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SACRUM IN HOSPITAL COMPLEXES – THE CASE OF STUMMER’S HOSPITAL IN TOPOĽČANY

SACRUM KOMPLEKSÓW SZPITALNYCH – STUDIUM SZPITALA STRUMMERA W MIEJSCOWOŚCI TOPOĽČANY

ABSTRACT

Sacred spaces in hospitals – chapels or sacred gardens, as places of peace and tranquility, address spiritual needs of the patients and their families. The paper examines the elements creating the phenomenon of *sacrum* in the composition of the historical Stummer’s hospital in Topoľčany. Today the historical hospital complex is not used for its former functions and the question is how to preserve the sacred phenomena in the context of its future new uses.

Key words: hospital chapels, hospital gardens, symbolism of trees, sacred landscapes

STRESZCZENIE

Przestrzenie sakralne w szpitalach – kaplice lub ogrody sakralne, jako miejsca spokoju, odnoszą się do duchowych potrzeb pacjentów i ich rodzin. W artykule przeanalizowano elementy tworzące zjawisko *sacrum* w kompozycji historycznego szpitala Strummera w miejscowości Topoľčany. Obecnie historyczny kompleks szpitalny nie jest wykorzystywany do swoich dawnych funkcji, przez co pojawia się pytanie - jak zachować zjawisko *sacrum* w kontekście jego przyszłych zastosowań.

Słowa kluczowe: kaplice szpitalne, ogrody szpitalne, symbolika drzew, krajobrazy sakralne

1. INTRODUCTION

In the history, until the 6th and 5th centuries BC healing was rooted mostly in religion and magic. When people became ill or suffered injuries, they did not visit hospitals or clinics, but often sought out treatment and comfort from priests, offered sacrifices and prayers to **certain gods**, or consulted learned practitioners who might prescribe the use of medicinal herbs or sometimes mysterious, traditional rituals.¹

In ancient Greece and Rome, an asclepieion (Latin *aesculapīum*) was a healing sanctuary sacred to Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine, where patients could come to be healed through spiritual or physical treatments. **Asclepieia** functioned as **sacred hospitals**, nursing-homes, centers of religious worship and of popular entertainment, as well as gathering places for teachers and students, especially those interested in becoming doctors.²

¹ Leonard J., *Asclepieia, the sacred hospitals of ancient*

Greece. Kathimerini, 31 Jan 2017.
² Risse G. B., *Mending Bodies, Saving Souls: A History of*

In the middle ages hospitals in monasteries offered places for prayer and places to sit and walk in courtyard gardens with seasonal plants. The main function of a medieval hospital was to care for the sick, the poor, the old and the infirm. Nurses performed the care which included cleaning, feeding, clothing and housing the sick.³

The germ theory of illness of Louis Pasteur and Claude Bernard in the 19th century has changed the focus of disease treatment and changed the hospitals to sterile environment, with patient comfort as a low priority.⁴

The gigantic hospital complexes with their sterile environment may look scary. People show respect to these places where people also die. Increased health-care competition and focus on patient satisfaction again change priorities for hospital space utilization and design.⁵

Today hospitals create 'all faith chapels' or 'meditation rooms' to help healing processes of their patients. The terminology used to refer to such sacred spaces is variable, for example 'Prayer Room', 'Quiet Room', 'Place of Worship' or 'Multi-faith Room'. Most such spaces are indoors, but this is not always the case – also outdoor spaces and gardens are designed to provide 'quiet space for reflection'.⁶ Gardens, nature and landscapes are mediators of sacrum per se. Gardens and landscapes fulfill similar roles in the very different cultural contexts, involving the concepts of Paradise, sacred groves, mythical lands, or anterooms of the netherworld.⁷

Sacred spaces in the hospital setting give spiritual support to the patients and to their families; they help them to connect with faith resources. They serve for meditation and for stress relief. Sacred spaces in hospital setting include chapels, designed as 'faith-based' or as 'all faith' chapels, meditation places, gardens or healing gardens, mortuaries, or bereavement rooms – private spaces for grieving

families, for families awaiting funeral home pickup, transition to hospital morgue, or for extubations.

1.1. Sacrum and the history of hospitals in Slovakia

Charitable nursing and healthcare in the territory of current Slovakia has evolved along with Christianity, concentrating on the sick, the poor and the abandoned children. Christianity created the conditions for establishment of shelters for the poor and the first monastic hospitals. Health care and nursing care were carried out by members of the monastic societies.

The first known hospital has been established in Bratislava in 1095, the next later in the 12th century in Kežmarok, Levoča and other cities, as part of monasteries, churches and cathedrals. They served more as charities, shelters for the poor, and the healthcare was provided by persons without professional education or special training.

The first schools, aimed at the provision of medicine and nursing care education, can be considered the barber-surgeon schools, established in the 16th and the 17th century in Bratislava, Levoča, or Banská Bystrica. Since 1620 the health and nursing care was provided mainly by the Merciful Brothers (Hospitaller Order of the Brothers of Saint John of God), who looked after the physical and mental health and in particular the poor without distinction of confession.

Merciful Brothers established 'spitals' and gradually elaborated the principles of health care and treatment. From female monastic societies, from the mid of the 17th century, the Order of Saint Clare, Cistercians, Ursulines or Sisters of Saint Elizabeth Order has been devoted to nursing and built hospitals in their monasteries.⁸

The period of enlightenment brought progress in the healthcare by Theresian and Josephine reforms that imposed a gradual improvement of the care of the sick. The function of municipal Physics – 'Fyzikus', which was a civilian doctor who cared about hygiene, was established in 1753. The Faculty of Medicine at the University of Trnava was founded in 1770, which hosted courses for surgeons, pharmacists and 6 week courses for midwives. In the 17th and in the 18th century the spitals provided already a regular medical and nursing care. From the middle of the 18th century the first "general" hospitals were established, which contained four classes of treatment: in the first class sick paid 45 kreutzers in one

Hospitals. Oxford University Press, 1999, 752,15-38.

³ Brodman J. W., Hospitals in the Middle Ages, [in:] *Lansing C. and English E. D.* (Eds.): *A Companion to the Medieval World*. Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, UK, 2009, doi: 10.1002/9781444324198.ch12.

⁴ Lindheim R., Syme S. L., Environments, people and health. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 4, 1983, 335-339.

⁵ Horsburgh C.R. Jr., Healing by design. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 333, 1995, 735-740.

⁶ Gilliat-Ray S., From 'Chapel' To 'Prayer Room': The Production, Use, and Politics of Sacred Space in Public Institutions. *Culture and Religion*, Vol. 6, No. 2, July 2005, 287-308.

⁷ Conan M., *Sacred Gardens and Landscapes: Ritual and Agency*. Dumbarton Oaks, 2007, 314, 7.

⁸ Gulášová I., Úvod do histórie ošetrovateľstva. *Ošetrovateľstvi*, Kontakt 1-2, 2005, 47-52.

day, in the second class 24 kreutzers in one day, in the third class 10 kreutzers in one day and the stay in the fourth class was free. According the decision of the Emperor Joseph II., the small spitals were concentrated in the general hospitals, and some minor spitals were cancelled.

Many of the current hospital complexes in Slovakia have been founded in the 19th century, or in the beginning of the 20th century. The former hospital areas usually consisted of few buildings in green, park spaces, their common components were hospital chapels and mortuaries. Later gradually new buildings were added and the hospital green spaces were built up. Many of these old hospital complexes, however, still posses cultural, historical and architectural values and they are protected as cultural monuments.

For example, the construction of the hospital on the Mickiewiczova Street in Bratislava started in 1857. The first of the buildings was put into operation in the year 1864, the chapel in the middle wing served for patients. The last building was added in 1936. The complex today is still used as hospital and it is protected as national cultural monument.

The hospital in Nitra in the locality Under Calvary was built up since 1894. In the 1980s and the 1990s several new pavilions have been added. The newest pavilion was built in 2012 and in this year was restored also the historic chapel in the hospital complex.

The construction of the hospital on the Rastislavova Street in Košice began in 1913, it was opened in 1924. In the year 1976 additional objects were built. The notable part of this campus is still the park, which originally contained also greenhouses used to grow vegetables for the hospital kitchen and flowers for planting in the park.

Since the 1960s many of the historical hospital campuses ceased to be sufficient and lost their functions. The lack of capacity of the berths was solved by construction of new large and modern hospital complexes, mainly in the 1970s and the 1980s, built with the aim to rationalize, centralize and technologize the service. The construction used the form of block system and very often solutions with a low base and a high-rise part of the bed departments, located one above the other. The communist ideology suppressed the expression of sacrum in these complexes.

2. THE CASE OF STUMMER'S HOSPITAL IN TOPOLEČANY

2.1. The history of Stummer's Hospital

The historical hospital in Topolčany represents an example of hospital complex established in the 19th century. It was founded by baron August Wilhelm Stummer von Tarnok (*1827 – † 1909)⁹ in 1885.

The construction was completed and the hospital was opened in January 1886. It was named after its founder – August's hospital. The original hospital complex contained four buildings forming a rectangular courtyard with a fountain in the middle, which was surrounded by a circular communication connecting the buildings. The area outside the courtyard was maintained as a park, for relax and healing purposes.¹⁰ The main hospital building accommodated 74 beds for patients, two side service buildings contained doctor and administration spaces, flats for nuns, and kitchen. The entrance building hosted the chapel and the flat for gate-keeper. The complex contained also a mortuary house. As described by Thúröczy in 1899, the hospital, headed by doctor Fridrich Alajos, took care of around 800 – 850 patients per year.¹¹ The nursing care was provided by the Sisters of Charity of Saint Vincent De Paul.

Later several new buildings were added, in 1904 it was the building of infection pavilion, designed by architect Filip Bineter, and in 1940-1943 the pavilion in the functionalist style, which was built from the initiative of the doctor Eugen Gressner (*1907 – † 1998). In the second half of the 20th century several other buildings and additions to the original historical buildings were built, with a low architectural value, which left negative marks on the whole complex.

In 1969 the construction of the new hospital in Topolčany has started, on the grounds adjacent to the old hospital. The provision of healthcare gradually moved into the new spaces and today the old hospital is not fully used and most of its buildings are empty and deteriorate. The area and the build-

⁹ August Wilhelm Stummer together with his brothers Karl and Alexander has been an entrepreneur in the sugar industry. For the services to the Hungarian economy, the Government granted the brothers the prestigious baronial title.

¹⁰ Kristiánová K., Bašová S. *Transformations of Old Hospital Areas – Valorization of Healing Garden Values*. SGEM Vienna GREEN 2017 Conference, Scientific Sessions of the SGEM International Scientific Conferences on Earth and Geo Sciences, Vienna, 27 - 30 November, 2017.

¹¹ Thúröczy V., *Nyitrávámegye közegészségügye*, [in:] Sziklay J. and Borovszky S. (Eds.), *Magyarország vármegyéi és városai. Nyitra vármegye*. 1899, Digitális kiadás: Arcanum Adatbázis Kft. 2004.

ings are waiting for new uses, revitalization, restoration, or redevelopment.

However, the campus of the old hospital still possess cultural heritage values, high architectural and landscape architectural values. Seven objects of the hospital complex are listed in the List of Cultural Monuments of Slovakia: the hospital main building, the chapel, the fence wall, the two service buildings, the infection pavilion and the park, under no. ÚPZF: 11466/1-7. The functionalist pavilion is not listed, but it exhibits high-quality values of architecture from the era of functionalism, too.

The intentions and plans for the new use and redevelopment of the old hospital complex should respect and preserve its cultural heritage, architectural and landscape architectural values.

3. AIMS AND METHODS OF RESEARCH

Our research, within the project KEGA – Interdisciplinary approach towards protection of cultural and natural heritage, aims at identification and assessment of the cultural and natural heritage values of the Stummer's hospital in Topoľčany.

Within this project the interdisciplinary team, consisting of historians, civil engineers, geodesist, structural engineers, architects and landscape architects, examines various aspects of the hospital campus and its values, its problems and threats, with the aim to explore the possibilities of preservation and valorization of the identified qualities in the further functional transformation processes. Within the scope of the project we have assessed the architectural qualities of individual buildings and we have identified the landscape architectural qualities of the campus.

For the purposes of identification and assessment of current and also extinct cultural and natural heritage values of the old hospital in Topoľčany, we have examined the historical literary and visual sources, historical map sources, and also the documents of the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic. We have conducted on-site field surveys aiming to analyze the current state of the hospital area, the buildings and the park.

Within this researched we have focused also on the elements creating the phenomenon of sacrum.

4 SACRUM IN THE CASE OF STUMMER'S HOSPITAL IN TOPOĽČANY

We have found several elements creating the phenomenon of sacrum in the composition of the historical Stummer's hospital in Topoľčany – for exam-

ple the centrally located chapel, the use of evergreen tree alley, weeping willows, or the symbolic meanings of water basin in the landscape design of the hospital park area.

4.1. Sacrum in the architectural composition of the hospital complex

The symmetrical rectangular arrangement of the buildings around the central courtyard, itself, reminds the archetypal quadratical compositions, which, simiraly as in the case of compositions using the form of cross, express the effort and endeavour to comprehend the chaotic world by introducing directions and co-ordinates. The courtyard reminds the courtyards of monasteries – the cloisters forming an enclosed quadrangle, with a well, in our case the water basin or fountain, in the middle (Fig. 1).



Il. 1. The symmetrical rectangular arrangement of the buildings around the central courtyard on the cadastral map in 1911 (Archive of the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic).

Ill. 1. Symetryczny układ budynków wokół centralnego dziedzińca na mapie katastralnej z 1911 r. (Archiwum Rady Zabytków Republiki Słowackiej).

The enclosure of the central courtyard formed by four buildings with a water basin in the middle is reinforced by a wall dividing the inner space from the outside world. The inner space of the courtyard is accessible through the gate – the pasageway through the entrance building with the chapel. Gate is a symbol of entrance to an important space. The ceremony of overstepping the gate symbolizes for many cultures transition from one period of life to another. The Christian symbology is based on the Jesus testimony in the Gospel of John (10, 9): „I am the door. When somebody walk through me, will be redeemed.“ Gates are thresholds, borders, when overstepped, the man finds himself in an other world. In the case of hospital, ill leave the space of healthy and enter the hospital with the hope of being rescued.



Il. 2. The entrance building with the chapel and the passageway (photo by Katarína Kristiánová).

Ill. 2. Budynek wejściowy z kaplicą i korytarzem (fot. Katarína Kristiánová).

4.2. The chapel

Churches or chapels - buildings of sacral character themselves represent symbols of a shrine, endeavours and efforts to create a space for the spirituality.

The chapel of the Stummer's Hospital is situated on the main composition axis of the whole complex, in the entrance building, on the left side of the passageway leading to the courtyard. The opposite right



Il. 3. The wooden door to the chapel ornamented by the motif of Tree of Life (photo by Katarína Kristiánová).

Ill. 3. Drewniane drzwi do kaplicy, z motywem Drzewa Życia (fot. Katarína Kristiánová).

side of the entrance building was used as a flat for gate-keeper. The neoclassical facades of the chapel and the entrance building use the motives of elementary geometry – the circle, square, and triangle. The small cupola turret with a lantern opening and the cross on the top marks the entrance and creates a symbol of the whole complex (Fig. 2).

The wooden door to the chapel is ornamented by the motif of a tree (Fig. 3). Tree has many symbolic meanings in the Christian iconography. It is 'The Tree of Life' – *arbor vitae*. Tree is understood also as a prefiguration of the Cross. 'The Tree of the Cross' with blossoming twigs is tied to incarnation, death and resurrection. In the hospital setting these motives give special belief and hope of getting back health and recovery.

4.3. Sacrum of the hospital park

4.3.1. The garden, the grove

The park area of the Stummer's Hospital originally contained a symmetrical garden composition along the entrance way, the enclosed garden in the courtyard, and the landscape garden in English landscape garden style – a grove part towards the watercourse Chocina.

The green spaces with many woody plants, both domestic and introduced exotic, represented an important healing function component of the Stummer's Hospital.

This original landscape architectural concept is still readable in the hospital area, especially in the symmetrical composition of the entrance part of the park and in the courtyard.

We can see several symbolic meanings and sacred phenomena in the historical concept of green spaces of the hospital complex.

A grove is from the earliest time the place of silent meditation, the place where man could meet with supernatural beings and forces. Grove with a few trees is different from the dark forest, symbolizing a fear of man against the powers of darkness. Sacred groves are also places which provide an asylum to those being chased.¹²

The garden is associated with the concept of Paradise, or Garden of Eden – an enclosed garden, which is protected and safe place, space which could be entered only through the gate. The surrounding fence protects the flowering forces inside. The inner space contains water – the life-spring and a tree – *arbor vitae*.

¹² Biedermann H., *Lexikón symbolov*. Knaurs Lexikon der Symbole (1989), Obzor, 1992, 87.

4.3.2. The water

The round water basin – fountain is situated in the centre of the courtyard (Fig. 4).

The presence of water in the centre of the hospital courtyard has many symbolic meanings. It is the living water, the place where you can drink from the life-spring.

Water is universally viewed as a source of life itself, it is associated with many myths of different cultures, in which life emerges from waters. Water is viewed as miraculous healing water, the source of purity and fertility.

It has many meanings in the Christian symbolic, too. Water is associated with holy water, a water of christening. Baptism by water removes both original and actual sin together with the eternal and temporal punishment due to them; it infuses the sanctifying grace; it imprints on the soul an indelible mark. Holy water has a great power. It is sprinkled for the benefit of the poor souls in purgatory, the ritual advises to sprinkle with holy water the sick, the houses, the fields, the vineyards and other things.¹³

4.3.3. Sacrum in plants

Plants – trees, with their branches reaching up into the sky, and with their roots rooted deeply in the earth, can be seen as a link between heaven and the earth, and the underworld, uniting above and below. Trees have been given sacred meanings in many of the world's mythologies and religions throughout the ages. In appreciation of trees and in the symbolism associated with them, the ancient tradition of the worship of all natural is preserved. The tree is in the ancient pagan forms of spirituality the essential link with the divine. The tree provided not only wood and fruit, but it was the dwelling of souls, ghosts, nymphs and other mythic creatures. The growth and death of trees, the annual death and revival of their foliage, is perceived by many cultures as powerful symbol of growth, death and rebirth.¹⁴ The tree is the *axis mundi* in the German-Celtic mythologies. The Norse World Tree, the mighty ash tree *Yggdrasill* connects all three planes of the cosmos and the nine worlds of the Norse universe.

¹³ Klotsche E. H., *Christian symbolics; or, Exposition of the distinctive characteristics of the Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed churches as well as the modern denominations and sects represented in this country*. Burlington, Iowa 1929, 101-102.

¹⁴ Brosse J., *Mythologie der Bäume*. Patmos, 2003, 308.



Il. 4. The round shape of water basin – fountain in the middle of the hospital courtyard (photo by Matej Kováč).

Ill. 4. Owalny kształt zbiornika na wodę – fontanna pośrodku dziedzińca szpitalnego (fot. Matej Kováč).

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the ‘Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil’ and the ‘Tree of Life’ are the best-known symbols found in Genesis.

Salvation through the Cross extended the ancient idea of cosmic *renovatio* symbolized by the ‘Tree of the World’, given the early Christian association of the ‘Tree in Eden’ with Christ’s Cross. In the 12th century this link appears in a legend of the ‘Tree-Cross’ – the *arbor crucis*, devoted to the cycle of sin and redemption, telling that the Cross was made out of wood descended symbolically from the ‘Tree of Life’, and materially from the ‘Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil’, both of which grew in the Garden of Eden, with the ‘Tree of Life’ growing at its center. The two trees were frequently depicted in art; in contrast one fruitful, the other withered.¹⁵

We can trace several marks of using the symbolic meanings of trees in the hospital park of the Stummer’s Hospital. The characteristic feature is the use of evergreens, which were popular in the hospital setting, representing the idea to provide the greenery for the patients all the year round. As symbols of

hope and overcoming and overruling the death they are commonly planted on the cemeteries as well.

The entrance allée of the Stummer’s Hospital, creating the main axis of the hospital complex, leading to the entrance building and the chapel, is today lined by evergreen *Thuja occidentalis*, also known as northern white-cedar, eastern, or American arborvitae – tree of life (Fig. 5). Its use is very common also at cemeteries; it reminds Mediterranean cypresses of sacred groves. In classical antiquity, the cypress was a symbol of mourning and in the modern era it remains the principal cemetery tree in both the Muslim world and Europe. In the classical tradition, the cypress was associated with death and the underworld. It is associated with grief – in the Greek mythology, Cyparissus, a favorite of Apollo, accidentally killed a beloved tame stag. His remorse and grief was so inconsolable that he asked to weep forever. He was transformed into cypress tree, with the tree’s sap as his tears. The evergreen American arborvitae is associated also with the ideas of durability, stability and longevity of life.

However, as we have identified from the historical photographs, the entrance tree allée was originally lined by deciduous woody plants.

In the courtyard area, evergreen European yew trees – *Taxus baccata* have been planted. Evergreen

¹⁵ Simor S. B., The Tree of the Credo – Symbolism of the Tree in Medieval Images of the Christian Creed, [in:] Tymieniecka A.T. (Ed.), *Analecta Husserliana LXVI*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000, 45-54.

long-aged yew since the antiquity symbolized longevity of life.

Another evergreen found in hospital park area, which is, as well as, typically planted also at the cemeteries, is the European box – *Buxus sempervirens*.



Il. 5. Evergreen tree-lined entrance path (photo by Katarína Kristiánová).

Ill. 5. Zimozielone nasadzenia liniowe wzdłuż alei wejściowej (fot. Katarína Kristiánová).



Il. 6. Lack of care and maintenance left footprints in the hospital park (photo by Katarína Kristiánová).

Ill. 6. Brak ochrony i konserwacji pozostawił ślady w szpitalnym parku (fot. Katarína Kristiánová).

Near the chapel, a solitary weeping willow *Salix alba* ‘Tristis’ has been planted, generally considered as a tree of sorrow and cemeteries.

Lack of care and maintenance in the past and the abandonment today has left footprints not only on buildings of the campus but also in the green spaces of the hospital park and its vegetation. However, the park of the Stummer’s Hospital still represents a valuable green space, with historical, landscape architectural and dendrological qualities.

5. CONCLUSION

As noted by Hodor and Łakomy: “Perception of sacrum results from inherited feeling, subjective reception, it becomes especially difficult in atheist communities where secularisation is intense. The dangers lie in commercialising these spaces and transforming them to the role of banal. However, skillful extraction of the value of the place leads to aesthetisation and improving the significance of the particular sacrum.”¹⁶

In connection with the concept of symbolism we can expect confrontation with the two extreme opinions. On the one hand, it is considered obsolete and as something quite dead, something, which today rational man is not concerned with, on the other hand there is the opinion that it is the key to understanding the spiritual world.

Examining the multiple values of the historical Stummer’s Hospital in Topoľčany we have identified specific elements with the symbolic meanings of sacred. We have interpreted the well known, as well as, the less known features, creating the phenomenon of sacrum of the dysfunctional hospital complex, the features which contribute to its cultural heritage values and to its *genius loci*.

As said by Waryś and Hodor, it is important to understand not only the functional and aesthetic values but also the concepts associated to such terms as majesty, sacrum and reverie. Not taking them into consideration and focusing only on keeping a formal-legal correctness and fulfilling the requirements and technical conditions, is a threat to a loss of sacrum, as important quality of space.¹⁷

Pargament et al. argue that loss of sacrum and desecration have implications for health and wellbeing in a community.¹⁸

Pargament and Mahoney suggest that sacred matters represent a vital interest for the psychology of religion. They note that people can perceive virtually any aspect of their lives as having divine character and significance. Furthermore, people can sanctify objects theistically as a manifestation

¹⁶ Hodor K., Łakomy K., Sacrum krajobrazu, estetyzacja przestrzeni miejskiej, Landscape Sacrum, Aesthetisation of Urban Space. *Space & Form* 26, 2016, 201- 2012, DOI: 10.21005/pif.2016.26.D-04.

¹⁷ Waryś E., Hodor, K., Contemporary Threats to Historic Cemetery Objects. *Technical Transactions, Czasopismo Techniczne, Architecture – Architektura*, 5-A, 2015, 329-342.

¹⁸ Pargament K. I., Magyar G. M., Benore E., Mahoney A., Sacrilege: A Study of Sacred Loss and Desecration and Their Implications for Health and Well-Being in a Community Sample. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 44, No. 1, 2005, 59-78.

of their images, beliefs, or experiences of God and nontheistically by investing objects with qualities that characterize divinity. According Pargament and Mahoney people invest a great deal of time and energy in sacred matters; people go to great lengths to preserve and protect whatever they perceive to be sacred; sacred aspects of life elicit spiritual emotions; sanctification offers a powerful personal and social resource that people can tap throughout their lives; and the loss of the sacred can have devastating effects.¹⁹

Today the historical Stummer's Hospital in Topoľčany is not used for its former functions and it will be transformed to host new urban functions. The hospital complex possesses high architectural and cultural heritage values, and the hospital park with its historical composition and mature woody plants represents high landscape architectural values, which should be preserved. Comprehensive approaches towards the transformation of the old hospital complex in Topoľčany will be required to preserve, revitalize, and restore, as well as, its sacred phenomena in the context of its future new uses.

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