

## **The location of churches in market square spaces of modern-age Masovia and Podlachia regions**

[Summary of a PhD thesis]

Two regions were situated in central Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth—namely, Podlachia (Podlasie, today the country's border region) and Masovia (Mazowsze), the capital-city region since the end of the sixteenth century. Apart from the largest villages and towns in these regions, most of them had mainly wooden small-scale buildings, the settlements themselves having had small development spaces. Although pretty modest-sized and provincial, these localities had their specific and characteristic architectural forms and urban-planning solutions and designs which embellished and, to an extent possible, monumentalised them, thus building upon metropolitan patterns and concepts characteristic of the modern age. Apart from the most famous such projects, including those in Węgrów and Tykocin, others are mostly not-too-well known though extremely interesting. The examples under discussion illustrate some of the layouts where the town's central square was clearly associated with the church building. Momentous among those projects were modern layouts of Catholic sacred buildings. The layouts and projects analysed in my thesis clearly dominated the region's architectural landscape.

Although the reciprocal relation between the church and its surroundings, on the one hand, and the market square in Masovian and Podlachian localities has long been known to architecture and arts scholars, the topic in itself has not yet been approached in an extensive manner. The thesis attempts at defining and explaining the origins of certain types of town-planning concepts and layouts and of the reasons and purposes of their emergence and implementation. The focus is on the history of conception and development of the types under study and individual objects exemplifying them; also, a group of relevant assumptions is defined. Of importance is also the description of the influences that the types in question have exerted on urban planning in the later periods (specifically, the nineteenth century).

The topics concerned are governed by town-planning issues, the relations between churches and their related market square spaces being placed in the spotlight. The thus-defined subject of research has consequently pointed to the group of buildings analysed. The main research objective is to juxtapose and analyse selected town-planning concepts/layouts completed in the modern age in the historical provinces of Masovia and Podlachia, their purpose and design being based on the association between the church building and the main market square. The parallel goal has been to show the selected examples against the background of achievements of European—mostly Italian and French—urban planning, showing the potential inspirations. Along with these assumptions, essential to my argument is to determine the main group of research problems related to the thesis's chief objectives. My dissertation is motivated by the willingness to cognise, and render the reader more familiar with, the modern-era urban planning and architecture in Masovia and Podlachia, and to try and find an answer to the question of how specific or typical of these regions the solutions under analysis were. Added to that is the determination of a group of factors that provided incentives for the foundations, many of them pretty ambitious as they were. Yet another interesting issue is a set of concrete

formal and compositional solutions used in the projects and layouts in question; still another one is the ways of modernising and monumentalising, in a Baroque spirit, of urban centres that were often much older. Quite interesting is the *longue durée* of such solutions: possibly perceived as regional traits of urbaneness, such solutions were still carried out in the former half of the nineteenth century.

However worthy of attention, the issues of architecture and urban planning of Masovia and Podlachia are still not quite well known. The said regions tend to be perceived as not quite interesting in this respect, both among professionals and as a popular view; this is true particularly with urban planning. In the Swedish ‘Flood’ time and then during the Great Northern War at the beginning of the eighteenth century, these areas—mainly, eastern Masovia and Podlachia—were heavily devastated, looted, and depopulated. Most buildings from the first half of the seventeenth century or from the earlier times were lost for good; most of those surviving were heavily redeveloped throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In spite of the great losses among buildings erected in the latter half of the seventeenth century, the lands of Masovia and Podlachia are still home to a number of interesting works and original types of architecture and town planning, constructed later on.

Masovia and Podlachia are approached in my thesis as culturally akin regions. Podlachia, where settlement developed later than in Masovia, tended to draw from cultural and human patterns and resources of the latter, and it was from Masovia that an extensive wave of colonisation flew into Podlachia. The two areas display a number of historical similarities, alongside those in property and social structure, in architecture and urban planning, which seemingly makes it legitimate to discuss them within a single dissertation.

Chapter one outlines the history of Podlachia and Masovia. The limits of both areas are marked: for Podlachia—within its administrative borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the later, nineteenth-century ones; for Masovia—within the Duchy of Masovia and the administrative borders of Poland-Lithuania. Summarised is the history as well as demographic and economic conditions of the regions in question, with particular focus on the modern era. The development of the local modern-age architecture is outlined.

Chapter two deals with the medieval genesis of the layout forms of churches situated within the market-square spaces, with conclusions drawn as to the background behind the given type. Discussed are the layouts of churches situated within the market square—using forms mostly of medieval provenance, often from before the town's chartering, and popular in the regions concerned in the height of the Middle Ages, in the sixteenth and the former half of the seventeenth centuries—along with analogous locations (those close to the corner of one of the square's frontages).

Chapter three discusses the chief examples of the projects pointed to in the thesis's title. Juxtaposed and discussed are selected examples of Baroque town-planning layouts, featuring the church in the square's frontage (usually situated at the centre of the narrower frontage), in the areas under study. Apart from Masovia and Podlachia, taken into consideration are buildings in the lands bordering on these regions. Analysed are the urban-planning layouts applied and the methods of integrating church buildings into the

space. These solutions are shown in the context of specified historical determinants related to the localities concerned, while pointing to collateral research issues.

Chapter four outlines the development of European urban-planning theory and practice. Axial to this discussion are the selected examples of mutual association between the church and the square, forming the representative urban space. Given this context, the possible influence from Italian Renaissance and Counterreformation urban-planning theories is traced, along with the West European, particularly Italian, Renaissance and Baroque urban-planning practice.

Chapter five discusses selected research problems that appear alongside analysing the layouts pointed out in the title. The aspects are taken into account include: facades—their forms, urban and set-design functions; church solids as part of urban space composition, their orientation with respect to the square and view axes or corridors; sequences of dominants and views from important buildings; axis shaping methods; associations of the squares under discussion with town owner residences.

Lastly, chapter six shows the influences and consequences of the modern layout types in question. These include: churches situated within square frontages in localities outside Masovia and Podlachia; Baroque church layouts in the village square frontage in Masovia and Podlachia; secondary placement of former churches within the square frontage; and, nineteenth-century church layouts within square frontages in Masovia, Podlachia and their neighbouring lands.