

## THE HISTORY OF THE MANOR AND THE SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE PARK IN DROBLIN LEŚNA PODLASKA COMMUNE

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**Summary.** The aim of the study was to write down the historical timeline of Droblin manor. The result of ownership changes and styles in the art of gardening was the functional and spatial evolution of the manor. Nowadays, the park consists of the Baroque central part and the English style park. In 2011, the manor was adapted to a restaurant and a hotel.

**Key words:** manor park, history, the spatial transformations, Droblin

### INTRODUCTION

Rural parks are clusters of high greenery, created by artificial planting, rarely by adjusting to natural woodland. These parks are an integral part of the landscape of our country and are closely linked to its history and tradition. The Polish art of gardening of the nineteenth century is characterised by a number of realizations which can be perceived as local „pearls of history” [Ciołek 1954, Bordewicz and Wrońska-Pilarek 2009, Pudelska and Wójcik 2010, Pudelska and Rojek 2011].

In the past, the manors of Podlasie region belonged to Polish noble families such as the Sapieha, Radziwiłł, Firlej, Potocki, Krasiński or prominent architects – Anthony Corazzi and Jakub Fontana. Among the manors, there are not only such buildings as the late-Renaissance defense villa in Czemierniki or the palace in Radzyń Podlaski, belonging to the most beautiful estates in the Rococo period in Poland, but also more modest mansions with a porch and a pillared portico. An overwhelming number of Podlasie region manors lacked exterior decoration and were founded on a simple plan. However, a valuable setting for the mansions and palaces were landscaped gardens and parks which surrounded them, unfortunately preserved to these days in a rudimentary state.

The majority of Podlasie region estates were not prosperous, because the local population suffered particularly hard after uprising repressions and estates were confiscated and bid. Building manors in Podlasie region followed some general principles such as locating them upon the rivers, creating a circular driveway with flowerbeds, and placing of simple utility structures such as windmills and barns on viewing axis [Maroszek and Rogalewska 1994].

Droblin manor is located 30 km north-west of Biała Podlaska. Nowadays, the manor complex is composed of a manor house, a park (subject to entry in the register of monuments and environmental conservation), and a stable. The property is privately owned, and the manor house includes a restaurant with accommodation facilities.

The main work in the restoration of a historic property is a study of the historical subject and a detailed inventory of the green. The aim of this study is to prepare some research on the historical past of a certain place. In 2012, an archival query on the history of Droblin manor was conducted. The purpose of the dossier is also to capture spatial changes of the park.

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Historical analysis was performed on the basis of archival documents including cartographic, iconographic and descriptive as well as on the family history of the owners of Droblin manor. This research was conducted on the basis of a large database of information sources. These include the materials in archives, libraries, and in private hands. Some query was performed using archival materials from the following sources: Archives of New Records in Warsaw, Gerard Ciołek Archives in Warsaw, Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw, Lublin National Archives, Archives of the Voivodeship Monument Conservator in Lublin, Central Documentation Centre of Geodesy and Cartography in Warsaw and the National Heritage Institute, Branch office in Lublin.

The analysis of the spatial composition of the park included: analysis of historical plans of garden styles and their relationship with the surrounding landscape. To trace the evolution of composite systems, archive aerial footage of the park was also used.

Vetting of the area was carried out in 2012. Overall inventory of architectural and photographic documentation of the manor park and accompanying architectural objects was conducted within field work.

#### RESULTS

##### **Historical outline of the object**

The first record of Droblin comes from 1580, with spelling „Droblino” – „Noble Stanisław Hińcza together with his wife Anna Turska from Droblin, gave 10 out of their land, for the price of 15 p.”.

From 1598 comes a record in „Polish Armorial” of the inheritance of property of John and Beata Hińcza by their sons. Boniecki (1904) reports that Hińcza came from Podlasie voivodeship. Alexander Stanisławowicz-Hińcza, MP of the Podlasie region signed the Act of Union between Lithuania and the Crown in 1569. John of Droblin with his wife Beata had four sons: Christopher, Martin, Stanislaus and Adam, who inherited Droblin in 1598.

At the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Droblin manor consisted of the outbuilding, fish ponds and a small garden. In the eighteenth century, it remained the property of the Hińcza family who rebuilt the composition into the Baroque-style garden with a driveway leading to the alley. In 1820, the owner of Droblin was Joseph Hińcza, who took over the estate from his father – Ignatius. Manorial estate development is connected with the history of the Hińcza family, who owned it continuously for over 300 years, which is quite a rare case in the Polish farmlands. In the mid-nineteenth century, Droblin property was purchased by the Wężyk family, which in addition to Droblin, owned extensive estates such as Witulin, Nose, Wólka Nosowska and Strzyniec villages. Half of the nineteenth century was a period of further development of the farm. In place of the old manor a new brick manor house – existing today, was built [Bończak-Kucharczyk 1983].

According to „Geographical Dictionary” [1881] Droblin village and farm were owned by Wilhem Wężyk and were located in Konstantynowski county, Witulin commune. Peasant land area was 441 acres (246 ha) including 23 houses inhabited by 221 people, among them the Russians and gentry. The meadows of Droblin village were the source of the Białka River. Droblin village and farm, which occupied the area of 946 acres (529 ha), including arable land and gardens of 640 acres (358 ha), meadows of 112 acres (62 ha), pastures of 8 acres (4 ha) and forest of 146 acres (81 ha) belonged to Wilhelm Wężyk. The crop rotation was performed on 8 fields. On the farm there were three brick buildings and 13 wooden ones. The main sources of income were a water mill and ponds full of fish. There were also the layers of peat. Droblin village was inhabited by 25 settlers and it occupied the area of 385 acres (215 ha).

In 1900, the Droblin property changed its owners and it went into the hands of the Przesmycki family and before 1906 Droblin was purchased by Waław Młodzianowski. In 1908, the property together with Waław's daughter – Helena, went to Alexander Tukalski Nielubowicz. The manor remained in the hands of the Nielubowicz family until 1921. In 1921, for debts to the Towarzystwo Kredytowe Ziemskie (the first Polish bank institution), the property was taken over by the State. Some part of the farmland was parceled out, and the manor was leased changing its owner every few years, the last of whom was Jerzy Rudzki. In 1944, the property was fully parceled out. The small central manor was leased by Władysław Lipiński, who lived in the manor in 1947. In the same year, the manor house was changed into a primary school. Bończak-Kucharczyk [1983] also notes that after 1947, the local population took over some parts of the manor, ponds and most of the park. During this period, almost all

the buildings of the manor were demolished and most of the park trees cut out. Some of the old ponds were drained and changed into grassland, while the remaining land, as a result of years of neglect, overgrown by self-seeding trees, shrubs and rushes.

Fijałkowski and Kseniak [1982] write that in 1982 the park in Droblin occupied the area of 3 hectares and had a well-preserved composition. The manor house was an elementary school and a former, regular layout of the park was marked by the alleys of lime-chestnut trees. In 1982, about 100 trees belonging to 10 species in the area of the property were inventoried.

During the period when the manor functioned as the school, part of the park, directly adjacent to the manor house, was significantly devastated. Rich dendroflora was destroyed, leaving only trees in the form the alleys, the surrounding interior in front of the manor, the trees of the driveway alley and a few trees to the north-east side of the house. The driveway and walking paths were also destroyed. To the south and south-west were localised sports facilities for students such as a jump and two playing fields. The former outbuilding was converted into a barn, and a brick outbuilding was built nearby. The school grounds were partially fenced, at which the hedges and young trees were planted. In front of the school there was built a concrete pavement with small flowerbeds. As a result of such arrangement of the buildings, there appeared in this area numerous wild-paths connecting the manor house with neighbouring objects, and in the former interior between the manor and ponds grew *Robinia pseudoacacia* L.

Since 2010 Droblin manor has been privately owned. The property was changed into a restaurant with accommodation facilities.

### Historical plans

The first cartographic source of Droblin is „Schematic composition of Droblin garden in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth c.”, included in „The register of the park” from 1983 (Fig. 1).

The analysis of the first cartographic source (Fig. 1) – at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, show that in front of Droblin manor there existed an interior in a form of a square, surrounded by alleys and rows of the trees, and a second rectangular interior situated between the manor house and ponds. On the map four ponds are marked, long dike north of a diagonal axis and long viewing axis of Bukowice manor. Other parts of the park were of regular form and were surrounded by rows of trees or alleys. The manor complex included the orchard in a rectangular form, located in the south-east of the manor, a park and a windmill standing in the south-west of the manor. To the south-west and west of the manor house were erected a number of outbuildings and a farm. The park was walled off from farm buildings.

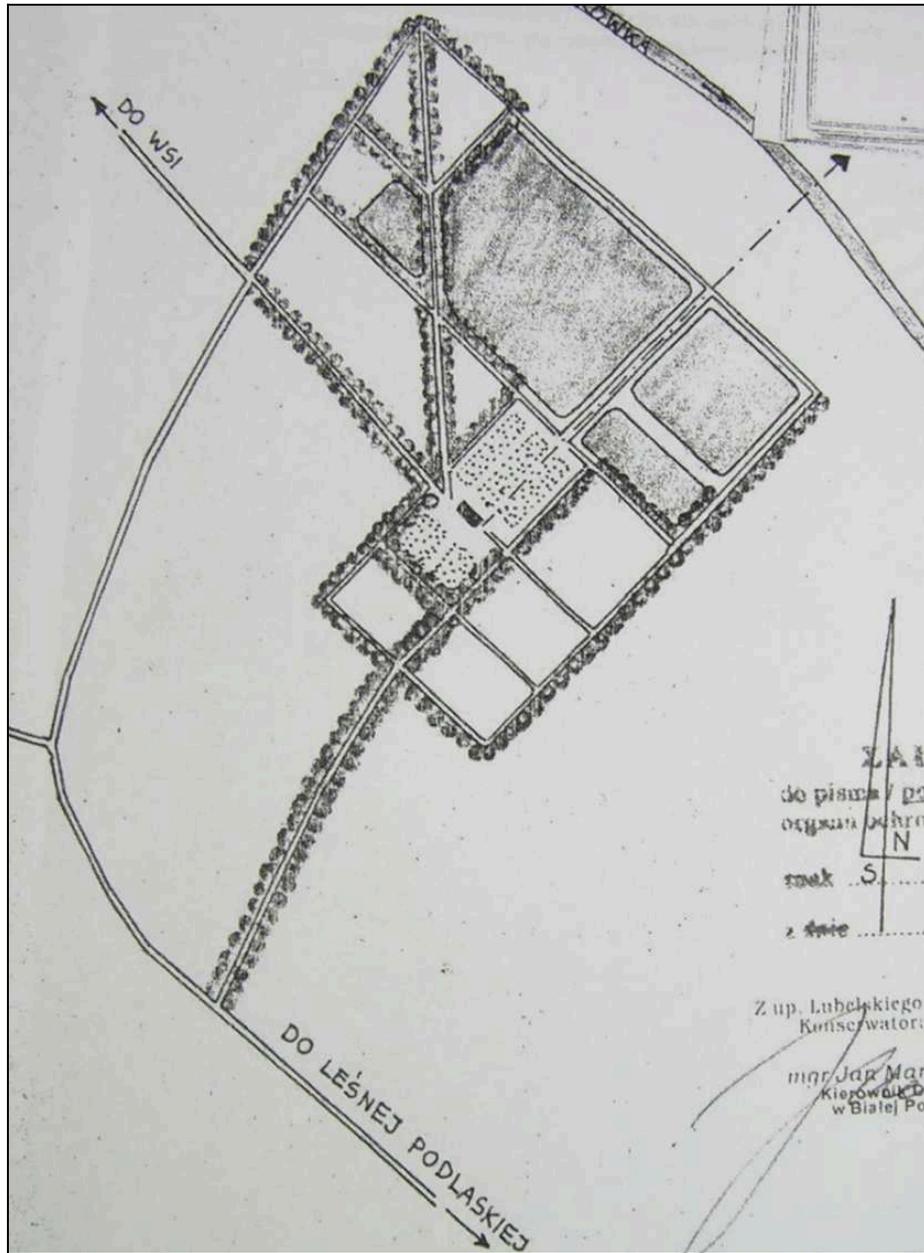


Fig. 1. Schematic composition of Droblin garden in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century [Bończak-Kucharczyk 1983]



Fig. 2. Military map by Anthony Mayer von Heldensfeld  
[copy in possession of the authors]



Fig. 3. Karte des Westlichen Russlands – 1911 r.  
[[http://igrek.amzp.pl/result.php?cmd=id&god=P40\\_S36&cat=WIG100](http://igrek.amzp.pl/result.php?cmd=id&god=P40_S36&cat=WIG100)]

Other sources found by the authors of the paper are archival maps of Droblin taking into account the location of the village and the surrounding area:

– Military map by General Anthony Mayer von Heldensfeld. This map is an extremely valuable source of information and its original version can be found in Kriegsarchiv in Vienna. The plan comes from the years 1801–1804 (Fig. 2).

– Carte du Royaume de Pologne – 1862 r.

– Karte des Westlichen Russlands – 1911 r. (Fig. 3)

– Tactical map of Poland – 1931 r.

– Grossblatt Nr 359 Lukow – 1938 r.

### **The changes of the spatial composition of the park**

The origins of the presented manor date back to the sixteenth century, when Droblin was the owner-occupied manor house. Perhaps it was located in the area of today's manor. In the seventeenth century, the Baroque-style garden was developed, with ponds and a formal garden. Perhaps from this period also comes, preserved to these days, the driveway alley and rows of trees surrounding the interior in front of the manor house. The next phase of the composition dates back to the eighteenth century, when the Baroque style and English style were combined. There was the opening of a distant view of the ponds in the valley of the river and Bukowice manor house and another one thanks to the alley that led from the manor house, between the ponds to the northern corner of the manor.

Heldensfeld's map presents Droblin from the early nineteenth century, as a village situated upon a small river and at a large pond. The layout of the village was based on the streets, as the main road constituted the skeleton of the village composition. The houses were built with their narrow sides in the direction of the street in the so called „peak construction”. The village and the river were adjacent to a large forest complex. The manor house is not marked in the outline of the village. Thus, it can be concluded that this was just a small farm.

The next phase of the manor development begins about half of the nineteenth century, at the time when it received its final shape, remaining like this with small changes until the Second World War. In the centre of the manor, around the manor house, a regular Baroque-style garden remained, and later the park was developed in English style. In the former interior in front of the manor, surrounded on three sides by the alleys, there was created a circular driveway. In the early twentieth century next to a windmill, at the crossroads, a brick chapel with a statue of Saint Mary was built. In the park a small number of plantings has been done, which still grow as a few trees.

In 2012, Droblin park covered the area of 3 hectares. In front of the manor adapted to a restaurant there was a circular driveway and paved roads in the park made of granite. From the north, the manor had two ponds. Within the manor complex, but outside the area of the protection of a conservator was built a stable for horses. To the north-east of the manor a wooden gazebo was built. Nowa-

days, it is possible to take two roads to get to the manor – paved one next to the stable or the historic poplar alley. The park is lit, but without landscaping elements that could present the history of the manor. At the beginning of the main alley there stands a roadside cross.

In front of the manor house there is located the interior dated back to the eighteenth century, which is a remnant of the Baroque garden. Behind the ponds you can notice fragments of the English style park – rows of ash, lime and poplar trees. The rest of the area is covered by the numerous self-seedings, which especially in the interior behind the manor house, interfered with the view of Bukowice manor, covering completely old axis view.

### CONCLUSION

Landscape parks were based on a sequence of places – grass, loose groups of woody vegetation and water features such as ponds, streams or springs. The composition of the park in Droblin is typical for Podlasie region. The manor house is a one-storey building and does not have rich decorations on the walls. The manor entrance has the features of a regular Baroque manor while the rest of the area is organized as the scenic park. Access to the residence is located on the main axis, and behind the garden elevation of the manor stretches a vast clearing. Desk studies and field work shed light on the history of the manor in Droblin and give outline to the evolution of the composition of the manor. Droblin manor has a rich history dating back to the sixteenth century, and although it shared the fate of many similar properties (reduction of land, lack of protection after 1947) it still remains a valuable object in the landscape of Podlasie region. In 2010, the place was highly appreciated by creating far-reaching plans for the renovation of the manor, establishing accommodation facilities for tourists visiting Podlasie region, and the construction of a stable.

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#### HISTORIA ZESPOŁU DWORSKIEGO I PRZEMIANY UKŁADU PRZESTRZENNEGO PARKU W DROBLINIE GM. LEŚNA PODLASKA

**Streszczenie.** Celem badań było sporządzenie historycznego kalendarium obiektu dworskiego w Droblinie. Skutkiem zmian własnościowych i stylów w sztuce ogrodowej była ewolucja funkcjonalno-przestrzenna ośrodka dworskiego. W czasach współczesnych park składa się z barokowej części centralnej i swobodnego parku angielskiego. Ośrodek dworski w 2011 r. został adaptowany na restaurację i hotel.

**Słowa kluczowe:** park dworski, historia, przemiany układu przestrzennego, Droblin