

Imprints of noble estates in the historic landscape. Analyses based on the former domains of the Sándor-Metternich family around Bajna, Hungary

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1. Abstract

The majority of the former noble estates still retain traces of manorial farming and landscape formation in the historic landscape. Despite this, heritage protection measures or restoration and reconstruction programs in Hungary are mostly limited to the centers of the estates, such as castles, manor houses and their surrounding historic gardens. The manorial imprints outside the estate centers (farms, deer-parks, tree alleys along historical routes, etc.) are gradually dilapidating, and traces of the historic land use and the former estate structure are hardly recognizable. Neither landscape-scale protection nor interpretation of the former land estates is carried out, or rarely executed - partially in the case of estates of outstanding values, protected as World Heritage sites. The lack of this conservation context makes this research particularly timely.

The influence of manorial estates on the landscape and their typical landscape imprints are presented through the example of a small, but exemplary designed and managed noble estate in Hungary, known as the Sándor-Metternich estates in the surroundings of Bajna village. A detailed description of the six settlements and a detailed map of the estate from the 1880s are available, which serves as a basis for the historical analyses. The landscape heritage inventory compiled on the basis of our field surveys in the area was compared with the results of the analysis of written and archival visual sources and historical maps. The current legal status and protection of the monuments of the former Bajna manor were also examined.

For the Bajna estate we concluded that today, only half of the historic buildings and farms have been preserved, and almost always just as partial elements. Over a hundred manorial heritage assets are still recognizable in the landscape, but even more (around 160) historic elements have been destroyed. In addition, it can be concluded that only 50 of the 110 identified historic manorial assets in the area of the former Bajna estate, i.e. 45% of the manorial values benefit from any kind of protection. There are many different types of protection measures (monuments and sites of national/local importance, special landscape values, landscape conservation areas, protected natural areas of local importance) concerning these values as individual heritage resources. However, there is a lack of comprehensive protection - at landscape-level - regarding all manorial assets still present throughout the former estate. From a national perspective, the former estate of Bajna is of local historic value and its heritage assets are in a typical situation in terms of heritage protection.

As a conclusion we adopted the generally applicable principles for the landscape-scale conservation of heritage assets regarding manorial ensembles. At the end of our study, we provided specific criteria for the protection of the discovered values on the former estate of Bajna at a landscape level. Our article is intended as a problem statement, on the basis of the results of our research which deals with the heritage significance of former manors, the justification and deficiencies of their protection, conservation and interpretation on a landscape scale.

2. Introduction

The landscape character and structure of manorial estates, their tastefully designed manor houses, farm buildings, hunting lodges, and other small architectures, just like the surrounding manorial tree-alleys, the surviving historical landscape uses or farming methods are important memories of the once existed manorial culture. These imprints, while maintaining their integrity, should be valued as a complex landscape heritage. Despite their frequent perishing and endangered status in Hungary and abroad, a number of significant manorial assets, estates - worthy of protection and interpretation - have survived (Hubayné 2017, Takács - G. Tar 2019, Demeter 2013, Szilágyi - Tufegdžić 2014). The manorial building ensembles often included the environment resulting from conscious landscape design. Most often, ornamental gardens were created in the center or sub-centers of the estate by the noble owners or their officers, but also the designed landscapes of hunting lodges, officers' lodges, manorial farms and cemeteries may be classified hereunder. The carefully planned parcel systems of the former noble estates, which have survived to the present day, as well as the manorial land use and its elements in the designed landscapes that were created not only with a sense of beauty but also with practical considerations, are still tangible traces of these historic landscapes and their traditional uses.

Despite this evidence, heritage conservation measures, such as restoration and reconstruction programs, are mostly limited to the centers of estates, the complexes of buildings of noble estates, castles, mansions and their historic gardens in Hungary (National Landscape Strategy 2017-2026 Hungary), Bálint - Virágos 2009, Fekete 2008a, Fekete 2008b). The Hungarian Landscape Strategy for the period 2017-2026 - which defines the objectives and actions for landscape protection, management and planning in accordance with the principles of the European Landscape Convention - sets out the strategic objectives of defining the distinctive Hungarian landscape heritage areas suitable for maintaining traditional landscape use, but it also highlights the shortcomings and lack of protection of landscape-level heritage, including manorial heritage. With regards to the practice of town and country planning, it criticizes the frequent failure to draw conclusions from historical context in landscape planning when drawing up plans and regulations. The planning instruments that protect the landscape heritage focus primarily on building regulations and other objects, at most only providing a loose framework for the landscape. Another problem is that the planning process lacks an inventory of historic landscape uses and a landscape heritage inventory, as well as the practical application of a set of tools for the protection of municipal heritage derived from spatial planning to ensure its overall systemic conservation. Although the objectives of the landscape strategy state that the restoration of manorial manor houses should be carried out in accordance with their landscape context and in conjunction with their surroundings, this objective is not being achieved in practice (National Landscape Strategy (2017-2026 Hungary).

3. Background and Literature Review

During our research, we reviewed studies on landscape history and heritage conservation in Hungary, which present the surviving memories of former estate complexes (Fekete 2008a, Fekete 2008b, Hubayné 2017, Takács - G. Tar 2019). In addition to national examples, we examined international good practices for the conservation of former manorial monuments in the context of the documentation of World Heritage sites and the management plans of such sites (e.g. Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape). Furthermore, we looked at the possibilities of different conservation tools through the example of England, which, like Hungary, does not have a specific manorial approach to landscape conservation, but at the same time the regulatory framework provides a range of possibilities to ensure this. In heritage conservation, object-based conservation tools (e.g. listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks & gardens) are managed at national level by Historic England, while site-based conservation tools (conservation areas, local green spaces) are managed more at the level of local and regional planning authorities, and other relevant conservation tools (National Parks, Areas of Outstanding National Beauty) are managed within the framework of nature conservation (Heritage Protection Guide, England, 2022). In England, therefore, landscape based protection of manorial estates is provided through a combination of different legal options, in particular the designation of conservation areas and the registration or listing of heritage assets, buildings, monuments or parks and gardens. A well-established protection and interpretation of manor houses on a landscape scale is probably best achieved in World Heritage areas. The Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape in the Czech Republic and the Garden Kingdom of Dessau-Wörlitz in Germany are emblematic examples for this, just like the Imperial Stud Farm in Kladruby Nad Labem in the Czech Republic. They are some of the most emblematic and representative designed landscapes of manorial estates in Europe (<https://whc.unesco.org>).

We consider the present analysis on the surviving landscape heritage elements of the former Sándor-Metternich manor of Bajna to be suitable support for this topic because, on the one hand, its extent is manageable - covering six settlements with a landscape scale, and on the other hand, despite the lack of comprehensive landscape-level protection, a relatively large number of significant manorial elements have survived in areas further away the manorial center. In addition, a significant proportion of the landscape uses have been stable for more than 200 years, so they can be considered historical. Thanks to the map sources and domonial descriptions of the estate, the destroyed manorial heritage elements can also be well traced. A detailed description of the estate and an authentic map of the manor from the 1870s (OMGE, 1877) made it possible to study the golden age of the Sándor-Metternich domains around Bajna. These sources amongst others served recently as the basis for a master thesis on the surviving memories of the Bajna manorial estate (Pap 2018) and for a general landscape historical study (Hubayné 2019).

We also overviewed the legal framework in Hungary for the preservation of manorial values. The systematic inventory and the protection of historic agricultural values with manorial origin has started on the basis of a legal act that entered into force in 1977. The initiative also covered the historic agricultural memories that had survived in the areas of large domonial estates that once played a major role in the agricultural farming of our country (Balassa 1981, Lectures of the Summer University of Eger 1983). This was an important, 'life-saving' first step in relation to the recognition of manorial values and memories. There are currently several categories of protection for manorial heritage values in the country, depending on their nature and significance. These

may provide protection such as 1) world heritage site at an international level; or as 2) a monument, protected historic garden, historic landscape, protected nature conservation area of national importance or special landscape value at national level; and at local level as 3) a built heritage of local importance, heritage area of local importance or a nature conservation area of local importance. The protective legislation may derive from the fields of heritage protection, nature conservation or landscape protection policy, but there is a lack of harmonization and uniform application of these aspects to ensure a complex, integrated protection of the former manorial values at a landscape level.

4. Method and Data

The former Bajna manorial estate covered an area of 76 km², extended over the administrative areas of the present-day settlements of Bajna, Gyermely, Sárísáp, Nagysáp, Annavölgy and Szomor in Hungary. The estate's manorial center was created at Bajna, where the recently renovated castle is still standing. The estate's glorious ages date from the 1850s to the 1930s. During this period, it was one of the modern, sample farming estates in the country, designed with exemplary elegance (OMGE, 1877, Pap 2018).

Our research is based on field surveys, systematic analysis of written and visual sources, and analysis of historical maps, such as military surveys and cadastral maps. The field surveys have included the identification and evaluation of existing and disappeared tree alleys, historical land uses and especially the survived manorial values. Thanks to the 1877's estate description and map (OMGE, 1877) we could clearly identify the estate boundaries, its building stocks and other elements, just like the former estate spatial structure. The field surveys also revealed existing vegetation elements of the designed landscape, such as the unusually planted horse chestnut tree plantation (as a stock) on the outskirts of Sárísáp. Further sources have been used to define the overall landscape features of the Bajna estate in order to compare them with the surviving (former) manorial values. Also we have compiled a complex inventory on the estate's manorial heritage with a list of the partially or completely preserved values and the destroyed manorial sites or elements, and we have identified the historical landscape uses that still exist today such as former manorial farms and woodlands, deer parks and historic gardens, manorial mines, pastures, etc. The heritage inventory was compiled using geospatial methods, and it records the type, location, approximate date of origin and/or destruction (documented on archival military maps), the actual condition and the eventual protection status of remaining manorial imprints. During our work, QGIS software was used for spatial data processing. (Pap, 2018, Hubayné 2019)

The current legal and protection status of the remaining memorial elements of the former Bajna manor were also examined. In addition to collecting data on the field, we reviewed the town planning manuals and regulations in case of the six settlements over the former manorial area, and we conducted the heritage protection status of each individual elements based on different online databases (<https://www.e-epites.hu/tak>, <https://or.njt.hu/>, <https://muemlekem.hu>). We have also reviewed the concerned county's territorial plans (KEM Spatial Plan, 2020) and the preliminary studies for the creation of the Gerecse Nature Park (<https://gerecsenaturpark.eu/>).

5. Results

5.1. Description of the Sándor-Metternich estate of Bajna and its manorial imprints

The former extent (1877) of the Sándor-Metternich estate around Bajna, its agricultural lands, the location of the manorial buildings and ornamental gardens, the boundaries of manorial farms, the historic tree alleys and gardens planted by the noble owners, the remaining deer parks and hunting forestry areas, just as other heritage elements in the historic landscape are shown in Figure 1, indicating their destroyed or preserved status.

Based on our research, it can be concluded that the historical landscape uses, which preserved traces of the manorial farming that flourished here in the second half of the 19th century, have survived to the present day in many locations at the former Bajna estate. At its peak, almost half of the farming area was covered by high-quality, progressive forestry, and the extent of the former manorial forests has hardly changed. A unique value in the land use is the extended, homogeneous stock of horse chestnut forestry area that has survived to the present day (Hubayné 2019). The manorial forests were also famous for their wild animal stocks, with specific deer or pheasant gardens and several foresters' lodges. The 322 hectare deer garden around the hunting lodge of Gyarmatpuszta is one of the best preserved manorial wildlife gardens in the country where the local estate center also included a manorial stud farm. In the 1880s, the estate managed a significant number of beef and sheep stock and some of the related manorial features (stables, feed stores, granaries, wells) associated with the livestock farming have been luckily survived. Arable farming was practiced on almost 40% of the estate, and the boundaries of the arable parcels (average 10 hectares in size), were planted with fruit trees in an exemplary manner. Along the main roadsides chestnut, maple and poplar tree alleys were planted (OMGE 1877, Pap 2018). The total length of the tree alleys depicted on the analyzed historical maps is 100.4 km, but nowadays only a small part (14.5%, ca. 10 km) of it survives where the manorial origin can be evidentially detected (Figure 1. and 2.). These historic alleys are of considerable landscape and historical value, but are not protected and are dilapidating rapidly. In addition to the historic alleys and the stock of horse chestnut woods, the former estate also includes a number of remaining veteran solitary trees (oaks, sycamores, black walnuts) both in the agricultural landscape and at the historic garden sites.

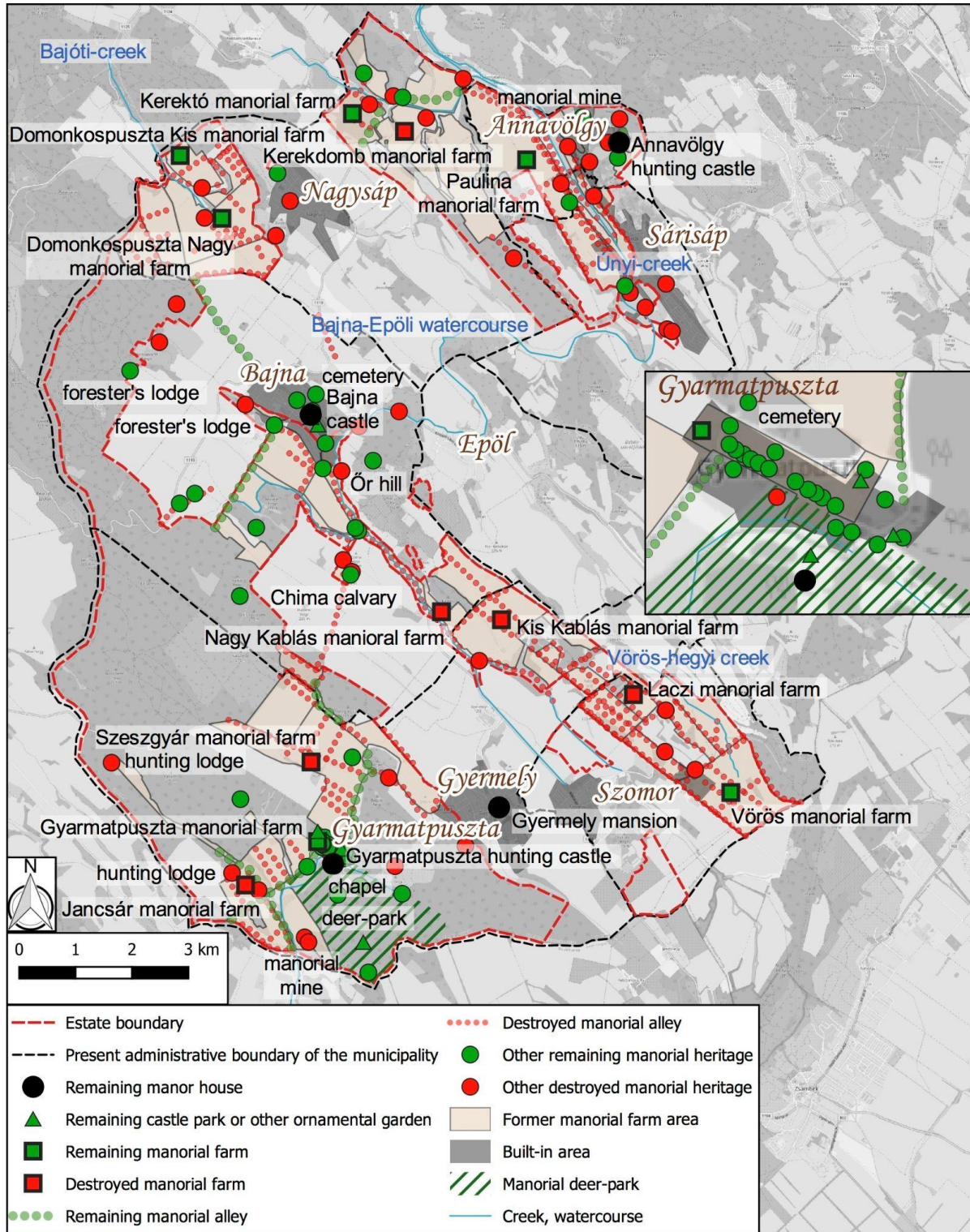


Figure 1. Analytical map of the surviving and destroyed manorial imprints on the territory of the Sándor-Metternich estate around Bajna, Hungary (source: by authors)

The complexity of the manorial farming is proved by the fact that a distillery, a brandy factory, two manorial brick factories, several manorial clay and stone mines operated on the territory of the estate. The remains of the mining site in Annavölgy also included residential and administrative buildings, shafts and mining holes, which are all reminiscent of the manorial coal mining industry. At the time of the manorial census in 1877, 161 manorial buildings and 12 manorial farms belonged to the estate. Today, only half of these buildings have been preserved, and almost always just as partial elements. A total of 110 manorial imprints are still recognizable on the former estate and 166 elements have been destroyed. Among the ruined or disappeared manorial values, water mills, foresters' and hunters' lodges, nurseries, pheasant gardens, brick factories and distilleries are the most typical. On the other hand manor houses, administration and residential buildings, stables, granaries, churches, chapels, tombs, roadside crosses, alleys (Figure 1. and 2.), sacred statues, wells, bridges and farm buildings are the typical surviving manorial memories.



Figure 2. Remains of a manorial tree alley on the former Sándor-Metternich estate at Gyarmatpuszta, Hungary (by: Imola G. Tar, 2022.02.08.)



Figure 3. Surviving historic land use with former manorial forests on the Sándor-Metternich estate, Hungary (by: Hubayné Horváth Nóra, 2022.02.08.)

5.2. Protective and regulatory measures ensuring the preservation of the manorial values at the Sándor-Metternich estate around Bajna

Table 1. summarizes the Hungarian scheme of the different types of protection measures regarding manorial values and other possible categories for landscape heritage conservation, e.g. Nature parks (see leftmost column). We also indicated the legislation that establishes the individual categories of protection (see rightmost column), outlining the examples of the preserved values in the area of the former Sándor-Metternich manor of Bajna.

Number of protected landscape heritage assets per municipality (pieces):	Bajna (pieces)	Sárisáp (pieces)	Nagysáp (pieces)	Annayölgypuszta (pieces)	Gyarmatpuszta (pieces)	Szomor (pieces)	Legislation providing the basis of the protection*
World Heritage Site	-	-	-	-	-	-	Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage (Paris, 1972), Hungarian legislation: Act LXXXVII of 2011 on World Heritage.
Monuments of national importance	6	-	-	-	19**	-	Act LXIV of 2001 on the protection of cultural heritage and ministerial decrees listing sites as protected national heritage
Historic sites of national importance (e.g. protected historic landscapes)	-	-	-	-	-	-	Act LXIV of 2001 on the protection of cultural heritage and ministerial decrees listing sites as protected national heritage
Nature conservation areas of national importance (National parks, nature protected sites, etc.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	Act LIII of 1996 on nature protection and ministerial decrees listing sites as nature conservation area
Specific landscape values of national importance	-	6	-	9	-	1	Act LIII of 1996 on nature protection and ministerial decrees listing sites as nature conservation area
Monumental values of local importance	5	-	1	-	3	-	Town and country planning regulations, municipal protection decisions
Historic sites of local importance	-	-	-	1	-	-	Town and country planning regulations, municipal protection decisions
Nature conservation areas of local importance	1	-	-	-	-	-	Town and country planning regulations, municipal protection decisions
Nature park areas (affected or not)	yes	yes	-	yes	yes	yes	Act LIII of 1996 on nature protection and ministerial decree on the creation of Nature parks
Protected manorial heritage assets in total:	5	6	1	10	22	1	50 pieces (45%)
Remaining manorial heritage assets in total:							110 pieces (100%)
Non-protected heritage assets in total:							60 pieces (55%)

* Source: National Legislation Library of Hungary, <https://njit.hu/> ** Buildings on the Gyarmatpuszta farmstead complex counted separately

Table 1.: Protected landscape heritage assets in the territory of the former Sándor-Metternich manor around

Bajna, categorized and summarized by settlements and protection measures.

Overviewing the existing protection status within the settlements located in the territory of the former Bajna estate, we can clearly show that each settlement considers the period of the Sándor-Metternich family's ownership as an important period of its historical heritage if a local memorial imprint with a significant value from the period has survived in the settlement. Such is the situation in the case of the settlements of Bajna and Gyermely, where as being the former center and sub-center of the estate - with historic remains of a castle surrounded by a historic park, several manor stables and farm buildings at Bajna; a hunting garden, a chapel, a forester's and hunting lodge at Gyermely-Gyarmatpuszta - and in the case of Annavölgy where the manorial mining imprints are still appreciated and clearly perceptible in the settlements. These monuments or other features with historic values are important for the settlements in terms of protection and exploitation, but usually independently of each other. On the other hand, in case of the settlements of Sárísáp, Nagysáp and Szomor, where only small memorial elements with minor importance by themselves (farms, tree alleys along roads, local crosses, bridges, etc.) remains from the time of the manorial era, the protection and proper use of the surviving imprints is not recognized or emphasized in the local strategic planning or regulation documents.

Within the area of the former estate, 6 buildings and heritage elements (e.g. crosses, family tombs) in Bajna and 18 of them in Gyermely are under national protection. In Szomor, Sárísáp, Nagysáp and Annavölgy there are no manorial imprints protected as national monuments, although several historical features, with evidence of being part of the former estate complex, are recognizable. Therefore, where significant memories have been preserved like the above mentioned ones at Bajna and Gyermely-Gyarmatpuszta, the protection is guaranteed, but elements with less evidential historic values are not adequately protected at a local or site level. In Gyermely, the Sándor mansion, the former manorial school and the administrative building of the farm are protected as built heritage of local importance. In Annavölgy, the building of the mining colony, which preserves the memory of the former manorial mining, is protected at local level. The Roman Catholic church of Nagysáp, built by the Sándor family, is a unique local architectural monument. In Bajna, the town planning strategic decree proposes the protection of the gatehouse at the entrance to the castle park, the unique equestrian skipping bridge and several statues of saints and crosses on the roadside as monuments of local importance. Unfortunately there are no locally protected heritage assets or sites with a manorial link in Szomor and Sárísáp. (National Legislation Library of Hungary)

The complex, landscape-level heritage protection of former manorial estates as historic landscapes (including Bajna as well) is not assured. Although there exists the “protected historic landscape” as a heritage protection category of national importance in Hungary, only one area, the Tokaj-Hegyalja Historic Wine Region, has been granted such a classification so far.

There are no nature conservation areas of national importance (national parks, landscape conservation areas, nature reserves) protected by specific legislation in the former manor area of Bajna. The castle park at Bajna is protected as a nature conservation area, but only of local importance, while the castle itself is protected as a monument of national importance. In Szomor, Sárísáp, Annavölgy, Nagysáp and Gyermely there are no protected natural areas of local importance linked to the manorial history. In the Hungarian hierarchy of protected elements, the so called ‘unique landscape values’ are protected at national level, but only part of the former

Bajna estate - Szomor, Annavölgy and Sárísáp - has already been listed from this point of view, thus Bajna, Gyermely and Nagysáp do not have this category of protection yet. The Gerecse Nature Park covers almost the entire area of the former noble estate. The enhancement of cultural values is one of the nature park's priorities, mentioning the manor of Bajna and its historic park as an exemplary potential, but the long term preservation, the appropriate use and interpretation of *other* manorial memories of the estate are sadly not included in their objectives (<https://gerecsenaturpark.eu/>).

Overall, it can be concluded that only 50 of the 110 identified memorial imprints in the area of the former Bajna estate, i.e. 45% of the manorial values benefit from any kind of protection. Table 1 shows that, although many types of protection are present, the protection of manorial values is incomplete (55% are not protected), the protection/conservation measures of the different heritage assets is not uniform (values of the same category or similar importance are protected in different ways according to local settlement's decisions) and there is no comprehensive and complex protection of the historic manorial landscape at a higher - regional - level.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The example of the former Sándor-Metternich manorial estate around Bajna and the reviewed sources have shown that the protection and interpretation of the surviving manorial heritage assets on a landscape scale is rarely implemented and typically realized in case of outstanding estates with international importance. This kind of heritage conservation approach is mainly provided by the World Heritage protection, but rarely are the manorial aspects in the focus (rare example: "Landscape for Breeding and Training of Ceremonial Carriage Horses at Kladruby nad Labem" Nomination dossier, 2018). The common lesson of the international context is that only a complex, integrated approach and an extensive cooperation at a landscape level might assure a proper conservation of manorial estates.

Although castle and garden inventories have been already compiled in Hungary in the past decades, there is no register of the manorial estates of the 18th and 19th centuries that still preserve their landscaped estates and their surviving manorial heritage assets. Therefore, the first step in improving the situation identified in this article is to carry out a comprehensive national survey on manorial estates, after which the manorial historic landscapes worthy of protection at landscape level can be identified. But here we only provide criterias justifying the integrated conservation of former manorial sites at landscape scale as follows:

- a significant part of the parcel system and historic routes network of manorial estates has been preserved
- a significant part of the manorial tree alleys, landscape greeneries, ornamental gardens in the estate centers and sub-centers have been remained
- the presence of a significant number of manorial heritage assets with unique landscape feature elements (e.g. statues, bridges, crosses, springs, etc.)
- the survival of manorial sub-centers, farmsteads, farming and other manorial buildings, in addition to the main residence of the estate
- continuous historical land uses since the first military survey (1780's), covering a significant part of the estate's area,

- sufficient historical and archival resources, precise historic maps available on the estate to delimit its boundaries and the area for protection,
- presence of specific manorial land uses e.g. deer garden, manorial mine, engineered water features and designed lakes for aquaculture,
- existing protection of manorial heritage assets,
- favorable farming structure, with little fragmentation, lands spread out in one or a few bigger blocks,
- low degree of conversion or transformation, absence of recent, inappropriate elements in the landscape,
- appropriate current use and owner supporting the continuation of the original manorial function (e.g. forestry as owner of a hunting lodge)

In Hungary, most enhancement projects of the former manorial memories only include the development of former estate centers, although the other sub-centers and belonging manorial parks and the historic environment within the estate boundaries should not be separated from the larger landscape unit. By identifying, preserving and interpreting the manorial heritage elements and the historic land use that survive throughout the time and space, a deep understanding of the landscape values, their functioning and management complexities, just as an extended knowledge on the manorial estates could be achieved. It can be concluded that the conservation of the landscape heritage values of such complex estate units can't be fully guaranteed only by protection at site level or with local regulations. Protection at the landscape level is necessary to assure the preservation of any single essential elements and the historic land use that are of significant value, but affecting several settlements.

In the case of Bajna, the protection of the manorial heritage should be consolidated within the six concerned municipalities and the small memorial elements should be listed as unique landscape values in those municipalities where this has not yet been executed (i.e. Bajna, Nagysáp, Gyarmatpuszta). The Gerecse Nature Park could provide an appropriate framework for bringing the municipalities together to preserve the common manorial values. It is unfortunate that the municipality of Nagysáp has not yet joined this landscape cooperation, so the nature park does not currently cover the entire former manorial area. Beyond the manorial center at Bajna, the large number of preserved manorial heritage assets would justify the creation of a thematic trail based on the history of the estate and interpreting it as a whole cultural and natural complex.

Certain existing protection zones in Hungarian legislation and county land-use plans, such as the so-called "protected zone of manorial landscape", could be a potential instrument for the complex, landscape-level conservation of the manorial heritage. The areas of Bajna, Gyermely, Szomor, Nagysáp are currently classified as being part of these protection zones. However, Annavölgy and Sárísáp are not part of it, so the protection of Paulina-farm one of the best preserved manorial asset here, is not ensured by the county regulations. Furthermore, it is questionable, to what extent the category of "protected zone of manorial landscape" provides preservation in practice for the former manorial estates, as the regulations only refers to the necessity of pursuing agricultural land use and to the landscape integration of new buildings, without any provisions for the preservation of historic manorial assets or agricultural monuments (KEM Spatial Plan, 2020).

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