

Halina Szulc^{*}CHANGES IN RURAL SETTLEMENT IN WROCLAW'S SUBURBAN ZONE
SINCE THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY

The administrative boundaries of a town do not coincide with its geographical boundaries. A wide zone of influence, exerted by a town upon its hinterland, called the suburban zone, exceeds the administrative boundaries. It may happen, though these are sporadic cases, that settlements which have just been unaltered with a town retain temporarily their rural character and that the method of construction, the functions, the socio-economic structure of the population, and land use are more typical of a village than of a town. It is, therefore, worth while investigating the whole area of the town, outside its administrative boundaries, as if in the anticipation of a future growth; the extent of the breakage down of the investigated phenomena will demarcate the geographical boundary of the town.

The investigation of the suburban zone should also cover a longer period, as only thus the genesis and changes within the separate districts of the town, which were for a certain time its suburban settlements, will be identified and explained.

The area of Wrocław's suburban zone was almost the identical in the early 19th century as in Wrocław within its present administrative boundaries. The subject of research is, therefore, to identify changes that have taken place in the area of the villages which today make districts of Greater Wrocław, as well as to observe how the boundary, separating the town from its suburban zone, has been shifted¹.

The turning point in the spatial development of Silesian towns took place in the early 19th century. This is not accidental as causes which have contributed to this have been many. For example, the reform of the municipal system of 1810, which abolished former privileges of towns; the secularization of church estates; the abolition of church jurisdiction around the old towns and seizure of control by the municipal authorities. Industrialization of towns and their suburban zones followed gradually, and its peak fell on the second half of the 19th century.

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Processes occurring intowns were accompanied by important changes in the countryside. Particularly strong changes can then be observed in the suburban settlements. Early in the 19th century the villein service was abolished and the regulation of grounds brought about changes in the pattern of fields and strips, as well as in the system of roads.

The early 19th century was a turning point also in the spatial development of Wrocław, as it brought about spatial and functional transformations of its suburban settlements. On Napoleon's order, who did not want Wrocław to remain a stronghold and be able to defend itself, fortifications were demolished in 1810. The external moats were filled up, and only the principal ones were left intact. A green belt of avenues was planted in the area of the demolished fortifications, and the city, no longer cramped by the ring of fortifications, could freely expand.

From the topographical viewpoint Wrocław is a bridge town which developed at a convenient place where the river Odra, flowing in various old beds and around some islands, could be crossed/Fig.1/. Medieval Wrocław arose on a site where the Odra river bed considerably approached the left bank edge of the terrace. The Old Town is situated in the valley, on a terrace not subject to floods. The town was built on a levelled surface about 120 m above sea level. The southern parts of Wrocław /Oporów and Klecina/ are the highest, as they are situated at about 137 m above sea level. The area slopes gently to the south-west to about 110 m above sea level in the vicinity of Pracze Odrzańskie.

The topographical situation of the separate districts is quite characteristic in Wrocław. The two basic topographical elements in its area are: the Odra's wide preglacial valley and its edges in the form of diluvial plateaus. In this section the Odra valley is approximately from 5 to 7 km wide, and the left-bank part of the valley is much narrower than the right-bank one. Because of the flatness of the area the Odra has meandered frequently and has often changed its bed. Abandoned channels and former meanders, filled up with water, can be seen on the topographical maps of the early 19th century.

Settlements situated in the Odra valley, outside the Old Town, were small and widely scattered in the early 19th century. Farms specialized mainly in live-stock breeding. It is a characteristic feature that the earliest prehistoric settlement was probably developed not in the Odra valley, but on a higher ground, not subject to floods. The flat and marshy Odra valley, exposed to frequent floods, did not favour settlement. Numerous villages in this area, which at present are city districts, were protected against floods by dikes and earth-work.

Bigger settlements surrounding Wrocław developed on a diluvial edge, rising gently over the flat, flooded bed of the Odra valley. A characteristic sequence of settlements, situated along the diluvial edge, developed on the left bank of the Odra. This plateau is intersected by the valleys of the rivers Ślęza

and Bystrzyca. The country, stretching along the winding streams of these rivers, the narrow valleys which made it possible for the villages to be built not only on the edge but also on the river bank, was particularly suitable for settlement.

Wrocław is situated in the border zone between two regions: the fertile land in the south with its black soil, and the sandy-forest area on the right bank of the Odra. In the Odra valley soils are not fertile sands, gravels, clay and river muds dominate. The thickness of muddy clay varies there, but seldom attains 2 m.

In the early 19th century the area of fertile black soils was covered by large peasant villages, situated to the south of the Old Town. On the right bank of the Odra large peasant villages developed on the ground which was no more subject to floods, in some more elevated places, outside the river valley.

Similarly, the hydrography and morphology of the region are interconnected by the system of roads. The ancient route, known as "The High Track", running from the west through Wrocław and on the diluvial edge, avoided the Odra valley. It was not accidental that several roads from the far south met in Wrocław, while only one highway led northwards; it bifurcated solely in the vicinity of the village of Psary, having crossed a difficult area of the wide Odra valley.

The most characteristic feature of the early 19th century suburban area of Wrocław is a number of vegetable-growing villages (Fig. 2). Those villages of free market-gardeners were founded as early as in the 13th century, i.e. at the same period as Wrocław. Their position in relation to Wrocław is very typical. They were situated along the roads that led to the city. They were shaped more or less as street villages, with a site densely built up and narrow strips of fields, extending the holdings. Those narrow strips, the width never exceeded 10 m, are typical of the intensive manual cultivation of vegetables, herbs and dyes. The spatial layout of vegetable-growing villages differs greatly from that of agricultural villages, inhabited by peasants.

Vegetable-growing villages are characterized by a dense population. At the end of the 19th century the population density was there over 400 people per sq. km, which is more typical of a town than of a village; the population density of the Silesian villages averaged from 30 to 50 people per sq. km.

Similar suburban vegetable-growing villages developed also around other Polish towns, like Legnica, Brzeg, Nysa, Ząbkowice, Głogówek, or Cracow, Poznań and Warsaw, in the same way as around Vienna, Nürnberg and other medieval towns. Market-gardeners usually settled around big cities, which are absorptive markets for vegetable, herbs and industrial plants. Vegetables, as an easily rotting product, can hardly be transported over long distances, and therefore have to be cultivated near the town.

Other types of villages can also be found in the early 19th century suburban zone of Wrocław. Typical are villages inhabited by raftsmen and fishermen. However, their investigation is difficult because they have been absorbed into and transformed by the city. They were situated along the Odra and its tributaries, like the villages of Szczytniki, Czepiny, Rybaki, Nowe Szczytniki. Some interesting fishermen's villages are also in Opole and Brzeg./Fig.3/.

Fishermen's villages, which had no fields and only a row of dwelling houses with fronts overlooking the river, were situated vertically to the river, on its meanders, like Rakowiec /now Rakowiecka street/ or Bierdzany /now Bierdzanska street/.

Villages with specialized functions like: weaving, pottery, shoemaking, etc. made certain characteristic types of suburban villages. A feature in common was a big density of population and its socio-professional structure.

The genesis of the types of suburban villages which I have presented has its roots in the period of location. They were functionally associated with the town and constituted its natural economic hinterland. For a long time they fulfilled different functions, which have left its mark upon the spatial layout of those villages. Villages lying far from the town were not inhabited by crofters but by peasants, or were manorial villages. An example of a former peasant village, with a greenfield layout, an evidence of the three-field rotation, and with a street-green site, is the village of Oporów /Fig.4/, which to-day is a residential district of Wrocław, with typical, detached and semi-detached, houses.

An example of a former manorial village of the early 19th century is the village of Krzyki /Fig.5/. To-day, it is also a residential district of Wrocław.

The area called "Big Market Gardening", which had developed over the area of the former villages of Gajowice, Nowa Wieś, Glinianki, Gaj and Huby, was incorporated into the city in 1868. The mid-19th century boundary of the Wrocław suburban zone was shifted southwards, to the agricultural area, which took over market gardening. The vegetable-growing zone was moved further south to the area of the villages of Grabiszyn, Krzyki, Borek and Tarnogaj.

The expansion of the city, though slow, proceeded also in the north and east directions. At that time, urban development affected also the former rafters' and fishermen's villages, situated in the Odra valley. The Old Town became the city core, and this historical part is still a dominant feature in the city's landscape.

Wrocław has developed spontaneously by forming separate settlements-islands, and not according to plan. Thus, the districts of Sępólno and Biskupin, though schematically planned, evolved from their former form of small manors situated in the Odra valley. In the 1920's and 1930's Sępólno was absorbed by Wrocław and plans for its development were then made.

Now, this settlement is a closed urban unit and its two-storey buildings, with a small number of dwellings, are dispersed among green spaces.

Intensive urbanization processes, taking place to the south of the city core, have effaced all the traces of former suburban villages, which can be found to-day only in the names of streets or settlements, or in a characteristic pattern of the streets, e.g. Gajowicka /now Adam Próchnik's/, Gliniana. Rural construction has been replaced by compact urban construction, winding streets have been straightened, and squares have acquired geometrical forms. The squares of Powstańców Śląskich, Hirschfelda and Jakuba Szeli have been built into the patchwork of such straight streets as Powstańców Warszawy, Sudecka and Krucza /fig.6./.

During World War II this district was destroyed, and on its ashes a modern residential district has been built. The pattern of streets, running from the city core southwards, coincides with the network of the former village roads.

Just before the outbreak of World War II Wrocław's population amounted to 629 thousand people, living in an area of 17.5 sq.km. During hostilities, and in particular during the three-month siege, the city was destroyed in 68 %. The southern and western part were totally destroyed, the central part in 50 % and the eastern and northern parts as well as the peripheries in 10 - 30 %.

The present area of Wrocław is 22.5 sq. km and its inhabitants amount to 584 thousands. The city's area, within its present administrative boundaries, resembles very much a trapezium with sides elongated in the north-west and north-east directions. The distance between the Market Place and Leśnica is about 30 km, as the crow flies, and from the Market Place to Psie Pole it amounts to about 20 km. This shape of the administrative area is caused by the fact that two satellite towns /Leśnica and Psie Pole/ were incorporated in the interwar period /Fig.7²/.

The spatial structure of the town has greatly been influenced by the land relief. Wrocław, which arose as a bridge town, has not turned away from the river in the course of centuries. The Odra in Wrocław, in a similar way as the Seine in Paris, is beautifully interwoven with the city structure. The cradle of the city, i.e. the island called Ostrów Tumski, on which the former castle and borough were situated, has now become a church district. Numerous state buildings, i.e. the University, built on the site of the former Ducal Castle, the State Archives, etc. overlook the river. A belt of green has been planted along the river banks, new avenues and residential districts have been built. Former forests have been transformed into parks: Szczytnicki, Południowy and Zachodni.

From the mid-19th century onwards the "inhospitable" Odra valley has been utilized for settlement, and a number of typical residential districts have been constructed /Sepolno, Biskupin, Zacisze, Zalesie, etc./.

Northwards, outside the Odra valley, the city has always developed very slowly. Even now the northern administrative boundary is close to the Old Town, and settlements northwards of the Market Place, like Poświętne, Sołtysowice, Zakrzów, have preserved their semi-rural character.

The main direction of expansion has always been southwards, in the direction of the elevated area, with fertile soils, on which the "Big Market Gardening" has been practised since the early 19th century.

The direct hinterland of the city is also a bare plain utilized for market gardening, agriculture and livestock breeding.

Cereals are cultivated in a less fertile area, extending to the north, west and east. Because of the threat of flooding by the Odra and its tributaries the remaining area is under meadows and pastures; livestock breeding is developed there.

Market gardening and fruit cultivation is concentrated in the southern area. In the direct vicinity, i.e. in the districts of Wojszyce, Oltaszyn and Brochów, vegetable growing is in its residual form as allotment or house gardens. Larger areas, formerly under market gardening, have been - so to say - pushed further south. Food is therefore supplied in bulk from the area situated far from the direct hinterland. The suburban zone within its present administrative boundaries includes such villages as Trzebnica, Olesnica, Ofawa, Strzelin, Sobotka, Kąty Wrocławskie, Środa Śląska, Brzeg Dolny, Oborniki situated at distances from 30 to 40 km. They form a ring, the radius of which is almost everywhere at an equal distance from the city's centre.

Literature:

1. The historical aspect of the suburban zone is discussed in my papers:
Wsie warzywnicze pod Wrocławiem w pierwszej połowie XIX wieku /Sum.: Vegetable growers' villages in the vicinity of Wrocław in the first half of the 19th c./, *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, 5/1957/, 3-4, pp. 563-714.
Zabrze /Sum.: Zabrze/, *Czasopismo Geograficzne*, 30/1959/, pp. 179-194.
Osiedla podwrocławskie na początku XIX w. /Sum.: Suburban settlements in the vicinity of Wrocław at the beginning of 19th c./, Wrocław 1963.
Village Relic Features within the Special Layouts of Some Polish Towns, *Geographia Polonica*, 24/1972/, pp. 241-254.
2. K. Małeczyński, M. Morełowski, A. Ptaszycka, Wrocław, rozwój urbanistyczny /Urban development of Wrocław/, Warszawa 1956.

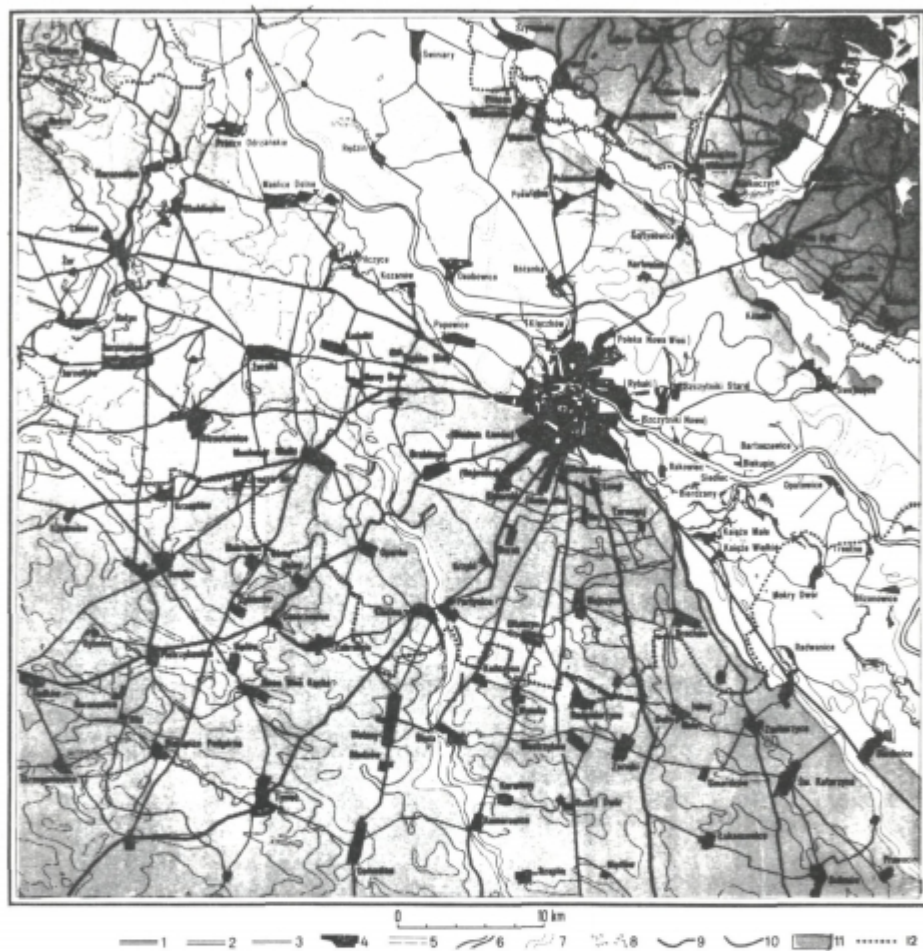


Fig. 1 Network of roads and settlements against the background of morphology in the beginning of the 19th century
 1 - 1st class roads; 2 - 2nd class roads; 3 - field roads; 4 - village buildings;
 5 - levels; 6 - present river courses; 7 - former river courses; 8 - dunes;
 9 - edge of the terrace; 10 - edge of the plateau; 11 - plateau; 12 - present boundaries of the town. White spots on the map represent a valley.



Fig. 2 Old vegetable-growing villages at the beginning of the 19th century.

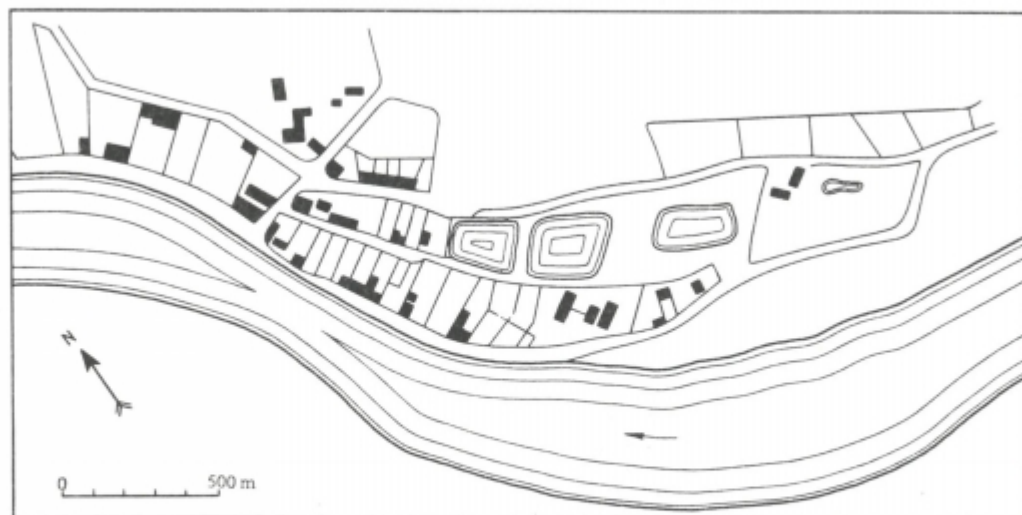


Fig. 3 Fishing village of Nowe Szczytniki in the vicinity of Wrocław at the beginning of the 19th century. Compact street village situated along the river, without fields.

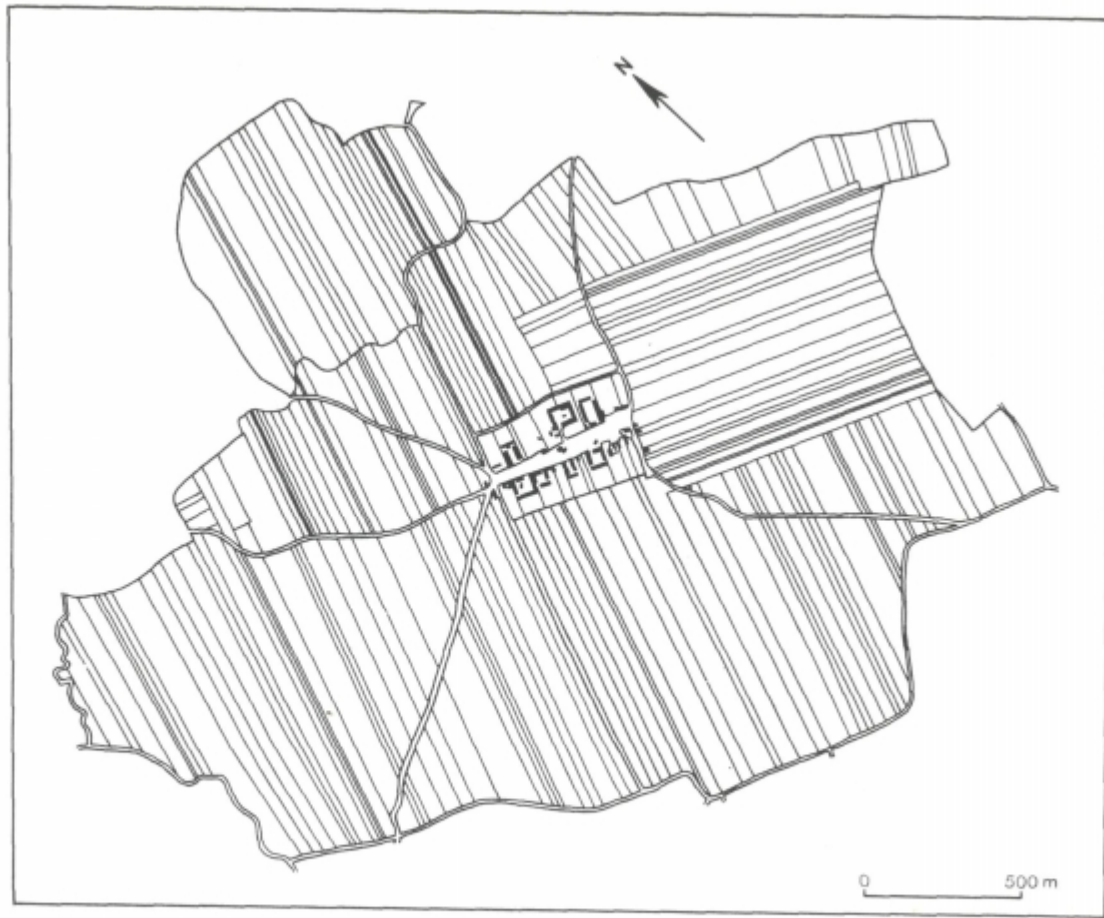


Fig. 4 Peasant village of Oporów in the vicinity of Wrocław at the beginning of the 19th century. At present, a district of Wrocław. Typical green village with open-fields.

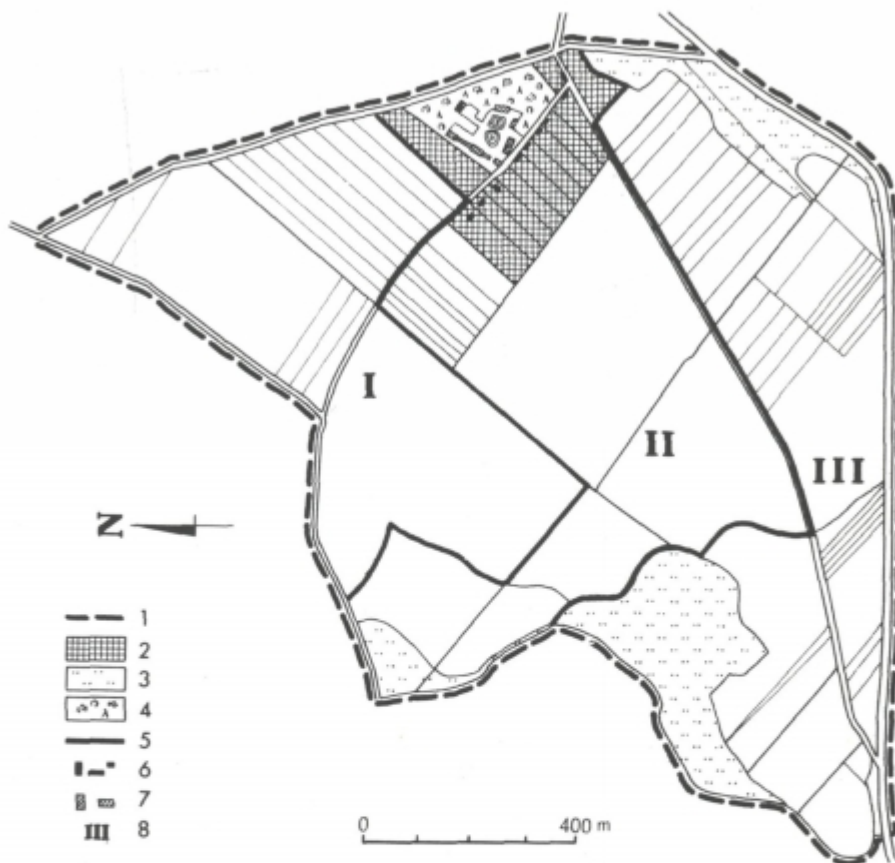


Fig. 5 Manorial village of Krzyki at the beginning of the 19th century. At present a district of Wrocław. Schematic plan based on the 1809 plan of the village. Manorial village (over 90% of the village area is occupied by the manor).
 1 - land owned by the manor; 2 - land owned by dependent farmhands; 3 - meadows; 4 - park; 5 - field boundaries; 6 - houses of dependent farmhands; 7 - manorial buildings; 8 - I, II, III - summer, winter and fallow fields.

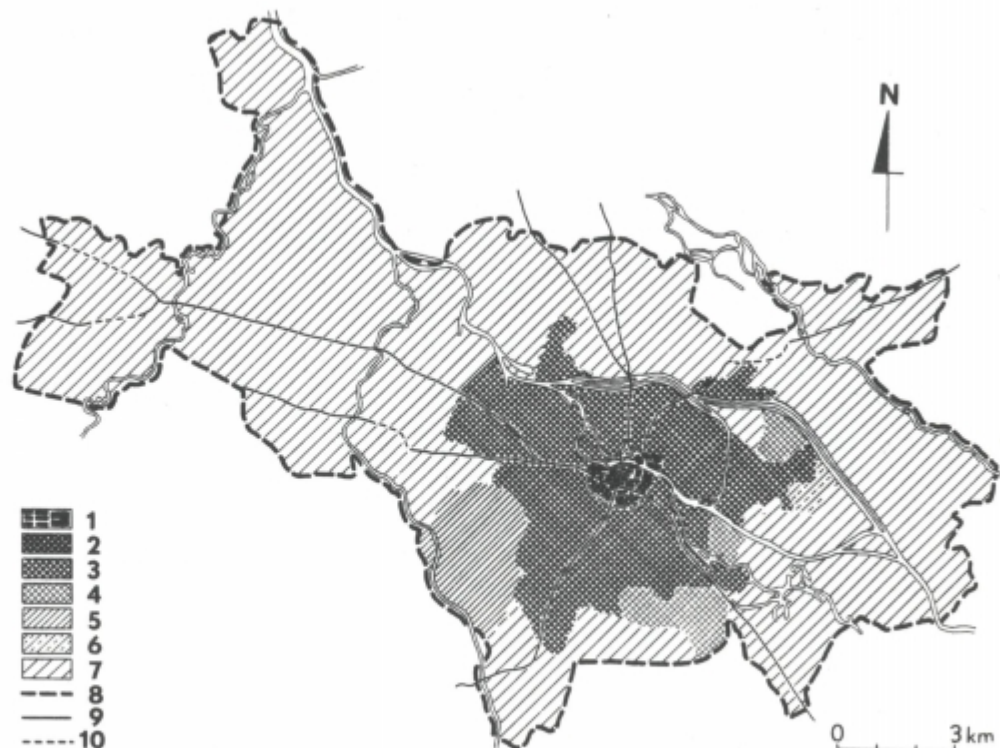


Fig. 6 Wrocław's development /after A. Ptasińska, cf. note 2/.
 1 - the city's area until 1261; 2 - areas joined with the city in 1261;
 3 - areas joined with the city until 1868; 4 - areas joined with the city
 in 1904; 5 - areas joined with the city in 1911; 6 - areas joined
 with the city in 1924; 7 - areas joined with the city in 1928; 8 - Wrocław's
 administrative boundary in 1928-1950; 9 - still existing historical
 routes; 10 - previous historical routes.



Fig. 7 Reconstruction of the layout of the southern district of Wrocław at the end of the 19th century. Old vegetable-growing villages, squares in geometrical shapes, and new streets along ancient roads.

SPREMEMBE RURALNIH NASELIJ V OBMESTJU WROCLAWA OD ZAČETKA
19. STOL. DALJE

V začetku 19. stoletja je obmestje tedanjega Wroclawa obsegalo skoraj povsem enako območje, kot ga zavzema današnje mesto. To obdobje je hkrati pomenilo prelomnico v prostorskem razvoju Wroclawa, kar je povzročilo tudi prostorsko in funkcijsko preobrazbo obmestnih naselij. Po Napoleonovem ukazu so bile l. 1810 porušene utrdbe. Zunanje jarke so zasuli, le nekaj glavnih je ostalo nedotaknjenih. Nekdanje utrdbe in obrambni zid je nadomestil zelen pas drevo-redov in mesto se je lahko svobodno širilo.

Naselja v pradolini Odre so bila majhna in razpršena, v gospodarskem pogledu pa so bila usmerjena v živinorejo. Območje, na katerem so danes mestne četrti, je bilo zaradi pogostih poplav neugodno za poselitve. Težišče poselitve je bil diluvialni rob, dvignjen nad poplavno dno pradoline Odre in tu so nastala večja naselja. Najbolj značilna poteza obmestja Wroclawa v začetku 19. stoletja so bile številne vasi, ki so pridelovale zelenjavo. Nastale so že v 13. stoletju, vzporedno z nastankom samega mesta. Njihov položaj do Wroclawa je bil poseben: položene so bile vzdolž cest, ki so vodile v mesto. Oblikovane so bile bolj ali manj kot obcestne vasi in tesno skupaj, kmetije pa so imele zemljo v ozkih trakovih. Poleg zelenjadarskih so bile značilne vasi splavarjev in ribičev, ki so bile postavljene vzdolž Odre in njenih pritokov. Ta naselja so doživela tako preobrazbo, da njihovih ostankov v današnji strukturi zazidave mesta skoraj ne moremo več zaslediti.

Podobno je tudi z nekdanjimi predmestnimi naselji tkalcev, lončarjev, čevljarjev itd. Splošna poteza takih naselij je bila velika gostota prebivalstva in specifična socialno-ekonomska struktura. Sredi 19. stoletja je bil vključen v mestu južni vrtnarski del, zato se je na tem odseku obmestje premaknilo dalje na kmetijske predele. Tudi zelenjadarska proizvodnja se je morala preseliti proti jugu. Mesto se je širilo, čeprav počasneje, tudi proti severu in vzhodu. V tem času je urbani razvoj dosegel nekdanje splavarske in ribiške vasi v dolini Odre. Staro mesto je postalo mestno jedro in ta zgodovinski del mesta je še vedno prevladujoča poteza Wroclawa.

Mesto se je širilo spontano, z nastajanjem ločenih naselij, brez urbanističnega načrtovanja.

Intenzivna urbanizacija na južnem robu mestnega jedra je povsem izbrisala sledi nekdanjih obmestnih vasi. Edini ostanki so ohranjeni v imenih ulic in v njihovem značilnem poteku.

Med vojno je bilo kar 68 % mesta porušenega. Danes meri 22,5 km² in šteje 584 000 prebivalcev. Mesto v okviru administrativnih meja po obliki spominja na trapez z razpotegnjenimi stranicami proti severozahodu in severovzhodu.

Taka oblika je posledica medvojne priključitve dveh satelitskih mest. Dolina Odre je bila poseljena močneje šele od srede 19. stoletja dalje; tu so danes številne stanovanjske četrti.

Proti severu se je mesto širilo zelo počasi, tako da je še danes administrativna meja zelo blizu starega mesta.

Najpomembnejša smer širjenja mesta je bila vedno proti jugu, kjer je svet nekoliko dvignjen, prsti pa rodovitne. Tradicionalno zelenjadarstvo se je od srede 19. stoletja pa do danes moralo umikati mestu.

Današnje obmestje Wrocława, ki ima zelo pravilno obliko kroga, vključuje številne vasi v oddaljenosti od 30 do 40 km.