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On public participation in efforts to beautify the towns and cities of Galicia in times of its autonomy. Prolegomenon¹

Urban Beautification Societies remain one of the most original forms of associations in autonomous Galicia, in terms of their focus on cities in particular. Without additional and tedious research, one would be hard-pressed to determine who and when had started them.

(Aleksander, 1995: 149–150)

Introduction

Extraordinarily popular over recent decades, revitalisation, public space revitalisation included – interest therein having risen especially once Poland had joined the European Union and gained access to considerable funding (not only EU-related) as a result – is by no means a new phenomenon. It is unquestionably deeply rooted in the culture of democratic societies, a symptom of collective human effort to improve the condition of surroundings one finds oneself in. Similarly to other post-socialist countries, Poland had to become re-accustomed to the phenomenon, as it were, after nearly half a century of hegemony in so-called command and control economy, wherein even public activity, also in the field of culture, was minutely inspected and funnelled in line with party interest and official guidelines.

Yet improving the condition of public space on Polish territory is by no means a 21st-century development. On the contrary: it has been entrenched in assorted activities engaged in by public administration (consider the Good Order Committees formed in the second half of the 18th century – Kostecka, 2017: 7–8), and in multiple public initiatives, arising in particular in the wake of local government reactivation in the Austrian Partition – so-called Galicia (one of Austria-Hungary's crown regions,

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comprising former Polish south-eastern territories seized by Austria), during a period referred to as “*autonomous*” (i.e. over the years 1867–1914). In the context of improving the aesthetic of Galician municipalities, activities of multiple Urban Beautification Societies (hereinafter referred to as “*UBS*” or “*UBSs*” in the plural) merit special attention, particularly intense over two decades immediately preceding the outbreak of World War I. The presence of artists and the artistic value of the final outcome of UBS work were a significant component. One might well risk claiming that the high number of such organisations in Galician cities and towns was a grassroots attempt at responding to shortages in urban planning, regulation and development, especially in terms of introducing green areas. Local press tended to report, somewhat maliciously, that the UBSs were an observable symptom of the weakness of Galician autonomous governance (of urban authorities) – failing to handle day-to-day issues, authorities consenting to such organisations being formed in the hope that they would stand in and take care of at least some of the local government’s responsibilities (see “*Mieszczanin*,” 1904).

It is notable that similar organisations had been in operation across multiple European countries in the 19th century, including those who had contributed to the annihilation of Poland as a state. For example, the UBS Bydgoszcz (*Verschönerungs-Verein zu Bromberg*) was among the first and most efficient in Prussia, not to mention the oldest one throughout Polish territory. Active over the years 1832–1898, its close collaborators and honorary members included eminent Prussian gardener and landscape architect Peter Joseph Lenné (Grysińska-Jarmuła, 2018).² Furthermore, the powerful City Beautiful Movement began developing in the United States of America (Wilson 1980) well-nigh in parallel to the intensified undertakings of Galician UBSs. Coinciding with UBS postulates, in terms of the importance of green urban areas in particular, the Movement was distinctive in the importance attached in the US to the quality and look of urban development itself.³ In hindsight, it is notable with regard to the activity of Galician UBSs that apart from the “*Sokół*” (Falcon) Gymnastic Society (with a focus on pro-health, cultural and patriotic activity), and a variety of educational organisations (People’s School Society in particular), UBSs were the best-represented – and, in some cases, also most efficient – “*field work*” associations active in autonomous Galicia. In such context, the relatively modest condition of their activity’s research and the lack of any attempts to synthesise the phenomenon in any way, however cursory, must be seen as astonishing at the very least.

² Formed in 1923 – after Poland had regained independence – the Society of City of Bydgoszcz Supporters (*Towarzystwo Miłośników Miasta Bydgoszczy*) referenced its heritage. See https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Towarzystwo_Upi%C4%99kszenia_Miasta (last accessed on September 26th 2022). For more on the forming and activities of UBSs in Prussia, see http://encyklopedia.warmia.mazury.pl/index.php/Towarzystwo_Upi%C4%99kszenia_Miasta_w_Olsztynie (last accessed on September 26th 2022), where the date of establishing the UBS Bydgoszcz was misquoted as 1833.

³ A similar postulate in the Galician UBS circle was submitted only on initiative by the Przemysł organisation, during the Societies’ convention in July 1912 r. (Felczyński, 1968: 388).

Pursuant to previous studies, the activity of these organisations was recorded perfunctorily, and mainly to reflect local context. Tadeusz Aleksander was the only scholar to truly accentuate the significance of UBS activities in Galicia during its “*autonomous*” times (Aleksander, 1995: 149–150). Monographs, such as articles in regional or local periodicals, were drafted in case of several UBSs (consider Przemyśl – Felczyński, 1967 and Wadowice – Meus, 2008, respectively); other solutions involved brochures (Wieliczka – Duda, 2008) or dictionary entries/chapters in scholarly research collections (Sanok – Zajac, 1990; Zajac, 2000). In all likelihood, the oldest of Galicia’s UBSs (formed in Cracow) was described in a brief unpublished specification coinciding with an archival inventory (Pietrzyk, Borkowski, 1978). It was mentioned but a few times in printed form, on the occasion of ponderings concerning another of Cracow’s late-19th century community organisations (Bieńkowski, 1997). Others have been alluded to but marginally.

It may thus be concluded that researched resources available are extraordinarily modest – whereas successive UBSs were literally booming in Galician towns, having evidently become fashionable. Non-inventoried searches the author has been engaging in for years as a sideline to other research of Galician urban planning, architecture and art have pointed to the existence of UBSs in multiple nooks and crannies of Polish territory incorporated into the Austrian state, and to the unquestioned and amazing richness of their activity. Intended to shed light on selected issues associated with the emergence and activities of Galician UBSs formed to improve urban space, this paper is a first-time attempt at referencing these findings, if only in part.

Time of Forming

Without detailed archival research, one would be hard-pressed to unambiguously declare the actual location of the first UBS. While conjecture regarding the establishing of such organisation in Tarnów goes back as far as 1881 (“Tarnowianin,” 1882: unnumbered), it remains undisputed that by 1912 it had not yet been formed (“Pogoń,” 1912a). It may well be assumed that the Society for Beautifying the City of Cracow and its Neighbourhood was the first UBS to have been formed in Galicia. While there are sources suggesting that it was established in 1868 (Bieńkowski, 1997: 15) – i.e. after Galicia had been granted autonomy – available records prove that this had actually happened over a dozen years later – the Governorate in Lviv approved the statutes on December 16th 1886 in the wake of several months of preparation, the board elected only in May 1888. Two years later, when recapitulating the first period of their activity, the Cracovian UBS appealed to the intellectuals of Galician cities with a critical postulate of forming similar organisations locally (Pietrzyk, Borkowski, 1978: 7–8). The original intent was for these bodies to be elite in nature.

The appeal did not go unnoticed. Prior to 1900, Societies were formed i.a. in Przemyśl (1890), Podgórze (1894), Brody (1895), Nowy Sącz and Tarnopol (1896), and Jasło (pre-1899) (see Aleksander, 1995: 150; Blicharski, 1995: 207; Felczyński, 1997; Laskowski, 2007: 64). Another UBS was to be established (1897) in Limanowa (“Głos Narodu,” 1897), informal activities (1900, formalised in 1907) were also initiated

by UBS Wieliczka (Pająk, 1968: 110; Duda, 2008). Over the next decade, Societies were formed i.a. in Sanok (1904) and Wadowice (1907, formally: 1912) (see Meus, 2008; Zając, 2000). Records for 1910 mention UBS Rzeszów (Pietrzyk, Borkowski, 1978: 11), another was formed in Jarosław in 1914 (Potoczny, 1997: 73). The date of establishing the UBS in Czarny Dunajec would require more precise data (Czajeczka, 1997: 200).

Initiators and Members

Members of local Societies identified thus far include representatives of multiple professions and specialities, university graduates the distinct majority. Consequently, UBS activists (functionaries in particular; information regarding this particular stratum being most abundant) comprised local government and municipal officials, lawyers, representatives of technical professions, teachers, and even the clergy. The governing bodies of individual Societies would most frequently reflect the specificity of the place, the professions represented locally typical.

Cracow's UBS was headed by attorney Ferdynand Wilkosz, Ph.D., pre-World War I membership including many eminent persons, well-known artists (e.g. Władysław Ekielski and Józef Mehoffer) and researchers of the city's past and its monuments (Karol Estreicher, Leonard Lepszy, Stanisław Tomkowicz) (Pietrzyk, Borkowski, 1978: 8–9).

In Przemyśl, the UBS was formed by attorney Julian Łużecki Ph.D., Wilhelm Fritscher and Salomon Ehrlich Ph.D., the organisation joined by a large number of officers of troops stationed at the Fortress of Przemyśl, ostensibly including foreign nationals (Felczyński, 1967, p. 380). In Jarosław, UBS members hailed chiefly from military and teaching communities (Potoczny, 1997: 75).

Nikodem Garbaczyński – town councillor, mayor in the years 1897–1900, honorary citizen of Podgórze from 1900 onwards – was chairman of the Podgórze UBS over the years 1905–1907 at least. Wojciech Bednarski – teacher, activist, eminent creator of the unique town park (named after him in time) founded in an old local quarry – was appointed director (JCKK, 1905: 228; JCKK, 1906: 173; JCKK, 1907: 179). Later, in the years 1913–1914 at least, Karol Górski, Ph.D., retired councillor of the Imperial and Royal judiciary and Wieliczka County Council member, became chairman, Bednarski continuing as director (JCKK, 1913: 203; JCKK, 1914: 233). Stanisław Kuzia, attorney and court councillor, was chairman of the UBS for Wadowice and the Neighbourhood, having also been the organisation's founder. Antoni Drozdowski was elected Secretary, with justice Stanisław Machalski as treasurer, justice Stanisław Kuźniarowicz as administrator, and engineer of forestry Władysław Kuzia as board member (Jurczak, 1987: 31–32 i 54). UBS Wieliczka was formed by Teodor Popiołek, director of the local mill (Pająk, 1968: 110); in 1913, the Society in Wieliczka was headed by Antoni Muller, Imperial and Royal councillor supreme of mining and Wieliczka County Council member, with town mayor Franciszek Aywas as his deputy, magistrate secretary Józef Martynowicz as secretary, and Józef Fryl (probably "Fryt"), head of the Imperial and Royal Saline Board, as treasurer (JCKK, 1913: 203–205).

Antoni Pogodowski, Imperial and Royal starost of Sanok, was elected first chairman of the local UBS, having been joined by other active members, representatives

of assorted professions: town mayor of many years, professor of the local gymnasium, construction engineer, real estate owner and town physician (Zajac, 2000: 223). At the time of pondering options of establishing a UBS in Limanowa, the contemporaneous town mayor supported by a “group of eminent citizens of Limanowa” (“Głos Narodu,” 1897) was seen as the organisation’s initiator. The circumstances in Dobczyce were slightly different: local parish priest Father Andrzej Brańka was the initiator of founding the Urban Beautifying and Regulating [sic!] Committee [sic!], as well as its generous sponsor (“Mieszczanin,” 1904).

Given the artistic facet of problems analysed herein, Cracow’s Society membership towards the end of the period of autonomy is particularly noteworthy, the entity itself then operating as the Society for Protecting the Beauty of Cracow and its Neighbourhood.⁴ According to 1912 records, the governing body of the organisation teemed with outstanding artists (painters, sculptors, architects): Teodor Axentowicz was deputy chairman, department members including i.a. Jan Bukowski, Stanisław Dębicki, Władysław Ekielski, Zygmunt Hendel, Konstanty Laszczka, Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz, Ludwik Wojtyczko and Kazimierz Wyczyński. Prominent connoisseurs of art were leading members as well, i.a. Feliks Kopera, Leonard Lepszy, Józef Muczkowski and Jerzy Warchałowski (JCKK, 1913: 167–168). It is notable that a remarkable part of the Society’s governing body were also on the board of The Society of Friends of Kraków History and Heritage (JCKK, 1913: 168).⁵

Scope of Activities

In terms of UBS undertakings, particular attention was paid to urban greenery, especially issues of urban park and green square establishing and maintenance. In anticipation of a UBS in Tarnów, great hopes were expressed in 1881 of the Society extending proper care over a neglected town park near the railway station (“Tarnowianin,” 1882). Having undergone transformation from 1890 onwards, the park on Castle Hill in Przemyśl would soon become one of the largest ones to ever be expanded under UBS auspices: newly routed parkways and multiple plantings were accompanied by attractive water reservoirs and intakes (Felczyński, 1967: 378). Towards the end of the period of autonomy, such activities were also engaged in by the UBS of Wadowice and the Neighbourhood – as an outcome of their efforts over the years 1912–1914, the Adam Mickiewicz Town Park was established in the local “Górnica” on land purchased and donated by the municipality (Meus, 2013: 304–305). UBS Jasło had also embarked upon a number of projects in an already existing town park, from the late 1890s at least (Laskowski, 2007: 64). UBS Wieliczka was equally adamant about focusing on urban greenery, local park and squares included (Pająk, 1968: 110). Over the years

⁴ The matter would have to be researched in greater detail. Significantly, however, JCKK-published censuses list the Society as having replaced – and, in time, co-formed – the former UBS, sharing its premises. Yet it cannot be precluded at this stage of study that this was a separate organisation altogether.

⁵ This applied to intellectuals in particular, including i.a. the aforementioned Feliks Kopera, Leonard Lepszy and Józef Muczkowski.

1909–1910, the UBS in Sanok expanded the existing town park considerably, fitting it with assorted infrastructural components (Zajac, 2000: 226).

When it came to urban green areas, UBSs dealt with more than establishing, expanding or tending to parks. The first UBS Cracow-related press mentions I am aware of report on the Cracow Planting Committee having examined two petitions filed by the Society: for a free-of-charge donation of young trees from urban nurseries for purposes of planting them in the Market Square, along what was then Wolska Street, and on Wawel Hill; and for a permit for a meteorological implements kiosk to be set up within the flowerbed area in front of the *Collegium Novum* edifice (“Czas,” 1888).⁶ *Ad hoc* interventions, while organised frequently, were occasionally overdue. Consider the 1912 case of Lviv, where – after old trees had been felled on Halicki Square – the local UBS undertook to “care for ancient trees in the city, and disallow their felling” (“Pogoń,” 1912b).

Introducing new landscape dominants by building commemorative mounds was a notable example of public space intervention. In Sanok, a mound was built over the years 1898–1908, students of the local gymnasium assisting, as a tribute to Adam Mickiewicz (Zajac, 2000: 225). Considerably later, in the year 1934 (on the 100th anniversary of Mickiewicz’s epic poem *Sir Thaddeus’* publication), a mound was built to commemorate the poet in the town park of Wadowice (cf. the plaque on the mound). Attempts were also made to popularise tourism through developing basic infrastructure at locations potentially attractive to visitors. This is e.g. what happened on *Biała Góra* (Mount White) towering over Sanok (Zajac, 2000: 227), and in the Three Crosses’ Hill area in Przemyśl (Felczyński, 1967: 382).

Matters of improving urban aesthetics were deliberated in statutes of the local organisation in Jarosław (established in 1914), the following listed under goals: “to beautify the town and its neighbourhood by establishing and tending to parks and gardens; planting trees; and erecting genre statues and sculptures with intent to improve the town’s aesthetic image” (Potoczny, 1997: 76). The aforementioned objective of embellishing cities and towns with sculptures (monumental statues included) was a yet another typical trait of Galician UBS activities, caring for urban greenery apart. As a result, monuments dedicated to persons significant to Polish history, national heroes and poets in particular, were erected in numerous cities and towns, sculptors frequently including eminent artists. For example: a monument to Tadeusz Rejtan was erected in Cracow (1890; Pietrzyk, Borkowski, 1978: 8), a monument to Tadeusz Kościuszko – in Jasło (1899, sculpted by Tadeusz Błotnicki – Laskowski, 2007: 165), a monument to Adam Mickiewicz – in Wieliczka (1903, by Błotnicki – Pajak, 1968: 110); works on a cast of a bust of Gregory of Sanok had been in progress locally from 1906 onwards (Zajac, 2000: 226). In Przemyśl, the stone statue of the *Shepherd Boy* would become a landmark in the local park (Felczyński, 1968: 381 and 386). Commemorative plaques would be funded in urban space, which is how centenaries were honoured in Sanok: the hundredth anniversaries of the last

⁶ In time, a similar kiosk would be erected in the Market Square of Przemyśl, also on UBS initiative (Felczyński, 1968: 387–388, 394).

defence of the Sanok Royal Castle (1909), and of Frederic Chopin's birthday (1910), respectively (Zajac, 2000: 226).

Urban space interventions were most certainly not limited to greenery or sculptures. In the year of its founding, USB Jarosław managed to develop a bowling alley and tennis court at their own expense (Potoczny, 1997: 76). Regularly modernised in later times, a tennis court was also developed (1905) in the town park of Jasło (Laskowski, 2007: 166). A tourist shelter was developed in the town park of Sanok (Zajac, 2000: 227), a similar investment realised in Wadowice (Meus 2008: 27). Multiple facilities (gazebos and glories) were erected at scenic turnouts of the Przemyśl park, in time expanded to include a miniature zoological garden (dismantled in 1914), its attractions such as deer and stags, a monkey, a badger, squirrels, and numerous birds, including parrots (Felczyński, 1967: 382–384).

Space thus developed became a backdrop for assorted UBS-hosted events: festivals (such as the one in the town park of Jasło – Laskowski, 2007: 64), jubilees, concerts and fairs (in Przemyśl, for example – Felczyński, 1967: 378–380).

Other UBS activities – in case of some organisations at least – included propaganda and educational publications in line with respective statutory objectives, such as the locally published book on Gregory of Sanok (Zajac, 2000: 225). Some of the more ambitious plans involved publishing periodicals, the best example being the “*Krakowski Miesięcznik Artystyczny*” (*Cracovian Art Monthly*) published over the years 1912–1914 (cf. Pietrzyk, Borkowski, 1978: 10), of which Leonard Lepszy himself, was the “editor responsible” for a time. As proclaimed by the periodical's subtitle, it was “a publication with a focus on issues associated with the National Museum, Society of Friends of Fine Arts, and Urban Beautification Society of the City of Cracow.” Postcards and writing paper featuring images of the given town or city or images of prominent local personas would occasionally be published as well, e.g. in Sanok (Zajac, 2000: 222 i 224–225). Some UBSs (e.g. in Jarosław, Przemyśl, Wadowice, Wieliczka) would publish their statutes, others (e.g. Cracow or Sanok) – operational reports.

Other UBS activities involved naming streets and/or squares by submitting suggestions, or making the occasional attempt to change traditional names. Some initiatives of the kind were volubly criticised, such as the attempts of UBS Lviv to modify street names commemorating specific persons in favour of restoring adjective-based monikers (“Pogoń,” 1912b).

Talks and lectures were popular as well, e.g. in Sanok (on Gregory of Sanok as well as UBS goals or the aesthetic and culture of co-existence) (Zajac, 2000: 225, 227) and Przemyśl (on activities engaged in by the local Society) (Felczyński, 1968: 392–394). Hindered by the outbreak of World War I, the latter did not succeed in organising its large-scale exhibition “City of Przemyśl” designed to portray the town's past and present (Felczyński, 1968: 392). Last but not least: some UBSs engaged in collecting, preserving and conservating mobile artefacts and historical records containing local references, Sanok a case in point (Zajac, 2000: 227).

Collaboration

While individual Societies operated locally – regardless of how effectively or efficiently – activists were usually aware that multiple urban space-related problems tend to prevail across multiple locations. In order to take preventive action, they established the Union of Societies to Beautify the Country [i.e. Galicia] in 1910 (Pietrzyk, Borkowski, 1978: 10–11). Pursuant to the Union’s statutes, its mission was to involve in “shared campaigns to beautify the country, and prevent its deforming” (*Statutes*, 1910: 3). It was decided that Cracow would be the seat of the Union, membership open to all UBSs. Every UBS would be obliged to “apply to the Department of the Union in any essential case of a given neighbourhood facing the risk of deformation and undergo examination by and adhere to the resulting opinion of the respective Art or Legal Committee” (*Statutes*, 1910: 4). Aforementioned Art Committee membership of the Union was to include two representatives per the following profession or occupation: experts on aesthetics, painters, sculptors, architects and conservators and/or their deputies, their names to be submitted by the board and approved by the annual General Assembly of the Union. The Committee was charged with the duty of “resolving matters of artistic necessity” (*Statutes*, 1910: 7–8).

Aforementioned conventions took place as planned. The 1912 Convention was organised in Cracow on July 14th, the agenda including such matters as “protecting the country against deformation and loss features typical for Polish landscapes,” and “appointing local Societies across the country, in towns and cities alike” (JCKK, 1913: 74). Once official deliberations were over, delegates visited the illustrious Architecture and Interiors Exhibition in Garden Surroundings, for purposes of which Franciszek Klein delivered an intervention titled *O zachowaniu śródmieścia Krakowa* (*On Preserving the City Centre of Cracow*, JCKK, 1913: 74).

According to 1912 records, the Union shared premises with the Society for Beautifying the City of Cracow and its Neighbourhood, at No. 5, Biskupia Street. Count Leon Piniński was the Union’s honorary president, with Stanisław Goliński, Ph.D., as chairman – also the contemporaneous chairman of the aforesaid Cracow Society. Societies from both parts of Galicia (including Lviv, Podgórze, Rzeszów, Sanok and Wieliczka) were represented on the governing bodies of the Union (JCKK, 1913: 167).

Collaboration between individual Societies and other local community organisations was an essential issue as well. UBS Cracow organised a number of joint initiatives in a group comprising 11 different organisations, including the most active one of them all: The Society of Friends of Kraków History and Heritage (Bieńkowski 1997: 66–73). UBS Przemyśl began co-operating with the local chapter of the Society of Friends of Science (Felczyński, 1968: 388).

UBS Heritage in the Second Polish Republic and Contemporarily

If finding themselves within the boundaries of the Polish state resurrected, some of the aforementioned Urban Beautification Societies of autonomous Galicia continued their activity (e.g. in Tarnopol – Blicharski, 1995: 361). Some would terminate activity

as defined in the olden days during World War I or later, for a variety of reasons. Examples include Podgórze: in the wake of its incorporation into Cracow in 1915, separation of assorted community organisations formerly operating in Podgórze was mandated, the decision affecting the local UBS as well.⁷ UBS Sanok suspended its operations for the wartime period, never to instigate it again (Zajac, 2000: 227). A similar fate befell Cracow (Pietrzyk, Borkowski, 1978: 10), albeit in this particular case it may well be assumed that UBS activities had been gradually weakening and yielding to an extremely operative competitor with a similar profile: the Society for Beautifying the City of Cracow and its Neighbourhood.⁸

Other UBSSs were formed only during the Great War or after it had ended – in times of the Second Polish Republic. The first group includes UBS Gorlice, formed in 1917 (Kuśnier, 1990: 27 and 46), in all likelihood in the face of the horrific destruction to urban development during the Battle of Gorlice in May 1915. Examples of organisations established during the interwar period include committees [sic!] established in 1929 of the UBSSs in Chrzanów (Świątek, 1998: 199) and Limanowa (Świątek, 1999: 451). The coincidence of dates merits a question whether it had not been the outcome of official state orders.⁹

The researched area saw other developments as well: new organisations were formed in towns and cities of former Galicia during the interwar period, their programme records – and intended scopes of undertakings – directly referencing UBSSs operating in Galicia in the olden days which had ceased all activity in the wake of World War I outbreak or downfall or monarchy. This is exactly what happened in Jarosław, for example: the Old Jarosław Society alluded to the tradition by changing its name to the “Society of Jarosław Supporters” (Potoczny, 1997).

Interestingly enough, aforesaid traditions were also referenced in socialist Poland – even Stalinist times – as exemplified by the 1950 case of an Urban Beautification Committee formed in Sędziszów Małopolski with intent to introduce green areas to town (Bieda, Żurek, 1983: 212). Somewhat later (1957), UBS Przemyśl was reactivated as well (Felczyński, 1967: 375–376). In Wieliczka, the body was renamed, and began operating as the “Society for the Development and Beautification of the Town of Wieliczka” in 1958 (Pająk, 1968: 6).

May the immortality of ideas represented by the multiple UBSSs of Galicia over one hundred years ago be proven by the fact that a number of community organisations continue operating dynamically across Poland using the moniker in question. They can be found throughout the country – consider the example of UBSSs active in the Kashubian region (Puck, formed/reactivated in 1998),¹⁰ Lower Silesia (Wrocław,

⁷ See the significant lack of formerly traditional mention in the JCKK, 1917.

⁸ Cf. footnote 4.

⁹ The action could have been associated with the contemporaneous reform of the historical monument protection system in Poland.

¹⁰ UBS in Puck, formed as early as 1884, suspended in 1939 pursuant to Adolf Hitler’s executive order, reactivated in the summer of 1998 r. See <http://tump.org.pl/o-nas/> (last accessed on September 25th 2022).

formed in 2004),¹¹ Łużyce (Żary, formed in 2006)¹² or the Warmia and Masuria region (Olsztyn, formed in 2009).¹³

Research Postulates and Perspectives

A review of available resources and the rather cursory assemblage of aforesaid facts merit reflection and identification of essential study-requiring issues, including, but not limited to:

- Ascertaining the actual source(s) of inspiration, encouragement and/or persuasion behind the forming of the respective UBSs,
- Analysing mutual relations and dependencies (in all likelihood changing over time) between commissions (committees?) forming part of erstwhile municipal council structures and UBSs established at a later time,
- Determining the number and locations of UBSs actually formed,
- Expanding the study of the UBS initiator and member community, their social, occupational, nationality-related and religious structures and affiliation, as well as their potential connection to the forms and types of organisational activity,
- Researching the involvement of art and technical circles in UBS works in detail,
- Estimating membership numbers for the respective UBSs with a view to ascertain their elite or mass nature,
- Analysing ways and formats of UBS funding,
- Introducing more detailed systematisation to UBS activity specification,
- Analysing forms of UBS collaboration with other bodies, local governments and other community organisations in particular,
- Identifying and describing key works with a focus on UBS publishing achievements, Ewa Łuskina's illustrious study already recognisable as one such work (Łuskina, 1910),
- Analysing the impact of UBS activity on public space in and aesthetic awareness among the residents of the cities and towns of Galicia,
- Setting UBS activities to a broader backdrop (national, European, global),
- Considering the importance of UBS heritage in the context of post-1918 organisations' work.

As proven by the review of resources collected to date, contemporaneous press remains a crucial source of UBS-related knowledge, in-house organisational publications (including reports and statues) notwithstanding. This applies to the familiar

¹¹ According to a statement by Wrocław activists, their work alludes to Der Breslauer Verschönerungsverein, an association formed in 1893. See <https://tumw.pl/o-nas/> (last accessed on September 25th 2022).

¹² See <https://spis.ngo.pl/161431-towarzystwo-upiekszania-miasta> (last accessed on September 26th 2022).

¹³ The UBS operating in Olsztyn in the years 1843–1912 had been the inspiration behind the local organisation. See http://encyklopedia.warmia.mazury.pl/index.php/Towarzystwo_Upiekszania_Miasta_w_Olsztynie (last accessed on September 26th 2022).

titles (such as “Czas” or “Gazeta Lwowska”), as well as – or, indeed, primarily – to local newspapers (such as Nowy Sącz’s “Mieszczanin” or Tarnów’s “Pogoń”).

Yet expanding knowledge of Galicia’s UBSs is less about continued library queries than broadly designed archival queries. Given the current state of knowledge, the existence of separate archival assemblages merit a distinct mention, including bespoke UBS collections (e.g. with regard to Cracow, see Pietrzyk, Borkowski, 1978); while differently profiled, these collections comprise an abundance of information concerning aforesaid organisations (e.g. as concerning the UBS Committee in Nowy Targ, the so-called *T. Klima File* comprising 1884–1930 records – Czajeczka, 1991: 279, 282) as well as indirect and/or incidental mentions of these organisations in historical records, e.g. in meeting reports for assorted collegiate bodies (municipal councils in particular). In all probability, the latter are the largest in volume; given their fragmentation, sheer bulk and elusive usefulness, this particular resources will be particularly difficult to analyse comprehensively.

It seems that commencing afore-suggested studies is unquestionably recommended, with a view to showcase – as accurately as possible – the determination and role of residents of Galician towns and cities in the process of changing their own environment, and to present in full the face of that early, 19th-century revitalisation movement, tailored and designed on considerable scale.

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Abstract

This paper is an introduction to studies of Urban Beautification Societies (“UBSs” in the plural) active in times of Galicia’s autonomy (1867–1914). The Societies were community organisations set up in many cities and towns across Galicia from the 1880s onwards with a view to improve the aesthetic in public urban space. To Galicia, years of its autonomy yielded years of considerable expansion of civic freedoms, including the re-enacted right to association. Formed by individuals with university education, UBSs were popular throughout Galicia, their structure frequently reflecting the local cross-section and specificity of social strata. Established in large, medium-sized, and small cities and towns (such as Cracow and Lviv; Przemyśl; Wadowice and Wieliczka), they attempted to reach their goals chiefly through establishing urban parks and green squares (often as not with accompanying infrastructure, such as tennis courts or bowling alleys); planting trees in market and other public squares and along communication routes; developing aesthetically pleasing small architecture; and taking initiative to erect monuments and install commemorative plaques, usually commissioned with eminent artists. The latter – in large cities in particular, where art communities were large and powerful – were occasionally UBS co-organisers and members, and thus capable of considerable influence over any Society activities, potentially including publishing, graphic artists and painters especially prominent therein.

Keywords: Urban Beautification Society, Galicia, Galician autonomy, city, spatial development, urban green areas

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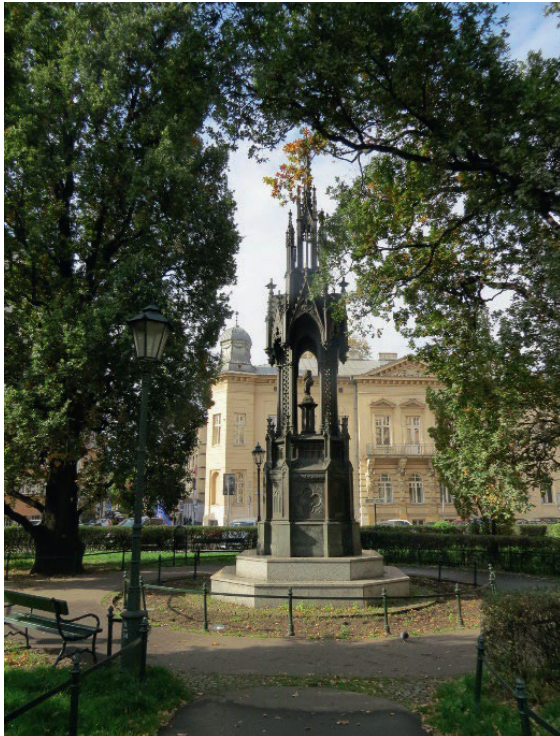


Fig. 1. Monument to Tadeusz Rejtan in Cracow, erected in 1890 with contribution and backing by the Society for Beautifying the City of Cracow and its Neighbourhood. Current condition (restored). Photo by: A. Laskowski, 2022.



Fig. 2. Monument to Tadeusz Kościuszko (surroundings included) in the town park of Jasio, sculpted by Tadeusz Błotnicki on initiative of the local UBS, unveiled in 1899. Current condition. Photo by: A. Laskowski, 2009.

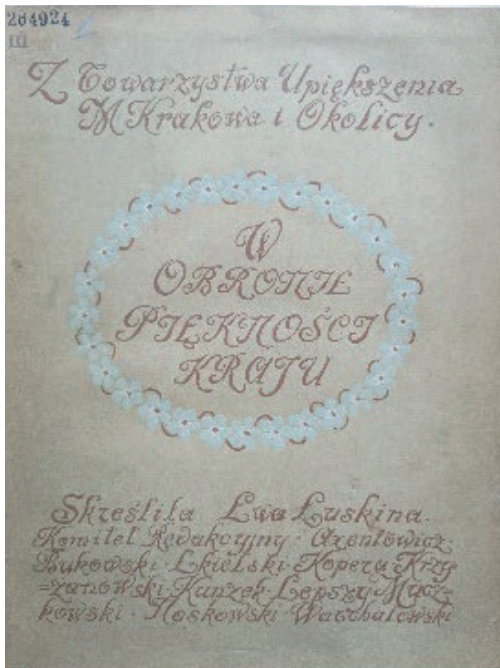


Fig. 3. Title page designed by painter and sculptor Henryk Kunzek, Ph.D., originally from the publishing house of the Society for Beautifying the City of Cracow and its Neighbourhood. Source: Łuskińska (1910).



Fig. 4. Official emblem of the Society for Beautifying the City of Cracow and its Neighbourhood. Source: Łuskińska (1910).



Fig. 5. Official emblem of the Union of Societies to Beautify the Country with its registered seat in.

