

## A dyke as a relic of Dutch settlement on the example of Vogla street in Wilanów

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**Abstract:** *A dyke as a relic of Dutch settlement on the example of Vogla street in Wilanów.* The following text concerns the genesis and history of the transformation of Vogla street, historically located within the borders of the Wilanów Estate, a relic of Dutch settlement, currently one of the most intensely used roads in this part of Warsaw. Vogla street in its present shape was constructed in the 19th century, due to the intensification of Dutch settlements on the banks of Vistula. The settlers, adapting flood plains to agricultural purposes, introduced many forms of landscaping characteristic of their culture and tradition. Among them were roads reinforced with willow branches and stones, built on high embankments, sometimes planted along with poplars or willows. This kind of road was called by the Dutch settlers a *trift*, transformed in Polish into *trytwa*. Vogla street, and in particular its central part, surrounded by wetlands, is an example of a *trytwa*. It is currently one of the very few elements documenting the historical influence of the Dutch settlers' culture on the development of the Wilanów landscape.

**Key words:** cultural landscape, Dutch settlement, dyke

## INTRODUCTION

Vogla street is located within the borders of the Wilanów district. It connects Przyczółkowa street with Zawady – a part of Warsaw which is currently an area of intense urbanisation. Vogla street is one of the main routes leading to this part of the city.

This street is also an important compositional element of the historical landscape of the Wilanów Estate, as a clear closure of the Morysin landscape from the south and as a relic of the historical Dutch settlement in the Wilanów landscape.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The subject of the research was Vogla street in Wilanów and its landscape context. The aim of the research was to indicate the historical value of the street and surrounding landscape as the result of the impact of traditions related to the Dutch settlement and as a consequence of the economic functioning of the Wilanów Estate.

The construction of Vogla street started at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, so the time range of the research is from the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries to modern times. The subsequent changes in the street were identified on the basis of the analysis of archival materials acquired as a result of an enquiry which covered the collections of the Central Archives of Historical Records (Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych), the National Library (Biblioteka Narodowa), the National Digital Archives (Nar-

dowe Archiwum Cyfrowe). The nature of the analysed materials varied – from the inventory plans of the Wilanów Estate and the plans of Wilanów Garden to large-scale plans presenting the southern outskirts of Warsaw. The interwar maps of the Military Geographical Institute (Wojskowy Instytut Geograficzny) were also used as a source of information, as well as aerial photography of the vicinity of Wilanów, from the collection of the Polish Aviation Museum in Kraków (Muzeum Lotnictwa Polskiego) and the Warsaw orthophotomap from 1976, available on the official website of the City of Warsaw.

On the basis of data obtained from archival materials, the history of Vogla street was developed and divided into subsequent phases. In order to determine the state of preservation of the historic structure of Vogla street, field studies were carried out, comparing the historical layout with the current one. The research was summarised with the conclusions concerning the origin and transformations of Vogla street as well as the needs of its current protection.

## RESULTS

### Natural and cultural conditions that affected the form of Vogel street

Vogla street is located in the Vistula valley – in the area of the floodplain (Fig. 1), within the boundaries of the so-called Urzecze – an ethnographic microregion, located in the central Vistula valley, extending between the mouths of the Pilica and Wilga rivers in the south to Mokotów, Siekierki and Saska Kępa in the north (Stanaszek 2014). The proximity of a large river determined the nature of the landscape in which this road was historically created. The terrain here was flat, and the only elevation was the so-called small Vistula escarpment, running through the Wilanów Garden, slightly less legible in the area of the Wilanów farmstead and rising again in Powsinek.

The western section of Vogla street crosses two connected lakes: Powązkowskie and Wilanowskie. These lakes are important elements of the former water course of the left-bank of Vistula old river-beds, which they



FIGURE 1. Vogel street in the contemporary landscape of Wilanów  
Source: Own elaboration based on Google map.

co-create with Sielanka lake (now degraded and drying – due to the connection with lake being cut off) and Czerniakowskie Lake. The eastern section of Vogla street crosses Wilanówka – a small river, which was created after the artificial shortening of Jeziorka river in 1959.

An important feature of the landscape surrounding Vogla street is the threat of floods (Fig. 2) – nowadays minimized due to the flood embankments erected along Vistula, but historically an important factor influencing the manner of development of these areas. In addition to Vistula, Jeziorka was also often flooded here, which caused the decision to shorten its course in 1959.

The historical form of the Wilanów landscape is inseparably connected with the ownership, economic, social and cultural processes taking place within the borders of the Wilanów Estate. The need for the consolidation of the suburban agricultural areas, resulting from economic conditions, became the direct cause of the creation of a huge land prop-

erty, known as the Wilanów Estate. This process was initiated in the 17th century by King Jan III Sobieski, who was at the same time following his dream about a suburban residence located in a pastoral landscape.

King Sobieski's work was continued by successive owners of Wilanów: Elżbieta Sieniawska, Maria Zofia and August Czartoryski, Elżbieta Lubomirska, and the Potocki family (Szpanowski 2013).

A characteristic feature of the Wilanów Estate was the fact that its successive owners, taking care of the economic development of their land, cared also about its aesthetics, which helped to build the visual integrity of the local landscape. Their activities consisted of creating large axial systems, connecting views, emphasising the dominants, implementing *ferme ornée* schemes (Sikora 2018).

At the same time, they tried to rationalize the economy in every piece of their estate. One of the manifestations of such an approach was implementation of the idea of managing the Vistula wastelands



FIGURE 2. Wilanów flooding, July 1934  
Source: Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe (Ref. 1-G-4641-3P).

by settling Dutch farmers, colloquially called Olęderzy. This process was begun in the 17th century by King Sobieski, and was continued in the 19th century by the Potocki family (Stanaszek 2014).

### The first stage of construction of the road to Zawady (later Vogla street) – in the vicinity of the Wilanów farm

At the end of the 18th century, due to the extension of the Wilanów farmstead southwards, a short new route was built on its southern edge as the map dated to 1793 shows (Fig. 3). The new road was located between the current Kostki Potockiego street and the shore of

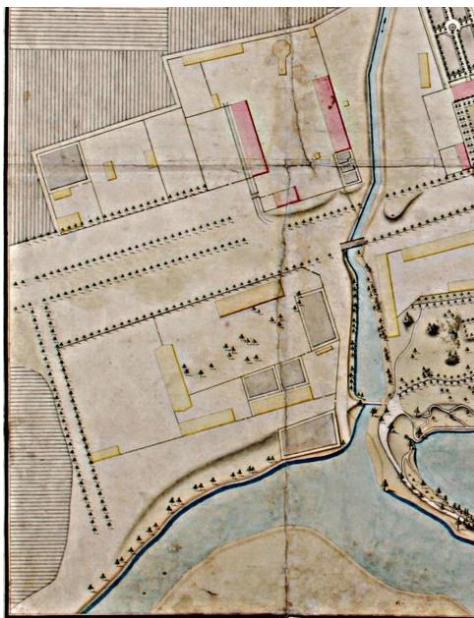


FIGURE 3. The Wilanów farm and the avenue at its southern edge – the first stage of the construction of the future Vogel street (in the left part of the illustration), ca. 1793

Source: "Planta Jeneralna Pałacu Wilanowskiego z ogrodem". Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych (Ref. 475-1).

Wilanowskie Lake. Its construction can be considered the beginning of the future Vogla street.

Until the 1840s, in the place of the other sections of Vogla street there were only meadows, partially covered with natural groves (Fig. 4). But at the same time, the creation of new settlements along Vistula, the enlargement of Wilanów farm and establishing of Morysin romantic park caused the need for further development of the road system in this area (Fig. 5). So, in the mid-19th century a new road system east of Wilanów was created. One of the new routes led to the southeast – along the shore of Powsinkowskie Lake – to the settlements of Latoszki, Zamoście and Okrzeszyn (with a branch to Zawady), the second ran north – to Morysin, along the shores of Wilanowskie Lake.

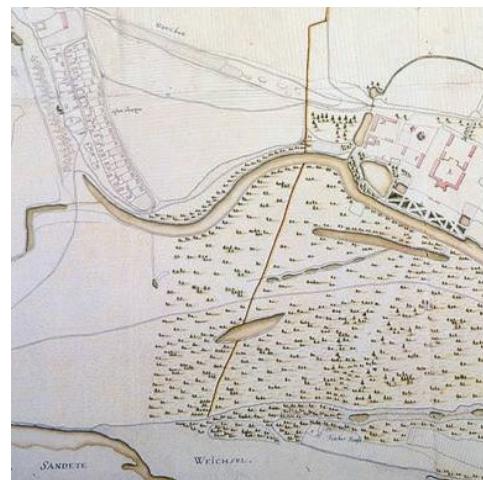


FIGURE 4. Wilanów and the area of the future Vogel street (on the left), ca. 1730

Source: "Plan von Denen König Güthern Villanow und Klein Powzin Fasahnen". Dział Dokumentacji i Cyfryzacji Wilanów (Ref. 499).



FIGURE 5. Avenue at the southern edge of the Wilanów farm and a bridge over Wilanowskie Lake, 1831

Source: "Ataki i ovladiyenia pristupom 1.yu i 2.yu liniami ukreplenia, predmiyestiyem i gorodskim valom goroda Varshavy – 25.go i 26.go chisel Avgusta 1831.go goda". Biblioteka Narodowa (Ref. ZZK 9102).

### **Characteristics of Vistula landscape shaped by the Dutch settlers in which the later Vogla street was constructed**

In the first half of the 19th century, on the initiative of the owners of the Wilanów Estate, Stanisław Kostka Potocki, and later Aleksander Potocki, the regulation of Vistula riverside areas was undertaken. It aimed at the lease of the flood plains to Dutch settlers. The regulatory plan from 1832 (Fig. 6) and the plan of the village of Zawady (Fig. 7) show, in this area, planned (or partly already existing) Polish and Dutch settlements and different forms of land use, related to the manor and peasants agricultural economy:

- Polish Colony;
- Nadwiślańska Colony;
- peasants' meadows and fields;
- farmland managed by Wilanów Manor;
- Old Colony of Dutch (from 17th century);
- land partition for new settlers.

The settlement activities undertaken by the Potocki family were aimed at the development of riverside wastelands. As Szałygin wrote: "The first contracts not preserved in the archives were concluded in 1819 and 1823. The (...) 24 November 1824, a lease was signed for 40 years. The colonists were to pay 15 zloty annual lease for each piece of cultivated land (the cultivated area could be increased by clearing bushes and thickets growing on the land of the village). The first colonies began to arise next to the Zawady village and close to the farmland managed directly by Wilanów Manor. The contract between the owner and the colonists was officially approved on 22 June 1832 [the author's translation]" (Szałygin 2004).

According to the documents, the settlers agreed to erect village buildings, including wooden houses 24 cubits long (one Polish cubit equals 57.6 cm), 14 cubits wide, covered with straw, and barns 20 cubits long and 11 cubits wide. In



FIGURE 6. Regulation plan of riverside areas, 1832

Source: "Plan Regulacji Kępy Zawadowskiej należącej do JW. Aleksandra hrabi Potockiego". Archiwum Akt Dawnych (Zb. Kart. 466-17).



FIGURE 7. The map of Zawady fields and meadows, 1840

Source: "Plan Ogrodów i Łąk wsi Zawady do Dóbr Wilanowskich należących". Archiwum Akt Dawnych (Zb. Kart. 467-7).

1827, the village of Dutch settlers had 7 houses and 64 residents. With time, the number of houses increased and the colonists built also a school, a chapel and founded a cemetery. First of all, cereals and potatoes were grown here. The Dutch settlement had a great impact on

the form of the surrounding landscape. Its most characteristic elements were:

- dykes, embankments, forming a system of protection inhabitants against Vistula floods, the dykes were usually planted with willows;

- *trytwa* – a dyke raised above the water surface and wetlands, built in places that are difficult to pass; these types of roads were usually reinforced with willow branches and poplar wood, mixed with soil and stones (Stanaszek 2012);
- *terpa* – artificial hill created to build a house on it, constructed in flood plains; they were intended to protect against flooding;
- channels, dams and drainage ditches, artificial water reservoirs;
- woven fences, which during floods stopped all the objects carried by the river. As Stanaszek (2012) writes, fences were constructed in various ways, meticulously passed down from generation to generation. The best material to weave the fences was obtained by cutting the two-year old branches of willows in March, while the distance of the pegs stuck into the ground had to be “one and a half feet”, i.e. about half a meter. Depending on local traditions and functions, horizontal or vertical braiding was practised;
- row plantings of willows and poplars, which were intended to protect farms and orchards from ice floes and other deposits brought by river during thaw and floods. They also accumulated excess water during high Vistula and Jeziorka levels, reducing the risk of flooding. Willow and poplar lines were usually planted perpendicular to the river current or on balks; therefore, they also had the function of delimiting the land of peasants.
- chapels (*kirchy*), Dutch homesteads (*Langhof*), Dutch cemeteries, windmills.

The elements mentioned above were historically present in the riverside landscape of Wilanów. There were dykes planted with willows, houses located on artificial hills, windmills, a local chapel, woven fences, parcel divisions, perpendicular to the river current (Stanaszek 2012). Jerzy Szałygin, describing Kępa Zawadowska, noted: “Despite the urbanization of the village, which was incorporated into the borders of Warsaw in 1951, the remains of the landscape associated with the Dutch colonisation are still legible. First of all, artificial plantings of willows and poplars, field layout, a fragment of an old embankment and a cemetery located in the western part of the settlement [the author’s translation]” (Szałygin 2004).

#### **Construction of a road to Zawady (the future Vogla street) in its present location**

After a huge flood in 1844, the construction of dykes around Wilanów began, which were completed in the 1860s (Szalýgin 2004). At the same time, the development of the Dutch settlement in the area of the former Vistula wastelands made it necessary to provide new villages with efficient transport services from the western side, which in turn contributed to the construction of the road in the place of the present Vogla street. This new road, running through the wetlands and meadows, straightened in its middle section, and located on an earth embankment perpendicular to Vistula current, received the form of a *trytwa* and became a part of the flood protection system built by the local inhabitants at the request of the then owner of Wilanów – August

Potocki (Akta tyczające się budowy tam... 1861–1867).

The biggest difference between the 19th century and the present course of Vogla street was in the area of the connection of Wilanowskie Lake and Pow-sinkowskie Lake. The road was connected here with a series of irregular squares and widenings, attached to the farm buildings. The then bridge over Wilanowskie Lake was located at the back of one of the barns – to the north of the present bridge. This clear connection between the road and the Wilanów farm resulted from the very strong economic and functional relationship between the new riverside settlements and the Wilanów Estate. The nineteenth-century construction of the road to Zawady was also a part of Potocki's larger plan of developing the Morysin landscape, especially its southern part – hence the transport connection of the new road with so-called royal axis (Fig. 8).

The relations between the new road (the current Vogla street) and the Wilanów farm changed over time. On a map from the second half of the 19th century (Fig. 9) the bridge over Wilanowskie Lake was already marked in a location close to the present one, and the road running through it (the western section of Vogla street) was described first of all as the “road from Zawady and Powsinek”. In the place where the road and the bridge used to be, before a “square for beetroot and potato mounds” was located. In the second half of the 19th century, the road was not only a farm road connecting the local decision-making centre – Wilanów – with satellite facilities (the Zawady farm, manor fields and meadows), but became a public road, providing direct access from Warsaw to the riverside villages.

It is worth noting that the road to Zawady (the future Vogla street) was not planted either in the 19th century or at

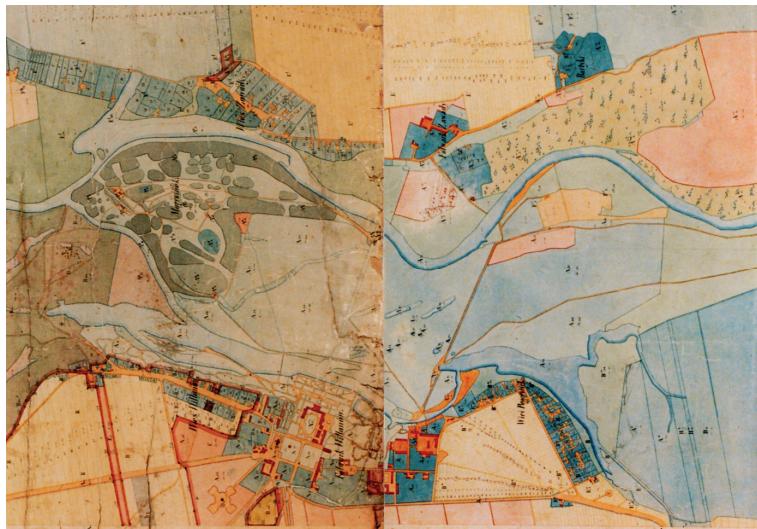


FIGURE 8. Wilanów Estate, 1850s

Source: "Dobra Willanów". Archiwum Akt Dawnych (Zb. Kart. 468-6, ark. 11, 16).

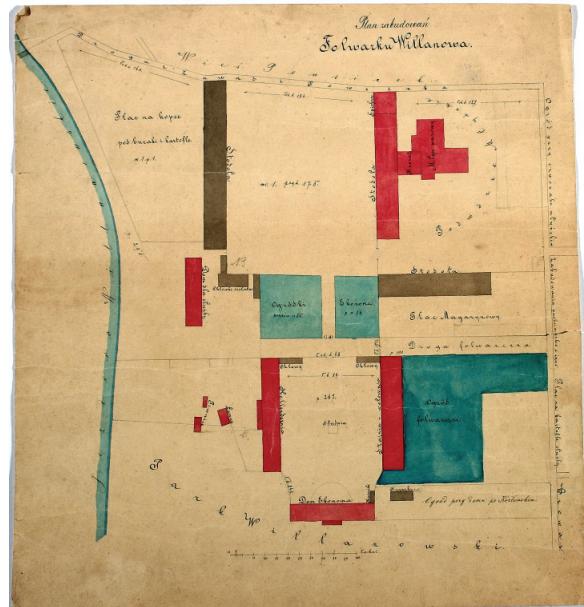


FIGURE 9. Wilanów Manor, second half of the 19th century – Vogel street described as the road from Zawady and Powsinek (in the upper part of a plan)

Source: "Plan zabudowań Folwarku Willanowa". Archiwum Akt Dawnych (Zb. Kart. 476-34).

the beginning of the 20th century, nor was it accompanied by any other high greenery. An exception was the short section running along the Wilanów farm, established as an avenue at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries.

In the interwar period, the road section between Wilanowskie Lake and Wilanówka river was still located on a high embankment, surrounded by woodless areas of meadows and fields of the Wilanów Estate – as is clearly shown in the aerial photography of the time (Fig. 10). The embankment created, as mentioned above, in the 19th century was strengthened in the interwar period (Fig. 11).

#### **Post-war history of the road to Zawady (Vogla street)**

In 1945, the Wilanów Estate was nationalised, including the agricultural areas through which the road led. In 1961, the surroundings of the Wilanów residence became the subject of planning works of the Department of Spatial Planning of the Kraków University of Technology, conducted under the direction of Professor Gerard Ciołek. The plan presented in the article by Ciołek illustrates the achievements of that period and contains also a fragment of the current Vogla street (Fig. 12) which already has a similar course to the present one.

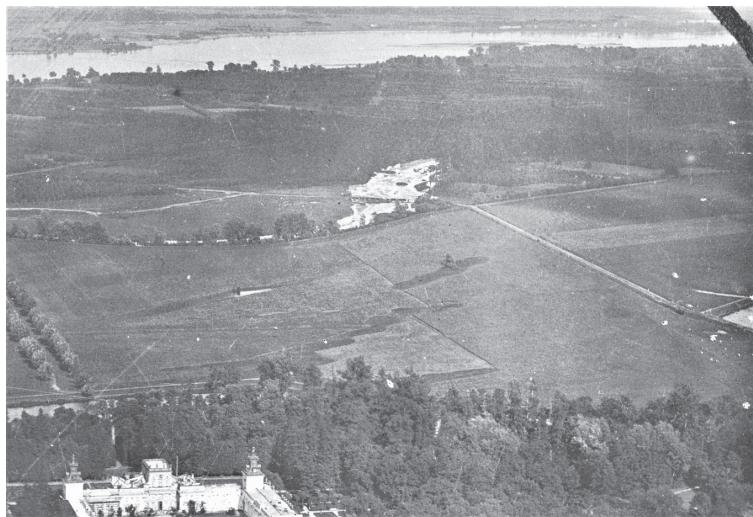


FIGURE 10. Vogel street, state in the interwar period – the street is not planted with trees (the right part of a photo)

Source: Muzeum Lotnictwa Polskiego w Krakowie.



FIGURE 11. Vogel street, 1934

Source: Wojskowy Instytut Geograficzny.

As a result of the detailed planning assumptions developed by Ciołek, several investments were carried out involving this street: a new reinforced concrete bridge over Wilanowskie Lake was built, an asphalt surface was laid and an avenue of trees – Canadian poplars *Populus*

*×canadensis* – were planted along the road (Fig. 13).

Today, Vogla street is clearly divided into three sections. The first one (western), from Przyczółkowa street to Wilanowskie Lake, is surrounded by modern housing estate buildings, which



FIGURE 12. Vogel street, 1952

Source: Ciołek (1962).



FIGURE 13. Vogel street, state in 1976

Source: Historic aerial photo from portal <http://mapa.um.warszawa.pl>.

have replaced the historical farm buildings. The second section – between Wilanowskie Lake and Wilanówka river – preserves the most authentic histori-

cal substance. The layout of the historical *trytwa* is clear here. Its surrounding has changed little and consists mainly of fields and wet meadows, only frag-

ments of it have been transformed into a golf course and an area of the dormitory of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences – SGGW. This section also offers the historical views of Morysin fields, Wilanów Garden, Powsinkowskie Lake and Wilanowskie Lake (Fig. 14). The third section of the road – between Wilanówka river and Zawady farm – has undergone major transformations. The open riverside areas have been replaced by dense tree cover along Wilanówka river, and at the end of the road, instead of the historic Zawady farm houses, there is a modern shopping centre. Vogla street is legally protected as a part of the Wilanów Cultural Park.

as an integral element of the composition of the Wilanów Estate (Kaczyńska 2011), connected with the Dutch settlement (Szaliggin 2004, Stanaszek 2014, Szpanowski 2015).

The author of this text, while not denying the evident connections of the road with the landscape of the Wilanów residence and the Dutch colonisation, developing the research of the predecessors, wanted to indicate the genesis of particular elements of the road, show the chronology of its transformations and determine the values and contemporary state of both the road itself and its surroundings.

In view of the enormous urbanization changes that have been taking place

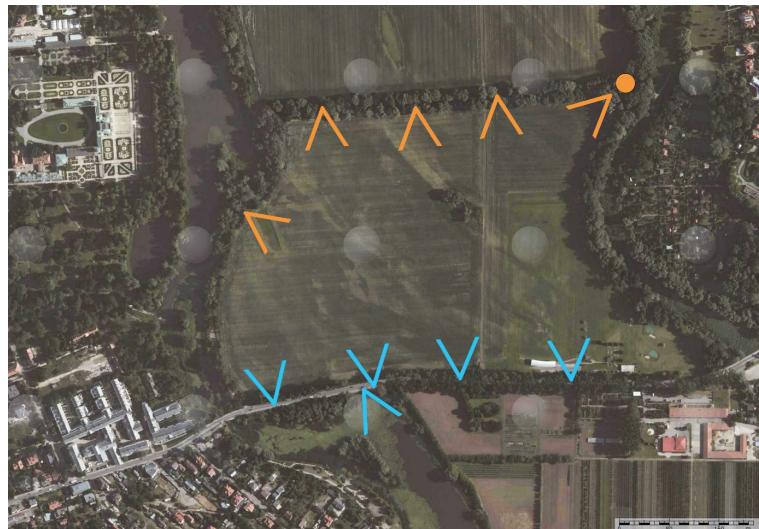


FIGURE 14. View connections between the palace and garden complex in Wilanów and Morysin with the middle section of Vogel street (orange arrows) and view openings from Vogel street to Wilanów, Morysin and Powsinkowskie Lake (blue arrows)

Source: Own elaboration based on Google map.

## DISCUSSION

Vogla street has not hitherto been an independent subject of scientific research, but many researchers have mentioned it

in Wilanów for over a decade, it is very important to fully recognize the values of the local cultural landscape in order to protect it and build the identity of this part of Warsaw on it. Vogla street,

as one of the most overloaded routes of Wilanów, will in the near future certainly be the subject of considerations concerning the possibility of its modernisation and extension, hence the urgent need to define and protect its cultural values.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The current form of Vogla street in Wilanów was influenced by both natural conditions, including its location in Vistula valley, as well as the fact that the road belonged to the Wilanów Estate.
2. Due to the fact that the owners of the Wilanów Estate brought Dutch settlers to the riverside areas, many forms of landscape development in this area originated from Dutch tradition and culture.
3. The influence of the Dutch colonists' culture on the local landscape was manifested, among other things, in the way the roads were constructed, adapted to the location on flood-plains. Vogla street is one such road (so-called *trytwa*).
4. The transformations of Vogla street reflected the changes taking place in the colonies of the settlers by Vistula. Initially, when their relationship with the local centre – the residence and the Wilanów farm – was very strong, the road to Zawady ran through the manor farm. When these colonies gained greater independence, the road ceased to be an internal road of the Wilanów Estate and became a public road providing access to Warsaw for the inhabitants of the villages by Vistula.

5. The state of preservation of the historical values of Vogla street varies from one section to the next. The central section is best preserved – between Wilanowskie Lake and Wilanówka river, therefore its existing historical values (the scale, the form of the earth embankment, viewing connections with the surrounding areas) should be strictly protected.

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- Streszczenie:** Trytwa jako relikty osadnictwa holenderskiego na przykładzie ulicy Vogla w Wilanowie. Artykuł dotyczy genezy i historii przekształceń ulicy Vogla – historycznie znajdującej się w granicach położonych w pobliżu Warszawy dóbr wilanowskich, obecnie będącej jedną z najintensywniej użytkowanych dróg dzielnicy Wilanów. Ulica Vogla w swoim obecnym przebiegu powstała w XIX wieku w związku z intensyfikacją osadnictwa, w tym głównie osadnictwa holenderskiego, na nadwiślańskich obrzeżach dóbr wilanowskich. Osadnicy przystosowując do celów użytkowych tereny zalewowe, wprowadzili wiele charakterystycznych dla swojej kultury i tradycji form zagospodarowania krajobrazu. Jedną z nich były wzmacniane faszyną i kamieniami drogi budowane na wysokich ziemnych wałach, czasami obsadzane topolami lub wierzbami, czyli trytry. Ulica Vogla, a w szczególności jej wyniesiona ponad podmokłe tereny część środkowa, jest właśnie przykładem trytry. Stanowi ona obecnie jeden z niewielu elementów dokumentujących historyczny wpływ kultury osadników holenderskich na rozwój nadwiślańskich terenów Wilanowa i ze względu na swoją wartość powinna podlegać ochronie konserwatorskiej.
- Slowa kluczowe:* krajobraz kulturowy, osadnictwo holenderskie, tama
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