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DRAWING AS A SOURCE OF FEEDBACK DURING ANALYTICAL STUDIES

RYSUNEK JAKO WSPARCIE W BADANIACH ANALITYCZNYCH

Abstract

Drawing is widely recognized as a tool for communication which enables architects to present and discuss their concepts; the drawing thus becoming the outcome of an idea. However, the process of drawing can also function the other way round. The process may be used as a tool of analysis and recognition, which inspires an architect to in-depth research, the results of which are finally presented as a drawing. In this context, the process sequence may be described as: analysis – research – synthesis, with the first and the final stages expressed in a pictorial form. The case study discussed in the paper will include the sketchbooks of Janusz Bogdanowski, an architect who employed drawing as one of the basic tools of scientific analysis and synthesis throughout his professional life.

Keywords: architectural drawing, cultural landscape, sketch

Streszczenie

Rysunek jest powszechnie uznawany za narzędzie komunikacji, które daje architektom możliwość prezentacji i omawiania koncepcji; w tym sensie jest on niejako rezultatem pewnej wizji. Jednakże sam proces rysowania może także przebiegać w odwrotnym kierunku. Może on być użyty jako narzędzie analizy i poznania, które z kolei inspiruje architekta do pogłębionych badań, a te ostatecznie mogą być ponownie przedstawione w formie rysunkowej. Dlatego przebieg procesu może być opisany jako: analiza – badanie – synteza, przy czym pierwszy i ostatni etap uwidacznia się w formie obrazowej. Studium przypadku przedstawione w niniejszym artykule będą szkicowniki pozostawione przez architekta – Janusza Bogdanowskiego, który przez całe zawodowe życie używał rysunku, jako jednego z głównych narzędzi naukowej analizy i syntezy.

Słowa kluczowe: rysunek architektoniczny, krajobraz kulturowy, szkic

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1. Introduction

Neil Waldman, a painter, once said that *Sketchbooks and journals are the street lamps that illuminate the artist's journey*¹. This artist's journey, during which the lamps illuminating the creative path are lit, is set more by such hurried notes than elaborated works. The latter are more a summary of thoughts, the first illuminations of which are preserved by an artist in a sketch. On the other hand, Brian Edwards, an architect, sees it from a broader perspective: *Drawing is a technique that allows the visual world to be understood*². In his opinion, an object which has become the subject of a drawing study, and thereby has become understood, will never be indifferent, superfluous or crummy. In consequence, the drawing's role is not only a cognitive one; it also teaches sensitivity. Edwards introduces a general dichotomy dividing drawings into the artistic – focused on formal values, i.e. texture, light play and personal expression, and the architectural, whose main aim is to document the result of analytic observation. This classification, though it can seem simplified, outlines key differences. One can add another, much more important, distinguishing feature: an artist draws what they see or feel, while an architect draws what they know, because for the latter a drawing is a tool to visualize, to present on a flat sheet of paper a 'real' three-dimensional structure that appears only in their imagination [4].

However, a drawing is employed not only to artistic or design-related aims, but also in academic work. At this point one should put forward the thesis that a drawing can be a very useful research tool for exploring various phenomena on the one hand, and turn out to be irreplaceable in presenting research results on the other. As such, it can be as equally a valuable source of knowledge transmission as a written study. One case study that could be used to prove the foregoing thesis is the academic and artistic activity of the architect Janusz Bogdanowski.

2. An architect with a sketchbook

Professor Janusz Bogdanowski dedicated his entire professional life to the Faculty of Architecture at Cracow University of Technology, where he managed the Landscape Architecture Section (later renamed the Chair of Landscape Architecture and Garden Composition Theory). The bibliography of his works includes nearly 800 items, and his key areas of interest focused on landscape architecture, military and garden architecture and the protection of cultural heritage [5].

¹ Goodreads, (online) <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/758194-sketchbooks-and-journals-are-the-street-lamps-that-illuminate-the> (date of access: 21 01 2015)

² B. Edwards, *Understanding Architecture through drawing*, second edition, 2008, p. 10

Being one of the most outstanding Polish academics specialising in these fields, he participated in numerous international conferences and symposia, where he was recognised as the *Polish professor with the sketchbook*. And indeed, in Bogdanowski's case, the perpetual need to photographically document visited places was also accompanied by a need to document them in drawings. He discovered the value of drawing as a useful tool in architect's work while at university. His first sketchbook is dated 1952, and was a handmade collection of loose sheets of paper bound with a clip. After the first one, subsequent ones were created for nearly fifty years, one by one, until 2001. The last is numbered 68.

It is very rare that we have a chance to compare the results of academic work with preserved drawings that not only document research interests and examined ideas, but also offer an excellent review of changes to the designer's workshop. Over the nearly three thousands pages of his sketchbooks, many of which contain more than one drawing and are frequently accompanied by descriptions and quotations from the encountered stories, we can see, among other things, the historic – practically no longer existent – cultural landscape of post-war Poland. The drawings, made by a professional architect with excellent theoretical background and great sensitivity, show what their author found worth extracting and recording: plans of villages and settlements, single cottages with everyday objects and equipment – unique works by local craftsmen, machines found in mills and oil facilities, as well as vast landscapes. There are also sketches of park layouts, palaces, fortresses and churches. Most are located – during the first twenty years – in southern Poland, while later on we encounter numerous drawings of venues visited during foreign trips [2]. All this material offers an extremely rich research basis that deserves a multi-aspect study. In this article, the sketch will be presented as a tool of academic work.

3. An academic with a sketchbook

In the history of the development of civil engineering and architecture, drawing has always played a prominent role, being the main method of presenting concepts. Consequently, it is one of the key subjects taught to the adepts of these professions [1]. An architect's sketchbook, containing visual records of specific places – which can be referred to later in their design process – and the register of personal concepts, has become a special tool in the 19th century³. However, the teaching process is not limited to the provision of this tool – with its various and numerous applications – since drawing is accompanied by analysis of the theme being drawn and its transformation for the purpose of a specific interpretation. This

³ Architectural sketchbooks become highly popular in the 19th century England. They can still be admired today, for instance in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, where the sketchbooks by R.N. Shaw, E. George or Edwin Lutyens make up a separate collection.

in turn often requires a synthetic interpretation, finally leaving space for individual expression as manifested by the person-specific line, exposing some elements of the studied theme while rejecting others. Bogdanowski's sketchbooks, created over the period of dozens of years, give us a chance to observe this process on a macro scale.

3.1. Analysis

Bogdanowski's first sketches, made in the 1950s, are a manifestation of his immense curiosity with the world. They beam with enthusiasm and the desire to get to know reality, the need to examine and analyse both the objects encountered during his journeys and the surroundings of such objects. Interestingly, from the very beginning, a typical feature of his sketches is the rule of the broadest possible, context-specific approach to particular themes. The best illustration of this principle are the sketchbooks dedicated to specific localities⁴. For example, the first thing we might encounter is the vast panorama of a village and its schematic outline – an observation of the landscape-specific context of a place. There will then follow a description of its typical features, such as the types of fencing, plants encountered in the gardens, and finally, the village's houses and their fittings. The need to document the observed condition of things was so great that it motivated Bogdanowski to develop an original system enabling fast marking of major elements of an architectural structure – foundation types, roof coverage, log bindings, etc. An extremely important fact is that many of the details and elements preserved in the drawings would not be commonly considered as deserving particular attention, yet Bogdanowski discerned their uniqueness in their individual, hand-made manufacturing or inventive form.

The architect's interests are not limited to rural construction. In his sketchbooks, he draws monastery layouts, castles and palaces, park complexes, outlines of small towns. Another important feature is the selection of topics drawn – the author of the sketchbooks consistently avoids architectural 'great stories' and ventures to discover small settlements located on the periphery, away from major roads, found, often by case, on his travelling route. He is stunned even by very modest facilities captured by his skilful lines and selected from an indefinite number of everyday details.

3.2. Synthesis

Venues visited and discovered during countless trips are a starting point for academic library research, and if its findings turn out to be important, also for

⁴ The most important sketchbooks in this group include the ones dedicated to Kryspinów and Juszczyń, discussed in articles published in *Aura*. See M. Bogdanowska, *Kryspinów, sierpień 1955*, *AURA* 10/2007, p. 14-15; idem, *Juszczyń, lipiec 1956*, *AURA* 11/2007, p. 32-33.

publications focusing on specific items⁵. It is worth recalling that the 1950s and 1960s in Poland saw a broad inventory campaign of the monuments and historic items that had survived the turmoil of the war. Bogdanowski joined in, employing his knowledge and skills to this purpose. He is a co-author of catalogues of monuments and historic items, including those dedicated to industrial architecture⁶. His academic work, based on photographic and drawn documentation of various facilities, aims at popularizing regional architecture and disseminating knowledge of its uniqueness⁷.

The negative transformations that the Polish cultural landscape was subjected to during the Communist rule have been recorded by numerous architects and urban planners, so it is not surprising that someone who came to know that landscape in such a profound manner as Janusz Bogdanowski must have been particularly worried by the changes. This fact motivated numerous publications dedicated to the protection of the landscape, suggesting possible approaches to the transformations already underway in order to ensure, without questioning the need for modernization, that the most precious ‘typical’ features of Polish cultural heritage were taken into account and preserved.

New research tasks, study visits with students (1968), field work carried out in Przemyśl and Biecz, all stimulated the transformation of Bogdanowski’s sketchbooks into notebooks. The scarcity of time did not allow for time-consuming drawing studies, while his skilful hand allowed faster recording of the most important matters. His drawings from the 1960s and 1970s show complex outlines for fortifications, measurements, quick comments and notes. They are intertwined with elaborate, axonometric designs of monastery layouts and numerous views of open panoramas in which the author attempts to analyse the landscape’s interior, graphically marking its particular elements.

We can observe a clear correlation between the themes of the sketchbooks and Bogdanowski’s publications from the 1960s, which focus on issues related to landscape architecture (studies, designs, protection) and military architecture (Biecz, Ogrodzieniec, Przemyśl, Rzeszów). In the 1970s, the most prominent theme is the issue of preservation of the historic cultural landscape. In the period of intensive transformation of the so-called ‘Gierek era’, manifestly hostile to the wooden rural cottage and determined to replace it with blocks of flats erected among fields of wheat and barley, it became obvious that the world immortalized

⁵ Papers published in 1950s and 1960s illustrate the issue, mainly these in “Ziemia” e.g. on the storehouse in Udrycze, the manor in Czermienice or the bishop’s kennels in Bodzentyn.

⁶ Inter alia J. Bogdanowski, M. Kornecki, *Katalog zabytków Budownictwa Przemysłowego. Powiat myślenicki* vol. III, No. 2 Wrocław 1963.

⁷ As a side note, one should mention that in that period a thatched cottage or a wooden church were perceived as manifestations of the backwardness of Polish rural areas and the attempts to preserve them, undertaken by many, were interpreted as a contestation of the political system, or as eccentricity.

in his sketches was slowly ceasing to exist. In his numerous publications from that period, Bogdanowski insists on establishing protection zones, elaborates the analyses of landscape values, the methodology of research and documentation of historic resources that still exist. It was already clear that the battle for preservation would mostly focus on rural areas, military architecture objects (provoking a reluctance to this day, as a 'relic from the partition period'), historic parks and gardens which, deprived of their legal caretakers, had become neglected and were often treated as 'undeveloped' terrain ideal for new investments.

In 1979 Bogdanowski finished one of his most important works, a book that revolutionized the approach to the fortifications from the Austrian partition period in Kraków, entitled *Warownie i zieleń twierdzy Kraków* (Fortalices and greenery of the Krakow stronghold)⁸. Thanks to this publication, one of the largest strongholds from the 19th century gained a vast group of fans. There is no doubt that the accessible language and numerous illustrations by the author significantly contributed to its positive reception. In many cases the illustrations summarized previous *in situ* inventory drawings. However, in terms of illustrative material, *Architektura obronna w krajobrazie Polski. Od Biskupina do Westerplatte* (Military architecture in the landscape of Poland. From Biskupin to Westerplatte)⁹ published in 2002 remains unmatched. Bogdanowski's drawings prepared for the purposes of this study account for nearly half (!) of the book's 500 pages. Clear descriptions allow readers to learn about major works of Polish military architecture even without reading the book thoroughly. The prototypes of many of these can be found in his sketchbooks, while the book itself is a summary of a more than half-century-long passion.

Apart from his monumental works, Bogdanowski continues to publish monographic articles on the results of his studies and the outcomes of analysis of specific phenomena. Of particular note are the articles published in the 1990s in *Teki Krakowskie*. One of the first issues contains a study on backyard gardens. Once again the illustrations made by the author dominate the written content: a three-page long description is accompanied by the layouts of preserved gardens and a wonderful drawing illustrating the typical layout of a Kraków townhouse, with street greenery and a hall leading to a modest but picturesque garden in the back¹⁰. Just like studies on military architecture, a cross-section work entitled *Polskie ogrody ozdobne* (Polish ornamental gardens), a summary of many years of Bogdanowski's academic research, was a cornerstone position when it comes to the dissemination of knowledge on the Polish cultural landscape¹¹. Also this book

⁸ J. Bogdanowski, *Warownie i zieleń twierdzy Kraków*, Kraków 1979.

⁹ J. Bogdanowski, *Architektura obronna w krajobrazie Polski. Od Biskupina do Westerplatte*, Kraków 2002.

¹⁰ J. Bogdanowski, *Informacje o problemie ogrodów krakowskich kamienic*, *Teki Krakowskie*, No. 1, 1994, pp. 113 – 122.

¹¹ J. Bogdanowski, *Polskie ogrody ozdobne*, Kraków 2000

contains numerous illustrations presenting the classifications and typologies of layouts, explaining the nature of various garden compositions.

Given the abundance of academic studies, it is difficult to choose the most important ones. However, it is worth mentioning the professor's teaching activity and, in this context, his academic script on a study method based on a system of architectural-landscape units and interiors developed by himself, since this has been republished a number of times¹². This publication has provided future architects with a tool enabling them to recognize and evaluate elements of landscape, thereby teaching them respect for the context they encounter in their work. Interestingly, it is in his sketchbooks that we can trace the 'moment' that this pioneering method first appeared – it is his drawings from the beginning of the 1970s that show a clear need to analyse specific landscape elements and assign them a particular function. Some of the sketches are as small as postage stamps – clearly what mattered to the designer was to capture the essence of the theme being drawn. It is also worth noting that the study in which the author discusses the JARK-WAK method consists in more than 50% illustrations. Hundreds of hours spent on drawing, analysis of the encountered places, studying various views and objects provided the foundation for the development of a complex research method. The author decided to explain this method using drawings, and in this way, the process of analysis-research-synthesis found its reflection in the cycle of drawing-theoretical studies-drawing.

4. A draftsman with a sketchbook

Finally, one cannot disregard the purely technical aspect of the drawings themselves and their artistic expression. What we are looking at is a form of expression that Bogdanowski has used throughout his entire professional life – a simple, linear drawing, without any hatching. However, over the years it has undergone particular transformations, and Bogdanowski fairly quickly developed the original features of his individual drawing style.

His first period consists in analysis. Initially, his drawings were clearly clumsy. It is obvious that he didn't know what he actually wanted to draw. (Paradoxically, this is a fairly frequent problem, when a draftsman cannot answer the simple question of why they are drawing something in the first place). In this time, linear sketches with excessively delicate contours were created. Sometimes, the artist, without much conviction, introduced hatching. He didn't know whether the drawing should take up all the page or just part of it. One can also see discouragement in Bogdanowski's drawings, works abandoned half way through.

¹² J. Bogdanowski, *Metoda jednostek i wnętrz architektoniczno-krajobrazowych (JARK - WAK) w studiach i projektowaniu*, pomoc dydaktyczna, Politechnika Krakowska, Kraków 1989; English version: *The method of architecture landscape (JARK-WAK) in studies and design*, Kraków 1998.

However, the third sketchbook seems to have been filled with works by another author. Three years after Bogdanowski began keeping these sketchbooks, a real explosion takes place – in 1955 as many as seven books, each several dozen pages long, are completely filled with drawings. Such intensive work brings tangible results – the drawings of 1956 are some of the best in the entire collection. ‘The lanterns of drawings’ had just lit his artistic path: Bogdanowski developed his own, ‘unequal’, vivid line, commonly recognizable later, whose free modification enabled him to expose lights and shadows or represent a multi-plane space. The author of the drawings consciously selects his takes and excels in capturing the true nature of the portrayed venues. The main feature of the sketches from the first period is still the pursuit of precision, with gradual liberation from the originally assumed convention of a ‘traveller’s story’, in which the author describes in detail all the facilities encountered on his way. Sketches from this period have one thing in common: regardless of the intended purpose of the drawing, the author cared about making good drawings.

Bogdanowski’s second period is synthesis. Research works require resignation from elaborate forms in favour of reliable visual notes. The joy of drawing no longer stems from copying and interpreting reality; the need to capture its nature, reduce the observed theme to almost a graphic sign and the need to identify the components adding up to different types of landscape interiors prevail.

The third period was creation. In the 1980s, Bogdanowski changes his tools, definitively abandoning the pencil and adopting a fineliner instead. The change of technique is reflected in the change of the nature of his drawings – ink cannot be corrected, which means that a final decision needs to be made ‘at once’. Drawings from the last, third period are extremely dynamic. The questions of the sense and purpose of drawing are revisited again. Prior analysis and quick synthesis are replaced by the pure pleasure of creation. There is no more space nor willingness for in-depth studies or measurements – what’s left is expression, enabling the designer to draw the interior of a baroque church or the facade of a gothic cathedral in just a few strokes, complementing the picture with an amusing mascarón. The drawings overlap, and the lines, previously setting the even contour of the drawn object, starts to wave and change into a dotted line, sometimes even made with the use of a half-dry felt-tip pen. The drawings from the last few years are, finally, clearly artistic in nature, reflecting Bogdanowski’s spontaneity, dynamics and visible joy.

5. Conclusion

When looking at someone’s life’s work we tend to focus on its final outcome. We know nothing of the creased sheets of paper torn out of notebooks, we overlook hours spent among books in archives, we fail to analyse the context of everyday struggle with reality. However, all these elements are indirectly reflected

in the work, and in the case of Bogdanowski – in hundreds of scientific studies and knowledge transferred to students, as well as in the selection of themes to be drawn, the manner of their representation and the line. In his case drawing – initially a documentation tool – has become a means of academic expression. All of this stemmed from the empathy towards the perceived world, awakened in the process of drawing. This phenomenon has been aptly summarized by Edwards: *To have sat for an hour and drawn an old panelled door is to create a respect for the object that may discourage the tendency to daub it with graffiti, or to relegate it to firewood*¹³. In the context of the foregoing, it is obvious that had it not been for the act of drawing, Janusz Bogdanowski would never have become such a devoted admirer of Polish landscape and such a heroic defender of it.

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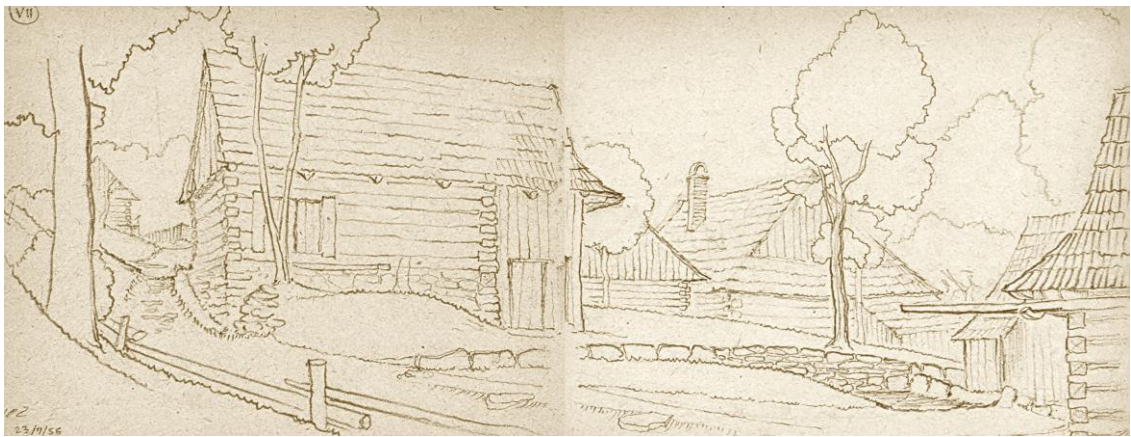
¹³ B. Edwards, op. cit., p. 7

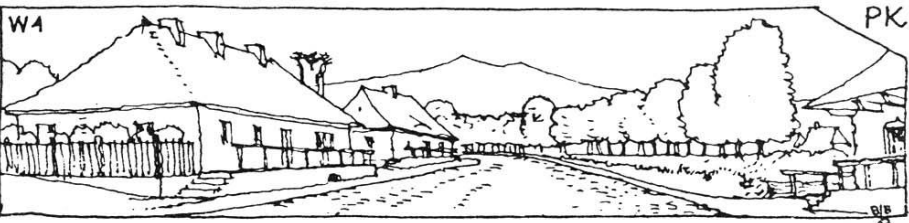
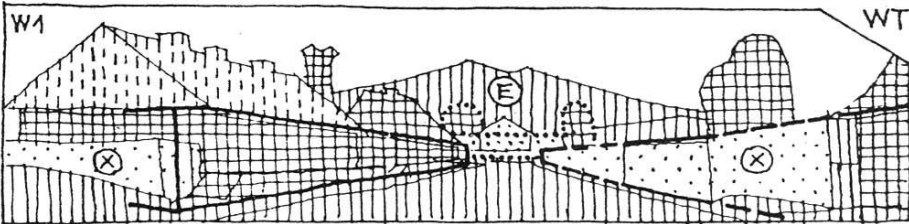
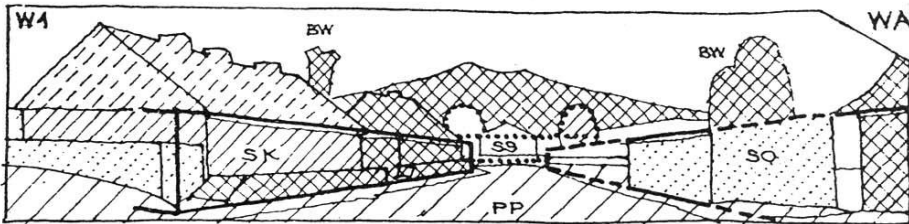
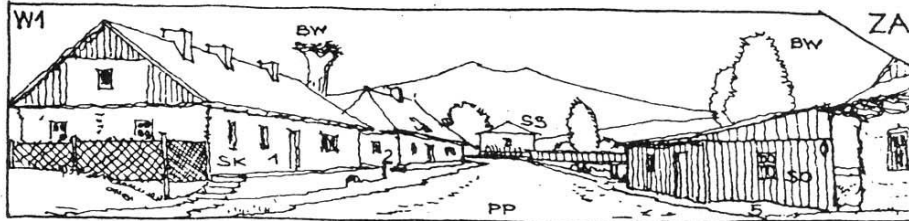
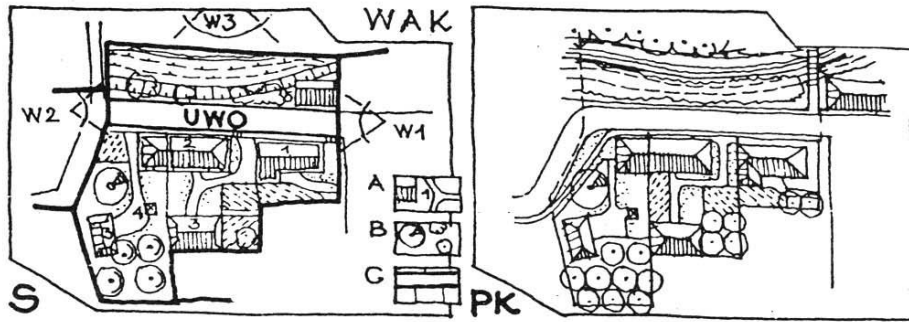
Podpisy do ilustracji/ captions:

Il. 1. Juszczyn, widok przysiółka, rysunek ołówkiem, J. Bogdanowski, 1956
ill. 1. Juszczyn, view of the hamlet, pencil drawing by J. Bogdanowski, 1956.

Il. 2. Tabela z opracowania poświęconego analizie wartości krajobrazowych,
metoda JARK-WAK, rys. J. Bogdanowski, 1989.
ill. One of the tables from the book on analysis of landscape values, the method
JARK-WAK, drawing by J. Bogdanowski, 1989.

Il. 3. Rzym, krajobraz i zamek, rysunek cienkopisem, J. Bogdanowski, 1993.
ill. 3. Rome, landscape and a castle, felt-tip pen drawing by J. Bogdanowski, 1993.





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