PODGÓRZE CEMETERIES AS CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN THE DISTRICT LANDSCAPE

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Summary

The paper presents three necropolises of Podgórze, formerly an independent township, at present the municipal district No. XIII of Krakow. Indicated were elements of cultural material and spiritual heritage of the old and new Podgórze cemeteries and the largest cemetery from the World War II time, for what can be considered the area of Nazi concentration camp KL Płaszów. These cemeteries are a resting place of persons who made a lasting contribution to the history, scientific, cultural and social life of Podgórze. Epitaphs placed on old monuments, which are pieces of sculptural art, provide a source of information about the socio-professional structure and nationalities of Podgórze inhabitants, who became fast polonized. A significant element of the necropolises internal landscape are green area, which in many cases requires a change of composition and certainly better tending measures.

Key words: Podgórze, cemetery, landscape, cultural heritage, greenery

INTRODUCTION

In 1784-1915 Podgórze was an independent township, raised to the dignity of free royal town by a document of 26 February 1784 issued by the Austrian Emperor Joseph II. Situated on the right bank of the Vistula River it was to be economically and military competitive for Krakow, because according to the first partition of Poland treaty, signed on 5 August 1772 in Petersburg, the Vistula River was to be the border between Austria and Poland. It ceased its existence
as an independent township on 1 July 1915 when incorporated into Krakow. So, the process of „Great Krakow” formation was completed by the President Juliusz Leo, who on 21 April 1915 expressed his courteous opinion that “Krakow gained a pearl in the ring of districts surrounding Krakow” (Przeorski 1931). The process of “Great Krakow” formation started in 1911 when the surrounding districts became successively annexed to the city. (Bieniarzówna J., Małecki J.M. 1994). Podgórze became the cadastral district No. XXII of Krakow. In 1991 The City of Krakow Council divided the city into eighteen subsidiary municipal districts referring to the historical division into cadastral districts. All subsidiary municipal districts were included in the spatial arrangement of administrative districts delineated in 1973 on the basis of The City of Krakow Council Decree No. XXI/142/91 of 17 March 1991. The boundaries of Podgórze administrative district which covers the area of Krakow situated on the right bank of the Vistula River, comprised six self-government districts, including cadastral district No. XXII which was numbered XIII. Its boundaries are similar to the boundaries of the former Podgórze township, therefore it is usually called the Old Podgórze.

The research covered two cemeteries, which were established during the Podgórze township existence and the terrain of the former Nazi concentration camp KL Płaszów from the World War II. It should be emphasized that two landscape zones developed in Podgórze. A zone of urban cultural landscape in the lowland part, whereas on the southern and eastern slopes of Podgórze Krzemionki Hills a zone of agricultural cultural landscape. This arrangement of landscape zones was indicated by land use forms shown on the 18th and 19th century large-scale maps, cadastral plans and iconographic materials (Przegon 2004).

**MATERIALS AND METHOD**

The presented paper is the outcome of studies of the archival written, cartographic and iconographic materials, analysis of contemporary evidential and descriptive material and literature studies. Penetration of the researched area was also conducted, combined with photographic recording of cemetery landscape elements (Fig.1). The applied method based on logical and chronological-comparative analyses.

Studied were archival documents of the Podgórze township. The Podgórze files from the period of Austrian municipality of 1784-1809 and 1815-1866 and from the period of the Duchy of Warsaw 1809-1815 were preserved only partially. All town registers were kept in German until 1866 when the town self-government was introduced. At that time German municipal board was replaced by the council mostly composed of Poles and from that time city records were kept in Polish.
Parish books were studied, in which births and deaths of the Podgórze inhabitants were recorded. It should be remembered that the area of former Janowa Wola village on which Podgórze was established belonged to the Corpus Christi parish in the Kazimierz district, whereas a nearby Ludwinów village came under the Skalka parish. On the other hand, friars from the Holy Spirit parish took care of St. Benedict church. Establishment of the Podgórze parish was accelerated by the decree of the Emperor Francis dated 5 January 1817 ordering to create a parish and build a church. The church dedicated to St. Joseph was built in 1832, i.e. fifteen years after the parish establishment.

Source materials about the socio-economic life of Podgórze are also rich. These comprise: (Bardel 1901; Bieniarzówna, Malecki 1984; Czarny 1908; Kiełkowski 1972; Kotewicz 1981; Kulczykowski 1963; Nowacki 1905; Przegon 2004; Przeorski 1931; Rusińska 1977-78; Sznur-Pepłowski 1895; Swaryczwski 1975; Teki Schneidra 1252 i 1253 AP w Krakowie; Wawel Louis 1977).

Also cartographic materials were analysed, such as M. Kromer’s Plan of 1783; Location Plan of Krakow, Kazimierz within the city walls and Podgórze of 1792 made by colonel Geiger; Mosano and Chevannes Plan of 1796; Chasteler’s Plan of 1798; Meno Passeck’s Plan of Krakow dated c.a. 1817; Francis von Perret’s Plan of 1838 and Alexander Kocziczka’s Plan of 1847.

**FIRST BURIALS IN PODGÓRZE**

Archeological excavations on Krzemionki Podgórskie localized three early Middle Ages cemeteries dated between 11th and 12th century. They were situated at the present Parkowa street, 41 Zamoyskiego Street and at 12 Radockiego street (Zool-Adamikowa 1966). Also, in the Middle Ages a small cemetery was situated by St. Benedict small church, as was demonstrated by excavations conducted in the fifties and sixties of the 20th century (Radwański, 1964; Žaki 1959). On the other hand, entries in the death records show that also in the eighties of the 18th century, the area adjoining the small church was used as a burial ground. It is additionally testified by an epitaph placed on the external wall of the small church in memoriam of Magdalena Lerowa, died on 21 November 1783. Currently small church of St. Benedict is under renovation (Photo 1). Perhaps neglected surrounding green area will also be taken care of. Self-seedlings of trees and bushes no longer remind of the former cemetery function of the small church surroundings. Another burial ground for Podgórze inhabitants, in the initial years of its existence was on the Ludwinów cemetery by St. Bartholomew chapel, constructed by the end of the 18th century as chaplain’s church for the Grabiński family (Bardel 1901).
Figure 1. Fragment of topographic map of Krakow. Analyzed area: 1 – The Old Podgórze Cemetery; 2 – The New Podgórze Cemetery; 3 – Area of the Nazi concentration camp KL Plaszow

THE OLD PODGÓRZE CEMETERY

The main necropolises of the Podgórze township were two cemeteries: old and new. The differentiation is due to the order in which they were established
and functioned (Grodziska, 1992). The appearance of objects with new functions in the urban space of Podgórze extended the range of land use structure. Cemetery terrains should be classified as green areas.

**Photo 1.** St. Benedict church (photo W. Przegon, August 2014)

On Polish lands, which after the first partition were annexed to Austria, the cemetery issues were regulated by the decree of Emperor Joseph II dated 23 August 1784. Among others it ordered location of cemeteries outside the built up areas. The date of the old Podgórze cemetery establishment is not known precisely. Analysis of the source cartographic cadastral materials and tombstone inscriptions allows to determine fairly precisely the location and date of the cemetery establishment. The first written document containing information about the old Podgórze cemetery is a Franciscan land register (its fragment has been entitled: "Grounds on the Krzemionki Mountain, where St. Benedict Chapel is" [AP, P-334, p.106-107]). Under the year 1820 it was recorded that the cemetery covered the plot number 548 with an area of c.a. 7058 ha. However, the important fact is that beside this plot number also its former number 356 was given referring to a land register of 1786. In that register the plot No. 356 was described as “worse quality land” (AP, P-330, p.32). Therefore it may be assumed that two
years after the Emperor Joseph II decree of 1784, which ordered to locate cemeteries outside the built up areas, the area was already selected, but we do not know if the cemetery was already functioning.

The next oldest information is in the tombstone inscription of Agnieszka Drelinkiewiczówna. It states that the girl lived in the years 1779-1794. Therefore, it may be supposed that the cemetery was commissioned between 1786 and 1794, therefore it is older than the largest Krakow necropolis, Rakowicki cemetery, which was delineated in 1802 in the area of the suburban Bosackie property within the boundaries of Prądnik Czerwony village. The name of Rakowicki cemetery originates from a route via Prądnik to Rakowice village, adjoining the cemetery.

Preserved archival materials allow for approximate dating of the cemetery establishment. Joseph Kromer’s plan of 1783, Mosano and Chavanne’s plan of 1796 or Chesteler’s Plan of 1798 do not contain any graphic or descriptive information referring to the cemetery. The oldest cartographic material where location of the old Podgórze cemetery was marked is *Location Plan of Krakow, Kazimierz within the city walls and Podgórze of 1792* made by colonel Geiger. Waters, roads, bridges, shrubs and (by means of hatch lines) relief were marked on the plan. On the Podgórze plan one may identify a plot, a bulwark on Krzemionki and a cemetery, marked on the plot as situated south of small St. Benedict church. In order to emphasize the function of the terrain, a sign of the cross and fifteen mounds were drawn, which may evidence that in 1792 there were fifteen graves. Colonel Geiger’s plan shows that Agnieszka Drelinkiewiczówna was not the first but one of the first persons buried on the old Podgórze cemetery. Because of this plan existence a statement by Karolina Grodziska, who writes that ”Podgórze cemetery was not marked on any of the known plans from 1783-1798” (Grodziska 1992) should be verified. On the subsequent plans from the first half of the 19th century, the cemetery location was clearly marked. These are: Plan of Krakow by Meno Passeck c.a. 1817, plan by Francis von Pierret of 1838 and Alexander Kocziczka’s plan of 1847.

Spatial development of the old Podgórze cemetery was recorded in land plot registers. In 1820 its area was 0.7058 ha, while by the end of the 19th century 1.4597 ha. On the other hand the Podgórze city council records, since 1867 contain plenty of information about the investments conducted on the cemetery. They aimed at maintenance of order. For instance in 1868 a paved access way was made from Wielicka street to the cemetery gate; in 1871 two inns in the houses situated close to the cemetery were closed down; in 1872 the cemetery paths were drained and cleaned and 151 trees were planted in 1881 (Grodziska 1992). The inventory of vegetal cover inventory conducted in the nineties of the 20th century revealed: maple trees, false acacias, ash trees and elms growing on the cemetery, rarely also linden trees, oaks and horse chestnuts. These were self – seedlings, which grew after the cemetery closed down. The necropolis was
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closed down in April 1900 because of its overcrowding and no possibility of further extension. Burials were possible exclusively in the existing tombs. The cemetery was finally closed down in 1985.

The Podgórze Cemetery was twice devastated, not by the passage of time but inconsiderate human activity. In 1942-1944 the Nazi occupation authorities levelled 0.5245 ha of the cemetery area because of the extension of Bonarka-Płaszów railway line by an additional railway track. Many historical tombstones were destroyed and the exhumed remnants were deposited in the chapel underground. Another “reduction” of the cemetery area by 0.5544 ha was done in the seventies of the 20th century during construction of Telewizyjna street, later named Powstańców Śląskich street. At present the area of the old Podgórze cemetery is 0.3808 ha, which constitutes one fourth of its initial area (Fig. 2).

**Figure 2.** Plan of the old Podgórze cemetery within the pre-World War II boundaries, after devastation, compiled by J. Żółciak with the cooperation of W. Sroka on the basis of the cemetery inventory conducted in 1974-1975 (K. Grodziska, J. Żółciak, Cmentarze Podgórza. Plan-informator, Kraków 1989).

The old Podgórze cemetery is a resting place of persons who made a significant contribution to the history of Krakow and Podgórze, as well as to its scientific, cultural and social life. These are Edward Dembowski, organiser and leader of the Krakow uprising, who together with his 27 companions died in battle in Podgórze on 27 February 1846; Franciszek Maryewski, the last mayor of Royal Free Town of Podgórze; Emil Serkowski, a former president of Podgórze; Wojciech Bednarski, the founder of Bednarski park in Podgórze and a local school headmaster; a painter Wojciech Eliasz Radziowski and his son, Władysław, a sculptor; Aleksander Kotsis, a painter; Agnieszka Jałbrzykowska – headmistress of a school for girls and the first woman granted a honorary citizenship of the Podgórze township. Eminent families, meritorious for Krakow and Podgórze also used to have their family vaults on the oldest necropolis of Krakow. These
were the Berg, Hołyński, Jasiński, Jordan, Kaczmarski, Langer, Seeling, Starowiejski, Wiśniowski and Zoll families (Adamczewski 1996; Żółciak 1996). Preserved tombstone inscriptions provide a valuable source of information about the nationalities, social class and professional groups of the former Free Royal Town of Podgórze community. Podgórze was mostly inhabited by Poles but also by the “immigrant” Germans, Austrians, Czechs and Jews. Most of them polonized fast. The photographs presented below were taken in August 2014 (Photo 1 and 2). Currently conservation works are in progress; they should comprise not only the monuments but also the trees. Restoration of the whole preserved part of the oldest Podgórze necropolis would be a great success of the art conservationists, Krakow authorities and its community.

THE NEW PODGÓRZE CEMETERY

The new Podgórze cemetery as opened in 1900, i.e. in the year when the old one was closed down. It was established close to south-eastern slopes of the Krakus Mound. The total area of municipal and private plots purchased for the cemetery was 3.7410 ha. Considerable diversification of the area relief
caused that works connected with ground levelling and profiling and tree planting lasted until 1907. Further works connected with the cemetery fencing and gravelling of alleyways were conducted in 1909-1914. The cemetery was first extended by 0.3273 ha already in 1910, the successive extensions were carried out in 1927, 1942, 1948 and in mid-seventies of the 20th century. At present the area of new Podgórze cemetery is 8.3700 ha, i.e. it increased twice over the last hundred years.

Aforestation of too steep slopes enhanced landscape values of the cemetery giving it a park character. Lawns, hedges and trees are well tended. The westward extension of the cemetery conducted in the seventies of the 20th century virtually liquidated the connection between the Krakus Mound and Łysa Góra. The interference of the anthropogenic object in the natural space between the hills proved slightly unfortunate idea. Standard tombstones, a lack of high greenery and uncovered dumping site for cemetery waste introduce an unnecessary discord in the harmony of the first project. Certainly, designing an appropriate vegetal cover and fencing with gates to Łysa Góra and Krakus Mound would be an interesting landscape and aesthetic solution.
Figure 3. Stages of the new Podgórze cemetery development (K. Grodziska, *Cmentarze Podgórze*, Kraków 1992, p. 59).

Photo 4. Fragment of new part of the new Podgórze cemetery (photo W. Przegon, August 2014)
It should be emphasized that, like in case of the old Podgórze cemetery, well preserved tombstone inscriptions on the new Podgórze cemetery provide an interesting source of information about socio-professional structure of Podgórze population. It refers to the period when Podgórze was still an independent township (1900-1915), the interwar period and the present day. The tombstones bear Czech and German names, such as Bohm, Doležal, Dostal, Jary, Nemecek, Aichmuller, Geib, Kraft, Lehner, Strack or Schreinzer (Grodziska 1992). Members of famous families were buried on the new Podgórze cemetery, e.g. the Mateczny family, of whom Antoni Mateczny (1858-1934), an architect and builder came from Styria, settled in Podgórze where he was an alderman and in 1905 discovered mineral spring on his property, where he built a hydropathic establishment surrounded by a beautiful park; Bodnicki family – well known stonemasons or Matula family – apothecaries. The persons meritorious for science, culture and art who were buried on the new Podgórze cemetery are: Janina Ipohorska, a writer and translator, many-year journalist of the “Przekrój” weekly, author of savoir vivre column, Jan Kałuża a member of Polish football team during Olympic
Games in 1924 in Paris; Eugeniusz Ralski, professor of the Academy (now University) of Agriculture in Krakow, co-organised a secret Faculty of Agriculture during the Nazi occupation, a man of extensive knowledge, high personal culture and impeccable manners; Andrzej Swaryczewski, architect, art conservationist, the citizen of Podgórze, fascinated with his “small homeland”, Antoni Wolak an opera singer and many others. The figure below shows the stages of new cemetery development, photographs 3 and 4 fragments of landscape interiors.

THE AREA OF FORMER CONCENTRATION CAMP KL PŁASZÓW

The largest Podgórze cemetery is the area of the former KL Płaszów concentration camp. The name of Płaszów camp is imprecise as it was situated in the area of Podgórze and Wola Duchacka cadastral districts. In autumn 1942 in Wielicka street, at the level of Krakow-Płaszów railway station, the Nazi established a forced labour camp, which in January 1944 was changed into Kraków-Płaszów concentration camp. Topography of the camp, subsequent stages of its organization and functioning, and the camp life were described in numerous publications (Bau 1990; Żółciak 1996; Kotarba, Kwiatkowski, Żółciak, Żółciak 1995; Kalendarium obozu płaszowskiego… 1982). The camp area was greatly diversified regarding the land use and property structure. These comprise limestone hills, wetlands and malaria areas bordering the city lime kilns and quarry, pastures and post-fort wastelands, as well as old and new Jewish cemetery, which were devastated on command from the Nazi camp commandant. The terrain on which the camp was established had been partially built up and inhabited, whereas the land was a private property or belonged to Krakow district, Krakow Jewish Religious Community and state treasury. The inhabitants were evicted. In 1942-1944 the camp was constantly extended and finally reached the area of about 67 ha. The eastern camp boundary was Wielicka street, the southern Panińska and Kamieńskiego streets, the western Swoszowicka street and the northern boundary were the hills adjoining city quarry.

In Branch IV of State Archives in Krakow there are documents of 1946 testifying the fact that immediately after the end of the war there was an idea of post-camp area management (AP w Krakowie, akta ZMK, sygn. 18/bud., pismo nr 1219/46). However, the project has never been developed and only a monument dedicated to the victims of this place was erected on an Austrian earthwork situated in the south-western camp corner, at the present Kamieńskiego street. The inscription on the pedestal states: “In memory of the martyrs murdered by the Nazi genocide in 1941-1945”. The author of the monument is professor Witold Cęckiewicz (Photo 6). In 1989-1993 a housing estate was built in the area between Heltmana and Wielicka street. An eleven-storey apartment block is situated in place of former SS barracks. Whereas at Stoigniew street, at the site
of former camp workshops, two sets of terrace houses were built and the water main was laid along Abrahama street. Despite so serious spatial disturbances, remnants of camp barrack or their foundations, execution sites and mass graves were preserved in the historical area of the camp.

Photo 6. Monument by Prof. W. Cęckiewicz at the former Nazi concentration camp KL Płaszów (Photo W. Przegon, August 2014)

In 1995 there was a project to organise the relic part of the camp and expose its authentic elements. Strong emphasis was put on conservation of landscape and natural values. This was to be achieved through appropriately arranged vegetation, compliant with the habitat, which would create a contemplative park-monument (Koterba, Kwiatkowski, Żółciak, Żółciak, 1995). On 14 October, 2002 the area of the former Nazi concentration camp KL Płaszów was entered into the register of the Malopolskie voivodship monuments. The area was covered by full conservatory protection against chaotic investments, casual renovation of objects and parcellation of land. Unfortunately, until now no project of the post-camp area management as a memorial site has been realised (Photo 7).
PODGÓRZE GREEN AREAS

Various kinds and types of greenery occur in the area of Old Podgórze. High greenery occurs in the area of the old and new Podgórze and in “Bonarka” forest. A park-type greenery in the first place forms Wojciech Bednarski Park, Florian Nowacki green belt and walking path along the Vistula river. Various other forms of greenery may be spotted on post-fort area of the “Krzemionki” fort and round the preserved “Benedict” fort. On the other hand the post-fort area of “Krakus” fort with Krakus mound is covered by vegetation typical for pastures and meadows. The “Korona“ Sports Club area is a magnificent recreational and walking terrain with still unexploited landscape and aesthetical values. Both high and low greenery present here only slightly emphasizes the character of the place, i.e. the sports facility. The area of “Liban” quarry, Bonarka strict Reserve of Inanimate Nature and the area of the former Nazi concentration camp KL “Płaszów” are covered by xerothermal and ruderal vegetation as well as self-seedlings of trees and bushes. Vegetation of anthropogenic type, i.e.
artificially introduced by man occurs in the prevailing area of the Old Podgórze. Some terrains are small enclaves, the other by merging create larger spaces with interesting landscape and aesthetic values (Przegon 2004).

Green areas mentioned above, remaining within the boundaries of the Old Podgórze constitute an important element of “Krakow green space”. It should be added that currently in Krakow there are 43 city parks and the next are being planned, such as Duchacki part (Park na Woli Duchackiej…, 2013). While planning urban space one cannot forget about green areas which fulfill a number of important functions: recreational, ecological, didactic, protective (protect against noise, on hot days reduce the phenomenon of so called heat islands), landscape, aesthetic, etc. Management of urban green is a very complex process, which requires collaboration of various municipal units and departments with non-governmental organisations and local communities. It is good that in 2013 a city landscape architect was appointed for the first time, i.e. Ms Katarzyna Rajss-Kalużna. I hope that her functional duties would comprise also the care for greenery of the necropolises of the Old Podgórze. These are objects evidencing cultural and spiritual heritage of the Podgórze and Krakow inhabitants.

CONCLUSION

The old Podgórze cemetery is the oldest necropolis of Krakow, whereas the largest is the area of the former Nazi concentration camp KL Płaszów. History of cemeteries, their material and spiritual culture values require remembering and constant conservation and tending measures. These tasks are responsibility of appropriate city departments and in the first place the city landscape architect. Precise monitoring of the cemetery areas is a responsibility of each of us, who visit our predecessors resting in the Podgórze cemeteries.

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CARTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS

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