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From the row cemetery to the crypt – the sepulchral space of Lublin in the late Middle Ages and the modern period in the light of archaeological research

SUMMARY

The first search for Lublin sepulchral sites was made at the end of the 19th century by Ph.D Władysław Olechnowicz. His approach was not exceptional. At a time when Poland lost its independence, many amateurs calling themselves “*lovers of antiquity*” led a similar approach of recognizing the area where they lived or worked. Olechnowicz's curiosity focused on Lublin itself and the adjacent area. He was particularly interested in groups of barrows (burial mounds), some of which he excavated, but as he said – “*he found only layers of ash under their embankments*”. The amateur's disappointment was due to his inexperience and above all his lack of professional training.

The efforts of priest Jan Ambroży Wadowski should be assessed quite differently. In a similar period he prepared fundamental work – “*Churches of Lublin*”. The book was published in 1907. The weight of this item cannot be discounted today, because priest Wadowski partly used the records that are currently unavailable. Even in comparison with contemporary publications, this book should be considered an unparalleled source of information about the history of Lublin's temples. The monography also contains many messages about church cemeteries and burials laid down in burial crypts.

The nineteenth century was also a period of time when the awakened national consciousness ordered the regionalists and guide authors to seek the ancient origins of sacral objects standing in the panorama of Lublin. This is how the myth about the foundation of the parish church of St. Michael on the Old Town Hill came to be and the circumstances of the erection of the church of St. Nicholas on the hill called “*Hill Thursday*”. The mentions and myths in a unique way influenced the perception of the origins of these objects in the second half of the twentieth century. Contemporary times, above all the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, are the times of intensified discoveries. The results of many of the carried out works allowed to indicate

the actual circumstances of the creation of individual churches. The vast majority of efforts is the result of the investor's need to provide archaeological supervision for the ongoing works. At the same time, it must be stipulated that the resources available to the archaeologist conducting this form of reconnaissance are very limited. Therefore, the results obtained should be treated as an introduction to further research. Individual discoveries, often with a limited stratigraphic context, do not allow more comprehensive reasoning. The one positive thing of archaeological supervision is a relatively quick opportunity to learn about a larger area should be considered.

Fortunately, the supervision is not the exclusive form of archaeological research of the Lublin sepulchral sites. Starting from the second half of the 70s of the last century, excavation works are undertaken. The intensity of the number of sacral buildings at which a more comprehensive fieldwork program was implemented is observed in the last years of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. Among them, interdisciplinary research should be distinguished, where the analysis of specialists in the natural and humanistic fields is used to explain phenomena and problems, and it draws on historic monuments and conservation studies. Extensive equipment becomes indispensable on sites where the burial chambers are exposed, because in their interiors there are materials made of organic substances – textiles, plants, wood, metals and even mother of pearl. The systematically growing resource of sources allows us to take characterization of the Lublin sepulchral space of the Middle Ages and modern times. The chronological work frame is the period of the late Middle Ages, from the location at 1317, to the fall of the First Polish Republic caused by the third partition of 1794. On the other hand, the land area of location lands the territorial scope of these considerations.

Until the end of the 18th century, within the limits of the location area from 1317, 25 temples were founded. Most of them were intended for religious congregations. It can be assumed that if not for everyone, most of them certainly had to have some sort of necropolis, even for monks and nuns. Many of the sacral buildings owed their glory years to the donors who in exchange for they offered sums could count on a burial in the sacral land.

In the next part of the work – *“Analysis of sepulchral sites of the historical city of Lublin”* – attempts were made to present the state of recognition of subsequent churches and the burial sites developing next to them. It was based on the findings of historians, verified later during field research, sometimes supported by specialists in other sciences. At the beginning the church cemeteries were compiled and analyzed. Afterwards, objects in the interior of which necropolises with pit graves functioned were discussed. The last chapter of this section was reserved to the presentation of churches, beneath the floors of which burial chambers were exposed – tombs and crypts.

Skeletal graves unveiled in the western part of the Castle Hill cannot be associated with the chapel of the St. Trinity – a homogeneous object, erected in the eastern part of the hill most probably by Casimir the Great (1342-1370). The burials in question, dated to the twelfth century, should therefore be linked to another object. Probably it was also a prince's chapel under the same call mentioned in 1325.

Although the area adjacent to the parish church St. Michael at Old Town Hill was seriously damaged during its demolition in the mid-nineteenth century, and then by the outcrop foundations made by J. Dutkiewicz in the 30s of the twentieth century, it was during several seasons of excavations that skeletal burials were unveiled. Their relationship with the foundation of the building allowed to determine the circumstances of the object's erection. The oldest graves, based on equipment elements, are dated to the 11th and 12th centuries. They belonged to a row cemetery before the erection of the Gothic church. It is impossible to determine whether in the early Middle Ages people were buried in the vicinity of another, unknown sacral object. It is yet certain that the use of the cemetery with pit graves was continued until the mid of 17th century. Written sources mention the necropolis fence and the morgue, these establishments were dismantled probably along with the removal of the ground part of the building. From the beginning of modern period, chapels founded by townspeople and guild brotherhoods were added to the church solid body, while burial chambers were constructed under them for the founders and their families. Until the end of the 18th century, the crypt structures filled almost the whole of the church's underground, and many of them went beyond its outline.

The existence of a cemetery with pit graves at the church of St. Nicholas on Hill Thursday clearly informs the records of the episcopal visits. The oldest of the preserved mentions was made in 1595. Other records also mention various ways of fencing the necropolis, raising a morgue there, and special rooms for unbaptized children and people "*without blessing*". Archaeological work carried out, whose main purpose was to recognize the early Slavic settlement, contributed little to exposing the graves. However, probe excavation applied tangentially to the foundations of the church pointed out graves cut by the walls. On this basis, it is believed that the sacral object in Renaissance body was inserted into the cemetery, which provides indirect proofs for the presence of the medieval church. Perhaps the temple noted in the records of the fourteenth century is hidden in the outline of the church known to us – such facts suggest the results of non-invasive research and preliminary architectural recognition.

The Dominicans were the first monastery settled in Lublin in the 60s of 13th century. It probably happened by the will of the prince, who chose the elevated location for the monks, in the nineteenth-century tradition it was recorded as the "*Dominican Hill*". The temple, unlike conventual buildings, has not yet been researched and it is difficult to make a reliable reconstruction of the phase of its development. The few and rudimentary discoveries seem to indicate that at least from the end of the late Middle Ages, a graveyard with pit graves was functioning on a small patio. Written messages mention that the burial crypts were established under each of the chapels added to the temple corpus. On the other hand younger religious chronicles claim that in the 19th century, the family tombs were emptied on a massive scale, removing human remains and coffins out of the outline of the church. The new quality in the recognition of the sepulchral space was provided by the GPR prospection, revealing more than 30 new crypts, which were previously unknown.

Church and Hospital of Holy Spirit stood on the western suburb, after the 16th century, called "*Cracovian Suburb*". The approved foundation date is to be 1419, when the town councilors notified the bishop about the construction of brick foundations. However, there are speculations that the new object stood in place or near the former St. John church. The lack of survived records will not allow to resolve this issue. Perhaps the older object should be linked to the skeleton

burials discovered to the south of the present church. These graves on the basis of equipment are dated on the 12th-13th centuries. The northern part of the necropolis used from the fifteenth to the mid-seventeenth century was recognized in the course of excavation research. Within 250 years, a multi-layered arrangements was formed there which groups graves of similar orientation. Carried out analysis prove that both boarders and residents could be buried there. One of the objects can be interpreted as an ossuary, this kind of assumption is mentioned in the documents from the 16th century.

Reasons for changing the place of burying people around the church of Holy Spirit cannot be explained on the basis of so far accumulated resources. Perhaps the designation and organization of a new communication axis identified with Cracovian Suburb were important reasons for the reorganization. There is a considerable chronological gap between the burials at the south of the church and the necropolis recognized in the northern part it, but a similar distance from the church is bond them. In addition, the first graves from the northern part of the cemetery were buried in the space designated for economic facilities – in a kind of paved courtyard. Perhaps, therefore, they are the growth vestiges of the area intended for burial of people.

To the collected data about the church of Holy Spirit and the sepulchral space shaped next to it should be joined with a few unverified empirical references about crypts placed under its chapels.

The next erected temple on Cracovian Suburb King Władysław Jagiełło donated to the monk and nun divisions of the St. Bridget Order. With financial support and with the will of the monarch, the donated object – referred to in the documents from the end of the 14th century as the chapel of the Virgin Mary, St. Sophia and St. Barbara – has been developed. The subsequent years of the nuns' stay in the Lublin outpost abounded in construction actions. One of the most important moves was the erection of tombs and burial crypts. The circumstances of the creation of some of them quite accurately relate to the source records. In parallel with the use of burial chambers, a multi-level graveyard with pit graves has been developing inside the temple walls. The modern history of the post-Bridget church abounds in various construction works, some of them related to the renovation of the temple, others – with a change in the layout of burials

in particular sepulchral rooms, or their repair caused by war damage. Collected observations prove that until the mid-nineteenth century some rooms were regularly cleaned up, and then the coffins of current hosts were placed in them. Removing the contents of a given room involved the necessity of placing it in another room. While penetrating the burial chambers were also exposed the older graves. Sometimes, in order not to disturb them, arches of the vaults were led to bypass the colliding coffin. More often, however, it was decided to exhume and transfer the remains. Probably in this way a series of wooden sarcophagi were placed down under utilitarian levels of the largest crypt in the presbytery. The radiocarbon dates obtained for these burials indicate that in the vicinity of the post-Bridget church, people could be inhumed in the 13th and 14th centuries, therefore long before the source record confirming the existence of the chapel.

Considerably well recognized is the cemetery founded by the church of St. Cross, located near the western border of the medieval center. The temple itself, according to the pronunciation of written sources, was created around 1434 and as a wooden building survived until the seventeenth century. In 1623 brick edifice was already noted, which at the end of this century was taken over by the Dominicans of the Observants. Archaeological excavations were carried out for three seasons, with the effect of which is the discovery of more than 100 graves buried in the ground. Despite the unequivocal 16th century accounts of the existence of the cemetery on the excavated site, no older grave than the 17th century was uncovered.

The recognition status of necropoles beside other Lublin temples is much less satisfactory. Only archaeological supervisions was carried out nearby, which confirms to a limited extent the custom of burying the dead there. For a significant group we can only conclude on about the presence of burials by the basis of source records and documents.

From the perspective of the undertaken studies as the immensely important sacral object in the historical panorama of Lublin should be considered church of St. John the Baptist and John the Evangelist – currently archcathedral. During the interdisciplinary research conducted in its crypts, almost 100 coffins were unveiled, which can be identified with the burials of the elite of the First

Republic of Poland. Gathered elements of equipment made of organic materials, pointed out to completely new sources allowing reconstruction of the Old-Polish funeral rite.

The uneven state of recognition of individual Lublin's sepulchral positions hinders the holistic view both of the development of sacral objects themselves and of the ways of managing the spaces intended for burial. Nevertheless, already gathered material allows us to pick up regularities and outline the path of a specific evolution that the sepulchral space was subjected to. They were discussed and characterized in the third part of the work – *“Stages of changes in the Lublin sepulchral space in the Middle Ages and the modern period”*.

Row cemeteries are considered as the first places of Christian burials on Polish land. In Lublin there were at least two such cemeteries and their use was defined as the first phase. First of them, at Willowa Street, located away from the castle center, disappeared in the middle of the 12th century. The second one - on the Old Town Hill, was taken over by the cemetery created near the parish church. Cannot be as well excluded that in the early Middle Ages, in an organized manner people were buried out at the two later grew up churches in Cracovian Suburb.

Second phase is defined by the stage when temples are erected on the grounds occupied by earlier cemeteries. We certainly notice such a transformation at the fourteenth-century parish church. Perhaps similar regularities occurred in the vicinity of the chapel handed over to the brigands of St. Bridget and in the area where the Holy Spirit hospital was founded.

In the third phase, next to the majority of medieval and modern churches, cemeteries with pit graves were established. In this phase also the burial space was subject to spatial regulations. Foremost, expanding church buildings absorbed the ground previously intended for burials. Secondly, if there were such circumstances, the area of the necropolis was increased. When it was not feasible, the earth was added in which more graves were buried. The third method, recorded only on several sites, included plowing the cemeteries, resulting in the tombs being removed, and the bones mixed with the ground formed a sepulchral layer.

The distinguishing feature of fourth phase will be the construction of masonry rooms inside the temple layouts for the laying the dead purpose. In this way constructed cuboidal boxes – tombs and vaulted crypts. Among the last category, two types can be distinguished – rooms tied with foundations of chapels and detached "*free-standing*" edifices – thus dug in the ground under the floors of temples, but not tied to their walls. The first type was foreseen and planned already at the stage of the church's design. The second one can be treated as a secondary element, built during the temple's use. This particularly applies to objects of medieval provenance.

Within the location land allocated to Lublin by Władysław Łokietek there were also cemeteries that cannot be linked to any sacral building. It is believed that their distance from the temples and placement near the borders of the medieval center, sometimes at crossroads, can be determined by their destiny – for people excluded or deceased as a result of infectious diseases. Among those groups, convicts could also be found. The establishment of medieval and modern necropolis away from the churches was defined as the fifth phase.

The last - sixth phase - marked the statutory abolition of the current custom of burying the dead in church cemeteries and inside the crypts under the floors of the temples. "*The Universal for Free Cities*" issued in 1792 by the *Police Commission of the Two Nations* prohibited the current form of burial and ordered the creation of new cemeteries, outside the inhabited zone. The implementation of new cemetery law regulations in Lublin resulted in the establishment of a multi-denominational cemetery located outside the fourth line of fortifications – at present Linden Street.

Archaeological research carried out at some of the cemeteries in Lublin provided the basis for identifying and analyzing funeral rites, as described in the fourth part – "*Funeral rite elements readable in the archaeological material*". The results of work undertaken in the crypts are particularly valuable in this field. The state of preservation and the amount of organic substances allowed to spot even elusive funeral rite manifestations – for example, showering corpses with bundles of flowers. In the bottoms of some coffins, holes were found through which the putrid juices could be dropped. The inner surface of other coffins was sprinkled with a mixture of loess and lime, which due to their physical

and chemical properties absorbed body decomposition products. These treatments should be considered as conscious steps undertaken by gravediggers and craftsmen at the stage of building wooden sarcophagi. The described observations are included into the canon of old Polish funeral executions accompanying the farewell of the elite of the Old Polish period. If these comments are supplemented with data from the costume analysis of the clothes in which the dead were provided for the last path, we can conclude that archaeological research has provided new data for the reconstruction of Baroque clothing.

The last part of the work entitled “*Valorization of information about burials at medieval and modern Lublin churches*” is an attempt to assess the state of recognition of individual sepulchral sites within the limits of location assignment.

translated by Piotr Zimny