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## MEMORIAL PLAQUES AND MONUMENTS IN *ŁÓDŹ-ŚRÓDMIEŚCIE* (THE CITY CENTRE DISTRICT) COMMEMORATING PEOPLE AND EVENTS FROM THE HISTORY OF THE CITY

**Abstract:** The aim of this article is a classification of monuments and memorial plaques located in the area of *Łódź-Śródmieście* (the city centre district) in terms of their tourism value. The author, based on research and analysis, estimates their value as present or potential sites of interest for tourists visiting Łódź and their possible use for tourism aims.

**Key words:** Łódź, memorial plaque, monument, tourism, sight-seeing, anthropogenic, tourism route.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Memorial plaques and monuments make up that part of the heritage of a city understood as the essential events connected with its past and its inhabitants. It is possible to find among these memorials those from Łódź who were prominent for culture, art, science and other fields on a local scale, and those who achieved great things nationally, or on a continental and even a world scale. These monuments and memorial plaques can also testify to the historical meaning of a city in the development of its own regions and its specific society.

In the Polish literature from the 1980`s to the present, ideas of a monument and memorial plaque has evolved considerably. However during this period no single definition was established for a memorial plaque, so for this article the author has provided his own. A memorial plaque is flat, usually quadrangular, made from wood, carved in stone or cast from metal, with a suitable inscription. They commemorate places, historical events or simply a well-known person, often interconnected. Depending on its specification, in addition to its inscription it is possible to find varying motifs – a portrait, insignia, coats of arms etc.

To provide a coherent definition of a monument the author has produced one synthesised from those which have appeared over the last thirty years. A monument is a structure, often a symbolic sculpture (sometimes a monumental sculpture) or

an architectonic sculpture, raised in honour of a person or to commemorate a historical event. The monument could be a statue, bust, obelisk, building (e.g. a mausoleum), plaque, column, group of columns and/or sculptures, mound or large rock, ancient tree or other atypical forms.

In this understanding, monuments and memorial plaques can be classified as an anthropogenic asset with tourism value. There is a wide description of such assets in the literature of this subject (e.g. WARSZYŃSKA, JACKOWSKI 1979, PRZYBYSZEWSKAJ-GUDELIS *et al.* 1979, SZWICHTENBERG 2001, LIJEWSKI, MIKUŁOWSKI, WYRZYKOWSKI 2002).

### 2. MONUMENTS AND MEMORIAL PLAQUES IN *ŁÓDŹ-ŚRÓDMIEŚCIE*

In Łódź there are 112 monuments and the highest number (35 – 31% of all monuments in the city) are situated in *Łódź-Śródmieście* despite its being the smallest district in the city. Because of this large number, and the size of the area, their density is several times greater than in other districts (Table 1).

The author has classified the monuments according to several criteria. However, in the description of artistic forms the author has accepted criteria

Table 1. Monuments in the districts of Łódź (data for June 2009)

District	Number of monuments	Percentage in relation to all monuments in Łódź	District area (in km <sup>2</sup> )	Number of monuments per km <sup>2</sup>
Łódź-Bałuty	25	22	78.9	0.3
Łódź-Górna	18	16	70.7	0.3
Łódź-Polesie	23	21	46.0	0.5
<b>Łódź-Śródmieście</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>5.1</b>
Łódź-Widzew	11	10	90.8	0.1
<b>Łódź (total)</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>293.2</b>	<b>0.4</b>

Source: Author based on inventory.

Table 2. Kinds of monuments in Łódź-Śródmieście (data for June 2009)

Kind of monument	Number of monuments in Łódź-Śródmieście	Percentage of monuments in Łódź-Śródmieście	Number of monuments in the whole of Łódź	Percentage in relation to all monuments in Łódź
Monuments <i>per se</i>	2	6	7	29
Statues	8	20	26	31
Busts	6	18	18	33
Obelisks	2	6	11	18
Memorial stones	5	15	32	16
Atypical monuments	12	35	17	72
Total	35	100	112	32

Source: Author based on inventory.

Table 3. Memorial plaques in all Łódź districts (data for June 2009)

Surface	Number of memorial plaques	Percentage in relation to all memorial plaques in Łódź	District area (in km <sup>2</sup> )	Number of memorial plaques per km <sup>2</sup>
Łódź-Bałuty	67	21	78.9	0.9
Łódź-Górna	35	11	70.7	0.5
Łódź-Polesie	61	19	46.0	1.3
<b>Łódź-Śródmieście</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>16.2</b>
Łódź-Widzew	46	15	90.8	0.5
<b>Łódź (total)</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>293.2</b>	<b>1.1</b>

Source: Author based on inventory.

proposed by JAWORSKA-MAĆKOWIAK & MAĆKOWIAK (2008), dividing those existing into monuments *per se*, statues, busts, memorial stones and atypical forms. The author, like its creators, is aware that this classification does not match all existing monuments.

Most monuments located in Łódź-Śródmieście are in fact categorized as atypical with the least numerous being monuments *per se* and obelisks. In the city as a whole, atypical monuments are the most common with obelisks and memorial stones the least (Table 2).

In discussing memorial plaques only those found externally are analysed. Plaques situated inside buildings, commemorations of missions, epitaphs, votive plaques, corner stones of shrines and other features, and plaques on wayside chapels are not taken into consideration.

In the administrative area of Łódź there are 318 memorial plaques, most of which (109) are situated in Łódź-Śródmieście, 34% of those in the entire city. Forevery km<sup>2</sup> of Łódź-Śródmieście there are over 16 memorial plaques, several times higher than the average for the remaining areas of the city and for Łódź as a whole (Table 3).

The concentration of monuments and memorial plaques in Łódź-Śródmieście is because this area makes up the historical centre of the city and where its administrative and social life from the beginnings of its industrialization was focused.

On the basis of an inventory and field investigations the author has described the exact concentration of monuments and memorial plaques depending on the street where they are placed. Analysis shows that

inventoried sites are located in 34 streets (monuments in 11, and memorial plaques in 30). It is impossible to allocate every monument to a specific street as they could be situated in parks. Most are located in Piotrkowska St - the historical axis of the city and the most important street in Łódź. Many well-known people commemorated in the form of monuments or memorial plaques (e.g. their residence or where activity took place at a specific address) were connected with this street or with important organizations, institutions etc located along it. In the neighbourhood of Piotrkowska St, are Sienkiewicza, Kościuszki and Narutowicza Streets, communication axes which have also been very important since the beginning the city's beginning.

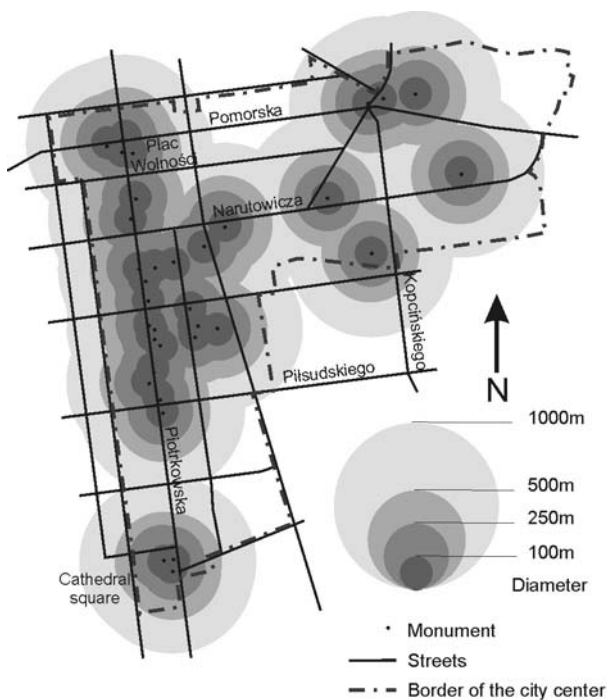


Fig. 1. Map of monuments in the central area (source: author based on own investigations and KRAKOWIAK, 2008)

On the basis of analysis, a map of the distribution of monuments in the central area (Fig. 1) has been drawn from which it is possible to see where the largest accumulation of monuments is found. Above all it is Piotrkowska St, in the section from *Plac Wolności* in the north to *Aleja Piłsudskiego* in the south (partly closed to traffic), the cathedral neighbourhood as well as *Rondo Solidarność* and Staszic Park.

The author recognizes that a similar map for memorial plaques is pointless as the number in the central part of the city is too great. Moreover, the areas of the greatest concentration to a large extent coincide with those of monuments.

A tourism map of the most attractive areas of *Łódź-Śródmieście* for monuments and memorial plaques was created on the basis of an analysis enriched by the author's opinion relating to their artistic value (Fig. 2). A ranking method was used, and the basic areal unit was a hexagon equal in size to *Plac Wolności* itself, and for this reason. The author additionally gave a score to those memorials identified as tourism attractions by Łódź municipal guides and Department of Geography students at the University of Łódź (*WNG UŁ*) (based on questionnaires). The criteria applied are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Criteria used in the ranking method and scores

Criteria	Score
Existence of monument	4
Existence of memorial plaque	3
Artistic value (author's subjective opinion)	2
Indication that a specific monument and/or memorial plaque has tourism value (students of <i>WNG UŁ</i> and/or municipal guides)	1 (monuments and/or memorial plaques identified by both students of <i>WNG UŁ</i> and municipal guides were scored twice)
Good visibility of monument and/or memorial plaque (author's opinion on basis of field inventory)	0.5

Source: Author.

The analysis, and its graphic representation, affirms that the most attractive areas are situated along the main communication axes in the city centre: *Pomorska*, *Narutowicza*, *Sienkiewicza* and *Kilińskiego* Streets as well as in the northern part of *Piotrkowska St* where traffic is restricted. Here are all the monuments from *Galeria Wielkich Łódzian* ('Gallery of Great Łódź Citizens'). The majority of sites are easily visible - memorial plaques are placed on external facades of buildings and monuments along the streets or in squares which increases their accessibility and attractiveness for tourists. Large concentrations of monuments and memorial plaques are situated around the cathedral of St. Stanisław Kostka (e.g. the monument to John Paul II, the plaque dedicated to St. Faustina); near the buildings of Łódź City Council as well as in *Pasaż Schillera* (e.g. the monument to Schiller, a plaque dedicated to the Łódź revolutionaries of 1905); *Plac Wolności* (e.g. the monument to Kościuszko, the plaque commemorating the Silesian insurrection); as well as in the vicinity of *plac Dąbrowskiego*, the *UŁ* Department of International and Political Relations as well as its Rector's office and Department of Chemistry on *Narutowicza St* (e.g. Solidarity 'tree', the

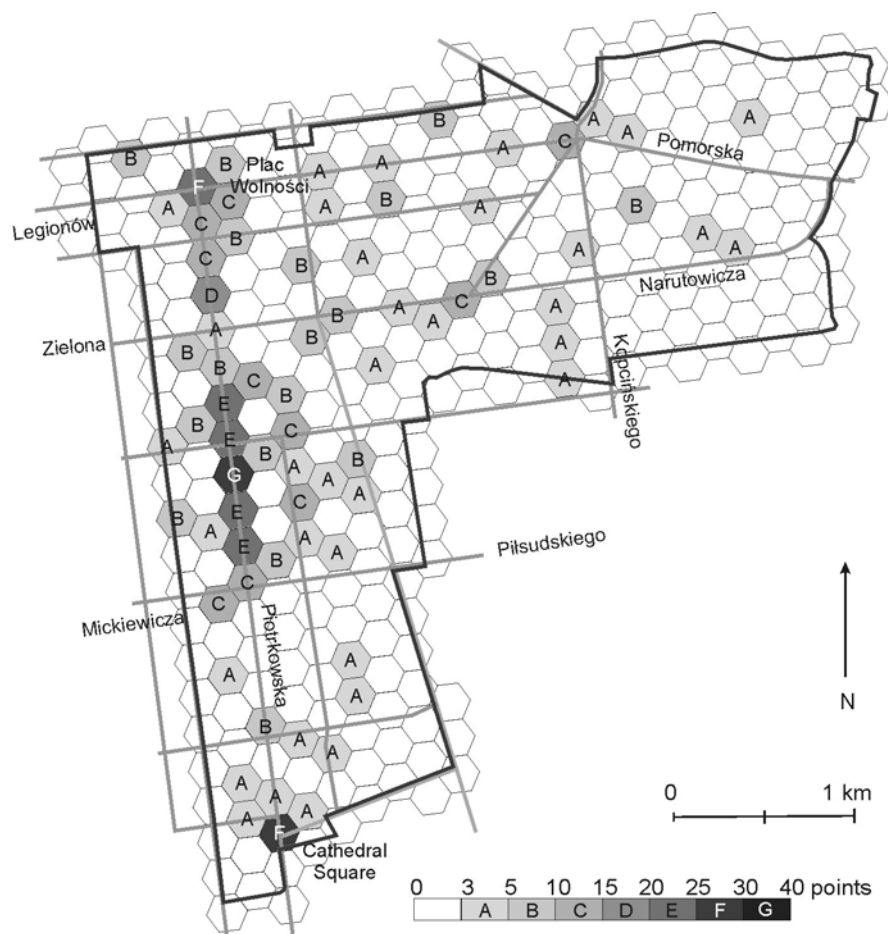


Fig. 2. The most attractive areas in the city centre in terms of monuments and memorial plaques (data for June 2009)  
(source: author based on inventory)

plaques consecrated to the priest Popiełuszko, and Strzebiński and Miklaszewska). These areas are of interest to tourists for their anthropogenic value.

Monuments and memorial plaques refer to all historical periods from the origins of Łódź's (Fig. 3) with the greatest numbers from the period from the formation of industrial Łódź to World War I (e.g. the 'founding of the first pharmacy' plaque); the interwar years (e.g. the 'the marriage of Poland to the sea in 1920' plaque); and the period from World War II until 1989 (e.g. the 'martyrdom of Popiełuszko' plaque). The least number commemorate people and events from both World Wars: before the industrialization of Łódź (prior to 1820); and since regaining sovereignty after 1989.

Such a reconstruction of history by monuments and memorial plaques can result in an unequal understanding of the development of Łódź for the history of Poland. Among those analysed therefore, predominant are the stormy period of the dynamic development of industrial Łódź; the years after the

regaining of independence in 1918 when monuments and memorial plaques were used to manifest national identity as well as patriotism; and the period of socialism. The period before Łódź's industrialization is only commemorated in nine places – mostly unconnected with the history of the city – perhaps as a result of its slow development and the few significant events in the period from the earliest settlements in the 13<sup>th</sup> c. to the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> c.

Monuments, due to greater artistic opportunity, are mostly figurative, however the limited form of a memorial plaque enables it to successfully commemorate events. It is possible to classify people commemorated into several groups: the biggest presents the heroes of the struggle for independence and other heroes (15% of all sites) with artists, composers, writers etc (a further 15%). Those connected with Łódź make up almost 76% commemorated by monuments and memorial plaques.

Among all the nationalities involved in the development of industrial Łódź (Polish, German and

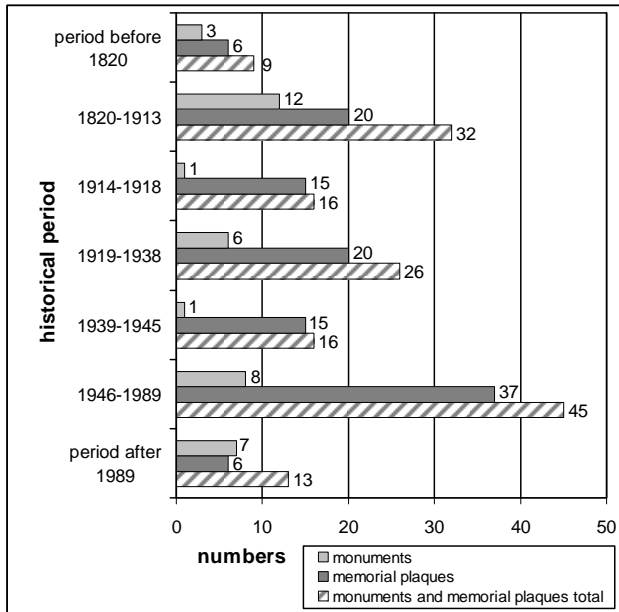


Fig. 3. Monuments and memorial plaques – periods commemorated (data for June 2009)  
(source: author based on inventory)

Jewish) the majority are for Poles (73%). This could be because during the history of Łódź, the Polish population has predominated demographically in spite of the smaller contribution (particularly financial and technological) to its development in comparison to the Germans and Jews. Moreover, from the end of the World War II, in the period when many monuments and memorial plaques in Łódź have appeared, the city has been dominated by one nationality. The existence of sites commemorating the presence of the Germans (9%) and Jews (18%) in the city centre, as well as their contribution to the city, could also increase tourism interest through a tourism route of monuments and memorial plaques, and among foreign tourists too (particularly from Germany, Israel and the USA). In spite of the coexistence in Łódź of different nationalities for over 100 years, the presence of German and Jewish communities has not been commemorated by monuments or plaques until today.

### 3. MEMORIAL PLAQUES AND MONUMENTS AS A TOURISM VALUE IN ŁÓDŹ-ŚRÓDMIEŚCIE

To describe the meaning of the monuments and memorial plaques of Łódź in tourism terms the author conducted an analysis of tourist guide books on Poland published after World War II. It is based on WILUŚ's article (1998) but considerably extended by the author's own investigation. Guide books published

after 1990 on Łódź were also analysed. The conclusion affirms that information contained in both groups of guide books on the monuments and memorial plaques in Łódź-Śródmieście is considerable. The authors of these guides describe these sites as an important tourism value for Łódź which can have significant interest to potential Polish tourists. The monuments are placed in addition to villas, palaces and town houses as among the greatest tourism attractions of Łódź-Śródmieście and the city as a whole, with the Tadeusz Kościuszko monument perhaps recognized as the most important. In total, 17 monuments were shown in the city centre and 5 of them (the Kościuszko monument, the Grave of the Unknown Soldier, the monuments to Ignacy Skorupka and Leon Schiller, and the 'millennium monument to the Citizens of Łódź') were identified in guide books on the whole of Poland. Memorial plaques have much less tourism value, only appearing as interesting sites in guide books to Łódź itself. This analysis is only 'theoretical' and does not reflect the real use of monuments and memorial plaques by tourists in the city.

Tourism attractions can be considered in terms of KRONENBERG's article published in 2006 concerning real and theoretical tourism space in Łódź, as well as the investigation of tourism in Łódź in 2008 conducted by the *Regionalna Organizację Turystyczną Województwa Łódzkiego - ROT WŁ* (Województwo Regional Tourism Organization). In both cases the aim of the analyses was to indicate the most popular tourism attractions, which permits the author to affirm that monuments and memorial plaques in Łódź, as well as specifically in Łódź-Śródmieście, are not the essential object of tourism interest. They have interest only as additional value, supplementary in a tour-operator's sightseeing programme offering visits to tourism attractions in Łódź.

Recapitulating, the monuments and memorial plaques make up an important tourism asset for the central area of Łódź but in practice their potential is little used at present. To estimate their value the author undertook a questionnaire survey of Łódź municipal guides as tourism experts. In the municipal guides' opinion undeniably the biggest tourism value of Łódź is Piotrkowska St, its value is considerably greater than all Łódź's other attractions.

The monuments are a basic group of sites recognized by municipal guides as worth seeing by tourists with the most important being the Millennium Monument, a result of its originality and uniqueness. Coming next were the *Galeria Wielkich Łodzian* (Gallery of 'Great Łódź Citizens'), Tuwim on his bench as well as Rubinstein's piano, attracting tourists' attention because of their form as well as being a nationally unique idea. Other monuments include that to

Table 5. Proposals for monument and memorial plaque tourism routes

Name of route	Sites on route	Route length (in km)	Approximate time necessary to complete route (in minutes)
German and Jewish Route	13 sites: 5 monuments 8 memorial plaques	4.0	90
Artists & writers Route	21 sites: 8 monuments 13 memorial plaques	6.3	120-180
Heroes Route	21 sites: 6 monuments 15 memorial plaques	7.2	180-240
Route of those who have developed Łódź educationally and socially	12 sites: 4 monuments 8 memorial plaques	7.5	180-240
Great 'Łódź Citizens' Route	37 sites: 10 monuments 27 memorial plaques	11.0	240-280
Lost Łódź Route	28 sites: 1 monument 27 memorial plaques	10.0	240-280
Martyrology and the Fight for Freedom Route	27 sites: 1 monument 26 memorial plaques	7.5	180-240

Source: Author.

Guttenberg on the façade of a town house, his only monument in Poland, and the Tadeusz Kościuszko monument recognized as one of the symbols of Łódź. However, apart from its monumentality, it is the least attractive for tourists in the opinion of the guides. No memorial plaque appears which shows that they are considerably less attractive in comparison with monuments.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

One possibility for the use of the monuments and memorial plaques situated in Łódź-Śródmieście is to create tourism routes between them. Considering monuments and memorial plaques as having a specific tourist value with a wide diversity of interest, tourism routes nevertheless have the opportunity to interest visitors in only a supplementary way to other attractions. However the results of the questionnaires with municipal guides in Łódź and with WNG UŁ students considerable interest is shown in the idea of tourism walking routes, based on monuments and memorial plaques. The author proposes seven thematic routes in Łódź-Śródmieście (Table 5).

All routes proposed by the author have an educational character, not only for tourists coming to Łódź, but for residents of the city from every age group. They can be used both by organized guided groups as well as interested individuals. The author proposes to promote the idea under one name for all routes 'Calling cards for the history of Łódź'.

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