GREENERY AS MEANS OF CHANGE IN LITTLE TOWN SQUARES IN THE LUBLIN REGION (ON THE EXAMPLE OF JÓZEFÓW NAD WISŁĄ, KOCK, KURÓW AND WĄWOLNICA)

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Introduction

Many forgotten and long neglected little towns of the Lublin region are now enjoying a unique opportunity to undergo a restoration process that incorporates revisiting and protecting the vital characteristics of their cultural heritage. Particularly valuable are regularly planned town squares, around which the urban fabric of the towns has been shaped throughout history. Though each town developed in its own directions and at its own pace, they all shared similar attitudes concerning the management of main squares.

The way these characteristic and distinctive spaces are arranged today has been shaped by years of transformation, including changes in administrative status (receiving or losing town privileges), changes in the functions or roles of the squares, developing expectations as to how they should be used and whether they should include greenery, and finally – the contemporary tendencies and the predominant approach to the management of these important urban features.

Simultaneously, the differences in perceptions regarding the main functions of little town squares across centuries, shaped by political, economic and social conditions, make it difficult to make the right decisions about their proper management today. One of the problematic issues is the incorporation of greeneries, which were introduced in the interwar period and later on. Understanding the history, nature and scope of change in the management of little town squares in the Lublin region, and analysing the reasons for introducing and keeping greeneries there, is extremely important as a way to revisit and restore the unique value of these spaces, especially since there are many ways available today to have revalorisation or revitalisation initiatives financed from EU funds. This will make it possible to ensure a fuller evaluation of how valuable and important these elements are and what roles they have played historically and today. It will also help define the right approach to the existing fabric of the place and

adopt a general line of decision-making regarding further management and planning.

1. Spatial considerations

The present day's Lublin Voivodeship largely coincides with the historic Lublin region. Situated between two rivers – the Vistula and Bug – at the times of the Duchy of Warsaw, the region included the Lublin Department, transformed into the Lublin Voivodeship in 1816, after Congress Poland came into existence, and later changed into Lublin Governorate. Today, the region includes approximately 120 settlements which used at some point to be officially towns – most enjoyed town privileges until the January Uprising in 1863. Their spatial arrangements, mostly based on Magdeburg rights, are very similar.

2. Little towns of the Lublin region throughout history

2.1. Historical, economic and social aspects

The settlement patterns in the Lublin region depended on the important trade routes. The earliest towns were built around early medieval tribal castles (e.g. Wąwolnica). Apart from towns funded by kings, with considerable growth potential and massive grounds assigned to them, most were the property of private landowners. If their status was given them based on Polish law, they were under no obligation to follow regular planning patterns. Only under Magdeburg rights, which came to effect in 14th century, was there any regular arrangement imposed on them, with meticulously measured main square, situated in the centre of the town, creating a rectangular space surrounded with proportionally planned buildings housing the principal institutions such as the town hall and lodgings of the most prominent inhabitants. The corners of the rectangular square gave rise to streets, arranged perpendicularly to create a chessboard-like structure (Fig. 1, 2, 3, 4,

5). Besides the requirement to have proper sites earmarked for religious and administrative buildings, the town charter specified things such as the number of fairs that could be organized in the town.

The turn of the 15th and 16th centuries saw a dynamic development of trade across Poland. The Lublin region was crossed by many trade routes leading to Lithuania, and nearby villages took advantage and grew both in wealth and in area. Towns became commercial, administrative, religious and cultural centres of the region. In the Renaissance, craft and trade developed through many local fairs organised in towns. Later on, however, the 17th century wars and natural disasters brought the entire country to an economic downfall, which was particularly acute around Lublin. For years the development of many towns of the region stopped, and the attempts to restore their economic glory met with many difficulties. Owners of depopulated settlements issued special privileges to encourage new settlers, which attracted a large population of Jews, who would take over the buildings near main squares. It was not until late 18th century that these neglected and deteriorated towns finally started to rise from the ashes. There appeared governmental committees whose goal was to reconstruct and improve the sanitary conditions of the towns. Some private owners introduced reforms to bring order to their towns and to ensure growth.[1]

After the failure of the Kościuszko Uprising and the partitioning of the country, the area of today's Lublin Voivodeship was put under the Austrian rule as the West Galicia, to be freed in 1809 and form part of the Duchy of Warsaw. This caused the region's towns to acquire a degree of independence regarding local governance. From 1815 right until World War I, the area was ruled by Russia. The partition period was a difficult time – soldiers constantly marched past or stationed in the local towns, causing the locals to suffer considerable impoverishment. The years 1820–1830 brought a governmental programme aiming to regulate and develop cities. A document titled "General Provisions of Construction Police for the towns of the Kingdom of Poland", issued in 1820, imposed an obligation to regulate streets and squares and was the basis for the initiatives to develop a number of cities.[2]

After the January Uprising, many towns lost their privileges and their importance, and an economic downfall naturally soon followed. In late 19th century, the developments in craft, transport and local industry caused the rail and road infrastructure to develop, changing the historic routes of trade (Fig. 6). Some of the periphery towns, where neither roads nor rails reached, fell further into economic oblivion. Living conditions in these towns were far from decent, "despite the relatively low population and architectural density. All kinds of houses and farm buildings were pressed together, most of them wooden, streets and roads mostly unpaved, full of dirt and mud, no sewage system or potable water, no trees; dirt and disorder all over."[3]

World War I and the war with Russia further degraded the socio-political situation of the region, "sweeping through the country (...) along a bloody and fiery route, reducing many settlements to ashes and ruins..."[4] After the war, newly independent Poland began to slowly recover. Despite the economic crisis both in the region and countrywide, town authorities strived to bring order to the public space. Streets were paved, houses electrified, water supply and sewage systems installed. Town budgets had some funds earmarked for planting trees along the main roads, which shows how important it was to people of the time to use plants as means to make urban space not only more beautiful, but also healthier.

In these difficult circumstances, the little towns of the region kept playing their role as local centres of trade and craft, places where people from nearby villages could go to purchase goods or services. These multicultural urban settlements also worked as religious and administrative centres, with a Catholic church, a synagogue or an Orthodox church on the one hand and a local administration office, a town hall, a post office etc. on the other. It was only World War II that put an end to the diversified multicultural map of the local populations, destroying once and for all the multinational atmosphere the region had breathed for many centuries.

[1] E. Przesmycka, *Przeobrażenia zabudowy i krajobrazu miasteczek Lubelszczyzny*, Lublin 2001, p. 62, 75-78.
[2] Ibidem, p. 79.

[3] J. Holewiński, *Osady ogrodowe wobec zniszczenia przez wojnę miast i miasteczek*, Warszawa 1915, p. 1-2.
[4] Ibidem, p. 2.

2.2. Functions of little town squares of the Lublin region across centuries – transformations

The market square has always been the most important place in a town, its most prominent, central element easily distinguishable in the urban structure. It was also the centre of local economic life. This was where all the roads and trade routes met. The square was used primarily for trade and services. Weekly markets and fairs offered an opportunity for villagers and country landowners to purchase all the necessary goods, while farmers sold their excess crops and other produce there, including cattle, pottery and other household items, as well and alimentary products. Yearly fairs were always big events and attracted a variety of merchants and manufacturers from all around the region. Around the square, there were shops, stalls and stores, and in the centre – or within the frontage – the most important local administration buildings were located, such as the town hall, offices and other institutions. The proximity of important roads made the vicinity of the main square a perfect spot to place inns and taverns.

The square was also an important venue for meetings and exchanging information and for many other daily activities of social and cultural character. It is here that all kinds of celebrations, festivities and assemblies were organised. At the time of glory the towns of the region took pride in their squares, which played the role of refined landmarks, with their grand public buildings and architecturally attractive frontages. Later, however, the dirty and muddy squares became more of an unsurpassable barrier which discouraged visitors. The surrounding private houses used to be quite prestigious, owned by the wealthiest townsmen. But starting from the 18th century, when poorer Jewish communities began to inhabit town centres, the overpopulated buildings fell into ruin and could no longer serve as embellishments of the squares.[5]

After World War I, the need emerged to clean and tidy the little town squares, which according to some circles could only be achieved by moving the fairs to some other, specially designed venues. New sanitary laws required cumbersome and noisy trade to move to places outside the dense architecture of the main squares. This was motivated by safety considerations, the need to improve sanitary conditions and bring back the aesthetic value to the central part of the town. This point of view was in sync with the modern urban planning approach which was to "... get rid of dead squares. For 6 days a week, and even longer where fairs are less frequent and take place once in two or three weeks or even once a month, town squares are dead, barren places full of rubbish, dirt and mud."[6] (Fig. 7, 8).

The idea of using the square for more days in the week as a space open to the public, with high decorative potential, where locals could meet and stroll at leisure, gained popularity, especially in towns where the square was the only common space available. Walking across it, one could meet people, which made the square "a place for strolling, a drawing room on weekday evenings, and throughout the day on Sundays and holidays – for all social classes."[7] But this could only be true of properly paved squares, well lit and with pavements for pedestrians. With these conditions met, locals could choose to take photos while leisurely strolling around the square (Fig. 9). The town centres began to be perceived as showcases to show off the town's best and efforts started to be made – such as paving, plotting pedestrian routes and planting trees – to make them look presentable (Fig. 10, 11).

Naturally, all these improvements did not completely eradicate trade from the town squares. Fairs and markets still attracted countless horse carts, chaises and wagonloads of merchandise, as can be seen on photographs from the period (Fig. 12, 13). Still, the interwar period saw a gradual improvement in the appearance of town squares, which gained new functions without losing their historic role as trade markets.

After the wars, the character of the squares took a dramatic shift. Due to extreme limitations imposed on private business and ownership, they lost their trading function to become nothing but refined landmarks. Ornamental lawns or little parks appeared, "planted as part of obligatory community work according to the tastes of the local Communist elite."[8] In some cases, trade was transferred to large department stores, often located in the very square or incorporated in the frontage. The function of the

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[5] E. Przesmycka, op. cit., p. 42.
[6] A. Kühnel, *Zasady budowy miast małych i miasteczek*, Lwów 1917, p. 37.

[7] Ibidem, p. 40.
[8] E. Przesmycka, op. cit., p. 2.

squares as key transport hubs was reinforced. Bus stops or small bus stations appeared there, as well as car parks and junctions; planners let important national roads right through the squares, which often completely ruined their previous spatial and functional structure. Elements of street furniture were introduced, such as lighting, rubbish bins, benches etc.

Lately, many towns have decided to build ring roads to take the noisy cross-country traffic outside of the town centre, only letting in local, less intensive traffic. Despite such initiatives, in many cases the centre – the only open space in the town – is not fully free from its communication function and still serves as a car park with little aesthetic appeal, making it impossible to introduce any kind of recreational function to the place. This is in stark contrast to the contemporary idea of the square being a place of many functions, providing both a transport hub and a place where locals can indulge in leisure activities and organise all kinds of fairs and cultural events or holiday celebrations. The social and aesthetic function of the town square is very emphasised by local communities. The emerging revalorisation or revitalisation projects should therefore be aimed at combining these functions in one spatially consistent area – though this is not always eventually achieved.

3. The 19th century – introducing greenery to towns

3.1. General considerations

The 19th century – "the age of steam and electricity (...), the age of machinery"[9] – saw a number of factories and manufacturing plants being established, road grids being developed and architecture condensing as poor worker districts emerged[10] to support the dynamic urbanisation of the economy. Cities became cramped, smoky, the streets got grey and dirty, flats were stuffy and sunless. The poor sanitary conditions in cities made way for serious diseases and epidemics, while crime surged in underprivileged districts. Water and land were recklessly used in a way that led to rapid degradation of the surrounding environment. With every little piece of land being used for construction, there was little left for plants and trees, so no new parks and gardens were created, while the existing ones found themselves threatened by the unrestrained wave of urban development.[11] Scientific progress and the human rights movement helped to realise the danger inherent in this approach, and healing the cities became a priority.

In the search for means to achieve this goal, there appeared several alternative planning concepts. Most of these novel ideas – some reduced to practice, some not – saw greeneries as the "green lungs" of the city. One of the most prominent ideas that shaped the perception of the city as a complex system and influenced subsequent developments in urban planning was Ebenezer Howard's "garden city". Putting great emphasis on the social aspect and combining the advantages of city life (such as availability of employment, social life, entertainment possibilities) with the beauty of countryside (fresh air, green spaces, closeness of nature), Howard's idea introduced a new vision of urban development and prompted decision-makers to invest in greeneries as one of the most important elements of the city.[12]

In keeping with the idea to "heal the city", the existing urban arrangements were transformed to improve the sanitary conditions. Apart from installing water-supply systems and paving the streets, various forms of vegetation were introduced to the city fabric. Trees were planted alongside the most important roads, ornamental plants embellished squares to add splendour to the important institutions located within the frontage. Green squares gave the impression of relieving and loosening the dense city architecture, and at the same time provided for cleaner air and better living conditions. In more radical cases, whole quarters or former city walls were demolished to make room for large

[9] E. Jankowski, *Dzieje ogrodnictwa*, vol. 2, Kraków 1938, p. 1.

[10] I. Drexler, *Miasta ogrodowe*, Lwów 1912, p. 4.

[11] K. Kimic, *Dziewiętnastowieczny park publiczny jako element uzdrowienia miast,* [in:] K. Gerlic (ed.), *Architektura i technika a zdrowie. Materiały II Sympozjum*, Politechnika Śląska, Gliwice 2004, p. 102.

[12] A. Czyżewski, *Trzewia Lewiatana. Miasta-ogrody i narodziny przedmieścia kulturalnego*, Państwowe Muzeum Etnograficzne w Warszawie, Warszawa 2009, p. 46-48; K. Kimic, *Tereny zieleni jako czynnik decydujący o poprawie warunków bytowania w mieście na przykładzie wybranych koncepcji urbanistycznych XIX i początku XX wieku,* [in:] *Architektura i Technika a Zdrowie. Materiały III Sympozjum*, Gliwice 2005, p. 109-119.

scale parks and gardens (e.g. in Paris the 19th century rebuilding movement allowed green belts to be introduced alongside streets, while Ring in Vienna and Planty in Kraków replaced former city fortifications, opening up the old city centres and nestling them in a patch of greenery). The physical and mental health of inhabitants made it necessary to create public parks of different types. All the biggest European cities had large parks created to function as meeting places and leisure areas bringing people closer to nature.[13]

3.2. Greeneries in the towns of the Lublin region

The idea of healing urban spaces quickly reached the Polish soil. Still partitioned, however, the territory developed at different pace under different rules. What was common in all partitions was that the initiatives began in bigger cities, where regulation plans were developed to bring order to the street grid and the structure of urban architecture.[14] The developments that took place in today's Lublin region were the work of the government of the Kingdom of Poland.[15] Introducing different types of greeneries was an important point in the regulation plans. Access roads were lined with trees, streets were transformed into wooded promenades and boulevards, spots of greenery appeared here and there within the urban fabric. As vividly put by Stefan Rogowicz: "the dark and cold walls of the cities welcome the goddess Flora, a messenger of Nature. Into the thick smoke and deadly fumes of the factories she brings a life-giving breeze of health and force. She draws apart brick walls to work her charm within, and where the walls resist, she plants trees in narrow streets and small squares, creates wooded lanes and sprinkles colourful flowers and splashes of green on every little unpaved strip of city soil."[16]

It was at this point that public parks gained importance as prominent structural elements of cities. Established in the suburbs, degraded lands or inhabitable areas[17], they became the cities' "green lungs", where everybody could enjoy a peaceful time of relaxation and leisure.[18] People recognised that "regardless of the beneficial effect of gardens on human health, (...) in the life of urban settlements, especially small ones, a public garden is one of the hubs of social life."[19] The 19th century tendency to create public green spaces also reached the Lublin region. In Lublin itself, uptown from the medieval boundaries of the city, the first municipal park called Saski Garden was created already in 1837.[20] Nearly 60 years later, another public park appeared in the worker's district of Bronowice.[21] City authorities set out to arrange the road grid and relax the dense architecture in an effort to improve the living conditions of the locals. New recreation areas were also created – though not without some difficulty – in the old squares (Litewski square, the former site of the Saint Michael Church and on the Dominikańska Hill).[22]

The tendency to embellish and heal urban spaces by introducing patches of greenery spread from large cities to smaller towns, where it was adopted to some degree. Experts tried to appeal to the authorities to "necessarily announce competitions for city garden projects where there are none – seek advice from those qualified, plant trees along boulevards, arrange yards for children and teens, in a word – afforest the city, regardless of how many private gardens there are in it. When these are gone, there will still be the public greeneries left."[23] While these "provincial" greeneries were highly criticised by distinguished urban planners for incompetent design and implementation, ignorance of the most fundamental principles of gardening, poor taste, "routine

[13] K. Kimic, *Dziewiętnastowieczny*, op. cit., p. 101-107.

[14] W. Kalinowski, *Zarys historii budowy miast w Polsce do połowy XIX wieku,* Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 1966, p. 35-44.

[15] Ibidem, p. 43; K. Kimic, *Miejsce i rola publicznych terenów zieleni w przestrzeni polskich miast XIX wieku* [in:] "Czasopismo Techniczne", issue 19, "Architektura", z. 6-A, Kraków 2012, p. 109-117.

[16] S. Rogowicz, *Idea ogrodnictwa miast i wsi*, [in:] *Pamiętnik jubileuszowej wystawy ogrodniczej w Poznaniu*, Poznań 1926, p. 124.

[17] K. Kimic, *Miejsce*, op. cit., p. 111, 115.

[18] K. Kimic, *Dziewiętnastowieczny*, op. cit., p. 103-105.

[19] E. Jankowski, *Ogrody publiczne w miastach prowincjonalnych*, [in:] "Ogrodnik Polski", no. 24, 1892, p. 553-556.

[20] G. Ciołek, *Ogrody Lublina w XIX wieku*, [in:] „Ochrona Zabytków" VII, issue 4, Warszawa 1954, p. 267-269; J. Willaume, *Początki ogrodu miejskiego w Lublinie 1827-1862*, [in:] "Kalendarz Lubelski", 1961, p. 55-57; M. A. Ronikierowa, *Ilustrowany przewodnik po Lublinie*, vol. 1, Lublin 1901, p. 230-231.

[21] H. Gawarecki, *O dawnym Lublinie. Szkice z przeszłości miasta*. Wyd. Lubelskie, Lublin 1974.

[22] A. Kierek, *Rozwój przestrzenny i stan urządzeń komunalnych m. Lublina w latach 1870–1915*, [in:] "Rocznik Lubelski", vol. 4, Lublin 1961, p. 209.

[23] E. Jankowski, op. cit., p. 555.

and commonplaceness",[24] this did not discourage growing numbers of towns from eagerly introducing similar projects within their own boundaries. This trend for "going green" was reinforced by horticulture intensively developing in late 19th and early 20th centuries, with many specialised societies being established in many cities. Their work consisted in organising horticulture exhibitions, popularising gardening and promoting public greeneries in magazines and publications.[25] One such contribution argued for "planting trees within city limits (...), since they are commonly believed to be beneficial and necessary to keep society as healthy as it is reasonably possible when people live so crowded in one place."[26] At the same time, hygiene and healthcare were increasingly promoted, and the benefits of city vegetation were eagerly argued in numerous brochures and lectures, also in Lublin.[27]

4. Vegetation as part of town square management in the Lublin region

Nearly until the end of the 19th century, there was no green in the landscape palette of the little towns in the Lublin region. The fact that many of them had already lost their town privileges did not contribute to any improvement in this respect. Quite the contrary, it caused many towns to fall into ruin, which discouraged any possible investments in recreational space for the people. Vegetation was practically nonexistent, only accompanying churches and manor houses as ornamental or vegetable gardens. In late 1890s, and more notably in early 1900s, some towns followed the example of larger cities and the tendency to "heal" the urban space resulted in planting tree lines along the main and most presentable access roads. After World War I, during the great reconstruction of Polish cities, more publications appeared urging authorities to improve the urban landscape by introducing vegetation and lines

of trees along the squares and the streets that led to them.[28] Trees and greeneries were expected to "(...) revive the square and make it cleaner. Since even the most beautifully paved or asphalted square looks unpleasantly empty and grey when there is nothing else on it."[29] The new functions and new ways of managing the space of little town squares naturally necessitated some transformation (Fig. 14).

Planning a green square on a market square required regularity, with paths for strollers and an open space in the centre around an ornamental object such as a statue. Such a square was used for religious and national holiday celebrations or possibly everyday trade. Among its necessary elements there were also "a carriage stop, a public toilet, a fountain."[30] Smaller squares, whose central point was the town hall, were proposed to be lined with trees and walking paths, since "lines of trees make up a frame of sorts, a square within a square,"[31] which separated it from the dull, heterogeneous architecture surrounding it. A square of this kind would indeed be the centre of the town, a perfect place for walking and strolling, whatever social background one should come from.

The need to introduce green squares within main squares was in keeping with the idea of improving city dwellers' living conditions. Many benefits were attributed to the presence of green areas within towns and within town squares. These included bringing the inhabitants closer to nature, creating a place perfect for walking and relaxation in beautiful flowery surroundings. Trees were believed to add considerably to the aesthetic value of streets and squares. They were thought to "undoubtedly embellish streets with their colours, shapes and blooms, bringing nature among the cold artificiality of buildings, giving shade, refreshing the air, keeping the dust away and adding moisture to the air, which alleviates the heat radiating from the insolated walls."[32]

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[24] S. Rogowicz, *Plantacje miejskie w b. Kongresówce*, [in:] *Pamiętnik jubileuszowej wystawy ogrodniczej w Poznaniu*, Poznań 1926, p. 136-145.

[25] "Gardening skills are being promoted more and more through lectures and talks, shows and exhibitions, making the passion for horticulture pervade deeper and deeper into the minds of even the lowest and poorest social classes, bringing them improved quality of life, a pleasant pastime and some joy of life." E. Jankowski, *Dzieje ogrodnictwa*, vol. 2, Kraków 1938, p. 5.

[26] E. Jankowski, *Ogrody publiczne w miastach prowincjonalnych*, [in:] "Ogrodnik Polski", no. 24, 1892, p. 554.

[27] W. Dobrzyński, *Istota i rozwój idei Howarda (miasto-ogród)*, Warszawa 1917, p. 27

[28] I. Drexler, *Odbudowanie wsi i miast na ziemi naszej*, Lwów 1916.

[29] A. Kühnel, *Zasady*, op. cit., p. 37.

[30] Ibidem, p. 38.

[31] Ibidem, p. 39.

[32] A. Kühnel, *Ulice. Projektowanie, budowa i utrzymanie*, Lwów-Poznań 1925, p. 303.

4.1. Late 19th century to the beginning of World War II

In late 19th century it was promoted – though not yet very successfully – to line streets with trees of both purely ornamental and fruit species.[33] Up until early 20th century, green was only to be seen anywhere near the town square if there was a church or a manor house nearby, or as tree lines alongside streets that led to it (Kurów, Kock), (Fig. 15, 16).

Inscribing vegetation into the space of the square began later in the 20th century, mostly during the interwar period. Analysing old photographs (thought they are not always properly dated), one can conclude that most plantings in the towns of the Lublin region took place in late 1920s and early 1930s as part of a nationwide afforestation campaign.[34] In November 1927, pressed by the public, the scientific community and the government to "make towns and cities healthier and more beautiful and improve the Polish landscape"[35], the Minister of Interior issued the *Circular on the National Afforestation Programme*[36] (Fig. 17). In the document, Minister Felicjan Sławoj-Składkowski ordered local authorities to "plant trees in squares and streets of cities, towns and villages."[37] Town squares, "unless they have historic value,"[38] were to include flower beds surrounded by trees. The circular also specified the work methods and gave practical tips. Attached to it was a list of recommended tree species prepared by the Warsaw Horticulture Committee chaired by the Chief Gardener of the Capital City of Warsaw Leon Danielewicz (Fig. 18). The document was supported by Bronisław Gałczyński's book *Drzewa liściaste leśne i alejowe* [Deciduous trees of forests and boulevards] which addressed specialist problems of tree planting and nurturing. Thus initiated, the initiative quickly bore fruit. The *Circular of the Minister of Interior of 25 September 1928* contained an action plan for the following year, which reinforced the campaign to plant trees alongside roads in cities and in villages and to pave town squares.[39]

The patterns of planting greeneries within town squares are somewhat similar in most towns. Trees were most commonly planted in lines alongside the main roads which went through the square in parallel to the frontages (Kock, Kurów). They were very characteristic features of the square's spatial composition and provided a sort of frame to expose the pattern. Plants were also used to add splendour to significant buildings – an example is the former town hall in Końskowola, surrounded by greenery (Fig. 19). Plants also served as ornaments of other elements of the square such as religious statues, monuments, wells etc. The square itself usually remained an empty space paved with field stones or unpaved (Fig. 20).

Newly planted trees were protected from damage by special covers – "thin rail tree guards"[40] which were three poles hammered in the ground around the tree and joined by small horizontal boards (Fig. 21). The tree guards were sometimes painted white. In some towns, young trees were only supported by a single thick pole. Whatever the method, these measures were meant to protect young trees from damage and abrasion (especially during fairs and other celebrations organised in the square) and keep them from falling over or breaking in the first years after the planting. The quality of the plantings and the future visual effect were imperative to the town authorities.

Based on analysis of old photograph and dendrological inventories, as well as oral information from local inhabitants, the most popular tree species planted in towns were European ash, green ash, small-leaved lime and Norway maple. However, the poor documentation and scarce photographs make it impossible to confirm whether these were varieties of smaller crowns, as tabular lists and guides of the time recommended. Regular ash crowns can be seen on photographs from Wąwolnica (Fig. 15, 16), but this could have been the effect of trimming and pruning.

Following the example of larger cities, some little town squares were given more extensive greeneries. For example in Kock, a green square was created within the main square and during the inter-

[33] W. Olędzki, *W sprawie obsadzania dróg,* [in:] "Ogrodnik Polski", issue 19, vol. 23, 1901, p. 456-461.
[34] *Circular of the Minister of Interior of 2 November 1927 on the National Afforestation Programme*, [in:] B. Gałczyński, *Drzewa liściaste leśne i alejowe*, Piaseczno pod Warszawą 1928.
[35] B. Gałczyński, op. cit.

[36] *Circular of the Minister of Interior of 2 November 1927 on the National Afforestation Programme*, [in:] B. Gałczyński, op. cit.
[37] Ibidem.
[38] Ibidem.
[39] *Circular of the Minister of Interior of 25 September 1928,* Dziennik Urzędowy Kuratorjum okręgu szkolnego poznańskiego, issue 15, Poznań 1928.
[40] A. Kühnel, *Ulice*, op. cit., p. 310.

war period the large lawn with tall trees was separated from the paved part of the square with a low brick wall with a small cast-iron gate situated near the church – quite a unique solution compared to other towns of the region (Fig. 16, 17, 18). The species planted in the green square were Norway maple, green ash, European ash, small-leaved lime and some birch and pine (Fig. 22).

4.2. From World War II until present

After the World War II, the functions of many town squares gradually changed. There appeared disharmonious elements such as shopping centres, bus stations and bus stops, and the large open spaces were used as roads, car parks or bus lay-bys.

The second half of the 20th century also brought much change in the way in-square greeneries were managed. Some tree lines planted before the war along the frontages had not survived, and the losses were not always made up for. In 1960s, the Kock square acquired new plantings on the north and west side, while the east frontage lost its greenery for some time. New plantings were mostly single trees or little green squares, or even small parks with pedestrian routes and street furniture such as benches, rubbish bins and concrete fountains. The new government was also very eager to install monuments commemorating the recent historical events, but after the collapse of the Communist regime in 1989 these had to be demolished or their message changed.[41] Another typical trend of the time was planting pruned trees, especially lime trees, along the pavements running near the frontages. In Kurów, where the war took a heavy toll on a number of prominent nearby buildings, the square was extended to incorporate a green square and a shopping mall with a car park. In 1960s, also part of the square in Wąwolnica turned green.

In recent times, many towns of the region have managed to obtain subsidies from a number of EU-organised funding programmes in order to revalorise or revitalise the main squares. The quality of the projects being implemented varies depending on the skill of the designers, the pressures from local authorities, comprehensiveness of the project and professional performance. The transformation processes differ in degree – from dramatic changes implementing novel, sometimes abstract concepts,

to subtle corrections of the status quo. In most cases, the squares are becoming refined landmarks surrounded by roads, with a recreational green square in the middle, complete with a fountain or a statue (Kock). The most frequent errors made in the process include: wrong choice of the paving pattern which limits the readability of the spatial divisions being restored, changed proportions in some parts of the square, or wrong choice of tree species (alien species which have no association with the place or with its history). Often good projects are only partially implemented: the paving is changed, old trees are replaced with new ones, but the disharmonious elements are not removed – though getting rid of them would have increased the readability of the space (Józefów).

Deciding to restore the former vegetation-free spatial arrangement makes it necessary to remove old trees, thereby sometimes destroying the aesthetic value of the space and its nature-oriented character (Kurów, Kock). The arrangements introduced with early 20th century plantings have accompanied several generations of inhabitants. Therefore, distorting these arrangements rises much concern among the locals and is heavily protested against. Depriving town squares of their green canopies might cause people to become reluctant to use the space for recreational purposes. Some revitalisation projects provide for keeping the greeneries in selected parts of the square, which act as supplements to the frontage (Kurów) and allow for specified forms of recreation (Fig. 23, 24).

Conclusions

Introducing greeneries to city centres and town squares in early 20th century stemmed from pan-European trends in urban development. Far-reaching plans to improve the aesthetics and "healthiness" of little town squares of Poland in general, and the Lublin region in particular, by planting tree lines along the frontages and creating green squares within the main squares, were put to an end by World War II. Still, the surviving greeneries have been and still are perceived as extremely valuable elements of the urban fabric, serving ornamental and recreation purposes, but also adding prestige to the town as its presentable landmarks. Thus, the historically motivated presence of vegetation within town

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[41] E. Przesmycka, op. cit., p. 287.

squares is considered indispensable. Nevertheless, the necessity and the form of greeneries to be introduced to town squares cannot be unambiguously specified, since these considerations should depend on the individual character of the place and the specific characteristics of the town in question. Despite many transformation processes the town squares and their greeneries have undergone through the years, vegetation remains an important structural and functional element of the space, which bears testimony to the history and individuality of the town.

Different solutions introduced to town squares across centuries show how important it is to treat them on a case-by-case basis, ensuring prior detailed spatial and landscape analysis which would take account of past developments in this regard. Before setting out to rebuild a square, detailed research into a number of considerations (urban planning, architecture, environmental and social aspects) should be ensured, including analysis of the past arrangements, taking particular consideration of the planting patterns and reasons behind them. Reconstruction projects should be designed and carried out in a comprehensive manner, taking into account all components of the square: the traffic arrangements, buildings, street architecture and vegetation, as well as frontage facades, regardless of ownership and preservation status. Any additions should be in harmony with the existing infrastructure – especially street architecture scaled and designed to match the character of the place – at the same time preserving any historic value of the existing architecture.

In recognition of their high value, the urban arrangements in many of the towns in the Lublin region (such as Kock and Wąwolnica) have been listed as monuments, causing their over 75-years-old green squares created before World War II to be covered by heritage conservation programmes. Since they are inherent elements of the cultural landscape of these towns, they also require detailed research to be done before any guidelines regarding their management can be issued. Since the value of the structures is recognised to a varying extent, and because the criteria for appraising the historical value of buildings and structures have changed across the past decades (and so have the attitudes towards green squares created within main squares),

many squares that would have been considered monuments today were probably covered in trees in accordance with the *Circular of the Minister of Interior of 25 September 1928* (e.g. Busko, Wiślica and Kock).[42]

Taking this into account, it must be concluded that special care should be exercised while assessing the value of vegetation elements and plant structures within town squares. Tree lines along streets (in furtherance of the interwar guidelines) can be used to cover possible deficiencies in the structure of buildings. Maintaining and introducing such a solution is a cheap way of marking the boundaries of the square without the need for costly reconstruction of the entire frontage.

As far as undesirable initiatives regarding the square flora are concerned, one of the most vividly opposed by the public is cutting down all trees in a square to have them replaced by new ones. On the other hand, removing only some of the trees from a dense composition can have ludicrous effects, since the remaining trees will have misshapen crowns without much aesthetic value. A good solution might be cutting down the trees gradually, which will allow the locals to get used to the process and to the final result, accompanied by planting grown trees whose size will fit the scale of the space they are to adorn.

The choice of species to be planted should depend on the species recommendations used in the period based on which the urban space is to be revalorised, supported by an analysis of the composition of vegetation in the interwar period, taking account of the scale (adjusting tree crowns to the scale of the accompanying architecture, possibly choosing varieties that will be more resistant to the urban environment). Introducing alien species or colourful varieties does not suit the towns and is not in harmony with their history.

Contemporary transformation processes should take account of all the functions a square performs at present, against the background of its past. Today, apart from being used as a transport hub, a square needs to accommodate for its recreational and aesthetic functions; introducing (or maintaining) these functions requires the use of appropriate spatial solutions, especially with regard to town squares

[42] A. Michałowski, *Wstęp*, [in:] *Studia i materiały,* "Krajobrazy", 7(19), Ośrodek Ochrony Zabytkowego Krajobrazu, Narodowa Instytucja Kultury, Warszawa 1995.

that include floral elements, leaving enough open space to provide for events such as fairs or festivals. To avoid any mistakes in this respect, a vital element of the revitalisation process should be recognising the needs of the local population, e.g. through social consultation. Gradual implementation of projects will prevent making excessively dramatic changes at one go and therefore risking violent opposition from the local community, at the same time allowing to better plan the expense over time.

The above considerations make it necessary to work out a compromise, depending on the local conditions and spatial peculiarities of a given town in the Lublin region. The compromise should take into account both historic developments, supported by conservation guidelines specific for the area, and the necessity to adapt its functions to the contemporary needs of its users – local communities. The presence of vegetation within a town market, if other public greeneries within the boundaries of the town are scarce, is not only fully acceptable nowadays, but also highly desirable.

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