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Protection of wooden architecture monuments and the cultural heritage of Polish Tatars (on the example of the Bohoniki Cultural Park and the landscape park in Kruszyniany)

Introduction

Due to its location on the eastern border of Poland, Podlaskie Voivodeship has for centuries been the land of many cultures, where elements of the material and spiritual heritage of the East and West interlace. It is one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse regions in the country, which is reflected in the architectural forms of sacral buildings and places of worship belonging to various religions that survived here, along with their traditions, customs, languages and cuisine. In addition to Poles, these lands were inhabited by various nationalities, including Lithuanians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Jews, Armenians, nomadic Roma and Tatar populations [1, p. 6], [2, p. 10].

Tatars in Poland are an official ethnic minority. According to the 2011 census, about 2,000 people of the Muslim faith belong to this community¹. The country currently has over a dozen places of prayer (mosques and houses of worship) and six mizars, or cemeteries [3]. Most members of this group live in Gdańsk, Poznań, Warsaw, and in Podlasie, in the belt from Sokółka to Krynki (Fig. 1). Specifically, in the villages of Bohoniki and Kruszyniany, the oldest settlements of Tatar Muslims and their legacy of wooden mosques from the 18th and 19th centuries survived. Their centuries-old traditions, as well as the customs cultivated and maintained to this day by the Tatar population, are a treasury of past history and irrefutable proof of the existence of genius loci. The magic of the

Podlaski Orient, situated in the surrounding natural landscape of the Green Lungs of Poland is quite unique, and many have visited the area over the years to experience it.

Despite the unique architectural and cultural values of both places, and the fact that the mosques and mizars located here have been entered into the national list of monuments and recognized as monuments of history, the cultural landscape of the villages is exposed to changes and distortions as a result of industrial investments planned here. These activities will undoubtedly have a negative impact on the scenery of the countryside, in spatial, natural and social terms. One of the ways to protect the Tatar culture was through the creation of a cultural park in Bohoniki, the aim of which is to strengthen the protection of monuments located in the area, as well as to consolidate the tourist potential of the village. In Kruszyniany, whose rural layout along with ownership divisions is under conservation protection, there are plans to build industrial poultry farms. To stop such investments, there are efforts to establish a landscape park here, whose priority would be both the protection of the surrounding nature of the Knyszyn Forest and its multicultural heritage.

On the basis of collected source materials and conducted field research², including architectural inventory, photographic documentation and conversations with residents, this text discusses the symbolism and richness of the culture of Polish Tatars living in the villages of Bohoniki and Kruszyniany. They are examples of temporal

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¹ The results of the 2021 census have not yet been published.

² The author's field tests were carried out in 2020 and in July 2021 as part of a scientific and research internship organized by the Faculty of Architecture of the Białystok University of Technology in the Sokólski Powiat.

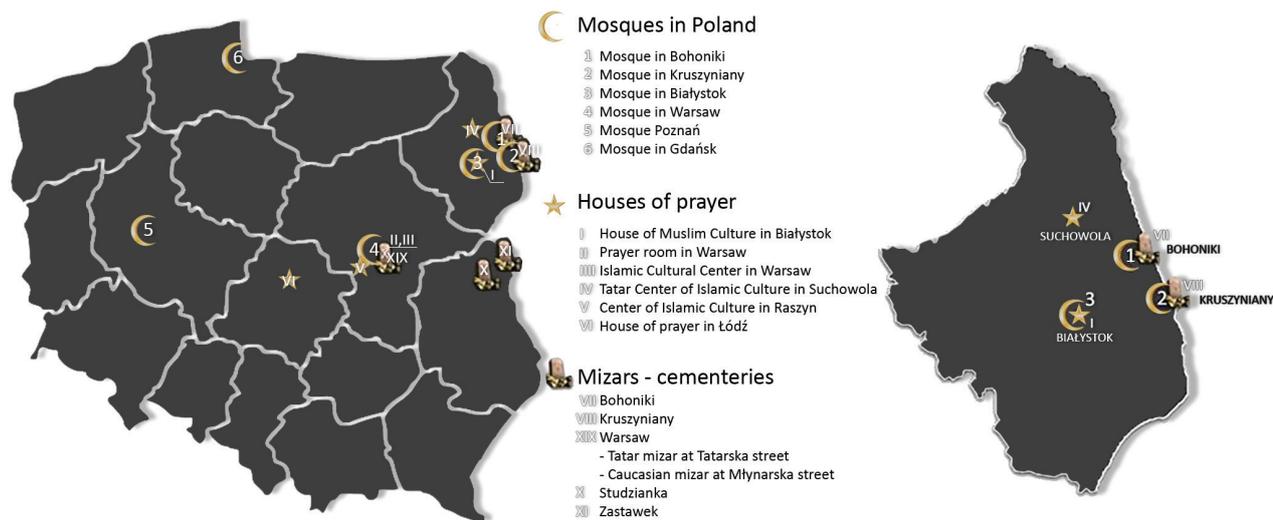


Fig. 1. Location of mosques in Poland and Podlaskie Voivodeship (elaborated by K. Karwowska, K. Klepacka, P. Bartnicka, R. Adamska, 2021)

Il. 1. Lokalizacja meczetów w Polsce i województwie podlaskim (oprac. K. Karwowska, K. Klepacka, P. Bartnicka, R. Adamska, 2021)

continuum, both in spatial and spiritual aspects, and the architecture found here serves as an identifier of the cultural landscape of the Podlaskie Voivodeship. The ethnic communities living here have retained strong identification with their roots and place of residence, cultivating traditions handed down from generation to generation. The article also discusses some of the legal issues concerning the protection of the villages from the perspective of regulations regarding the functioning of a cultural and landscape park, as well as describes the actions taken in this area by the residents themselves, local authorities and conservation services. This is to draw attention to the problem of comprehensive protection of monuments and cultural heritage of Polish Tatars in the context of contemporary civilizational changes and related landscape changes.

Podlaski Orient. History of Tatars in Podlasie

The genesis of the name Tatar dates back to the 5th century and comes from the name of Mongolian tribes, and over time the people of Turkey. A few centuries later, these tribes covered more than half of Asia and almost all of Eastern Europe. After the collapse of the Mongol Empire, the western part of their civilization transformed into several independent states, including the Golden Horde. Its inhabitants are the ancestors of Polish Tatars.

The history of Tatar settlements on Polish lands started 600 years ago. The first settlements appeared in the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 14th century. The settlers were mostly refugees and prisoners of war from the Golden Horde. They settled in Podlasie thanks to King Jan III Sobieski in the 17th century, serving in the Polish army on many fronts. They were called Polish Tatars, Lipka Tatars (*Lipkowie* from the Turkish name for Lithuania) or *Muślimi*. In 1672, during the war with Turkey, the Tatars switched to the side of the enemy due to non-payment of overdue fees by the Polish side. It was

the famous rebellion of the Lipka Tatars. Hetman Sobieski, however, defeated the Turks and took the rebels back despite their treachery.

For their bravery and devotion and as compensation for unpaid dues, the king gave them land in the villages of Drahle, Bohoniki, Malawicze Górne, Kruszyniany, Górka and Nietupa. He gave the Tatars nobility, guaranteed freedom and allowed them to marry local women and raise children in the Islam faith. However, they had to adopt Polish surnames. Therefore, to this day, among the Tatars, you can find surnames ending in *-ski* and *-cki*, e.g. Murawski, Popławski, Jasiński, or ending in *-icz*, e.g. Szabanowicz, Szczęsnowicz, Szahidewicz. In addition to military service, the Tatars were mainly engaged in land cultivation, trade and tanning. In time, they began to build their own temples [1, p. 57].

Cultural heritage of Polish Tatars

More than six centuries of common history has resulted in the Tatars considering themselves Poles, all the while maintaining their religion and traditions. In the village of Kruszyniany, one can find the Center for Education and Culture of the Muslim Tatars in Poland, which introduces visitors to the customs of this ethnic group. Every year, numerous events are organized, during which the flavors of Tatar cuisine, colorful folk costumes, verbal and musical folklore and horse archery shows are presented.

However, the most important element shaping the Tatar identity is undoubtedly religion. Islam is a religion that has created a certain model of life among its followers, establishing five basic precepts – pillars. The Islamic calendar is different from the Gregorian calendar used by Polish Christians. For Muslims, the year starts from the date of the pilgrimage of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina, that is, from July 15, 622 according to the Gregorian calendar, and Muslims practice the lunar calendar. Therefore, Muslim holidays do not have a fixed date in the



Fig. 2. View of the mosque in Bohoniki from the side of the mihrab (photo by M. Sulima)

Il. 2. Widok na meczet w Bohonikach od strony mihrabu (fot. M. Sulima)

calendar – they are mobile and are celebrated at different times. The holiday season is a very important time for the entire Muslim community and an opportunity to maintain inter-generational ties. Families come from different parts of Poland, and from even further, to celebrate and pray together in the mosque [1, p. 71].

Mosques and mizars in Bohoniki and Kruszyniany

In the village of Bohoniki six Tatar families live, that is, about 30 people. The faithful pray in the mosque, which was probably built in 1873. The date was discovered on the door frame during the renovation of the building in 2006. It is a wooden building (because Tatars were only allowed to erect such buildings), on a plan similar to a square measuring 11.49×8.03 m, with a porch, covered with a hipped roof with a turret, topped with a dome and crescent moon (Fig. 2).

The object is oriented towards the south-east, towards Mecca, the holiest city for Muslims. According to the requirements of Islam, the interior of the mosque is divided into two sections: the larger section for males and the smaller section for females, which, separated by a wooden partition with a curtain, allows women to participate in prayer. On the side where males pray, along the wall, there is a gallery supported on two columns, where boys gather to pray. Both rooms have separate entrances from the common vestibule, where shoes should be left. It is an expression of hygiene and respect, as Muslims pray in ritual purity (Fig. 3).

The interior of the main hall is decorated with *muhirs* (from the Arabic *muhir* – seal), i.e. decorative fabrics hanging on the walls with inscribed verses of the Koran and motifs of climbing vines, and paintings depicting places that are holy to Islam. However, there are no images of Allah, because unlike Christianity, in Islam there is a total ban on depicting people and animals in religious art. Carpets are laid on the floors, on which the faithful line

up in rows and, facing the holy city of Muslims, pray in Arabic. Prostrations are also made in this direction. In the mosque, this direction is marked by the mihrab – a niche in the wall, next to which there is a mimbar (from Arabic – a place from which one calls, a hill), i.e. a pulpit (Fig. 4). From there, dressed in a black robe (*dżubie*) and a head-dress (*czalma*), the imam delivers a sermon [1, p. 59].

Another Tatar village in Podlasie, Kruszyniany, is located near the border with Belarus. It was founded in the 16th century, as part of the land reform carried out by Queen Bona, the so-called spear measurements, as a terraced village with houses set on the gable on both sides of the main road. The historical spatial layout of the village together with building complexes, ownership divisions and road network was entered into the register of monuments in 1979 and is under conservation protection.



Fig. 3. Projection of the mosque in Bohoniki (elaborated by K. Karwowska, K. Klepacka, P. Bartnicka, R. Adamska, 2021)

Il. 3. Rzut meczetu w Bohonikach (oprac. K. Karwowska, K. Klepacka, P. Bartnicka, R. Adamska, 2021)



Fig. 4. Cross-sections of the mosque in Bohoniki (elaborated by K. Karwowska, K. Klepacka, P. Bartnicka, R. Adamska, 2021)

Il. 4. Przekroje meczetu w Bohonikach (oprac. K. Karwowska, K. Klepacka, P. Bartnicka, R. Adamska, 2021)

The Tatar population began to settle here from the 17th century. In the interwar period, the village was inhabited by followers of as many as four religions: Orthodox, Catholic, Muslim and Jewish faiths. Today, in addition to eight Tatar families, Orthodox Christians and Catholics also live here. In the village there is an Orthodox church located in the 18th-century cemetery and the oldest mosque in Poland [1, p. 63].

Most likely, the building was built between 1768 and 1795 [4, p. 21]. In 1846, it underwent its first renovation, as evidenced by the embedded plaque in the foundation. During the construction and conservation works in 1957,

and then in the years 1975–1976, 1992–1993 and 2004, attempts were made to protect its original appearance, and the elements requiring repair or replacement were reproduced as faithfully as possible to preserve the historical architecture [5, p. 269]. In 1960, due to its historical and cultural values and uniqueness on a national scale, it was entered into the register of monuments of the Białystok Voivodeship under number 62 [4, p. 24] (Fig. 5).

The mosque was built by local masters as a wooden structure with a log structure tied with a dovetail, on a rectangular plan and painted green. It is decorated with three towers: two symmetrical towers from the façade



Fig. 5. View of the front façade of the mosque in Kruszyniany (photo by M. Sulima)

Il. 5. Widok na elewację frontową meczetu w Kruszynianach (fot. M. Sulima)



Fig. 6. Cross-sections of the mosque in Kruszyniany (elaborated by K. Karwowska, K. Klepacka, P. Bartnicka, R. Adamska, 2021)

Il. 6. Przekroje meczetu w Kruszynianach (oprac. K. Karwowska, K. Klepacka, P. Bartnicka, R. Adamska, 2021)

side and a smaller one on the roof. They are topped with bubble helmets ending in a crescent [1, p. 63].

As in the mosque in Bohoniki, the interior of the building is divided into two parts (for women and men), to which separate entrances lead. Carpets are spread out on the floors and *muhirs* adorn the walls (Fig. 6).

As Agnieszka Płocka noted, while the division and layout of the building is dictated by the requirements of Islam, the external appearance – the shape of the building, the small number of decorations and the two towers in the front façade resemble Catholic sacral architecture, [...] e.g. the church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Stanislaus the Bishop in Narew from 1755, or the no longer existing 18th-century church in Mścibowo, in the Grodno region in Belarus [4, p. 14].

An important cultural element of the villages of Kruszyniany and Bohoniki are also Tatar burial places, or mizars, which give visitors even more insight into the culture of this ethnic group. The mizar in Bohoniki is the largest Muslim cemetery in Poland. Located at the far end of the village, set among large trees, it has existed there for 300 years, and the oldest tombstones date back to the 18th century. It can be accessed through a gate with a crescent motif, on which there are inscriptions in Arabic, Belarusian and Polish. In the vicinity of the gate there are newer tombs, and further back there are older ones, on which there are Arabic inscriptions and metal crescent moons on the stones located at the heads of the deceased. In the other village, dating from the 2nd half of the 17th century, the mizar in Kruszyniany is located behind the mosque and it is surrounded by a stone wall [1, p. 75] (Fig. 7).

Bohoniki Cultural Park

Bohoniki and Kruszyniany are villages that in historical, architectural, cultural and natural terms are important points on the map of the Podlaskie Voivodeship. On the one hand, they are unique on a national and even European scale, showing examples of wooden Muslim buildings combining Islamic traditions with local building art

[6]. On the other hand, they serve as proof of religious tolerance of various cultures in the ethnic borderland of Podlasie. The attractiveness of the places is additionally emphasized by the possibility of “live” contact with the Tatar population, who actively cultivate and promote their values, and who for centuries have been inextricably linked with the history of Poland.

Although the mosques and mizars located here are monuments and, since 2012, hold the status of monuments of history³, and the spatial arrangement of the Kruszyniany village is under conservation protection, the changing landscape and spatial transformations caused by industrial activity may permanently change this state of affairs. This became a reason for efforts to cover both villages with additional, comprehensive protection. In both cases, it was a question of an extended model of care so that, unlike the other forms, [...] *The object of protection was not only a monument, but an area comprising a complex of immovable monuments together with their surroundings, which as a whole represents [...] urban, historical or cultural value [...] [8, p. 41].*

For this purpose, a cultural park was established in Bohoniki on 28 May 2019. It was the first cultural park in the Podlaskie Voivodeship, which is meant to protect not only the monuments subject to conservation care, but also the surrounding environment. The need to strengthen the legal protection of the villages was a consequence of investments planned here, which would have a negative impact on the rural layout of the village. One of them is the location of a gravel pit near the Tatar cemetery, as such spaces are increasingly expanding around the village. Aggregates

³ The status of “monument of history” is awarded by the President of the Republic of Poland to monuments immovable of particular historical, scientific and artistic value, which are of significant importance for the cultural heritage. These should be objects under conservation protection that are well preserved, have the original spatial composition or have undergone slight transformations, present a homogeneous style, are properly exposed in the landscape and have preserved their original relations with the environment [7].

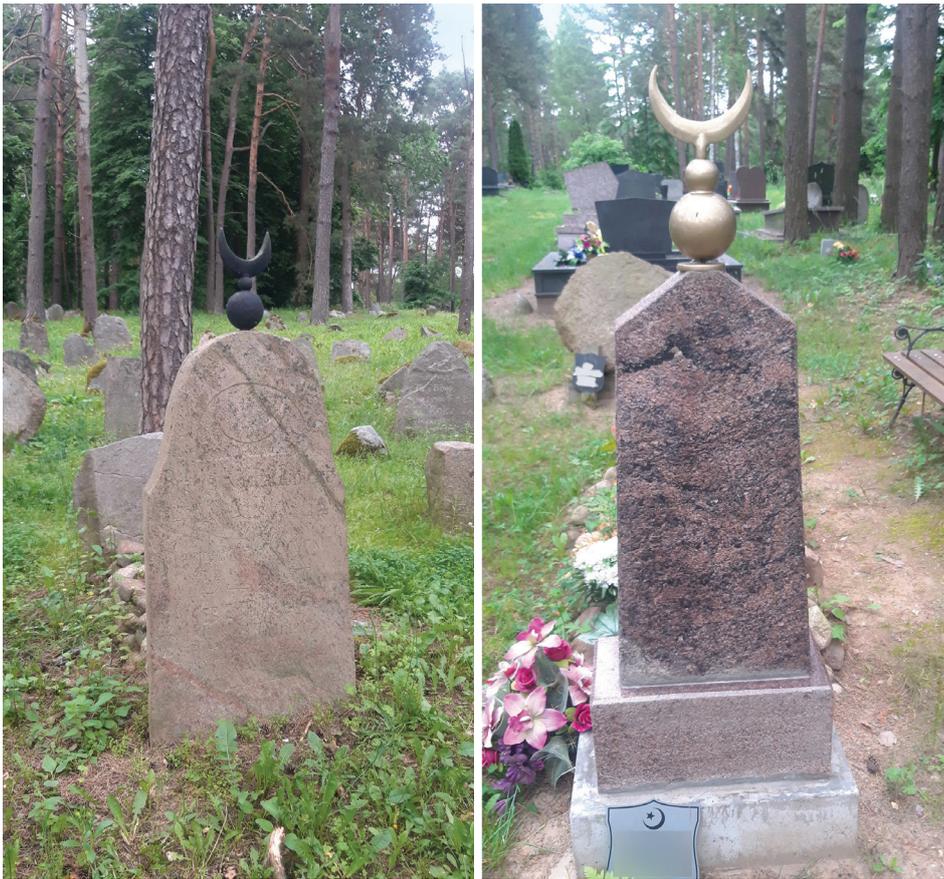


Fig. 7. Tombstones in the area of the mizar in Kruszyniany (photo by M. Sulima)

Il. 7. Nagrobne kamienie na obszarze mizaru w Kruszynianach (fot. M. Sulima)

extracted from the gravel pits can threaten the durability of the monuments found at the site, as well as have a destructive impact on the environment, distorting the terrain.

An important argument was also the protection of the cultural heritage of Polish Tatars, both in terms of material and spiritual heritage, which should not be left to survive only in human memory. The Tatar community living in the village cultivates its traditions, which translates into tourist potential, which could be threatened by plans for industrial activity in the area. As Barbara Tomecka, an expert in the field of monument protection, emphasized, the cultural park in Bohoniki deserves an extensive form of protection: *It's about preserving [...] monuments of Tatar culture [...] views of the mosque and mizaras, protection of the spatial layout of the village of Bohoniki, the architectural forms of buildings* (after: [9]). An important issue concerning the village itself was also the unification of newly created architecture and limiting the location of large-format advertisements in the area.

In Europe, the need for comprehensive protection of man-made and natural areas was highlighted in 2000 [10, p. 206]. At the time, the European Landscape Convention called for the legal recognition of landscape as an important component of people's surroundings, an area for expressing cultural and natural diversity as the basis of their identity [11]. As Mateusz Pszczyński pointed out, the solutions developed in Florence have only been partially implemented by Poland into the legal order [10, p. 206]. It was not until the *Ustawa z dnia 23 lipca 2003 r. o ochronie zabytków i opiece nad zabytkami* [Act on the Protection and Care of

Monuments of 2003] that the concept of cultural landscape was defined. In accordance with Article 3 (14) of that law, it is defined as [...] *a space historically shaped as a result of human activity, containing the products of civilization and natural elements* [12]. The act also introduces a new form of monument protection, which is the cultural park. It aims to protect [...] *cultural landscapes and preservation of landscape-distinctive areas with immovable monuments characteristic of the local building and settlement tradition* [12].

In practice, a cultural park is an act of local law approved by the municipal council after a substantive opinion issued by the provincial conservator. An important element constituting the character of the park is the preparation of a plan for its protection and a plan for its management. The resolution on the establishment of a cultural park should include: the name, the scope of the borders, the method of protection and all restrictions that should be precisely formulated⁴. Three months after the establishment of the park, a local spatial development plan must be drawn up [13]. Designed planning documents must take into account all specific prohibitions and restrictions, and,

⁴ Article 17 acts on the protection and care of monuments lists the following prohibitions or limitations in force: in the area of the cultural park: *carrying out construction works and industrial, agricultural, breeding, commercial or service activities; changes in the use of immovable monuments; placing boards, inscriptions, advertisements and other signs not related to the protection of the park, with the exception of road signs and signs related to the protection of public order and safety [...] and storage or storage of waste* [12].

as Pszczyński emphasized, take into account the protection of specific, valuable features of the socio-architectural space together with the natural context with which they form a common valuable “cultural whole” [10, p. 212].

Important from the point of view of the inhabitants of the area where the cultural park is to be created is the approval of the local community as to the establishment of a protected area. The restrictions introduced in the resolution concern limiting the type of buildings or the type of business activity permitted in the area, i.e. issues closely related to the users of the space [10, p. 207]. Therefore, before adopting a resolution, it is necessary to make this fact public, and within a period of not less than 21 days, interested parties may submit applications regarding the project.

In Bohoniki, the villagers initially disagreed with the idea of creating a cultural park there. At the end of June 2018, on the initiative of the Podlasie Provincial Conservator of Monuments, the first meeting was held, which was the beginning of further talks. A field visit was carried out to assess how far away from the mizar the gravel pits were located and how they interfered with the landscape of the village. Interestingly, during subsequent consultations, representatives of the Tatar community were also among the opponents of this form of protection. Their fears mostly resulted from ignorance and concerns about the restrictions, including the need for agreement of the conservator on the renovation or modernization of buildings in the protected area. It was then clarified that the cultural park would not entail any restrictions that would not be set by the residents in agreement with the municipality [14]. All restrictions resulting from the establishment of the protection zone were to apply to new buildings, which should be erected to fit into the unified architectural composition of the village.

The Podlaska Voivodeship Conservator of Monuments also proposed that if the idea of creating a cultural park was not supported, it would be possible to protect the rural layout of the village with conservation protection of the village, similar to what is present in Kruszyniany, which for residents would mean consulting all construction works with the Office for the Protection of Monuments [15]. Another argument for establishing the park was to support development and promotional activities. This form of care is an added value in the case of efforts to obtain sources of financing, for example for tourist activities, which is associated with an increase in the attractiveness of the village.

After discussions with experts and subsequent consultations, the project was approved, and in 2019 the Bohoniki Cultural Park was established. The initiative was supported by the authorities of Sokółka and provincial and state institutions, including the Provincial Conservator of Monuments, the Podlasie Voivode, representatives of the National Heritage Institute and the Deputy Minister of Culture and National Heritage [16]. The restrictions approved by the residents and the municipality included a ban on development of a viewing area around the mizar; a ban on the extraction of mineral resources; a ban on the storage of garbage and other waste; a ban on fencing real estate with concrete or other such elements; a ban on the

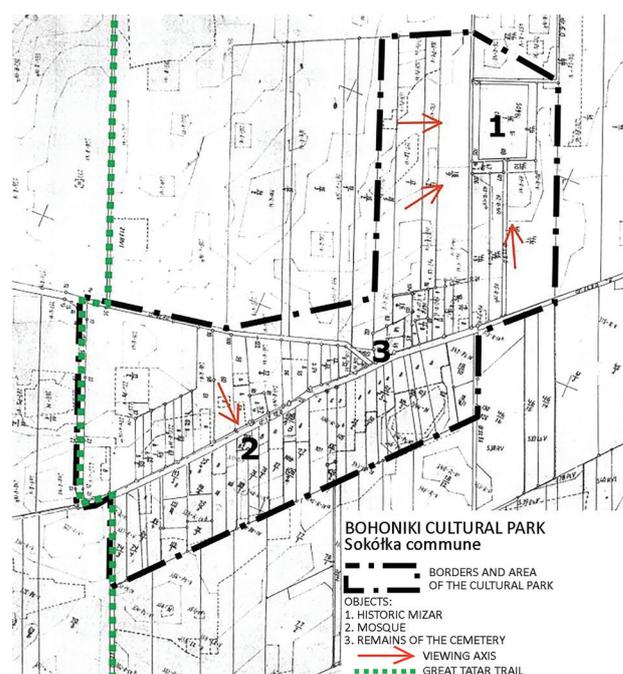


Fig. 8. Boundaries of the Bohoniki Cultural Park (source: [17])

Il. 8. Granice Parku Kulturowego Bohoniki (źródło: [17])

building of production, industrial or warehouse buildings in the area or conducting such business activities in this area, with the exception of agricultural activities [17]. In accordance with paragraph 4 of the resolution of the City Council in Sokółka, an area of 57 ha was to be protected, including the area of the village within the viewing zone of the mizar and the historic mosque (Fig. 8).

After the adoption of the resolution, design work on the protection plan and consultation work on the development of a local spatial development plan began, which works are currently at the stage of completion. The Local Spatial Development Plan of the Bohoniki Cultural Park determines the purpose of the area and the principles of building and development in the protected area with respect for traditional architecture. It concerns mainly visual aspects and requires the construction of new buildings to be built in homogeneous architectural form, the type of finish and colors forming a coherent spatial whole [18]. As part of the procedure, in-depth public consultations were carried out, which consisted of presentations, debates, and an in situ research walk. They were conducted by experts in the field of spatial planning and representatives of the Municipal Office in Sokółka. Their aim was to reach the widest possible range of interested persons and collect their opinions, concerns and recommendations. Increasing the level of public knowledge about the proposals given in the development plan was extremely important for improving investment and construction processes. Therefore, during the meetings, the provisions of land use in the current plan and changes that could occur were discussed [19]. According to the Act, the Sokółka Commune Office is obliged to submit the plan for public inspection and then submit it for approval by the municipal council. Only then will it be possible to issue decisions on development conditions.

Unfortunately, despite the legal protection of the Bohoniki Cultural Park, gravel pits continue to appear around the village. On the basis of a compromise worked out with the entrepreneur, the distance of the gravel pits from the mizar area should be 207 m⁵. However, the park protects only the area within its borders, not the surrounding meadows or agricultural fields. *Ustawa z dnia 9 czerwca 2011 roku Prawo geologiczne i górnicze* [The Act of 9.06.2011 – Geological and Mining Law] [20], gives entrepreneurs the opportunity to dig and search for deposits. The lack of specific legislative provisions in this matter is thus detrimental to the cultural landscape of Bohoniki, whose surroundings increasingly resemble a lunar landscape.

Landscape park in Kruszyniany

In Kruszyniany, located in the heart of the forest complex of the Knyszyn Forest, planned investment in an industrial poultry farm, at a distance of 1500 m from the border of the site under conservation protection, became the reason for taking action to create a landscape park there.

The cultural values of the village are evidenced by the fact that its layout was entered in the register of monuments, and the mosque and mizar present there have the status of a historical monument. In addition, these areas, due to their unique natural values, are located within the limits of European Natura 2000 protection, for which, in accordance with the *Ustawa z dnia 16 kwietnia 2004 r. o ochronie przyrody* [Nature Conservation Act of 2004] [21], the following plans of protection were prepared: Natura 2000 Puszcza Knyszyńska PLB200003 and Natura 2000 Ostoja Knyszyńska PLH200006. The Krynki Commune, which includes the village of Kruszyniany, is also subject to landscape protection under the Resolution of the Podlaskie Regional Assembly on the “Wzgórze Sokółskie” Protected Landscape Area [22].

Industrial activities pose a significant threat both to the rural landscape – interfering and disturbing its exposition, as well as to flora and fauna, including habitats of rare species of animals and birds found in this area. This is also associated with a decrease in the touristic attractiveness of Kruszyniany and the exposure to economic losses for rural residents, most of whom conduct activities connected with tourism or gastronomy. However, the existing protective regulations do not prohibit industrial investment in the area. The area entered in the register covers only the historical layout of the village, and the plots intended for poultry farms are open areas of fields and meadows – undeveloped, without agricultural activity. From the planning documents in the possession of the municipality of Krynki, the current list of conditions and directions of spatial development from 2002 do not formulate specific prohibitions as to the location of poultry farms in the area either (it allows for the location of tourist services and ecological agriculture); besides, it is not a legal act. The lack of a local spatial development plan is an open door for such

investments. In addition, the applicable legal provisions do not specify the meaning of large-scale industrial activity, such as large scale poultry farms, and would classify it as agricultural activity. Since there are no regulations specifying the difference between farming and production on an industrial scale, the municipal authorities issued decisions permitting the development of such projects.

In turn, the residents of Kruszyniany, the Muslim Religious Community of Kruszyniany, as well as public administration bodies, including the Podlasie Provincial Conservator of Monuments, Deputy Minister of Culture, National Heritage and Sport, General Conservator of Monuments, the Ombudsman, as well as nature organizations and those working for the benefit of cultural and national minorities (including WWF, Polish Society for the Protection of Birds, Polish Angling Association, “Dzika Polska” Foundation, Nietupa River Valley Association) have been postulating for the creation of a landscape park here since 2019.

Article 16, point 1 of the nature conservation act⁶ defines a landscape park, [...] *as a protected area of natural, historical and cultural value as well as landscape value in order to preserve and popularize these values in conditions of sustainable development* [21]. In addition to protecting the monuments present, it also protects the surrounding area, guaranteeing a more extensive form of care than a cultural park.

The creation of a landscape park takes place by way of a resolution of the regional parliament. It should contain the name of the park, the definition of the area, the placing of borders and buffer zone (if designated), the wording of prohibitions and restrictions in force in the area and an outline of the method of protection. The protection plan created within five years from the date of establishment of the park, as an act of local law, should include: [...] *defining the boundaries of landscape protection zones constituting, in particular, exhibition foregrounds, axes and viewpoints as well as built-up areas distinguished by their local architectural form* [21]. It also lists sites of significant historical and cultural importance. As restrictions in the protected area deeply interfere with the daily lives of residents, it is important to ensure that they can participate in the procedure for drawing up a draft conservation plan [21].

In the case of Kruszyniany, residents and representatives of public institutions initially opted for the adoption by the municipality of Krynki of a local spatial development plan (zoning plan). The postulates, supported by the Provincial Conservator of Monuments, were rejected due to the costs. Therefore, the only chance for the villagers to stop industrial investment was through the creation of a landscape park.

As in the case of establishing the Bohoniki Cultural Park, in Kruszyniany not all residents initially adopted a consensus attitude regarding the delimitation of the pro-

⁵ Information obtained during an interview conducted in December 2022 with a representative of the City Hall in Sokółka.

⁶ *Ustawa z dnia 16 kwietnia 2004 r. o ochronie przyrody* speaks of the following forms of nature protection: national parks, nature reserves, landscape parks, protected landscape areas, Natura 2000 areas, natural monuments, documentation sites of inanimate nature, ecological sites, natural and landscape complexes, protection of species of plants, animals, fungi and lichens [21].

tection zone. Their fears stemmed mostly from the possibility of restrictions and difficulties in the functioning of various businesses conducted by farmers and entrepreneurs living in the area. As the chairman of the Muslim Religious Community of Kruszyniany assured, [...] *The planned landscape park does not include agricultural land, and farms located in its territory can continue their activities*⁷. Most residents, however, were aware that stopping such industrial investment could protect not only the monuments and nature of the area, but also protect their source of income. This was confirmed by their solidarity as to the legitimacy of a protection plan, which was to put the village under the conservator's care. *The introduced restrictions do not limit in any way the scope for the development of investments in tourism or gastronomy, and the supervision exercised by the conservator is aimed at protecting against activities threatening the historical system*⁸. In addition, the spatial method of protection [8, p. 41], in the form of a landscape park, would help in the promotion of local heritage, social activation, as well as create opportunities for long-term development.

Work on the adoption of the landscape park has been ongoing since 2020. According to the assumptions, it is to protect the lands of three communes: Krynki, Michałowo and Gródek. In their area there are currently about 60 objects entered in the register of monuments, which, as stated by the Podlasie Provincial Conservator of Monuments, [...] *It is the basis for the protection of cultural heritage of national importance* [23]. The initial name of the park, which is to have an area of about 15,000 ha, is the Świsłocz Valley Landscape Park. *The main objective of the park is to preserve the mosaic of landscapes in the left-bank part of the Świsłocz river basin located between its tributaries: Jałówka and Nietupa, as well as historical and cultural heritage resulting from the richness of cultures, nations and religions, interpenetrating Belarusian, Polish, Tatar and Jewish settlements* [24]. The commission appointed by the Marshal of Podlaskie Voivodeship collected full documentation on the legitimacy of creating a protected area in three municipalities, including examining the natural and cultural values of these places. The queries carried out confirmed that [...] *most elements of nature, material testimonies of history and objects of high cultural value are located in the central part of the studied area, limited from the north by the Nietupa valley, and from the south – by the Kołodziejanka valley, and then further south by a narrow strip to the sources of the Jałówka river. Almost 80% of the analyzed area is already subject to legal protection* [24]. The vote of the regional parliament on the establishment of a landscape park is planned after public consultations and obtaining the necessary arrangements of the municipal councils and the Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection in Białystok [24]. Due to the current situation on

the Polish-Belarusian border and the state of the epidemic, consultations and further procedures were suspended.

Conclusions

Tatars as an ethnic and religious minority have been living in Poland for over 600 years. Bohoniki and Kruszyniany are the only centers of Islamic culture in Podlasie that have preserved and cultivated their tradition. The historic mosques and mizars located here are tangible witnesses of a turbulent history reaching far into the past. The value of the places is also evidenced by the fact that by the decision of the Polish UNESCO Commission and the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, monuments related to the culture of the Tatars have a chance to be entered in the UNESCO world list⁹, which may be another ennoblement on the world scale. These conclusions provide the basis for broadly understood, holistic protection in terms of both socio-cultural and landscape values, so that they continue to bear witness to the rich past from which present and future generations will draw [4, p. 32].

As Marcin Wójcik rightly pointed out, two basic contexts can be distinguished in the process of such protection. The first is related to the implementation of endogenous functions, i.e. maintaining the memory and cultural identity of local communities (in this case Polish Tatars) as a condition for their further existence. The second context refers to the requirements of modernity and related civilizational changes. However, both constitute an inseparable and complementary approach, bearing in mind the past, duration and change [25, p. 10].

On the example of the Bohoniki Cultural Park discussed in the text and the landscape park in Kruszyniany, which is still in the process of gaining such status, it is clear that thinking about the comprehensive protection of monuments inscribed in the natural environment requires complex activities and should involve the cooperation of various entities, including conservation services, municipal governments and the residents themselves. It also requires will, commitment and, above all, social awareness. Unfortunately, the provisions resulting from the legislation may also prove to be an important issue, especially in terms of clarifying the importance of agricultural and industrial activities, which do not allow for full protection of sensitive areas. Protective measures should reconcile the interests of all, in the service of the common good. Only then is it possible to use special protection tools – cultural and landscape parks, whose role is to limit the scale and effects of activities degrading the values of culturally and naturally valuable places.

Translated by
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⁷ Based on an interview conducted in December 2022 with Bronisław Talkowski – the chairman of the Muslim Religious Community in Kruszyniany.

⁸ Based on an interview conducted in December 2022 with Bronisław Talkowski – the chairman of the Muslim Religious Community in Kruszyniany.

⁹ The entry may have monuments from Poland, Lithuania and Belarus.

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Abstract

Protection of wooden architecture monuments and the cultural heritage of Polish Tatars (on the example of the Bohoniki Cultural Park and the landscape park in Kruszyniany)

The article discusses the symbolism and richness of the culture of the Polish Tatars living in the villages of Bohoniki and Kruszyniany, located in Podlaskie Province. The centuries-old tradition, as well as the customs cultivated and maintained to this day by the Tatar population, are a treasure trove of the history of times past and undeniable proof of the existence of *genius loci*. Despite the unique architectural and cultural values presented by both villages and the fact that the mosques and mizars located there are included in the national list of monuments and have been recognized as monuments of history, the cultural landscape of the villages is exposed to changes and distortions as a result of the industrial investments planned here. These activities will undoubtedly negatively affect the image of the village, both spatially, naturally and socially. One of the ways of protecting Tatar culture has become the creation of a cultural park in Bohoniki, the purpose of which is to strengthen the protection of monuments located in its area, as well as to consolidate the village's tourist potential. In turn in Kruszyniany, the creation of industrial poultry farms is to be prevented by the establishment of a landscape park, whose priority will be both the protection of the surrounding nature of the Knyszyn Forest, as well as the protection

of the multicultural heritage of the village. The text also addresses legal issues of protection from the perspective of the regulations on the functioning of the cultural and landscape park, as well as describing the actions taken in this regard by the residents themselves, local authorities and conservation services. The aim of the text is to draw attention to the problem of comprehensive protection of monuments and cultural heritage of the Polish Tatars in the context of modern civilization transformations and related landscape changes.

Key words: Tatars, cultural heritage, protection, cultural park, landscape park

Streszczenie

Ochrona zabytków architektury drewnianej i dziedzictwa kulturowego Tatarów polskich (na przykładzie Parku Kulturowego Bohoniki i parku krajobrazowego w Kruszynianach)

W artykule omówiono symbolikę i bogactwo kultury Tatarów polskich zamieszkujących położone w województwie podlaskim wsie Bohoniki i Kruszyniany. Wielowiekowa tradycja, a także kultywowane i podtrzymywane po dziś dzień przez ludność tatarską zwyczaje stanowią skarbnicę historii czasów minionych oraz niepodważalny dowód na istnienie genius loci. Pomimo unikatowych wartości architektoniczno-kulturowych, jakie prezentują obydwie miejscowości, oraz faktu, iż znajdujące się tam meczety i mizary wpisane zostały na krajową listę zabytków oraz uznane za pomniki historii, krajobraz kulturowy wsi narażony jest na przemiany i zniekształcenia w wyniku planowanych tam inwestycji przemysłowych. Działania te mogą niewątpliwie negatywnie odbić się na wizerunku wsi, zarówno pod względem przestrzennym, przyrodniczym, jak i społecznym. Jednym ze sposobów ochrony kultury tatarskiej stało się utworzenie w Bohonikach parku kulturowego, którego celem ma być wzmocnienie ochrony zabytków znajdujących się na jego obszarze, jak również ugruntowanie potencjału turystycznego wsi. W Kruszynianach z kolei zamierzenia powstania ferm przemysłowych drobiu ma powstrzymać powołanie tam parku krajobrazowego, którego priorytetem będzie zarówno ochrona otaczającej przyrody Puszczy Knyszyńskiej, jak i wielokulturowego dziedzictwa. W tekście poruszono też prawne kwestie ochrony z perspektywy przepisów dotyczących funkcjonowania parku kulturowego i krajobrazowego oraz opisano działania, jakie w tym zakresie podjęli sami mieszkańcy, władze samorządowe i służby konserwatorskie. Ma to na celu zwrócenie uwagi na problem kompleksowej ochrony zabytków i dziedzictwa kulturowego Tatarów polskich w kontekście współczesnych przemian cywilizacyjnych i związanych z nimi zmian krajobrazowych.

Słowa kluczowe: Tatarzy, dziedzictwo kulturowe, ochrona, park kulturowy, park krajobrazowy

