

WORLD WAR I “CARTOGRAPHIES”

MAPPING THE POLISH LANDSCAPE OF FORGETTING IN LEGNICA

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This article focuses on mapping the landscape of forgetting in the context of World War I in Legnica, a town in southwestern Poland. It describes the process of (re)constructing and (re) negotiating the cultural landscape of the town by using the metaphors of conversation and conflict. This analysis shows that World War I remains a past that is impossible to deal with by Legnica's contemporary inhabitants.

Keywords: boundaries, cultural landscape, memory studies, metaphor, Legnica, The First World War

Osrednji fokus članka je zemljevidenje krajine pozabe v kontekstu prve svetovne vojne v Legnici, mestu na poljskem jugozahodu. Avtorica opisuje proces (ponovne) gradnje in (ponovnega) pogajanja o kulturni krajini mesta z rabo metafor pogovora in konflikta. Njena analiza pravi o tem, da ostaja prva svetovna vojna preteklost, ki je legninski prebivalci ne zmorejo rešiti.

Ključne besede: meje, kulturna krajina, spominske študije, metafora, Legnica, prva svetovna vojna

*Landscapes are always in process,
potentially conflicted, untidy and uneasy.*
(Bender 2001: 3)

*Conflict is not something that befalls an originally,
or potentially, harmonious urban space.
Urban space is the product of conflict.*
(Deutsche 1996: 278)

LANDSCAPE AS METAPHOR

Referring to the quotations cited above, I believe that the metaphor of conflict may be used not only in the context of urban space but also in the context of cultural landscape, supplementing it, however, with the metaphor of conversation.¹ Both of these categories—“conversation” and “conflict”—delineate the framework of this analysis, the aim of which is to present the process of (re)constructing and (re)negotiating the cultural landscape of Legnica while paying special attention to signs, traces, and representations of World War I. The metaphor of conversation denotes that “landscape can be conceived of *as* a conversation, rather than an independent reality that is conversed *with*” (Waage 2010: 46). This metaphor was based on the idea of conversation understood as a creative process that encompasses an exchange of information,

¹ I was inspired to use the metaphor of conversation in the context of cultural landscape by Edda R. H. Waage's article “Landscape as Conversation” (2010: 45–58). In contrast to this analysis, Waage focuses solely on the relationships between nature and humanity, using different concepts to shape the course of her narrative.

engagement, and presence—an attempt to maintain memory and advance the knowledge of a place's past as well as of its inhabitants. The opposite pole is represented by the metaphor of conflict because conflict is often related to a process of destruction (or stagnation). Conflict is based on a lack of information, clashes of interest, and endeavors to single out winners and losers, absences, and oblivion. These extreme points are separated by space, distance, or a limbo between a need to communicate and an impossibility of communicating.

The analysis of the cultural landscape—from the perspective of the opposing metaphors of conversation and conflict—is closely allied to the issue of constructing boundaries. Assuming that we live in a reality bounded by divisions that we construct ourselves and continually maintain, it is necessary, at the same time, to adopt the view that we produce pairs of opposites and, in effect, territories of two potentially conflicted "camps." Positioning oneself on one side of a boundary results in a potential conflict with what we have left on the opposite side. Because boundaries are diverse and numerous, the levels of potential conflicts appropriate not only geographical territories and physical spaces, together with their inhabitants, but also adopt ways of experiencing "the world," of receiving it and interpreting it (including understanding and presenting the past). The more permanent the boundaries we delineate and the more strongly we attach ourselves to them, the more laborious our attempts to maintain them become. In effect, we increasingly demonize and separate ourselves from what was "pushed away" to the other side. In practice, it often happens that the boundaries that people have conceived and marked out—which are not accidental because boundaries are related to power (i.e., political, technological, or economic)—are later treated and perceived as reality, independent from and external to the people that reproduce and strengthen this type of projection among the representatives of subsequent generations. Significantly, however, boundaries always have a relational character and they require constant confirmation if they are not to become eroded and "fade." Thus, a distinction between the two sides divided by a boundary yet, paradoxically, inextricably bound together by a boundary, forms a *sine qua non* for the existence of the boundary itself. In the case of this analysis, the boundary is assumed to be mainly vertical rather than horizontal in nature. As a result, in western Poland one sees a palimpsest, rather than a patchwork (with horizontal and vertical dimensions),² to which, for instance, the Polish-Belarusian eastern borderland has been compared (see Demski 2003: 129–148).³

² In this case, the borderland is understood as an area that experiences multiple boundary changes in relation to its state administration during one generation of inhabitants. It is significant that the cultural and consciousness-related changes in the population are not caused by emigration but by shifts in state borders. A unique aspect of a borderland, in this instance, is connecting two sides, resulting in a kind of pattern that is manifested in all aspects of its inhabitants' lives.

³ Here I refer to vertical stratification. A change of state borders causes a total exchange of population in a given territory. In effect, former inhabitants are displaced and the territory becomes populated with new inhabitants with a completely different national, cultural, and/or ethnic identity. They fill up the space, making use of the infrastructure left by the previous inhabitants, yet there remains the specific aspect of total dissociation from the other side and the "alien" past, which relates to a reconstruction of history.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AS A PALIMPSEST

This article focuses on mapping the landscape of forgetting within the context of World War I in Legnica (the particular landscape of which forms an integral part of the overall cultural landscape), and so it is important to clarify definitions so as to avoid potential misunderstandings. The cultural landscape functions as a type of matrix in which people belonging to different groups engage in specific activities to realize whatever goals have been determined within existing power relations. These people's actions are recorded in the form of "imprints" on the matrix (touching both physical and representative layers). As a result, a cultural landscape appears "as [a] palimpsest of overlapping, multivocal landscapes. Each landscape is contested by different groups who engage with its materiality in different ways and whose experience of being in *their* landscape produces a sense of place and belonging" (Saunders 2001: 37; see also Ucko & Layton 1999: 1; Tilley 1994: 15). Hence, a person participates in creating the cultural landscape and, within the process of "creating" he or she is not necessarily guided solely by economic or pragmatic principles but also by cultural or emotional considerations. Consequently, the cultural landscape takes on a dimension that is perceptible both physically and cognitively, and at the level of both the individual and the group. The cultural landscape is, then, a palimpsest that is "happening" without cessation or, as described by Zbigniew Kobyliński, "a stratigraphic system, retaining the overlapping and intersecting traces of all events that took place here" (2014: 14).

Landscapes exist as cultural images (i.e., graphic representations and photographs) and physical places (Daniels & Cosgrove 1988: 1). However, it is not possible to see cultural landscapes in their entirety. They can be experienced directly, from individual viewpoints, but, because their nature is imaginal, "seeing" the whole requires a wide, contemplative look that must also encompass memories (Kobyliński 2014: 14).

Mapping out the cultural landscape of Legnica in 2016,⁴ while simultaneously attempting to perform an analysis that takes into consideration the period dating back to 1914, I can distinguish three principal phases of (re)construction and (re)negotiation in relation to the town's cultural landscape: 1) 1914–1945: Legnica as part of Germany; 2) 1945–1993: Legnica as part of Poland; and 3) 1993–2016: Legnica during political transformation in Poland.

Taking into consideration the boundaries in the three phases, I perceive Legnica's cultural landscape to be a set of overlapping, multivocal landscapes. Therefore, the metaphors

⁴ I conducted field studies in Legnica in September 2016. Apart from research in the State Archive in Legnica, where I additionally conducted an interview with the curator of an exhibition related to World War I, I searched the collection of the Museum of Copper and the town library in Legnica. I had numerous conversations with employees of both institutions. I compiled photographic documentation in the field regarding commemorative places connected with World War I. Field studies were facilitated by funding from the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (grant: *Adulescentia est tempus discendi*, no. 4/ATD6/MN/2016).

of conversation and conflict cease to operate at one level but reveal the multidimensionality of relationships longitudinally. The metaphors referred to here function within two categories that define cultural landscape: 1) processuality, in which landscape "emerges as a cultural *process*" (Hirsch 1995: 5), and 2) relationality, in which landscape emerges as a relational space. Both of these elements are directly related to the assumption that landscape depends on cultural and historical contexts, which itself means that the (re)construction and (re)negotiation of landscape does not take place in a cultural vacuum. In effect, there is no "absolute" landscape.

WHY LEGNICA?

Legnica (German: *Liegnitz*), which lies in southwestern Poland and is the third-largest town of the Lower Silesia Voivodeship, (after Wrocław and Wałbrzych),⁵ is also the southernmost and largest urban center of the Legnica–Głogów Copper Belt. Legnica is not as well known as other Polish towns, such as Warsaw, Cracow, or Wrocław (slightly over sixty kilometers from Legnica). Nor does the city center constitute a major tourist destination. Still, apart from valuable places of interest, Legnica also holds a number of mysteries related to its "complicated" past, its "difficult" history, and its cultural landscape intersected by a network of boundaries, both visible and invisible. Assuming that landscapes have their cultural biographies in the same way that material objects do, and biographies that are worth examining and recreating, I see the town on the Kaczawa River as an interesting case study. On the one hand, the cultural landscape of Legnica reveals itself as a matrix, which is unique in many respects; on the other hand, this matrix contains numerous elements characteristic of the towns of the Recovered Territories,⁶ and it forms an example that represents and, from many perspectives, also reflects the complicated history of the entire region.

The history and topography of Legnica was not entirely unknown to me because I had previously conducted field studies relating to the postwar period and the legacy of the Soviet military forces in the town. On this occasion, searching for materials related to the celebration of the centenary of the Great War in Poland, I unexpectedly came across an exhibition organized and published by the State Archive in Legnica on its internet page in September 2014, entitled "The Image of World War I in the State Archive in Wrocław, Legnica Division" (Exhibition 2014). This was relatively surprising because in the years 1914–1918 Legnica was part of Germany and Poles began settling this area only in the aftermath of World War II (previously they had usually stayed in the town as seasonal workers or as

⁵ In 2007 the population of Legnica was slightly over 105,000 (Central Statistical Office 2007: 20).

⁶ In line with the Potsdam Conference agreements of 1945, the borders of Poland were altered. Poland gained territories in the west from Germany, later colloquially called the Recovered Territories; in the east, however, Poland lost to the USSR lands that had formed over half of Poland's prewar territory.

regularly employed labor). The unexpected discovery that, despite the region's complicated history, the town's contemporary inhabitants had perhaps commemorated World War I (if so, in what form [representations] and from what perspective [reinterpretations]?) caused me to take a closer look at the cultural landscape of Legnica in the context of the practices and material signs of World War I. During field studies, it quickly became apparent that, in practice, it was the celebrations of the centenary of the outbreak of World War I, both at the international level (the European Union) and the supralocal level (considering the initiatives undertaken at the central level in Poland), that were main reasons behind the notion of a past war "returning," in a way, to the town of Legnica. It may safely be claimed that the "central" celebrations of the centenary of World War I enforced, as it were, the non-forgetting of the war in the Recovered Territories, there being practically no support of any demand for such commemoration at the local level.

What is this town that I am actually discussing here? Until 1945, Legnica had been part of Germany. Due to the town's strategic location, and its position at an intersection of important trade and transportation routes, development of the center took place against a military backdrop throughout the centuries. In the context of this analysis, it is worth mentioning that the King Wilhelm I 7th Grenadier Regiment, formed in 1797, was stationed in the garrison in Legnica, and it is from there that its soldiers set off to the front during World War I. The regiment was part of the 18th Infantry Brigade, whose command was also located in the town. During the Great War, the town did not suffer material damage; military operations took place elsewhere. The news from the front lines reached Legnica in a modified form, both as oral narratives (e.g., stories told by returning soldiers) and visual representations (e.g., postcards, photographs, and maps). However, this does not mean that World War I had no influence on shaping the cultural landscape of Legnica. After World War I ended, soldiers from the battle lines began to return to the barracks in Legnica and an intensification of nationalist sentiments was noted in the town. The international situation, shaped in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles (called "the dictate of Versailles" by the Germans) and the rebirth of independent Poland,⁷ largely influenced the picture of social and demographic relationships in Legnica. The plight of the Polish population inhabiting the town grew steadily worse. Large numbers of Germans, refugees from Greater Poland and Silesia, were coming to Legnica and, in time, a portion of the German soldiers stationed in the town joined the voluntary armed forces that were fighting with Polish military troops specifically in Greater Poland and Silesia in the interwar period (Dąbrowski 1998: 353–363). In the years 1919–1939, numerous commemorative monuments were erected in the urban space and many celebratory events were connected to the maintenance of the "German" memory of the Great War.

⁷ Poland regained independence in 1918 after 123 years of belonging to other states (during the period 1795–1918, Poland was partitioned and annexed by Prussia, Russia, and Austria). Regaining independence was possible due to the final defeat of Germany during World War I and it coincided with the end of armed conflict worldwide.

As a result of World War II, the German population began to abandon the town as early as 1944. In February 1945, Legnica was taken over by Red Army troops. According to the provisions of the Potsdam Conference, Legnica, as one of the towns of the Western Provinces, was to become part of Poland, and Legnica's nationality was to change within the limits of the state territory. German citizens were displaced⁸ and Poles from the Eastern Borderlands started to arrive in Legnica.⁹ In contrast to the Allied Forces, which left the liberated territories promptly, Soviet soldiers remained in Poland for several decades. Pursuant to Stalin's decision of June 1945, the Northern Group of the Soviet Army was formed and its command center and barracks, together with the garrison of the Polish Army, were located in Legnica.¹⁰ The military command headquarters formed one of the largest centers of Soviet troops in Poland, having taken over approximately one-third of the town. The final withdrawal of Russian Federation forces from Poland took place on September 17th, 1993. Legnica's hosting of the Soviet military's command headquarters was significant for the town and its inhabitants, from the perspective of both the region and the entire country. Over four decades of Soviet presence had left deep marks on the town's cultural landscape and a profound influence on the signs and traces reflecting the town's German past, including those related to the Great War.

LEGNICA'S CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

As mentioned earlier, it is possible to observe at least three fundamental phases in the process of (re)construction and (re)negotiation of the cultural landscape of Legnica all within the context of World War I. Each phase was shaped under the influence of different sociopolitical conditions and, in combination, represent overlapping layers of a cultural landscape understood as a palimpsest. This section presents (a) the general characteristics of the three phases, which are indispensable to an understanding of the complexity of the town's cultural landscape, and (b) Legnica's uniqueness in the context of other European countries and other regions of Poland. This uniqueness stems from the history of the

⁸ Between 1945 and 1947, over 2,170,000 Germans left Silesia. According to German estimates, between 1945 and 1949, 3,500,000 Germans were displaced from the territories taken over by Poland (Sowa 2011: 83).

⁹ The Eastern Borderlands refers to the lands that belonged to Polish in the interwar period and that were incorporated by the Soviet Union after World War II.

¹⁰ The localization of the command center of the Northern Group of the Soviet Army in Legnica was dictated not only by the town's strategic location near the border with Germany, but also by the fact that during the war the town was largely undamaged and had a significant number of barracks, an airport, and a hospital. Also, before the war, it had been the second-largest town in Lower Silesia (after Wrocław). The headquarters of the Northern Group was located in Legnica in 1945–1984 and 1990–1993. From 1984 to 1990, the headquarters of the Western Direction Forces were located in Legnica. The garrison of the Polish Army was located in the town in from 1945 to 2007.

Recovered Territories and the fate of its inhabitants, which represents a set of experiences different from those of central and eastern Poland.

LEGNICA AS PART OF GERMANY (1914–1945)

The first phase, related to the town's affiliation with Germany, covers the period from the beginning to the end of the Great War, leaving in its wake witnesses and participants, victims and perpetrators, the victorious and the defeated, and the survivors and the dead. During this period, manifestations related to World War I in the physical space of Legnica were connected with burials at the local cemetery and new places of commemoration, which until 1945 jointly created the material and imaginary map of the town. In addition to the commemorative plaques dedicated to representatives of various social groups,¹¹ numerous monuments were erected. Until World War II, apart from functioning in the urban space as material signs of the German memory of World War I, the monuments mentioned above were also the “meaningful points” around which the German community of the town realized numerous practices, constructing a mental landscape and delineating their own boundaries between memory and forgetting. As noted by Aleida Assmann, memory and forgetting are opposite yet inextricably intertwined “camps”; it is forgetting that forms a “norm” in the life of individuals and groups, whereas memory remains an “exception,” especially in the cultural sphere, because memory requires special and costly means (2008: 98). The erection of monuments, as a manifestation of an active side of remembering, is one means. Among the monuments constructed by the German inhabitants of Legnica to commemorate the heroes and victims of World War I, the following are worthy of mention, at the very least:

- a. The Monument to Teachers and Students of the Knight Academy That Died during World War I (1919). The monument stands to this day in the courtyard of the Knight Academy¹² (not its original location; see Figure 1). On the three sides of the plinth, the names of the fallen are inscribed, and on the pedestal there is the sculpture of a lion with the inscription *Mit Gott für König und Vaterland* (With God for King and Country) with the dates 1914–1918.

¹¹ Among this type of commemoration, begun in the years 1935–1939, it is possible to highlight, for example, the plaque dedicated to the memory of the fallen citizens of Legnica, prominently visible in the vestibule of the New Town Hall (1935); the plaque commemorating employees of the newspaper *Liegnitzer Tageblatt* that died during the war (1936); the plaque commemorating the slain members of the butchers' association (1937); the plaque commemorating General Karl Hoefner, who participated in the fights against Silesian insurgents in 1921 (1938); and the plaque for Otto Weddigen, a submarine commander (1939) (Humeńczuk 2000: 31).

¹² The Knight Academy was a boys' secondary school in Legnica from 1730 to 1945. From 1945 to 1978, the academy building, as one of the quarters of the Northern Group of Soviet Army Forces, was systematically vandalized. In 1978 the structure was handed over to the Polish administration. To this day it is one of the most impressive monuments in the Austrian Baroque style in contemporary Poland (Andrzejewski 2016).

- b. The Monument to the Inhabitants of Przybków (erected between 1918 and 1937). Przybków was a settlement near Legnica that later became incorporated into the administrative borders of Legnica. The monument was dedicated to fallen soldiers that had come from that village, and it is one of the few objects of this type that have been preserved until modern times (similar monuments were erected after World War I in almost every locality in Germany). On the front wall of the monument is an inscription: *Unseren im Weltkrieg gefallenen Helden* (To Our Heroes That Died in the World War) with the dates 1914–1918. On the side walls of the monument (pyramidal) there are three plaques—two with the names of soldiers that fell on the Western Front and a third with the names of soldiers that fell on the Eastern Front. The monument has been preserved but it is uncared for and damaged.
- c. The Monument to Grenadiers That Died during World War I (1921). The monument has not survived. It was erected by grenadiers in honor of their comrades. The monument, which was located on a hill in the center of the town, commemorated the soldiers from the Royal Grenadiers Regiment from Legnica.
- d. The Cemetery Monument to the Soldiers Killed during World War I (1928). In 1915, at the communal cemetery in Legnica a separate quarter was allotted for Legnica's inhabitants that were being killed during the ongoing war and for the soldiers that died in the local hospitals. The military cemetery was consecrated in 1915. In 1928, an event was held to unveil the monument, erected at the initiative of the Legnica Branch of the Former Prisoners of War Association. Neither the monument nor the cemetery have survived.
- e. The Monument to the Soldiers of the 7th Regiment of the Landwehr (1929). The regiment was mobilized in Legnica in 1914 and it fought within the ranks of the Austro-Hungarian Army on the Eastern Front. In 1918, the regiment was moved to the Western Front, where it suffered heavy losses. The monument was commissioned by former members of the Landwehr. On both sides of the monument there was the Landwehr cross. On the front side were the dates 1914–1918 and an inscription glorifying Germany; on a ribbon above a drum was the name of the unit. On the other wall was the inscription *Ich hatt einen Kameraden* (I Had a Comrade), complemented with the word *Unvergessen* (Unforgotten) on a sash at the base of a cross. The monument has survived, albeit in an altered condition. In the past, it stood in the town center. It is now exhibited in the museum (see Figures 2 and 3).
- f. The monument commemorating the fact that the municipality of Legnica constructed flats for veterans and families of soldiers that died in World War I (1929). In the years 1926–1929, in the southeastern part of Legnica, a housing estate was constructed for veterans of World War I and for the families of fallen soldiers. The modest monument commemorating the construction of ninety-two apartments was erected in the square in the center of the estate. The monument was destroyed.
- g. The Monument to the Inhabitants of Legnica Killed during World War I (1938). The initiative to erect this monument was taken by the Union of Soldiers of the

Legnica District. In practice, the monument, known as “the hall of memory,” was supposed to commemorate all soldiers from Legnica killed during World War I. The walls of the monument were covered with inscriptions and at the center was an image of an eagle with its wings outstretched, the dates 1914–1918, and the inscription: “The town of Legnica to its killed sons. Immortal glory and the homeland’s gratitude is the reward for their deeds!” On the two sides of the eagle there were busts of General Erich Ludendorff and Field Marshal Paul Hindenburg. The monument formed part of a larger architectonic complex, which, in keeping with the project, included a meeting hall and a meeting center for the Hitler Youth organization. In the 1960s, the monument was remodeled into a sports locker room. It has fulfilled this function to the present day and now in the summer season it also houses some shops (see Figures 4 and 5; Humeńczuk 2000: 28–41).

It is worth noting that the trend of creating new commemorative places related to World War I intensified in direct proportion to the preparations and mobilization of society in the context of the subsequent war. With the help of monuments, social groups not only effected an ideological transformation of space but also created national mythologies and embedded dominant narratives. As noted by Jay Winter, a group’s activity around sites of memory “is crucial to the presentation and preservation of commemorative sites. When such groups disperse or disappear, sites of memory lose their initial force, and may fade away entirely” (2008: 61). “During the entire period between the two world wars, the functions and meanings of war monuments oscillated between the poles of ‘cultural mobilization’ and ‘remobilization’ . . . The interpretations around these two poles received a new impulse in the 1930s” (Vukov 2015: 52). Monuments related to World War I expanded a symbolic landscape of remembrance that was complemented, for example, by patriotic cards with images of German generals, photographs of soldiers, and aerial pictures of Legnica taken using the latest technologies and printed in the local press, such as *Liegnitzer Tageblatt*. This is explained in the sense that there is a close relationship between repetitive visual structures and the organizing of a community (Zaremba 2016: 6).

LEGNICA AS PART OF POLAND (1945–1993)

In 1945, Legnica was incorporated into Poland as part of the Recovered Territories. The new state authorities began to resettle these areas with former inhabitants of the Eastern Borderlands. At the same time, the displacement of the German population began. A large group of inhabitants new to the town comprised Soviet soldiers and their families. The cultural landscape they were entering was alien and incomprehensible to these newcomers. What is more, it represented the material and cultural heritage of a nation that had caused them much harm. Therefore, the boundaries bisected many planes and their number by no means diminished after the war. Because the existence of boundaries delineated and constructed on the mental level required constant confirmation in what was material

and visible, the cultural landscape of Legnica began to change rapidly. The first serious damage to the monumental fabric of the town was done in 1945 by Soviet soldiers. A wave of iconoclasm began, initially involving numerous German monuments—mostly those connected with World War I and German imperialism.¹³ Among the monuments mentioned above, only two were spared at the time: the Monument to the Inhabitants of Przybków and the Monument to Teachers and Students of the Knight Academy.¹⁴ It follows that, during the first two phases, German World War I monuments in Legnica went through all three stages typical of rituals surrounding public commemoration or, rather, experienced three different stages in the life history of monuments.¹⁵ The German cemetery was devastated and by 1960 nearly everything was either desecrated or destroyed. Many tombstones were used to construct new walls for the prewar Jewish cemetery, which has been preserved. When the stones were laid, an effort was made to ensure that the German inscriptions would not be visible (Makuch 2015: 175–176). Thus in 1945 there began a rapid eradication of the symbolic landscape of remembrance of prewar Legnica. The communist authorities completed the work of destruction in the 1960s; they almost completely obliterated the old town. All of the activities described above, initiated or supported by the presence of Soviet military authorities, should be regarded as intentional acts of active forgetting.

Apart from the fact that “the Second World War together with a changing society contributed to the distancing (perhaps alienation) of the unique circumstances of the Great War in post-1945 memory” (Saunders 2001: 45), the policies of the Polish authorities during the Polish People’s Republic prevented any return to the German past.¹⁶ “In totalitarian states . . . as Orwell has shown in his novel *1984*, every scrap that is left over from the past has to be changed or eliminated because an authentic piece of evidence has the power to

¹³ This mostly concerned the monuments of rulers—the king of Prussia, Frederick the Great (1869), and Emperor Wilhelm I (1898)—which belonged to the most recognizable and most often reproduced images from Legnica in the German period. November 18th, 1945, turned into a doomsday. In 1951, a monument of “gratitude” to the Soviet Army was erected to replace the monument to Frederick the Great.

¹⁴ Some of Legnica’s inhabitants claim that it is probable that the monument on the grounds of the Knight Academy was preserved because the figure of the lion was associated with the town’s symbol (the coat of arms of Legnica is a golden lion on an azure field, holding crossed silver keys; interview, Legnica, September 2016).

¹⁵ There are three stages in the life history of monuments: 1) construction of the commemorative form, 2) reinforcement of ritual action in the calendar and turning such activities into a routine, and 3) transformation or “disappearance” of a monument as an active site of memory. Winter states that the majority of “sites of memory live through their life cycle” and “inevitably fade away” (2008: 70–71).

¹⁶ During an interview, an employee of the Museum of Copper in Legnica admitted that as far back as the 1970s, when the local authorities commissioned the organization of an exhibition related to the town’s history, guidelines were issued to ban mentioning Legnica’s German past. The German period was supposed to remain a “blank space” between the Piast dynasty and 1945 (interview, Legnica, September 2016).

crush the official version of the past on which the rulers base their power. . . . This paranoid effort is deemed necessary for the protection of the state because an independent reference to the past can trigger a counter-history that challenges the totalitarian version of the past and undermines the state” (Assmann 2008: 105).

Among the new settlers, for whom the Eastern Borderlands was *their* landscape, a sense of temporariness dominated, together with a fear that the Germans might want to return to the lands they had lost (interview, Legnica, September 2016).

LEGNICA DURING POLISH POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION (1993–2016)

The third principal phase relating to the (re)construction and (re)negotiation of the cultural landscape of Legnica began at the onset of the 1990s and continues still. The beginning of that period was related to the fall of communist rule and to the final withdrawal of Russian Federation troops from Poland. It was then that the town’s German history, including signs and traces of World War I, slowly began to be studied and “rediscovered.” Several initiatives are worth mentioning in this context.

In 1994, the monument to soldiers of the 7th Regiment of the Landwehr that had been killed during World War I was unearthed. After 1945, there were attempts to remodel the monument, as evidenced by rubbed-out inscriptions and chiseled-off helmet, but eventually the monument was overturned and covered with soil. In 1994, at the initiative of the director of the Museum of Copper, the monument was unearthed and restored. After the stone monument collection of the Museum of Copper was opened in 2014,¹⁷ the monument’s visibility was ensured. It is, however, worth noting that the museum space is not a public space, and therefore the “German” monument to commemorate World War I soldiers has not yet been displayed in the town’s space. Over twenty tombstones from the former German cemetery were also placed in the collection.

It is significant that a new monument was erected in the communal cemetery in 1993 to commemorate all the Germans (and thus, also the participants in World War I) that died in Legnica from 1915 to 1946. The monument, however, was not erected at the initiative of the Poles, but of the inhabitants of Wuppertal (Wuppertal has been Legnica’s partner town since 1993).

In the context of the cultural landscape understood as cultural images, it was also important that an informal group of the town’s sympathizers established a historical portal, www.liegnitz.pl, and in 2013 the Historical Foundation (Liegnitz.pl.). The portal collects and makes available historical archives, documents, testimonies, and photos of Legnica, both prewar and during World War I. The foundation aims to restore and revive places and monuments that are valuable to Legnica’s history.

¹⁷ A large group of former inhabitants of Legnica, in association with the organization Bundesgruppe Liegnitz, took part in the official opening of the stone monument collection (Makuch 2015: 179).

In 2014, no events commemorating the anniversary of World War I were held in Legnica. Still, the State Archive, "as the paradigmatic institution of passive cultural memory" (Assmann 2008: 102), organized an exhibition entitled "The Image of World War I in the State Archive in Wrocław, Legnica Division" (available in electronic version only; Exhibition 2014). Although the exhibition was compiled entirely using materials collected in the Legnica archive, there are no photographs related to Legnica from 1914 to 1918. Apart from scans of documents, letters, maps, and coins, there are numerous postcards and photos illustrating World War I as experienced elsewhere. The documents pertaining to this period of time and collated in Legnica's archives are predominantly German, although the organizers of the exhibition also obtained a small number of documents compiled in Polish. As the exhibition's organizer admitted, the idea of holding the exhibition had not been a local initiative, but was imposed top-down by the Polish State Archive Head Office in Warsaw:¹⁸

There are no, so to speak, local pressures, because here in Legnica no one is interested in World War I. This is a different population, a different state and, after all, that was a hundred years ago. . . . It was Germany here and so, showing World War I on the basis of historical archives, for instance Legnica's . . . for them it was a war, a completely different reception than today's. We simply did our duty. There is no internal or Legnica-based need for this subject matter. I have no idea, I have no data on whether anyone watched it. (interview, Legnica, September 2016)

Although the exhibition does not say much about the cultural landscape of Legnica during the German period, it gives some idea of how World War I was seen through the eyes of the town's contemporary inhabitants and how they experienced the past.

A RETURN TO THE METAPHORS

A metaphor "is not a matter of adornment, but installs a new order; in effect it is a discovery of meaning" (Vedder 2002: 198). The metaphor of landscape as conversation or conflict forms the backdrop against which the transformations on the material and imaginary maps of Legnica took place in the last century.

World War I did not cause damage to the material fabric of the town, and in many respects it remained invisible to the inhabitants of Legnica. The war was, however, present in the memory of the local community thanks to Legnica's veterans, letters sent from the front lines, and tombstones in the local cemetery. Through these, the dead and the living found proximity in materialities and places. As early as 1919, the erection of new monuments was

¹⁸ These were the guidelines that concerned the state archives for all of Poland.

initiated, together with accompanying memory-making events. These were the means by which memories stimulated the production and shape of matter, reflected in transformations of the cultural landscape. Although some of the objects commemorated victims of World War I, others honored *our* (German) heroes, heroes created by the Great War. Despite the fact that “many voices remained silent or were obscured by hegemonic narratives” (Cornwall 2016: 10), it is worth noting that the erection of new places of memory in Legnica was initiated by diverse social groups. The fact that commemorations erected by and dedicated to different entities can coexist indicates that the construction of the cultural landscape when Legnica belonged to Germany suggests that the idea of conversation can be understood as a creative process. The relationships between separate landmarks in urban space were based on the ability to interpret, respect, and create a network of meanings that was significant from the perspective of the local community. In the face of an impending World War II, they did not in any way inhibit the incorporation of landmarks into ideological designs connected to the instrumentalization of the memory of those killed during World War I. What *is* significant—the metaphor of landscape as conversation—operates, in this case, on one level and is related to the German imaginary community.

A radical change took place in 1945, at which point began the (re)construction of Legnica’s cultural landscape and, more precisely, the gradual destruction of its cultural landscape and the construction of a new layer in the “socialist spirit.” For the new settlers and the Polish authorities, the prewar landscape of the town was incomprehensible and impossible to decipher, not only because it had been written in a “foreign language,” but also because it appeared to be the landscape of a newly-conquered enemy, who might have wanted to return to these territories. As a rule, in communist countries “the commemorations about the Great War were overshadowed by those of the second world conflict and by the new ideological approaches to national histories” (Vukov 2015: 53), whereas in western territories there were, for obvious reasons, absolutely no Polish signs or traces of memory of World War I. Destruction of German commemorative places was not only written into the new ideological design, it also aimed to eradicate the memory of a German past. Ever since that moment in 1945, the process of reconstruction of the landscape of Legnica has strongly been a metaphor of conflict. Apart from the destruction related to the creation of the new, what is striking is the absence of the German past or, rather, any attempt to give power to that absence. Thus, the metaphor of landscape as conflict complicates the relations within its layers, introducing multidimensionality. Paradoxically, the metaphor combines the successive layers of landscape through a gradual process of cutting off and eradicating the earlier layer.

The third phase, related to the process of democratization and to the efforts of some entities to develop understanding between Poles and Germans, resulted in some attempt in Legnica to revive the memory of the first world conflict and its visual representations. In the context of the metaphors related to the cultural landscape, this phase is best understood as a space-in-between, a limbo between a need for communication and a lack of

possibility of communication. Generally, among the inhabitants of Legnica there is no memory of World War I. At this stage, it is possible to notice a shift from the *active* to the *passive* form of cultural forgetting that "is related to non-intentional acts such as losing, hiding, dispersing, neglecting, abandoning, or leaving something behind. In these cases, the objects are not materially destroyed; they fall out of the frames of attention, valuation, and use" (Assmann 2008: 98).

As I'm saying, who cares about it? This is a different population here, we don't celebrate here any heroes, those various fallen during the First War, here, well, there's nothing like that because, I don't know, people came here, like my family, from Volhynia, from around Lviv . . . I can't see any connection. It's a different reception, when we talk about Warsaw, about Poznań, or Cracow, here it's different. . . . Here it was really the backstage of the first war. This was Germany. There were Germans here, while there are none today. Who cares about that here, in this area? (interview, Legnica, September 2016)

Attempts to revive the memory of World War I are imposed top-down, undergo the process of musealization, and finally become entangled in the process of rediscovering Legnica's German past. Although such initiatives face the challenge of combining different layers of the landscape, or in fact several multivocal landscapes, into a new whole, this process does not embody the metaphor of conversation within the multilevel structure.

SPACE-IN-BETWEEN?

Studying the contemporary map of the region, it is difficult to notice the old lines of division running below the visible surface topography. It in no way means that the lines completely lost their power to divide or demarcate, or that they exert no influence on the contemporary experience, understanding, or interpretation both of the past and of the material signs shaping Legnica's cultural landscape. Particularly problematic are those boundaries that are related in some way to military conflicts. World War I in the Recovered Territories occupies a special place in this context. Contemporary inhabitants of Legnica, despite the passage of several decades since the end of World War II, still stick by an invisible boundary that at least to a certain extent separates the inhabitants from a German past, especially in military terms. In 1945, the new settlers began to create the history of Legnica "anew." Constructing a new community and local identity was based on a dissociation from the place's past and was an attempt to eradicate the signs of an alien community from the memory of urban space.

In this context, it appears vital to ask how to construct history and to negotiate the past (not from the perspective of great, national narratives, but from the local point of view) if, in a given place, there are not any of "one's own" points of reference but only "alien" ones.

In this particular case, what matters is not the lack of consensus or the existence of moral dilemmas related to the commemoration of World War I but, rather, that in this territory there is no “Polish” memory of World War I (because family memory of this period in time concerns completely different lands). There exist material signs of alien memory that, although in a modified shape, still jointly contribute to the creation of the cultural landscape.

Up until now, the inhabitants of Legnica, like those of other towns in the Recovered Territories, have not determined suitable “tools” that would enable them to transcend the invisible barrier separating them from the town’s difficult past. Instead of actions consisting of attempts at a gradual integration of the past through advancement of knowledge (it does not appear likely that the contemporary inhabitants of Legnica would borrow German commemorative places related to World War I), it is, rather, a passivity and separation of experience that dominate. Possibly, this silence is a mediation about absence. “Perception of the landscape, if it is not to limit itself to casual admiration of its picturesqueness, must be at the same time be reinforced by knowledge because it is only the understanding of the landscape that enables us to relate to it with respect and evokes a willingness to preserve its value. Incomprehensible landscapes will always cause negative impressions” (Kobyliński 2014: 17).

In the case of the inhabitants of Legnica, such an attitude does not have to spring from purposeful activity; it may be conditioned by a lack of possibility, or ability, to deal with a “difficult,” alien, military past. It is probable that “they did not see it because it had no meaning to them. It was simply white noise in stone. For them to see it, someone had to point it out, and others had to organize acts of remembrance around it” (Winter 2008: 73). At the present stage, the cultural landscape of Legnica thus resembles a space-in-between, fluctuating between the metaphors of conversation and conflict, while appearing to gravitate increasingly toward impossibility. It seems that, in conjunction with perspectives regarding the shaping of European solidarity and cosmopolitan memories that transcend national and ethnic boundaries (Levy & Sznajder 2006: 23–38), the accession of Poland to the European Union in 2004 could have had some influence on various initiatives related to the discovery of Legnica’s German past (e.g., the emergence of the web portal). In Poland’s western territories, there is no memory of World War I apart from initiatives imposed top-down and realized at the institutional level. This past has so far not found a suitable form to which the contemporary inhabitants of the Recovered Territories can assign meaning. No matter what definitions of the “European legacy” or “cosmopolitan memory” are adopted from the bottom-up, World War I in Legnica still remains a past that is exclusively “German.” Additionally, how should the past of former opponents and enemies be commemorated? Perhaps, “in order to remember anything one has to forget; but what is forgotten need not necessarily be lost forever” (Assmann 2008: 106). Perhaps at some point in the future this commemoration of the past—for instance, through the celebration of future anniversaries—will finally find a form that, with the passage of time, will become acceptable to future generations of Legnica’s inhabitants.

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“KARTE” PRVE SVETOVNE VOJNE ZEMLJEVIDENJE POLJSKE KRAJINE POZABE V LEGNICI

Kljub več kot sedemdesetim letom od konca druge in stotim letom od konca prve svetovne vojne prebivalci Legnice še vedno zaznavajo in ohranjajo nevidne meje, ki v določeni meri ločujejo pripadnike različnih narodnosti.

V konkretnem primeru ne gre toliko za pomanjkanje soglasja ali za obstoj moralnih dilem, povezanih s spomini na prvo svetovno vojno, temveč za dejstvo, da na tem ozemlju ni »poljskih« spominov na prvo svetovno vojno, saj se družinski spomini na to obdobje nanašajo na druga ozemlja. Tako je namesto dejanj, ki bi pomenili poskuse postopnega navezovanja na preteklost nemških mest spominjanja, prevladujoča pasivnost.

Hkrati se zdi, da utegne pristop Poljske k Evropski uniji, ki poudarja oblikovanje evropske solidarnosti in kozmopolitskih spominov, ti pa presejajo nacionalne in etnične meje (Levy and Sznajder 2006: 23–38), vplivati na različne pobude, povezane z odkritjem nemške preteklosti Legnice. Eden prvih poskusov je internetni portal.

Ne glede na to, katere definicije »evropske zapuščine« ali »kozmpolitskega spomina« so sprejete od spodaj navzgor, je prva svetovna vojna v Legnici še vedno preteklost, ki je izključno »nemška«. Končno se zastavlja vprašanje, kako bi se morali spominjati preteklost nekdanjih nasprotnikov in sovražnikov?

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