

## EXISTING SYMBOLS ON THE PALACES OF TIMISOARA – RESOURCES FOR THE URBAN CULTURAL TOURISM PRACTICING IN PLEVNA SQUARE

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**Abstract:** *The increasing importance of urban cultural tourism and not only has substantially increased the concerns for the most accurate knowledge of this phenomenon and the symbols with which it operates, in this context the concerns of the people from Timisoara regarding the diversification of tourist activities, finding new urban cultural destinations, the delimitation of its scope of this form of tourism and the interferences with the other fields of the economy. Urban tourist destinations today know as many forms as there are forms of tourism, defining as action areas separately identified and promoted as places to visit, urban architecture with its symbolism, urban markets that attract classic and niche tourists and anthropogenic resources.*

**Key words:** *urban cultural tourism, symbols, Plevna Square, resources*

### INTRODUCTION

Urban cultural tourism is achieved through the most accurate knowledge of this phenomenon, both through the diversification of tourist activities and through its interference with other areas of the economy. Therefore, finding new urban cultural destinations and delimiting its scope has a primary role in the development of this branch of tourism [3,5,9].

Today, urban tourist destinations know as many forms of tourism as there are, defining the following areas of action:

- separately identified and promoted as places to visit;
- urban architecture with its symbolism;
- urban markets that attract classic and niche tourists;
- human resources [1,4,7].

The choice of a destination, such as Timisoara, the future capital of culture, is often made according to the availability of resources, transport and its implications: the convenience of the trip, the quality of the trip, the cost and duration of the trip, the services offered and the safety and security of the trip [8,11,12].

Timisoara, the future capital of culture in 2023, has resources for all 3 components of culture:

- superior culture;
- lifestyles (gastronomy, social environments, traditions, festivals);
- multiculturalism - symbols [10,13,14].

Using these resources according to the profile of niche tourists, new forms of historical cultural tourism can be proposed for implementation: urban tourism, business tourism in order to diversify the tourist activity and satisfy the increasingly diverse requirements of tourists visiting Timisoara [2,16].

The palace in general is a place or can be considered as a symbolic image of Man and the Light that shines in itself like the great basilicas, temples or domes, which urges any type of tourist to meditation, to the search for the beautiful, the light that highlights the vegetal symbolic elements, zoomorphic or anthropomorphic, symbolizing the spiritual element of every human being. Light and Darkness represent a dual system of polar forces,

darkness not being perceived as hostile but as the primordial, complementary principle of light [6,15,17].

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

As part of the research undertaken, we analyzed the resources for the practice of urban cultural tourism in Timisoara, by identifying and analyzing the symbolism existing on the palaces in Plevna Square with the aim of promoting this area as a local product or brand and attracting as many tourists as possible. We believe that by promoting Plevna Square in Timisoara as a cultural and historical tourist resource at the national and international level, we will obtain a series of benefits regarding this destination: the promotion of some forms of niche tourism, the spread of the benefits offered by tourism, the improvement of tourism production in Timisoara, the future cultural capital, establishing a productive climate through the variety of forms of tourism proposed for implementation and ensuring the sustainability of tourism in this Timisoara district.

### RESEARCH RESULTS

The most progressive part of the municipality of Timisoara in terms of the number of inhabitants and houses at the beginning of the 20th century, was the Maier neighborhood, which is today called by the old Timisoara residents Elisabetin, which is part of the Iosefin urban site, which incorporates also Plevnei Square, and represents the subject of this study because it has resources for the practice of historical cultural tourism with its niche forms. The human resources of Timisoara that we want to promote through modern forms of urban cultural tourism are represented by squares and palaces that lend themselves of being introduced into urban cultural routes as heritage buildings in which a multitude of symbols predominate on their facades:

- colonettes with Doric, Corinthian and Ionic capitals;
- the stylized beehive;
- the Sun and the Moon;
- infinity;
- vegetable symbols, ear of wheat, leaves, sunflower, tree of life;
- zoomorphic symbols: dog, lion, peacock, squirrel, owl;
- anthropomorphic symbols: masks.

The human resources of Timisoara, located in Plevnei Square, namely the Matei Junkert Palace and the Adolf Vertes Palace, we consider having all the necessary ingredients for the practice of historical cultural tourism with its niche forms due to the varied architectural styles and symbolism.



Figure 1. Anthropomorphic symbols



Figure 2. Plant symbols

For tourists wanting forms of niche urban cultural tourism in the Plevnei Square in Timisoara, we distinguish the following symbols:

- the owl as a profane symbol representing wisdom, present on most palaces in the market;

- the dragon as guardian of hidden treasures Heavenly, ordering and creative power that represents the royal function and the rhythms of life that guarantee order and prosperity.

- the tree of life that interconnects all forms of creation, Light and Cosmos being the symbol of Life in continuous evolution, rising Earth - Sky, representing the cyclicity of death-regeneration. The Tree of Life facilitates communion between the 3 levels of the Cosmos: Underground (roots), Earth's surface (trunk, branches), Heaven (top branches) is present on the Matei Junkert Palace and is well represented;



**Figure 3.4. The tree of Life**

- Music - the art of harmonies, Violin and Lyre, through the proportional mathematical combination of medium and low acute sounds, is present on the Adolf Vertes Palace, through the Girl playing the violin and on the Matei Junkert palace through the stylized lyre on the palace pediment;

- Peacocks – present on both palaces symbolizing:
  - a. The All-Seeing Eye through the tail feathers;
  - b. The solar disk being a symbol of Immortality;
  - c. The tail evoking the Sky with stars;



**Figure 5. The peacocks**

- The perfect cube from the center of Plevna Square, where the central symbolic motif is the cube symbol of the Earth, and the other motifs are working tools Stone, Blood, Kiss, Perfection in the Art of Polishing the Stone.



**Figure 6. Plevna Square overview**

Matei Junkert's palace, figure 2 has the following configuration and presents a multitude of symbols on the facade:



**Figure 7. Matei Junkert Palace**

- it is rectangular in shape, the rectangle being the geometric figure that signifies the three proportions in art and counts in:

a. the 3 x 4 rectangle has a diagonal equal to 5;

b. the rectangle 1 x 1.618 is not measured in whole numbers but its proportions arouse interest, it is observed that the rectangle whose characteristic ratio between the sides is the one of the golden sections, enjoys remarkable geometric properties being often chosen involuntarily as the shape of the surfaces in architecture, painting and decorative arts" (Ghika, 1931).

c. the rectangle 1 x 2 or the long square, or the double square, used as a key of finding the golden number.

The Matei Junkert Palace is built in Art Nouveau style and is located in the corner of Plevna Square at number 6, it was designed by Iacob Klein with many symbols and had as its owner the lawyer, the secretary of the Timis Bar Association, Matei Junkert. The palace can be promoted as a resource for practicing the following subtypes of tourism:

- cultural and historical, by highlighting the qualities of the personality who commissioned the design of this palace. The limited partner Iunkert Matei was born on December 4, 1869, in Pischia, Timis County, being a graduate and Doctor of Law from the Faculty of Budapest. He took the exam to become a lawyer at the Budapest Court of Appeal in the same year, being registered as a trainee lawyer at the Timis Bar Association, practicing continuously until April 9, 1946, when he retired, requesting a pension of 27,228 lei on the grounds that "it is serious sick, alone and in need", but died on May 28 of the same year.

- cultural, highlighting the existing symbols on the Palace facade as follows:
  - a. two stylized columns at the entrance to the building;
  - b. rectangles;
  - c. windows grouped three each.

The Adolf Vertes Palace is located on H. Berthelot street number 5, it stands out for the symbolism of the numbers 3 and 5 and other existing symbols on the facade: vegetal, zoomorphic and anthropomorphic.



**Figure 8. Adolf Vertes Palace**



**Figure 9. Detail - Adolf Vertes Palace**

The palace can be promoted as a resource for practicing the following subtypes of tourism:

- classic tourism promoting the existing symbols on the facades as resources: the symbolism of the number 3; circle and semicircle; the three-tiered tower that signifies the Holy Trinity, the belief in a supreme being and the immortality of the soul; medallion. Young woman with a violin, symbolizing the Learning of concord; the tiled squares in the entrance hall symbolizing the Earth; the tulip – stylized on the balustrade, symbolizes Eternal Love.

- cultural tourism: the Palace can be promoted, as a resource for this type of tourism, by evoking the activity of the lawyer and the president of the Neolog community in Cetate neighborhood promoting: Fraternity - the promotion of multiculturalism; Freedom - defending the freedom of others regardless of nationality; Equality, regardless of profession.

- historical cultural tourism promoting the qualities of Adolf Vertes, whose name was given by posterity to a street in Timisoara: renowned lawyer, Doctor of Law, magistrate.

## CONCLUSIONS

Timisoara has resources in terms of both high culture and multiculturalism and different lifestyles. We believe that the choice of such a tourist destination is opportune from the point of view of the services, quality and costs of the trip, but also through the multitude of cultural resources offered at the destination.

The analyzed area, namely Plevna Square, was landscaped and the surrounding buildings were built starting with 1903, around the park the buildings are exclusively residential, in the Art Nouveau style, the Secession trend, forming a homogeneous architectural ensemble that are currently considered resources for the practice of various

modern forms of tourism, true monuments of art through the ingenuity of design and construction.

The fact that Timisoara will be the future capital of culture motivated us in choosing and analyzing some resources of great cultural importance for the practice of urban cultural tourism, namely the existing symbols on the palaces from the capital of Banat. The Timisoara human resources for the practice of urban cultural tourism chosen to be analyzed are located in Plevna Square, namely the Matei Junkert Palace and the Adolf Vertes Palace, which we believe have all the necessary ingredients for the practice of historical cultural tourism with its niche forms due to the architectural styles and various symbolisms.

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