

MAYOR HERMAN HAKEN AND ARCHITECT WILHELM MEYER-SCHWARTAU – FORMING OF SZCZECIN CITY LANDSCAPE AT THE TURN OF 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY

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Abstract. In the context of shaping the city landscape, including shaping of the green areas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a special attention is deserved by the activity of Hermann Haken – the Mayor of Szczecin and Wilhelm Meyer-Schwartau – Municipal Construction Counsel. The aim of this study is to present the impact of the decisions taken by Haken and the designs prepared by Meyer-Schwartau on the development of Szczecin in terms of shaping the landscape of the city utilizing of its natural values and greenery.

Key words: green areas, city landscape, Szczecin.

*Możesz z Wałów Chrobrego dotknąć nieba wytartego szmatą obłoków
by odkryć na dnie wzruszenia kształt zielonego miasta*

Tymoteusz Karpowicz, Dzień

1. Introduction

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a significant spatial development of European cities resulting from the industrial revolution occurred. This involved economic, social and, above all, demographic changes. The territorial development of Szczecin at that time fundamentally changed the nature of the city which was transformed from a fortress with a cramped layout of medieval streets encompassed by a wall into an agglomeration of diversified spatial composition and architecture. According to Łopuch, Szczecin, for more than 600 years, remained an essentially medieval city and was changed only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when it obtained new buildings of monumental character [1, p. 16]. The spatial transformations that took place during that period have been preserved in the landscape of the city and, despite the ravages of war, they are still visible in its structure.

In the context of shaping the landscape of the city, including shaping of the green areas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a special attention is deserved by the activity of Hermann Haken – the Mayor of Szczecin in the years 1877–1907 and the architect he imported to Szczecin – Wilhelm Meyer-Schwartau that performed the function of the Municipal Construction Counsel within 1891–1921.

The aim of this study is to present the impact of the decisions taken by Haken and the designs prepared by Meyer-Schwartau on the development of the metropolitan Szczecin in terms of shaping the landscape of the city utilizing of its natural values and green areas. The study analyses the background conditions and the historical development of selected objectives of the design by Meyer-Schwartau that had the greatest influence on the “green” image of the city and that, at the same time, represent the identity of Szczecin for its past, present and future generations.

Just as the designs of parks by Arnold Röhrling and his activities as the Director of public gardens and the Chief Gardener of Lvov influenced shaping of the landscape of the city, in the same way, the designs by Wilhelm Meyer-Schwartau and the decisions taken by the City Mayor Hermann Haken determined the image of Szczecin as a rapidly expanding city at the turn of the century.

In scientific work, the architecture of Szczecin from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was described from the perspective of the spatial development of the city, which was to be a result of demographic and economic processes. There is quite a rich literature, both German and post-war Polish, about the history of the spatial development of both the city itself and its green areas. Kozińska and Włodarczyk discuss the processes of the demographic and spatial development of the city, similarly as Białecki and Turek-Kwiatkowska as well as Zaremba and Orlińska¹. Pieces of valuable information for the subject studies are provided by the publications on Meyer-Schwartau's work by Wojciech and Maria Łopuch [2; 1; 3] as well as publications on the Central Cemetery by Słonimski [4; 5] and the collective work under the guidance of prof. Stachak [6; 7].

2. Hermann Haken – Mayor of Szczecin

Hermann Haken² took up the function of the Mayor in Szczecin in one of the most important moments in the history of the development of the city – when the decision about the demolition of the fortifications was taken. By virtue of the Act of 1873, it was decided to liquidate eight fortresses in Germany, including the Szczecin ones. During Haken's tenure, the current downtown bristles with their characteristic stellar squares, wide boulevards and elegant buildings came to existence. The most important role in the new structure of the city was played by Kaiser Wilhelmstrasse (at present the avenue of John Paul II) constituting the main compositional axis of the new city that connected the Old Town with its verdant Westend District (at present the Pogodno District) and extensive green areas in the west (Kasprowicz Park, Arkoński Park and Forest)

After taking office in Szczecin, Haken attracted the young generation of educated architects and officials from Berlin: W. Meyer-Schwartau, E. Drews, Osterwold, Rosener, Sternberg who, together with the older ones: K. Kruhl and C. Schmidt, changed the architectural image of Szczecin [1, p. 86].

As presented by Łopuch in his publications, Haken played a decisive role in the architectural development of Szczecin; being a broad-minded person, he maintained contacts with high-ranking government officials and implemented the concept of Szczecin as a great industrial centre of the Province of Pomerania. As he himself maintained, he won the battle for the architectural shape of the city by drawing young educated officers headed by Meyer-Schwartau to the magistrate [3, p. 5].

3. Wilhelm Meyer-Schwartau – urbanist, architect, Municipal Construction Counsel

Wilhelm Meyer-Schwartau was born in Lübeck-Schwartau in 1854, he was a student of prof. Friedrich Adler in the Berlin Building Academy. At the age of 37, he was appointed to the position of the Municipal Construction Counsel in Szczecin and performed these duties for 30 years [3, p. 7]. He was the author of many monumental neo-style buildings that shape the today's image of Szczecin: the buildings of the Municipal Savings Bank (at present Pomeranian Medical University) and the Customs Office (at present – the same office), the church on the Łasztownia Island (at present The Trinity Church) and the school buildings: Municipal Gymnasium (at present Secondary School no. 1), Royal Prussian School of Construction Crafts (at present Chemical Department ZUT).

¹ B. Kozińska, *Rozwój nowoczesnego Szczecina od początku XIX wieku do II wojny światowej*, Szczecin 2002; E. Włodarczyk, *Wielkomijski rozwój Szczecina w l. 1871–1918*, *Dzieje Szczecina*, t. III pod red. B. Wachowiaka, Szczecin 1994, p. 279–519; E. Włodarczyk, *Przekształcenie śródmieścia Szczecina (1870–1918)*, *Przegląd Zachodniopomorski* 1982, z.3/4; E. Włodarczyk, *Wielkomijski rozwój Szczecina w XIX i pierwszej połowie XX wieku (do 1945 r.)*, Szczecin 1993; Białecki T., Turek-Kwiatkowska L., *Szczecin stary i nowy*, Szczecin 1991; P. Zaremba, H. Orlińska, *Urbanistyczny rozwój Szczecina*, Poznań 1996.

² Hermann Haken (1828–1916) – Mayor of Szczecin (earlier – for 10 years Mayor of Kołobrzeg) – he was for 30 years decided of the shape of growing city. During his times, city has not only developed, but it has also become strong industrial center – shipyard Vulcan has developed, the custom port has been started to built. Honor citizen of Szczecin (1913), his name was imprinted in then citizens of Szczecin memory in the name of Odra terraces – Hakenterrasse, in 2000 his name was given to newly build roundabout in Szczecin [8, p. 314].

His most famous designs are related to shaping the city's landscape and green areas that today play a key role in the urban structure of Szczecin. These are – Haken Terraces (at present, Wały Chrobrego) established on the Odra River and the compositional layout of the eastern – oldest part of the Central Cemetery, the largest cemetery in Poland and the third largest in Europe.

The architectural image of Szczecin was, in a large part, shaped by Meyer-Schwartau. While descending down the monumental staircase from Wały Chrobrego towards the Odra embankment, we will see the building of the former Customs Office on the other side of the river and, on the right, the slender tower of St. Gertrude church. His output, consisting of a number of representative buildings and schools as well as the Central Cemetery, is marked by a momentum in urban planning, impressive dimensions of objects and rich architectural decorations. Certainly, it can be stated that the buildings designed by Meyer-Schwartau in the modern, often unified, urban landscape continue to represent the individual character of the city [3, p. 30].

4. Green layouts of Meyer-Schwartau's design that define the character of Szczecin

4.1. Haken Terraces (at present Wały Chrobrego)

The establishment of the Odra terraces was initiated by Hermann Haken, the Mayor of the city who on behalf of the city authorities signed with the State of Prussia, the then-owner of Fort Leopold, an agreement enabling to build the terraces. The design of the whole layout prepared by Meyer-Schwartau assumed the creation of viewing terraces located at the distance of 80 meters from the Odra river bank and rising 18 m above the river level. The width of the layout was intended to correspond to the width of the old fort – 480 m. The highest part of the terraces with a walking promenade was planted with linden trees and connected by a wide staircase with a semi-circular observation deck which, in turn, was joined with side flights of stairs to the passenger harbour. The monumental nature of the layout was emphasised by a strictly symmetrical composition referring to the principles of Baroque (Italian cascading palace gardens), while the architecture of the terraces gained Neo-Baroque forms: the semi-circular outlines of the observation deck and fountain pool; the S-shaped side stairs together with the pavilions on top that were erected at the close of the streets; stone facing of the retaining walls with a characteristic Cyclopean motif, supplemented by a fountain, located at the foot of the layout, with a shallow pool and a huge semi-circular niche containing a sculpture in the middle that refers to the Baroque garden caverns. The development of the terrace crown was also designed according to the principles of symmetry: at the axis of the layout (monumental stairs, terrace and fountain niche) there was designed the building of the Municipal Museum in the centre and the administrative buildings at the sides. At the back of these buildings, towards the city centre, a vast square with flower beds discounts was planned; it was to be surrounded by elegant buildings and linked with the Grabowski Park (at present Żeromski Park) [1, 24–28].

A complex of buildings designed at the top of the terraces was intended for the seat of the Regency (German administrative region) authorities, the Municipal Museum, the Insurance Institution and the Finance Office that combined the municipal, cultural and economic functions together emphasizing in this way the rank of the layout [1, p. 97]. The importance of the place was to be additionally enhanced by the equestrian statue of Emperor Wilhelm III by L. Manzel which, however, due to the very large size did not fit on the terrace and was set in the greenery (in the place where now the monument to Adam Mickiewicz stands) and in front of the Museum a sculptural group was placed: Hercules fighting with a centaur (also by L. Manzel).

The terraces were erected in the years 1901–1907. At that time, the buildings intended to stand on the main promenade were designed. First, the headquarters of the National Insurance Institution (at present Maritime Academy) designed by E. Drews – an architect from Szczecin, were established at the southern end of the layout. Then, the imposing building of the Szczecin Regency (at present Voivod ship Office), designed by P. Kieschke, a Berlin architect, was built in the northern quarter. Whereas, the centrally located building of the Municipal Museum (at present National Museum and Theatre), designed by W. Meyer-Schwartau, was completed in 1913. The massive and symmetrical body of the museum building with a tower and extended arcade driveway, faced with bright-yellow sandstone and grey granite identical as on the walls of the terrace buildings, forms a perfect culmination of the terrace crown [2, p. 62]. As the last, the building of the Main Custom Directorate (at present Maritime Academy), designed by K. Hinckeldeyn, an architect from Berlin, was erected in the southern part of the terraces.

Execution of the layout assumptions lasted nearly twenty years: in 1901 Wilhelm Meyer-Schwartau prepared the whole design and in 1921 the construction of the last of the buildings was completed [2, p. 97]. The City Council of Szczecin in recognition of the achievements named the terraces after the initiator of their creation, City Mayor Hermann Haken. [9, p. 19–39]

In the Grabowski Park joining the greenery at the back of Haken Terraces, Meyer-Schwartau designed a “Park House” (at present Hotel Park) that was built in 1912. The building, a “land haus” -type comprehensive family house, housed a restaurant, a cafe and guest rooms in the middle of a garden. The sculptured shape of the building that was covered with a mansard roof and a turret created a climate of familiarity and its terrace opened to a carefully designed garden with exotic plants (palm trees that were popular in Szczecin at that time) resembling a residential layout [3, p. 27].

After the end of the Second World War, the first representatives of the Polish authorities came to Szczecin and occupied the buildings on Haken Terraces which, as one of the few, survived the carpet bombing in 1944. In the building of the Szczecin Regency, the seats of the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Polish Government and the City Mayor were established and it is here that the Polish flag was first hoisted on the flag pole and City Mayor Piotr Zaremba issued a proclamation to the Polish people on April 30, 1945.

The terrace outlay established at the beginning of the twentieth century opened the city on to the Odra River creating a monumentally composed portion of its panorama (Fig. 1). The design of the representative part of the city by Meyer-Schwartau is characterised by a momentum, loosened arrangement of development at the back of the administration buildings and the museum as well as by that the space is filled with greenery. To this day, there have been preserved the lime avenue along the promenade at the crown of the terraces and the rows of oaks along A. Mickiewicz Square. However, the original composition of the greenery at the rear of the buildings (the present A. Mickiewicz Square) with beautiful perennial flower bed and the lawn founded in a sunken garden did not survive. [7, p. 29–30] They are replaced by a modern system of lawns and paths.

The beautiful layout of Haken Terraces by taking advantage of the natural values of the landscape and complementing it with a monumental architecture became a permanent part of the spatial structure of the city and inscribed in the consciousness of its residents, both past and present ones, acting as a recognizable distinguishing mark of the landscape³ of Szczecin.



Fig. 1. HakenTerraces (Wały Chrobrego), photo by M. Rzeszotarska-Palka 2016)

³ Mark of landscape – identification mark in space, that serves to characterize sources in every town and village in order to distinguish one from another. Definition after I. Niedźwiecka – Filipiak, [10, p. 52].

4.2. Central Cemetery in Szczecin.

Almost parallelly with the work on the construction of Haken Terraces, works at the establishment of a new municipal cemetery were carried out. The official opening of the cemetery took place on December 6, 1901 [7, p. 23–25] Meyer-Schwartau was the author of the eastern part of the design, while the western part was designed by Georg Hanning (together with Luise Lotte Hüger) – the Director of the cemetery until 1928. The eastern part was completed as the first one in 1918. The area of the cemetery then had 64 ha and in 1943 the cemetery already covered 164 ha.

The Szczecin necropolis is distinguished by a unique park character with a carefully designed composition of the main east – west axis that utilizes the natural qualities of the terrain. The main axis of observation was marked with a flourish – its beginning was accentuated by the chapel building with a central projection located on a hill exposing a decorative pool at the foot and three terraced ground-floor gardens (at present it is the War Cemetery) (Fig. 2). On both sides of the axis of observation, avenues running in bends are designed. The Neo-Romanesque chapel with an octagonal interior is covered with an eight-walled polychrome dome and refers to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, while in architectural details it is dominated by Romanesque decorations [3, p. 12].



Fig. 2. Central Cemetery, photo by M. Rzeszotarska-Pałka 2016

Meyer-Schwartau in shaping the main compositional axis of the layout perfectly took advantage of the existing terrain making it at the same time an impressive axis of observation and engaging the viewer in the landscape. According to Słonimski, the designer borrowed the general principles from the layouts of the cemetery-gardens realized in the 70s of the nineteenth century in Vienna and Hamburg-Ohlsdorf according to which a “garden of the dead” had to combine the aspects of a landscape, greenery, architecture and grave sculpture in harmony with the surrounding landscape [5, p. 86–87]. The creators of the Szczecin cemetery: Meyer and Hanning were guided by the idea of “transferring funerals from churches and towns to gardens” [3, p. 12]

“A huge park to bury the dead” wrote Francis Gilin 1947 [11, p. 220]. Various parts of the vast cemetery were designed in an individual way focusing attention on the role of greenery separating intimate garden interiors. Additionally, many places were left free of burials and they formed natural-looking glades and

thickets⁴. There are many species that are rare in Poland on the cemetery area: *Abies koreana* Wils., *Pinus ponderosa* Dougl., *Picea omorica* Pancic, *Larix leptolepis* Gord., *Quercus pseudo turneri* Schneid., *Calycanthus floridus* L [12, p. 19–0].

The exhibition of cemetery art that was held in Szczecin in 1911 became an inspiration for the creation in the next year of the Cemetery Regulations which included provisions on the principles of the formation of lodgings and the forms of graves and tombstones. After 1918, the Cemetery was enlarged with the western part with avenues that run perpendicularly to the main axis. In this part, there were marked rectangular lodgings separated by tall hedges that constituted independent interiors with a centrally located narrow courtyard.

Despite the destruction of many historic objects of sepulchral art, the Szczecin necropolis is still the largest and most valuable example of a landscape cemetery in Poland that is also of European importance. It is planned to initiate a procedure for the recognition of this cemetery as a monument of history and, in the future, also to seek entry on the UNESCO World Heritage List [5, p. 102].

5. Results. The role played by the green layouts designed by Meyer-Schwartau in contemporary Szczecin

According to Raszeja and Gałecka, the lack of clarity and legibility of space as well as the loss of characteristic elements that determine the identity of an urban landscape are the problems of modern cities [13, p. 143]. As proved by analyses, both the present Wały Chrobrego and the Central Cemetery are unique elements of the landscape of the city that define its character and are recognizable to the residents and people from outside of Szczecin. They are not only covered by a legal monument protection⁵, but are also treated with a special care by the city authorities and still continue to have a usable value in the life of the city inhabitants and also an aesthetic function as well as a sensual one by creating a space full of meanings and close to the heart.

The Central Cemetery, although limited for new burials due to the lack of space (the city has a new cemetery at Bronowicka Str.), still plays a very important role in the lives of the city residents. Since its creation, nearly 300 thousand people have been buried in the Cemetery, many of them are still visited by relatives. Periodically, in June, symphonic outdoor concerts dedicated to the memory of “*those who did not return from the sea ...*” are held in a beautiful setting of the performance of the “*lights on the water*”. The Cemetery is one of the most valuable green areas in Szczecin due to the rich collection of over 415 species and varieties of trees and shrubs [6, p. 112] which were selected with consideration of interesting shapes, colour of leaves in different seasons as well as the appearance during flowering and ripening of fruit. All this makes it a destination of numerous trips both for lovers of greeneries as well as for professionals walking along the paths demarcated in 2010: the botanical path⁶ and historical route which enable to view the most interesting places of the eastern part of the necropolis. Thanks to the unique composition created by Meyer-Schwartau that endows the Cemetery with a park nature, it has become a place not only for the dead but also for the living. After the war, the road leading to the cemetery, Pasewalker Chaussee, received a new unusual name “Towards the Sun”, given by Helena Kurcysz, the Main Spatial Planner of the Szczecin Voivodeship⁷. The symbolic name of the street perfectly corresponds to the layout of the main compositional axis of the necropolis.

⁴ Unfortunately, many of those places were assigned to burials after the II World War.

⁵ Wały Chrobrego (view terraces) has been inscribed to monuments register of West Pomerania voivodship – no. 851, decision no. DZ-4200/22/O/96 on 18.12.1996. Central Cemetery has been inscribed to monuments register of West Pomerania voivodship – no. 905, decision no. Kl.III/5340/10/85 on 16.06.1985.

⁶ Botanical path was designed in the eastern part of the cemetery. There were 32 boards with information of interesting trees and shrubs located. The path begins and ends at main cemetery gate, it was created by Marcin Kubus from ZUT in Szczecin. Exactly, in that place terrain lessons of Dendrology for landscape architecture students from ZUT are given.

⁷ Helena Kurcysz was living nearby the Cemetery after the war and she has everyday walked from Cemetery to Wały Chrobrego (to Support Committee for Poles, where the food was given). She was always wandering towards the sun: in the morning – towards east, while in the evening – towards west. That is the idea of the name “Towards Sun” [14; 5, p. 99–100].

On the other hand, the old Haken Terraces and the present Wały Chrobrego were the scene of many events in the history of post-war Szczecin, functioning for the residents as a traditional goal of family walks and the most important place where they take their guests while trying to show the city. A postcard from Szczecin usually represents just the panoramic view of Wały Chrobrego. Here are held the annual Days of the Sea, as well as rallies of the largest tall ships in the world – the Tall Ship Races. Czekieli-Świtalska exactly in this place finds the heart of the city, which is so difficult to define in Szczecin (the city does not have a traditional market square), “*The heart of the city, which are Wały Chrobrego in Szczecin, is surrounded by a greenery and from its terraces there is a splendid view of the green Grodzka Island (...) make the most impressive view from the area of the Łasztownia Island, however, this view can only be seen during large outdoor events*” [15, p. 166].

6. Conclusions

The historical development of Szczecin that was clearly intensified as a result of the decision to liquidate the Prussian fortifications in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, had a major impact on shaping of the landscape of the city and its system of urban greeneries. The activity of the then Mayor H. Haken and the Municipal Construction Counsel W. Meyer-Schwartau resulted in a number of objects endowing the city with a distinct character and forming its identity till nowadays.

Meyer-Schwartau was able to masterly use the terrain in shaping vast perspectives. When designing Haken Terraces he achieved the monumental effect using the high embankment of the river where he led the representational stairs towards the front of the Museum while in the Central Cemetery he created a broad perspective by drawing the viewer’s attention to the distant landscape. [4, p. 27] He created designs of representative green areas that constitute essential elements in the landscape of the city. The designs by Meyer-Schwartau could not be, however, implemented without the support of the then Mayor Herman Haken who was consistently building the spatial structure of modern Szczecin.

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**МІСЬКИЙ ГОЛОВА ГЕРМАН ГАКЕН ТА АРХІТЕКТОР ВІЛЬГЕЛЬМ МЕЙЕР-ШВАРТАУ –
ФОРМУВАННЯ МІСЬКОГО ЛАНДШАФТУ ЩЕЦІНА НА ЗЛАМІ ХІХ–ХХ СТОЛІТЬ**

***Анотація.** Особливої уваги у контексті формування міського ландшафту на зламі ХІХ–ХХ століття заслуговує діяльність Германа Гакена – міського голови Щеціна та архітектора Вільгельма Меєра-Швартау. Стаття має на меті показати вплив рішень, прийнятих Гакеном, та проєктів, виконаних Меєром-Швартау для розвитку Щеціна в контексті формування міського ландшафту міста враховуючи його природні умови та зелені насадження.*

***Ключові слова:** озеленені території, міський ландшафт, Щецін.*