



Historic Cemeteries: Common Principles of Protection

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Abstract: Those closed cemeteries, or their sections, are called historic cemeteries which reflect their original structure, the plots and resting-places' original divisions, and the tombstones have subsisted in their original places. Cemeteries placed on the national or local list of monuments in Hungary could be listed here but just in case the protection affects their whole area or their well-defined section. There are cc.140 historic cemeteries under area protection in our Homeland. A substantial part of further unprotected historic cemeteries is exposed to risk, decay, damage, or liquidation.

Keywords: burial grounds, area protection, cultural heritage, landscape architecture

1. Introduction

A considerable quantity of cemeteries in Hungary is still being used, but a smaller quantity of them has been closed. A part of closed cemeteries is liquidated when the decay time on corpses expires. The area is used for other purposes or reopened again for burials. A small percentage of closed cemeteries have not been reused. Their vegetation frequently grows wild; their value in use is gradually decreasing. According to the local government's decision, so-called reverence parks could be formed on their territories. When forming a reverence park, the original function of veneration is revered, however, the graves are liquidated and the tombstones are freely removed, and the area is formed as a park-like site. Moreover, some

cemeteries could be preserved and showed in their original forms in case their artistic style, cultural history, architecture, and landscape architecture offer value. This small proportion of cemeteries could be considered as historic cemeteries.

2. Materials and Methods

Cemeteries can also be declared protected by many principles, i.e. by nature conservation, protection of historic monuments, or veneration. Nevertheless, the number of protected graveyards being declared protected in different ways is very humble. To put it more subtly, graveyards rarely get territorial protection extended over their whole territory retaining subtleties. In many more cases a certain part of the cemetery, either tombstones or a chapel, perhaps an avenue, becomes protected. The advantage of area protection is to provide an overall picture of a given period, settlement, or social group's cemetery culture. Individual tombstones or other cemetery objects' relationship to each other, the burial order, the concept of cemetery layout, plant application, use of materials, etc. could be familiarized with us in union.

Among the different forms of conservation just the protection of historic monuments goes in every detail when trying to preserve the national graveyards territorially. There is no cemetery under nationwide protection. Though there are some graveyards under local protection because of their natural value but in case of most of them just one or another element is protected. They could also get local protection because of their architectural value but just a little part of them is protected territorially. Veneration protection refers in advance to certain famous persons' tombs thus generally insuring the security of one or two tombstones.

Among the national rules concerning the protection of historic monuments the Act LIV/1997 was the first to emphasize the conservation of graveyards, and it listed them among the specific objects of the protection of historic monuments. The Act LXIV/2001 on the Protection of the Cultural Heritage also deals with the problem of cemeteries and burial sites among the specific objects of the protection of historic monuments. There are no essential divergences concerning the articles of the acts. Neither does the No.LXXXIX/2005 modification of the Protection of the Cultural Heritage Act contain significant modifications concerning the territorial protection of cemeteries. [1]

Cemeteries placed on the national or local list of monuments in Hungary could be listed as a historic cemetery but just in case the protection affects their whole area, or their well-defined section. After surveying the Register of Listed Monuments we can state that there are altogether just a few dozen cemeteries which have got the national protection of historic monuments for their whole territory. [2] And there are cc. 100 territorially protected cemeteries on the list of local protection. [3]

3. Results and discussions

Historic cemeteries under territorial protection could be divided into two groups. The ones in the first group enjoy territorial protection extended over their whole territory, or over a part of their encompassed territory. Those cemeteries belong to the second group in which an ensemble of tombstones is declared protected, consequently we cannot talk about real territorial protection, and however, the protection of tombstone ensembles essentially yields the same result.

The following cemeteries belong to the first group (Fig. 1 highlighted in red), altogether 16 items:

- Baja, Jewish Cemetery
- Balassagyarmat, Jewish Cemetery
- Békéscsaba, Jewish Cemetery
- Budapest, Jewish Cemetery on Salgótarjáni Road
- Fertőszentmiklós, Cemetery
- Gyöngyös, Jewish Cemetery
- Kiskunhalas, Old Reformed Cemetery
- Kovácsvágás, Cemetery
- Lovasberény, Jewish Cemetery (Fig. 2.)
- Nagykanizsa, Jewish Cemetery
- Pápa, Jewish Cemetery
- Pilisvörösvár, Jewish Cemetery
- Székesfehérvár, Serbian Cemetery (Fig. 3.)
- Tata, Jewish Cemetery
- Tiszafüred, Jewish Cemetery
- Veszprém, Jewish Cemetery

Cemeteries belonging to the group (Fig. 1 highlighted in purple) 27 items:

- Alsópetény, Cemetery
- Balatonudvari, Cemetery
- Budapest, Kerepesi Cemetery (Fig. 4.)
- Debrecen, Cemetery on Budai Ézsaiás Road
- Hédervár, Roman Catholic Churchyard
- Hévíz – Egregy, Roman Catholic Churchyard
- Iván, Cemetery
- Kánó, Reformed Cemetery
- Karancsság, Cemetery
- Kőszeg, Cemetery

- Kunszentmárton, Cemetery
- Mihályi, Cemetery
- Miskolc – Ávas, Reformed Church and Churchyard
- Nagybajom, Reformed Cemetery
- Nagycenk, Cemetery
- Nagylózs, Cemetery
- Nézsa, Cemetery
- Pécs, Roman Catholic Churchyard
- Sopron – Balf, Cemetery
- Sopron Cemetery of St. Michael
- Szatmárcseke, Reformed Cemetery
- Szirák, Cemetery
- Szőlősdárdó, Reformed Cemetery
- Telkibánya, Reformed Church and Churchyard
- Tokaj, Jewish Cemetery
- Velence, Cemetery
- Vilyvitány, Cemetery



Figure 1: Historic cemeteries in the Register of Listed Monuments.

The above listed 43 cemeteries and churchyards, also the cc. 100 territorially protected cemeteries on the list of local protection altogether cannot amount to 5 percent of all cemeteries in Hungary. Though there is a legal opportunity to protect cemeteries, territorial protection can just rarely be carried out. One of the reasons is that there is no database available which would contain the most important parameters of national cemeteries. From this shortcoming follows the fact that the list of national historic cemeteries has not hitherto been compiled. Moreover, neither the terminus techniques of *historic cemetery* itself, nor its definition appear in Hungarian technical literature or rules.

A further problem is indicated by the lack of integral guidelines based on which it would be possible to choose cases worth national protection out of national historic cemeteries. Theoretically, local protection could be a good solution as a local decree is enough to declare protection; but it is also a disadvantage of this form of protection as the cancellation of protection based on local interests is also simple. Beyond the problems of being declared protected numerable problems are caused by the exploitation of historic cemeteries, which could lay the basis primarily for the survival of non-protected but reckoned historic cemeteries.

4. Conclusion

In the following the recommended guidelines on how to declare protection for historic cemeteries will be presented. While compiling the guidelines, we took into consideration the National Office of Cultural Heritage's (Kulturális Örökségvédelmi Hivatal) principles applying the declaration for protection [4], as well as Alois Riegl [5] and Peter Goodchild's [6] writings on principles of selection for listed monuments. The point-of-view system is disclosed in the under-mentioned points:

1. Integrity – structure, composition, gravestones, the given era's stylistic characteristics
2. Uniqueness/ typicalness
3. Historical value – the cemetery's age, how the style of the given era appears
4. Artistic value – artifacts valuable from history of art and ethnographic points of view
5. Value tied to cultural history – burial places of famous persons, historical events
6. Botanical values
7. Settlement shape/ landscape value

8. Settlement ecology roles

9. Value in use – in connection with its accessibility, infrastructure, and promotion.

In connection with its value in use the question could arise: What could one use a closed cemetery for? This question can be answered by several examples of cemeteries in Western Europe, also by innumerable programs in Kerepesi Cemetery in Hungary. [7] Further burials are offered in certain cemetery plots, besides organizing guided tours, extramural courses, fine art exhibitions, drawing and photo competitions, concerts, and lectures.

The database compilation of historic cemeteries, then choosing the items worth protection out of this database, also the elaboration of historic cemeteries' exploitation plans would make it possible to protect this part of our national cultural heritage at European level.

References

- [1] Román, A. (Ed.) (2002). Act LIV/1997, Act LXIV/2001, Act LXXXIX/2005 in The Book of Chartas (Karták könyve). Budapest.
- [2] The List of Monuments (www.koh.hu)
- [3] The List of Locally Protected Objects (teir.vati.hu)
- [4] National Office of Cultural Heritage's (Kulturális Örökségvédelmi Hivatal) principles applied for protection (www.koh.hu)
- [5] Riegl, A. (1998) Művészettörténeti tanulmányok (Art History Studies). Budapest.
- [6] Goodchild, P. (2003). Történeti kertek és parkok értékelése – az angol elmélet. (Evaluation of Historic Gardens – The English Theory). *Műemlékvédelem*.3. pp. 213-218.
- [7] www.btirt.hu – Kerepesi Cemetery



Figure 2: Lovasberény, Jewish Cemetery



Figure 3: Kerepesi Cemetery, Budapest



Figure 4: Székesfehérvár, Serbian Cemetery