

## The Stability of park composition

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**Abstract:** *The stability of park composition.* The research dealt with 85 antique garden layouts in the Piotrkowska Region. The aim of this work is an examination of a dependence of permanence in a park composition with reference to ownership form which it covers. As a research hypothesis it has been assumed that the continuity of a park ownership form influences the park function while it decides about the permanence of layout composition. In the work methods of historical analysis were applied as well as methods of formal and spatial analysis. Among the examined garden layouts 74 objects were broken out and changed their function but only 7 retained continuity of ownership. Having analyzed the grade of composition retention three groups of objects are selected: parks with retained axis composition – 29 objects that is about 34% of all examined layouts, parks with traces of historical composition – 17 objects that is 20% and parks without retained historical composition – 39 layouts which equals nearly 46%. Having conducted the analysis of the park areas it can be stated that none of the objects has intact boundaries. The results of the conducted research explicitly indicate that there is a close connection between retaining territory ownership covered by the object and its function as well as its composition.

*Key words:* antique garden, permanence of composition, ownership form, way of use.

### INTRODUCTION

The border location of Piotrków Region between the significant regions of Poland and the communication routes related to

them, being of an international importance, were a substantial factor influencing shaping the spatial structure which led to the localization of estates and foundation of gardens surrounding them.

Within the aforesaid territory different types of gardens at a certain period of time were intensively developed only to cease completely later on or to gradually yield to other forms of development. It is a general rule concerning most objects. The lack of continuation of the gardens was connected with economic crises, which affected most objects or with damages resulting from political crises. For the Cistercian Abbey in Sulejów and the Norbertan Abbey in Witów it was the time of cassation of the monasteries, for the castles (Majkowice, Bąkowa Góra, Zameczek) most often it was the destruction caused by the Swedish war, whereas for numerous palaces and manor houses it was the collapse of property resulting from World War II. The 1944 was a turning point for the existence of parks and gardens belonging to the place being the centers of agriculture and cultural heaths, whose owners were deprived of the property in result of the decree on agricultural reform. The interruption of natural continuity of development that assured the magnificence of the manor

house and palace – garden and park made not only the owners and administrators leave the properties left but also the gardeners, who oftentimes handed down the traditions of garden art from one generation to another. Manor houses and palaces taken over either by the state or cooperatives were transformed into primitive functions, they became multifamily houses, offices, storehouses and even barns. The buildings with their surroundings were slowly devastated.

## RESEARCH PURPOSE

The purpose of the work is to examine the stability of the park composition with reference to the form of property ownership which it takes. The research hypothesis assumes that the stability of the foundation composition is influenced by the continuity of the park ownership which determines its function.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research that was carried out in 1996–2005, included 85 parks entered in the national register of historic monuments or the conservator's records. The territorial range of the study covers Piotrków County extended to those objects which are located within other counties but before they belonged to the former Piotrków Province (Fig. 1). The questions of administrative borders was considered as of secondary importance. Referring to the former borders of Piotrków County allowed the authors to collect more complete data and develop more credible results. Out of the 85 parks being the subject of the study, 76 are situated within Piotrków County, 8 within

the area of current Łódź Province in the following counties: Bełchatów, Łódź Wschód, Opoczno, Radom, Tomaszów, one object is located in the territory of Świętokrzyskie Province – in the County of Włoszczowa.

For the purpose of the study the authors used 74 archival cartographic materials and 19 archival iconographic materials. Also 85 park evidence studies were used, 39 publications on the history of garden art, restoration and revalorization of historic garden foundations as well as 57 pictures taken from the air in 1997. Each of the objects is also presented in photographs illustrating its present conditions.

The following research methodology was applied:

- Methodology of historic analysis for determining the garden age, in form of providing planning and iconographic materials, dendrochronology, dated by the architectural detail and types of applied technologies.
- Methodology of formal analysis for composition and space research, restoration of the parks interiors, axis and landscape relations.
- Methodology of spatial analyses, used in the planning process, i.e.: for preparing the condition studies and the development directions of cities and communes.

The following studies and analyses were used in the proceedings pragmatics:

- Inventory of the historic garden resources of Piotrków Region – detailed and general inventories of gardens, for determining the condition of preservation of the foundation composition, including especially its flora and defining the real current function of a particular object.

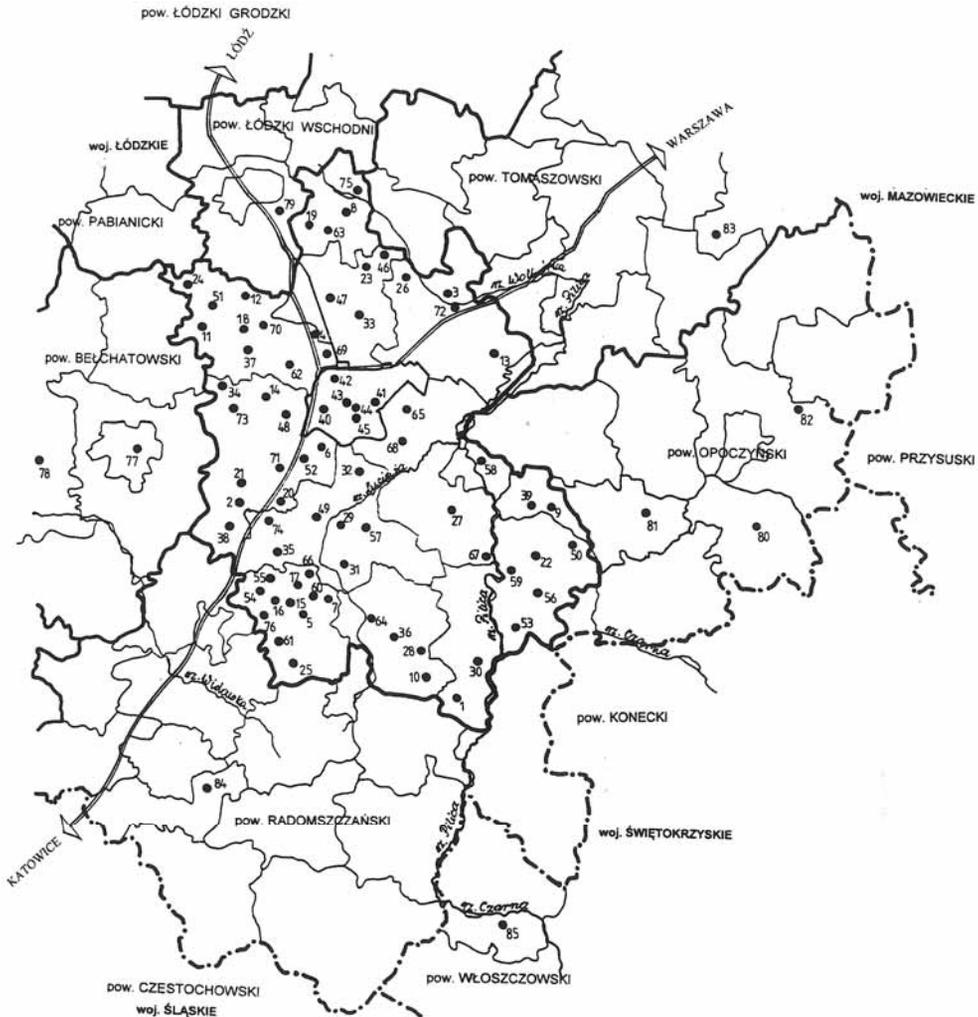


FIGURE 1. Location of historic garden foundations in the Piotrków Land covered by research works

- Analysis of the photos taken from the air in 1:5000 scale in accordance with the photo interpretation rules, to determine the conditions of preservation within the original borders of the object, legibility of the composition and existing spatial relations.
- Historic analysis, for determining the original character of the garden, historic structures of settlements, dynamics

of cultural features which are reflected in shaping the spaces of garden foundations.

The point of departure for the research was the records of historic garden foundations carried out in the 70s–90s of the 20th Century, mainly by the teams recruiting from the Association of Agricultural Engineers and Technicians in Łódź as well as the records kept by the Monu-

ments Preservation Authorities. The information included in the records were verified based on the analyses of archival materials and own field research.

Each of the objects was documented by a description comprising the following information: Park specification certificate, its location, short historical description, archival cartographic and iconographic materials, description of the park composition transformations, characteristics of the existing condition, dendrology resources and the condition of its preservation.

## RESULTS

Amongst the objects covered by the study, there are 70 manor parks, 5 church parks, 3 castle parks, 3 palace parks and one of each of the following: village, school, forest and city parks. Out of all the studied garden foundations, only 7 preserved its original function. One of such objects is the city foundation, i.e.: Poniatowski Park in Piotrków Trybunalski, whereas the remaining six parks: Kielczówka, Kotków, Majkowice, Piła, Szarbsko and Żuchowice are former manor parks which play similar role today.

Having analyzed the degree of preservation of the composition, three groups of objects were separated:

1. Parks keeping a composition – 29 objects, being about 34% of all studied objects,
2. Parks with historic composition traces – 17 examples, being 20%,
3. Parks without historic composition – 39 foundations, which refers to nearly 46% of all studied objects.

Carrying out the analysis of the borders, it can be stated that none of the objects

have remained intact in this respect. However the violation of the border means mainly the reduction of the park area. The causes of the changes of bordering lines arise from the division of estates resulting from hereditary rights, properties taken over by invaders and the divisions and nationalization of real estates after 1945. It must be underlined that such dividing up of the land had various effects on the stability of the object compositions. The family divisions of properties were carried out in such a way that the separated estates could function independently. Therefore, despite parceling up the manor house along with decorative park, they remained as a complete composition. In the case of parceling up the land estates in result of the agricultural reform of the 1945, the divisions were made quite at random, without preserving the area of manor house and decorative park as integral parts of a historic garden foundation. In most of the objects which were parceled up in that way no traces of historic composition has remained till today. In the case of the objects where parceling up aimed at separating the manor house with a surrounding park and given to a new user, the composition is legible or preserved partially.

Out of the parks of the first group, with preserved axial composition, 24 objects were parceled up while separating the area of the manor house and a surrounding park, however 5 foundations avoided being parceled up. They are: Białaczów, Cieszanowice, Glina, Piotrków Trybunalski – Poniatowski Park and Szydłów. The continuity of ownership and functions, in spite of parceling up, was preserved: Kielczówka and Żuchowice. However, one object, i.e.: Poniatowski Park in

Piotrków Trybunalski was not parceled up, nor its owner or function have changed.

Out of the second group of the objects with traces of historic composition, 13 foundations were divided up, 4 objects: Rusociny, Straszów, Szarbsko, Wielka Wola, avoided parceling up. The continuity of ownership and function was preserved in the Szarbsk foundation and despite parceling up – in Kotków.

Amongst the parks of the third group, without preserved historic composition, 37 objects were parceled up, one – Majkowice avoided parceling up and as for the other park, namely: Winduga Park, there is no explicit information on dividing up the property. The continuity of ownership and function were preserved in Majkowice and despite parceling up – in the foundation in Piła.

## DISCUSSION

Keeping the original layout of the composition of the historic garden foundations is very difficult. This predominantly derives from the fact that the park composition is built up by two materials: architectonic, more stable and flora, which is a subject of biological processes of ageing. The park composition consists of particular components, like: compositional axis, park interior, alley, but also some landscape elements: vantage point, vantage axis. The spatial (compositional) element jointly with its material define its historical layout and a genuine value. Changes in the park material, or in its composition elements violate its historical layout. The works on the stability of the park layout deriving from the applied flora material were already the subject of studies (Rylke, 1995). They proved that

the park composition keeps its layout for 100 to 120 years from its foundation. For most of the trees it is a critical age after which they start aging, and such a condition also influences the legibility of the composition.

The stability of the park compositions located in Warsaw, with reference to the natural conditions of the city were also a subject of research (Różańska, 2000, 2002). The research proves that the parks located on the Warsaw butress (most characteristic landmark in the city topography) demonstrated the best degree of the composition preservation, whereas the parks located on the heights as well as the ones situated in the Vistula valley were absorbed by the city, parceled up for construction of buildings and roads. The ones that survived are of reduced area, deformed composition, or newly planted flora.

The historic parks in Poland were described in form of catalogues. The substantial recognition of the works shows versatility. The catalogue covering the whole territory of Poland (Parks and Gardens..., 1992) presents in a unified form of resources in particular provinces divided into communes. The information included there refer to: the type of park, its user, object area, time of founding and the number of monument register.

In the catalogue of village parks in Lublin region, the authors focused on the dendrology values of the objects (Fijałkowski, Kseniak, 1982). It comprises a description of over 500 objects. The catalogue of the historic gardens of Legnica Province includes 187 objects entered in the monument register (Ciesielski, Wrabec, 1997). The Parks from Cracow are included in the catalogue providing

a full description of the existing condition and sources as well as the complete documentation of archives (Bogdanowski, 1997). It comprises 189 objects, described in detail and documented by photos and plans. A catalogue – not published – of the historic garden foundations of the former Piotrków Province (Milecka, 2000) presents descriptions, photographic and archival documentation of 93 complexes of greeneries. The garden foundations of Podkarpacie region were presented in three catalogues – Krosno Province (Piórecki, 1998), Przemyśl Province (Piórecki, 1989) and Rzeszów Province (Piórecki, 1996). The manor houses of old East Prussia were presented in the study, which was divided into two parts: album and catalogue (Jackiewicz-Garniec, Garniec, 1999). The archival German plans of the foundations and current photos of the objects illustrate the existing conditions and can be used for analysis of the transformations. The historic foundations of the South-East Poland were developed in a similar layout (Budziński, 1998).

However, until today there is a lack of study that could show the stability of park composition in respect of a continuity of ownership which in turn influences the continuity of its function. The research referring to the historic objects in Piotrków Region prove that such a relationship exists. What is more, it is a reason, probably not only within the examined area, why numerous historic objects were destroyed. A substantial factor, or it can be said even a critical factor for keeping the composition of the historic objects is parceling up resulting from new social and political conditions in Poland. The forced division of the private property, despite the presence of

owners and well prospering estates is an action against the tradition of the Polish agriculture. It was a mass action and brought about significant losses in the Polish garden art. Only 10 objects avoided a sorrowful fate of parceling up within the territory covered by the research.

Numerous parks were substantially, one can say even irretrievably destroyed, by a sudden and completely strange change of use as well as the aggressive introduction of primitive forms of development. Many of them stopped existing in result of cutting-down trees and using the land for farming. Another form of destruction was introducing new ill-considered plants, which degraded the historic compositions. However, the biggest destruction of the garden foundations result from their inappropriate use, or a total dismissal, which directly leads to devastation and gradual erasing of the compositions in effect of natural succession.

Inappropriate use of the gardens took various forms. Most often buildings or facilities were constructed within the territories of former foundations which were totally unsuitable to the character of the place and which interrupted the compositions and caused gradual but permanent declining. Such buildings oftentimes of aggressive spatial forms and inadequate scale, were located even in the central parts of the foundations. Parks taken over by institutions related to farming became a location of livestock buildings, storehouses and sheds. Different kinds of pavilions, kiosks, garages, etc. were built therein. The areas neglected for many years, frequently became the location of different equipment. The utilities were built in, which usually was connected with cutting-down trees in parks. New

objects which only on the surface did not jeopardize the parks were built up, e.g.: hydrophore stations (Bujnice, Wola Krzysztoporska, Rokrzyce), or pressure tower (Niechcice). The parks lakes occurred to be perfect collectors of waste waters and rainwater, which collected dirty waters from an entire village through the system of meliorating ditches causing overflow areas and destroying the park trees (Milejów, Kluki). The dirty water was additionally “enriched” by leaks of sewage systems and caused a biological death of the park lakes and had an impact on the water environment.

Another group of destruction was ill-considered geodesy divisions and parceling up the gardens, which is an irreparable fact now in respect of the law. The civilization progress connected with road constructions brought about further reductions of park areas, e.g.: building the Warsaw-Katowice motorway depleted the area of the foundations of Wolbórz and Stobiecko Szlacheckie.

The list of destructed parks is long, as there were endless ideas of how to develop the areas after the World War II. Generally, it can be said that they result from a total disrespect of the natural and cultural assets. However, even if the policy of developing the garden foundations has changed and they are nowadays under legal protection, the parks are still being devastated, and the complex revalorization works bring expected results only within fenced and guarded areas.

## CONCLUSIONS

Detailed research and analysis of the historic parks of Piotrków Region proved the truth of the research hypothesis set out at the beginning of the study that

the stability of the composition depends on the continuity of the park ownership which influences its function.

The compositions of the parks were modified and transformed in result of the general change of use in Piotrków region. The chronology of transformations of the garden functions result in revolutionary changes made in the mid 20th century, which caused a total loss of the contemporary functions in nearly all the gardens and parks. Along with new owners new functions occurred which do not assure a continuity of the use and fail to keep the garden foundation or their harmonious evolution.

In most cases of gardens it is impossible to say that the original composition and old area were preserved. What is legible however, is the deeply rooted traditions of axial symmetry, whose roots should be sought in manor gardens in the 18th Century, whereas in usable parts of the foundations, a division into quarters.

The most numerous group of gardens are the post-manor foundations dating back to the 19th century. They constitute 89% of all the resources. As the historic garden foundations, except for its historic and cultural role recognized until recently, have a great potential and natural value, therefore it is necessary to protect also those parks which were substantially decomposed and now they are included in the conservator’s records as the so-called village parks.

The garden of exceptional style values, compositional and natural values being 5% of all the resources, should be protected and made available to the public, which does not eliminate the possibility of acquiring them by private entities or companies. Finding the most advantageous solutions which will reconcile the

social and economic interests is the need of the moment. Under new administrative and economic conditions it is necessary to evaluate the conditions of the objects and to determine the directions of their developments as well as the policy of their protection.

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**Streszczenie:** *Trwałość kompozycji parku.* Badaniem objęto 85 zabytkowych założeń ogrodowych Ziemi Piotrkowskiej. Celem pracy było zbadanie zależności trwałości kompozycji parku w odniesieniu do formy władania obszarem, który on zajmuje. Założono hipotezę badawczą, iż o trwałości kompozycji założenia decyduje ciągłość formy własności parku, a ta z kolei decyduje o jego funkcji. W pracy zastosowano metody analizy historycznej, metody analizy formalnej oraz metody analiz przestrzennych. Wśród badanych założeń ogrodowych 74 obiekty uległy parcelacji i zmieniły swoją funkcję, a tylko 7 zachowało ciągłość własności i funkcji. Analizując stopień zachowania kompozycji wydzielono trzy grupy obiektów: parki z zachowaną kompozycją – 29 obiektów, co stanowi ok. 34% wszystkich badanych założeń, parki ze śladami historycznej kompozycji – 17 obiektów i jest to 20% oraz parki bez zachowanej historycznej kompozycji – 39 założeń, co daje blisko 46%. Przeprowadzając analizę powierzchni parków stwierdzić można, iż żaden obiekt nie posiada nienaruszonych granic. Wyniki z przeprowadzonych badań jednoznacznie wskazują, iż istnieje ścisły związek trwałości kompozycji parku z ciągłością zachowania własności terytorium zajmowanego przez obiekt i pełnionej przez niego funkcji. Kompozycje parków uległy znacznym zmianom i przekształceniom na skutek generalnej zmiany użytkowania założeń ogrodowych Ziemi Piotrkowskiej. Z chronologii przekształceń funkcji założeń ogrodowych wynikają rewolucyjne zmiany dokonane w połowie XX wieku, które spowodowały całkowitą utratę dotychczasowych funkcji w niemal wszystkich ogrodach i parkach. Wprowadzone po wojnie, wraz ze zmianą właścicieli, nowe funkcje nie stanowią kontynuacji zapewniającej przetrwanie kompozycji założeń ogrodowych lub ich harmonijnej ewolucji.

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