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Sacral Landscape and its Influence on Regional Tourism Space Development: Western Pomerania, NW Poland

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Formed through the centuries, cultural landscapes of a region include not only the material realm in the form of numerous historical buildings, monuments and other evidences of local society's development, but also significant elements of the immaterial realm, which manifest in the form of spiritual heritage, faith, tradition, customs and language. Interesting, often unique in terms of religious and historical point of view, religious buildings, as well as traditional pilgrimage routes and local shrines are now undeniable qualities, shaping the touristic space of the region. The study of tourism and a detailed Valuation Analysis of sacred objects showed that wide ranging cultural tourism (with the significant participation of religious tourism) is a great alternative to the still popular (although in many places already saturated), leisure tourism. The historical values and a multitude of interesting, often unique objects, with proper promotional activity, may contribute to the tourist interest of places often overlooked.

The main aim of this article is to show the spatial diversity of the phenomenon of religious tourism and valuation of the landscape in terms of its usefulness as an area of cultural tourism in a region, so far perceived through the prism of seaside leisure tourism. Valuation of facilities and pilgrim routes by way of Grading Points, while enhancing statistical information on tourism, led to create an understanding of the spatial diversity of the religious tourism phenomenon and its juxtaposition with other forms of tourism in the region. Thanks to this type of observation, in the future it will be possible to create a model showing the possibilities of alternative forms of tourism (including religious and cultural tourism) to formulate the touristic space. This, for example, will help eliminate the problems associated with the seasonality of coastal and leisure tourism, offering new, often overlooked spaces of interest in the region.

Key Words: *cultural tourism, religious tourism, religious landscape, valuation, attractiveness, Western Pomerania, Poland*

Introduction

Tourism, as a spatial phenomenon, is created by an individual or a certain group of people participating voluntarily in a process of travelling. Hence identification of a tourist space, irrespective of the region, takes place on the basis of various prerequisites, defining the functions which are fulfilled in a given geographical space by tourist activities in a broad sense of the word. This identification is also one of the most important stages in the development of tourist activity in a region. To a large extent, it applies to areas which, due to saturation caused by long-lasting existence of fully developed spaces, are looking for new opportunities and ways of increasing their tourist

attractiveness (Duda, 2012). In recent years old pilgrimage trails dating back, in many cases, to the early Middle Ages have been revitalised all over Europe. In the realities of today's world the trails are being adapted to tourist needs. Religious tourism and pilgrimage tourism have become one of the most rapidly developing forms of tourism on the continent. Thus, individual sacral structures, shrines and monasteries / convents, as well as entire thematic pilgrimage trails, which make up the sacral and cultural landscape (developed over the centuries) of a region, gain in importance.

The purpose of this article is to assess, on a preliminary basis, the tourist attractiveness of the most

important sacral structures and religious (pilgrimage) trails of a region, and analyse how they are perceived and used in religious tourism by tourists (and / or pilgrims). Valorisation of the structures and trails by means of the *Point-Based Capability Evaluation Method* supported by statistical information derived on a parallel basis from a questionnaire-based survey, made it possible to create a spatial representation of the religious tourism phenomenon in a region perceived so far as a seaside destination for leisure tourism. Observations of this kind will make it possible to develop a model showing possible uses of alternative forms of tourism (including religious and cultural tourism) for shaping the tourist space. For example, it will make it possible to eliminate problems stemming from the seasonal character of seaside and leisure tourism, offering instead, new, previously omitted tourist spaces in the region.

Many scientists and specialists dealing with cultural tourism and pilgrimage issues point to the need to conduct research of this kind. Attempts to develop a model of how this form of tourism can be used for shaping the space of a region have been made, by Mikos von Rohrscheidt (2008, 2009), Steinecke (2007) and Jackowski (2000). Each of these studies point to the need to develop alternative tourist spaces (including mainly cultural tourism) in order to eliminate problems connected, among other things, with seasonal concentration of tourist traffic (Fernández-Morales 2003).

This paper shows the first stage of this work, aimed at determining the spatial variability of religious tourism traffic in the Western Pomerania region of north-western Poland.

Sacred landscape and its place in the cultural landscape of the region

Religion, as a phenomenon, is inseparably connected with human life, individual, social, and cultural. Thus, it becomes an important component of culture and takes its place in the process of development of a cultural landscape. From the dawn of history, structures, which had the functions of *sacrum*, became integral elements of that landscape regardless of the faith or religion which developed in a given area (Jackowski, 1991; Jędrysiak, 2008). Initially they were just natural objects such as: rocks, mountains, caves, lakes or trees. As monotheistic religions developed, anthropogenic elements were added to the religious infrastructure: temples, churches, monasteries / convents, chapels etc. With time they made a significant transforming impact on their surroundings,

contributing to development of the cultural and religious landscape of a given region.

In this context it is important to remember the discussion, going on in global literature, about the conceptual separation of the sacral and religious landscapes which have been considered as synonymous with each other so far (Myga-Piątek, 2012; Benvenisti, 2000). However, an analysis of landscape-creating factors (interaction of material natural / cultural elements and the immaterial layer) makes it possible to distinguish between the two. Usually, the term 'sacral landscape' is construed as a subtype of a landscape where spatial organisation of material and immaterial objects is conducive to experiencing sanctity (Myga-Piątek, 2012). This is one of the oldest types of a cultural landscape, remaining, for the most part, in an immaterial dimension. Depending on the region, its cultural development and the experience of the viewer, a sacral landscape can be any type of cultural landscape where *sacrum* is experienced and which becomes a place for outlook-related reflections, e.g. holy mountains, pilgrimage trails, locations sanctified by a religious event etc., whereas a religious landscape is usually perceived as an 'institutionalised' sacral landscape where religious worship structures operate and their organisation is determined by various forms of religious functions. In many cases the landscape of that kind stems, so to say, from a sacral landscape, developing in an evolutionary process undergone by the cultural landscape being shaped. Therefore it demonstrates many characteristics typical also for the immaterial *sacrum*, which, for the sake of a broader experience, have been enriched by introduction of material elements (places of worship) used for religious practices in the landscape (Myga-Piątek, 2012; Richards & Munsters, 2010).

Thus, the religious and sacral landscape developed over the centuries includes not only the material domain in the form of numerous historic structures, monuments and other evidences of the religious development of the society, but also, to a large extent, the immaterial domain which manifests itself in the form of spiritual heritage, faith, traditions, customs or language. Today, interesting and, in many cases, unique, in religious or historic terms, sacral buildings, as well as centuries-old pilgrimage traditions and trails, and local shrines are undeniable assets which shape the tourist space of the region (Duda, 2012). This type of landscape is the focus of the author's attention in this article.

Religious tourism as an element shaping the cultural tourism space

Typology of tourist spaces, broadly discussed in related publications, (Liszewski, 1995, 2006; Gołembski, 2009; Włodarczyk, 2007) distinguishes three fundamental types: spaces of tourist imagery (frequently preceded by various external and internal stimuli, such as guidebook reading, visual messages, stories told etc.), spaces of limited accessibility (natural, political, economic or cultural limitations) and real spaces where the phenomenon of tourism is realised. The space, made of both natural elements and the results of human economic operations carried out in this environment, satisfies the need to rest, get to know new things and have some experiences (including spiritual ones), thus determining the development of the tourist traffic (O'Hare, 1997; Nitkiewicz-Jankowska, 2010).

The space of cultural tourism consists of structures which, due to their intended use, serve culture in a broad sense of the word (cultural heritage structures, temples, museums, theatres or outdoor exhibitions). For the most part, they are sacral structures which, apart from their historic, architectural or cultural value, have, first and foremost, religious functions. All over the world there are about a million structures of a supralocal religious significance in operation, which, at the same time and for many reasons, have become tourist destinations (Jackowski, 1991).

Tourism of a religious character can be numbered among the oldest forms of tourism in the world. Many authors are of the opinion that the beginnings of travels of this kind in the Christian world date back to the middle of the 10th century when the first pilgrimage to the tomb of Saint James the Apostle in the Spanish town of Santiago de Compostela was documented. However, it is known that pilgrimages had taken place much earlier, initially to the Holy Land, then to Rome and the aforementioned Santiago. Religious tourism is one of the most dynamically developing forms of tourism. WTO statistics show that every fifth tourist in the world is guided by a religious motivation in their travels (as the sole motive or co-existing with other motivations, e.g. cognitive ones). It is worth mentioning that some forms of tourism of that kind can be found in all great religions of the world, and cover almost all social and age groups within those religions (Jackowski, 1991; Jędrzyak, 2008; Mikos v. Rohrscheidt, 2009). Over the centuries, tourism-related migrations to sacral structures or within a sacral landscape, in a broad sense of the word, have created a well-developed network of pilgrimage trails which,

accompanied by rich infrastructure, can be numbered among the best-known cultural tourism trails in the world. They are a peculiar combination of *sacrum* and *profanum* and, as such, fit perfectly in the global tendency of combining various motivations of tourist travels, thus contributing to development of a specific and distinct global tourist space.

Sacral landscape of Western Pomerania (NW Poland)

Western Pomerania is a geographical region situated in north-western Poland between the German border and the coast of the Baltic Sea. The tourist space of the region is determined predominantly by natural assets of the region. In accordance with the division of the country into tourist regions by Mileska (1963) or Lijewski and Wyrzykowski (1995), the area of Western Pomerania covers two large macroregions with distinctive features, emphasising their individual and original character, namely: the Coast Region and Pomerania Lake District Region (Gołembski, 2009). Consequently, leisure and recreational tourism dominates in the region. Rich natural assets of the region and adequate tourist development in the form of lodging and restaurant facilities contribute to that situation, especially in the Baltic Sea coastal area. The potential of historic and cultural assets of the region, connected with its interesting and colourful past, remains unrealized. Many locations situated a short distance from the seaside, in spite of numerous historic structures and interesting museums, continue to stay in the phase of tourist exploration. The seaside tourism space determines, to the highest extent possible, the tourist activity in Western Pomerania. As a result of that, other locations are still awaiting discovery for tourism. However, for several years efforts have been made to activate a large portion of the region by restoring its tourist attractiveness and introducing tourist traffic there, which is an excellent alternative to the leisure tourism which has almost reached the level of full saturation (Lijewski *et al.*, 2008).

The emergence of completely new spaces connected, to a large extent, with cultural tourism is a response to a growing tourist demand for active forms of leisure and recreation throughout the year, not limited by a short bathing season on the southern shores of the Baltic Sea. Over the centuries, a complex history of Western Pomerania contributed to creation of characteristic elements, many of them unique not only in today's Poland but also in this part of Europe. A rich cultural heritage of the region includes not only the sacral and secular architecture, typical of Pomerania, but also interesting spiritual experiences, one of them

is, undoubtedly, the pilgrimage tradition developed here after Christianisation in the 12th century.

Western Pomerania (nowadays, identified with the Western Pomerania Province in Poland) is a part of the historic Duchy of Pomerania which was an autonomous unit with the characteristics of a state, ruled by the Dukes of Pomerania in the period of the 12th to the 17th century. Its turbulent history and geopolitical situation meant that this area changed hands many times over the centuries, being under the rule of the Danes, Brandenburgians, French, Swedes, Prussians and Poland. Each of those periods left its indelible mark on the cultural landscape of the region and had a huge impact on development of the local population and the cultural landscape. Over the centuries, considerable growth of pilgrimage trails (mainly local ones, and some of a supralocal character) in Pomerania led to development of traffic which today we would easily refer to as a religious tourism. Local centres of religious worship emerged, attracting numerous pilgrims from adjacent areas and, quite often, from more distant locations of Pomerania. With time, many of them, e.g. Góra Chełmska or Brzesko, evolved into shrines or pilgrimage centres known far beyond the borders of the region. Development of the structures of that kind and the growth of the religion- or religion /culture-motivated migration continued until the 16th century when Protestantism was introduced all over the Duchy of Pomerania. For dogmatic reasons, this stopped the pilgrimage traffic almost entirely, and most centres of religious tourism became the domain of the Dukes.

For several years, intensive revitalisation work has been done to restore old pilgrimage trails in all their original glory. Individual sacral structures, which have the greatest impact on the creation of a new tourist space in the region, are subject to a similar treatment. Growing interest in the cultural heritage of Pomerania, in its history and uniqueness in the European context, leads to a situation where the cultural landscape and the religious tourism structures are frequently recognised as a major destination for the tourist traffic in this part of Poland.

The revitalisation of the *Pomeranian Way of Saint James*, a medieval pilgrimage trail leading eventually to Santiago de Compostela, carried out in the period 2010 to 2013, had the greatest impact on development of the religious tourism space in Pomerania. In the region, the trail goes from Sławno to Świnoujście, following old medieval tracks via Darłowo, Bukowo Morskie, Góra Chełmska, Kołobrzeg, Kamień Pomorski and Wolin. Additionally, a trail branch was

marked out from Wolin to Saint James the Apostle Archdiocesan Cathedral in Szczecin, which is the most important sacral structure on the St. James routes in Western Pomerania (Duda, 2013). Contrary to what one might expect, the chance for development of a new tourist space, connected with the launch of the Pomeranian Way of Saint James, can be seen in the fact that the trail goes in the vicinity of the Baltic coast, already oversaturated with tourists. A short bathing season and unpredictable weather during the summer months means that more and more frequently, tourists coming to the Polish seaside look for other forms of recreation or even give up and change their destination. Presentation of Western Pomerania's cultural heritage in the form of preserved medieval urban complexes (e.g. Trzebiatów, Kołobrzeg, Kamień Pomorski, Darłowo) and skilful development of a tourist product on that basis lead to an increased interest in forms of tourism other than leisure tourism. Revitalisation of a medieval pilgrimage trail helps draw visitors' attention to pilgrimage centres, well-known in the past, and promote present-day locations, which, until recently, were just of local importance for religious tourism (Rakowski, 2011).

Local and regional *shrines* are distinctive features on the map of religious tourism in Western Pomerania. From year to year, they generate a growing interest not only among pilgrims but also among tourists interested in the religious culture of the region (Rakowski, 2011). They are relatively few in numbers, if we take into consideration the entire region and compare it to other parts of Poland. Undoubtedly, this situation resulted from the turbulent history of the region and a long period of Protestant domination. Nevertheless, at present there are eight structures with the status of a sanctuary, collectively attracting about three hundred thousand pilgrims every year. Apart from the dominating religious function, some of the structures also have tourist destination functions, with a complete accompanying infrastructure including lodging, meals, and souvenir shops.

The Thrice Admirable Virgin Mary Sanctuary on Góra Chełmska near Koszalin was used as an example to show the dynamics of the tourist / pilgrimage traffic volumes in the period of five years (2001 to 2006) (Table 1). According to annual reports, for the last 12 years of operations the place was visited by almost 500,000 pilgrims and in the last year of the examined period of time the sanctuary was visited by over 90,000 pilgrims (Parzych, Gotowski, 2010). In the past it was a sanctuary of the Virgin Mary and Cistercian nuns from a nearby convent took care of it. It was known all over Central and Western Europe and its importance is emphasised even in historic documents from Rome and

Santiago de Compostela. At present, the Sanctuary is located on the Pomeranian Way of Saint James and, undoubtedly, this location will have a positive impact on the volume of tourist and pilgrimage traffic, especially given the fact that the tourist traffic in the Sanctuary is dominated by individual pilgrims.

Thematic *cultural trails*, the character of which are connected, to a large extent, with the religious tradition of the region, play a special role in the development of the religious tourism space of Western Pomerania. The *Cistercian Route*, which includes former monastic abbeys (both men's and women's communities), gets recognised more and more. Today, those abbeys can be numbered among the most precious historic structures of Pomerania (Kołbacz, Bierzwnik, Bukowo Morskie, Cedynia). If an adequate promotional policy and clear marking of individual structures were undertaken, this trail would become a driving force of tourist traffic, especially in the southern part of the region.

High hopes for development of cultural tourism in Western Pomerania are placed on the planned recreation of the *Saint Otto of Bamberg Route*. In the 12th century Saint Otto, Bishop of Bamberg travelled all over the region with a Christianisation mission (1124 and 1128). The first churches were built, and today, in locations where Saint Otto baptised the people of Pomerania, one can find commemorative wells. For several years, intensive efforts have been made to adapt the trail and the structures located on it to the tourist traffic (Cywiński, 2005).

Analysis of the religious landscape resources of Western Pomerania

The religious and sacral landscape of Western Pomerania developed within the space of many centuries of complex history. Changes of national territories and multicultural influences from the south (Poland, Neumark), west (mainly Brandenburg) and north (Scandinavia), as well as multiple introductions of new beliefs and religions (cults of Svetovid and Triglav, Christianisation in the 12th century, the Reformation in the 16th century and renewed Catholicism after the Second World War) have left lasting traces in the spiritual development of the Pomeranian community. The present-day space of religious tourism is dominated by Christian traditions, which developed in the region following the Christianisation missions of the aforementioned Saint Otto.

The contemporary religious and sacral landscape of Pomerania consists not only of former pilgrimage

Table 1. Volume of pilgrims in the Sanctuary of Chelmska Mt. (2001-2006)

Year	Number of pilgrimage groups	Number of individual pilgrims	Total number of pilgrims
2001	293	17 000	62 067
2002	326	27 870	85 761
2003	573	25 000	82 227
2004	367	26 000	74 084
2005	437	27 000	88 730
2006	340	50 353	90 000

by Parzych, Gotowski, 2010, modified by Duda, 2012

trails, which have been subject to systematic revitalisation and marking in recent years, but also numerous sanctuaries (both the contemporary and historic ones, the latter with pilgrimage traditions of many centuries), small roadside shrines and hundreds of historic sacral structures (churches and monastery complexes). A specific and original (unique to Pomerania) character of the landscape is created by structures connected with medieval Christianisation missions of the 12th century. They have remained to the present day in spite of numerous wars fought in this area and the centuries-old influence of the Reformation, contributing substantially to development of religiousness in the local community. At present, apart from strictly religious functions, those structures have historic and cultural character and are highly attractive to tourists.

The most important elements which shape the contemporary space of the religious tourism in Western Pomerania include:

routes: Pomeranian Way of St. James, Saint Otto of Bamberg's Christianisation Mission Route, European Cistercian Route and the Route of Pomeranian Holy Mountains

historical and present-day shrines (the most important ones): Góra Chelmska near Koszalina, Święta Góra Polanowska, Osieki, Trzebiatów, Kamień Pomorski, Żabowo, Binowo, Resko, Brzesko, Siekierki and Choszczno; (Fig.1. – circles)

important sacral structures, which are not shrines (the most important ones): Saint James Cathedral in Szczecin, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Concathedral in Kołobrzeg, Saint Mary Collegiate Church in Stargard Szczeciński, stone churches of the Chojna area, the Blessed Virgin

Mary Church in Darłowo, Gothic churches of Koszalin area; (Fig.1. – squares)

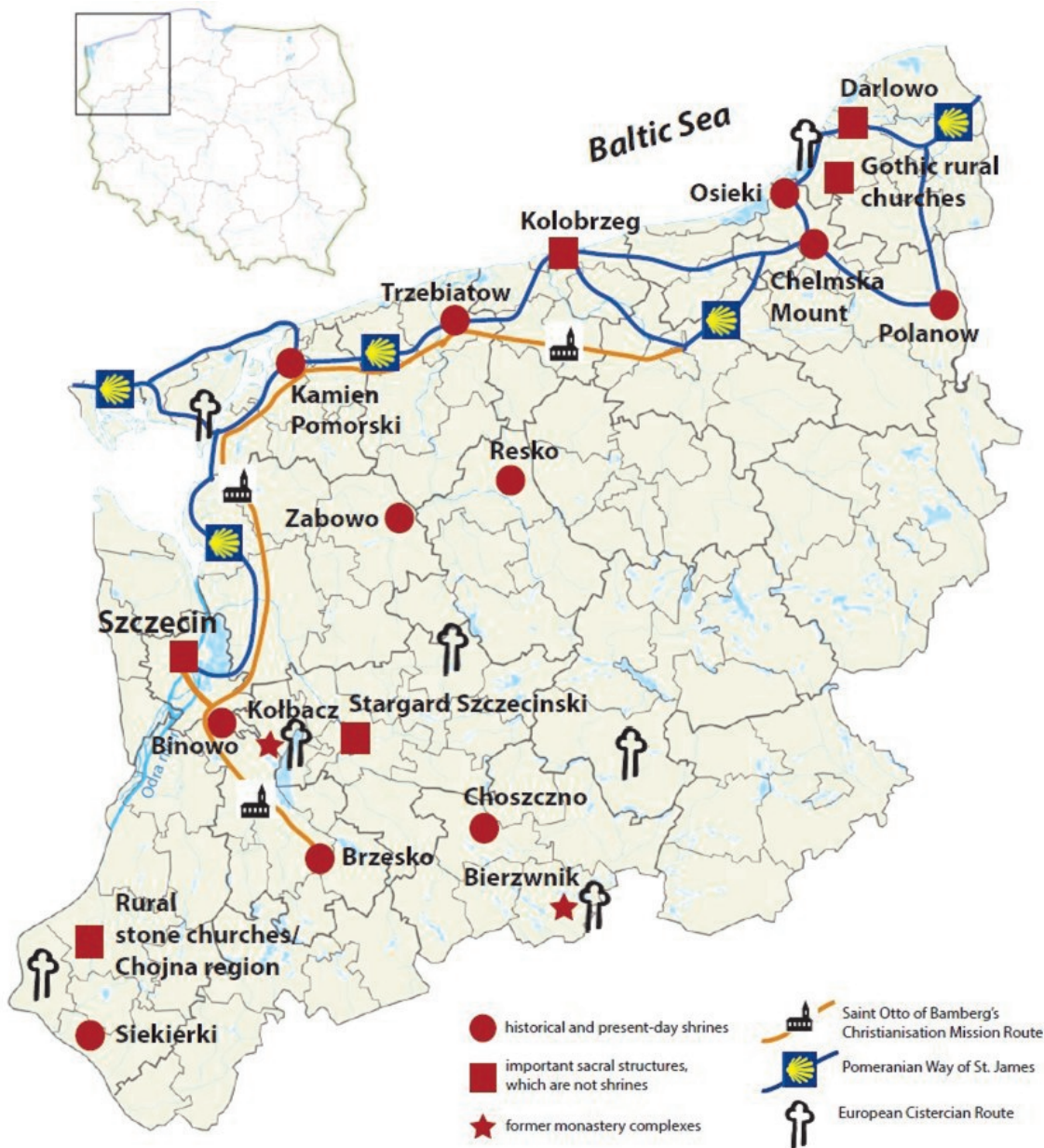
former monastery complexes: Kołbacz and Bierzwnik (Fig.1. – stars)

Methodology

Assessment of the tourist attractiveness and the extent to which individual structures are used in tourism is the first step in analysing the potential of the religious and sacral landscape and its influence on shaping the tourist

space of the region. In order to identify the structures that are of greatest importance to religious tourism they have been subject to an in-depth analysis focusing on their attractiveness and tourist / cultural potential. In this context, the measure of attractiveness includes not only the historic value of a structure, its tourist and transport accessibility and some accompanying facilities, but – first and foremost – the importance of the structure, both in the past and at present, to pilgrimage traffic, and the attractiveness and diversity of the events and religion-related offer provided on site.

Figure 1. Localisation of sacral objects in Western Pomerania



(Source: Duda 2013)

Table 2. Categories for evaluating the attractiveness and tourist potential of religious tourism objects in Western Pomerania (by Duda, 2012)

1. The importance of the object / route for the movement of pilgrims in the historical past and its importance in shaping the former religious life of the region (0-3 points)	
3 points	very important object / route for former pilgrimage and creating religious life in the past;
2 points	object / route important for former pilgrimage and partly forming religious life in the region (locally);
1 point	object / route locally important for pilgrimage in the past; not created religious life in the past;
0 points	object / route not important for pilgrimage nor creating the former religious life in the region;
2. The importance of the object / route for pilgrims today and its importance in shaping the religious life of the region (0-3 points)	
3 points	very important object / route for contemporary pilgrimage and creating religious life in the region;
2 points	object / route important for contemporary pilgrimage and partly forming religious life in the region (locally);
1 point	object / route locally important for pilgrimage; not creating religious life in the region;
0 points	object / route not important for pilgrimage nor creating the religious life in the region;
3. Historical and cultural value of the object / route (0-2 points)	
2 points	object / route with great historical and cultural value (unique architectural structures or / and witness to important historical or cultural events or / and object / route connected with famous historical / cultural
1 point	object / route represented typical historical / architectural / cultural features; witness to local historical or cultural event; not connected with important or famous person or group of people;
0 points	object / route without unique nor even characteristic historical or cultural value;
4. Tourist and communication availability of object / route (0-2 points)	
2 points	object / route very well communicated with the main towns and living centres in the region and outside it; object located on (or very close to) the main pilgrim routes in the region; easy available for tourists;
1 point	object / route well communicated with main centres in the region or / and outside it; located close to the main pilgrim routes; partly available for tourists;
0 points	object / route very poorly communicated with main centres and roads in the region; located far from main pilgrim routes; very hard or not available for tourists (close, without any information about visiting
5. The presence of accommodation, catering and additional infrastructure accessible to pilgrims and tourists in the immediate vicinity (or on the route) (0-3 points)	
3 points	rich accomodation and gastronomic base; presence of additional infrastructure for pilgrims and tourists (gift shop, parking place, toilets . . .);
2 points	very good accomodation and / or gastronomic base; partly present additional infrastructure for tourists / pilgrims;
1 point	accomodation or catering base very close to the object, poor additional infrastructure for tourists / pilgrims;
0 points	no accomodation nor gastronomic base in the vicinity of the object / route; no additional infrastructure;
6. Marking the object (the trail) and promotion in the region (0-3 points)	
3 points	object / route very well marked (signs and arrows); good promotion in Information Centres, guidebooks or / and in the object;
2 points	object / route well marked (signs or arrows); informations in guidebooks or along the ways leading directly to the object;
1 point	object / route partly marked (not enough); poor informations in IT, guidebooks or along the way;
0 points	no marks; no informations nor promotions;
7. The presence of religious tourism offers or events addressed to the tourists / pilgrims at the site or along the trail (0-3 points)	
3 points	presence of one or more tourist offer (guiding, audioguides, other special offers); events addressed to pilgrims (or tourists) connected with the object / route;
2 points	presence of only one tourist offer or event connected with object;
1 point	tourist offer very poor, events not connected with the object / route;
0 points	no offers and no events connected with the object / route;
TOTAL (MAX): 19 points	

The valorisation was conducted by means of one of the best research methods of this kind, namely *point-based capability (grading points) evaluation* (Mikos v. Rohrscheidt, 2009a). Each of the evaluated structures was analysed using seven categories (see Table 2) selected in accordance with previous work of Duda (2012) and Mikos von Rohrscheidt (2009a), and the structure was graded separately in each category according to the intensity of the given phenomenon (Table 3 to 6).

Valorisation of Routes

The *Pomeranian Way of St. James* is a part of a pilgrimage trail network covering all of Europe and leading to the tomb of the Apostle in Spanish Santiago de Compostela. The Pomeranian part runs from Lithuania across the Russian territory of Kaliningrad Oblast, and northern Poland to Rostock in Germany where it joins German trails running south and west. In West Pomerania the trail has been revitalised according to its likely route back in the period of the Middle Ages to 16th century when it sank into oblivion for almost 500 years due to the introduction of the Reformation and cassation of orders - who took care of the pilgrims on the road. However, in the eyes of a contemporary tourist it is quite a new route. It was only marked and revitalised in 2013. Relevant accompanying facilities (including lodging and meals) have not been developed in full as yet, and individual structures have not produced an interesting offer consistent with the theme of the trail, addressed to participants of the hike, either. Nevertheless, a large-scale trail promotion campaign and references to Ways of St. James, which have grown in popularity all over Europe, have resulted in the trail becoming a brand recognised among pilgrims and religious tourists and eagerly used in the tourist traffic of the region. This is why it was given the highest score in the point-based capability evaluation in the group of thematic trails (14 points out of the maximum of 19). The fact that the Pomeranian Way of St. James runs not far from the coastline of the Baltic

Sea makes the trail a perfect tourist alternative for people who spend their holidays at the seaside. In this way, places which are attractive for cultural, historic or religious reasons, although frequently overlooked during the transit trip to the seaside, have become tourist destinations in their own right, thus enhancing the importance of the tourist space in the region.

Saint Otto of Bamberg's Christianisation Mission Route leads through locations and structures along the route of the first mission which brought Christianity to Pomerania back in 1124: Brzesko, Pyrzyce, Szczecin, Wolin, Lubin, Kamień Pomorski, Cerkwica and Białogard. However it is not an officially marked or promoted cultural trail. Its route is defined by places known from historic chronicles. Having said that, it is known that in the Middle Ages religious centres visited by Bishop Otto *en route* across Pomerania could be numbered among the most significant centres of religious life in the region. It is there where the first temples were built, the only traces of which have remained in the structure of basilicas erected subsequently. Also, in the places where Pomeranian people were baptised, mission wells were created many years later, such as those which can still be found in Pyrzyce and Cerkwica. Due to the lack of any trail markings or any thematic offer being developed and addressed to pilgrims and tourists the route is not perceived as a fully functional tourist and religious trail (8 points) and only individual locations (structures) scattered along it contribute to its attractiveness.

The *European Cistercian Trail* in West Pomerania includes a dozen or so structures which were once important centres of the order's activity (both men's and women's communities). Unfortunately, due to the complex history of Pomerania, numerous wars and periods of order cassation few structures have remained to the present day. The remains of monasteries / convents in Kołbacz and Bierzwnik can be numbered among the most important ones in terms of their tourist value. A high score (12 points) given in

Table 3. Valorisation of the attractiveness and potential of cultural tourism pilgrimage routes.

No.	Object	Categories							Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1	Pomeranian Way of.	2	1	2	2	2	3	2	14
2	Saint Otto's of Bamberg Christianisation	3	1	2	1	1	0	0	8
3	European Cistercian	3	1	2	2	1	2	1	12
4	Route of Pomeranian	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	13

valorisation of the cultural and tourist potential results mainly from the great importance of the structures for development of the religious life of the region in the historic past as well as good organisation (marking and availability of the offer addressed to tourists) of the trail.

The *Route of Pomeranian Holy Mountains* is a contemporary pilgrimage trail including historic pilgrimage destinations, such as three so-called holy mountains in Pomerania: Rowokół (nowadays it is outside of West Pomerania region), Góra Chełmska and Święta Góra Polanowska. From the dawn of history those places defined the spiritual dimension of the region. They were famous (especially Góra Chełmska) as shrines far beyond the boundaries of Pomerania, even in remote pilgrimage centres such as Rome or Santiago de Compostela. At present the trail is not marked clearly and it is rather poorly developed in tourist terms. As a result of its strong position in the sacral landscape of Pomerania and given the existing religious / pilgrimage centres functioning along it, the value of the trail and its tourist / religious potential have been assessed quite positively (13 points), second only to the Pomeranian way of Saint James which follows partially the same route.

Valorisation of Shrines

The shrines of West Pomerania (the present and historic ones, the latter out of operation) form, to a large extent, the core of religious tourism in the region. However, a detailed point-based capability analysis pointed to the greatest importance of the structures

which, on the one hand, are situated in the immediate vicinity of large pilgrimage trails and, on the other hand, represent high historic and cultural value. Therefore they attract not only pilgrims but also regular tourists, whose arrival has been motivated by cognitive and general cultural elements. Out of all the structures subject to evaluation the shrines located on large thematic trails, i.e. the Pomeranian Saint James Trail and the Christianisation Mission Trail, turned out to be most attractive, namely Góra Chełmska (maximum score of 19 points), the shrine in Kamień Pomorski (17 points), Brzesko (15 points) and Święta Góra Polanowska (13 points), although the latter is not actually a shrine, it stands out as an extremely important element of the religious landscape of Pomerania. The structures are well prepared for visitors, both pilgrims and tourists, and have an interesting additional offer addressed to the travelling public. By the way, these are extremely valuable historic structures with high cognitive and cultural value (Kamień Pomorski, Brzesko, Trzebiatów). Old shrines, which defined the religious and sacral landscape of Pomerania until the 16th century, form a separate group. This includes the churches in Żabowo, Binowo and Osieki. They once were important pilgrimage centres of the region and their influence spread over neighbouring regions of Brandenburg and Scandinavia. Due to the several-century-long period of the Reformation and wars, the historic structures which have remained to this day (with high historic and educational value) do not perform any pilgrimage functions any more and do not attract any increased religious tourism traffic.

Table 4. Valorisation of the attractiveness and potential of most important shrines.

No.	Object	Categories							Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1	Chelmska Mount	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	19
2	Polanowska Holy Mount	3	2	1	2	1	3	1	13
3	Shrine in Trzebiatów	0	2	2	2	2	2	1	11
4	Shrine in Resko	1	3	1	2	1	3	1	12
5	Former shrine in Osieki	3	0	2	1	1	1	0	8
6	Sanctuary in Kamien Pomorski	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	17
7	Former shrine in Zabowo	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
8	Former shrine in Binowo	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
9	Sanctuary in Brzesko	3	3	2	2	0	2	3	15
10	Shrine in Choszczno	0	2	1	2	1	0	1	7
11	Shrine in Siekierki	0	2	1	2	0	1	2	8

Valorisation of non-shrine sacral objects

In West Pomerania there are over 200 historic sacral structures, both from the Middle Ages and from the following centuries. This is a region which stands out in Europe for its so-called brick Gothic and 17th and 18th century structures with brick nogged timber walls (the so-called brick nog land). The valorisation analysis covered the structures with the highest tourist and historic / cultural value which have not been in the group of the shrines evaluated previously. The structures have been selected for evaluation on the basis of a questionnaire survey of a group of tourists (200 completed), participants of religious tourism, who indicated places that define the present-day sacral landscape of West Pomerania.

In this category, the most important churches of the two dioceses covering the examined region, i.e. Szczecin-Kamień Diocese and Koszalin-Kołobrzeg Diocese: Saint Jacob Cathedral in Szczecin (18 points) and Concathedral in Kołobrzeg (17 points) are most significant in terms of the tourist traffic. At the same time, they are huge Gothic basilicas belonging to the group of most attractive, in historic and cultural terms, structures of the region. Due to their location on the Pomeranian Saint James Trail they are equipped additionally with tourist infrastructure, marked, and accompanied by well-developed lodging and restaurant facilities situated in the immediate vicinity. Moreover, each year, walking pilgrimage groups set off to Jasna Góra in Częstochowa from both cathedrals.

Saint Mary Collegiate Church in Stargard Szczeciński (14 points) is a particularly valuable historic structure. It is the finest example of the brick Gothic in northern

Poland. This church, situated on the pilgrimage route to Częstochowa, plays a significant role as a religious centre for the entire region.

Groups of sacral structures scattered all over the West Pomerania region are worth mentioning in this context, too. They include Early Medieval rural stone churches which can be found in the Chojna, Cedynia and Moryń areas, that is in the former Pomerania-Brandenburg borderland; a Gothic church complex near Koszalin (i.a. in Sucha Koszalińska, Iwięcino, Bukowo Morskie, and Osieki); and the accumulation, unique in Europe, of the 17th and 18th century half-timbered churches (i.e. in Dżisna, Sianów, Dorowo, and Iglice). Although not playing any significant role in religious tourism nowadays (5 to 7 points), they have contributed to development of the religious landscape of the region and witnessed the spiritual development of its inhabitants throughout the centuries.

Valorisation of former monasteries and convents

Existing and former monastery and convent structures can be numbered among the most important elements of the cultural and sacral landscape of the Pomeranian region. East of the Odra River (in the present-day West Pomerania) one can find remaining traces of activity once carried out by Templars, Hospitallers of St. John, Cistercians, Augustinians, Norbertines and Franciscans. They took care of the spiritual development in areas they had settled, as well as handling land management, thus, they contributed to the economic growth of the region. Moreover, they took care of the pilgrims on the pilgrimage trails, heading for local shrines or large European pilgrimage centres.

Table 5. Valorisation of the attractiveness and potential of most important sacral objects (non-shrines).

No.	Object	Categories							Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1	Szczecin – St. James Cathedral	2	3	2	2	3	3	3	18
2	Kołobrzeg – Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	17
3	Stargard Szczeciński – St. Mary Collegiate Church	2	1	2	2	2	3	2	14
4	Rural stone churches of Chojna County	1	0	2	1	0	1	0	5
5	Gothic rural churches of Koszalin County	1	1	2	1	0	1	1	7
6	Darłowo – St. Mary's Church	2	2	2	2	1	2	0	11
7	Pomeranian half-timbered churches	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	5

Table 6. Valorisation of the attractiveness and potential of former monasteries and convent structures.

No.	Object	Categories							Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1	Former cistercian monastery in Kolbacz	3	1	2	1	0	1	0	8
2	Former cistercian monastery in Bierzwnik	3	2	2	2	1	2	2	14

Times of glory and development of monasteries and convents ended following the secularisation and the beginning of the Reformation in Pomerania in the first half of the 16th century. At present the best preserved remains, mainly those structures of Cistercian and Hospitallers of St. John, define the tourist and cultural attractiveness of the region. Former Cistercian complexes in Kołbacz and Bierzwnik can be numbered among the largest remaining monastery-type structures in West Pomerania. The Kołbacz complex was once the most important seat of Cistercians in this part of Europe and its influence on religious, economic and political development of the region cannot be underestimated, but it is the monastery complex in Bierzwnik, preserved in a much worse condition, which plays much more significant role in development of the religious tourism nowadays. Each year Cistercian Days are organised in the complex, attracting many tourists and fans of Medieval history. Moreover, the latter structure is situated on the route of the Szczecin Foot Pilgrimage to Jasna Góra. Thus, it takes an active part in defining the pilgrimage traffic of the region, as it did in the past.

Survey of Tourists at Analysed Structures

Methodology

In order to determine the character and intensity of the tourist and pilgrimage traffic at the analysed structures and on the pilgrimage trails, a questionnaire survey was conducted among the people found at the structures and on the trails. For the purposes of this

paper the results of the questionnaire survey were considered to be another source of information, complementary to the valorisation and analysis of capability. The findings justified, to a large extent, the selection of the examined structures and confirmed the importance of the latter for defining the religious tourism space in the region.

The survey covered a population of 200 people representing various age groups and both genders. All the respondents were participants of religious tourism at one of the examined sacral structures in West Pomerania. The questions included, among other things, inquiries about the motivation behind a respondent's decision to visit a given sacral place, how they get there, how long they stayed and the character of the travel. Those polled pointed also to places (structures or trails), which, in their opinion, defined the religious tourism space in the region, and assessed the service quality, tourist and religious offer of the structure and its adaptation to provision of services addressed to tourists or cultural pilgrims.

The questionnaire-based survey was conducted in the period of May to late October 2012, as well as during the most important religious holidays taking place in individual shrines of Pomerania. The questionnaires were filled out in Kamień Pomorski, Brzesko, Resko, Trzebiatów, Kołobrzeg and at Góra Chełmska in Koszalin. Additionally, about 50 questionnaires were filled out by those wandering along the Pomeranian Way of Saint James and the participants of Szczecin Walking Pilgrimage to Jasna Góra.

Table 7. Cultural/Pilgrim Routes

No.	Object	Responses [%]			Motivation
		Object shaping the religious tourism in Western Pomerania	Object with facility fully equipped to handle religious/cultural tourism	Good quality of service and tourist/religious offer	
1	Pomeranian Way of St. James	64%	32%	41%	tourism knowledge religion
2	Saint Otto's of Bamberg Christianisation Mission Trail	67%	12%	8%	knowledge religion
3	European Cistercian Route	11%	41%	28%	tourism knowledge
4	Route of Pomeranian Holy Mountains	28%	11%	7%	religion tourism

To obtain information about the impact of individual structures, making up the sacral and religious landscape of the region, on development of the tourist space, the survey took into consideration the responses connected with the assessment of the examined facilities and identification of the motivation behind the respondent's decision to visit the given place (Table 7 to 10).

Analysis

Travelling for religious purposes has not lost its significance today. It is proved by quite a lively traffic of religious tourism in the examined structures and shrines, and an interest, growing from year to year, in pilgrimage trails, especially those which can be followed on one's own at any season of the year (Brzezowska, 2013).

Analysis of the responses provided by those polled showed a substantial similarity to the valorisation made by means of the point-based capability evaluation method. There is a clear difference between the qualities of the structures situated close to frequently used transport and tourist routes (Kołobrzeg, Koszalin - Góra Chełmska, Szczecin, Kamień Pomorski) and those in remote locations with more complicated access (stone churches of Chojna area, half-timbered churches of Pomerania, Binowo, Resko). Localisation of a structure is important, as well. In the broad seaside strip, which is a destination for thousands of visitors

each year, the tourist traffic to sacral places is also more intense. However it does not result from the character of the given place and cannot be presented as a part of the religious tourism space. Surely, their location along the Pomeranian Saint James Trail and a long-term tradition of a pilgrimage centre or a regional place of worship functioning there contribute to the significance of some structures, such as Góra Chełmska, Kołobrzeg, Kamień Pomorski, Brzesko or Szczecin.

The space of religious tourism in West Pomerania is defined, first and foremost, by listed buildings, well-known in Poland and abroad, which, at the same time, are valuable historic and cultural assets of the region, such as Kamień Pomorski (68% of positive responses by those polled), Góra Chełmska (58%), Brzesko shrine (59%) and Saint James Cathedral in Szczecin (89%). Thematic trails, which were defined by religious migrations of Pomerania people since the Middle Ages, form an inherent element of the religious and sacral landscape. As much as 67% of the respondents consider the informal (unmarked) Saint Otto's Christianisation Mission Trail to be one of the most important elements of the religious tourism space in Pomerania. A similar opinion was voiced about the Pomeranian Way of St. James (64%). Although the latter is quite a young element of the landscape, nevertheless its idea and character have been known all over Europe for many years.

Table 8. Most important shrines

No.	Object	Responses [%]			Motivation
		Object shaping the religious tourism in Western Pomerania	Object with facility fully equipped to handle religious/cultural tourism	Good quality of service and tourist/religious offer	
1	Chelmska Mount	58%	21%	10%	religion knowledge
2	Polanowska Holy Mount	22%	6%	4%	religion
3	Shrine in Trzebiatow	34%	48%	36%	religion tourism knowledge
4	Shrine in Resko	18%	45%	34%	religion knowledge
5	Former shrine in Osieki	4%	6%	3%	knowledge
6	Sanctuary in Kamien Pomorski	68%	77%	88%	religion knowledge tourism
7	Former shrine in Zabowo	1%	1%	0%	-
8	Former shrine in Binowo	2%	1%	1%	tourism
9	Shrine in Brzesko	59%	67%	83%	religion knowledge tourism
10	Sanctuary in Choszczno	12%	22%	31%	knowledge religion
11	Shrine in Siekierki	14%	10%	34%	religion knowledge

Table 9. Most important sacral objects (non-shrines).

No.	Object	Responses [%]			Motivation
		Object shaping the religious tourism in Western Pomerania	Object with facility fully equipped to handle religious/ cultural tourism	Good quality of service and tourist/ religious offer	
1	Szczecin – St. James Cathedral	89%	65%	68%	religion knowledge tourism
2	Kołobrzeg – Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	45%	60%	32%	religion knowledge tourism
3	Stargard Szczeciński – St. Mary Collegiate Church	40%	53%	31%	religion knowledge tourism
4	Rural stone churches of Chojna County	2%	5%	2%	knowledge tourism
5	Gothic rural churches of Koszalin County	5%	3%	2%	tourism
6	Darłowo – St. Mary's Church	12%	20%	15%	tourism knowledge religion
7	Pomeranian half-timbered churches	10%	5%	7%	knowledge tourism

Adaptation of the structure to the needs of the tourist traffic and the quality of the offer addressed to tourists and pilgrims have been assessed and given almost the same score as the first category has. Thus, in the eyes of the respondents, the places which contribute most to defining the space are also the places most prepared to provide services to tourists, including those whose main travel motivation centres on religious issues.

Conclusion

The sacral landscape of Western Pomerania has developed as a result of centuries-old pilgrimage traditions and under the influence of many nations of Christian Europe which have shaped this region since the 12th century. In spite of many wars and historic turmoil, many significant sacral structures have remained in the region, and currently those structures form a basis for religious and cultural tourism. Their attractiveness and use for tourist purposes can contribute substantially to the revival of the tourist space in the region and, in many cases, may offer an

alternative to the existing recreational tourism connected with the coastal zone of the Baltic Sea.

Analysing of the attractiveness of the sacral structures and pilgrimage trails of Western Pomerania is the first stage of more detailed research into the potential for religious tourism in the region. Apart from the importance of individual locations for pilgrimage traffic in the past and at present, the analysis also assessed the availability of additional infrastructure, tourist and transport accessibility of individual locations and their active approach to creation of the tourist product in the region. Employing the point-based capability evaluation method made it possible to develop an attractiveness hierarchy of the most important sacral structures and pilgrimage trails, in terms of their importance for creation of the religious tourism space and their attractiveness, both religious and touristic one. Moreover, the importance of individual structures has been supported by a questionnaire-based survey conducted among pilgrims and religious tourists. The respondents assessed,

Table 10. Former monasteries and convent structures

No.	Object	Responses [%]			Motivation
		Object shaping the religious tourism in Western Pomerania	Object with facility fully equipped to handle religious/ cultural tourism	Good quality of service and tourist/religious offer	
1	Former cistercian monastery in Kolbacz	8%	2%	5%	tourism knowledge religion
2	Former cistercian monastery in Bierzwnik	10%	5%	10%	tourism knowledge religion

among other things, the development and adaptation of the structure to the needs of tourists / pilgrims, and defined the motive they were guided by in the process of selecting individual destinations.

The various research conducted by the author and described in this paper makes it possible to reach the following conclusions:

- Old-time pilgrimage centres and important religious centres continue to form a basis for pilgrimage traffic and religious tourism in the region;
- Revitalisation of old-time pilgrimage trails has contributed to revival of many existing, previously omitted by tourists, locations, turning them into attractive religious and tourist destinations;
- In spite of a great number of sacral structures in the region, the most intensive development is enjoyed predominantly by those situated along the existing pilgrimage trails (Way of Saint James, Saint Otto of Bamberg Trail, and Szczecin Walking Pilgrimage to Jasna Góra route);
- Perception of individual structures by pilgrims / tourists as structures shaping the image of the religious tourism in the region confirms, to a large extent, the valorisation research findings: structures, which are most attractive to tourists, enjoy greatest popularity among pilgrims, too;
- More and more frequently, apart from strictly religious motives, one can observe cognitive, historic or even recreational motivation among tourists / pilgrims visiting sacral structures.

In the opinion of the author, this analysis of the sacral landscape of the Western Pomerania region (mainly by means of a stocktaking exercise and valorisation of the structures which are the components of that landscape) and assessment of its impact on development of the religious tourism space, will make it possible to create a map of the potential and contribute to the actual creation of an alternative to the existing tourist spaces of the region.

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