

## SACRED PLACES IN LVIV – THEIR CHANGING SIGNIFICANCE AND FUNCTIONS

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*Abstract:* In the paper, issues of a multitude of functions of sacred places in Lviv are considered. The problem is presented on the example of selected religious sites that were established in distinct periods of the development of the city and refers to different religious denominations. At present, various functions are mixing in the sacred complexes of Lviv. The author tries to formulate some general conclusions concerning their contemporary role and leading types of activity. These findings are based, most of all, on analyses of the facts related to the history of Lviv, circumstances of its foundation, various transformations, and modern functions of the selected sites.

*Keywords:* Lviv, Western Ukraine, religious diversity, functions of religious sites

### Introduction

Lviv, located in the western part of Ukraine, is a city with an incredibly rich history and tradition. It was founded in an area considered to be a kind of political, ethnic and religious borderland. For centuries the influence of different cultures, ethnic and religious groups met there and the city often witnessed momentous historical events affecting the political situation in this part of Europe. The community of the thriving city was a remarkable mosaic of nationalities and religious denominations from the very beginning. On the one hand, these were representatives of the Latin West (first – Catholics, later on – Protestants), on the other hand – the Byzantine East. A large Jewish community also had a significant impact on the religious and social image of the city.

Various communities coming to and leaving Lviv have left their mark on the city in the form of tangible and intangible monuments, which include religious buildings. First of all, they were a response to the current needs of local believers: they met their spiritual needs and helped to organise religious life. In some cases, they also commemorated important events or constituted votives or pleading memorabilia.

In addition to the religious significance, places of worship often boasted their own considerable artistic value. Located in certain areas of the city, they captured current trends in planning, urban patterns, and architectural styles. Many sites have also become treasuries of works of art, gifts and votive offerings. Over time, religious sites came to be identified with one particular nation or confession, thus distinctive celebrations and religious ceremonies took place at each site. In this way, the sacred elements contributed to the cultural landscape of Lviv, becoming the witnesses and exponents of various aspects of city's past.

The aim of this paper is to describe the role of sacred places in Lviv and the evolution of their functions through the ages, but especially at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The variable role of religious sites becomes a common research question as it refers to numerous cities all over the world. Changes and the acquisition of new functions (cultural, educational, social or tourist) by, among others, churches have been observed in Western Europe for a long time. Lviv is presented as an example of such phenomena in the particular historical and political context of the eastern part of the continent.

Taking into account a large number of religious sites in Lviv, only a few selected sites have been described. They were erected at various stages of the development of the city and today represent different religious denominations. They were chosen due to their participation in important historical events connected with the city and their significance to particular nationalities forming the society of Lviv. These sites seem to be proper examples designed to show changing roles as well as combining various activities at sacred places in Lviv.

Following A. Jackowski's (2003) statement that a proper interpretation of religious phenomena is possible only in relation to historical conditions, at the beginning of the paper the author presents the most important historical facts from the history of the city of Lviv. At the same time, she discusses political, cultural and social determinants that influence the possibilities of the functioning of sacred places. In the case of Lviv, the issue is of special interest because of the high variability of the above mentioned conditions. Then, there is a description of these sites: their origin, importance to the city and its inhabitants as well as past and present forms of activity carried out in them. On this basis, general conclusions are drawn on the current significance and function of the investigated sites and their changes over time.

The paper has a mainly descriptive character and is based on different historical works, as well as guidebooks concerning Lviv. The author's own research conducted

at selected sites generated more material for analysis. These include observations of people and groups visiting sacred places, participation in religious ceremonies, announcements regarding different current activities available on information tables or obtained at the inquiry desk, etc. In addition, similar information available on the websites of certain churches was also very helpful in the preparation of this paper.

## Historical determinants of the functioning of Lviv's sacred places

The city of Lviv was established in the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century in the Ruthenian Principality of Halych-Volodymyr (Fig. 1A) and ruled by the House of Romanowicz. At the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century the Principality had been plundered during the Mongol invasion and several major urban centres were destroyed. One of the key elements of national reconstruction, undertaken by the ruler Daniel, was the foundation of a new castle, named Lviv in honour of his son Leo. In 1250, Prince Leo took possession of the castle, and soon after that another Mongol invasion occurred, bringing the Principality of Halych-Volodymyr under the authority of the Mongol Golden Horde for a few decades. Already under the reign of Halych princes, Lviv began to shape its multinational population structure. In addition to the native Ruthenian population, it was also home to German colonists, Armenians, as well as Poles, Tatars, Jews and Karaites. The rich religious life of Lviv is proved by the fact that at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century there were 8 Orthodox churches, 2 Catholic churches and 2 Armenian churches (Ostrowski 1997).

After the death of the last Halych princes, George Trojdenowicz, the authority over the Principality was taken over by Polish King Casimir the Great in 1340, and after a brief rule by the Kingdom of Hungary, in 1387, it was finally incorporated into the Kingdom of Poland by Queen Jadwiga. From that moment on, Lviv as the capital of the vast Ruthenian Voivodeship belonged to the Polish Kingdom (Fig. 1B) until the first partition of Poland in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (Mroczo 1992).

In 1356 King Casimir the Great assigned the city so-called Magdeburg rights, granting it administrative and judicial autonomy. With these new privileges and new land grants from subsequent rulers of Poland, Lviv expanded its boundaries and grew in population and wealth, reaching a prominent place among the cities in the eastern part of the Kingdom of Poland. Lviv developed in the spirit of freedom and tolerance that allowed people to pursue their religious initiatives. Religious diversity of Lviv's society was reflected by its sacred architecture. The influx of settlers from the West created demand for Catholic churches (this denomination was associated with Poles, Germans, Hungarians and other Western nations), while the native population of Ruthenia as well as the Greeks and the Vlachs erected churches



Fig. 1. Lviv on the political map of Europe over the centuries

*Explanations:* A – middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century; B – the year 1600; C – the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; D – the year 1930; E – the mid-1980s; F – the mid-1990s.

*Source:* Work by M. Meksuła.

representing the architecture of Eastern Christianity. In 1412, the so-called Roman Catholic metropolis (seat of power) was moved from Halych to Lviv, and then the bishoprics of the Orthodox and Armenian Church were founded. Therefore, Lviv became the only seat of three Christian denominations in Europe at that time<sup>1</sup> (Korc 1994; Mroczko 1992).

During the Renaissance, Lviv remained a multinational city, but gradually the Polish nation and as a consequence the Catholic Church, began to play a leading role. This was the result of strong influences of Polish culture and language, which intensified the process of Polonisation of other nationalities in the city. On the other hand, the fact of being a Catholic enabled one to obtain “town citizenship” and contributed to the improvement of one’s social status in the city. Inhabitants with such citizenship possessed the right to trade, occupy with handicraft, and participate and vote in the city council. Neither the native Ruthenians nor the Armenians had the same rights as Polish Catholics at the time (Korc 1994).

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<sup>1</sup> Over the centuries, both the status and possibilities of the functioning of each bishopric were changing as they were connected with the general political situation and position of particular Churches within the state as well as religious transformations that they were subjected to. The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Lviv has existed continuously since it was canonically established in 1412. During World War II and the era of communism an intensive disintegration of church structures took place, and it was only after 1991 when the archdiocese was reorganised and completed its organisational structure. From 2002 on, the archdiocese is a part of the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Lviv (Modzelewska, Osadczy 2006b).

The original bishopric of the Armenian Church transformed into the Armenian Catholic Archdiocese of Lviv in 1635, after the Armenian Church entered into union with the Catholic Church. This archdiocese existed until 1945 when the Soviet authorities decided to close it and arrested its last administrator. Practically eliminated from the religious life of Lviv, the archdiocese was never abolished by the Holy See and remains vacant since 1938 – death of the last bishop (Szteinke 2006). On the other hand, in 1997 the diocese of the initial (from before the mentioned union) Armenian Church was revived and exists in Lviv as the eparchy (which means diocese in the Eastern Churches) of the Armenian Apostolic Church (Modzelewska 2006). The Orthodox bishopric transformed into an eparchy of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church after the year 1700. In 1807, when the Metropolis of Halych was re-established, Lviv was assigned the rank of archeparchy. After World War II (1946), the Archeparchy, together with the entire Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was subjected to the rule of the Russian Orthodox Church, although it secretly continued to function in its canonical territory. It was officially revived in 1991, and since 2000 it is an integral part of the Metropolitan Greek Catholic Archdiocese of Lviv (Modzelewska, Osadczy 2006a).

Lviv also remains a seat of three individual dioceses of the Orthodox Churches. These are: the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, which claims a direct lineage and considers itself the descendant of the original Orthodox Church and two others that are not recognised by other canonical Eastern Orthodox Churches: Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (diocese from 1989) and Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyivan Patriarchate (diocese from 1992) (Modzelewska, Nabywaniec 2006).

As for the economic life of Lviv, the local Jewish community gradually became of great importance. The Jewish commune was established in the Middle Ages as one of the earliest in the entire Polish Kingdom. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, there were two Jewish communities connected with Lviv: one within the walled city and another one located on the outskirts. They had separate synagogues and mikvahs (ritual baths), but they shared a cemetery. Throughout the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Jewish community suffered from foreign invasion, mostly by the marauding Tatars, and also from a series of natural disasters such as floods, fires, and epidemics. Despite these setbacks, the commune grew significantly and its members were engaged mainly in trade and handicraft. Jews in Lviv were very active in moneylending, wholesale and retail trade as well as in the trade of perfume, silk goods, and other items (grain, cattle, hides, wine and other natural goods) that they imported from the whole of Europe. Among Lviv's Jews were also butchers, tailors and silversmiths (Korc 1994).

The 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries were periods of raids and battles between Poland and the Ottoman Empire, the Tatars, Cossacks, Swedes, and finally the Russians. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Lviv had to resist two sieges by Cossack troops under Bohdan Khmelnytsky. Due to the fact that the local authorities paid a significant tribute to the invaders, the city itself was not plundered. What is worth mentioning, in both cases, Lviv's Polish defenders rejected Khmelnytsky's demands to deliver the local Jews, and in contrast to many other Polish cities, in Lviv there were no pogroms of the Jews (Korc 1994).

Sieges and the ravages of war contributed to a gradual decline of the economic and cultural life of Lviv and the loss of its high social and political position in the country. But apart from dramatic moments, Lviv also experienced joyful episodes. At the time of the so-called Swedish Deluge (invasion), it was the only large city in Poland that was free from the enemy, so Lviv became the capital city for a time being. It was in the Roman Catholic Cathedral in 1656 that King John Casimir took his famous vows and entrusted the Polish nation and state to the Virgin Mary. Important changes took place in the sphere of religious and social relations in the city. In 1630, the Armenians joined the Union of Brest,<sup>2</sup> which indeed contributed

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<sup>2</sup>The Union of Brest was the 1596 declaration of a number of Orthodox bishops in the region of "Rus" (which includes at present parts of Poland, Ukraine and Belarus) to depart from the Orthodox Church and enter into communion with the Pope of Rome. The act of union did not appear suddenly or unexpectedly but was a result of many years of meetings and negotiations between some bishops of the Kyivan Church and Roman Catholic churchmen. The union was strongly supported by the King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania, Sigismund III Vasa, but opposed by some bishops and prominent nobles of the Rus. At the time, the Orthodox Church in the area included mostly Ukrainians and Belarussians under the rule of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Polish monarchy, fearful of Russian influences, sought to unify the various peoples under its rule through Catholicism. Hence the

to their social advancement, but this also meant a gradual assimilation and the loss of their cultural identity. The Orthodox Church joined the Union in 1700; in this case, the consequence of this step was the Romanisation of the liturgy, rituals and sacred art (Mroczo 1992; Ostrowski 1997).

As a result of the first partition of Poland in 1772, Lviv became part of the Austrian Empire and became the capital of the new province of Galicia and Lodomeria (Fig. 1C). The new authorities introduced a number of reforms covering the state structure, education and culture. In 1773 Emperor Joseph II also issued a decree on the liquidation of monastic orders and the secularisation of church property. Lviv's monasteries that could not prove that they were actually involved in educational, social, medical or charitable activity were closed. Their premises were transformed and used as military barracks, hospitals, prisons, and educational institutions. A number of Lviv's churches – Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic and Armenian – were closed, and on that occasion many valuable works of religious art were destroyed.

During Habsburg rule, Lviv became one of the most important Polish, Ukrainian and Jewish cultural and religious centres. According to the Austrian census of 1910, which listed religion and language, 51% of the city's population consisted of Roman Catholics, 28% Jews, and 19% belonged to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

For both Poles and Ukrainians, the city served as an important centre of the Polish and Ukrainian patriotic movements. Polish inhabitants and the clergy in the city favoured national attempts to regain independence via financial support for uprisings and active participation in uprisings. In turn, during the Spring of Nations of 1848, the Supreme Ruthenian Council in Lviv, which was to be a counterweight to the

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King was pleased and promised Orthodox Christians the rights and privileges enjoyed by the Latin rite as well as preservation of traditional Eastern rites and customs. These guarantees were proclaimed by the Polish King at the Synod of Brest, attended by the Metropolitan Bishop of Kiev and the bishops of Vladimir, Lutsk, Polotsk, Pinsk and Chelm. The hierarchs of the Kievan church gathered in synod composed 33 Articles of the Union, which were also accepted by the Pope of Rome. However, the act of peaceful reunion did not come to fruition and did not fulfil expectations. The bishops of Lviv and Przemysl refused to comply and Orthodox laymen founded brotherhoods to oppose the union. Opponents of the Brest Union felt that their tradition and autonomy were being given away. Thus, at first widely successful, within several decades the union lost much of its initial support. Moreover, it still remains extremely controversial, as it split the Eastern Church in the Polish Commonwealth into two camps – adherents of the Union (Uniates, later referred to as Greek Catholics) and opponents who stood by the Orthodox Church. In the Polish Commonwealth, the Uniate Church was regarded as a transitional element between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic faiths. Hence, it aroused aversion or even hostility of the Orthodox hierarchy and was never made equal to the Roman Church. This disagreement among the clergy spread to the everyday life of the Uniate community, which had been affected by various religion-based conflicts since the time of the Union (Czapliński 1985; Olszewski 1982).

Poles' National Council, proclaimed the rebirth and conciliarism of the Ukrainian nation. It was an initiative that the Greek Catholic Church was strongly involved in. The Council was established in St. Jura's Cathedral under the leadership of the Greek Catholic clergy, with Bishop H. Yakhymovych being nominated as the Chairman of the Council. Membership in the Council was restricted to Greek Catholics and the social structure of the Council was dominated by Lviv's clerical and secular persons with at least some education (intelligentsia). The purpose of the Council was to strengthen Ukrainian people living within the dominant Austrian Empire, defend the constitutional rights of Ukrainians, and uphold the interests of the Greek Catholic Church.

As for the city's Jewish commune, by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the city became a centre of Hasidism, though other sects were also prominent, and in 1844 a Reform synagogue was erected. Political and cultural activity also flourished, for example, in the 1880s the first Zionist organisations were established in the city and the first daily newspaper in Yiddish appeared ([www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource)).

Reforms pursued by the Emperor Joseph II also affected the Armenian community. Their consequences, such as closures of churches and cemeteries, liquidations of parishes and limitations on Armenian priests were very painful. Apart from those negative actions, there were also advantageous steps – Armenian clergymen gained equal rights with Roman Catholic clergy, and they obtained a permanent salary from the Austrian government (Smirnov 2002).

During World War I, after the initial withdrawal of Austrian troops, Lviv experienced Russian and then again Austrian occupation. In the final stages of the war, with the emergence of the vision of an independent Polish state, the city experienced another difficult period. In October of 1918, Ukrainians, supported by the Austrian authorities, designated the Ukrainian National Council in Lviv, and captured the city, proclaiming the establishment of the West Ukrainian People's Republic. Some Polish troops, supported by the residents of Lviv, including children and the youth, defended the city. The battles of Lviv took place in several stages, and finally ended with the Poles' success in April of 1919. For the Poles, the defence of Lviv became an extraordinary example of the sacrifice and heroism of the youngest combatants who afterwards gained a legendary nickname of the Lviv Eaglets. In 1920, Lviv again came under threat, this time from the Soviet army, and it was only the Polish-Soviet Riga Peace Treaty of 1921 that established the final ownership of the city by the reborn Polish state (Fig. 1D). In 1920, in recognition of its services and loyalty to the Polish Republic, Lviv was awarded the "Virtuti Militari" Cross and the title of "Semper Fidelis" (Mroczko 1992).

In the Second Polish Republic (1918–1939), Lviv became one of the provincial capitals and remained a leading centre of Polish science and culture. Gradually, the city developed economically after the war's devastation, basing its development on



traditional trade and its former role as an intermediary between the West and the East, and the North and the South of Europe (Mroczko 1992). Among the ethnic groups of Lviv, Poles, Ukrainians and Jews remained part of clearly distinguishable communities, as other ethnic groups assimilated with the first two. Likewise throughout Eastern Galicia, conflicting Polish-Ukrainian relations, full of mutual prejudice and resentment, became a major problem of the city. On the one hand, they were exacerbated by a general policy of the Polish authorities, which did not favour Ukrainians; on the other hand, by unfulfilled dreams of independence of the Ukrainian people and their nationalist propaganda activists (Korcz 1994; Ostrowski 1997). The Greek Catholic Church, which supported the Ukrainians, also expressed their aspirations for independence. Andrzej Szeptycki, the head of the Greek Catholic Church of Lviv, served as a spiritual leader not only for the Greek Catholics, but also for the entire Ukrainian nation (Kumor 2001).

During World War II, Lviv was the site of the martyrdom of the local population. In September of 1939 the city surrendered to the Soviet army and in November, along with the entire Czerwieńsk and Vohlynia regions, was incorporated into Soviet Ukraine. The Polish population of Lviv suffered the first repressions at the hands of the Soviets. In 1941, the German army and Ukrainian troops working for the German army entered Lviv. In June of 1941, the independence of a united Ukraine was declared and adopted by the Ukrainian National Committee in exile; whereas in July a Ukrainian government was formed in Lviv. It was then that the provisional Ukrainian authorities and the police, which collaborated with the Nazis, began to take action against local Poles and Jews. In June of 1943, the Nazis liquidated the Lviv ghetto, thereby ending the program of the extermination of the local Jewish population (Mroczko 1992; Ostrowski 1997).

The city was liberated in July of 1944 by the Polish National Army and the Soviet Army. As a result of the resolutions of the Yalta Conference of February 1945, the city was left to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (Fig. 1E). The new government immediately undertook efforts to make Lviv a Soviet city – with Ukrainian roots but without any Polish heritage. That is the reason that Russification covered all areas of post-war city life in Lviv. First, the resettlement of Poles from the borderland, including Lviv residents, to Poland was carried out. Furthermore, Polish churches and secular monuments were destroyed and Polish names of streets and squares, schools and cultural institutions were gradually liquidated. Any traces of Polish culture were also removed from written works on the history of Lviv. The marginalisation of the Polish community resulted in a decreased importance and number of parishes of the Catholic Church. Priests were persecuted, and churches and monasteries were taken over by the Soviet state and transformed into secular buildings or given to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (of the Moscow Patriarchate) (Mroczko 1992).

The war and postwar actions completely altered the ethnic structure of Lviv; the city was left with only 20% of its pre-war population. World War II itself caused an almost complete extermination of the Jewish residents and heavy losses among other nationalities. During postwar population transfers, apart from numerous Poles, most remaining Armenians left Lviv (Smirnov 2002). The resulting population shortage was supplemented by migrants. Many were Ukrainians from Western Galicia, deported to Ukraine, and some were Ukrainian-speaking migrants from rural areas near Lviv. Afterwards, an increased influx of migrants from the eastern parts of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia appeared and all the new inhabitants were subjected to the intense process of Sovietisation (Ostrowski 1997).

The Soviet authorities also pursued an active policy of destroying all religious groups in the former Galicia, especially the Greek Catholic Church. In 1946, under pressure from the government, a non-canonical pseudo-congregation was called in Lviv, where the priests were to reject the Union of Brest and file a request with the Orthodox Patriarch of Moscow and Constantinople to join the Orthodox Church. The Soviet government began the liquidation of Church organisations, and Greek Catholic church buildings were given to the Orthodox Church. On this occasion, many valuable works of religious art were destroyed. Despite the ban, the Greek Catholic Church did not cease its activity, but with significant help from the Roman Catholic Church, especially the Polish Roman Catholic Church throughout the communist period, the Greek Catholic Church operated underground. In the “catacomb” system, pastoral activities were carried out; there were male and female monasteries and seminaries, where new Greek Catholic priests were trained. Roman Catholic churches and cemeteries were frequent meeting places for the faithful of the Eastern rite, among others; such was the function of the Roman Catholic cathedral in Lviv (Dzwonkowski 2005; Nabywaniec 1993).

The Armenian Church suffered similar persecution as the Roman and Greek Catholic Churches. These restrictions started as early as the beginning of the Soviet occupation of Lviv in 1939. The hostile attitude of the Soviet authorities towards the Church was manifested by progressive limitation of the functioning of churches, closures of churches, deportations of believers and repressions against clergymen who were submitted to strict surveillance. In 1945 some priests and finally the last administrator of the Church were arrested, which meant the actual liquidation of the church organisation. At the same time, the cultural and scientific work of the Church was destroyed and its buildings including the main cathedral and convent of the Armenian Benedictine Sisters were acquired by the state and transformed into public use facilities (Smirnov 2002).

In comparison to other churches, the Orthodox Church remained in the best condition. In Ukraine – but outside the historic Galicia region – it had the largest number of believers, parishes, churches and clergy. However, it was subordinated

to the atheistic Soviet authorities and often played the role of a political agitator (Eberhardt 2001; Kumor 2001).

## Current religious situation in Western Ukraine

Taking advantage of the rather sudden weakness of the Soviet Union, in 1991 Ukraine declared independence and became a separate country (Fig. 1F). The new political conditions facilitated a religious revival and the restoration of the structures of various churches and religious communities.

Presently, the most numerous denomination in the western part of Ukraine, thus in Lviv, is the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. Attempts to restore it in the country were taken by the Greek Catholic hierarchy as early as the beginning of the 1980s. They were successful thanks to the fact that in Soviet times, the Church had in fact existed and was functioning underground, so its structures were not fully destroyed. In addition, the Church was strongly and actively supported by Pope John Paul II as well as some nationalist organisations. Since the 1990s the development of Greek Catholic parishes has progressed, and many had been transformed from previously Orthodox parishes. The regaining of lost property by Ukrainian Greek Catholics from Orthodox hands generated frequent inter-denominational conflicts and rivalry and was accompanied by violent clashes of the faithful provoked by their religious and political leadership. What should be mentioned here is the fact that the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church has been often favoured by local political parties, which tried to gain votes of the Church's members (Kumor 2001; Pawluczuk 1998).

After 1991, the situation within the Orthodox Church became extremely complicated. As a result of complex transformations, three distinct Churches started to function within this denomination. Ranking them according to their significance, in the Western Ukraine the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church is ranked first, then the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyivan Patriarchate, and finally the original Ukrainian Orthodox Church under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Moscow. The precise number of believers, parishes and clergy in each of the Orthodox Churches remains unclear as it happens that the parishes are transferred from the rule of one Church to another and their affiliation with each Church is uncertain (Eberhardt 2001; Pawluczuk 1998). The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church is the main rival for the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, as they both are traditional Galician churches and the distribution of their parishes is very similar. In addition, they have a common purpose to expand their influence beyond western Ukraine and attract the support of those Ukrainians who are not closely linked with their national and religious identity (Jepsen 2005).

The Roman Catholic religion is usually identified with the Polish community. In the postwar period, this Church lost enormously in importance, and its property was taken over by the government or came into the possession of the Orthodox Church. After 1991, when the Polish community saw a chance for recovery, it was impossible to regain most of the lost churches and monasteries. Many buildings had been destroyed, some belonged to other denominations, and others were in the hands of the Greek Catholic Church. In the latter case, by agreement between the churches, houses of worship often became two-denominational and were used by both Roman and Greek Catholic Ukrainians (Eberhardt 2001).

The Armenian Church also underwent religious recovery after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the 1990s a handful of Armenian families who had remained or had come to Lviv during the Soviet era attempted to re-establish their local parish and regain the city's cathedral. Finally, in 1997 the Armenian Apostolic Church eparchy was established in Lviv and in 2000 the local Ukrainian authorities assigned to it the Lviv Cathedral. Since then, the cathedral is used by the Armenian Catholic and Armenian Apostolic communities (Smirnov 2002).

Protestant Churches in Lviv are a legacy of German colonisation in the region. Current religious freedom in Ukraine favours the emergence and activities of the various Protestant communities that had previously not existed. In addition, the denominations which may be included as so-called new religious movements have become more and more common. There are various charismatic groups and churches, which fit well with non-traditional faiths. They typically offer un-confessional faith that additionally often contains elements of Ukrainian nationalism. This feature becomes an extra advantage and attraction of each faith for people or groups with strong nationalistic views (Eberhardt 2001; Pawluczuk 1998).

Among non-Christian faiths, the Jewish community is the most significant in Lviv. After postwar religious suppression and emigration to Israel, Germany and the United States, the situation of this group has become stable today. There are more and more synagogues that serve the faithful and places where they gather to pray. Jewish cultural centres as well as schools are being opened. New social and political Jewish organisations have appeared in order to guard the rights of the Jewish community.

## **Sacred sites in the city – their prestige, role and changing use**

First, it should be explained that the sacred sites described below do not represent all the denominations which have existed in Lviv over the centuries. Below are only some examples but they seem to be the most suitable to show some typical paths of the changing history and functions of the city's sacred places.

In the first phase of urban development, around the year 1260, the Church of St. John the Baptist was founded by the Hungarian princess Constance, the wife of Prince Leo. The original, probably late Romanesque style church, was obliterated by repeated reconstructions, and its contemporary neo-Romanesque decoration was created after a complete renovation in 1887 (Medyński 1990). This site, which could be an exceptional memento of the very early days of Lviv, served as a warehouse for many years after World War II. Now, after some architectural changes, it houses a small museum of the Ancient Monuments of Lviv. As stated on the plaque found on the church fence, it is also a place where Greek Catholic services are offered.

In the same time period, St. Nicholas' Orthodox Church was established for Ruthenian dukes. It was a castle chapel, and perhaps a burial ground of Halych princes. The building of Romanesque-Byzantine style was rebuilt and restored in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and then again during the 1920s and 1960s. Hence, the only element of its original features is probably the foundations (Medyński 1990; Włodek, Kulewski 2006). Although during its long history, the church experienced all the miseries and disasters that hit Lviv: fires, floods, invasions, it survived as the oldest functioning Orthodox church in the city, which operated continuously even during wartime. It is the place of St. Nicholas' perpetual worship, whose relics were offered to the local community by the Patriarch of Antioch in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. There is also the icon of Saint Nicholas, which is worshipped there. Currently, the church belongs to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kiev Patriarchate.

In the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, in connection with intensive development plans of the city, the construction of three cathedrals began: Roman Catholic Cathedral, Armenian Cathedral, St. Jura's Cathedral of the Eastern Rite. Being assigned to a particular ethnic group, each cathedral grew over time, not only as a centre of religious life, but also as a witness to the history of each group.

The Arch-cathedral Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Roman Catholic Cathedral) is the only well-preserved Gothic building in Lviv, manifesting the simplicity of Medieval architecture in the city. The founder of the church was King Casimir the Great of Poland. Construction began around the year 1360 and was continued throughout the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In the course of its centuries-old history, the cathedral was rebuilt several times and enriched with numerous chapels, decorated altars, monuments, tombstones, commemorative plaques, turning into the richest complex in historic Lviv and valuable testimony to its history, preserved at the same time almost intact. The most beautiful chapels, among them the Boim Chapel, Kampian Chapel, and Buczack Chapel, were built inside the cathedral in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Kampian Chapel is the most valuable monument of the Late Renaissance in Lviv and the Boim Chapel is a remarkable work of art (Mannerism) and a monument of class "zero." Both chapels possess elaborate carvings and equally rich ornamental decorations (Medyński 1990; Mroczo 1992).

The Roman Catholic Cathedral is a unique jewel of the Polish nation, because of the many uplifting events that were associated with it (e.g. funeral mass for Władysław Jagiello and duke Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki) and Polish figures who have been commemorated in its interiors (S. Żółkiewski, T. Kościuszko, Archbishop J. Skarbek, Pope John Paul II). The most valuable treasure is undoubtedly the image of Our Lady of Grace, placed in the main altar of the church. Originally, it hung on the outside wall of the cathedral, and when it became famous for its graces, it was transferred to one of the chapels, and then to the main altar. Very quickly, this humble and simple image became an object of adoration around Lviv, and soon it gained its significance in Polish history. In the face of the Swedish invasion in 1656, before this painting King John Casimir made a promise, which placed the Republic of Poland under the protection of Divine Providence and the Virgin Mary – the Queen of the Polish Crown. In 1776 the painting was adorned with Papal Crowns sent from Rome. After World War II, the original image shared the fate of many Poles and left Lviv along with Archbishop E. Baziak (Medyński 1990). Now the painting is kept in the vault at Wawel Castle in Cracow. The Lviv Cathedral was provided with one of the two copies made in the 1970s by the Academy of Fine Arts, and also crowned by Pope John Paul II in 2001.

Lviv Cathedral has been serving Poles continuously for over 500 years and together with St. Anthony's Church, it is the only active Polish parish church in Lviv. In 1991, it was the place of the Roman Catholic ceremonial enthronement of the new Archbishop of Lviv, M. Jaworski. As in the difficult times of the partitions of Poland, and then the era of communist domination, so today the church serves as a centre of Polish culture and patriotism. It brings together and integrates local Poles and attracts tourists who want to learn and experience the old Polish spirit of Lviv. There are many activities for Poles organised by the cathedral, both religious and social. Some groups operate within the parish, for example: a choir, children's and youth groups, rosary groups, Legion of Virgin Mary, etc.

The Armenian Cathedral and the nearby Armenian Street create a picturesque and charming corner of old Lviv, allowing to move into a unique and mysterious world of the Orient. Armenian merchants and artisans who came to Lviv in the Middle Ages concentrated and settled around their church, thus protecting their national and religious individuality. Despite the fact that for centuries it was supplemented with new elements, the cathedral is an impressive monument of Old Armenian building traditions. It is a monument that was located particularly far to the northwest, outside its homeland of Armenia (Medyński 1990; Ostrowski 1997).

Much more impressive than the body of the cathedral, uneven in style, is the interior, usually steeped in gloom. Noteworthy features include a twentieth century altar, Archbishop's throne, a railing and decorations such as twentieth century Venetian mosaic domes over the sanctuary and a vestibule and wall paintings of Arme-

nian motifs by the famous painter John H. Rosen (Medyński 1990; Smirnov 2002). The immediate vicinity of the church is also interesting. It features the remains of the Armenian archbishops' palace, an Armenian Benedictine nunnery, the only house of this congregation in Poland and three courtyards, decorated with stone statues. In the south courtyard, one can see the "Cave" – the chapel of Christ Crucified, with rococo carvings. The north and south courtyards also served as Armenian cemeteries from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, which hold numerous gravestones, including typical Armenian *chaczkars*. They are placed at various locations in the cathedral complex – they also cover the courtyards.

After World War II, when the Soviet authorities closed down the organisation of the Armenian Church, the cathedral was closed and transformed into a storage space for the Lviv Painting Gallery, and later the Ukrainian National Museum. Some paintings, manuscripts and liturgical vessels were transferred to the Museum of Religion and Atheism. Many valuable objects were placed in the hands of private individuals. The nunnery housed icon conservation workshops, and bishop's palace was turned into apartments (Smirnov 2002).

After the establishment of an independent Ukraine, in 1997 Lviv was officially the capital of the Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Ukraine, for all the Armenians who arrived there after World War II. However, the return of the cathedral into the hands of the church was completed in stages from 2000 to 2003. In 2001, on the occasion of 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of Christianity in Armenia, the cathedral was also visited by Pope John Paul II and the head of the Armenian Church, Patriarch Nerses Bedros XIX of Beirut. The re-consecration of the church took place in 2003, and was witnessed by numerous guests including clergy and lay people and representatives of the government and artists. It should be noted that in recent years, the cathedral, as a unique work of art, was included in a renovation project designed to help restore its former glory. The work is carried out and financed by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage ("Cultural Heritage").

St. Jura's Cathedral, owned initially by the Orthodox Church and now by the Greek Catholic Church, was erected on a hill dominating Lviv. On the foundations of a Medieval building, at the initiative of Archbishop Athanasius Szeptycki in the years 1744–1770, a new cathedral was built together with a group of palaces formed as the seat of the Archbishop and church committee buildings. This created a magnificent rococo complex. A special artistic effect of the cathedral is achieved with a combination of its beautiful figure, decorated with original architectural and sculptural details of the location on a hill surrounded by trees. Architecturally, the church was a compromise between the traditions of the Eastern Church and unitary aspirations for closer relations with Latin culture. The facade and interior are decorated with excellent sculptures. Inside, a painting of Trembowelska Virgin Mary, which is considered miraculous, as well as other beautiful paintings draw the

attention of visitors. In 1998, the cathedral of St. George was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (Medyński 1990).

The cathedral has witnessed a lot of key events in the life of the Greek Catholic Church, Ukrainian state, and the city of Lviv. As in the case of the Roman Catholic Cathedral, St. Jura's Cathedral was of profound importance for the Ukrainian nation in the process of building its national identity. In the year 1700, the Act of Accession of the Orthodox Metropolitan of Lviv into the Union of Brest was proclaimed there, and the underground floor of the cathedral became the burial place for the Uniate bishops of Lviv. In the difficult years of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Bishop Andrzej Szeptycki, considered a national hero and religious leader of the Ukrainians, led the entire community of Greek Catholics from Cathedral Hill. After World War II, the cathedral was given to the Orthodox Church by the Soviet government. The original owners regained it in 1991 in the presence of Miroslaw Lubacziwski, the Major Archbishop of Lviv and the Supervisor of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine. After organisational changes in the last two decades, in 2011, St. Jura's cathedral was re-established as the seat of Metropolis of Lviv (archdiocese). In addition to the tasks arising from its administrative function, the Cathedral is a place of rich religious life of the Greek Catholic community and includes significant pastoral programs for the Ukrainian faithful.

The real pearl of architecture and a peculiarity of Lviv is the Dominicans' Rococo Church, built at the same time and in the same style as St. Jura's Church. The first Church of Corpus Christi was built in the Middle Ages, and the construction of the new church began in 1745, after the demolition of the original building, decaying after a few fires. The dome, painted green outside, is a distinctive, easily recognisable element of the city's skyline. Both the church facade and the interior are decorated with high-quality sculptural decorations. Inside, there are beautiful gilded wood carvings, alabaster statues and plaques. The large number of tombstones and epitaphs helped nickname this church the "Lviv Westminster" (Janicki 1990).

Under communism, liturgical equipment and accessories were removed from the church; the adjacent monastery was turned into a Museum of Religion and Atheism. The entrance led through a portal, with the words "Soli Deo honor et Gloria" (To God alone be honour and glory). Several thousand artefacts, documents and materials were gathered to "expose the true face of Catholicism and the Unitary Church" and show "the Uniates serving the enemies of the Ukrainian people and other evidence of the harmful opium of the people" (Janicki 1990). Paradoxically, the creation of the museum protected the church and the monastery from total devastation, because these buildings, which were used to store flour and sugar after the war, were now renovated for museum use (Frejlich, Skrzydlewska 2008).

Currently, Holy Eucharist Church is in the hands of the Greek Catholic Church. Its interior has been tailored to the needs of the liturgy of the Eastern rite including



icons and tetrapod<sup>3</sup> placed inside, and the church's paintings were decorated with embroidered towels in the style of the East. These elements are apparently in contrast with the original baroque decorations of the church. As an object of historical interest, situated in the historic centre of the city, the church is frequently visited by tourists. For the material needs of the faithful, a small shop with candles, devotionals, religious books, guides and albums on Lviv has been opened at the entrance. However, in the building of the monastery, the Museum of the History of Religion still operates. It gradually eliminates elements of atheist propaganda and presents the activity of existing denominations in Ukraine (Frejlich, Skrzydlewska 2008).

The Dominicans' Church, located next to several other historic churches in the city, is an example of the relationship between the city's churches and the current political situation. When Ukraine regained its independence and the Greek Catholic Church began to gain popularity in the west of the country, a need arose also in Lviv to acquire new churches. The government, counting on the support of the Church, started returning buildings which had belonged to the Catholic Church before World War II and had been closed in the communist era or operated as public hospitals, warehouses, dormitories, etc. In the 1990s, a similar scenario was true of Lviv's Bernardine Church – now St. Andrew's Orthodox Church, the Church of the Carmelite Order – now St. Michael's Orthodox Church, and the Jesuits' Church – today the garrison church of St. Peter and Paul (Skop 2008).

Protestant communities, which in quite a few cases became owners of existing premises after 1991, also have their places of worship in Lviv. The history of the Church of Seventh-day Adventists in the Lychakiv district is very complicated. The building was erected in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century for a monastery belonging to the Capuchin order. When the Josephin reform abolished the order, its buildings were given the Franciscans (Medyński 1990). After 1945 the church was closed, and the building was transformed into a hospital for the treatment of infectious disease. In the 1990s the building was given to the Adventist community and was furnished in accordance with the rules of Protestant churches. The church regularly hosts prayer meetings and Bible readings, and also conducts pastoral and social activities, including premarital courses and family therapy meetings for addicts, and runs a children's association and a choir.

In modern Lviv, only a few traces of the Jewish community have survived. Signs of its presence include the remains of ancient synagogues. The site of the Great Synagogue of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and a progressive synagogue called the Tempel of the mid-nineteenth century are commemorated on plaques and on a residential building as well as in a small square. Both synagogues were destroyed by the Germans after

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<sup>3</sup> Tetrapod – in Orthodox churches it is a form of the altar with a cross, icons and candles that can be adored by the faithful and where sacraments are offered.

the invasion of Lviv in 1941. The building of 19<sup>th</sup> century Yankel Glanzer Hasidic synagogue has been preserved. Because the Germans used it as a warehouse during the war, it was not totally devastated. After the war, it housed a library, and now it is the Centre for Jewish Culture.

## The significance of Lviv cemeteries

Much like churches, Lviv cemeteries provide an equally versatile and valuable trove of information on the city's life, history and culture. These are places where a particularly strong spiritual realm of the sacred is intertwined with secular life, and where you can touch the past which enters the present. Among Lviv cemeteries, special attention should be paid to two: Lychakiv and Yanivskiy cemeteries. Apart from being the burial place of the dead for decades, they represent unique cultural value and speak volumes about the past identity of the city. As for the Lychakiv Cemetery, it is also a site which, quite unfortunately, provokes nationalistic attitudes leading to returning disputes and conflicts concerning relations between Poland and Ukraine as well as the physical arrangement of the cemetery.

Lychakiv Cemetery was founded in 1786, and Yanivskiy Cemetery in 1883. Both cemeteries were created in the then suburbs, in connection with the closing of the old parish cemeteries located mostly near parish churches, which was the case for sanitary reasons (Medyński 1990). Cemeteries are historical sites that are still in use, although Lychakiv Cemetery burials are currently limited due to a shortage of space. However, along cemetery paths and at tombs you can meet family or friends of the deceased, who organise and decorate the graves of their beloved or stand in silence and reflection, to remember and experience the presence of the dead. Speaking about the purpose and meaning of Lviv cemeteries, it must be emphasised that these are sacred places regardless of one's religion or even views on the world in general. People of different faiths and – judging by the lack of religious symbols on many tombstones – far from any church, rest there. Nevertheless, cemeteries remain sacred sites and are widely considered a sign of the sacred in the public mind.

The transmission of secular values – artistic, cultural and patriotic – is the second attribute of Lviv cemeteries. Lychakiv, for a long time the largest cemetery in Lviv, and one of the most beautiful cemeteries in Europe, was built on the model of a park, upon beautiful hills and among rich greenery (Medyński 1990). It could be called “a landscape and park cemetery, a cemetery-museum” (Nicieja 2010), “real gallery of sculptures in the open air” (Janicki 1990). In 1990, by resolution of the City of Lviv, the cemetery was established as a historical and cultural reserve.

People who are buried in Lychakiv Cemetery were primarily wealthy and famous, whose families hired outstanding sculptors to create tombstones and impressive funeral chapels. Thus, many graves are extremely valuable works of art representing a variety of styles (Nicieja 2010). In addition, the cemetery is a Pantheon of Poles who are recognized as “Bene Merentes” – deserving citizens – for the city of Lviv and the Republic of Poland. Among the thousands of famous people who are buried there, one should mention: A. Balzer, S. Banach, B. Dybowski, S. Goszczyński, A. Grottger, M. Konopnicka, W. Kętrzyński, J. Ordon, F. Smolka, and many others. In many cases, the funerals of such persons were national events. At the cemetery, there are also separate areas for Polish soldiers who had fought in different periods for Poland – the Kosciuszko uprising, Napoleonic wars, the November and January uprisings (Medyński 1937). A number of prominent Ukrainian writers, journalists, nationalists, including the poet Ivan Franko, also rest at Lychakiv Cemetery.

A separate part of Lychakiv Cemetery is the Cemetery of the Defenders of Lviv, also called the Lviv Eaglets Cemetery. In this *Campo Santo* of the city there are the ashes of officers and soldiers, women and children, most of them volunteers, who defended the Polish character of the city in 1918. In 1925 the ashes of the nameless defenders of the city were transferred to Warsaw and laid in the city’s Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. From a Polish perspective, the extraordinary prestige and importance of the Cemetery of the Defenders are best summed up in A. Medyński’s guide to Lviv published in 1937 (pgs. 203–204): “In this quiet retreat of Polish Sanctuaries, a fount of eternal life was created, because it will give future generations a love for the Homeland, an understanding of its needs and steadfast willingness to sacrifice everything if the need arises.”

After the war, the Cemetery of the Defenders disappeared from the map of the city and experienced a decline. In 1971, the Soviet army planned the destruction of the cemetery using tanks. The cemetery was turned into a garbage dump. Interventions by Polish authorities remained unanswered. Only in 1988 was the cemetery partly cleaned, protected and restored by local Poles and employees of Energopol (Janicki 1990; Włodek, Kulewski 2006). In the 1990s after many discussions and efforts by the Polish side, the Ukrainian authorities recognised the Cemetery of the Defenders as a Polish cemetery, which allowed further work on the renovation of the site. Although not found in their original form – some elements and inscriptions still aroused controversy and opposition among the Ukrainians<sup>4</sup> – the cemetery was

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<sup>4</sup> The Eaglets Cemetery can be treated as a symbol of turbulent Polish-Ukrainian relations. It stirs up controversies as it reminds people of bitter and painful moments of the struggle for Lviv between Poles and Ukrainians in 1918 following the collapse of the Habsburg Empire. There were hundreds of victims on both sides. Construction of Polish memorial to

officially opened in 2005 in the presence of Polish and Ukrainian presidents. At the same time, the Memorial of the Warriors of the Ukrainian Galician Army, dedicated to soldiers fighting for the liberation of the Ukrainian people, was opened nearby. The ashes of Ukrainian soldiers are deposited under a column with a figure of St. Michael the Archangel.

Due to its artistic and landscape value, until World War II, Lychakiv Cemetery was one of the most attractive places for walks in the city. Thanks to the fact that the graves of famous and well-deserved people were in sight, such a hike could become a history lesson. After the war, the Soviet authorities, aware of the importance of the cemetery, allowed for the destruction of the most visible tombs and put up modern Ukrainian and Russian tombstones, which were to hide the Polish graves (Nicieja 2010). It was only in the 1990s that a systematic renovation of the cemetery was undertaken.

Today, due to its exceptional artistic and landscape value, the cemetery is commonly visited by large numbers of tourists coming to Lviv. But for some nationalities, mainly Poles, Ukrainians, Armenians and Russians, it is also a place of historical significance and they come to the cemetery to get acquainted with their national heroes or to touch a piece of their national history. Local small businesses have adapted to the needs of the growing number of tourists and offer artificial flowers and candles, as well as drinks and sweets. Owing to the fact that the cemetery is now established as a museum, entrance to the site is not free.

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the defenders of Lviv started already in the 1920s. After World War II, when Lviv became a Soviet city, the cemetery was abandoned and gradually destroyed as an undesirable Polish memento. Only after 1991 it became possible to restore the cemetery with the approval of the authorities of an independent Ukraine. The official opening of the Eaglets Cemetery under the supervision of the presidents of both countries was to be a step on the way to Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation. However, the official opening was postponed because of the Lviv City Council's disagreement and objection to some details in the memorial's design and wording of the inscription that glorified the Polish Army defending Lviv. What was astonishing was that the main controversies appeared not between Kyiv and Warsaw but Kyiv and Lviv, as Lviv's politicians wanted to portray themselves as Ukrainian patriots and expressed deep animosity towards the current president of Ukraine, L. Kuchma, who was unpopular in Western Ukraine. Thus, the conflict around the cemetery evoked the old Polish-Ukrainian rivalry for the national identity of Lviv. On the other hand, it became an element of a political struggle between Western Ukraine and the president of Ukraine. Finally, the cemetery was solemnly reopened in the presence Polish president A. Kwaśniewski and newly elected Ukrainian president V. Yushchenko. But to counterbalance the symbolism of the Polish memorial, the Ukrainians began to reconstruct and enlarge an adjoining Memorial to the Warriors of the Ukrainian Galician Army. Old graves were renovated as were the remains of the other Ukrainian soldiers fighting for the independence of Ukraine in different times; these were reburied there. This way, next to the memorial for Polish national heroes, appeared also a memorial to Ukrainian fighters for independence (Zhurzhenko 2011).

Yanivskiy Cemetery does not represent such great artistic value, as does Lychakiv, but also has a number of notable and expensive tombs. Among the famous people buried there are the following: saint Józef Bilczewski, Archbishop of Lviv (died in 1923) and, considered a saint, Father Seraphim Kaszuba, a preacher wandering the remote parts of the Soviet Union (who died in 1977). The cemetery is, however, an interesting record of city's history. Initially, the poorest residents of Lviv were buried there; one can say that it was a cemetery for the poor. In the years 1918–1919 it became the burial place for soldiers of the Polish-Ukrainian War. Therefore, in the military section of the cemetery, there are Polish Army and Sich Rifleman burial areas. After the war, the cemetery, and especially the Polish graves, were left unattended. In the 1970s on the order of the Soviet government, the military sections of both the Polish defenders of Lviv and Sich Rifleman were destroyed. After 1991, the graves of Ukrainians were renovated, cleaned, and surrounded by a fence. However, in the Polish part, the remaining graves were vandalised and the memorial cross was destroyed, even though they are barely visible along the path overgrown with weeds. There is a lack of interest and concern for the tombs of the Polish Army, and despite the fact that they are a slice of Polish history of Lviv, only a few tourists visit them (Włodek, Kulewski 2006).

At Yanivskiy Cemetery, there are also traces of Jewish culture, which are not very numerous in Lviv. First, there are some tombstones, concentrated in a separate sector and characterised by typical Jewish ornamentation and sometimes a striking fence as well as a Holocaust memorial reminding visitors of the extermination of Jews in the city.

## Summary

Lviv is a valuable example of a city in which one can easily identify the factors influencing the functions of sacred sites and trace the transformation of these functions with reference to varying political and cultural conditions. Places of worship in Lviv reflect not only the realities of each period of history, but also their specificity in the region of Eastern Europe.

Undoubtedly, the religious function was dominant at the sacred sites of Lviv for most of its history. These sites were created and developed as centres of worship where religious practices were implemented, and the faithful have an opportunity to meet their spiritual needs. As multiple ethnicities and denominations were characteristic of Lviv since its beginning as a city, it possessed a favourable atmosphere designed to create a spirit of tolerance and religious freedom. As a result, not only the dominant nations, but also religious minorities had the opportunity to practice their religion and create sacred art.

It is easy to note that in the course of history, religious function of the sacred places transformed: from its full bloom, through a nearly complete loss, up to new expansion. The favourable climate for religion usually occurred in periods when Lviv existed within independent states; for example the Kingdom of Poland or contemporary Ukraine. On the other hand, adverse conditions were experienced when Lviv remained under hostile or imposed rule, as it happened in the years of wartime occupation and the subsequent communist regime. Especially at such times, a partial or total restriction of religious life occurred and religion often became a tool of politics and current ideologies. It also happened that one certain confession gained special approval and support of the authorities, while other denominations were noticeably discriminated. This led to a gradual reduction or complete loss of the original religious function of many sacred places and usually resulted in their devastation. The destructive role of communism in the postwar years should be particularly emphasised. Communism drastically degraded the importance of religion and places of worship, not only in Lviv and Ukraine, but in many countries in Central and Eastern Europe, which found itself under Soviet influence.

The second most important function of the sacred sites found in Lviv is the tourist function. It began to develop in the 1990s when independent Ukraine changed its attitude towards religion and all matters related thereto, and then when the country opened itself up to foreign contacts, including tourist contacts with other, non-Soviet European countries. Churches of different faiths returned to their owners, and were gradually renovated to regain their value, not only spiritual, but also artistic. Particularly attractive for tourists from the West are churches that allow to explore the art and rituals of Eastern Christianity. They attract with valuable architecture, rich and peculiar interior design and a different liturgy. Often, they offer additional attractions, such as music concerts, museums and exhibitions. Churches in Lviv are also examples of the diffusion and assimilation of artistic phenomena of the Latin and Byzantine cultures. Tourist destinations in Lviv also include selected cemeteries, where many tombstones have artistic value and are genuine works of art.

The proof for the development of the tourism function of sacred sites is their expanding promotion through guidebooks and handouts found at information centres and at the sites themselves. There are also markings and arrows along city streets leading to different locations, making it easy to reach them for both organised tours as well as individual tourists. Something that demonstrates the commercialisation of places of worship and adaptation to the modern tourist market is the fact that some places have fees for sightseeing and picture taking.

An important element that contributes to the tourist attractiveness of sacred sites in Lviv is the relationship with key historical events. To some extent, the majority of historic Lviv churches and cemeteries are witnesses of the past of the city and the region. This is especially true of sites commemorating the Polish history of

Lviv. Especially for Poles, many sites have a symbolic dimension, even more in a patriotic than a religious sense. The sacred relics of the past are an undeniable proof of Polish cultural heritage in the city. Ignored, depreciated or devastated under communism, now for visitors from Poland they are a testament of momentous episodes in the Polish history of the city, and for the small Polish community in the city – places of national integration. But other nationalities also come to Lviv on “roots trips.” Today, there is a growing tendency among Jews and Armenians from abroad to visit Ukraine, including Galicia and Lviv, to follow the footsteps of their nation’s old life.

Speaking of churches in Lviv in a historical context, it should also be noted that very often their presence alone and their religious life had political overtones. For example, for Russian invaders, Orthodox churches served Russia’s policy of Russification in occupied lands, while Polish churches were a symbol of national identity for Poles and Greek Catholic churches for Ukrainians.

Today, the range of functions performed by religious buildings in the city is broader than ever. Churches and cemeteries, which were previously the realm of the sacred, distinct and separated, by means of a real or only symbolic wall, enter the world of the secular in the form of tourism. The uniqueness of places of worship, combined with the presence and experience of God designed to lead to holiness, becomes an attraction which allows to break away from everyday life. It is intensified by people’s increasing desire to get to know new places. There is no doubt that in the next few years, these phenomena will develop, especially in the case of such an attractive tourist destination as the city of Lviv.

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