

# Przestrzeń turystyczna cmentarzy. Wstęp do tanatoturystyki.(Cemetery tourist space.Introduction to thanatourism)



Oglądaj/Otwórz

 Summary (200.7KB)

Data  
2008

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Metadata  
[Pokaż pełny rekord](#)

## Streszczenie

Research confirmed that the cemetery is the destination of educational migrations, which are usually part of cultural, ethnical, sentimental or general tourism. The act of learning takes place during individual or group trips, as well as during ordinary walks. Let us remember that the 19th c. ideas of the American rural cemetery, French park – cemetery and English garden cemetery aimed at creating not only a memory space, but also a museum space with monuments and pieces of sepulchral art, which are now considered to be historical items. The cemetery is also a space which commemorates events, historical facts and famous people. Therefore it is often a sort of a “history book” of the local community. The cemetery is often the destination of educational trips, during which the participants learn about its history, architecture and art. They visit the graves of important people, known from history, and pay homage to them for their deeds. The more interesting form the cemetery has and the more historical values can be found in its space, the more attractive it is considered to be. The most controversial part of the first hypothesis was the statement that the cemetery is the destination of recreational migrations. The author believes that this thesis has strong foundations. The cemetery, classified as a green area, is a walking area, i.e. an area where a recreational activity takes place. The cemetery is a therapeutic space, which makes it easier to accept the departure of a close person. The grave is in this case a certain substitute of the dead person’s home, an environment which is taken care of. The grave is a confirmation of a continuous contact with the deceased person. The author observed meetings, conversations and walks taken together at the cemetery. The cemetery, as a sacrum space, is often treated as a place of solitary peace, a safe place, an asylum similar to a shrine. However, this thesis can be confirmed only to a limited extent. The cemetery cannot be treated as a popular recreational space. Even the most beautiful cemetery, which at the same time is a wonderful park (e.g. the Central Cemetery in Szczecin), or a forested area within a city (the Junikowo cemetery in Poznan), has its basic functions, it is the resting place for the dead and any excessive behaviour will be regarded as the profanation of the sacrum. The recreational functions of the cemetery result primarily from the accumulation of natural and landscape assets. However, a cemetery devoid of special natural assets may also be a place where people spend their free time, rest and recuperate. Naturally, recreational functions of the cemetery are very limited. Both the author’s research at the Central Cemetery in Szczecin and Suliborski’s work (2005) confirm the fact that the recreational functions of cemeteries are usually used by people inhabiting the vicinity and elderly people over 55 years of age. 58% of the people approached by CBOS declared walking in a cemetery in their free time. The cemetery starts to perform educational and recreational functions only after certain conditions are met. Time is an important factor, as with time the cemetery acquires historical, cultural, spiritual and natural value. Another important factor is the activity of local inhabitants, who use the cemetery for recreation rather than for educational purposes, contrary to tourists, who usually treat a cemetery as an educational asset rather than recreational. A cemetery with extraordinary cultural and natural assets has great tourist potential. If there is adequate technical infrastructure at or around the cemetery (paths, benches), as well as commercial and service infrastructure (souvenir stalls and shops, guides), which makes the visit at the cemetery attractive, if the cemetery is promoted as a cultural or natural asset, it becomes a site visited for educational purposes. It may be an element of a larger tourist product. Cemetery space is multi-functional. The changes caused by tourist activity that occur in this space, can be observed first of all in the intensity and regularity of the renovation and protection of sepulchral art. Cemeteries from World War I in Low Beskid were renovated after the local authorities had recognized them as sites which could increase the inflow of tourists. The cemetery, similarly to a shrine, in a sense loses the sacrum dimension for the benefit of the profane (The Old Cemetery in Zakopane), becoming an educational space. People visiting cemeteries have different reasons for doing so, as shown in the descriptions of tourist trips to places of death (thanatourism) (TANAŚ 2006).

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