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DENDROFLORA OF ROADSIDE SACRAL OBJECTS IN THE TRZYDNIK DUŻY COMMUNE (LUBLIN VOIVODESHIP)

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ABSTRACT

Among numerous elements of the Polish landscape, especially noteworthy are the roadside sacral objects. They are a testimony to national and local identity, and express centuries-old religious values. What is more, roadside crosses and shrines, surrounded by trees and shrubs, accentuate the space with exceptional decorative and cultural value. The presence of vegetation enriches the compositional value of these objects, complements their spatial structure, and highlights the aesthetic value. This paper presents the results of a study of regarding roadside sacral objects, carried out in the Trzydnik Duży Commune, Lublin Voivodeship. The study was performed as an inventory, enabling us to determine the species composition, health condition, and age of the dendroflora accompanying the roadside sacral objects. Within the studied area 73 roadside sacral objects were inventoried. It was found that 53 of them were surrounded by trees and shrubs that represent 42 species. The most common include limes, lilacs, and white cedars. Health condition of the dendroflora is varied, however 78% of the examined trees and shrubs are of very good or good health condition.

Key words: dendroflora, roadside sacral objects, landscape, Trzydnik Duży, cross, shrine

INTRODUCTION

The geography of religion is one of the field of geography and deals, among other things, with the influence of religion on the environment (Kong 1990, Jackowski 2002). It also takes research of sacral landscape or sacred space (Jackowski 2002). The variety of definitions connected with the idea of sacred space was presented by Przybylska (2005). Przybylska and Czepczyński (2016) characterized the specificity of sacral landscape in Poland. Roadside sacral objects (crosses, shrines and statues) are an inseparable element of the Polish landscape (Seweryn 1958, Czerwiński 2012, Antolak and Szyszkowski 2013). And also of the landscape of United States of America especially in Texas (Everett 2000). They are important elements of environment (Antolak and Szyszkowski 2013). They express religiousness of the local people. Their localisation, as well as the circumstances of their origin are varied. Most often they are found at crossroads and historical locations. They are constructed as thankful, pleading or penitential votive offerings (Seweryn 1958, Czerwiński 2012, Przybylska 2008, Smyk 2012, Antolak and Szyszkowski 2013).

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They are an important element of the surrounding space, lending it their aura of holiness. They increase the cultural value of the landscape (Hernik et al. 2013). Due to the difficulty of reaching the information, roadside sacral objects (crosses, shrines and statues) are rarely included in sacred space research (Przybylska 2008). Przybylska and Czepczyński (2016) state that in Poland we observe important role of sacral objects in public space. But sacral landscape of Europe is still changing, especially rapidly after the Second World War (Henkel 2014). However as before religious elements are important components of historical core of cities, despite the desacralisation of landscape e.g. Prague in Czech Republic (Havlíček 2014). While the sacralisation of Polish landscape after the Second World War was uneven (Przybylska and Czepczyński 2016). In the years 1945–1948 many new roadside crosses and shrines were built, but in the years 1948-1956 they were removed by the Soviet regime. Another wave of rising sacral objects was the 80s after the strikes. In the 90s the number of roadside crosses increased quickly. Nowadays it still exists in our country a strong need to mark the presence of religion in public space e.g. on the streets, in parks (Przybylska and Czepczyński 2016).

An important element complementing roadside sacral objects is vegetation, especially trees and shrubs. They complete the space, creating a natural background for the sacral elements (Lubiarz and Kulesza 2013, Tóth and Feriancová 2015). For this reason, it is worth to study quantitative and qualitative status of trees and shrubs accompanying roadside sacral objects. The purpose of this paper was to perform a thorough inventory of dendroflora accompanying the roadside sacral objects in the Trzydnik Duży Commune, determine species composition, health condition of the trees and shrubs, as well as estimate the age of the trees. The goal was also to verify if the vegetation surrounding the roadside sacral objects in the examined commune would confirm the data gathered in other regions of the Lublin Voivodeship (Lubiarz and Kulesza, 2013, Kulesza and Lubiarz, 2013).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A field study, inventory in character, was carried out throughout the entire area of the Trzydnik Duży Commune. The commune is situated in the Lublin Voivodeship, in the Kraśnik district. Despite being relatively close to the town of Kraśnik, it is predominantly rural.

Observation and measurements were performed twice, in July of 2015 and August of 2016. The research encompassed all roadside sacral objects (crosses, shrines, statues) situated within the administrative boundaries of the commune. Species composition of the vegetation accompanying each of the objects was determined using a method of dendrological inventory that listed all encountered trees, shrubs, chamaephytes, and vines. Botanical names and taxonomy were adapted from Seneta and Dolatowski (2017) and Streeter et al. (2009). The health condition of trees and shrubs was examined according to the following criteria: spatial structure, deformations of the habit, appearance of shoots and leaves. Additionally, in the case of trees, the presence of both shallow and deep hollows was found, and measurements of trees' diameter at breast height was carried out at the height of 130 cm from the ground. A four degree scale was used to assess the health condition of vegetation: very good, good, bad, and very bad (Lubiarz and Kulesza 2013). Deciduous trees also underwent historical analysis estimating the age of specimens on the basis of diameter at breast height and tree age tables by Majdecki (1986). What is more, detailed photographic documentation of the examined objects was prepared. As a result of the study, it was possible to assess the condition of roadside crosses and shrines, as well as the health condition of the accompanying trees.

RESULTS

As a result of the research carried out in the Trzydnik Duży Commune area 73 roadside sacral objects were found. These include: 54 crosses, 17 shrines, and 2 statues. The objects are unevenly

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distributed throughout the commune. The highest concentration of roadside sacral objects can be found in the south-eastern section of the commune, in such villages as: Rzeczyca Ziemiańska, Rzeczyca Księża, Łychów Szlachecki, and Łychów Gościeradowski. The majority of the objects is situated in direct vicinity of passageways, whereas only 3 objects are situated in the fields, quite far from any roads. 11 objects can be found at crossroads.

The landscape of the Trzydnik Duży Commune is dominated by roadside crosses. 36 of them are made from metal, 9 from wood, and 9 from stone. The majority, as many as 44 roadside sacral objects are surrounded with fences. Most often they are small and made from metal (23 objects), wood (17 objects), or concrete (4 objects). Enclosures take the shape of a rectangle, square, or even a triangle. Metal fences are predominantly wrought, less often made for ready-made construction elements – in contrast to concrete fences, dominated by prefabricated spans.

Among all roadside sacral objects 53 are complemented with accompanying trees and shrubs. The inventory encompassed a total number of 265 plants, both deciduous and coniferous, including: 122 trees, 140 shrubs, and 3 chamaephytes. A detailed list of species and types of accompanied objects is shown in Table 1. The dendroflora of roadside sacral objects is dominated by deciduous trees and shrubs.

Table 1. The list and number of plants and type of roadside sacral objects

Species or genus of plants		Total number of specimens	Number of specimens with		
			crosses	shrines	statues
1		2	3	4	5
1.	*Abies alba* Mill.	1	1	–	–
2.	*Aesculus hippocastanum* L.	4	–	4	–
3.	*Aesculus* ×*carnea* Hayne	1	1	–	–
4.	*Betula pendula* Roth	4	4	–	–
5.	*Buddleja davidii* Franch.	2	2	–	–
6.	*Buxus sempervirens* L.	8	8	–	–
7.	*Chaenomeles speciosa* (Sweet) Nakai	2	–	–	2
8.	*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* (A. Murray bis) Parl.	3	1	2	–
9.	*Corylus avellana* L.	2	2	–	–
10.	*Crataegus monogyna* Jacq.	2	2	–	–
11.	*Euonymus europaeus* L.	8	2	6	
12.	*Forsythia* ×*intermedia* Zabel	9	7	2	–
13.	*Fraxinus excelsior* L.	2	2	–	–
14.	*Hydrangea arborescens* L.	12	8	2	2
15.	*Juglans regia* L.	2	2	–	–
16.	*Junipersus squamata* Buch.-Ham. ex Lamb.	7	6	1	–
17.	*Juniperus communis* L.	6	2	4	–
18.	*Juniperus sabina* L.	2	2	–	–
19.	*Juniperus* ×*pfitzeriana* (L. Späth) P.A.Schmidt	7	4	3	–
20.	*Ligustrum vulgare* L.	2	2	–	–
21.	*Paeonia* sp.	3	3	–	–
22.	*Philadelphus coronarius* L.	7	–	7	–
23.	*Picea abies* (L.) H. Karst	12	7	3	2
24.	*Picea glauca* (Moench) Voss	6	–	6	–

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cont. **table 1**

1	2	3	4	5
25. *Picea pungens* Engelm.	3	–	3	–
26. *Prunus avium* (L.) L.	1	1	–	–
27. *Prunus serotina* Ehrh.	1	1	–	–
28. *Pyrus pyraster* (L.) Burgsd.	1	–	1	–
29. *Quercus robur* L.	3	2	1	–
30. *Quercus rubra* L.	1	1	–	–
31. *Rhus typhina* L.	5	5	–	–
32. *Robinia pseudoacacia* L.	1	1	–	–
33. *Rosa rugosa* Thunb.	6	–	6	–
34. *Rosa* sp.	20	5	15	–
35. *Sambucus nigra* L.	3	1	2	–
36. *Sorbus aucuparia* L.	7	1	6	–
37. *Spiraea ×vanhouttei* (Briot) Zabel	3	3	–	–
38. *Spiraea japonica* L. f.	2	1	1	–
39. *Syringa vulgaris* L.	29	13	16	–
40. *Thuja occidentalis* L.	51	33	18	–
41. *Tilia cordata* Mill.	9	5	4	–
42. *Ulmus minor* Mill. emend. Richens.	1	1	–	–
43. *Viburnum opulus* L.	1	–	1	–
44. *Vinca minor* L.	3	1	2	–

Source: own study

40 deciduous trees, 124 shrubs, and 3 chamaephytes, as well as 82 coniferous trees, and 16 shrubs were found (Fig. 1). These plants represent 42 species. 23 genera of plant specimens were identified, since they are garden dwellers, difficult to identify with complete precision. These plants are representatives of the rose (*Rosa* L.), and peony (*Paeonia* L.) genus. The flora of the examined area is predominantly deciduous species, 32 specimens, which equal 76% of the inventoried dendroflora. There are only 10 coniferous species, which equals 24% (Fig. 2). As can be seen in Figure 3, the largest number of species was found among deciduous shrubs (38%), followed by deciduous trees (36%), coniferous trees (17%), coniferous shrubs (7%), and deciduous chamaephytes (2%). The inventoried deciduous plants belong to 29 genera from 18 families, whereas coniferous plants represent 5 genera from 2 families. The majority (60%) of identified species is of foreign origin, the remaining ones represent taxa of the indigenous flora.

Analyses showed that the dendroflora of roadside sacral objects of the Trzydnik Duży Commune is

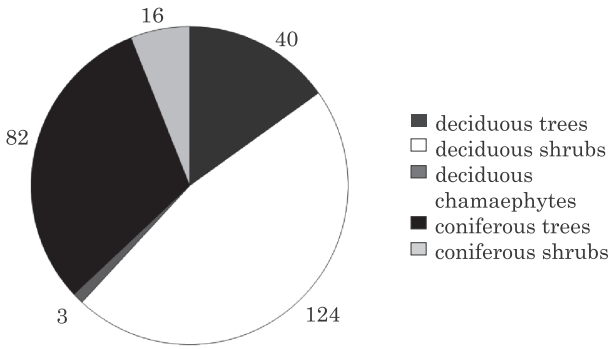

Fig. 1. Number of plant specimens in individual groups of dendroflora
Source: own study

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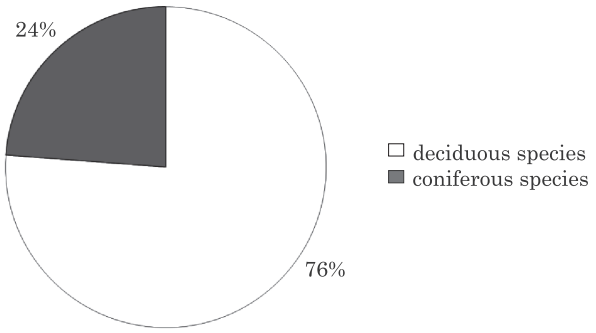

Fig. 2. The share of deciduous and coniferous species
Source: own study

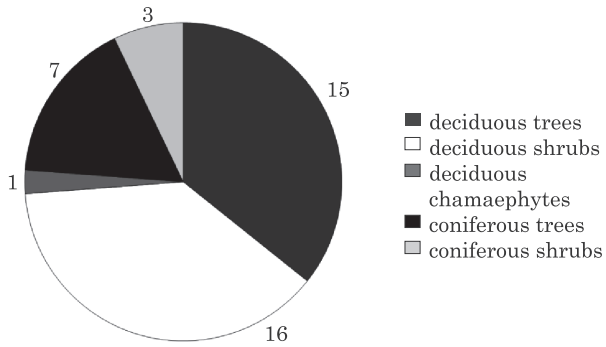

Fig. 3. Number of deciduous and coniferous species of trees, shrubs and chamaephytes
Source: own study

represented in largest numbers by genera from such families as: rose (*Rosaceae*), cypress (*Cupressaceae*), and olive family (*Oleaceae*). The first group includes 9 species from 7 genera (*Spirea, Pyrus, Chaenomeles, Sorbus, Crataegus, Rosa, Prunus*), the second includes 6 species from 3 genera (*Thuja*, *Chameacyparis*, *Juniperus*), whereas the third one encompassed 4 species from 4 genera (*Fraxinus, Forsythia, Syringa, Ligustrum*). The genus represented most often is *Juniperus* spp., four species of which were found (*Juniperus communis* L., *Juniperus sabina* L. *Juniperus sguamata* Buch.-Ham. Ex Lamb., *Juniperus* ×*pfitzeriana* (L. Späth) P.A. Schmidt).

Among the deciduous species the most common is lilac (*Syringa vulgaris* L.), represented by 29 specimens, and among the coniferous species it is the white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis* L.), represented by 51 specimens. The lilac accompanies 7 sacral objects, i.e. 4 crosses, and 3 shrines. The white cedar complements 14 objects, including 10 crosses, and 4 shrines. The most often observed species of deciduous trees is small-leaved lime (*Tilia cordata* Mill.), present at 7 sacral objects. As do the lilacs, it complements the surroundings of 4 crosses and 3 shrines.

Health condition of the examined dendroflora is varied. The condition of deciduous trees and shrubs is worse than that of the coniferous species. 78% of the studied dendroflora is characterised by very good or good health condition. The condition of 22% of the studied plants, however, is bad or very bad. The health condition of the examined vegetation, in accordance with the a four degree scale, is shown in Figure 4. The most commonly observed damage to deciduous trees is snag in crowns and deep hollows, whereas in coniferous plants – browning of shoots. The poorest health condition was noted in a small-leaved lime at a cabinet shrine in Owczarnia. The tree, 137 cm in diameter, is highly pollarded, and throughout the entire length of its trunk runs a deep hollow. Another tree with a very bad health condition is a rowan at a shrine in Kolonia Trzydnik. This specimen is partially withered, has a deformed habit and torn off bark. Unfortunately, in a few cases damage to the roots caused by reckless field work was observed.

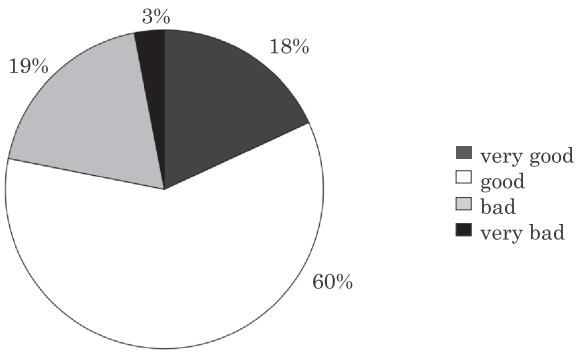

Fig. 4. Health condition of studied dendroflora
Source: own study

As a result of measurements and calculations, it has been determined that the most numerous age group consists of specimens less than 20 years old, which equals 44% of all examined trees. Only in the case of 8% (10 trees) the size of the diameter at breast height indicates age above 100 years,

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and only four specimens allow the assumption of being older than 120 years. The most impressive in size, and the same time the oldest specimens are a pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur* L.) with a cabinet shrine in Agatówka with diameter at breast height of 168 cm, as well as a small-leaved lime at a roadside shrine in Owczarnia with diameter at breast height of 137 cm. Unfortunately, only 15% of all analysed places of worship in the Trzydnik Duży Commune has an old deciduous tree stand. Having analysed archive photographs from the last 50 years, and by observing the remnants of felled down trunks at 7 objects (10% of the all roadside sacral objects in Trzydnik Duży Commune), one can observe a troubling tendency of removing large deciduous trees and replacing them with coniferous species. What is more, 28% of studied crosses and shrines do not possess any kind of floral accompaniment, which clearly illustrates a decline of the need to preserve the historic tree stand as an element that shapes and accentuates a place of *sacrum* in an open landscape. What is more, we have also observed decorations of examined places of worship involving artificial flowers made from synthetic materials, e.g. polyethylene, polypropylene, etc. It is especially visible in locations where sacral objects are not accompanied by shrubs and trees.

DISCUSSION

Roadside sacral objects have been and still are very important element of the Polish open landscape (Pukowiec and Pytel 2013, Przybylska 2008). In Poland after the Second World War people erected crosses by the roadside, but less often they built shrines or figures. Nowadays the number of roadside crosses exceeds the number of shrines by four times (Przybylska and Czepczyński 2016). Our results showed that in the Trzydnik Duży Commune there are three times as many crosses, as shrines and statues. The crosses and shrines located along the roads contribute to the sacralisation of space, especially in social aspects (Smyk 2012). They are a kind of small jewels of Polish landscape (Seweryn 1958).

The data presented above largely confirm the research results from other regions of Poland, including Lublin Voivodeship (Majdecka-Strzeżek 2003, Fortuna-Antoszkiewicz and Kimic 2007, Cała 2007, Pudelska 2011, Holly 2012, Lubiarz and Kulesza 2013, Rydzewska and Wilkaniec 2013). The value of roadside crosses and shrines is predominantly determined by their localisation in the landscape. The natural background and closest plant surroundings of these objects creates, and even strengthens their spiritual meaning (Fortuna-Antoszkiewicz and Kimic 2007, Rydzewska and Wilkaniec 2013). Especially valuable are the trees that become a symbolic conduit between earth and heaven. Their presence guards the place of worship and determines the zone of *sacrum* in the open landscape (Cała 2007, Rydzewska and Wilkaniec 2013). The research carried out thus far took place in Great Poland, Mazovia, Opole Region, Carpathian Foothills and Lublin Voivodeship indicates that the dominant tree species which accompanies crosses and shrines is small-leaved lime, and in the case of shrubs – lilac (Majdecka-Strzeżek 2003, Fortuna-Antoszkiewicz and Kimic 2007, Cała 2007, Pudelska 2011, Lubiarz and Kulesza 2013, Rydzewska and Wilkaniec 2013). Also in the multi-ethnic and religiously varied Polish – Ukrainian – Slovak border area the dominant species that accompanies roadside sacral objects is limes. One can often find ash trees, and seldom spruce trees (*Picea* spp.) and fruit trees such as apple trees (*Malus* spp.) or wild cherries (*Prunus avium* (L.)L.) (Holly 2012). But in southwestern Slovakia in district Nové Zámky Tóth and Feriancová (2015) showed that the oldest trees accompanying small sacral architecture are horse-chestnut trees (*Aesculus hippocastanum* L.).

In the 20th century the species structure of dendroflora underwent change, and the surroundings of the sacral objects began being dominated by coniferous plants, especially white cedars (Cała 2007). Their presence affects an age-old tradition and deforms the representation of the indigenous landscape in which deciduous trees such as: limes, sycamores, maples, and oak trees were a kind of protectors of the roadside places of worship (Cała 2007). Quite often they also possessed a symbolic meaning referring to the

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Christian faith, which is not represented as clearly by the modern dendroflora (Cała 2007). This detrimental tendency is confirmed by field research carried out in Great Poland and Lublin Voivodeships (Rydzewska and Wilkaniec 2013, Lubiarz and Kulesza 2013). While comparing the dendroflora of roadside sacral objects of two communes of Lublin Voivodeship one can notice certain similarities. Both Trzydnik Duży, and Mełgiew communes are dominated by crosses surrounded by more deciduous than coniferous species. There are, however, some interesting differences. Despite the fact that in the Mełgiew Commune there are more roadside places of worship (84 objects), the species diversity of the accompanying vegetation is smaller. It is represented by only 31 taxa (Lubiarz and Kulesza 2013). On the other hand, these objects are surrounded by a greater number of trees – 170 specimens. Therefore, it can be stated that the dendroflora of roadside sacral objects in Trzydnik Duży is more varied in terms of species, but with a clearly smaller number of deciduous trees. A comparative analysis of the health condition of the dendroflora showed similar results. In both communes the largest share of trees is characterised by very good or good health condition. The only difference is the fact that in the Mełgiew Commune, deciduous plants are in better condition than coniferous ones. Age analysis yielded similar data, i.e. in the Mełgiew Commune 45% of all trees are less than 30 years old, and there are only six specimens more than 120 years old (Lubiarz and Kulesza 2013).

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of our research in the area of the Trzydnik Duży Commune, an inventory of 73 roadside sacral objects was compiled. The majority of these objects are accompanied by deciduous and coniferous trees and shrubs representing 42 species. The species composition is dominated by limes, lilacs, and white cedars, which confirms data from previous research into the vegetation of roadside crosses and shrines in other regions of the country. As we showed in Discussion, in comparison to the Mełgiew Commune, the dendroflora of sacral objects in the Trzydnik Duży Commune shows clear similarities. Both examined areas present similar numbers of inventoried roadside crosses and shrines. The largest group consists of crosses accompanied by deciduous trees and shrubs. Health condition and age of the trees in the compared areas is similar. The greatest difference relates to the fact that the dendroflora accompanying the sacral objects of the Trzydnik Duży Commune is more diverse in terms of species, but has a quite smaller number of deciduous trees. In both areas, high number of inventoried plants that accompany the roadside places of worship, in our opinion, highlights their role in building the identity of the open landscape. Disappearance of old tree specimens and replacing them with coniferous plants of foreign origin is highly unsettling. This research reveals the need for further inventory and documenting in order to protect the sacral sphere of the cultural landscape from destruction.

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DENDROFLORA PRZYDROŻNYCH OBIEKTÓW SAKRALNYCH W GMINIE TRZYDNIK DUŻY (WOJ. LUBELSKIE)

ABSTRAKT

Wśród wielu elementów polskiego krajobrazu na szczególną uwagę zasługują przydrożne obiekty sakralne. Są świadectwem narodowej i lokalnej tożsamości oraz wyrazem zakorzenionych od wieków wartości religijnych. Przydrożne krzyże i kapliczki otoczone drzewami i krzewami są ponadto akcentami w przestrzeni o szczególnej wartości dekoracyjnej i kulturowej. Obecność roślinności podnosi ich wartość kompozycyjną, dopełnia ich strukturę przestrzenną i podkreśla walor estetyczny.
W pracy przedstawiono wyniki badań dotyczących przydrożnych obiektów sakralnych, przeprowadzonych w gminie Trzydnik Duży, która jest zlokalizowana w województwie lubelskim. Zaprezentowane badania mają charakter inwentaryzacyjny. Na ich podstawie określono skład gatunkowy, zdrowotny i wiekowy dendroflory towarzyszącej przydrożnym obiektom sakralnym. Na terenie opracowania zinwentaryzowano 73 przydrożne obiekty sakralne. Stwierdzono, że aż 53 spośród nich towarzyszą drzewa i krzewy reprezentujące 42 gatunki. Najczęściej spotykane są lipy, lilaki i żywotniki. Stan zdrowotny dendroflory jest zróżnicowany, jednak aż 78% badanych drzew i krzewów charakteryzuje się bardzo dobrym lub dobrym stanem zdrowotnym.

Słowa kluczowe: dendroflora, przydrożne obiekty sakralne, krajobraz, Trzydnik Duży, krzyż, kapliczka

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