

Gdańsk cemeteries (1945-2015)

The paper presents the management, establishment and liquidation of Gdańsk cemeteries after 1945. The first part of the work outlines demographic changes that determine the size and internal structure of cemeteries. The biggest problem was to determine the number of people buried in 1945, this number is extremely difficult to determine, however, using sources not yet used by researchers, such as books of the dead, it was possible to estimate the number of burials in this tragic period for the city and its inhabitants. The second chapter deals with the management of necropolises, discusses the issue of municipalization, which caused a dispute with the Roman Catholic Church, and the methods of administering active cemeteries, whose condition was often not in the best condition due to too small a budget. A comparison with the cemeteries in Sopot and Gdynia is important here, which allows to show the general problems with maintaining the necropolis in the first decades of People's Poland. Demonstrating the condition of active cemeteries is also important in the context of the next chapter, which discusses the course of liquidation of old necropolises. The condition of the closed cemeteries was, of course, even worse than the active ones. The condition of the cemeteries to be liquidated was also part of the wider context of the post-war rusticization of urban spaces, their specific agrarianization (grazing and animal husbandry in cemeteries) and the general pauperization of its inhabitants. The general degree of underfunding of urban greenery needs was also indicated. This chapter, in addition to the formal and legal discussion and the practice accompanying the liquidation, extensively analyzes the reasons for the decisions made. The liquidation of cemeteries in Gdańsk was finally discussed in the context of organizing the issue of cemeteries throughout Poland. The fourth chapter deals with the problem of establishing new cemeteries, both municipal and military, it discusses the regulations and guidelines that guided them, as well as the process of implementing the projects. The fifth chapter is devoted to cemeteries as special monuments of material culture, it was important to trace the ways of perceiving the Gdańsk necropolises both before and after 1945, which was the starting point for presenting the attitude of conservation services. This chapter ends with a discussion of the fate of three saved old cemetery complexes. The last, sixth chapter discusses the issues of cemeteries as an element of the greenery system in Gdańsk and (referring to previously unused source materials) contains postulates for the necessary directions of research. There are two annexes at the end. The first contains notes on the main cemeteries in Gdańsk. In addition to a brief historical outline, there is information that did not fit into the main lecture of this work, and concerns the layout, composition and objects located in the given complex. The second annex lists all the park areas arranged in the areas of former cemeteries. The layout of the notes is analogous to the first annex, apart from the history of the object, it contains information about the layout and composition.