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Between the Sacrum and Profanum. Geographical Determinants of Development of the Sacral Landscape and Religious Tourism Space in Areas of High Cultural and Transformations (Western Pomerania, NW Poland)

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to present the role of geographic factors (elements of the natural, social and geopolitical environment) in shaping the broadly construed sacral landscape, with particular emphasis on its impact on the development of religious tourism space. The individual determinant of the development of the sacral landscape of the region is its individual and symbolic perception of *sacrum* but its final form and spatial and materialistic organization are influenced by numerous factors of non-religious nature (*profanum*). Geological considerations, relief, vegetation, and even climatic and weather phenomena largely determine the image of the cultural landscape and delimit its extent. The role of individual features is very difficult to estimate. The sacral landscape, or its materialistic form of a religious landscape, enjoys a great interest in tourism activity, not only in the context of pilgrimage and religious tourism, but also as widely understood cultural tourism. In such context of construal of the cultural landscape development, the selection of Western Pomerania region (NW Poland) seems justified, as an example of the specific area that links *sacrum* and *profanum*. This region, with its rich and complicated history, has repeatedly experienced diametric changes of a spatial, social, cultural and religious nature. Due to the geographical location and the relief formed during the last glaciation, also a characteristic natural landscape has developed here, which significantly influenced the specificity of the Pomeranian community.

Keywords: Landscape Geography; Sacred Landscape; Religious Landscape; Religious Tourism; Western Pomerania

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Celem niniejszego artykułu jest ukazanie roli czynników geograficznych (elementów środowiska przyrodniczego, społecznego i geopolitycznego) w kształtowaniu szeroko rozumianego krajobrazu sakralnego, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem jego wpływu na rozwój przestrzeni turystyki religijnej. Wprawdzie największym determinantem rozwoju krajobrazu sakralnego regionu jest indywidualne i symboliczne pojmowanie *sacrum*, to jednak na jego ostateczny kształt oraz organizację przestrzenną i materialną wpływ mają liczne czynniki pozareligijne (*profanum*). Uwarunkowania geologiczne, rzeźba terenu, szata roślinna, a nawet zjawiska klimatyczne i pogodowe w dużym stopniu determinują obraz krajobrazu kulturowego i delimitują jego zasięg. Rola poszczególnych elementów jest bardzo trudna do oszacowania. Krajobraz sakralny, czy ściśle rzecz biorąc jego zmaterializowana forma w postaci krajobrazu religijnego cieszy się dużym zainteresowaniem turystycznym, nie tylko w kontekście pielgrzymowania i turystyki religijnej, ale również szeroko pojmowanej turystyki kulturowej. W takim kontekście pojmowania rozwoju krajobrazu kulturowego, uzasadnionym wydaje się wybór Pomorza Zachodniego (NW Polska), jako przykładu specyficznego obszaru łączącego *sacrum* i *profanum*. Region ten, o bogatej i skomplikowanej historii, wielokrotnie doświadczył diametralnych zmian o charakterze przestrzennym, społecznym, kulturowym i religijnym. Ze względu na położenie geograficzne i ukształtowaną podczas ostatniego zlodowacenia rzeźbę terenu, wykształcił się tu ponadto charakterystyczny krajobraz naturalny, który w znacznym stopniu wpłynął na specyfikę pomorskiej społeczności.

Keywords: Geografia krajobrazu; Krajobraz Sakralny; Krajobraz Religijny; Turystyka Religijna; Pomorze Zachodnie.

Introduction

Sacrum has accompanied man since the beginning of his history. It is an integral part of his religion and culture, regardless of the geographic latitude or social and cultural conditions. Sacral space largely influences human behaviour as well as it occupies an important place in the process of shaping the surrounding landscape. It becomes one of the fundamental determinants of development of the sacral space, both in its material, geographical and spiritual dimensions. It is worth remembering, however, that from the very beginning the *sacrum* zone has also been accompanied by the *profanum*, which often complements the sacral space, to a large extent contributing to forming the landscape belonging to a specific cultural group as well as the developed tourist space.

In such context of construal of the cultural landscape development, the selection of Western Pomerania (NW Poland) seems justified, as an example of the specific area that links *sacrum* and *profanum*. This region, with its rich and complicated history, has repeatedly experienced diametric changes of a spatial, social, cultural and religious nature. Due to the geographical location and the relief formed during the last glaciation, also a characteristic natural landscape has developed here, which significantly influenced the specificity of the Pomeranian community. The various elements and aspects of the geographical environment determine to a greater or lesser extent the type of human activity within it, contributing to the emergence of unique conditions influencing inter alia shaping of the sacral space and sacral landscape of the region.

The rich literature of the subject both of the national and worldwide range often deals with the matters of origin, conditions of development and shaping the cultural landscape (including the sacral one), but mainly with regard to the well-known and widely recognized religious spaces. The discussion on the influence of non-religious and geographical factors on the development of the sacral space has not received a broader view or detailed research. This type of observations is particularly missed in relation to regions of dynamic social, cultural and religious transformations, that the Western Pomerania region undoubtedly is¹. However, this article does not address this aforesaid research gap, but merely points to the need to draw attention to the geographic aspects shaping the religious landscape (and within the broader notion – the cultural landscape) of the region, especially in the context of the development of alternative tourist areas in this part of Europe (Duda 2014).

1. The Objective and methodology

The aim of this article is to present the role of geographic factors, like elements of the natural, social and geopolitical environment, in shaping the broadly construed sacral landscape, with particular emphasis on its impact on the development of religious

tourism space. The author assumed that certain parts of the geographical space, due to various external, not just the cultural, conditions are often transformed into *sacrum* zones. This is due to the need and ability to express religious beliefs and the manifestations of faith by a human being (*homo religiosus*). As many researchers of the subject have noted (Jackowski, Soljan 2001, Przybylska 2005), such space may be created by places, routes and objects in a variety of scales - a house, chapel, tree, river or a hill, as well as a whole town, religious or pilgrimage centre and trail. The development of the broadly construed *sacrum* is therefore in a large extent determined by non-religious factors, elements of *the profanum*, which are also the determinants of the cultural landscape of the region.

The publication attempts to answer a number of important questions and research issues related to the widely construed analysis of geographic space and landscape and its importance in shaping the cultural and religious tourism space of the region. The most important of these problems are summarized below:

- a) The matter raised relatively rarely is the importance of geographical (environmental and social) factors for the development of the sacral landscape and religious tourism space. If and to what extent the non-religious elements shape the sacred landscape and the *sacrum* of the region?
- b) The on-going secularisation and commercialization of society have largely contributed to the disappearance of *sacrum*, especially in places of great religious and touristic and religious significance. Places where the interdependence of environmental and religious values may still be seen should now be sought in marginal areas - far from well-known religious centres and great pilgrimage routes. Can the region of Western Pomerania be regarded as one of the very few nowadays-European examples of natural, harmonious coexistence of *sacrum* and *profanum* as well as the functioning of the natural-sacral landscape?
- c) An important aspect related to the geographical approach to the landscape is the question of human belonging to that landscape (Kulczyk 2013). A human being, or rather, the way he/she perceives the environment, is considered to be a determinant of the existence of the landscape. In many cases there are links between landscape and tourism (Andrejczuk 2010). This begs the question - what are the functions of the sacral landscape in shaping the geographic and tourist space of the region?

Attempts to provide responses to the above research questions therefore became the main objective of this study, which was made possible through several years of observations and qualitative analyses of sacral space in Western Pomerania. For the purposes of research, an inventory of sacral landscape resources in the area under study and their assessment in terms of values were also performed, with particular emphasis on the influence of non-religious factors.

The basic method used in the publication is a comprehensive analysis of tourism resources, within the detailed inventory and valuation of sacred landscape elements in the context of their suitability in the cultural tourism space development. This method is a universal tool that allows an objective presentation of the spatial diversity of the tourism activity phenomenon, especially regarding its multidisciplinary. All those

elements that in the opinion of tourist space users determine its perception as a sacred (or religious) landscape, were accepted as criteria for valuation analysis.

The paper also presents conclusions, resulting from a detailed tourist and cultural valorization of the region in the context of religious tourism development, described in other publications (Duda, 2014).

2. Sacrum – Sacral Landscape – Religious Landscape – Religious Tourism Space

"...There was no such thing as the world with human beings but no religion, nor - as it seems - could there ever be in the future..." (Erich Fromm)

Religion and the *sacrum* shaping it, from the dawn of history are inseparable elements of human life and manifestations of its cultural activity. Many researchers consider it an indicator of the cultural diversity of societies as well as the identifier of national and ethnic identity (Benvenisti 2000, Myga-Piątek 2012). It is religion, regardless of geographical latitude or cultural situation that forms a link between the *sacrum* zone and *the profanum*, represented by the daily activities of man. It is manifested mainly in the doctrinal dimension, in the religious activities, in the organizational and social aspects as well as in the individual spirituality. Certainly, religion is also manifested in the landscape aspects, creating a characteristic, strictly defined and functional type of cultural landscape.

For many years in the academic literature there has been a discussion on the typology of the cultural landscape and the relationship between man and the landscape. The special place in this discussion has been taken by the polemics concerning the conceptual meaning of the sacral landscape and religious landscape (e.g. Eliade 1959, Carmichael et al. 1994, Jackowski 2003, Myga-Piątek 2012b). For many authors, this concept is used interchangeably, and it defines the type of landscape that characterizes the areas in which the *sacrum* appears, and which perform religious functions. Some researchers see the sacral landscape as a material reflection of the functioning of the *sacrum* in a particular geographical space. They identify it as a collection of objects (e.g. sanctuaries, chapels, churches, temples, crosses etc.) linked functionally and historically, culturally and even visually. However, one must agree with Myga-Piątek (2012) that through such a definition of landscape the meaning of its spatial organization as a whole, is lost. The author emphasizes the distinctness of the understanding of the sacral landscape as a subtype of the landscape in which the spatial organization of elements of both material and non-material nature promotes experiencing holiness. The so construed sacral landscape may be a subtype of the natural as well as the cultural landscape (**Figure 1**). The essential condition for the functioning of the sacred landscape is its privileged function manifesting itself in a specific experiencing of *sacrum*, the presence of the religious *genius loci*.

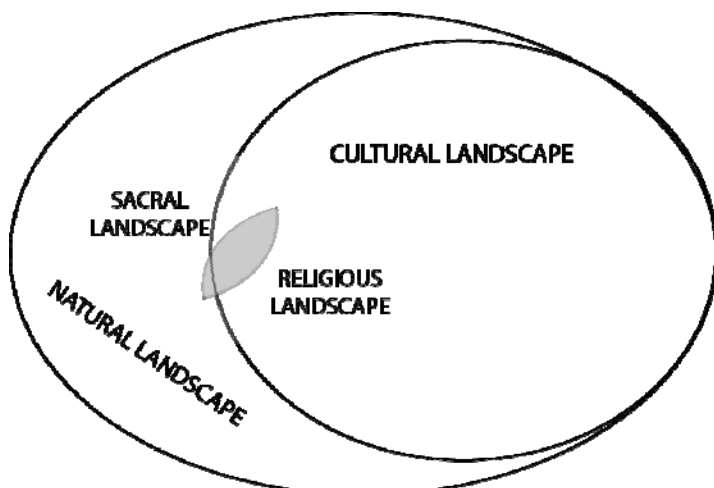


Figure 1: Place of the sacral landscape and the religious landscape within the natural and cultural landscapes structure

Source after: U. Myga-Piątek 2012 with own study

While the concept of the sacral landscape should be construed in the context of the so-called "non-materialistic (symbolic) landscapes, the institutionalized, materialistic form is then adopted by the religious landscape (Myga-Piątek 2012). There are objects of religious worship within it, and their organization is subordinate to a strictly defined function. As the formation and development of this type of landscape is closely influenced by direct human activity in certain cultural conditions and evolutionary historical processes, most researchers classify the religious landscape as a subtype of a classically construed cultural landscape, without direct influence of the natural elements on its structure. These landscapes are among the most recognizable and common not only in Europe. They are distinguished on the basis of complex systems of sacral buildings organising the space, such as monasteries, basilicas, which dominate the landscape, churches, temples, and cemeteries and pilgrimage routes (linear sacred spaces). Religious landscape is therefore presented as *sacrum* in an institutionalized form and appearing in the material layer – shrines, temples, objects of religious worship, and the symbolic one – fixed traditions, customs, symbols and rites.

This so construed religious landscape was and is present in all religions and beliefs, irrespective of geographic location, historical era and the degree of cultural development of society. Its spatial diversity and boundaries are then defined by the range of occurrence of religious objects and the adherence to a certain cultural and religious circle (Plit 2008, Awramiuk-Godun 2013). Thus, the specific geographic space determines not only the appearance of the religious landscape itself, but above all, its differentiation, character and symbolism. In terms of the impact of these factors, geographers and space researchers organize, in terms of typology and regionalization, the concept of landscape, including the sacral and religious ones (e.g. Bartkowski 1986, Granö 1997, Fry 2001, Ostaszewska 2002, Kulczyk 2013).

The religious and sacred landscape that has been forming for ages² covers not only the material sphere represented in the form of many religious objects as well as sacred historic buildings, monuments and other evidence of religious development of

societies, but also to a large extent the non-material sphere which manifests itself in the form of spiritual heritage, faith, tradition, customs or ritual language. These interesting and often unique in terms of religion and history elements, as well as centuries-old pilgrimage traditions, trails and local sanctuaries are also today undeniable values shaping the tourist space of the region (Duda, Ostrowski 2012). Although the notion of the tourist space does not constitute the subject of analysis of this article, it is worth noting that most researchers define it as a fragment of geographical space, in the area of which tourist phenomena occur (i.a.: O'Hare 1997, Liszewski 2006, Włodarczyk 2007). Religious tourism is characterized by a unique combination of *sacrum* – faith and willingness to carry out acts of piety, and *profanum*, expressed through other accompanying activities, including sightseeing, short rest and use of a widely available tourist base. The basis for the development of religious tourism space is, however, *sacrum* and the sacral and religious landscape evolving under it. It is shaping, among other things, the touristic attraction of the region, its uniqueness both visually and symbolically, as well as it determines the development of the region's religious tourism movement which characterises the region. The interdependencies between the discussed concepts are illustrated below in **Figure 2**.

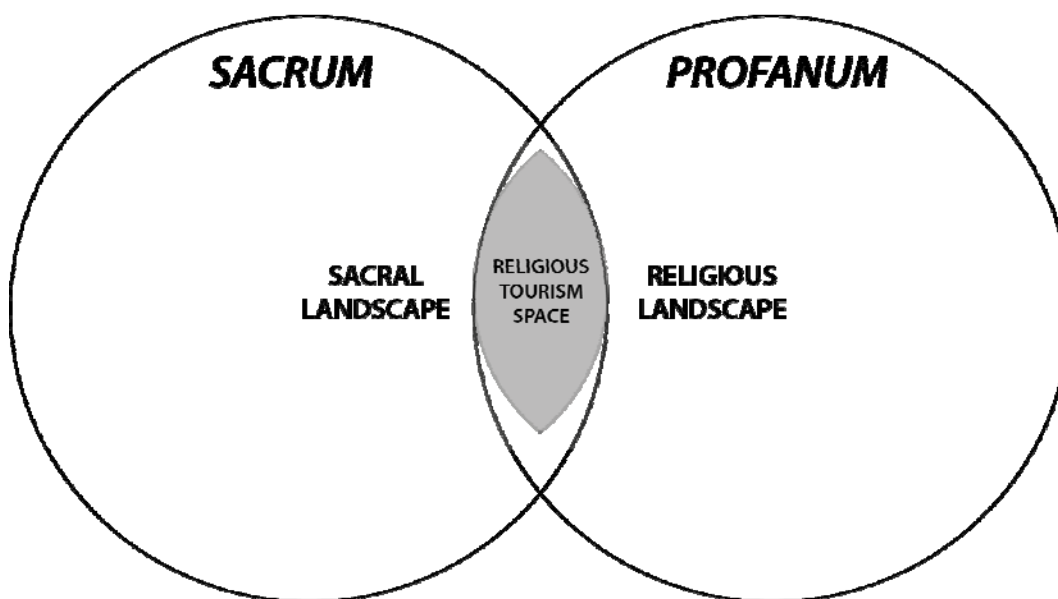


Figure 2. Interdependences between sacrum, profanum, sacral landscape, religious landscape and religious tourism space

Source: own work

3. Environmental and Historical-Cultural factors shaping the Sacral landscape of the Western Pomeranian Region

Western Pomerania is a geographical, historical and administrative region located in north-western Poland, just off the border with Germany and the Baltic Sea coast.

Considered nowadays as the area of the West Pomeranian Province, at the same time it is part of the former Pomeranian Duchy, which for over 500 years has been a state autonomous entity, since the 12th century. Due to its unique and multidimensional nature, the landscape of Pomerania determines the development of the tourist area of the region, delimited to the greatest extent by natural qualities (**Figure 3**).

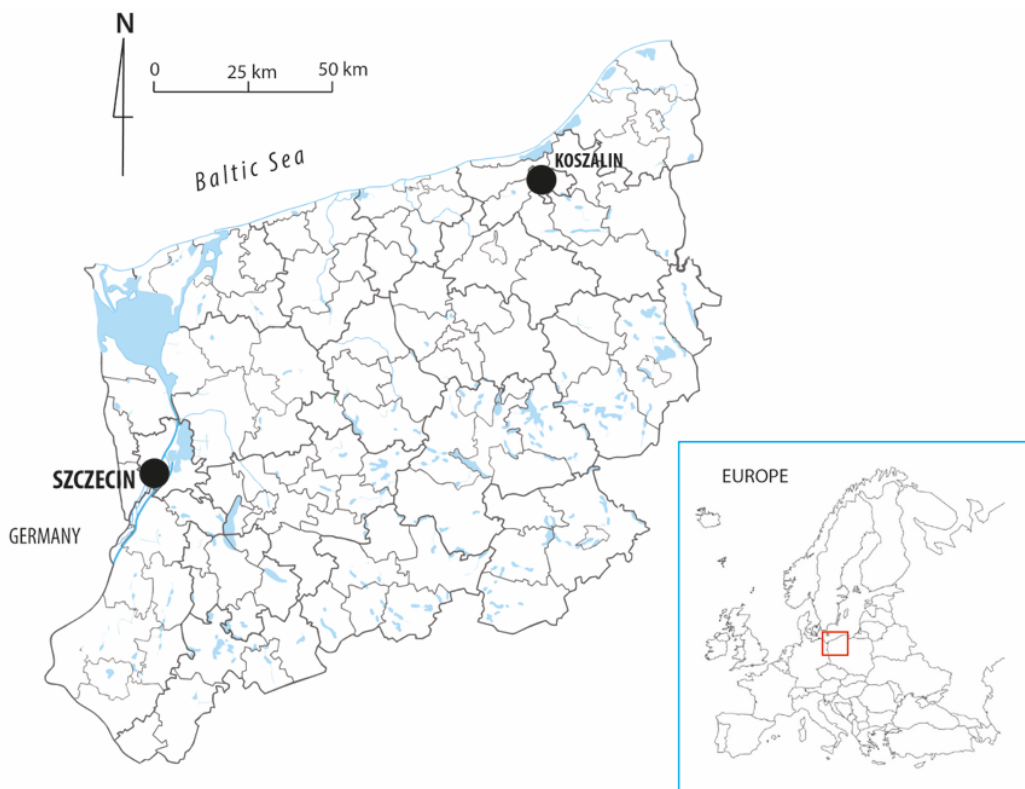


Figure 3: Geographical location of Western Pomerania region

Source: own work

3.1. Regional geographic and cultural-historical specificity of Western Pomerania

The geographic situation and the complex history and cultural changes that have affected the region of Western Pomerania, over the centuries have contributed to the development of a specific and – in many cases – unique landscape. Its characteristics has been contributed by the rich natural resources that were the result of glacial activity during the last glaciation, and the cultural ones, being a reflection of the mosaics of influences of many nationalities and social groups living in the area since the early Middle Ages.

Western Pomerania is characterized by a strongly varied relief, resulting from the transformations that the last glaciation (Vistulian Ice Age) created in these areas. It took place ca. 24-12 thousand years ago, and it covered not only the northern Poland, but also the whole of Europe in the Baltic and North Sea basins. It left a number of

well-developed forms, which are hard to find in other parts of Europe, outside Scandinavia. Therefore, highly elevated moraine hills (up to 220-250 m above sea level), severely cut by gorges and ravines, as well as canyoned river valleys form distinctive marks in the landscape. One of the visible manifestations of the activity of the ice sheet is the presence of sand, gravel and clay in the superficial sediments in the region. There are also numerous erratic rocks present, of often-monumental sizes of over 5 m in circumference. Within the extensive moraine uplands, numerous hollows and basins, filled with lakes of various sizes are observed (**Figure 4**). In Western Pomerania there are almost 1400 lakes with a total area of nearly 60 000 ha, representing almost 3% of the region's area.

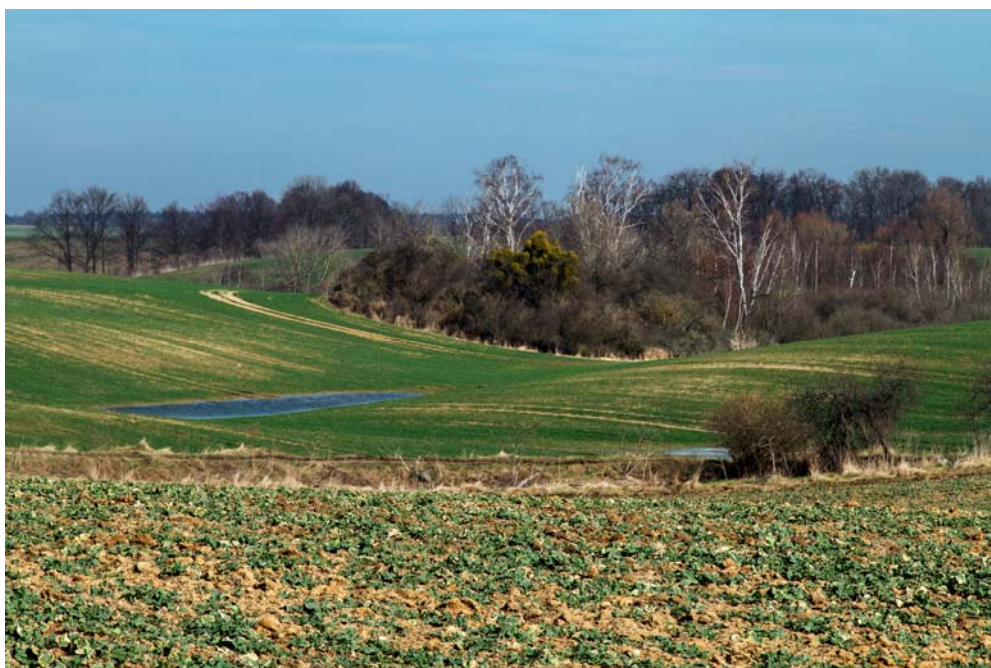


Figure 4: Postglacial natural landscape formed during last Ice Age; Mysliborz Lakeland Area, Western Pomerania

Source: personal picture

The landscape of Western Pomerania is characterized by high forest cover (over 35% of the area) and direct access to the Baltic Sea. It is one of the least urbanized and industrialized regions of Poland and this part of Europe. The extensive coastal plains are cut by the river valleys that directly reach the Baltic Sea, which have always been excellent locations for settlement and economic activities of people. Environmentally valuable and preserved areas occupy almost 20% of the area of the province and include all forms of nature conservation, including national parks, nature reserves and landscape parks. The high cliffs of the Pomeranian Bay are among the highest in Poland. Almost 100 meters of sandy walls are one of the most recognizable elements of the coastal landscape of this part of Europe. In addition, long and wide sandy beaches with fantastically developed sand dunes are considered to be the most beautiful by the Baltic Sea.

Such a natural landscape has been inhabited by man since the early Middle Ages and has been transformed according to his capabilities and current needs. These changes are a testimony to history and result from the centuries-old competing of West European, Polish and Scandinavian influences (Duda 2015). The varied cultural landscape of Western Pomerania was established on the basis of several historic units previously belonging to the Duchy of Pomerania, Brandenburg and later Prussia and Germany, as well as the lands of the New March and the Kingdom of Poland. For centuries it passed from hand to hand to be reigned by Danes, Brandenburgers, Swedes, Frenchmen, Prussians and Poland. Each of these periods left an indelible mark on the cultural landscape of the region and has had a great impact on its formation and shaping the local community (Duda 2014). The remains of the centuries-old Pomerania development are numerous monuments and urban complexes that have survived to the present day. Unfortunately, frequent wars, including the Thirty Years' War in the seventeenth century and the Second World War, as well as the social and cultural transformations related to the region's perennial location in the border region contributed significantly to the decimation of cultural resources and the disappearance of the sense of identity of Pomeranian community. The most influential were, among others, the decision of the Pomeranian dukes to introduce the idea of the Reformation of Martin Luther in 1534 and the spread of Protestantism throughout Pomerania. More than four hundred years later, revolutionary social, religious and cultural changes took place after the Second World War. As a result of significant transformations in the administrative borders in Europe and the almost complete exchange of population, the Protestant community of Pomerania was replaced by the extraneous settlers from Catholic Poland.

The phenomenon worth emphasizing observed in Pomerania is the unique combination and permanent interdependence between natural and environmental resources and those of cultural and historical nature. This combination uniquely shapes the environmental and cultural landscape of the region, the structure of which depends to a great extent on the degree and harmony of the mutual supplementation of its individual elements. An example of this is the traditional settlement network, the nature of which is largely related to the natural conditions and land relief. For the purposes of construction of many objects and structures that make up the material heritage of Western Pomerania, materials commonly found in nature such as erratic boulders transported by the ice sheet during the last glaciation, clay (till of moraine uplands) and large wood cover, were used. It was in the Pomerania in the 14th and 15th centuries, where brick and stone buildings were built on a massive scale. Also, mills were constructed and ran based on the well-developed fluvial network of the region. Cistercians developed their activities here, based on the wealth of environmental and landscape values. They not only established their monasteries in Pomerania, but also carried out economic activity, also within scope of the agricultural drainage and land farming (including wineries) (Wyrwa 1999). Thanks to the ease of access to post-glacial clay, those monks also introduced the technology of firing and brick production in their areas, ever so popular in this part of Europe at a later stage.

3.2. Development of the sacral landscape of West Pomerania

The religious life of Pomerania has always centred around temples, places of worship, churches, monasteries and monastic centres. Local religious leaders and later monks, thanks to various forms of pressure, created popular piety which developed in the region often under the clear pressure of change and the current cultural as well as the social and political situation. In such a complex reality, the image of the spatial arrangement of places of worship and the routes of religious and pilgrimage nature were simultaneously shaped. Almost always these needs have been satisfied in a sustainable way in close relation with natural conditions, land formation and the proximity of water bodies.

The beginnings of the development of the sacral landscape of Western Pomerania date back to prehistoric times, when the nomadic Slavic tribes and the temporarily inhabiting these areas tribes from the northern and western regions of Europe (e.g. Goths or Gepids) used the natural elevation of terrain to build their temples and places of worship. Also, the easy-available rock material would be used to build the so-called "stone circles". Preserved to this day (e.g. in Grzybnica near Koszalin) are parts of the original sacral landscape of the region. It was similarly formed by the early medieval burial sites, which were treated as sacred space, not accessible to everyone. In Pomerania they were burial mounds, curses and megaliths, erected from natural materials, easily available in the vicinity. The oldest manifestations of the sacral space of Pomerania are also the ancient Slavic and Scandinavian centres of traditional, pagan beliefs, the symbolism of which in the greatest extent referred to the environmental phenomena. The geographical location of Pomerania, allowing for numerous and strong cultural contacts with Scandinavia, translated into the character of the region's cultural landscape of that time. These dependencies have been revealed, among others, through attempts to transfer the traditions and symbols from the northern regions of Europe to the Baltic Sea basin – runic stones still present, decorative elements of architecture, the cult of St. Olaf or the reception of natural elements for sacred places - e.g. sacred mountains.

The complete transformations of the sacred landscape of Pomerania have taken place along with the introduction of the Christian religion into these areas. This took place at a significantly later stage than it became reality in the neighbouring regions of Western Europe or Poland. Pomeranians were baptised by Bishop Otto of Bamberg, who held two Christianisation missions here in 1124 and 1128. Very quickly in the landscape there emerged stone churches (**Figure 5**), which to this day clearly characterise the region. The perception of *sacrum* has changed; also, the traditions and spiritual life of the inhabitants have changed. The tradition of using the building materials available in nature - different types of fieldstones, erratic boulders and wood - remained unchanged. In the religious landscape there appeared not only village churches or chapels, but first of all – large monastic foundations erected by orders arriving to the Pomerania in great numbers: Cistercians, Augustans, Franciscans, Joannites or - earlier - Templars. The high density of those objects promoted the pilgrimage movement. The

monks would care for pilgrims roaming from Pomerania towards the largest religious centres of the then Christian world - Jerusalem, Rome or Santiago de Compostela, and even local Pomeranian shrines on Mount Chełm, Binowo, Osieki or Żabowo (Łysiak 2001, Duda, Ostrowski 2012). There were a number of important trade routes here, which until the sixteenth century were used by knights, monks and pilgrims heading to Southern and Western Europe. The course and layout of old roads was dependent on geographical conditions such as relief, proximity to river valleys, and forests (shading) along the road. In the contemporary sacral space of Western Pomerania part of the old tracts is still operative, for instance: Pomeranian Way of St. James or the trail of the Holy Mountains of Pomerania.



Figure 5: Medieval church built of erratic boulders – characteristic element of Western Pomeranian religious landscape; Borkowo village near Lobeż / Western Pomerania
Source: personal picture

The greatest changes in the religious landscape of the region, however, were induced by the radical religious and social and cultural changes that took place in the 16th century and after the end of World War II in the 20th century. In 1534, pursuant to the decision of the then rulers of the Duchy of Pomerania - dukes of the Gryffin dynasty, Protestantism was introduced across the whole of Pomerania region. The ideas of Martin Luther's Reformation not only changed the perception of the Christian religion, but also, above all, led to the secularisation and abolition of religious orders and the disappearance of pilgrimage. Many of the existing objects have disappeared from the sacrum space, or they have completely changed the purposes they had served (religious objects have been taken over by the princely and state domains). However, other elements appeared in place of them, the symbols of which reflected the ideas of the new perception of *sacrum*, such as the national bible texts revealed on the external parts of religious objects (on portals of churches, gates, walls surrounding temples and cemeteries). Traditional stone and brick churches have been replaced by timber frame

structures (**Figure 6**), and at a later stage brick structures referring to the style of the old Gothic or Romanesque buildings. More and more often there were small Evangelical cemeteries present in the landscape, founded for sanitary reasons outside villages or on their boundaries (**Figure 7**).



Figure 6: Church of timber frame construction, Marwice village / Western Pomerania;
Source: personal picture



Figure 7: Protestant cemetery located outside the village boundaries; Dobieszewo village / Western Pomerania
Source: personal picture

For over 400 years the sacral landscape of Pomerania was influenced by evangelical ideas of the Reformation. The image of *sacrum* created for centuries has once again significantly changed in 1945. As a result of the resolutions made during the conference bringing the acts of the World War II to an end, the areas of former Pomerania were divided between the two countries - Poland and Germany. As a result, almost an entire population was exchanged in the area of present-day West Pomerania (Poland), where the Protestant Pomeranian community was replaced by Catholics from Eastern and Central Poland. Once again in the sacral landscape appeared small shrines and small religious infrastructure, especially along the historical and contemporary pilgrim routes. Pilgrimage traditions are also being rebuilt, and some new routes have emerged in the cultural and tourist space, some of which are related to historical tracts. The sanctuaries are a particular element of the material religious landscape of West Pomerania. Their location perfectly fits into the centuries-long trend of using natural environmental conditions, such as the shrine on Mount Chełmska or the sanctuary of the Nadodrzańska Queen of Peace in Siekierki on the Oder River.

3.3. Between the sacrum and profanum. Religious tourism space of Pomerania

The modern religious and sacral landscape of the region consists both of the primary elements like natural elevations and depressions, extensive forest areas, river waterways and numerous erratic boulders, as well as secondary ones, the occurrence of which was contributed by the human cultural activity (material and non-material one). It consists of the preserved structures and places of all past historical epochs, which create an unusual and unique religious and cultural mosaic. It forms the subject of interest not only to those involved in their spiritual development, the beneficiaries of *sacrum*, but also tourists and people interested in the historical and cultural aspects of the religious space – beneficiaries of the *profanum*. The space of the religious tourism is mainly based on the sacral landscape and it uses *sacrum*, as the main motivation for undertaking touristic activity. However, a tourist utilises a full infrastructure facilitating access, visiting and experiencing the unique *genius loci* of the given place. *The profanum* then helps to experience the *sacrum* in a great extent.

The most important elements shaping the contemporary religious tourism space of Western Pomerania are:

- a) Pilgrimage routes: the Pomeranian Way of St. James (despite the location of more than 3200 km away from Santiago de Compostela), the Way of St. Otto of Bamberg Christianisation Mission, the Pomeranian Holy Mountains Trail and the European Cistercian Route;
- b) Ancient and contemporary sanctuaries;
- c) Other sacred objects and places of local religious worship, not holding the status of a sanctuary;
- d) Ancient and contemporary monastic ensembles (Duda 2016).

4. Geographical Conditions for the Development of Contemporary Sacral and Religious Landscape

In the literature of the subject matter, the concept of a sacral landscape (as well as of the separately described religious landscape) appears as extremely complex and depends on the level of typology and its significance in relation to the cultural landscape and geographic space. The example of West Pomerania clearly shows that the contemporary sacral landscape is largely a result of many factors shaping it. Interestingly, these are not just religious factors, or even broader - the culturally-religious ones. Its final image is also influenced by all sorts of non-religious factors, including geographic, historical, social and cultural. It also seems that these factors are further reinforced in areas where the landscape has been influenced by significant social and cultural changes. In the case of the religious-sacral space, there is a distinct duality in the level of perception of the landscape. On the one hand, the intangible *sacrum* creates a unique sacral landscape, based on the cultural experience of faith, spiritual experience and the relation towards the deity one put their beliefs in. On the other hand, thanks to the material heritage of society, its skills and the perception of aesthetics (*the profanum*), a visualised image of that faith is being generated, its material reflection through sacred buildings, temples, paintings, monuments or pilgrimage trails, forming the religious landscape of the region. Depending on which type of landscape we are dealing with, its development will be related to the varied influence of particular religious and non-religious factors. The differences refer not only to the nature of these factors, but also to the strength and extent of their impact.

4.1. The influence of geographic factors on the formation of the sacral landscape

Sacral landscape, being a direct translation of *sacrum* in the geographical space of the region, is the oldest cultural landscape of such type created by a man (i.a.: Carmichael et al. 1994, Przybylska 2005, Myga-Piątek 2012, Duda, Ostrowski 2012). It is consisted of symbolic or natural elements, which, in the opinion of its users, shape the sacred *genius loci* of the given place. The final shape of the landscape was influenced by various non-religious factors, including geographical ones, which were the subject of interest and studies of the author. Based on the research of the space, which were conducted on the area of West Pomerania, four groups of geographic factors were identified, which – aside of the *sacrum* contributed to the final shape of the sacral landscape. The observations that the author made outside his research area (among others in: Catalonia (Spain), Scandinavia, the Czech Republic, Bavaria (Germany) and southern Italy) have made it possible to reliably refer to other regions and religious landscapes of Europe. The geographic determinants of their development are then based on the following factors:

1. Environmental abiotic factors - associated with land relief and its shaping processes as well as the geological elements influencing the shape and richness of the landscape;
 - a) Land relief and its differentiation - perception of *sacrum* in the uplifts of the terrain, hills as well as in depressions and valleys, have accompanied man since the beginning of history and the formation of spirituality. Almost on all continents and in most religions, sacred mountains or valleys are present or were present in the past. The land relief is one of the most common geographical factors shaping the cultural landscape of the region.
 - b) The presence and access to various sizes of water reservoirs - both the sea coast and lakes - water has played a significant role in the sacred landscape since time immemorial. It's on the banks of lakes the monasteries were often founded, and earlier they formed places of assembly for religious purposes, where sacred fire was burned or the pilgrimage to sacred places commenced.
 - c) Rivers, river valleys and springs - water flowing as a source of life in almost all religions is one of the most important items used to stay connected with *sacrum*. In the sacral landscape, rivers and especially springs play an additional important role in fulfilling religious practices. It is in the rivers that baptism or ritual washing take place or rites involving burning human dead bodies on riverbanks.
 - d) Erratic boulders - rock material originating either from direct access to the outcrops of rocks or quarries or, as in the case of all Central European Lowlands, transported by the ice sheet during the last glaciation. Large boulders, stones appear as a place of experience of the *sacrum* in the sacral landscape of many regions and religions around the world. Good access to such rock material translates into its widespread use in creating the sacred space of the region (stone circles, baptismal stones, altars).
2. Climatic and physical factors related to circulation and rotation of the Earth - changes of seasons and variation of length of day and night, atmospheric precipitation, apparent motion of the Sun following the ecliptic. The sacral landscape of the region consists of immaterial elements of experience and religious experiences, which may certainly also include the annual cycle of important holidays, devotions or other events of spiritual importance for the followers. The symbolic use of precisely chosen time, such as the spring or autumn solstice, the first day of summer or the moment of sunset in the northern boundary of the continent, are of great importance here. The cycle of religious events and the perception of the *sacrum* is thus adapted to the appropriate climatic and astronomical conditions, different for various geographical latitudes;
3. Environmental factors related to its biotic part - the use of trees or forest areas for the implementation of religious practices or recognising animals as the element explaining the *sacrum* (e.g. cows in India or fish-symbol in the Christian religion);

- a) Trees and forests – as sacred trees, coppices or places of seclusion and contact with *sacrum*. Areas of dense forestation were often used during the Middle Ages to establish monasteries and/or hermitages. Such practices were used by Cistercians, who built their centres mainly outside the developed areas, surrounded by forests and lakes.
 - b) Plants and herbs – naturally occurring herbs or vegetation used in medicine or food production often determine the development of monastic centres. They have become one of the most desirable elements in the natural landscape of the region and have contributed to the development of the sacral space.
 - c) Local and regional fauna – an element that in a small part determines the development of the sacral landscape of the region. Nevertheless, it is worth to emphasise certain dependencies connected with symbolic, cultural and even religious references to some animals and their occurrence in the natural environment of the region.
4. Geographical social and cultural factors – related to the political and cultural division of the world, administrative boundaries, the level of development of societies (both at present and in historical times) as well as belonging to particular religious and belief groups;
- a) Administrative and political boundaries and their course - every society, every culture creates its own unique sacral landscape. Changes in the course of the boundaries and the extent of individual social influences contribute to a large extent to changes in the landscape structure. In this case also the interaction of neighbouring societies, their mutual relations and their willingness to cooperate are also an important factor.
 - b) Traditions, customs and religions and their spatial variation - as in the previous point, the sacral landscape is to the greatest extent dependent on the national and religious affiliation of the communities inhabiting the region and their mutual relationship.

4.2. Geographical determinants of the religious landscape development in the region

The religious landscape, as evolved from the primary sacral landscape, manifests itself in space through the physical presence of places of worship and the migration routes of religious nature. Certainly, its shape is most influenced by cultural and religious factors, although there are also geographical conditions, the nature of which is shown below:

1. Natural factors related to the availability of natural building materials - there is a clear correlation between the natural elements commonly found in the landscape (erratic boulders, sand, clay, minerals and timber) and the utilisation thereof directly for the construction of cultural and residential buildings;
 - a) Erratic boulders, rocks, field rocks - the dominance of stone churches from the 13th and 14th centuries in Pomerania is connected with the mass availability of this material in the postglacial landscape of the region.

- b) Sand, gravel and clay - products for making mortar or firing bricks have been massively used by some orders, e.g. the Cistercians, to build monasteries or large churches prevailing in the landscape. It was not by a coincidence the most of the brick churches and other sacral objects in Europe are concentrated in the area of the European Lowlands, in areas rich in the post-glacial resources of till. It is one of the most recognisable and unique elements of the religious landscape of these areas.
 - c) Timber - high forestation and abundance of wood in the regions translates into a multitude of structures, erected on the basis of this commonly present material. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, numerous wooden churches were erected in the area of Pomerania and surrounding areas using the timber frame technology (fig.4.).
2. Climatic and weather factors - related to structural design options of sacral objects resulting from local or regional meteorological conditions, e.g. construction of wooden church towers, slightly inclined towards strong winds frequently blowing from the sea, e.g. Iwięcino in West Pomerania;
 3. Geographical social and cultural factors – related to the political and cultural division of the world, administrative boundaries, the level of development of societies (both at present and in historical times) as well as belonging to particular religious and belief groups;
 - a) Traditions, customs and religion and their spatial differentiation - omitting aspects of *strictly* religious nature, differences in the culture and traditions of particular religions, or even denominations, are evident in the perception of *sacrum*, the way it is presented or construed. These differences translate into architectural elements, richness or moderation of decorations, land development and the furnishing of sacred objects. Such elements create a distinctive and recognisable religious landscape of the region.
 - b) The economic development of the society, closely linked to the political and social geography of the region, translates into the visual aspect of the religious landscape. The quality and diversity of the building materials used, furnishing of objects, accompanying and tourist infrastructure, the method of presentation and information are just some of the elements that are significantly influenced by the economic condition of the region and its inhabitants.

Conclusion. Functions of the Sacral Landscape in the Geographic and Touristic Space of the Region

Sacral landscape, including the material and visualized religious landscape isolated out of it, are one of the oldest forms of space organization of this type in the world. Their impact on the natural landscape, as well as the coexistence in the context of interdependence, subordinates the functioning of other elements in space. It is believed that the religious landscapes have evolved in Europe as a result of

Christianization, and in the material layer they are distinguished on the basis of a complex system of sacral buildings and pilgrimage routes. (Benvenuti 2000, Plit 2008, Myga-Piątek 2012). The example of Western Pomerania as well as other regions of modern Europe (e.g. Scandinavia, Germany or England) show that this type of landscape, along with its extended material layer, has appeared on the continent much earlier, along with the cultural and spiritual development of individual societies. Even at that time the objects of the religious cult would emerge in the sacral landscape, largely linked and integrated into the elements of the natural landscape, e.g. burial mounds and burial blankets, stone circles, pagan altars etc. It must certainly be accepted that the European cultural and sacral landscapes have developed as a result of the centuries-old influences of Christian ideas. Depending on local and regional conditions of non-religious nature, they gained distinct individual characteristics, often differing in symbolic or visual terms.

Insofar as the individual determinant of the development of the sacral landscape of the region is its individual and symbolic perception of *sacrum*, its final form and spatial and materialistic organization are influenced by numerous factors of non-religious nature (*profanum*). A large part of them are geographical factors, like natural, social, economic and cultural elements. Geological considerations, relief, vegetation, and even climatic and weather phenomena largely determine the image of the cultural landscape and delimit its extent. Their typology and importance in the creation of sacral space are of interest to the author and to many years of research presented in part in this study. The analysis and research of the cultural space of West Pomerania also indicated the differentiation that the joint impact of particular geographical factors on the sacral and religious landscapes of the region is subject to. Strict relationships between the environmental conditions of the development of the natural landscape and the structure of the sacral space are observed. The region rich in diverse relief features, a well-developed river network, numerous lakes and post-glacial accumulation rock material has shaped individual and unique in the European scale the cultural landscape features based on the richness of natural values. This was also coincided by numerous social, cultural and religious changes experienced by the Western Pomerania over the centuries. They made the sacred landscape as observed today a unique combination of all the elements and influences that accompanied the people in these areas. This also means that the region is extremely attractive in terms of tourism and forms the basis for shaping the original area of cultural and religious tourism in Pomerania.

The attractiveness of the landscape is determined by many factors, such as its harmoniousness, diversity, variability, uniqueness, contrast and absorptivity (Kowalczyk 2008). The role of individual features is very difficult to estimate, although some types of landscape and their characteristics are more important to tourists than others. The religious landscape, or precisely speaking its materialistic shape in the form of the religious landscape, is subject to a great interest of tourists, not only in the context of pilgrimage and religious tourism, but also the broadly understood cultural tourism (Cosgrove, Jackson 1987, Mikos von Rohrscheidt 2013, Duda 2014, 2016). Its unique combination of material sphere – structure, elements, complexity, authenticity, and the non-material one like history, symbolism, associations, conception of *sacrum*, as well as strong links to the natural landscape result in the sacral landscape serving the

purposes of aesthetic, educational and cognitive nature in addition to the sacral one. It is an authentic manifestation of the cultural development and social transformations that have accompanied the inhabitants of the region over the centuries.

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¹ The unique cultural landscape of the region is observed in the territory of the entire Pomerania as a historical land, the borders of which overlap the former Pomeranian Duchy. For the purposes of this article, the studies covered the West Pomeranian region, identified with the West Pomeranian province (województwo zachodniopomorskie), located in the northwestern Poland. This choice was dictated by the specific social and religious conditions that shaped this space after the Second World War, when the change of borders resulted in an almost complete exchange of population and, consequently, the religious world-view (Protestant denominations were replaced by Catholic doctrine).

² According to U. Myga-Piątek (2008), the notion of religious-sacral landscape is used in literature as a landscape that retains autonomous sacred qualities while fulfilling the utilitarian function (religious values serve the religious practises).