

FORMS OF RURAL SETTLEMENTS IN POLAND AND THEIR TRANSFORMATION IN THE COURSE OF HISTORY

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Abstract

The Polish countryside has undergone various morphological transformations throughout the history. That was resulting from unusual territorial variability of Poland and different national status of individual historic regions, which were remaining within the structures of neighbouring states and were influenced by their culture, various economic concepts and patterns of rural spatial organization. As a result of that the forms of rural settlement in different historical regions of Poland acquired some specific characteristics.

Key words: morphological forms of the villages, rural spatial organization, Poland

OBLIKE PODEŽELSKIH NASELIJ NA POLJSKEM IN NJIHOVA PREOBRAZBA V TEKU ZGODOVINE

Izvleček

Prispevek analizira vplive političnega razvoja na oblikovanje podeželskih naselij. Podeželje na Poljskem je v svoji zgodovini doživelo številne velike spremembe. Za evropsko raven velja Poljska za državo, kjer se je meja pogosto spreminjala. Vse to ter številni kulturni vplivi iz sosedstva so oblikovali zelo raznolika podeželska naselja, ki so se kljub obema svetovnima vojnama in radikalnim prostorskim posegom v času socializma v marsičem ohranili do danes.

Ključne besede: morfološke oblike podeželskih naselij, podeželska prostorska organizacija, Poljska

I. POLITICO-HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF EVOLUTION OF RURAL SETTLEMENT IN POLAND

Rural settlements in Poland have undergone various morphological transformations throughout the history. Often, the transformation processes had quite specific character in different regions of the country, which was a result of extremely frequent changes in Poland's territory. Consequently, in many historical periods different provinces of Poland were under foreign domination and, in some cases, for centuries remained within the political structures of neighbouring states, being influenced by their culture, economic systems and rural settlement patterns.

It was, for instance, the case of Silesia, the province which since the 14th century belonged to Kingdom of Bohemia, then passed to the House of Hapsburg, to be annexed later by Prussia and then Germany. Another province that often changed hands was Western Pomerania: at first an independent duchy, in the late Middle Ages it was taken over by Brandenburg, and in the 17th and 18th centuries a large portion of this region, around the city of Szczecin, was annexed by Sweden. In East Prussia the history took yet different course: this ancestral land of Baltic Prussians (akin to Lithuanians) was ruled by the German knight order (the Order of the Teutonic House of Mary in Jerusalem). Although since the 15th century part of this area passed under Poland's control (Royal Prussia) and the remainder was considered as Polish feudal fief, nevertheless the settlement system was almost entirely established according to western patterns. On the other hand some foreign lands have been incorporated into Poland (within its present-day borders): in the 14th century – Red Ruthenia in south-east, and in the 16th-17th centuries Podlasie, part of Black Ruthenia, White Ruthenia and Lithuania proper in north-east. Here, foreign, non-Polish influences played also active part in shaping the settlement system.

Apart from changing political affiliation of different historical provinces, of considerable importance for shaping the settlement system in Poland was immigration of foreigners, most notably Vlachs, Dutch and Germans. Vlachs, shepherding people of Balkan origin, migrating since the medieval times northward following the Carpathian range, in the 14th-16th centuries gradually populated Slovak and Polish Carpathians, up to Cieszyn Silesia and Moravia. Initially they abode on high pastures living exclusively by shepherding. In time, however, as a result of increasingly frequent contacts with Ruthenian, Polish and Slovak population they assimilated with the Slavs and tended to settle down in the Carpathians and piedmont areas, forming rural settlements according to the so-called Walachian law. Dutch settlers, mostly religious refugees (Mennonites) from the Netherlands and Friesland, as early as the 16th century brought wetlands in the Vistula River mouth into cultivation, and later, up to the late 18th century spread over other areas in northern and central Poland. German colonization contributed to development of rural settlement system in Poland in two historical periods. First, in the 13th-15th centuries German settlers played important part in the process of planned foundation of villages, mostly in Silesia and Pomerania, under the so-called German law. Second, after the partition of Poland in the late 18th century a large group of German newcomers appeared in Prussia-occupied areas in Greater Poland, Gdansk Pomerania and

central Poland which resulted in establishing many rural settlements. One should mention also Slovaks who, although in much smaller numbers, populated since the Middle Ages mountainous areas of Zips (Spis) and Orava at the foot-hills of the Tatra Mountains.

As a result of the above-mentioned political and migrational processes – which certainly have no parallel in other European countries – forms of rural settlement in different historical regions of Poland acquired some specific characteristics. The political factor, however, should not be overestimated. As a matter of fact, rural settlements in the entire territory of Poland have been shaped following some universal patterns that had emerged in Central Europe with accordance to specific socio-economic conditions, level of agriculture and changing concepts of spatial organization of villages. These factors influenced modifications in spatial forms of rural settlement, which naturally depended as well on particular environmental conditions.

Morphological alterations of rural settlements sometimes affected only some elements of the inner structure (i.e. the layout), e.g. only the built-up area or only the field pattern. In some cases, however, the entire spatial and economic (sometimes also social) structure was modified which led to totally new settlement forms.

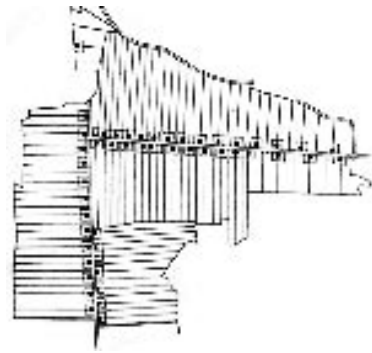
2. PHASES IN EVOLUTION OF RURAL SETTLEMENT FORMS IN POLAND

With regard to socio-economic changes in development of rural settlements on Polish lands – which in turn generated more or less marked morphological transformations – one can distinguish the following phases:

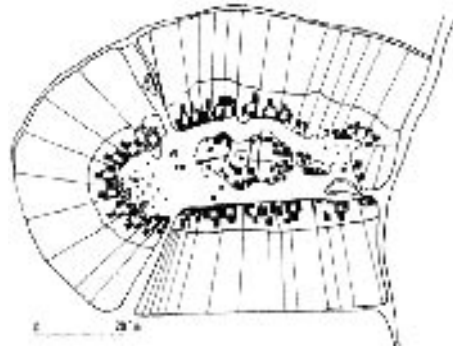
- the early-medieval (pre-charter) period
- the medieval charter period
- the period of manorial and corveé economy
- the period of transition from feudalism to capitalism
- the period of morphological transformations in the 19th century
- the period of ‘socialist village’

2.1 The early-medieval (pre-charter) period

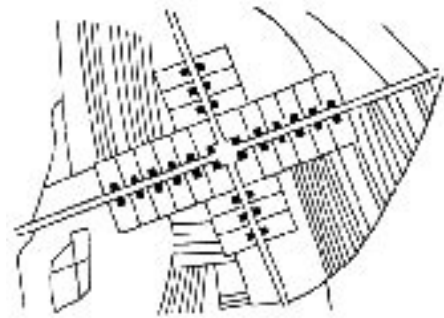
The Low Middle Ages – the period of early feudalism – lasted on Polish lands from the 6th to the middle of the 13th century. In that epoch agriculture and rural settlement underwent significant transformations that occurred in a few stages. First of all, the slash-and-burn farming, which involved perpetual moving in search of new farming land as the soil became unproductive (hence the place names such as Łazy, Łazęgi, etc., whose etymology suggests wandering) was replaced by sedentary agriculture based on ploughing with draught animals (first ox teams, then horses). The later part of this period, since the mid-10th century, coincided with formation of Polish statehood, emerging of magnate class and establishment of large landed estates.



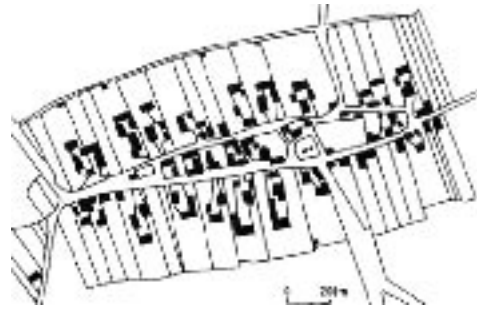
Frederician colony – regular street-village



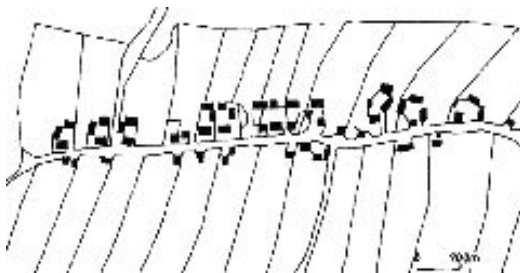
*Large regular round-shaped green village
(After H. Szulc)*



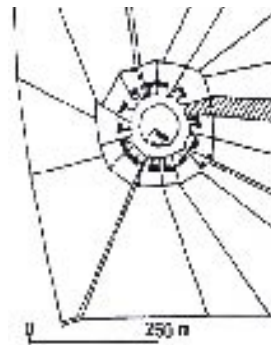
*Josephinian colony A copy of the plan
colony founded in 1783*



*Large, regular oval-shaped green village
re-organised under the German law
(After M. Kielczewska-Zaleska)*



*Regular Dutch row-village
(After M. Kielczewska-Zaleska)*



Round-shaped village (After A. Zagożdżon)

Map 1: Historical regions of Poland



1. Present-day boundry of Poland; 2. Boundaries of historical regions; 3. Main rivers

Map 2: Main historical provinces of Poland in the medieval period



In the Low Middle Ages two types of settlements existed: open, unenclosed villages and fortified settlements completed with a group of subjugated villages obliged to render some particular services. These settlements were either clustered or dispersed. The former were usually composed of a single homestead inhabited by large family. The later were generally situated on the areas of long-established settlement system with considerable population density.

The settlements of that time had to be formed in accordance with the environmental conditions. Their founders had to choose the most suitable sites, most often at rivers or lakes, sometimes on natural clearings in the forests or dry sand hills. For safety reasons, some villages were sited on islands or marshy grounds. Of great importance was also the accessibility to the existing roads, particularly the major trade routes. Actually, the road section at which the settlement was established, became automatically the principal element of its inner structure. It represented an axis at which the village core, that is the ground intended for buildings, was laid out. Depending on the shape of road system it could take the form of simple single-street village, fork-shaped village or multi-street village. In some settlements the high street broadened into an oval or round village green, often occupied by a pond. The so-called green villages of round or oval shape, most common in Silesia and Pomerania, were well-adapted to stock-raising functions: the village green served as a place to which livestock were driven in the night, being watered at the pond and protected from wild animals by fences put at each end of the main street. Some spontaneously developed villages assumed an intricate, compact form deprived of any geometric regularity.

The organic, unplanned villages that developed in the early medieval period were characterised by very loose relationship between the built-up village core and the arable fields. Forest clearing carried out independently by individual farmers resulted in field strips dispersed chaotically all over the territory belonging, by traditional unwritten law, to a given rural community. Consequently, it led to a disordered, irregular field configuration with individual strips varying greatly in size and shape. Moreover, field strips were widely separated, because only more fertile soil was taken under cultivation, whereas land of lower quality lay fallow. The fields were cultivated according to the two-field system.

Creation of Polish state, establishment of chivalry and magnate class, as well as formation of royal/ducal territorial administration produced a new settlement system. It consisted of a network of fortified settlements – seats of duke or his governors. Representing central places of the system, these strongholds were completed with craftsmen's baileys and market settlements. In further distance a number of satellite villages of various functions were established. Some of them were settled by war captives, which is evidenced by many place names found in the vicinity of former strongholds e.g. Pomorzany (Pomeranians), Niemce (Germans), Czechy (Bohemians), Węgry (Hungarians). Another, very specific, type of settlements is represented by so-called service villages, situated within a radius from a few to 20 kilometres from the stronghold. Their inhabitants were obliged to render services of different kinds, according to the specialization of the village, usually revealed by its place name e.g. stock-raising (such as Owczary – sheep-herds, Świniary – swine-herds, Kobylany – horse-herds), food production (Piekary – bakers, Miodowniki, Sytniki – mead-brewers, Winiary – winegrowers), hunting (Psary – dog-keepers, Sokolniki – falconers, Bobrowniki – beaver-keepers), weapon

production (Grotniki – spearhead-makers, Szczytniki – shield-makers), church maintenance (Świątniki), pottery (Zduny), production of receptacles (Łagiewniki), etc.

The emergence of magnate class as owners of large landed properties caused some important changes in the settlement system. Landlords had small castles and manor houses built and organized manorial farming estates, along with subordinated villages, the inhabitants of which were burdened with fixed work dues.

After the introduction of the Christianity (966) and its strengthening in the mid-11th century, the church authorities, bishops and abbots, embarked on colonization of ecclesiastic domains. The archbishopric of Gniezno, for instance, possessed in the early 12th century some 100 villages with more than 1,000 households each. Clergy, coming from Western Europe, the monks in particular, brought along western innovations in the domain of agriculture and spatial planning. They largely contributed to improvements in farming tools (e.g. introduction of the heavy plough in the 12th century) and diffusion of the three-field system, gradually replacing less productive two-field system. The three-field system consisted in division of the arable land into three roughly equal fields. In one of the fields (the autumn field) fall crop was planted, another field (the winter field) was planted with a spring crop, and the third field was left fallow and used for grazing.

During most of this period rural settlement had open and spontaneous character devoid of legal foundations. Only from the mid-12th to mid-13th century new legal regulations concerning settlement foundation were introduced, which paved the way to radical changes in the centuries to come. This was the colonization under the so-called Polish law. The principle of the new colonization was to offer the settlers involved more privileges in comparison to the remainder of rural population. They were exempted for a few years from manorial dues. In villages founded under the Polish law there was a position of starosta – a lord's agent presiding over the execution of dues in kind and money dispensing justice on behalf of the lord.

Polish-law villages were somewhat larger than previously existing ones, with the number of settlers typically ranging from 10 to 15. Morphologically speaking they were much similar to older settlements. Usually these were compact villages, developed along a short section of a road (street) or clustered around a small, round or oval green with a pond; some of them lined river banks or lakeshores. Sporadically newly established villages represented the dispersed type of settlement. Fields generally continued to have irregular configuration, widely scattered and separated with forests, scrubs, swamps or meadows. At a certain distance from the village were situated manors of middle-nobles, as well as solitary hamlets (mills, smithies and inns)

2.2 Medieval chartered settlements

The most important turning point in socioeconomic relations and spatial organization of rural settlement in Poland occurred from the middle of the 13th to the middle of the 16th century. Alterations that took place during that period, which had impact on morphology of villages, were connected with large-scale reform called colonization under the German law. The legal status of villages founded under the German law was codified by a charter granted by a local ruler. Such document was targeted at defining dues and privileges of the village

dwellers and the settler-contractor (locator) called *soltys*. It was a person responsible for recruitment of settlers and successful accomplishment of the settlement process. The German law (which spread into Poland from Germany, hence the name) implied radical remodelling of the rural economic system. The newly created villages were based on three-field system as an innovative, more efficient farming method and the land was held by peasants on the rent-charge basis. German law regulations were to the benefit of all parties concerned: the peasants profited from guaranteed legal and economic conditions, while the landlords were able to increase their incomes, which stimulated further development of their domains.

Charters were issued not only for newly established villages (founded *in cruda radice*, that is on previously undeveloped sites), but also for localities that had existed beforehand (the latter case was much more frequent). It should be stressed here that the population of localities founded *in cruda radice* was not necessarily composed of foreign colonists. If foreign colonization initially prevailed, later on new villages were settled mostly by Poles. Therefore the colonization under the German law is not identical with German colonization. As a matter of fact, in some provinces e.g. Silesia and West Pomerania, the influx of German was massive, indeed. Further eastward, however, in Greater Poland and Gdansk Pomerania, the share of Germans diminished, while in central regions, Mazovia and Lesser Poland was practically negligible.

Although there are no complete data on number of newly established villages in that period in Poland, most certainly they were very numerous, considering that in Greater Poland alone, German-law villages founded in the 13th-14th centuries are estimated at 343 (Burszta 1958, p. 51). Changes that occurred at that time determined the shape of the settlement system in Poland for the next 500 years and are still clearly visible in the cultural landscape of the country.

Colonization under the German law greatly influenced morphological features of rural settlements. As a result of precise land measurement, they assumed usually very regular forms with planned field configuration and distribution of homesteads. The settlement land was divided into equal-sized pieces called *Hufen* measuring 16.7 ha and distributed among all settlers, whose number ranged from a few to several dozens (usually around 20). The settler-contractor, who held the position of village administrator, was entitled to double-size portion of land.

With regard to field pattern, two main types of villages can be distinguished: individual and aggregate, each occurring in many variations.

Aggregate field pattern is represented by open-field villages, well-adapted to lowlands prevailing in Poland, therefore most numerous. This type was closely connected with three-field system. Spatial arrangement of the village area started with designation of an area intended for dwellings. Centrally located, this area was subdivided into a number of building plots, corresponding to the number of settlers. The remaining land was divided into three blocks of fields, each of which was subdivided into strips, allocated to every settler (it means that each villager held land in three portions). Usually two fields were adjacent to the built-up area, whereas the third one was arranged at right angles to them. One field would be planted with winter crop, the second field would be planted with spring crop, while the third field would remain fallow. The practice of crop rotation allowed for continuous production without

excessive depletion of soil. This basic three-field configuration was often supplemented by subsequent encroachments: incorporation of new fields is evidenced by place names such as Przymiarki, Przypusty, Nowiny, etc.

The open-field settlements had different layouts. Relatively few round-shaped green villages, known from previous period, can be found in Pomerania, Greater Poland and Silesia. Oval-shaped green villages are most typical of Silesia: nearly 500 of them can be found in this province, 350 of which chartered under the German law. Most common, however, particularly in central and eastern Poland, were regular street villages with houses standing on one or two sides of the high street. This simple model occurred in more complex forms of fork-shape villages and multi-street villages. Generally, open-field villages represented most widespread type of villages founded under the German law.

Individual field pattern was represented by double-row forest villages (*Waldhufendorf*), founded mostly in hilly and piedmont areas, particularly in river valleys in the Sudetes and the Carpathian Mountains, from Silesia up to Lesser Poland. In contrast to open-field villages, where each farmer owned one parcel in each communal field, here every farm was assigned an elongated strip of equal size (usually one Flemish hide or 16.7 ha), initially covered with forest. The plots had their narrow edge along the track on the valley floor and then stretched upwards along the slope to the ridge. The farmers have built their houses at the bottom end of their plots along the road. In broader valleys plots were allocated separately on each side of the valley, while in narrower ones a single plot crossed the whole valley, from one ridge to another. The advantage of the former variant was that natural conditions on each farm were nearly identical as strips extended over both sunny and shady slopes.

Houses, separated from each other by tracks giving access to fields, were loosely distributed all along the length of the village. Double-row forest villages were typically established *in cruda radice* after primary forests were cleared or burned down. Pre-existing settlement forms – if any – could not survive, as the entire spatial structure of the village was transformed.

Adaptation of village shape to natural conditions is clearly visible in villages founded in the Carpathians in the 15th and 16th centuries under the so-called Walachian law. The colonization of the Carpathians advanced from two opposite directions: from the valleys up and from the ridges down, and was connected with two different economic systems: farming and pastoral, correspondingly. Villages founded on mountain pastures under the Walachian law represented a mixture of the two. Their spatial arrangement was similar to double-row villages founded under the German law: each villager was given a strip of land, typically of one hide. The difference consisted in the fact that the plot always stretched from the valley floor up to the ridge, symmetrically in both directions. As has been mentioned before, Vlachs having increasingly frequent contacts with Ruthenian, Polish and Slovak population assimilated with Slavic autochthons. This process resulted in four areas in the Carpathian Mountains inhabited by different ethnic groups: the Hutsuls (in present-day Ukraine), the Boykos (in Bieszczady Mountains), the Lemkos (in the Lower Beskides) and Podhale highlanders (the Tatra Mountains and Podhale region).

Medieval chartered villages, both founded *in cruda radice* and re-organized under the German law, represented only a part (although major) of the total rural settlements in Poland.

Many older villages kept operating under the Polish law e.g. in Gdansk Pomerania in the late 15th century out of 1,112 villages as many as 323 stuck to Polish-law regulations; in other regions their share was also around 30-40% (Burszta 1958, p. 65). Most of old villages founded under the Polish law were marked with irregular pattern of both built-up area and fields. Some of them (e.g. in Silesia and Pomerania) retained such chaotic configuration till the 19th century. Nevertheless, in the period concerned, in some villages regulation of field pattern was carried out (division of arable land into three fields), without changing legal status of the village or layout of built-up area.

One should mention here also one more type of row-villages that sprang up in the second half of the 16th century – that is in the post-medieval period, but evidently inspired by the idea of chartered settlements founded in the Middle Ages. They originated during the big agrarian reform effected in royal domains in eastern provinces of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: in Lithuania, Belorussia and Ukraine (among present-day Polish regions: in Podlasie). This reform (called *pomiara włóczna*, meaning ‘one-hide land measurement’) aimed at reorganization of hitherto irregularly dispersed singular settlement into regular street-villages rearrangement of arable land according to the three-field pattern. Thus each farmer was assigned 3 plots (one in each field) of the total area of one hide (Polish vloka equal to 21.2 ha). In practice, however, the redistribution of land was not as even as it was provided for: after the consolidation more affluent peasants received two or even three hides, whereas the poor got less than one hide, which upset the theoretically very regular field configuration.

2.3 The period of manorial and corveé economy

The manorial and corveé economy, which reached its peak development in Poland in the 16th and 17th century, entailed far-reaching changes in socio-economic conditions of rural areas and consequently transformations of spatial structure of villages.

Manorial system gradually dominated rural economy. It became more profitable to cultivate the land through serfs rather than free tenant farmers. The land remained in the landlord's holding and was loaned to peasants who cultivated it in return for services and dues, including personal work dues (a few days a week). This system was introduced in response to growing demand of Polish grain in West Europe. Grain was floated by the Vistula River to the port of Gdansk. Many other river ports arose along the Vistula, as well as purchasing centres and huge storage houses. As the grain export turn out to be highly profitable, it stimulated further extension of manorial estates and foundation of new ones, that followed the model of previously existing, well-organized ecclesiastic manors.

The manorial system determined the economic system in Poland for nearly 300 years. Continuous growth of manorial estates based on grain monoculture, which flourished until the second half of the 18th century, greatly influenced the rural settlement system in Poland, most notably in the Vistula River basin and Greater Poland and to lesser extent in West Pomerania and Silesia. Manors were particularly widespread in Greater Poland: here manorial estates covered four times larger area than peasant's lands; in other regions this ratio was approximately 4:3.

Expansion of manorial estates was furthered in different ways: peasants' property was withdrawn in part or totally, commons (meadows) and fallows were incorporated into demesnes, forests were cleared and marshlands drained. Moreover, in the aftermath of wars against Sweden in the second half of the 17th century, many villages in Poland were depopulated or abandoned, which facilitated development of manors.

Rapid growth of manorial estates resulted in extensive wastelands being put under cultivation. Consequently, several new villages had to be founded and Poland's settlement landscape was substantially altered. Manorial villages were laid out in a different way than older settlement. In case of newly incorporated arable lands, fields were arranged in uninterrupted blocks. In case of manorial estates founded on previously cultivated lands, the demesne was intermingled with peasants' plots within each field. To do away with such irrational field pattern, some landlords carried out amalgamation of fields and separation of tenants' property from demesne. Sporadically, new land measurement was performed leading to total transformation of spatial structure. Much more often, however, the patchwork distribution of fields remained unchanged until the 19th century.

New manorial villages, founded chiefly in the 15th-17th century, were most numerous in Greater Poland and Pomerania. They clearly differed from older villages founded under the German law: the demesne was unquestionably the dominant element of the manorial estate, whereas the strips held by individual villagers were small and represented in total a minor part of the estate. As to the spatial disposition, the manor was situated either in the centre of the village or aside, amidst the fields. In the latter case, manor and village constituted two separate elements, clearly different as to their physiognomy. Peasants' settlement was compact, composed of low, wooden buildings sited on individual farmsteads. Manorial buildings (stables, barns, storage houses, etc.), large and often made of bricks, usually formed a quadrangular enclosure, with one side sometimes occupied by landlord's mansion with adjacent garden. In some large manorial estates, composed of several villages, a separate settlement systems arose, centred around the primary village – the family nest – with landlord's residence (completed with a manor or not). In further distance there were manorial settlements surrounded by several peasant's villages.

2.4 The period of transition from feudalism to capitalism

The capitalist system was instituted on Polish lands in the last decades of the 18th century. It coincided with a crisis of feudalism in agriculture caused by, among others, decrease in grain export. The manorial system was becoming increasingly inefficient and was gradually replaced by land-rent system. Therefore, while retaining the manorial system in the existing villages, landlords embarked on establishing new rural colonies operating on the basis of rent paid in coin and usage of the crop rotation system. These colonies were peopled mainly by foreign settlers, Dutchmen and Germans in particular.

As a matter of fact, first Dutch colonies appeared in Poland as early as the first half of the 16th century in the Vistula River mouth and in Ducal Prussia (former lands of the Teutonic Order). They were established by Dutch colonists, most of whom were religious dissidents

(Mennonites) fleeing persecutions in their homeland. Experts in drainage methods and reclamation of wetlands, they were primarily settled in swampy areas. Consequently, from the 16th to 18th century a new, previously unknown type of settlement emerged at edges of river valleys. These villages were laid out loosely with farmsteads disposed widely over an extensive area. Dwellings were arranged in row lining up the main road laid down along the edge of meadows or swamps. The road, which often took a winding course conformably to surface features, represented the main axis of the settlement. At right angles to it were arranged elongated plots of equal size occupied by colonist's homesteads. These so-called Holländer settlements were much similar to double-row forest villages founded under the German law, but the two types of settlements are found in completely different natural environments: the former on swampy lowlands, the latter in forest districts.

Holländer settlements represented a novelty in Poland's agricultural economy. The Dutch colonist enjoyed the status of free, self-administered settlers obliged to make tax payments. They brought to Poland some important agrarian innovations. Initially restrained to northern sections of Poland, the Holländer settlements kept on pushing southward along the Vistula River valley, eventually reaching other regions. Since the end of the 16th century, as the migration from Holland diminished, the notion of "Holländerei" passed on to all settlements operating according to analogous legal and economic system, regardless of being settled by colonist from Germany or, in later times, even Poland. It should be noted that some Holländer settlements, particularly in Greater Poland and central Poland, originated not on swampy lands but also on forest-clearings. Therefore, in opposition to marsh-land Holländerei, these colonies were called Hauländerei (from German verb 'hauen' - to clear).

Holländer settlements occurred in two spatial forms: some, modelled after Dutch peat colonies, were adapted to natural conditions of river valley or swamp edges. Their make-up was similar to that of double-row forest villages: each colonist was assigned a plot measuring one hide (in Pomerania equal to 21.2 ha), stretching from the river bed or marshy lowland upward to the village confines. Farms stood on one or, more rarely, on both sides of a road traced out at right angles to plots, on higher ground beyond the flood-plain. These so-called marsh row villages were marked by ribbon-like field pattern. The other, less common, type of Holländer settlements was characterized by dispersion of homesteads and fields arranged in blocks. In this case the settler was assigned a single, rectangular piece of land, in the middle of which the dwelling house with accompanying buildings were placed. This type was typically found on forest clearings and most often had the form of solitary settlement.

In the same time, similar, very regular row villages originated in Silesia (which did not belong to Polish State then). In the aftermath of 1740-1745 war, Austria lost this province to Prussia. Largely devastated during the 7-Years War (1756-1763), Silesia was subject to large-scale program of reconstruction and re-colonization. Apart from Silesia, the so-called Frederician colonies sprang up in poorly populated regions of West Pomerania and East Prussia. To repopulate the country, settlers were driven from other German states, mainly from Westphalia, Rhineland, Austria, and others. After the first partition of Poland in 1772 this colonization was extended over lands newly incorporated to Prussia: Greater Poland, Kujawy and Gdansk Pomerania. In a like manner, after the second and third partitioning (1793 and 1795) colonization pushed further into Polish lands, including central Poland up

to the Vistula River. Initially this settlement process developed on former royal domains and after secularization in 1796 also ecclesiastic domains. According to estimates, the Frederician colonization yielded some 250 new settlements in Silesia, 180 in West Pomerania, 120 in East Prussia, and over 500 on lands annexed to Prussia after the partition of Poland (Burszta 1958, p.125). This colonization accelerated germanization of the areas concerned, and contributed to modernization of rural economy and settlement systems.

Frederician colonies varied as to their economic functions. Many of them developed as industrial colonies e.g. the weaver's colonies in right-bank section of Silesia or timber-sawing colonies that can be found throughout the country. Most of them, however, performed agrarian function. Some Frederician colonies were established on former manorial estates, others on cleared or abandoned lands. The size of individual plots ranged from 17 to 51 ha.

Village-plans of Frederician colonies bear evidence of traditional Prussian fondness of order and regularity. Differing in form, they all exhibit stunning, perfectly geometrical layout, with only sporadic departures dictated by surface features. Most colonies were set up in the form of compact, simple street-villages, with farmsteads regularly arranged off the perfectly rectilinear street. Likewise, the plots were also disposed according to very regular, ribbon-like pattern. Much less common were colonies in the form of oval-shape green village. Compact colonies of these types prevailed in western part of the country. Quite often, however, Frederician colonies were laid out as loose settlements, resembling Holländer marsh-land villages, although more regularly planned. In some cases, however, Prussian land-surveyors produced more sophisticated village-plans, e.g. in the form of cross, elongated rectangle with a polygonal place in the middle, radial streets intersecting at the octagonal central place, or circular with radial arrangement of plots.

Most of the Frederician colonies constituted independent elements in the settlement system. Some of them, however, were built as an extension of the previously existing village. Formally considered as one village, such two segments stood in sharp contrast, differing not only physically, but also with regard to socio-economic aspects. Owing to their rational spatial structure, most Frederician colonies survived to date with little or no alterations.

The guiding principles of the Frederician colonization inspired similar action undertaken in Lesser Poland after its annexation by Austria (1772). Here also both economic and political motives (Germanization of Galicia) lay behind the undertaking known as the Josephinian colonization (from the name of Emperor Joseph II Hapsburg). Based on legislations issued in the years 1781-1786, the action resulted in 123 colonies founded within a short period of time in Galicia (Burszta p. 130), mostly within former manorial estates and secularized (in 1773) ecclesiastic domains (subsequently also on wastelands, clearances in forests and swamps).

Modelled after earlier Austrian colonization in Hungary, the field pattern in Josephinian colonies differed from that in Frederician settlements. Resembling medieval villages, fields were widely dispersed, often intermixing with peasants' plots. Arable land assigned for the new colony was first divided into main fields, each of them subdivided into a number of plots corresponding to the number of settlers. Each colonist possessed a piece of land in each field, which resulted in typical checkerboard disposition of field. Besides, a portion of land was set aside for the road and building plots with gardens laid out at right angles to it.

Village-plans of Josephinian colonies were largely inspired by geometric layout employed in Frederician settlements. Apart from most typical street-villages, square, rectangular and cruciform shapes can be found. Many of them survived almost intact till now, clearly distinguishing themselves from much older medieval villages.

In the Russia-occupied section of partitioned Poland the situation was totally different. As it has been mentioned before, a fragment of this area remained temporarily (till 1806) under Prussian administration, being subject to Frederician colonization. After Napoleonic wars this area was annexed to the Duchy of Warsaw and after the Congress of Vienna (1815) was incorporated into the Kingdom of Poland, which was a part of Russian Empire. At the beginning of the 19th century German colonization of this areas kept developing as landlords, interested in exploitation of hitherto unused lands (wastelands, forests, swamps), attracted settlers from abroad. This was encouraged by the government of the Kingdom of Poland, which as early as 1816 passed legislation favouring import of so-called 'useful foreigners'. As a result of such policy, many German colonies were founded in private domains, in particular in the vicinity of Kalisz, Łódź, Płock, Warsaw and in Podlasie region. The influx of colonist diminished after 1835 when new policy halted the process of parcelling out manorial estates.

The 19th-century German colonies, largely imitating the models of Holländer and Prussian settlements, occurred in two spatial forms: regular linear row village and solitary colonies. The former were elongated, loose settlements, composed of stripped farmsteads arranged at right angles to the main road. The solitary colonies represented fragmented ownership pattern, made up of blocks of lands, in the middle of which the dwelling and outbuildings were sited. If other holdings of this type happened to be situated at certain distance, they formed together a dispersed settlement.

The complex system of rural settlement that developed in Poland, composed of open-field villages, Holländer settlements, Frederician colonies and private German villages, underwent homogenization in result of large-scale agrarian reform carried out by tsarist government in 1864. Connected to the emancipation of serfs, this reform implied a radical spatial transformation of villages all over the Kingdom of Poland.

It should be noted here that although Polish peasants had enjoyed personal freedom since the late 18th century, nevertheless land-ownership rights were granted with considerable delay. In Prussia-occupied territory (Silesia and Pomerania) it took place in 1808 in state properties and in 1811 (with some restrictions) in private domains; in 1823 this legislation was extended over Greater Poland. In order to prevent excessive fragmentation of land, the primogeniture principle was employed, giving the oldest son the exclusive right to inherit his father's estate. In Galicia, serf enfranchisement was carried out after the 1848 revolutionary unrest, but here it was not coupled by land amalgamation. Therefore many archaic settlement forms have survived in the Lesser Poland countryside. Later, in 1864, enfranchisement reform was launched by Russian authorities in the Kingdom of Poland (following the emancipation manifesto issued in 1863 by Polish insurgent government). The tsarist reform was most radical, leading to total transformation of previous spatial structures.

The land regulation that followed the enfranchisement act was based on two basic principles: consolidation of fields and separation of manorial property from plots owned by individual peasants. Consolidated fields were divided into allotments, redistributed among

peasants (one piece, of different size, for each). It involved substantial modification of the village structure: compact linear settlements were transformed into loose villages, similar to Prussian row villages. It could be laid out along one street, two parallel streets or assume more complex shapes, according to the configuration of road network. Retkinia (today a neighbourhood within the city of Łódź) provides an example of more perplexing layout, resulting from diversified social and ownership structure. This village was composed of four units: Duża Kolonia (big colony) with full-size holdings, Mała Kolonia (small colony) inhabited by yeomen possessing medium-sized farm, Retkinia-Zagrodniki occupied by peaty farmers, and Retkinia-Komorniki for cottiers who owned nothing but their cottage and garden, employed by better-off peasants as farmhands.

Consolidation of demesnes consisted in amalgamation of dispersed manorial plots into one piece of land, typically forming a block, with lord's manor and outbuildings situated in the centre (it would be very impractical and expensive to move manorial buildings, larger and more solid structures compared to villagers' dwellings, to another place). In this way reformed manorial estates were turned into separate, independent settlement units, either totally detached or topographically connected with newly regulated village.

New row villages, formed after the enfranchisement of serfs, along with similar linear Prussian and Dutch colonies, became predominant element in rural landscape of the former Kingdom of Poland. Only in few villages (mainly those with no manorial estate) the original compact village-plan in the form of street-village, fork-shaped village or multi-street village was preserved in spite the consolidation process. Subsequently, thus formed settlement system was supplemented with accretive hamlets that originated through subdivisions of holdings among heirs or by putting adjacent wastelands into cultivation. Generally, the settlement system as established in the 19th century persisted, with some minor changes, till the end of the Second World War in the mid-20th century.

2.5 The socialist and modern period

Socio-economic and morphological transformations of rural settlements in the second half of the 20th century were brought about by creation of large cooperative and state-owned agricultural holdings during the communist period. The collectivization process, however, was far less advanced in Poland than in other 'socialist' countries (except former Yugoslavia). Although many state-owned farms were established on the so-called Regained Territories (former East Prussia, Pomerania, Silesia), nevertheless private tenure accounted for no less than 72% of farmland countrywide. State-owned farms were usually formed from former manorial estates, which involved changes in physiognomy (construction of block housing for workers, devastation of palaces and mansions), but configuration of rural settlements remained almost intact. Although cooperative holdings founded by peasants operated on consolidated lands and some large-scale constructions were erected, their members kept living in their village dwellings, which did not undergo significant changes. Moreover, most cooperatives were dissolved before the fall of the communism.

Much more marked changes occurred in the last decades of the 20th century as a result of urbanisation and suburbanization of rural areas. This ongoing process has resulted

in many recreational settlements and second homes, either permanent or seasonal, sharply distinguishable from traditional rural physiognomy. These processes, that have produced far-reaching modifications in the cultural landscape of Poland's countryside, require more extensive analysis, which exceeds the scope of this paper.

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POLITICO-HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF EVOLUTION OF RURAL SETTLEMENT IN POLAND

Summary

Morphological forms of the villages in Poland are much more differentiated than in other European countries. Despite of differences that result from various planning concepts evaluating during passage of time the great influence on the villages shape had a large territorial variability of Poland, especially its division between Russia, Prussia and Austria for over 120 years. Apart from changing political affiliation of different historical provinces, of considerable importance for shaping the rural settlement system in Poland was immigration of foreigners, most notably Vlachs, Dutch and Germans. As a result of the above-mentioned political and migrational processes – which certainly have no parallel in other European countries – the forms of rural settlement in different historical regions of Poland acquired some specific characteristics. However, it needs to be underlined that rural settlement in Poland, on its whole territory, in a great measure was being formed according to some general, universal central European patterns that were corresponding with prevailing, in the different historic periods, socio-economical relations, level of rural economy and changeable concepts of rural spatial organization. Changes of those factors were contributing to formation of different settlement forms, differentiated according to varied conditions of geographic environment.

In the period of ancestral community and later, after transition to individual or even early feudal economy, the settlement was rare, sparse, in the shape of single households and farmsteads. From 13th century, together with distribution of two-field and afterwards three-field economy, this form of settlement was replaced with compact villages (oval villages, street villages). During this time the first wave of settlement from the West had reached Poland and the villages that were founded according to German law, has come into being. Essential changes in the rural settlement occurred from the decline of the Middle Ages up to the end of 18th century, most of all as a result of successful business cycle in the rural economy caused by advantageous grain export to Western Europe. As a consequence of that the manorial and corveé economy has formed. In the last decades of the 18th century, as an effect of colonization that took place according to the patterns developed by Dutch settlers, new forms of the villages – so called ‘Holländer’ - had appeared. They had a form of loose, irregular colonies, with buildings extended among whole acreage of the village, situated separately in the field of each settler. After Poland partition new forms of colonization so called Frederician or Josephinian had developed. Villages that were founded in those times were characterized by a geometrical planning, in a shape of linear row village, rectangle or a unique star. The radical reconstruction of rural settlement network took place in the second half of 19th century in connection with the enfranchisement of peasants in the Russian annexed territory (1864). During this time, as a consequence of large disintegration of peasant grounds, the process of comasation and separation of peasant and manorial grounds, which were separated into individual manorial complexes. In this way the dominating type of row village has developed, with households situated usually on the one side of the road, separately on the field of each farmer. Only not numerous old villages had avoided radical reconstruction. That is the reason why in nowadays settlement landscape, oval villages, street villages and different types of multi-street villages - although rarely - still can be seen. After WWII as a consequence of landed estates nationalization, some of the manorial farms had been parceled out, new form of villages had appeared and partly state owned farms were created. All of them, to a greater or lesser degree, had remained the traces in the contemporary settlement landscape of Poland.