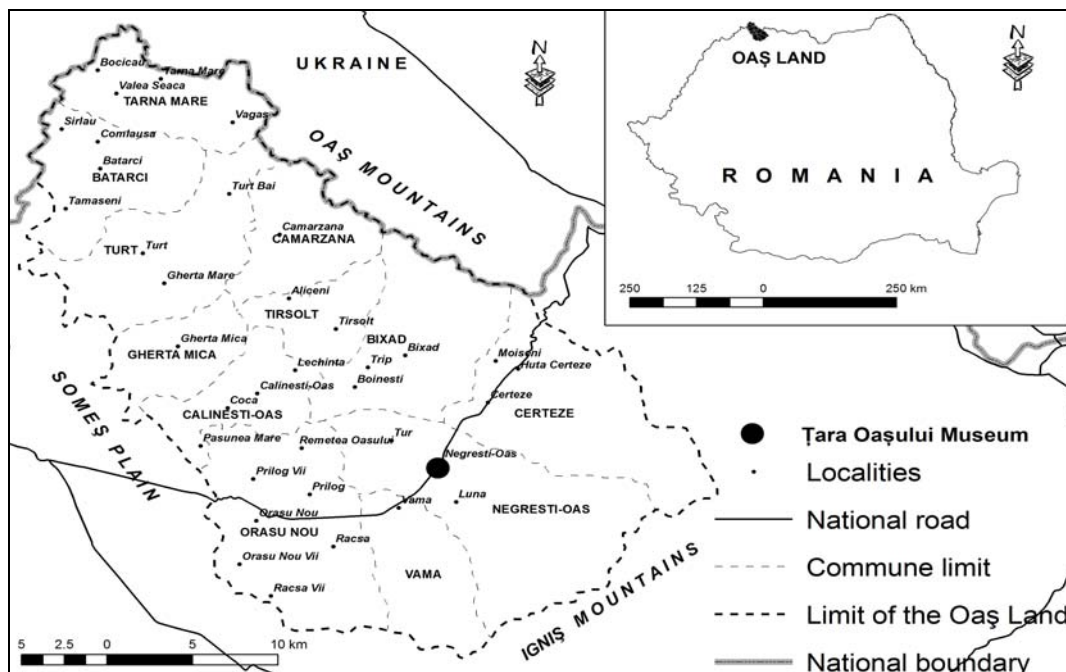

Figura 1. Location of the Ţara Oaşului Museum

If we take a look back at the history of the museum, we identify a series of construction stages. The first stage is represented by the transfer of the Betea house during the 60s from the Racşa village and its reconstruction in the outskirts of the Negreşti Oaş town where it functioned under the name „museum house". The second stage consists of the necessity to save the wooden church from the village Lechinţa, a church abandoned during the 30's by the congregation of the village. In 1979, with the restoration of the wooden church from Lechinţa in its present location, it also appears for the first time the idea of creating an open-air museum in Negreşti Oaş. Since 1986 the open Air Museum of Oaş opens its doors to the public. This marks the start of the third stage of the museum's existence. In the fourth stage of building the museum, after 1990, its development is growing with the systematic completing of the collections.

Today, the museum have „the 11 houses it was meant to suggest the scattered village, once representative type for all houses from Oaş. But considering the unitary character of the area, only four houses were used for the reconstruction of traditional household: Beta house from Racşa (18th Century), Morar House from Negreşti (19th Century), Moiş house from Moişeni (19th Century) and Paul house from Cămârzana (18th Century, which is now under construction and reworking). Remarkable are the

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two barns from Gherţa Mare and Gherţa Mică (two of the three types that once existed) shed for sheep in Bixad, the 5 types of cages for birds and animals, the bakehouse from outside, blacksmith shop (also functional) and Moişeni crucifix. The other houses have to illustrate the typology of the houses from the area or building techniques and materials, and a few have been used in museography projects. So the Contra house from Vama (the first decade of the 20th Century) we arranged a workshop-school pottery Vincze house from Vama (1936) is a house of social soire, in and around a house in Negreşti (built in the first part of the 20th Century) operates the water mill, mill for suiting and a whirling, as well as in one of the two houses of Gherţa Mică (19th Century) is open in summer a tiny but original contemporary art gallery and the Lohan house from Tur village (1943), will soon host a workshop of fur naught (ragged clothed made of wool)" (Ilieş et al., 2014, p. 97).

As a continuation of the progress made in time we are currently witnessing a new stage in the evolution of the museum that coincides with its promotion from a tourist point of view by highlighting the beauty of the structural parts and of the surrounding areas. This tourist promotion is supposed to save the representative elements of the local architecture that act like a guardian of the local identity. Therefore, the historical development of the Ţara Oaşului Museum was marked by five distinct stages, each of them being characterized by certain defining features.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is the result of practical approaches and of combined efforts made during the previous period (2013) in order to increase the attention and the promotions focused on a tourist attraction of a unique anthropogenic value which is the Ţara Oaşului Museum. The obtained results consisted of two new products: a Map of the Ţara Oaşului Museum which can be consulted by everyone who is interested at the entrance, in the Ţara Oaşului Museum, Negreşti Oaş, Satu Mare County, Romania; and the Interactive Map of the museum which can be accessed on the web page: http://www.oasmuseum.ro/harta_muzeului/harta.html. The entire arsenal of methods, techniques and tools applied in geographical research was used for conducting the present study. Thus, after a preliminary bibliographic research/documentation, a series of field trips were conducted in order to obtain the necessary information (Ilieş et al., 2011). The research and documentation was ment to help us familiarize with the specific characteristics of the museum's structural elements represented by households (house, barn, shed and other outbuildings), wine press, mill, smithery, pottery studio, church, etc., practically the entire Oaş rural universe.

We need to mention that knowing the connections that define all these elements is a sine qua non condition in promoting this type of tourist attractions. During the field research we focused our attention on the following aspects: locating each element; establishing its preservation degree and the measures to be taken in order to increase the tourist development; drafting the possibilities of a new tourist development etc. Moreover, a picture of each site was taken in order to make a compilation of images that are representative for the Ţara Oaşului Museum. The data obtained in the two previous stages (the research/documentation stage and field research stage) were used in the following processing stage meant to create the final products (the Map of the Ţara Oaşului Museum and the Interactive Map of the Ţara Oaşului Museum).

DESIGN ELEMENTS USED FOR PROMOTING TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

The design in tourism is a multidisciplinary research field with an intense use during the last years. This transpires from a necessity surfaced in tourism during the new

context of the tourist regionalization/globalization. „Globalization and regionalization are complementary processes of the contemporary society, processes triggered by the disruption of the balance between the possibilities of meeting the civilization needs and the cultural needs. Ideally, the two should be in balance but the reality is different. It is also important to mention the fact that it is quite difficult to draw a clear line between globalization and integration" (Ionescu, 2004). „Globalization is the stage of setting the global economy as a whole. The process consists of opening the borders and generalizing trade (between people, ideas, capital, goods) and it involves several dimensions: political, economic, cultural, spiritual etc." (Ionescu, 2004).

„Regionalization is a common trend in the evolution of the territorial organization of the European states. Regions tend to be intermediate public bodies ment to meet the needs of territorialisation of certain Community policies and to provide the basis for institutional convergence of EU Member States" (Cândea et al., 2006, p. 57). It was against this background that in Europe regions were created „as a territorial space or level of implementation of regional policies and corresponding programs, thus a condition of access to resources" (Cândea et al., 2006, p. 58).

Tourist regions are structural units of the global tourism system and define a certain area in terms of tourism. Regionalization is the process of fragmentation in structural units of different types and sizes, depending on their defining particularities in terms of tourism. We cannot speak of globalization in the absence of regionalization, the division of the whole into its structural parts, meant to play an important part in the proper functioning of the global tourism system.

In this context of tourist regionalization/globalization, the idea of design in tourism is needed, and idea that ivolves the art and the science of promoting tourist destinations from an aesthetic and funtional point of view. The aesthetic part envisages „the ensemble of characteristics and phenomena studied by aesthetics" (Dex, 2009). Aesthetics is a philosophical discipline that studies the essence, regularities, categories and structure of that human attitude towards reality, characterized by reflection, contemplation, valuing and building of some specific features of objects and processes in nature, society, or consciousness of human creations (Aghiţei et al., 1972). The functional aspect focuses on the relations established between the structural components of the promoted attraction on the one hand and between them and the exterior on the other hand.

The main stages used in promoting the Ţara Oaşului Museum were: establishing the general objective (promoting the Ţara Oaşului Museum); establishing the operational objectives (Obtaining cartographic material - Map of the Ţara Oaşului Museum; Obtaining an interactive map - Online); establishing the necessary activities (research-documentation activities; field activities; activities specific for the process of creating the maps mentioned in the operational objectives); establishing the aticipated results (reseach/documentation rapport concerning the Ţara Oaşului Museum, from both a general and particular perspective; overall photos of the museum and photos for each structural element in part; decoupages of each structural element; sketch of the museum; map of the museum - the printable, hardcopy version and the online map); the progress of each activity (with the purpose of reaching the above mentioned goals); the creation and the printing of the Map of the Ţara Oaşului Museum (which involves the gathering of every component into a whole); the creation and the launching of the interactive Map of the Ţara Oaşului Museum (which requires the transformation of the initial map into a digital, easy to access map).

In order to promote the Ţara Oaşului Museum, we used the following tourist design elements: photography, decoupage, pictography, sketching, mapping and online mapping.

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The photos used in promoting the Ţara Oaşului Museum were taken in 2013. They were taken by following various techniques that are specific to the art of photographing. Among these we mention the temporal and the spatial ones. The temporal technique refers to that moment of the day in which the pictures were taken while the spatial techniques refer to the type of photos that were taken (detail photos that focus on every structural element of the museum and general photos that render the general frame of the museum, its global structure).

1. Administrative building

2. Lechinţa wooden church

3. Gherţa Mică house

4. Gherţa Mică house

5. Pottery house from Vama

6.1. Household from Racşa – the house

6.2. Household from Racşa - henhouse

6.3. Household from Racşa - barn

6.4. Household from Racşa - hayloft

6.5. Household from Racşa - maize barn

7. Guest house

8.1. Household from Călineşti – house

8.2. Household from Călineşti - barn

8.3. Household from Călineşti – henhouse

8.4. Household from Călineşti – fireplace

9. Grape press

10. Mill from Certeze

11.1. Household from
Moişeni – house

11.2. Household from
Moişeni - henhouse

11.3. Household from
Moişeni - barn

11.4. Household from Moişeni
– henhouse

12. Smithery from Vama

13. House from Vama

14.1. Household from
Cămârzana – house

14.2. Household from
Cămârzana - barn

15. Pottery studio

16. New house

Figure 2. Decoupage with the structural elements from the Ţara Oaşului Museum

The decoupages, in numer of 27, were obtained by pulling each structural element out of its context from the previously taken photos. They were used as pictographs in order to replace the conventional signs and they were placed in the museum's sketch according to some well established rules that concern location and dimension (Figure 2).

On the map, the vegetation is represented through schematic drawings, depicting at a corresponding scale the location (spatial position) and size of each tree, as explained in the legend of the map.

The museum's sketch was obtained by mapping the information obtained from the museum's plans and from the orthophoto plan of the concerned area. In order to render the information, we used coloured polygons and divided the information into 4 types, thus 4 colours: green, light grey, dark grey and blue. The significance of each colour is the following: green - grass; light grey - interior walkways; dark grey -

asphalt road; blue - water adduction (Figure 3). From a functional perspective, the museum's sketch aims at supporting the other structural elements (decoupages, conventional signs, text and numbers).

Figure 3. Museum's sketch

The cartographic representation constitutes one of the most important promotion methods in tourism. Just like any other promotion method, the cartographic representation is based on data (numbers, text, images, graphics etc.) and is used for rendering these data in a synthetized form that can have a visual impact on the receiver of the information. From a structural point of view, the Map of the Țara Oașului Museum is built from „mathematical, content, preparation and printing elements, but also from complementary characterization elements" (Dincă & Herman, 2012, p. 324). The mathematical elements category especially contains the proportion scale elements while the content elements category focuses on vegetation, hydrography and touristic infrastructure and development. „Vegetation is the essence of each landscape and it is an element with a considerable power of attraction" (Iațu & Muntele, 2003, p. 84). Due to the very limited area and to the associations that enter the museums surroundings, vegetation has only a decorative role for the other structural elements that stimulate the tourist's attention. Vegetation is represented on our map with green polygons. The preparation and printing elements are represented by the legend and the wind rose. The legend of the map is really accessible, being a harmonious summation of colours, symbols, decoupages, pictographs and text.

The information given to a potential user of these two types of maps (the Tourist Map of the Țara Oașului Museum and the interactive map) is graphic, textual and digital information. The graphic information contains the iconography (decoupages) obtained from the processed photos taken during the field activities. The advantage of using this

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type of information consists of transforming the objective reality in an aesthetic, friendly, easy to use format that is accessible to everyone and that helps visualize the landscape, as these pictographs give an image that is mirroring the field reality. The textual information refers to the names of the structural elements that compose the museum and of the street on which we can locate the Ţara Oaşului Museum (Livezilor Street), while the digital information consists of the number of order on the map and in its legend of each structural element (figure 4).
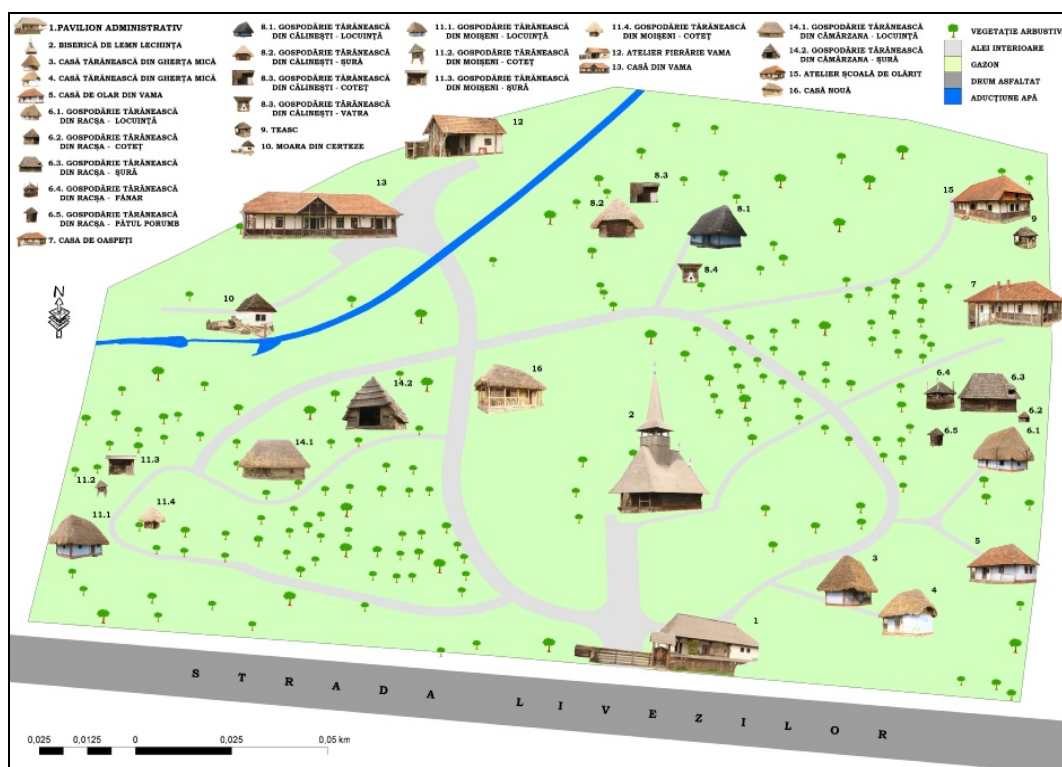

Figure 4. Map of the Ţara Oaşului Museum
(Source: Ilieş (coord) et al., 2014)

The preparation and the editing of the interactive map of the Ţara Oaşului Museum is another element included in the tourist design for the promotion of the museum from and aesthetic and functional point of view. If the aesthetic aspect is given by the modality of combining colours, decoupages etc., the functional aspect is given by the way in which the interactive map can be used. Taken into consideration the fact that the present society is based on knowledge, on information, it became necessary to provide the gathered data in an easily accessible way, with the help of internet and websites.

One of the most modern and easy to use instruments of information, orientation, awareness and promotion of tourist attractions is the interactive, online map. The interactive map is a system of hypertext documents and information regarding the Ţara Oaşului Museum, all linked between them and accessible from anywhere due to the worldwide internet web. They can be registered on a server and they can be accessed with an identification code called URL (http://www.oasmuseum.ro/harta_muzeului/2.html). The hypertext is displayed with the help of a web navigation program called browser

(Internet explorer, Mozila Firefox, Google Crom etc.) that downloads the interactive map from a server and displays it to users on a terminal (computer screen, phone). From a structural point of view the interactive map is identical with the Tourist Map of the Ţara Oaşului Museum, placed at the entryway to the above mentioned institution. The difference consists of the fact that by accessing each structural element the user can find the photo of the elements and detailed information regarding it.

For example, by accessing the number 2 element, the Lechinţa wooden church, we will obtain the following information: „It is the only wooden church preserved in Ţara Oaşului. It was built in the early 17th century (around 1629) in the village Lechinţa from the current commune Călineşti-Oaş. The wooden churches from Oaş disappeared as they were replaced by the brick ones, most of them being replaced in the second half of the 19th century. In 1939, when it was photographed by the ethnographer Ioniţă G. Andron, the church was intact. 20 year after, it was turned into ruins. It was again at the insistence mister I. G. Andron that the church was dismantled in the mid-60s and the recovered material was stored at Negreşti. The church was firstly restored by a team of craftsmen from Maramures, on the same place where it is now, in the years 1979 – 1980, after a plan drawn up by architect Niels Auner. In 2006 it was carried out, under a project financed by PHARE, the current, more correct restoration. A very unusual project was born at the same tine: a 18th century church mural was reconstituted. The research on all the wooden churches of Maramures was carried out by the painters Ioan Gozman and Dorel Petrehuş who then drew up the project (having the Călineşti - Căieni church from Maramures as model). The actual painting was done by painters I. Gozman, D. Petrehuş, Ion D. Ion şi Corneliu Pop" (Vârnav, 2014). The menu was designed according to the principle of accessibility to information in electronic form; it is simple and open to any user with minimal knowledge of the Internet use.

CONCLUSIONS

The design in tourism constitutes a sine qua non condition in developing through tourism a tourist attraction, because the tourist product is not a tangible product that can be presented to clients „as a product sample, like in the case of the consumption goods, and it cannot be stored in time, its sale being realized on the extent of its offer" (Cocean, 2006, p. 194). This is the reason why in tourism, more than in other fields, the design has a huge task of making the tourist product known, in this case the Ţara Oaşului Museum, by using all design elements. In the specialized literature, Ţara Oaşului was analysed over time by many authors among which: Bănăţeanu, 1957; Butiri, 1972; Andron, 1977; Ilieş et al., 2001; Ilieş, 2006, 2007; Herman & Wendt, 2011; Herman, 2012; etc. Nonetheless, the specialized studies on the increasing direct or indirect promotion of the Open Air Museum of Ţara Oaşului, and the area that it represents, are almost inexistent.

Against this background, this paper is intended as a contribution to improving the image and visibility of the Ţara Oaşului Museum and the mental space that it represents (Lynch, 1960; Downs, 1970; Gould and White, 1974; Ciobanu, 2010). The steps taken within this work can be continued by improving and developing the products designed according to the requirements of the time and of the reality on the ground.

On this direction we include: the further development of the presentation sheets of each structural element separately and of the entire museum, in order to facilitate the transmission of information to potential receptors; the transformation of the information in bulletin boards and in online data. It should be noted that in addition to the visual contact that a tourist has with the exhibits in the museum, informative panels that could be placed in close proximity to the exhibits are recommended. The information on the bulletin boards is recommended to be rendered in two languages: in Romanian and in an international language, preferably English etc.

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