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**RIVERS, PUBLIC HYGIENE
AND URBAN FEELINGS**
THE CASE OF THE PEŁTEW RIVER IN LVIV
BEFORE 1914*

In 1883 a Lviv newspaper warned the public of a possible hygienic danger lurking on one of the plots of land near the municipal park:

One of the streets leading from the park is nowadays one of the most dangerous due to miasmas that breed in a huge water basin [...]. A year ago, someone had planned to build an apartment house here, and so he excavated the ground in order to lay foundations. He then changed his mind and did not commence building. Water began to gather in that open pit, and various miasmas began to breed in it, infecting the air around it. The question is, if the magistrate has the power to force the owner of the plot to fill in this miasmatic pit?¹

This denouncement shows the kind of feelings which were related to the issue of water in the city. It also clearly shows the impact of the so-called miasmatic theory of diseases, which most hygienists of that era accepted. The theory was based on the assumptions of Max von Pettenkofer, a Munich-based doctor who was one of the main proponents of public hygiene.

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¹ *Zygmuntowska ulica*, in: *Kurjer Lwowski*, 27 (27 April 1883), pp. 1–2.

This field of medical science emerged in the first half of the 19th century, but had also its roots in the sanitary reform ideas of the Enlightenment². The activities and writings of doctors-turned-public-hygienists, their scientific output, and the great social need for a defence against rising epidemics, led to the creation of a new branch of knowledge. New academic chairs were created³ as a sign of its social importance. New research based on statistical data and the observation of the less wealthy social strata, drew the attention of urban reformers to the social causes affecting the spread of new diseases in cities. Edwin Chadwick, Louis-René Villermé, Victor Aimé Huber, Rudolf Virchow, Józef Polak in Warsaw and Antoni Pawlikowski in Lviv, to name a few, helped to understand that many urban diseases were not 'natural' and had strong social causes. In other words, living in a city was a serious threat to human lives and the water situation (the availability of fresh potable water, the quality of sewers, the existence of insalubrious standing water in the city) formed a crucial part of the traditional critique of the 19th-century city⁴. This threat demanded an answer, both in terms of social and urban planning reform. The first country to experience these problems was Great Britain, with its rising industrial cities and its colossal capital, London. As Christopher Hamlin has argued, the social aspect of new epidemics was downplayed by Chadwick in his famous report in 1848, stressing instead the importance of the insalubrious physical conditions in which people lived⁵. That formed a pattern of responses, followed by hygienists on the continent. In this respect, public hygiene affected the way the city was perceived and planned.

This can clearly be traced in the case of public discourse regarding cholera epidemics⁶. Cholera, a disease that had been known in India and the

² The main thinker and politician involved in this reform proposal was Johann Peter Frank, an advisor to the Austrian emperor, cf. G. Mann, *Führende deutsche Hygieniker des 19. Jahrhunderts. Eine Übersicht*, in: *Städte-, Wohnungs- und Kleidungshygiene des 19. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland: Vorträge eines Symposiums vom 17. bis 18. Juni 1967 in Frankfurt am Main*, ed. by W. Artelt et al., (1969), p. 3.

³ H. Heinz-Eulner, *Hygiene als akademisches Fach*, in: *Städte-, Wohnungs- und Kleidungshygiene*, pp. 17–33.

⁴ For one of the examples, see: L. Mumford, *The City in History. Its Origins, Its Transformation, and Its Prospects*, (1989), pp. 461–465.

⁵ C. Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice in the Age of Chadwick: Britain 1800–1854*, (1998), pp. 83–120, 252, 272–273

⁶ The significance of the disease on the development of the sewer system was under-

rest of Asia for centuries⁷, first appeared in Europe in 1831, brought to the Kingdom of Poland by the Russian army fighting against the Poles in the war of 1830–1831. That marked the beginning of the ‘cholera century’, when four great pandemics swept across Europe in the periods of 1826–1838, 1846–1863, 1865–1875, and 1883–1896⁸. Not all of them spread throughout the entire continent, but the fact that cholera was present for so many years in Europe contributed to the atmosphere of fear which dominated the continent.

Regarding the conclusions drawn from the first encounters with cholera, it is instructive to turn to the sources from the Kingdom of Poland, a region neighbouring Galicia, which also had an impact on the physicians in Lviv, as both regions, formerly belonging to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, formed a common milieu of communication. One of the first analyses of the cholera epidemics (from 1830–1831 and 1837–1838) was written as early as 1838⁹. The author, a physician entrusted with the task of personally dealing with the outbreak of cholera in Warsaw, first saw the hundreds of infected soldiers in the Spring of 1831. Then, after a smaller outbreak of cholera emerging from Galicia in 1836, which was tamed by a frosty winter, another epidemic appeared in 1837. The second one is crucial to understanding the interrelation between health and urban structure, as it was imagined at that time. Here, the river was partly to be blamed: the author described the flooding of the lower central district of Warsaw next to the Vistula river (Powiśle), leaving the soil damp for months. In addition, the raftsmen from Cracow, who arrived at Warsaw at that time, seemed to be infected by the disease. It turned observers’ eyes to the river and its standing water as a possible cause of the epidemic¹⁰. To be sure, it was too early to explain the disease in bacteriological terms; the real danger was deemed to be the air, which it was believed could carry the disease from infected

lined in: M. Hietala, *Services and Urbanization at the Turn of the Century. The Diffusion of Innovations*, (1987), p. 188.

⁷ For more details cf. the chapter *Les fièvres intestinales* in: J. Ruffié, J.-Ch. Sournia, *Les épidémies dans l’histoire de l’homme – Essai d’anthropologie médicale*, (1995).

⁸ Cf. an instructive third chapter of: M. P. Czapliński, *Epidemie cholery w rejencji opolskiej w latach 1831–1894*, (2012).

⁹ J. Kulesza, *Opisanie cholery azjatyckiej jaka epidemicznie grasowała w Warszawie i Królestwie Polskim w latach 1831, 1836 i 1837*, (1838).

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 10–12, p. 46.

water or soil (the author spoke of the ‘smell of cholera’, which he learnt to recognize)¹¹. But the correlation between the densely built parts of the city, the insalubrity of the dwellings of the underclass (who often lived in areas prone to flooding where rents were cheaper), and the waste stored in the yards nearby on the one side, and the epicentres of the cholera outbreaks on the other, was noted. That could not explain all the differences between the cases, so an accompanying theory was developed: the attitude to the new illness itself was related to its causes. So a strong fear of being infected made the rest of a victim’s family vulnerable to cholera. The fear was further strengthened by the appearances of the infected:

Horrible and terrifying is the outlook of a patient: already the first glance convinces [the observer] of his inner sufferings. Here the choleric physiognomy is unerring, it leaves a deep impression on anyone who sees it and ensures it will be recognized in the future [...]. The person is cold, blue, icy, with bluish eyes turned upwards [...] cold, lengthened nose, black mouth, he moans in a subdued voice, and the screams which he gives out from time to time testify to the aches and pains of his cramped limbs¹².

This description, as others, helps us understand the feelings present during these relatively short periods of epidemics, when hundreds of city dwellers could be infected, among whom around half tended to die¹³. The feelings were so salient that they were incorporated into the diagnosis.

The practical conclusions from physicians’ research included avoiding standing water in the vicinity of the dwellings¹⁴, as well as humid soil (broader streets instead of narrow ones could provide an antidote to this). The existence of slums was also seen as a precondition for an epidemic. All of these reform proposals stemmed from the fact that the contagion theory was not developed yet, and attention focused on the physical form of the

¹¹ Ibidem, pp. 11, 54. Cf. also a similar diagnosis in the professional press: I. Lebel, *Uwagi nad naturą Cholery i jej leczeniem*, in: *Pamiętnik Lekarski Warszawski*, 1, 4 (1837), pp. 555–600.

¹² Kulesza, *Opisanie cholery azjatyckiej*, pp. 28–29.

¹³ Such general conclusions, supported by the statistics, were later given by: B. Dzierżawski, O. Hawelke, W. Janowski, J. Zawadzki, *Cholera, jej dawniejsze epidemije u nas, przyczyny, objawy, zapobieganie i leczenie*, (1892), p. 46.

¹⁴ Kulesza, *Opisanie cholery azjatyckiej*, p. 122.

city, its soil and the water flowing through it. The best solution appeared to be controlling the water and waste circulation in the city. Chadwick proposed building modern underground sewers and developing better water pipelines. The French, astonished by the fact that a disease associated with primitive Asian peoples came so easily to Paris in 1832, decided to pioneer the development of a sewer system, which was conceived as part of the famous restructuring of the city begun in the 1840s under Louis Phillippe¹⁵. The Parisians in the age of Haussmann also had to be convinced to take water from pipes instead of the river, which showed that old habits were hard to change¹⁶. Many such urban modernizing reforms came as a direct result of the fear of the epidemics, which recurred every decade or two.

Coming back to the Kingdom of Poland, in 1852 the worst outbreak of cholera in the 19th century gave more data to analyse the causes of the disease. The idea of water circulation was adopted as a dictate in the cities, although the urban sewer systems were still primitive. In Warsaw, the police had the task of rinsing the sewers to force the water to flow¹⁷, but a year later the first known proposal to build a modern sewer system was reported in the press¹⁸. In 1855, Galicia also saw a wave of cholera, and in 1862 a significant book by the hygienist Karol Gregorowicz was published in Warsaw¹⁹. The author claimed that many of the central plots in the city were insalubrious, which shocked public opinion and led to more sewer system proposals (most notably by Stanisław Markiewicz, physician and hygienist, who published his book in 1869²⁰), and finally to building the most modern sewers in this part of Europe (from 1879) by the Russian authorities headed by the merited Warsaw president Socrates Starynkevych.

Let us turn to Lviv now. The city was different from Warsaw in terms of its size, topography and also the role the river played in its history. The

¹⁵ Ruffié, Sournia, *Les épidémies*, p. 129. The building of the modern system began under Haussmann after 1852, cf. Hietala, *Services and Urbanization*, p. 190.

¹⁶ D. H. Pinkney, *Napoleon III and the Rebuilding of Paris*, (1972), p. 116.

¹⁷ *O środkach zaradczych w epidemii cholery w r. 1852 w Królestwie Polskiem przedsiębranych*, (1852), p. 15.

¹⁸ S. Ratyński, *O kanalizacji miast a w szczególności Warszawy*, in: *Biblioteka Warszawska*, 3 (1853), pp. 124–148.

¹⁹ K. Gregorowicz, *Warszawa pod względem topograficznym, higienicznym i geologicznym*, (1862).

²⁰ S. Markiewicz, *Kwestia kanalizacji miast*, (1869).

Pełtew river had never been of any commercial significance to the city; transit had to rely on roads, and later on railways²¹. It formed a part of the city fortification (as a moat) during the early modern period. The first important change came with the reforms undertaken by the new authorities after 1773, when the city fell into Austrian hands. The city walls were torn down, and the moat around the city filled in with the material drawn from the walls, thus allowing freer communication between the old core and the outer districts²². However, this also resulted in the river serving as a waste depositary for the inhabitants. Works around the river in that time had mainly aesthetic aims and consisted of regulating the flow of the river, which kept on flooding parts of the city after heavy rains, as in 1811²³, and building new bridges (there were three of them) across it in the newly created Wały Hetmańskie. This piece of urban planning played an important role for society, giving the inhabitants a pleasant public walk, and was an example of the beautification policy in the cities of that era. This public walk was further embellished by rows of poplars and chestnuts planted by the government official managing urban planning, Wilhelm Reitzenheim²⁴. That was part of a complex restructuring plan and building a new urban centre outside the Old Town conducted by the Austrian authorities, which was quite forward-looking at that time²⁵.

However, that work did not resolve all of the problems with the river. As early as 1817, a memoirist wrote about the river flowing along the remnants of the city walls and its unpleasant smell²⁶. But the beautification works continued under the new governor, archduke Ferdinand d'Este. The Pełtew river started to be covered, which served the aims of inter-city communication

²¹ S. Hoszowski, *Ekonomiczny rozwój Lwowa w latach 1772-1914*, (1935), pp. 26-27.

²² J. Białynia-Chołodecki, *Lwów w XIX stuleciu*, (1928), p. 9. Cf. also F. Jaworski, *Przewodnik po Lwowie i okolicy z Żółkwią i Podhorcami*, [1911], p. 87.

²³ Białynia-Chołodecki, *Lwów*.

²⁴ I. Chodyncki, *Historia stołecznego królestw Galicyi i Lodomeryi miasta Lwowa od założenia jego aż do czasów teraźniejszych*, (1829), pp. 444-445. Cf. also G. Petrišin, U. İvanocko, *Teritorial'ni zmini*, in: *Istoriâ L'vova. U tr'oh tomah*, 2, ed. by Ā. İsaëvič, M. Litvin, F. Steblj [Г. Петришин, У. Іваночко, *Територіальні зміни*, in: *Історія Львова. У трьох томах*, 2, ed. by Я. Ісаєвич, М. Литвин, Ф. Стеблій], (2007), p. 18.

²⁵ M. Prokopovych, *Habsburg Lemberg. Architecture, Public Space, and Politics in the Galician Capital, 1772-1914*, (2008), pp. 24-30.

²⁶ L. Grzymała Jabłonowski, *Złote czasy i wywczasy. Pamiętnik szlachcica z pierwszej połowy XIX stulecia*, (1920), pp. 17-19.

and representation. The partly executed *ring* around the city was formed by a sequence of squares, to which two new ones were included in the 1830s and 1840s. Gołuchowski Square (also called Gołuchowskich), named after a Polish-born Galician governor, was created on the north-western border of the *ring*, near the place of the former 'Lower Castle'. It served as a flanking square to a newly created Lviv theatre (sponsored by Stanisław Skarbek). In the middle of the central part of the Pełtew, a small square named after governor Ferdinand (Ferdinandsplatz) was broadened by covering part of the river²⁷. As cartographic sources confirm, both squares were ready by 1844²⁸. The Wały were later adorned with an old, renewed statue of a 17th-century local hero hetman, Stanisław Jabłonowski, in 1859²⁹. In 1862, Ferdinand Square was adorned with a statue of the Virgin Mary, and the name of the square gradually changed to Marian Square. The new area of imperial Lviv, created during pre-autonomous times, built up with houses and monuments (such as the seat of the Landed Credit Society in the 1820s), and changed this part of the city completely. Owing to the fact that the important Cracow district stretched to the west and southwest from the centre, the Wały Hetmańskie, which linked the Old Town with the new district, gained in importance as the main public space and a fashionable urban *corso*.

The river was still visible between these squares. Its smell and periodic flooding still made it a problematic element of the city. In 1865-1866, the city endured a new cholera outbreak. Although Jan Chądzyński, who wrote a booklet devoted to the issue, testified to the changed opinions concerning how the disease spread (by touch; that is, contagion theory), he stressed once again the importance of keeping the urban space clean³⁰. A few years later in 1872, a huge flood occurred in the centre³¹, as well as another out-

²⁷ [A. Schneider], *Przewodnik po mieście Lwowie. Wydany staraniem komitetu zawiązanego na przyjęcie gości z Wielkopolski, Prus, Szlązka i Krakowa, przybyłych na Zjazd do Lwowa dnia 13-o Sierpnia*, (1871), p. 24.

²⁸ M. Sepiał, *Rozwój miasta Lwowa w XIX wieku*, in: *Architektura Lwowa XIX wieku*, ed. by J. Purchla, (1997), p. 16.

²⁹ [Schneider], *Przewodnik*, p. 23.

³⁰ J. Chądzyński, *Cholera w roku 1865*, (1865), pp. 23, 32.

³¹ P. Grankin, *Kanalizaciâ mista L'vova (vid počatku XV st. do 1939 p.)* [П. Гранкін, *Каналізація міста Львова (від початку XV ст. до 1939 р.)*], (2015), p. 52.

break of cholera³², which finally forced the new autonomous Municipal Council to get rid of the river, which increasingly changed into an open public sewer. Here, demographic growth was an important factor, as the city grew from a population of nearly 40,000 in 1795 to more than 68,000 in 1850, up to almost 100,000 in the 1870s³³. But the crisis of the following year (1873) precluded the execution of that plan.

Here, scientific discourse played a role. Urban physicians began criticising the river in the 1870s, chief among them Ludwik Radwański, who made a proposal for a modern sewer system, after a study visit in the west, in 1879³⁴. That resulted in 1881 in inviting the Polytechnic Society in Lviv to prepare a report regarding the city's sanitary conditions. The Society appointed a commission with nine of its members under Wincenty Górecki to carry out the necessary research. The report was written in 1883. Its conclusions were later summarized as follows: "Pełtew is in fact the main collective canal into which almost all waste from houses and streets is guided. In this respect, it is dangerous to the health of the inhabitants [...], because it has a small inflow of water, and with its permeable bottom and banks, it constantly infects the soil, water and air"³⁵. The report was given to the authorities in October 1884³⁶. One of the conclusions was the proposal to cover the river and to restrict it with concrete instead of bricks and stones used earlier³⁷. Work on Akademicka street, to the south of Wały, began in 1886³⁸. The press reported on the entrepreneur who conducted the works, a bridge constructor who was also a member of the aforementioned commission, called Waclaw Ibiański³⁹. In September 1888, the press reported on the works in the central part of Wały and under Gołuchowski Square (the

³² A. Pawlikowski, *O stosunkach zdrowotnych w mieście Lwowie. Sprawozdanie za rok 1888*, (1891), p. 7.

³³ K. Wnęk, L. A. Zyblikiewicz, E. Callahan, *Ludność nowoczesnego Lwowa w latach 1857-1938*, (2006), pp. 31-33.

³⁴ Grankin, *Kanalizaciâ* [Гранкін, Каналізація], p. 56.

³⁵ Pawlikowski, *O stosunkach*, pp. 9-10.

³⁶ J. Wiczkowski, *Lwów jego rozwój i stan kulturalny oraz przewodnik po mieście*, (1907), p. 56.

³⁷ Grankin, *Kanalizaciâ* [Гранкін, Каналізація], pp. 54-55.

³⁸ *Kurjer Lwowski*, 210 (31 July 1886), p. 6. For some more details cf. *Koryto Pełtwi*, in: *Czasopismo Techniczne*, 6 (June 20th 1886), p. 104.

³⁹ *Kurjer Lwowski*, 162 (13 June 1886), p. 5.

canal under the square had to be strengthened with concrete rings)⁴⁰. The works were completed in October that year⁴¹. Now there was no more smell in the centre, although the river remained open outside it, to the north of Gołuchowski Square and to the south of Akademicki Square, at the end of the street of that name. The process of covering the river continued until the war in 1914⁴².

Works on the sewer system accompanied covering the river. The sewers in Lviv were mainly outdated and had to be replaced. The old system contained 14 km of canals in 1882, among which more than 12 km were inappropriately built, due to an ineffective section with a flat, often permeable bottom, and too small a slope⁴³. Modern concrete canals were added; in 1888 there were already 4.5 km of such canals, and by 1895, 20 more kilometres had been added to the system⁴⁴. Covering the river was described as part of this modernization of the sewer system⁴⁵. Pełtew became part of it, as the largest artery gathering 'tributaries' from all over the city. There were doubts about the unhealthy fumes from the water, which could enter houses via the canals (as was also the case in Warsaw), but the whole investment coincided with a revolutionary discovery of the cholera virus by Robert Koch in 1882. In an influential report written in 1888 but only published in 1891, urban engineer Antoni Pawlikowski rejected that possibility outright, claiming that recent research explained that bacteria were not able to penetrate into houses through the air⁴⁶.

Pawlikowski's book testified to the persistence of the previously mainstream manner of thinking about the causes of epidemics. The city was evaluated by its geological conditions⁴⁷, and especially the height (the

⁴⁰ *Kurjer Lwowski*, 128, (7 September 1888), p. 5.

⁴¹ *Kurjer Lwowski*, 300 (28 October 1888), pp. 2–3.

⁴² We can point to the proposal to cover the South-Eastern part of the river called *Na Rurach* in 1886: *Kurjer Lwowski*, 157 (8 June 1886), p. 2, and proposals to continue covering the river outside the centre, given as late as in 1914: *Kurjer Lwowski*, 85 (6 March 1914), p. 2.

⁴³ Pawlikowski, *O stosunkach*, p. 69.

⁴⁴ Grankin, *Kanalizaciâ* [Гранкін, Каналізація].

⁴⁵ Hoszowski, *Ekonomiczny*, p. 101.

⁴⁶ Pawlikowski, *O stosunkach*, p. 10.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 13–14.

higher an area, the better it could resist the disease⁴⁸) and the humidity of the soil (which stemmed from the level of the ground water). The theory of miasmas infecting the ground and the air was still deemed valid⁴⁹, so also the river mud was considered very dangerous, which was caused by the practice of getting rid of biological waste by simply throwing it in to the river⁵⁰. All of these conclusions were supported by statistical data concerning diseases, especially cholera, typhoid fever and dysentery. The condition of the sewers was very uneven, as mentioned above. The topography also had its drawbacks: waste produced on the hills, as well as sand and mud, frequently flooded the lower part of the city during heavy rains, and penetrated the soil⁵¹. This made the problem hard to solve, and a modern sewer system was finally built in the city only a few years before the war.

Nevertheless, the efforts to improve the sanitary conditions in the city were seen as a major urban achievement of that time. A book published in 1896 entitled *Miasto Lwów w okresie samorządu* celebrating 25 years of autonomous government, was a testimony to the urban pride. The improvements to the urban sanitary conditions was presented among the most important achievements:

Those who strolled through *Wały Hetmańskie* in 1870, cursing the unpleasant fumes from the Pełtew river, wouldn't recognize today this part of the city, probably the most beautiful in Lviv. The Pełtew has disappeared under beautiful greeneries, [and] the nearby streets have been paved [...]⁵².

This discourse was strongly against the river and the threat it posed. Memoirs concerning Pełtew confirm that the river could not be seen in

⁴⁸ Cf. an article in the Lviv press about the cholera outbreak in Lyons, where the upper part of the city was better situated to defend itself against the epidemic. After improvements done in the sewer system, the death toll from subsequent cholera outbreaks fell notably: *Asanacja miast*, in: *Kurjer Lwowski*, (2 September 1892), no p.

⁴⁹ Pawlikowski, *O stosunkach*, pp. 20–21, 38–39. It can be added, that a 3-D model of the city was created on the occasion of the hygienic exhibition in the city in 1888, by an engineer Jan Januszewski. The model clearly showed the geological layers (in a section) and topography of the city, thus helping to shape the hygienic urban imagery, cf. *Kurjer Lwowski*, (29 July 1888), no p.

⁵⁰ Pawlikowski, *O stosunkach*, pp. 75–77.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

⁵² *Miasto Lwów w okresie autonomii 1870–1895*, (1896), p. 180.

a positive light⁵³, but the scientific discourse itself had its own impact on people's minds, as can be seen in the memoirs about these parts, which were still open at the turn of the 20th century. Here, the river was still seen as unattractive and unhealthy, or likened to a small tributary of a real river⁵⁴.

The end of the 19th century brought a change of tone. In the 1890s, discussions about moving the underground current of Pełtew near Gołuchowski Square to allow a new theatre to be built at the end of the axis of Wały Hetmańskie, proved that the river was still considered a problem. But later on, in October 1903, when new works started on building a new statue in commemoration of the poet Adam Mickiewicz near Marian Square, other opinions came to the fore. It proved impossible to lay the foundations, as the workers discovered that the planned site was located just above the river's current, flowing below street level. This resulted in changing the location of the Virgin Mary statue, which was moved nearer to the main axis of the Wały, and planning a new site for Mickiewicz⁵⁵. It transpired that an investigation was necessary to discover where exactly the river flowed. A month later, a journalist made a more general remark about Pełtew, which led to some nostalgia. The river, about whose existence everyone apparently wanted to forget, was in the words of the author destined to reappear from time to time. The article was summarized with the words:

The small river that used to roll its turbid waters along the most important streets of Lviv, has disappeared under ground level, and soon its own legend shall be created; people will ask astonishingly, is it true, what say the old textbooks of geography, that Lviv is located over the Pełtew river and shouldn't there be a good reason to form a new geographic concept, that «Pełtew runs under Lviv»?⁵⁶

⁵³ Cf. the description from 1879/1880 in Ossolineum, Zbiór rękopisów, sygn. 12914/I: J. Maszkowski, *Wspomnienia z lat 1875-1944*, p. 2. Another memoirist stated that a city such as Lviv could not be enumerated among the most beautiful in 1860, because of the virtual lack of a (large) river: Biblioteka Narodowa, Zbiory specjalne (further: BN Zs), sygn. akc. 17621: *Przypomnienia o Jazowsku spisane dla kochanych siostrzeńców i siostrzenic przez Franciszka Wyszkowskiego w roku 1860-tym*, p. 237.

⁵⁴ BN Zs, sygn. 10189 IV: W. Ryszkowski, *Wspomnienia*, p. 367. Cf. also a similar approach in 1905: BN Zs, sygn. akc. 9498: A. Ziemięcki, *Moja przyjaźń z geografią*, p. 157.

⁵⁵ *Kurjer Lwowski*, 278 (7 October 1903), p. 5.

⁵⁶ *Kurjer Lwowski*, 310 (8 November 1903), p. 2.

A few years later, another press article reminded the public about the river which ran through the centre. Commenting on an article about old Lviv, which was published in Vienna by Józef Strzygowski, the author cited a remark that if Lviv had had a broad, uncovered river, it could be one of the most beautiful cities⁵⁷. That opinion proved to be influential and enduring. Interestingly, we can find this in the memoirs of Lviv's inhabitants years later. Adam Mitscha, who wrote after 1945 about the *fin-de-siècle* city, still remembered many sites outside the Wały, where the river was still visible. And instead of making allusions to the unpleasant features of the river, he made the comment that the city really lacked a river, and if it had had one, it would be the most beautiful city in the world⁵⁸. Other inconveniences were also combined with this issue. A famous travelling writer (*krajoznawca*) and author of many city guides, Mieczysław Orłowicz, wrote in his memoirs that the city lacked places for recreation, especially to swim and bathe. Numerous of Lviv's ponds, such as the Staw Pełczyński, which were in the 19th century considered as possible additional reservoirs for a future sewer system, later disappeared. For example, the Staw Pełczyński was later transformed into a smaller ice rink. That lack of open water was a visible drawback for him⁵⁹ in the age of mass sport and public recreation.

In addition, scientific discourse related to the cholera outbreaks changed over these years. As a book written to help prevent the next contagion in the early 1890s has shown, the urban aspect was less important. Robert Koch's experiments helped to finally exclude the air and clean water as the cause of the disease. Now, prevention included more human-related actions, such as quarantines and *cordons sanitaires*, to prevent contact between people. Now the social aspect, such as the fight against poverty, was more crucial than the issue of the soil (though the Pettenkofer theory had still not been fully abandoned by that time). The conclusion was also reached that the sewer system must be complete, i.e. the canals should come directly into the buildings⁶⁰. This does not mean that the covering of the Pełtew river was deemed unnecessary at that time, but the disease had been tamed, and people were slightly more familiar with the issue, so we can ask that if the

⁵⁷ *Kurjer Lwowski*, 287 (23 June 1910), p. 2.

⁵⁸ BN Zs, sygn. akc. 8900/2: A. Mitscha, *Wspomnienia*, 1: 1892-1914, p. 255.

⁵⁹ BN Zs, 12519/1: M. Orłowicz, *Wspomnienia*, 1, p. 346.

⁶⁰ Dzierżawski, Hawelke, Janowski, Zawadzki, *Cholera*, pp. 32, 36, 59-60.

river had still been open in the 1890s, would it have been covered, or if any other method of clearing it would have been utilized, such as the idea of broadening it by side-basins along its flow, which was also proposed?

CONCLUSIONS

The lack of a large river posed significant urban problems. It was more difficult to provide the city with urban infrastructure. Creating new greeneries was deemed more difficult than in other cities⁶¹, as well as building a sufficient sewer system. As Pawlikowski concluded:

Water insufficiency is apparent in daily life, all the more if one notices that Lviv has no river which could serve for bathing, washing clothes, cleaning the streets and the canals, not counting the commercial and industrial needs. In addition, during a longer period of drought, when there is not enough water in the pipes and wells, there is no chance to use it for firefighting, cleaning streets, and there is a severe lack of water during the frequent and ravaging outbreaks of dysentery, cholera and typhoid fever⁶².

This explains how water was important in the everyday life of a city. We can add that a sewer system without a large river was also a much more costly investment.

But a sewer system was indispensable at that time, and the development of the sewers must be seen as a broader trend of improving urban living conditions, which made the rapidly expanding cities more comfortable, at least for the middle and upper classes, thus allowing more people to migrate to the city. It also resulted from the overall modernization of the Austrian state initiated under the neo-absolutist regime after 1848⁶³, and the subsequent economic development, especially during the *Gründerzeit* period of the 1860s and 1870s. The development of other large Austrian cities also included infrastructure and considerations of urban public health, which

⁶¹ *Kurjer Lwowski*, 59 (27 February 1886), p. 2.

⁶² Pawlikowski, *O stosunkach*, pp. 41–42.

⁶³ J. Deàk, *Forging a multinational state: state making in imperial Austria from the Enlightenment to the First World War*, (2016), p. 103.

later led to city authorities embracing social issues (which was called *Kommunalsozialismus*)⁶⁴. This change in social sensitivity, however, lies beyond the scope of this article.

Opinions and feelings relating to the river, and water in general, stemmed not only from human experiences but also from urban discourse, from the press, public announcements and books. Fear of epidemics, the physical urban conditions, and standing water (as we can see in the opening citation) was a reaction to the unknown and uncertain, and the authors of scientific discourse made use of it. The changing proposals they made also illustrated the uncertainties of the era, such as looking for solutions to the sanitary problems and epidemics. Covering the river was the result of these fears and this discourse. When the theory related to preventing epidemics slowly changed, a new discourse of nostalgia for the river could replace it, although in fact both discourses were mixed until 1914. And when after 1945 the Poles wrote about the lost river, it can be also understood as nostalgia for the lost city.

Peltew was too small a river to survive in a large, crowded city, which was promoted to regional capital in 1773, and grew to more than 200,000 inhabitants before the First World War. Its history tells us much about the way a city was viewed at that time by hygienists: as an entity of the soil beneath it, water within it and air above it⁶⁵. The actions taken by city officials, engineers and physicians had their impact on the inhabitants not only in terms of their health, but also their feelings, leading to the creation of 'river nostalgia'. If we read the memoirs from the city's residents, we can also find examples of 'river compensation'. As the writer Józef Wittlin has pointed out, making an allusion to a widespread knowledge of the fact that Lviv was (and is) located on a major watershed in this part of Europe: "Lviv lies at the same time on the Baltic and Black Seas, so does it need a river?"⁶⁶.

Corrected by Christopher James

⁶⁴ G. Melinz, S. Zimmermann, *Die aktive Stadt. Kommunale Politik zur Gestaltung städtischer Lebensbedingungen in Budapest, Prag und Wien (1867–1918)*, in: *Wien Prag Budapest: Blütezeit der Habsburgermetropolen. Urbanisierung, Kommunalpolitik, gesellschaftliche Konflikte (1867–1918)*, ed. by eidem, (1996), pp. 142–152. Cf. also Hoszowski, *Ekonomiczny*, p. 100; Ł. T. Sroka, *Rada Miejska we Lwowie w okresie autonomii galicyjskiej 1870–1914. Studium o elicie władzy*, (2012), p. 141.

⁶⁵ For more details, see: A. Łupienko, *Some remarks on the birth of modern city planning in the Polish territories (1850–1914): the impact of the hygienic movement*, in: *Mesto a Dejiny*, 2 (2016), pp. 18–34.

⁶⁶ J. Wittlin, *Mój Lwów*, (1991), p. 41.

RZEKA, HIGIENA PUBLICZNA I EMOCJE W MIEŚCIE

PRZYPADEK PEŁTWI WE LWOWIE PRZED 1914 ROKIEM

STRESZCZENIE

W artykule omówiony został proces „pozbywania się” rzeki przez władarzy Lwowa od końca XVIII do końca XIX wieku. We wstępie naszkicowany został wpływ epidemii chorób (głównie cholery) na rozwój urbanistyczny miasta oraz kwestie higieny publicznej. Dalsza część artykułu poświęcona została reakcjom na brak rzeki w centrum miasta, kiedy to uczucia strachu przed brudną wodą powoli ustępowały, a pojawiła się nostalgia za utraconą rzeką.

FLUSS, ÖFFENTLICHE HYGIENE UND EMOTIONEN IN DER STADT

DER FALL POLTWA IN LEMBERG VOR 1914

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Artikel beschreibt den Prozess der „Beseitigung” des Flusses durch die Behörden von Lemberg vom späten 18. bis zum Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts. In der Einführung wurde der Einfluss der Krankheitsepidemien (hauptsächlich Cholera) auf die Stadtentwicklung und Fragen zur öffentlichen Hygiene skizziert. Weiter stehen im Beitrag die Reaktionen auf das Fehlen des Flusses in der Innenstadt im Mittelpunkt, als die Angst vor schmutzigem Wasser langsam nachließ und die Nostalgie nach dem verlorenen Fluss auftauchte.

Übersetzt von Renata Skowrońska

RIVERS, PUBLIC HYGIENE AND URBAN FEELINGS

THE CASE OF THE PEŁTEW RIVER IN LVIV BEFORE 1914

SUMMARY

The article discusses the process of „getting rid of” the river by the authorities of Lviv from the end of the 18th c. to the end of the 19th c. The introduction presents the impact of the disease outbreaks (mainly cholera) on the urban development of the city and the issue of public hygiene. The further part of the article is dedicated to the reactions to the lack of the river in the city centre, when the feelings of fear of dirty water were slowly replaced by nostalgia for the lost river.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE / SCHLAGWORTE / KEYWORDS

- historia XIX wieku; rozwój miast; rzeki; Galicja; Lwów
- Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts; städtische Entwicklung; Flüsse; Galicien; Lemberg
- 19th-century history; urban development; rivers; Galicia; Lviv

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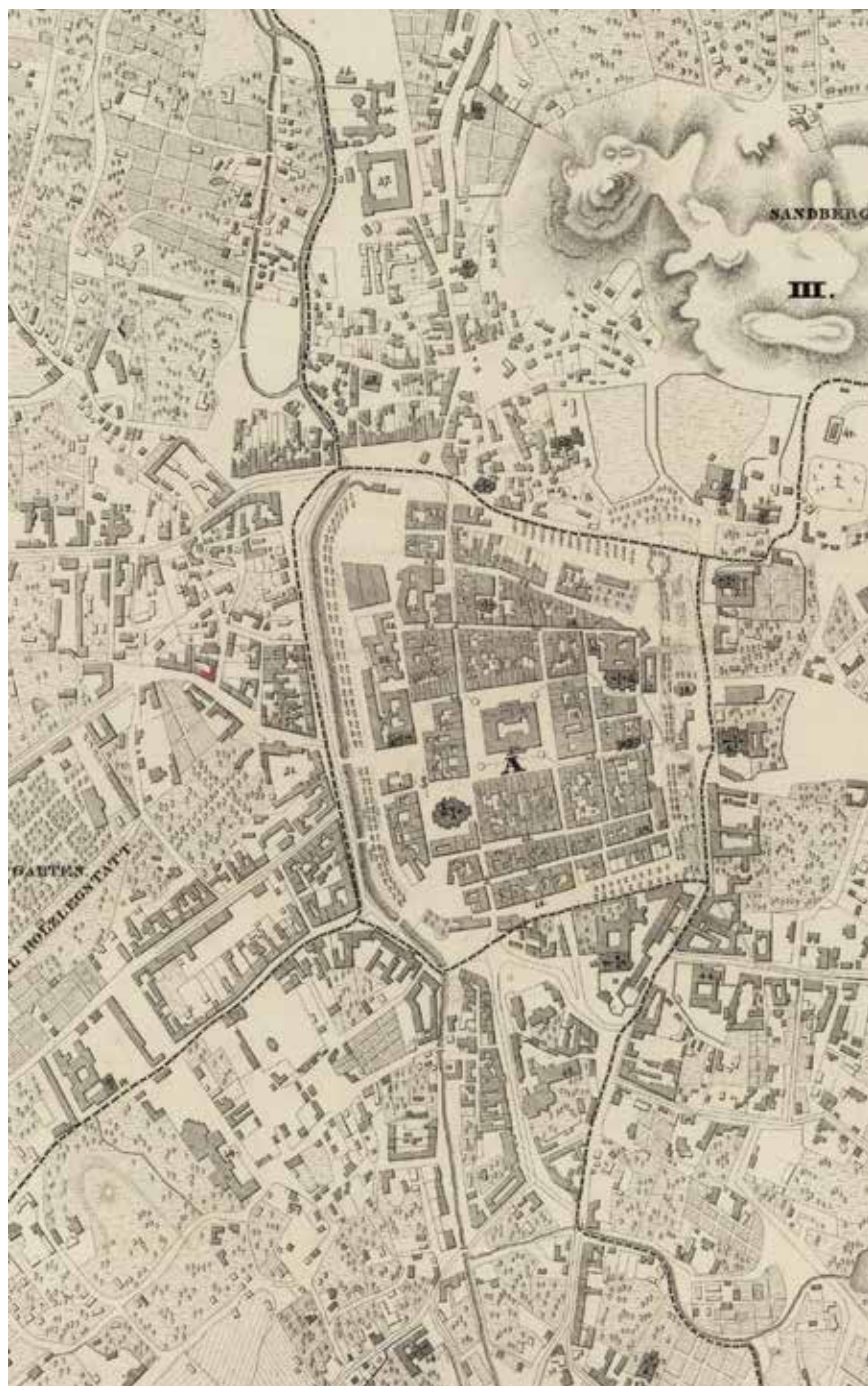
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1. *Plan der Stadt Lemberg samt uhrer Vorst[ae]ten*, fragment (ca. 1844). The Peltev river is still visible as it flows across the centre, interrupted only by a few bridges. Source: Polona



2. Plan kr. stoł. m. Lwowa: z uwzględnieniem nowych nazw ulic i placów, fragment (1871). New squares created over the covered river bed are visible: Plac Gołuchowski, Plac Maryacki. Source: Polona



3. Plan królewskiego stołecznego miasta Lwowa, fragment (1890). The Pełtew river is already covered in the centre. Its open bed is visible to the North from Plac Zbożowy, and to the South from Plac Akademicki. Source: Polona