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Material Culture in Central European Towns

Articles by Paweł Cembrzyński, Urszula Sowina, Piotr Kołpak,
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Inhalt

MEMO 9 (2022): Material Culture in Central European Towns

Materiality of neighbourly relations in medieval central European towns. A step towards understanding neighbourhood formation <i>Paweł Cembrzyński, Urszula Sowina</i>	1-22
The Social Role of Saints' Processions in 15 th Century Cracow <i>Piotr Kołpak</i>	23-38
Building identity. Town halls of small Polish towns as a symbol and a sign of urban character and identity (14 th -16 th century) <i>Maciej T. Radomski</i>	39-57
Expressing urban identities through medieval secular badges <i>Jakub Sawicki</i>	58-73
Sacrum in the Service of the Community. The Chapel of Cracow City Council in the Comparative Perspective of Late Medieval Europe <i>Monika Saczyńska-Vercamer</i>	74-87

Zum Geleit der neunten Ausgabe von MEMO

Elisabeth Gruber

-)) We were interested not in the materiality of the object or space itself, but in the process by which they became relevant to the community, gained symbolic meaning and a unifying character. We were interested in the ways and circumstances in which space and objects were used or in which they organised interpersonal contacts.

Monika Saczynska-Vercamer



Die Beiträge der neunten Ausgabe von MEMO greifen ausgewählte Aspekte von materieller Kultur im städtischen Raum auf und untersuchen, inwieweit städtischer Raum – beispielsweise in Form topografischer Nachbarschaften – und spezifische Objekte wie Pilgerzeichen, Gebäude oder Kapellenausstattungen gemeinschaftsbildend wirkten, symbolische Bedeutung erlangten oder gar mediatisierende Kräfte entwickelten. Anstoß dafür bot die inhaltliche Schwerpunktsetzung des IMC Leeds 2019 (<https://www.imc.leeds.ac.uk/imc2019/>), die sich dem Thema „Materialities“ widmete. Eine Auswahl der dort von der Forschergruppe rund um Monika Saczynska-Vercamer vom Centre for History of Medieval and Modern Material Culture in Warschau diskutierten Beiträge liegen nun in publizierter Form vor.

Paweł Cembrzyński und Urszula Sowina zeigen in ihrem Beitrag anhand von archäologischer, architektonischer und schriftlicher Überlieferung Möglichkeiten der Entwicklung von städtischen Nachbarschaften auf. Piotr Kołpak fragt am Beispiel von Krakau nach dem Einfluss der Landespatrone auf die städtische Sakraltopografie. Maciej Radomski untersucht die Rolle von Rathäusern auf städtische Identitätskonstruktionen. Am Beispiel von Kleidungsaccessoires wie Pilgerzeichen oder Zunftzeichen stellt Jakub Sawicki materielle Ausdrucksformen städtischer Gemeinschaften vor. Monika Saczynska-Vercamer schließlich untersucht am Beispiel der Ratskapelle von Krakau die Bedeutung von Tragaltären für Prozesse von Gemeinschaftsbildung innerhalb der städtischen Ratselite.

Featured Image

Jankowo Dolne, site 21. Kachel mit Hochzeitsszene. Aus: Janiak 2003, S. 84, Abb. 143.

Materiality of neighbourly relations in medieval central European towns

A step towards understanding neighbourhood formation

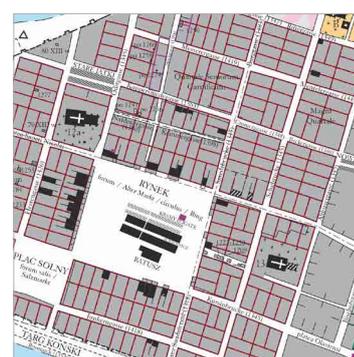
Paweł Cembrzyński, Urszula Sowina

Neighbourhoods constitute a basic element of social and spatial town structure. Yet, only few studies in historical urban research attempt to define and contextualize them. In this paper, we show formation, existence and evolution of neighbourhoods in medieval chartered towns in Central Europe using archaeological, architectural and written sources. Specifically, we: 1) traced material elements of the built environment enabling face-to-face communication, 2) identified spaces fostering community building and 3) considered how to find neighbourhoods within the city matrix. We show that neighbourly relations mainly concerned infrastructure maintenance and that spatial development diminished inter-plot connectivity inducing shift of social interactions to streets. Thus, material markers of neighbourhoods can provide a distinct perspective for tracing social urban interactions.

Nachbarschaften stellen ein grundsätzliches Element sozialer und räumlicher Struktur von Städten dar. Dennoch gibt es in der historischen Städteforschung nur wenige Versuche, die diese definieren und in Kontext stellen. In diesem Artikel beschreiben wir die Entstehung, den Fortbestand und die Entwicklung von Nachbarschaften in mittelalterlichen, zentral-europäischen Lokationsstädten mithilfe archäologischer, architektonischer und schriftlicher Quellen. Im Besonderen haben wir: 1) materielle Elemente der gebauten Umwelt nachverfolgt, die face-to-face Kommunikation ermöglichen, 2) Räume, die Gemeinschaftsbildung ermöglichen identifiziert und 3) untersucht, wie Nachbarschaften in der Stadt-Matrix gefunden werden können. Wir zeigen, dass nachbarschaftliche Verhältnisse hauptsächlich für die Erhaltung der Infrastruktur zuständig waren und dass räumliche Entwicklung die Vernetzung zwischen Nachbarschaftsparzellen senkt, was soziale Interaktionen auf die Straßen verlagert. Folglich können materielle Zeichen von Nachbarschaften eine eigenständige Perspektive, soziale städtische Interaktionen zu verfolgen, bieten.

1. Introduction

The term 'neighbourhood' seems to have a very conspicuous meaning, simply referring to a well-known area where one lives, although at a closer look such an understanding of 'neighbourhood' is very subjective and vague. It can be



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Featured Image

Urban layout of Wrocław around 1300. Reconstruction of original parcellation. Map: The Historical Atlas of Polish Towns, Vol. IV Śląsk, Issue 13 Wrocław, Wrocław 2017, Map 5: Wrocław around 1300, By: M. Chorowska, Cz. Lasota, T. Kastek, J. Połamarczuk.

read differently according to context or even the language one speaks.¹ For example, in modern urban studies, neighbourhood is considered as one of the smallest (basic) units of urban social organization. It can be defined based on walking distance (up to 10 minutes), physical enclosure, administrative division, identity based on proximity to a topographical feature, and social characteristics (ethnicity, occupation, income etc.).² The neighbourhood is almost always associated with a community. One without a community is considered deficient, dysfunctional and doomed.³ Since neighbourhoods are important features of urban life they are also in the area of interest of archaeology, history and other social sciences.⁴ In the context of historical studies, one of the key issues is to identify a neighbourhood in historical sources. M.E. Smith in a review on tracing the neighbourhood through archaeological methods, defines it as (drawing on modern sociological theories) “a residential zone that has considerable face-to-face interaction and is distinctive on the basis of physical and/or social characteristics”.⁵ In an anthropological archaeology perspective neighbourhoods are seen as “residential, social landscapes that serve to integrate multiple households without homogenizing residents”.⁶ In European research on medieval and early modern towns this clear, ‘archaeological’ definition has not been employed by historical studies. Instead, a multitude of approaches exist, depending on the subject under study. Neighbourhoods can be described as local communities connected by attending the same parish church or by a membership of a secular or sacral association (for instance in medieval and renaissance Italian cities⁷). Sometimes the term ‘neighbourhood’ is not explicitly defined and used interchangeably with the term ‘district’⁸ or identified with a ‘quartier’.⁹

The problem of defining the ‘neighbourhood’ is especially interesting in medieval chartered towns in Central Europe (German: *Lokationstadt*). On the lands east of the river Elbe new towns emerged in two ways: either old urban centres (e.g. Krakow, Wrocław) were reorganized, or newly rising towns were founded (e.g. Culm, Elbląg), and both types were organized based on German law (Law of Magdeburg, Law of Lübeck, Law of Culm). As a consequence, their legal and spatial organization was based on the principles of this law, and as such created the framework for neighbourhood emergence within these towns. The legal organization indicated that a town, which was granted legal autonomy in relation to territorial authorities by virtue of *locatio*, developed its own government, which included the *voyt* (Latin: *advocatus*): an alderman with *officium scabinatus* (*echevins*) and the Council with a burgomaster exercising power (including judicial power) in the town.¹⁰ The spatial organization was reflected in a well-measured plan of the town with a separate area for the market place surrounded by a regular street network and city-blocks. The latter included the settlement parcels of land with specific modular measure-

1 Garrioch/Peel 2006, p. 664.

2 Flint 2009, p. 354, Dean 2012, p. 8.

3 Garrioch/Peel 2006, p. 665.

4 Smith 2010.

5 Smith 2010, p. 139.

6 Pacifico/Truex 2019.

7 See e.g. Burke 2006, Garrett/Rosser 2006.

8 See e.g. Szende 2012.

9 Czaja 2019.

10 For further reading, see Gawlas 2005.

ments.¹¹ These parcels of land were held by burghers and were subject to perpetual ground rents, but their holders had complete property rights (i.e. the right of purchase and sale, the right of inheritance, etc.). The inhabitants of these plots were often changing due to an inflow of newcomers, as well as mobility inside the city walls.¹² Under these circumstances, various social communities were shaped: families (including domestic servants), neighbourhoods, and professional, or sometimes even ethnic, communities. The neighbourhood communities represented, apart from those of the family, the most important types of social ties in pre-industrial towns, and neighbour space was crucial for communication in the medieval town. Thus, the clearly defined foundation law had its manifestation not only in social life, but also in the physical form of these towns, which opens up the possibility of investigating the neighbourhood through materiality.

In this paper we would like to contribute to an understanding of the formation and existence of neighbourhoods in central European medieval chartered towns through studying their material form. Modern studies of urban life indicate that the material space is vital for creating and maintaining social relations.¹³ We have assumed that the formation and existence of neighbourhoods is based on face-to-face relations between inhabitants (neighbours) in a given space. Our specific aim was to: 1) trace elements of the built environment that allow or enable communication; 2) identify spaces which potentially fostered social cohesion and community building; and 3) consider where one should look for a neighbourhood in a chartered town. To achieve these goals, we used examples from large chartered towns from the area of today's Poland, mainly Krakow and Wrocław, dated from the 13th to 16th century (a period of development of chartered towns). In this short paper we could only note the most important issues, that is why we chose places with a good state of preservation both in terms of historical and archaeological data.

2. Methods and sources

To better understand neighbourly interactions, we employed a three-element methodological approach. (1) We described and analysed elements of the urban space based on archaeological and architectural sources by investigating accessibility (where one could walk and meet, i.e. streets, markets) and identifying the elements that could lead to conflict or cooperation (wells, latrines, gutters). (2) In the next step we traced these material elements in urban written records to find out how people perceived and used them. Such an approach, inherent to historical archaeology, can give a fresh insight into the past through correspondence, contradiction, or mutual complementation of text and artefact.¹⁴ (3) We then looked at the development of the built environment – as reflected by archaeological and architectural phases and complemented by written sources – within a wide chronological scope to capture possible changes in neighbourly relations.

11 Pudełko 1967, Sowina 1995; Goliński 1995, Chorowska/Lasota 1995.

12 E.g. Sowina 1991; Sowina 2004; Mrozowski 2020.

13 See e.g. Hillier/Hanson 1984, Lefebvre 1991, Gehl 2011.

14 Andrén 1998.

Archaeological and architectural sources included features like: masonry and wooden constructions of houses, sanitary and production infrastructure, border markers (fences, walls) as well as finds like traces of daily activities (production, waste disposal, communication, etc.). Archaeological and architectural remains analysis can determine not only functions and forms but also the chronology of changes. In the case of neighbourly relations, these types of material sources can be particularly useful for identifying the usage of space: where people were walking and meeting and what kind of common facilities were they using. In the current paper, the information on archaeological and architectural features were derived mainly from published archaeological reports and derived publications.

The main written sources concerning neighbourly relations considered by us included all surviving types of court books and documents of towns of varying sizes in the Polish lands from the 14th through the second half of the 16th century. Among them were town councillors' books, books of the tribunal of the *advocatus*, and *echevin* books. In the case of Krakow, archival research also embraced separate books of testaments and town account books, as well as books of the municipal building inspectors (Latin: *quartalienses*; Polish: *wiertelnicy*).¹⁵ The vast majority of town books and documents were manuscripts, usually in Latin, but some were in German. In the court books (the equivalent of the notary books of southern Europe) all real estate transactions were registered, and a detailed analysis of all these allowed us to recreate ownerships in a town on each plot and street. Such socio-topographical investigations allowed us to understand relations between plot owners on different levels: within city-blocks, on streets and in quarters.

3. Markers of neighbourly relations

3. 1. The structure of the built environment in chartered towns: a basis for developing neighbourly relations

The form and localization of elements of the built environment connected with neighbourly relations depended on the spatial organization of the urban space. A characteristic feature of the chartered towns was a regular urban layout in the form of a grid plan.¹⁶ The layout consisted of: 1) a regular market square (rarely more than one) or a market-street; 2) city-blocks with rectangular urban plots (some blocks were designated for a church); 3) parallel streets that separated city-blocks; and 4) a delimitation of the main urban area (a ditch, fence, city-wall). The regular grid had an ideological and aesthetic significance,¹⁷ but primarily created a modular system of space delimitation. It allowed for the easy addition of new streets and blocks to an old structure according to similar regulations. The process of creating a new urban layout started in the centre and continued outwards to the peripheries.¹⁸ The first delimited part of a new town was the market square with its surrounding city-blocks. Additional city-blocks were added behind the first ones according to need. The process

¹⁵ Jelonek-Litewka/Litewka/Walczy (ed.) 1997 (years 1568–1577).

¹⁶ Hall 1978.

¹⁷ For further reading, see Lilley 2009; Eysymontt 2009.

¹⁸ Pudełko 1967, p. 46; Eysymontt 2009, p. 22; Untermann 2006.



Fig. 1 Original division of city-blocks in Wrocław west from Market Square. Arrows indicate directions of communication. Base map: The Historical Atlas of Polish Towns, Vol. IV Śląsk, Issue 13 Wrocław, Wrocław 2017, Map 5: Wrocław around 1300, By: M. Chorowska, Cz. Lasota, T. Kastek, J. Połamarczuk.

continued until the blocks fully covered the space inside the town boundaries, for example in medieval Wrocław¹⁹; in some cases, part of an intramural space was left open for a longer period.²⁰ Each city-block in a grid contained rectangular plots, with plots oriented with the shorter side towards a street. The number of plots and their exact orientation in each city-block was dependant on the design of the urban layout and the course of the major communication routes in a town. In smaller towns (initially) blocks contained only one row of plots, but in larger urban centres it was usually two rows (**Fig. 1**).²¹ The size of the plot and the city-block was based on the modular element's dimensions within the grid,²² but from the beginning it was subjected to divisions and transformations.²³ Each town had main roads leading from gates to the market square, secondary streets with lower communication importance, and side streets connecting to the main ones. Here, we focused on showing that neighbourly relations depended on the type of material structure present, and will describe relations within three elements of the urban layout: plot, block, and street.

3. 1. 1. Basic unit: an urban plot (borders and infrastructure)

A plot (Latin *Area*, *curia*; German *Hof*) constituted the basic spatial unit of medieval chartered towns.²⁴ The plot functioned as a living and working space for the owner and his family. Basic features inside the boundaries of a plot included: a house, service buildings (sheds, warehouses, workshops, fireplaces,

19 Chorowska 2010, pp. 67–89.

20 Cembrzyński/Radomski 2022.

21 Krasnowolski 2004, p.186.

22 Pudełko 1967; Krasnowolski 2004.

23 Piekalski 2001, p. 217.

24 Sowina 1995; Goliński 1995.

barns, etc.), sanitary devices (dug wells, cesspits, gutters), communication routes, and sometimes gardens.²⁵ Within some plots, especially in larger towns like Gdańsk, Wrocław, or Krakow, there existed 'connections', which were conduits branching off from the town's water supply system to reach these plots.²⁶

The first element that established relations among neighbours was a boundary. Archaeological excavations indicate their presence from the very beginning of a town's existence. Boundaries could be marked by constructions and buildings of varying complexity. For example, a fence built from posts and planks was discovered in Elbląg, on the sites on the streets Mostowa 15 and Duchą Świątego 22.²⁷ The tree used for its construction was cut down in 1237, the assumed year of the town's foundation.²⁸ Several phases of wooden constructions built along the fence followed its course, suggesting that the border was long-lasting. In the town of Puck, several wooden fences found in the backyards of the market square plots were rebuilt in the same place in consecutive phases, while others were moved in a process of extending the plot's area (Fig. 2).²⁹ Many postholes creating the oldest known borders were registered during excavations in Wrocław in a city-block between św. Mikołaja-Kiełbaśnicza-Ruska-Rzeźnicza streets. Within this block a small wooden building was localized precisely parallel to one of its plot's borders functioning as a fence.³⁰ Another way to demark a boundary was a ditch. Such feature, replacing an older fence, was found between the plots on Mikołajska 25 and 26 in Wrocław.³¹

It could be assumed that the light construction of a fence (low and wooden) enabled contacts, but in the case of masonry walls the personal contact between neighbours would be restricted. Nevertheless, the urban authorities registered many examples of conflicts or arrangements between neighbours over more solid borders, especially concerning border walls used as part of front house construction (so called fire walls, built to prevent the spreading of a fire). M. Goliński³² found several examples of such records in the medieval town of Świdnica. Since the neighbour wall was part of the construction of houses on both its sides, it was typically expected that a neighbour who erected such a wall was paid by the other. This caused conflicts, especially when the neighbour was not willing to pay. In such a situation he was forced to pay by the town authorities, and thus the conflict was registered in the official town documents. Such arrangements also concerned the walls in the rear parts of plots. An interesting example, showing the complicated situation involving the space at the rear of a plot, comes from Krakow in 1573.³³ The border wall at the end of some plots was inspected by the municipal building inspectors; it was standing between the properties belonging to a Jan Białogardzki, a cooper (*doleator*), and Stanisław Lithwinka, a cauldron maker (*caldeator*). On the cauldron maker's side some bricks had already eroded, and a clay chimney, lower than the wall, and a cauldron for laundry washing, were all situated just next

25 Buśko 1995a.

26 Maciakowska 2005, pp. 331–338; Sowina 2009, p. 317; Sowina 2016, pp. 358–359.

27 Nawrońska 2012, p. 99.

28 Czaja/Nawroński 1993.

29 Starski 2017, pp. 390–394.

30 Krzywka 2017, p. 45.

31 Janczewski 2002; Jastrzębski/Piekalski/Wysocka 2001.

32 Goliński 2002.

33 Jelonek-Litewka/Litewka/Walczy (ed.) I 1997, no. 104, p. 173 (year 1574).

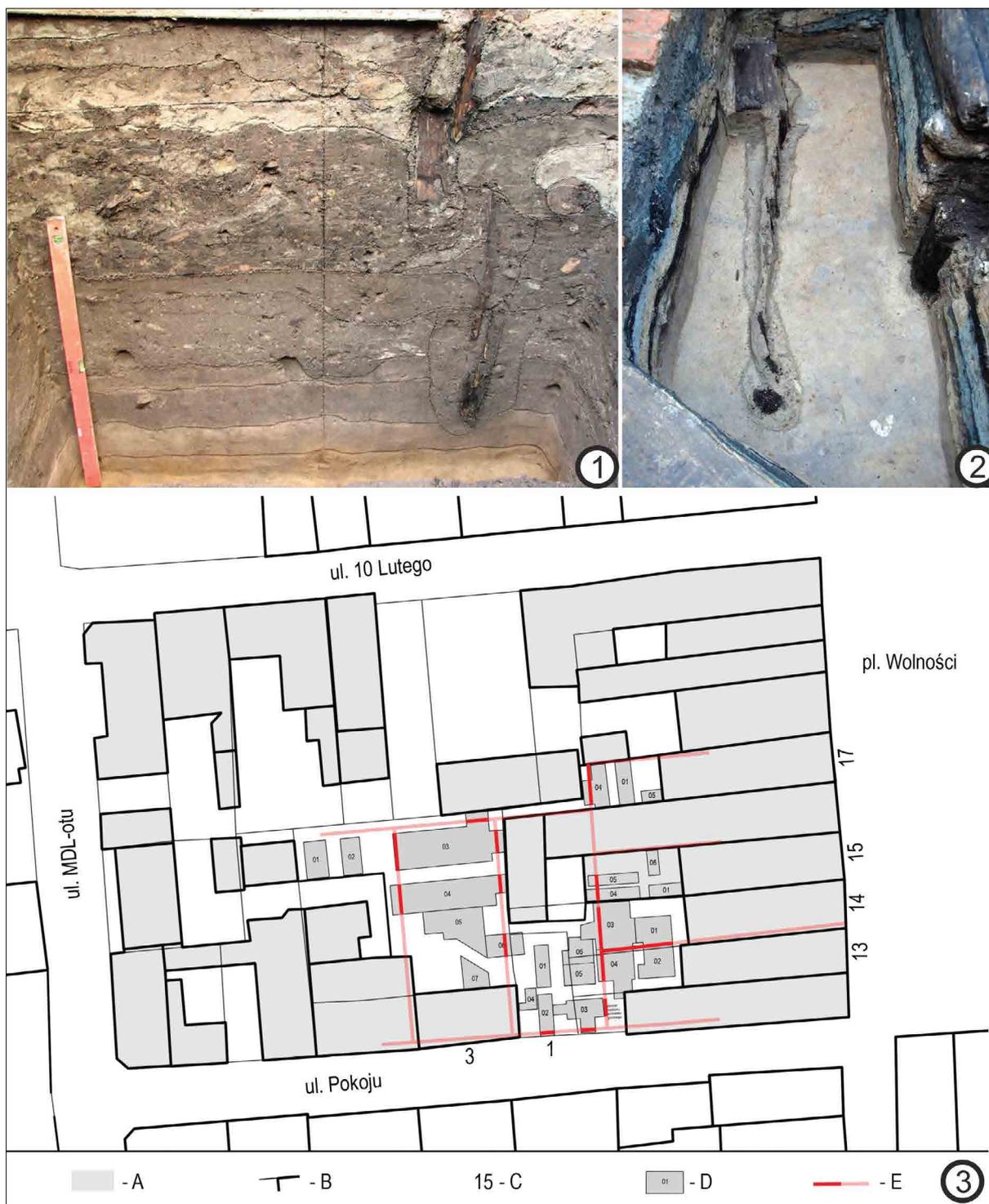


Fig. 2 Puck: (1) Border fence at 10 Lutego 4 street; (2) border fence at Plac Wolności 17 plot.; (3) Reconstruction of primary plot divisions on background of today's plan of a city=block on south-west side of a town square. A – modern buildings, B – boundaries of buildings and urban plots, C – numbers of excavated plots, D – research excavations, E – uncovered and reconstructed fences and drainage ditches located at boundaries of old burgher plots. – Starski, Michał: Zagospodarowanie parceli mieszczańskich w późnośredniowiecznym Pucku. Dom i jego zaplecze, In: Puck. Kultura materialna małego miasta w późnym średniowieczu, Warszawa 2017, ryc. XV.3. p. 392, ryc. XV.4. p. 393.

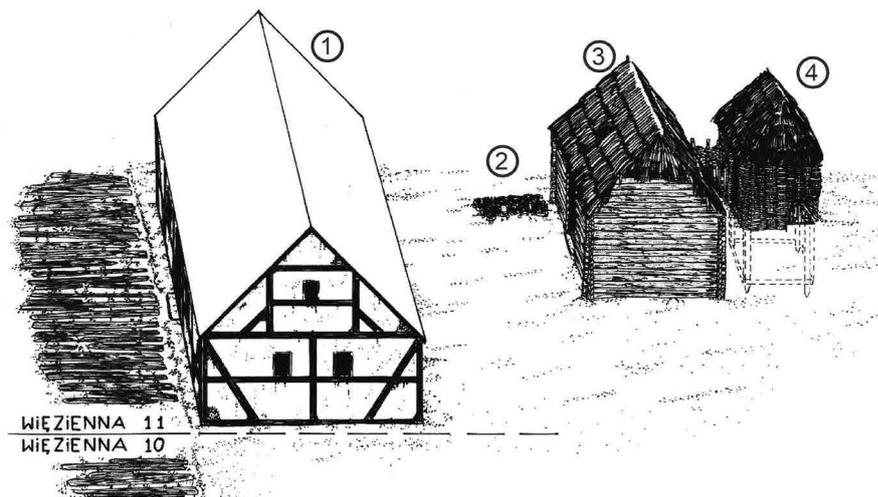


Fig. 3 Example of spatial organization of a plot. Więzienna 11 Street in Wrocław in the last quarter of the 13th century. (1) front house; (2) hearth; (3) wooden building; (3) cesspit. Graphic: Buśko, Cezary: Rozplanowanie parceli i struktura zawodowa jej mieszkańców, In: Buśko, Cezary/Piekalski, Jerzy (eds.): *Ze studiów nad życiem codziennym w średniowiecznym mieście. Parcele przy ulicy Więziennej 10-11 we Wrocławiu*. *Wratislavia Antiqua* 1, Wrocław 1999, ryc. 4, p. 207.

to the wall. This chimney was considered a threat to a wooden roof installed on the wall by the cooper, and thus a neighbourly conflict emerged requiring intervention by the municipal officials.

Some elements of plot infrastructure behind the house could also foster neighbourly relations by forcing cooperation. The rear part of a plot developed in accordance with economic needs and the financial capabilities of the owners. Archaeological studies³⁴ on medieval plots in Wrocław has led to a general conclusion that the town's plots had three to five functional zones (Fig. 3). A habitational building with a working space was situated in the front part. Behind the house, service buildings were found, such as warehouses, fireplaces, and workshops, followed by the next zone with rear buildings used for habitation or some craft activities (malthouses, workshops, bakeries). Further, there was a space designated as a sanitation zone with wells and cess-pits. In the last zone a garden could be located, however this element was not typical and its presence depended on the plot's localization within the town and the size of the town. An analysis of peripheral parts of Wrocław showed the existence of three plot zones: the front one with a house, then a nearby yard behind this (with cess-pits, dug wells, workshops, and warehouses), and a rear part with constructions connected to storage and craft production accommodating the needs of the owner.³⁵ Similar spatial arrangements were traced on medieval plots in Głogów.³⁶ The plot infrastructure, organised in the abovementioned zones, delivered many elements for developing direct neighbourly relations, and in particular these were water sources and cesspits.

Neighbour-shared facilities, both providing water for broadly conceived consumption (also for production) and also for discharging wastewaters and/or rainwater, were the most important devices within a plot's space. The first type of such a facility mainly comprises of dug wells. Archaeological sources indicate that they were often localized in the central or rear part of the plot.³⁷ Such localization, within a fenced plot, implied that the well served just one property. However, written records indicate that neighbours could have shares in wells localized on an adjacent plot. For example, in 1343 in Krakow, a widow

34 Buśko 1995b.

35 Konczewski 2007, p. 100.

36 Czapla 1998.

37 Cembrzyński 2011, pp. 37–38; Sowina 2009, p. 177, Sowina 2016, p. 187.

named Alusza sold a house and a plot with a right to use a well on the plot belonging to a neighbour.³⁸ Access to a water source was particularly important among those who needed water for production purposes due to naturally increased demand. For example, arrangements among brewers in Świdnica specified the amount of money spent by each shareholder for maintaining the well and for access to the infrastructure. Descriptions of these include: “free gate to it [a well]”, “gate and free access [to the well] during day and night”, or “while brewing, the gate (...) should be opened to carry water through the yard”.³⁹ Sometimes wells were localized on a border between neighbours. In such cases, the arrangements, similarly to the Świdnica case, regulated renovations and access.⁴⁰ Thus, in the period under research, dug wells were one of the most important urban elements, not only in organizing the space and society of the town, but also integrating them, mainly in the scope of neighbourhood communities. Defining the level of the neighbours’ shares in the possession of the well was connected both with the possibility of drawing water from it and the taking care of it.

The second type of water facility shared by neighbours comprised common wastewater canals along the border or even through rear parts of the plot. Many archaeologically excavated gutters have been found within plots.⁴¹ For example, border-ditches are known from archaeological excavations in Wrocław, on Św. Mikołaja Street 77–78, where a ditch running along the border was timbered and covered with wooden planks.⁴² Another example, representing a simple ditch without stabilizing constructions, was unearthed on Św. Mikołaja 25.⁴³ Infrastructure on plot borders required maintenance from both neighbours, opening the field for interactions. In late medieval Krakow it was typical to dispose of waste water through a neighbour’s plot.⁴⁴ Even though this appears like lawlessness that could easily spark conflict, such solutions were actually part of the water disposal system, something carefully controlled by the town authorities. Still, conflicts between neighbours were inevitable. For example, in 1533, a Seweryn Boner, an important official of the king, sued his neighbour Tomasz Scholc because the latter was disposing of liquid waste from his property into the Boner’s channel (“*quod e braseatorio suo meatibus subterraneis aquas immundas sordesque immitteret in canale uicinum domini Castellani quod uulgato nomine flutrinna vocatur*” [[...] that sewage and wastewater [dirty water] from [his] malthouse drove through the underground drains into the neighbouring canal of the castellan, which is commonly called flutrinna (sewer)]), which he was not authorized to do.⁴⁵

Another feature that could trigger interpersonal contacts were cesspits, that is places of waste disposal (especially faeces). Such devices are well known from archaeological sources in historical urban areas. Their form varied from small pits filled with waste, to wooden shafts of various constructions (without a bottom), all the way to large masonry constructions that could hold

38 Piekosiński/Szujski (ed.) 1878, pp. 161–162, Sowina 2016, p. 189.

39 Goliński 2003, pp. 66–73; Goliński 2004, p. 76.

40 Sowina 2009, p. 179–185, Sowina 2016, pp. 189–195.

41 Cembrzyński 2011, pp. 81–84.

42 Buško 1999, p. 43.

43 Janczewski 2002.

44 Sowina 2011, p. 270.

45 ANKr CC 435; Sowina 2011, p. 272.

many cubic metres of contents.⁴⁶ Usually they were localized on the rear part of the plot⁴⁷ creating a 'sanitation zone' (see above). Each cesspit could be regularly emptied and thus function for a long time, but often they were buried after they were full, and a new one was built close by. The main problem for neighbourly relations centred on the nature of the cesspits' contents: faeces and domestic waste. The lack of a bottom resulted in the liquid waste leaking into ground water causing its contamination.⁴⁸ The same ground water had to then be used as a freshwater source by the nearby dug wells. Apart from this hazardous situation, it is not hard to imagine that the smell from badly protected cesspits readily resulted in conflicts. Nevertheless, in certain situations cesspits also provided a reason for cooperation. For instance, in Gdańsk a large cesspit (40 m³) was built in the 16th century within a plot on Długi Targ. Later the plot was divided into two parts (Długi Targ 21 and 22). The cesspit was localized exactly on the new borderline, so it had to be divided in the middle by a provisional wooden construction. This construction allowed the device to be used by both neighbours without causing disputes on the degree of individual usage, as this was clearly demarcated.⁴⁹

Much more information about neighbourly relations over cesspits can be found in the written records. Due to their localization in the rear part of a plot, close to land borders, neighbours frequently filed complaints. In Krakow most of the complaints filed to the municipal building inspectors concerned the poor state of latrines. Sources mention cesspits with a cover,⁵⁰ which can be identified with the above-mentioned large constructions. Additionally, there is information about smaller devices called "necessary places", such as privies or latrines. They probably had a form of small wooden shed/hut localized close to a house.⁵¹ Relations over latrines were generally conflicts. One such situation was recorded in Krakow in 1470, when the Długosz brothers (the author of one of the most important Polish chronicles and his younger brother) were accused by their neighbour of building a latrine just at the border wall. Exactly on the other side, by the wall, was their neighbour's well.⁵² The problem of the closeness of the latrine was noticed very early. A rule that can be interpreted as an order to keep a latrine at least 3 feet away from a border fence, is known from the *Sachsenspiegel* (*Bakovene, genge, under swine koben sollen dri vuze von deme zunesten* [Ovens, cesspits and pigsties have to be built three feet away from the fence]),⁵³ as well as from later sources, e.g. from the towns of Elbląg⁵⁴ and Wrocław.⁵⁵ Sources also mention shared latrines. In a document from Krakow, one neighbour was so tired of another not taking care of their common latrine that he built one for himself on his own property.⁵⁶

46 Krzywdziński 2005; Marcinkowski 2005; Gläser 2004, Smith 2020.

47 Cembrzyński 2011, p. 77.

48 Wagner/Lanoix 1958, p. 30.

49 Polak 2005, p. 297.

50 Jelonek-Litewka/Litewka/Walczy (ed.) I 1997 no. 120, p. 193 (year 1574).

51 Jelonek-Litewka/Litewka/Walczy (ed.) I 1997, no. 21, p. 61.

52 Sowina 1996, p. 220.

53 Ebel 2012, p. 103 – LI, 1.

54 Czaja 1992, p. 89.

55 Chorowska 1994, Aneks position 10.

56 Jelonek-Litewka/Litewka/Walczy (ed.) I 1997, no. 65, p. 121.

3. 1. 2. A cluster of plots: a city block

We have already looked at relations within single units of urban spatial organization (plots). To get a broader perspective and understand neighbourly relations on a larger scale, we need to move our focus to the whole city-block. Accessibility appears to be particularly important here, that is communication among plots within a block and with the area around it.

The starting point for the further development of a city-block was the regular layout established during the foundation or reorganization of the town. In Krakow, each block contained eight to 16 plots oriented with the shorter side towards two parallel streets, or towards the market square and the streets perpendicular to the market square (**Fig. 4**). Access to plots was ensured from the main street, and to corner plots additionally from the side street (see **Fig. 1**).⁵⁷ The situation was similar in Wrocław, where blocks had several different sizes and layouts (**Fig. 5**).⁵⁸ This arrangement was rather typical; it was also found in Legnica⁵⁹ and in many other towns in central Europe.⁶⁰ Unfortunately, fully studied city blocks are rare, however some precious information and an interesting example is available from a well-studied city-block in Wrocław, on the Św. Mikołaja-Kielbaśnicza-Ruska-Rzeźnicza streets.⁶¹ The block was delimited in the second quarter of the 13th century, shortly after the reorganization of Wrocław according to the German law on civic rights. Metrological analysis of the block indicated that it contained 16 full-sized plots (Latin *curiae*): four on the north and four on its south side, oriented towards the main streets, and eight in the middle, oriented towards the side streets (**Fig. 6**).



Fig. 4 Urban layout of Kraków. Reconstruction of a grid from 1257 by B. Krasnowolski superimposed on the 19th century cadastral plan. Map: Krasnowolski, Bogusław: Lokacyjne układy urbanistyczne na obszarze Ziemi Krakowskiej w XIII i XIV wieku. Część I. Miasta Ziemi Krakowskiej - chronologia procesów osadniczych i typologia układów urbanistycznych, Kraków 2004, Il. 3.

57 Noga (ed.) 2007, map 4.4.

58 Eysymontt/Goliński (ed.) 2017, map 5.

59 Eysymontt/Goliński (ed.) 2009, map 5.

60 See e.g. Hall 1978, pp. 123–141.

61 Krzywka 2012; Krzywka 2017.

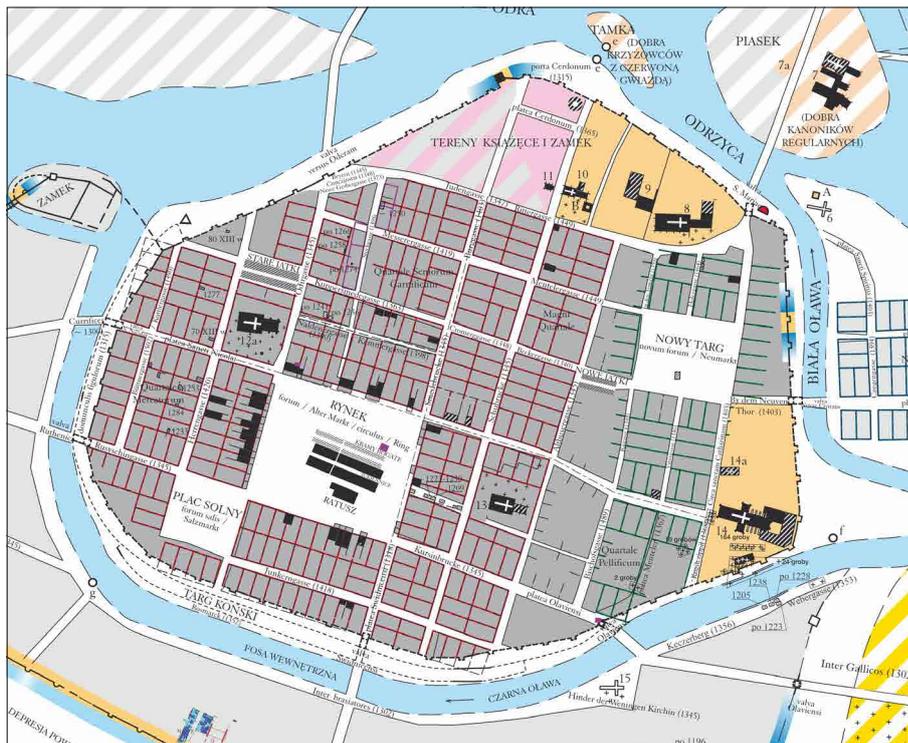


Fig. 5 Urban layout of Wrocław around 1300. Reconstruction of original parcellation. Map: The Historical Atlas of Polish Towns, Vol. IV Śląsk, Issue 13 Wrocław, Wrocław 2017, Map 5: Wrocław around 1300, By: M. Chorowska, Cz. Lasota, T. Kastek, J. Połamarczuk.

Intensive changes in ownership resulted in the connection or division of plots. At first, borders were marked with fences made of perishable materials (timber, wattle and daub), and these borderlines were respected by the oldest constructions at the rear parts of the plots. The internal organization of the plots was rather typical: a wooden front house with an entrance from the yard and service buildings; with production and sanitary infrastructure in the middle or at the rear. The front houses did not occupy the entire width of a plot, allowing for communication with a yard. Important changes happened in the

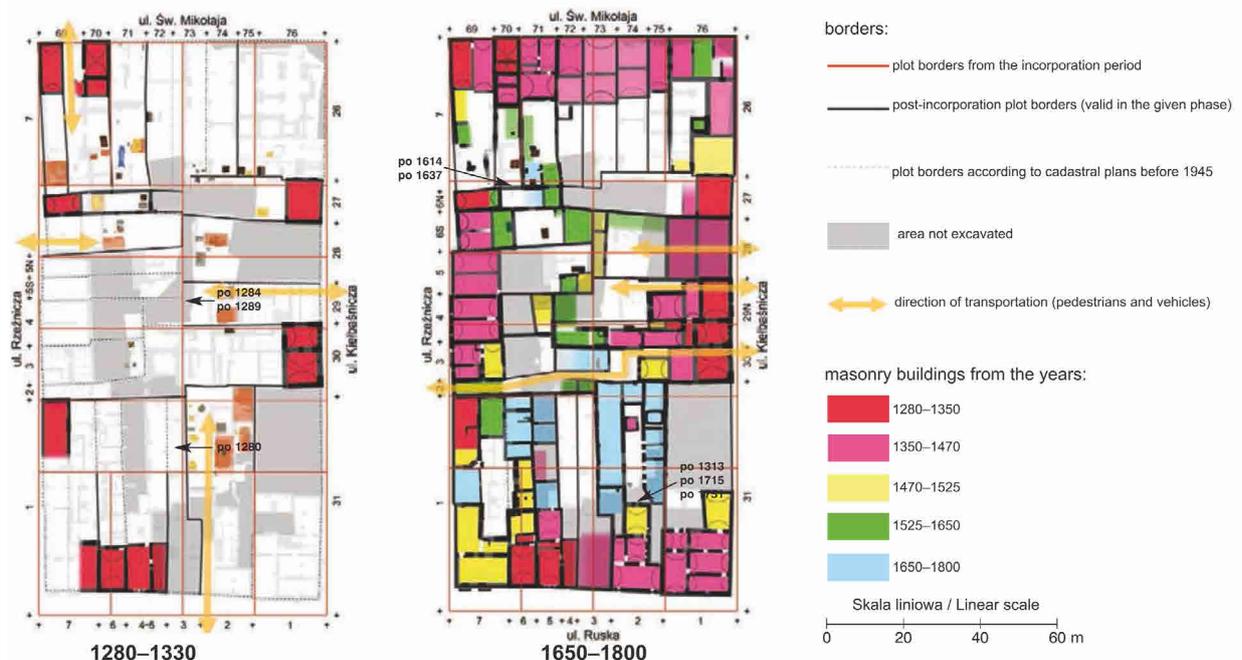


Fig. 6 Two chronological phases of changes of plot division and development in a city-block between Św. Mikołaja-Kiełbaśnicza-Ruska-Rzeźnicza Streets in Wrocław, reconstructed by M. Chorowska and M. Krzywka. Map: The Historical Atlas of Polish Towns, Vol. IV Śląsk, Issue 13 Wrocław, Wrocław 2017, Map 7: Study of changes in parcellation and development of plots, By: M. Chorowska, M. Krzywka.

14th century, when first the front buildings began to be built of bricks. During the 14th and 15th centuries borders between plots were stabilized by permanent walls. Front buildings were extended and occupied the whole width of plots. Easy communication to the yard was now limited to carts, and was probably possible only through the front house. One plot was exceptional because it had access to the yard not through the front house but from the parallel street. As mentioned before, sanitary infrastructure was localized in the rear part of the plot, but on some plots latrines were in the middle, and behind them empty areas were left in the rear. Masonry buildings at the rear of plots started to be raised in the 16th century, and their presence completely blocked connections with neighbouring plots. No internal pathways connecting the plots inside the block were recorded. The abovementioned case provides an excellent opportunity to trace the evolution of within-block communication. Initially, communication was continuous from the streets to the rear part of plots. If we assume that plots were not densely built-up it was possible to easily move from one side of the block to another. The development of the front houses sealed access to the backyard, and developing infrastructure gradually limited access to the adjacent plots.

This pattern was observed in other places as well. In Krakow in the 13th and 14th century, plots by the market square had wide access (for carts) to their rear parts next to the front houses. In the late 14th and 15th century the street front was fully built-up, and all access roads became closed.⁶² However, people were often able to find solutions allowing them to circumvent such blockages. In one of the cases, access to the rear part of the house led through the plot in the area behind the market-plots; it was later changed into a regular access road with a common gutter.⁶³ Another example from Wrocław shows that owners of plots on the north side of the market square took into possession plots behind their properties. This way they gained the connection with the street behind the block as cart access was blocked from the front side by houses.⁶⁴ In some cases, access to backyards was provided by narrow streets between houses. Such a pathway dated to the 14th century was found in Krakow on Gołębia street between the remains of two medieval buildings under today's university.⁶⁵

To conclude, the abovementioned examples suggest that plots were losing their connectivity over the passage of time. Does this mean that communication among neighbours was also compromised over time? It is possible that ways/modes of communication changed but did not diminish, that is transitioned from within the block to the outside: i.e. to the streets. Most probably, development was prioritised over communication, so the loss in neighbourly relations was not considered detrimental. It might also be the case that close coexistence was no longer needed. In any case, written sources, as already mentioned, clearly show that intensive contacts between neighbours persisted despite diminished spatial connectivity within the city-block.

62 Łukacz 2011, p. 80.

63 Łukacz 2011, p. 80.

64 Chorowska 2002, p. 208.

65 Niemiec 2009, pp. 177–178.

3. 1. 3. Public spaces: streets

All plots in towns were oriented towards streets, which were natural meeting spaces and communication arteries. However, these meeting spaces evolved over time, both physically and functionally. Initially, street sides were built-up with wooden houses, smaller than a plot (see above: Cluster of plots: a city block). Early houses from Wrocław (from the 13th c.) could be accessed not from the street but from the private space in the yard.⁶⁶ The entrance was moved to the front façade when the houses grew to fill the entire width of the front. These new larger buildings created continuous street-frontages with decorative facades.⁶⁷ This suggests a transition in the perception of streets by inhabitants of the town; it points to a newly emerging function of street-fronts as representative spaces, i.e. communicating social status. This transition can also be reflected via street level alterations. At first, in many urban centres, street levels were always rising after the town's foundation (in Wrocław streets were rising until the 14th century). This rising was an effect of levelling the street with different materials (sand, domestic waste, ash etc.). It helped to keep the streets dry and constituted an effortless way of waste disposal. With the growing representative function of streets, the situation changed due to plastering and regulations ordering the owners of adjacent plots to keep them clean.⁶⁸ In Wrocław the first regulations ordering the cleaning of streets (not leaving dung or rubbish in front of a house) came from the period between 1300–1315 and were repeated in the following decades.⁶⁹ Similar regulations are known from Prussian towns at the turn of the 14th and 15th century, suggesting that littering was a common problem.⁷⁰ According to the Kulm law, the part of a street in front of a house was treated as belonging to the property. It was a place where people kept raw materials or constructed small outbuildings. In Prussia, town authorities forbade the storing of timber on the street and the destruction of street gutters, to keep streets clear and clean.⁷¹ Perhaps the increase in the communicative function of streets was related not only with a need to ensure efficient connectivity for the growing number of inhabitants and visiting outsiders, but also with a decrease in connectivity within city blocks, described in detail in the preceding section (see Cluster of plots: a city block).

Streets generated opportunities for neighbourly relations, not only because they were used by all inhabitants to move from point A to B, but they also provided elements required by them in everyday life. Public water devices are perfect examples of such infrastructural elements. These comprised of public stand-alone wells or water storage reservoirs connected to a network of sub-surface conduits. For example, one dug well was found on a small street in Wrocław called Kacerska Górka. It was located close to the southern side of a street in the front of plot no. 5. It was a square wooden construction built after the end of the 13th century.⁷² Another dug well on that street (between nos. 15 and 17) was built after 1339 and was functioning until the end of the 14th

66 Piekalski 2004, pp. 176–181.

67 Piekalski 2010, p. 409.

68 Piekalski 2010, p. 409.

69 Goliński 2010, pp. 61–62.

70 Czaja 2005, pp. 345–346.

71 Czaja 2005, pp. 345–346.

72 Lewicka-Cempa/Kudła 1993.

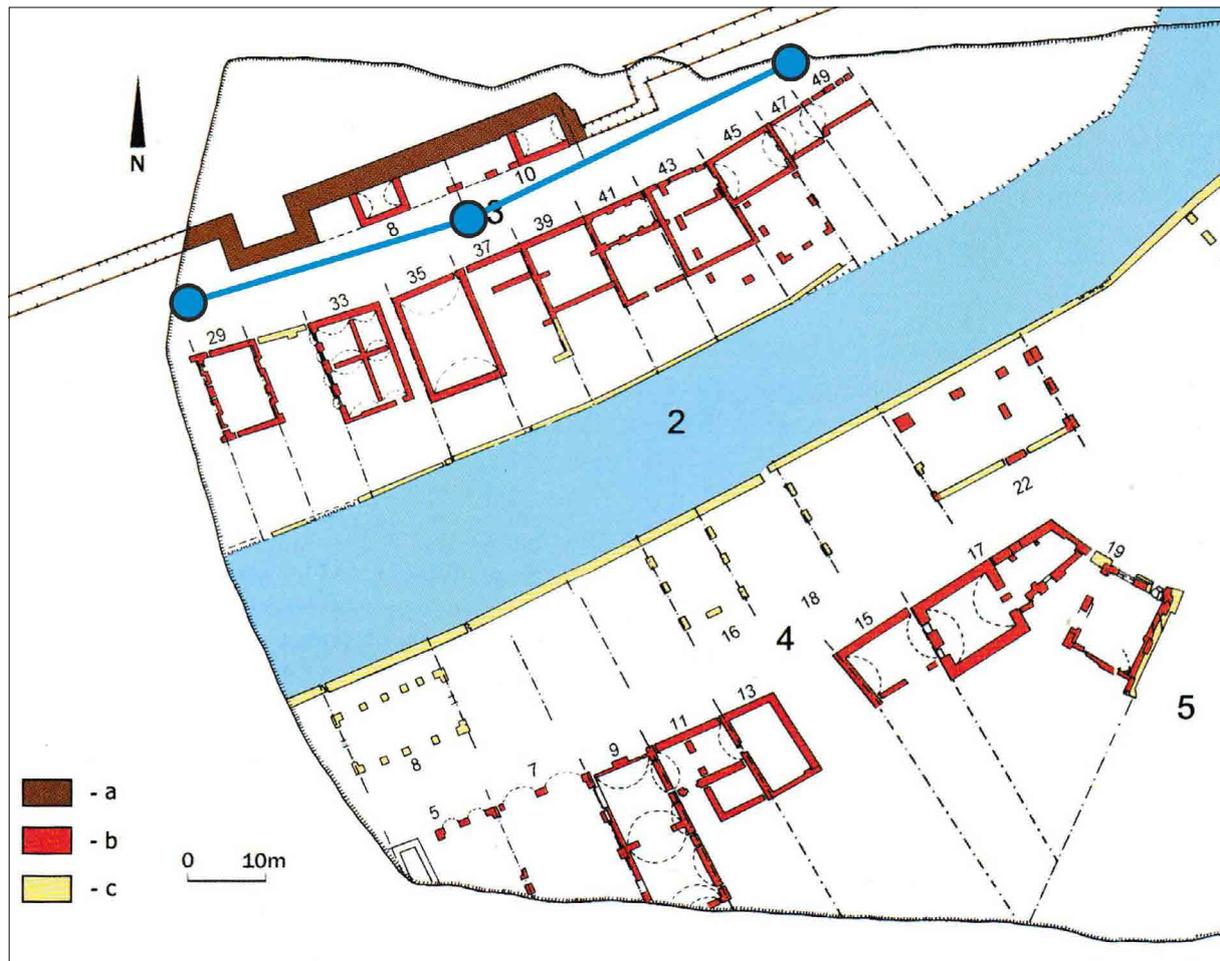


Fig. 7 Course of a main water conduit with three water storage reservoirs on Zaułek Niski street (not existing) with surrounding plots. Excavated area under today's Galeria Dominikańska shopping mall in Wrocław. Base plan: Konczewski, Paweł: *Działki mieszczańskie w południowo-wschodniej części średniowiecznego i wczesnonowożytnego Wrocławia, Wratislavia Antiqua 9*, Wrocław 2007, ryc. 7, p. 14.

century, in its final phase as a cesspit.⁷³ An interesting example comes from excavations on the Zaułek Niski street in Wrocław. A central water conduit built around 1420 was running along this street and functioned for at least a century. The part found during excavations consisted of three parallel pipelines and three water storage reservoirs. The reservoirs were located 36.9 and 34.25 m from each other (**Fig. 7**).⁷⁴ This central water conduit is known thanks to a description from 1499. It mentioned many water reservoirs in the course of a main waterpipe placed at regular intervals.⁷⁵ Such water storage reservoirs could be easily accessed by the inhabitants of several nearby houses. Public dug wells and water storage reservoirs in late medieval Krakow were located on major streets and junctions or squares, i.e. intensively frequented places.⁷⁶ In such easily accessible spots, these devices could be particularly serviceable for commuters, outsiders, and animals gathered there. These structures appear to be optimal candidates for medieval urban hot-spots and meeting hubs, bringing together inhabitants and outsiders. In Krakow, some of the wells were

73 Dwojak 1993.

74 Dwojak 1993.

75 Goliński 2001, pp. 105–123.

76 Sowina 2009, pp. 185–186, 219, 394; Sowina 2016, pp. 196–197, 239, 422–423.

localized at the houses gathered around the Market Square (not on a street or junction). Their position close to the plots of the oldest settlers of the chartered town, who were also its first patricians, is quite conspicuous. Such wells could be commissioned by, and initially belonged to, so-called ‘neighbour well communities’. These types of communities were registered in Italian, Flemish and German medieval towns.⁷⁷ In Germany, such communities were responsible for maintaining the well (renovations, cleaning), and were not only a purely practical solution but also generated several social events, like a feast organized during the well’s yearly cleaning.⁷⁸ This situation points to the fact that some devices, that initially served a limited number of close neighbours, grew to become places of public utility and meetings.

4. Conclusion

In this paper we propose that the formation and existence of neighbourhoods in central European medieval chartered towns can be traced via certain features of the built environment, and that written records can complement our knowledge invaluablely. We assumed at the beginning that the neighbourhood is based on face-to-face relations. According to M.E. Smith⁷⁹ one of the indicators of the neighbourhood in archaeological sources is the clustering of houses. In the case of chartered towns, we can assume that a city-block is the cluster. Archaeological and architectural features indicate that relations inside the city-block changed over time. When a plot was loosely built-up it was easy to move and maintain face-to-face contacts on all sides of each plot. After erecting border-walls and larger buildings adjacent to borderlines, those face-to-face contacts with neighbours were reduced. Access to the property was possible from the front, and thus the street became an open space that could generate contacts. The growing importance of street space may be indicated by the stabilization of the street level (prohibition of littering) and the emergence of representative façades. The transitions that we observed (the diminished spatial connectivity within a city-block in particular) allows us to suppose that at a certain point, the street arose to become the most important area for maintaining social relations in a neighbourhood. We must also consider that meeting places other than the ones strictly related to the urban layout, which were the focus of the current paper, also existed within neighbourhoods (such as churches or taverns).

On the other hand, written sources emphasise that intensive contacts inside city-blocks were maintained through time despite the rise in infrastructural density. Even though physical contact was less feasible, neighbours had many points of common interest, fostering both negative and positive interactions. Town court books registered multiple conflicts over elements of infrastructure and buildings. Maintaining devices such as gutters and wells could not be effective without harmonious (financial) cooperation. Negligence by one neighbour could have had consequences for both plots, such as lack of fresh water, or no waste water removal. This continuing need for interaction built mutual and long-lasting relationships among neighbours. If we refer to

⁷⁷ Sowina 2009, pp. 177, 394; Sowina 2016, pp. 196, 422–423.

⁷⁸ Schmid 1998 pp. 573–576.

⁷⁹ Smith 2010.

Ferdinand Tönnies' sociological concepts,⁸⁰ we may say that this was the way in which permanent social relations were formed. Since neighbourhoods occupied definite space, we may call them territorial communities with a sense of group identity.

While many of the documents we mentioned here mainly refer to the owners of plots, who were in charge of maintaining common infrastructure, these plots were also home to many more people, such as the: owner's relatives, previous owners who had the right to stay until their death (widows for example), tenants, servants, and people apprenticing under a master-craftsman.⁸¹ Neighbourly interactions were multidimensional and complex even within a single plot. An insight into such relations among neighbours-relatives within one plot in Krakow can be traced in a source from 1568. Several owners of one plot were reminded by building inspectors that they should keep the property clean especially in common areas.⁸² Another issue that we did not fully look at is the social stratification of inhabitants within a plot. One large house on a plot provided a shelter for people from the upper classes as well as tenants of different social origins (foreigners, students, the poor), alongside servants and workers. It was not the patrician or the artisan who was going to the public well to fetch the water, but rather a servant or journeyman from a workshop.⁸³ Thus, neighbourly relations were also social status-dependent.

To conclude, territorial neighbourhood communities are reflected **in the built and in social urban space**. This certainly resulted from a natural need for efficient everyday functioning: relationships among neighbours constituted a basic element enabling the entire urban organism to act optimally. The neighbourhood primarily focused on maintaining its built environment for the upkeep of its living conditions. The material space created a framework for neighbourly relations, generating local identity, which moves us to the concept of neighbourhood not as spatial but rather social category.

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⁸⁰ Tönnies 2011.

⁸¹ Sowina 2017, pp. 56–58.

⁸² Jelonek-Litewka/Litewka/Walczy (ed.) I 1997, no. 16, p. 48.

⁸³ Sowina 2016, p. 399.

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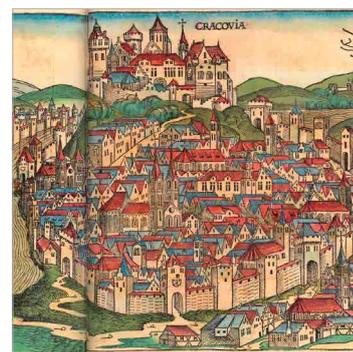
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The Social Role of Saints' Processions in 15th Century Cracow

Piotr Kołpak

The concept of „sacred geography” refers not only to the spatial depiction of the sacrum – it also embodies the phenomenon of celebrating the cohesion of Heaven and Earth in accurately defined spaces. Throughout this ideological construct some historical narratives can be better understood, for example Jan Długosz’s story (15th c.) about vision of a townswoman Weronika. She was dreaming of a miraculous procession of saints Adalbert and Florian heading the Krakowian march to the Wawel cathedral in order to visit saints Stanislaus and Wenceslas – „their famous fathers and fellow citizens”. These four patron saints were considered as a group of patron saints of the Polish Kingdom. The sense of patronage in Długosz’s tale has been illustrated by the words of Adalbert, who accuses Poles of oppressing the poor, dangers on the routes and simony. The same saints participated in the processional ritual that unites the community of the capital city of Krakow and determined the actual points of the sacred’s and profane’s convergence. A comprehensive view of the topographic location of the objects associated with the state patronage, their hagio-toponymy and the processional rite within these spaces allows to understand the functioning of the sacred geography of medieval Krakow.

Der historiographische Begriff der „Heiligen Geographie“ bezieht sich nicht nur auf die räumliche Verteilung von Kirchen und Kapellen. Es geht auch um die Vereinigung von Himmel und Erde in einem liturgischen Theater, das im Stadt- oder Dorfraum stattfindet. Dank dieses ideologischen Konzepts ist es einfacher, die Erzählungen alter Chronisten zu verstehen - zum Beispiel eine sehr interessante Vision der Bürgerin Weronika, die der Chronist Jan Długosz im 15. Jahrhundert beschrieben hat. Weronika träumte von einer wunderbaren Prozession, die durch die Straßen von Krakau ging. Es wurde von den Heiligen Wojciech und Florian geleitet, die beabsichtigten, die Heiligen Stanisław und Wenzel – „ihre heiligen Väter und Mitbürger” – zu besuchen. Diese vier Schutzheiligen galten als eine Gruppe von Schutzheiligen des polnischen Königreichs. Das Gefühl der Patronage in der Geschichte von Długosz wurde durch die Worte von Adalbert illustriert, der die Polen der Unterdrückung der Armen, der Gefahren auf den Straßen und der Simonie beschuldigt. Dieselben Heiligen nahmen an dem Prozessionsritual teil, das die Gemeinde der Hauptstadt Krakau vereint, und bestimmten die tatsächlichen Punkte der Konvergenz des Heiligen und des Profanen. Ein umfassender Blick auf die topografische Lage der mit der staatlichen Schirmherrschaft verbundenen Objekte, ihre Hagio-Toponymie und den Prozessionsritus in diesen Räumen ermöglicht es, die Funktionsweise der heiligen Geografie des mittelalterlichen Krakau zu verstehen.



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Featured Image

Woodcut of Krakow from Herman Schedel's Weltchronik (Nurnberg 1493), f. 264v-265 (public domain)

1. Introduction

By combining the experiences of time and space, processions were always a form of liturgical ritual in which the urban form met the prevailing culture. In the Middle Ages, processions played an important role, connecting the formalized Church liturgy with various forms of spiritualism. Priests were followed by representatives of all social strata.¹ It was a kind of liturgical performance set in a specific urban setting, and the elements of the city's form participating in it were purposefully chosen. The coupling of hagio-toponymous elements of the urban environment with liturgical processions gave sacral geography a certain mobile and dynamic 'concentration of holiness'. Halina Manikowska, in her research on sacral geography, emphasized the perception of space and time by showing that such manifestations "celebrate the unity of heaven and earth in precisely defined places – real, concrete points of convergence".²

The following review of the processional forms present in the lives of the 15th-century townspeople of Cracow focuses on processions honouring the cult of saints revered as patrons of the city and the Polish Kingdom. The most prominent is the cult of St. Stanislaus, the Bishop of Cracow who was killed by King Bolesław II the Bold's knights in 1079 in St Michael's Church in what became Kazimierz, a southern suburb of Cracow. Shortly afterwards, in 1138, the Kingdom of Poland was divided into districts, which, according to the 13th-century authors of hagiographic narratives, was punishment for murdering the bishop. At the end of the 13th century, St. Stanislaus became the patron saint of the unification of the state. However, even before his canonization, the local Church community was wrestling over larger relics of the martyred bishop. That is why, in 1184, Gedko, the Bishop of Cracow – together with the Duke of Cracow, Kazimierz the Just – brought the body of the holy Roman martyr Florian from Italy, who was then worshipped in what became Kleparz, a northern suburb of Cracow. It was supposed to counteract the strong pull of the cult of St. Adalbert who was revered in Gniezno, Greater Poland, since the clergy of Gniezno competed with the clergy of Cracow in various spheres. Soon, however, efforts were made to recognize the sanctity of Bishop Stanislaus, temporarily inhibiting the development of the cult of St. Florian.

2. The mysterious dream of Veronica

The story of mysterious dream by a woman called Veronica, recorded by chronicler Jan Długosz in the *Annales seu cronicae incliti regni Poloniae* (1438), is a testament to the significance of processions among the 15th-century Cracow burghers. According to Długosz's account, the heroine of the story fell asleep and then:

It suddenly occurred to me that I was taking part in a mass at St. Florian's Church outside the Cracow city walls [in Kleparz]. As I stood there in a place intended for the common people, a very venerable procession with two white banners at the head began to come out of the sacristy. The amount of people increased so that it filled almost the entire church.

1 Brooks 1933, pp. 141–142.

2 Manikowska 2010, p. 52; Manikowska 2008, p. 96.

Among them were some dignitaries dressed in bishop's robes, others in knight's garb distinguished by the red and white, and all of them wore choir vestments.³

Veronica and the crowd left the chapel and stopped outside the collegiate cemetery fences. There she was confronted by a tall woman dressed in white robes, who pointed Veronica towards a small house where she was to find her master. The oneiric atmosphere of the strange three-story building was completed by the meeting of two women: one in white and one in yellow. As it later turned out, they symbolize the good and bad sides of the clergy and the common people. After exiting the house, Veronica met the procession returning to Kleparz:

Everyone stopped except two of them seemed to be heading for me. One of them had an infula and chasuble like a bishop, and the other, girded with a golden belt, was wearing a knight's cloak. When they came closer I was trembling, and the one who seemed to be a bishop spoke to me thus: "Daughter, what are you doing?... Behold, I and my dearest companion whom you see, the holy and famous martyr Florian, visited our famous fathers, our fellow citizens: St. Stanislaus and St. Wenceslaus, and their church was placed on the castle mount... For the four of us, namely the three aforementioned holy martyrs, Adalbert and myself, were given to this homeland as special helpers and patrons. We persistently stand before the face of the Most High for the salvation of this people... And know that in this homeland, and in the surrounding territories, there are many who grieve on this day, your brothers and sisters, some seriously injured, others deprived of their arms, legs and eyes, others in captivity, others robbed of their property and possessions."⁴

St. Adalbert added another sentiment, this time relating to the state:

About the oppression of the poor, the highway robbery of travellers, especially by those who should be their defenders, and how much they gain with public money, offices and excellent positions that demand virtue and righteousness. Such people inevitably lead the state poorly... And at the end of his speech, he had two remarks for me. One, that in order to atone for God's wrath, processions should be held in the churches, the other, that I should go to the one who is currently holding the office of bishop in the Cathedral, that I should report all this to him, and that I should encourage him to make an urgent effort to fulfil it.⁵

In this heavenly vision of a procession, there are a few elements worthy of attention. The tale reminds us of the liturgical provisions of Bishop Zbigniew Oleśnicki, who was the chronicler Jan Długosz's mentor. In 1436 – one year prior to Veronica's vision – the bishop called together a council of the Cracow diocese during which the article *De horis* was announced, formally equating the liturgical cult of St. Florian with the cult that "the other holy patrons of the kingdom have enjoyed until now: Adalbert, Stanislaus and Wenceslaus."⁶ Al-

3 Długosz 2006, p. 215.

4 Długosz 2006, pp. 217–218.

5 Długosz 2006, p. 219.

6 Zachorowski (ed.) 1915, p. 47: "Inter ceteros regni huius patronos insignes, videlicet Adalbertum, Stanislaum, Wenceslaum martyres". See also Dobrowolski 1923, pp. 92–93.

though the decision referred to above concerned only the Diocese of Cracow, there is no doubt that it reflected much broader trends relating to the promotion of a concrete, Cracow-based vision of the pantheon of the Kingdom's patron saints. Oleśnicki demonstrated in every possible manner that the Cracow Church was taking the initiative in state actions away from the kings.⁷ That is why the saints were not named here as patrons of the capital city or cathedral, but of the whole Kingdom. The cult of these four patrons, as a concrete idea carrying religious and propagandistic significance, was formalised in the first half of the 15th century by the Cracow Cathedral council. The aforementioned article included in Bishop Oleśnicki's statutes was one of the clear points of this programme, and Długosz's story about the burgher Veronica's vision reflects Oleśnicki's intentions and serves to develop them into a narrative.

In addition, St. Florian's Collegiate Church, located outside the city (in Kleparz), is highlighted as the site where the revelation begins, and not in, say, the Church of St. Adalbert on Cracow's Main Market Square, since St. Adalbert was appointed as Veronica's visionary advisor. The Kleparz chapel gained considerable importance in the 15th century. At the beginning of the century, patronage over the Collegiate Church was given to Cracow University by Władysław Jagiełło. In the years 1418–1423, its *praepositus* was none other than Zbigniew Oleśnicki, who later became Bishop of Cracow. These facts certainly influenced Oleśnicki's decision to add St. Florian among the patrons of the Polish Kingdom.

St. Adalbert, who led the march, approached the terrified Veronica and explained the meaning of her vision, and at the same time gave a clear interpretation of the cult of the Polish Kingdom's patron saints. A group of intercessors – Adalbert, Florian, Stanislaus, and Wenceslaus – were given to the homeland as special helpers and patrons (*singulares coadiutores et patronos*), who are ceaselessly before the face of God for the salvation of the people (*qui incessanter assistimus ante conspectum Altissimi pro salute gentis huius*), and who pray for the welfare and salvation of the homeland (*nos pro bono et salute huius patrie incessanter nostris precatibus ad Deum intercessimus*). These phrases almost exactly correspond with Oleśnicki's statute, in which the same four saints were described as patrons of this kingdom (*huius regni patronos insignes*), interceding before the face of the enthroned God (*ante faciem sedentis in throno intercessores*). The interaction between them and their charges took place in the streets of greater Cracow, between the Wawel Castle Hill and the Kleparz suburb. Saints Adalbert and Florian walked away from Kleparz and headed towards Wawel, crossing the streets of Cracow to visit their glorious fathers and fellow citizens (*gloriosos patres concives nostros*).

Even the term *concivis* (co-inhabitant or co-citizen) directed the reader's attention to the Cracow agglomeration. The recipient of the *Annales* would immediately come to the conclusion that all the Polish Kingdom's patrons 'resided' in Cracow, as it was expressed by St. Adalbert, who was associated with Gniezno and not Cracow. The sacred relationship between Kleparz and Wawel can also be seen in the first edition of the *Translatio sancti Floriani* in the words of St. Florian, who wanted his body to rest beyond the northern gates of the city, in order to protect Cracow from invaders. From south of the walls, the city was already guarded by another patron, St. Stanislaus, whose cult was focused

7 Rowell 2005, p. 12.

not only at Wawel, but also at Skąłka. *“Ego a Prutenis hanc partem civitatis tuebor; veniet enim adhuc patronus huius regni, qui in ecclesia sue sedis requiescet et ipse ab alia parte a paganis ac aliis nacionibus defendat hanc civitatem”*.⁸ Both cult centres constituted the axis of protection along which the urban agglomeration was spread. The reality was more mundane. Both Kleparz and Kazimierz, to the south, had roads leading to Cracow, so both towns were buffer zones, the first line of defence against potential invaders.

St. Adalbert's statement displays all the characteristics of a true guardian of the homeland: care for matters of national importance, as well as the reliable and honest exercise of power. According to the patron, representatives of the highest spheres gained their position out of greed, which resulted in disastrous management of the state, and the young king should retain his noble characteristics: patience, humility, modesty and gentleness (which also determined the model of a good ruler). But the holy patrons were not only defenders of the king and institutions of power – as Długosz demonstrated many times – the saints also cared for the common people. St. Adalbert therefore made accusations of a scandalous social policy, recalling the absence of charity for the poor, the severely injured, and those who were being held captive by slave drivers. Finally, he rejected the debauchery spreading even among Church circles, the oppression of the poor, and the state's inactivity in the face of dangers lurking in wait for travellers; dangers all the more shameful because they were guardians of law and order. He threatened Cracow and the whole country with severe punishment if the situation did not improve. At the end of his speech, he added two recommendations, the first of which concerned the celebration of processions in churches to placate the wrath of God (*ad placandam iram Dei ferent in ecclesiis processiones*).⁹

In the context of the entire vision (the saints' processions and St. Adalbert's advice), it was through processional forms that this hierophany of the Kingdom's patrons was to be completed, and the pilgrimage carried out by people in the streets of the city would participate in the work of redemption and could count on God's mercy. Significantly, it was most probably during the times of Bishop Oleśnicki (Długosz's mentor) that the rites of the most important processions were written, in which all local inhabitants participated, including: the richest patricians and the urban poor, lavish hierarchs and begging monks, the servants and officials of the royal court, and local craftsmen and merchants.

3. The space of the cathedral on Wawel Castle Hill

The processional rite of late medieval Cracow was closely connected with the space of St. Wenceslaus and St. Stanislaus Cathedral on Wawel Castle Hill; the tomb of the latter patron became a marker of the spiritual position of the chapel and figured prominently in the local processions. However, the centre of gravity of the folk cult of St. Stanislaus in the 15th century finally moved from Wawel Hill to Skąłka in Kazimierz where – legend has it – the saint was murdered in 1079 by King Bolesław II the Bold's knights.¹⁰ Although wider society and the Church's elite continued to participate in the hierophany taking

8 Kętrzyński (ed.) 1884, p. 758.

9 Długosz 2006, pp. 195–196.

10 Witkowska 2008, pp. 136–137.

place in the cathedral space – such as during the solemn display of saints' relics – this was already taking place with the tomb of St. Stanislaus located in the middle of the church, which became an inseparable element of the Polish political body and an ideal symbol of the monarchy, regardless of which dynasty was in power.¹¹ The tomb, in which the ashes of St. Stanislaus have been since his exaltation in 1254, has been called the beating heart of the cathedral and the Altar of the Homeland (*Ara Patriae*) by Agnieszka Roźnowska-Sadraei and Michał Rożek respectively.¹²

The cathedral space was connected with the processions that were part of the intertwined powers of ceremony and monarchical propaganda. The entrance of kings (*adventus regis*) in the capital city of Cracow took on a sacred form. The detailed descriptions of Jan Długosz and Oleśnicki's instructions addressed to participants of the official welcome, provide rich sources for the reconstruction of the entry of the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Kazimierz Jagiełłończyk, into Cracow in 1447. The future king was met by:

“... all the processions of the city, including the university with its members... in a large crowd, the important people entered the city of Cracow, and all the processions were ahead of him. And going up to the castle, he entered St. Stanislaus Cathedral, and after honouring the relics of the saints and making a sacrifice of fifty florins, he headed towards the palace.”¹³

“... all the processions of the city” consisted of – as Długosz explains – representatives of Cracow University, and the collegiate, conventual, and parish churches of the three towns in the Cracow agglomeration. These institutions were to form processions that would gather in front of St. Mary's Church in the Main Market Square to the sound of the great cathedral bell and together they would set out to greet the future leader.¹⁴ The religious welcoming procession passed through the city to elevate the moment of unification of the estates into one body of the state, which Ernst Kantorowicz called the *corpus regni*.¹⁵ The ceremony was crowned with the celebration of the saints' relics in *ecclesiam maiorem sancti Stanislai* – understood, above all, as the reliquary of St. Stanislaus in the Cathedral. A similar ceremony accompanied the farewell. Before leaving the city, the king went to the Cathedral to honour the saints' relics, made a donation *ad sepulchrum sancti Stanislai*, and participated in a votive offering for a successful journey at the holy bishop's tomb.¹⁶

More spectacular versions of the royal entrance took place after major military victories. These were triumphant processions, modelled on Roman victory parades, which consisted of a ceremonial march through the city and a thanksgiving offering of some of the war booty to the Capitol. The oldest, and likely best described, entrance of this type in Cracow was the procession of 25 November 1411, when Władysław Jagiełło returned after the Teutonic campaign of 1410. After 15 days sojourn in Niepołomice, the ruler set off on foot towards the capital city to visit the “*sanctorum Venceslai, Stanislai et Floriani*

11 Roźnowska-Sadraei 2008, p. 293.

12 Rożek 1979, p. 452.

13 Długosz 2006, pp. 45–46. See also Gieysztor 1978a, p. 159; Borkowska 1995, p. 199; Staronawska 2008, p. 423.

14 Koczarska 2006, pp. 479–482.

15 Kantorowicz 2007, pp. 167–187.

16 Borkowska 1999, p. 83.

limina".¹⁷ The principal element distinguishing this procession from other *adventus regis* ceremonies, was the laying of flags won during the Battle of Grunwald in the Cathedral. By hanging several dozen flags in the Wawel Cathedral on both sides of the reliquary of St. Stanislaus, Jagiełło clearly linked his military victory with the role of the Kingdom's patron, and initiated the practice of placing ornate flags as a votive offering. Długosz also emphasized that "Poles should guard [the flags in the cathedral] and keep them as a perpetual symbol. As they age, they should be weaved anew, so that there would be proof of the enormous and incredible battle and victory, and that those same flags, in part, would be visible".¹⁸ The space of the main nave, together with the tomb of St. Stanislaus, thus acquired a commemorative character of national importance. However, Jost Ludwik Decjusz – in his work *De Jagellonum familia* – was the first to literally link the laying of the flags with this confession. There is no doubt that this place was chosen purposefully and with reference to the saint's role as patron of the Kingdom.¹⁹ In the following years, the practice of depositing souvenirs of victory in the same place only confirms that the Jagiellonian dynasty created a particular *tropaion* for the Polish Kingdom out of this holy grave, a symbol of the power of the state and a site of memory in the nation.²⁰

Jagiełło's triumphal parade, along with its finale in the cathedral, combined the ideas of the *corporis Reipublicae mysticum* and *corporis Ecclesiae mysticum* into a processional rite and united them into one body: the *corpus regni*. For Długosz, both mystical bodies could not exist without the other, they merged into one: the state ceremony was fulfilled in the Church, and the liturgical rite performed state functions.²¹ Such was the message conveyed by the ruler's official entrance into Cracow, taking on the shape of religious processions. The long-winded description of Władysław Jagiełło's entrance into Cracow in 1432, after his victory over Fedek Nieświcki near Kopestrzyn, provides further evidence of the crystallisation of a uniform ritual of welcoming the ruler in this way. In a similar manner, in 1411, the king descended from his horse and entered the city on foot. Before heading to the Wawel Castle residence, he visited numerous churches in the surrounding agglomeration.²² In 1432, the victorious king was met by processions from all the churches, a situation analogous to when Cracovians welcomed Kazimierz Jagiellończyk in 1447. Perhaps the absence of any mention of a "...procession from all the churches" in the account of the parade celebrating the 1410 Teutonic campaign, suggests that they these traditions were not introduced until after Zbigniew Oleśnicki – who was responsible for the formation of the march – became Bishop of Wawel. This would certainly have been part of the bishop's political and propaganda activity.

Thus, the grand entrance ceremonies were a thoughtful elaborate message, to be repeated and embedded into a particular public space. The staging of this spectacle showed the power and majesty of the ruler, before whom the flags of victory were sometimes carried, and also demonstrated his piety so that he may appear to represent the ideal pious ruler. The procession put the harmonious society of the capital and its surroundings on display, dominated by the

17 Długosz 1982, p. 186.

18 Długosz 1982, p. 187.

19 Decjusz 1521, p. xli. See also Piech 2001, p. 382, fn. 84.

20 Borkowska 2011, pp. 423–424; Rożek 1979, pp. 455–456.

21 Walczak 1992, p. 27; Borkowska 1981, p. 292; Borkowska 1983, p. 70.

22 Długosz 1982, p. 76.

sanctuaries of the patron saints, the most important of which were St. Wenceslaus and St. Stanislaus towering above the city. Finally, the march through the city was an expression of the unity of the most important elements of the kingdom – the *regnum* and the *sacerdotium* – complementing each other before the tomb of St. Stanislaus. The dynamic of the events resulted from an attempt to achieve a triumphal entrance based upon an appropriately modified processional rite in which the hierophany of sanctity was combined with the interests of the state, eliminating the proud ancient character of victory celebrations.²³

4. Skałka – the kingdom's greatest

As mentioned above, Cracow's tradition has connected the history of St. Stanislaus' martyrdom with Skałka south of the city walls. The society of the 15th-century honoured Skałka as the site of the kingdom's greatest drama in their history up to that point. According to Długosz's historical narrative, it was there that events occurred that divided the country and led to the extinction of the Piast dynasty in 1138.²⁴ Situated on a flat plateau above the Vistula River in the city of Kazimierz, the hill was another clear geological landmark around Cracow.²⁵ There was a second chapel, dedicated to St. Stanislaus, in addition to the older section dedicated to the Archangel Michael. In Długosz's view, Skałka was a distinctive place, famous for the glorious martyrdom of St. Stanislaus, forever associated with Cracow, the capital of the bishopric and the Kingdom, afflicted simultaneously with the disgrace of murder and the honour of martyrdom.²⁶

Aside from this special place of theophany, there were also other places and chapels dedicated to Bishop Stanislaus of Szczepanów. The chronicle *Rocznik Traski* from 1270 describes a great flooding from the Vistula River, covering the area under the St. Stanislaus mount, "*totum campum et spacium a monte sancti Stanislav*".²⁷ Moreover, in keeping with late medieval hagiographic tradition, a fountain in honour of St. Stanislaus had already appeared by the early 15th century.²⁸ According to the author of the *Notae Cracovienses*, the water in the fountain miraculously turned into wine in 1426, and he connected this event with the birth of Kazimierz, the second son of Władysław Jagiełło who perished after only a few months.²⁹ The myth of the fountain was expanded further by Długosz who introduced an etiological legend, likely based on a similar theme in the hagiography of St. Adalbert.³⁰ While the bishop's body was being dismembered, the index finger of his right hand fell into a nearby pond, where it was swallowed by a fish, but ultimately caught by fishermen. Through contact with the holy body, the water in the fountain became a *de facto* reliquary and obtained miraculous healing powers.³¹

23 Fałkowski 2010, p. 100.

24 Jan Długosz, *Catalogus episcoporum Cracoviensium*, see: Polkowski/Pauli (ed.) 1887, pp. 62–68. See also Walczak 2001, pp. 399–410.

25 Krasnowolska/Kmietowicz-Drathowa 1997, pp. 209–210.

26 Przędziecki (ed.) 1864, 3, p. 114.

27 Bielowski (ed.) 1872, p. 841.

28 Wyzomska (ed.) 1996, no. 580. See also Skiernia 1997, pp. 595–625; Starnawska 2008, p. 126.

29 Kętrzyński (ed.) 1888, p. 906.

30 Witkowska 1984, pp. 83–84; Starnawska 2008, p. 93.

31 Polkowski/Pauli (ed.) 1887b, pp. 73–74. See also Karłowska-Kamzowa 1976, p. 34.

Sources from the 14th-century mention a St. Stanislaus Street (*platea sancti Stanislai*), and Kazimierz city council accounting books indicate a St. Stanislaus Gate (*valva sancti Stanislai*), a St. Stanislaus Bridge (*pons sancti Stanislai*), as well as a *platea minor sancti Stanislai* connecting the street with Skawińska Gate (St. Stanislaus Gate).³² St. Stanislaus Street is undoubtedly today's Skąteczna Street, and the aforementioned bridge and gate may have been located near Skawińska Gate, allowing for residents to cross a tributary of the Vistula River at the foot of the hill.³³ Therefore the whole northwestern part of late medieval Kazimierz can be described as the St. Stanislaus hagio-toponymous zone, where the chapel, hill, fountain, street, gate, and bridge were all named after the holy bishop of Cracow.

As the sacred heart of Kazimierz, Skątko – with its commemoration of St. Stanislaus – was connected to Wawel Castle Hill by a diverse processional rite.³⁴ The liturgical records of Jan Konarski and successive bishops of Cracow provide sources for the reconstruction of the early 16th-century annual processions from Wawel to Skątko, celebrated around St. Stanislaus's feast day in May and September.³⁵ Despite the fact that this information comes from a slightly later period, we may safely assume that there were also processions connected with the pantheon of the Polish Kingdom's patron saints during the time of Zbigniew Oleśnicki and Jan Długosz, who put words into St. Adalbert's mouth about the importance of celebrating these processions.³⁶

Thus "*in die competenti infra octavam sancti Stanislai*", after the solemn mass in the cathedral, a procession formed, joining the two hills and places of worship connected with St. Stanislaus: the first of importance for the state, the second for the common people. While chanting a Cross and Holy Trinity *responsorium*, they passed through the Grodzka Gate, the town of Stradom and Gliniana Gate toward the St. Stanislaus hagio-toponymous zone in the area of St. Catherine's church. At the same time, in the minds of the faithful, there had to be a lively conviction that they themselves participated in the history of martyrdom, traversing the route that – they estimated – was the same the holy bishop took escaping the king's wrath. Participation in the May procession was therefore both a performance of the drama, the backdrop of which was the history of the events, and historical continuity that identified and united the local community through commemoration.³⁷ In the liturgical guidelines, the church's role is noted as "*ecclesia sancti Stanislai in Rupella*", although in the temple itself antiphons were sung mentioning the two patrons of the building, St. Stanislaus and St. Michael, as well as St. Adalbert. On the way back they entered the church of St. Catherine and St. Hedwig in Stradom with the song *Hedvigis sancta inclita* and the prayer *Da pacem*. In accordance with the ritual practice of Cracow processions in honour of the saints, after returning to the cathedral, the ceremony was concluded with a prayer through the intercession of St. Wenceslaus with the song *Beatus vir Wenceslaus*. The presence of St. Stanislaus, St. Adalbert and

32 Piekosiński/Szujski (ed.) 1878, pp. 154, 156, 177, 254; Krasnowolska/Kmietowicz-Drathowa 1997, p. 237.

33 Laberscheck 2005, p. 20; Laberscheck 2008, p. 144.

34 Jagosz 1979, pp. 603–614; Jagosz 1997, pp. 39–126.

35 Missale Cracoviense 1509, fol. CCXXVIIv; Missale Cracoviense 1510, fol. CXCv; Missale Cracoviense 1515, fol. CCv; Missale Cracoviense 1516, fol. CXCv; Missale Cracoviense 1528, fol. CCv; Missale Cracoviense 1532, fol. 226.

36 Goetel-Kopffowa 1964, p. 66.

37 Reynolds 2000, pp. 135–138.

St. Wenceslaus in the above ritual appears to be an element of the design that was crystallizing from the times of Bishop Oleśnicki.

The May and September processions were attended by residents of the entire Cracow agglomeration. Dominic of Prussia, recalling his student years in Cracow, wrote at the beginning of the 15th century that Poles fasted on the eve of St. Stanislaus's feast day, and while celebrating they donned their best clothing, which was the reason why some Germans suggested that Poles consider St. Stanislaus their God.³⁸ Most likely this was informed by Konrad Celtis Harmann Schedel at the end of the 15th century. He also mentioned that large crowds visited and worshiped at the body of St. Stanislaus, "patron and leader of the whole of Sarmatia".³⁹ These words are indirectly in line with the ban – passed on 11 May 1534 – on vicars carrying a reliquary of the head of the holy bishop from the sacristy for the faithful to kiss.⁴⁰ Canons probably pointed out that the folk forms of worship were not worthy of honouring, since they were guided by the fact that "the holy glory of the saint should be preserved and the silver should not be allowed to be damaged". On the same day, the General Chapter decided that the relics could only be removed by "extraordinary persons, and only in the presence of the prelates and canons"; and during the ceremony to commemorate St. Stanislaus and its octave, a guard should also be appointed to protect the patron's head.⁴¹ The crowd of beautifully dressed Cracovians was therefore a threat to the preservation of the sanctity of the place. St. Stanislaus's relics must also have been a serious temptation for potential thieves; as early as two years after the above regulations were issued, the statue of St. Stanislaus was stolen from the church vault at Skalka, in which part of the body of the holy bishop was likely kept.⁴² The annual celebrations were naturally organized by the Cracow Cathedral Chapter, including the distribution of jubilee prints for the occasion. On 21 April 1536, one florin was paid for printing 150 such prints on the occasion of the May celebrations.⁴³ The feast of St. Stanislaus, together with its octave, therefore mobilized the inhabitants of the entire agglomeration and became an opportunity for a special celebration, during which the liturgy commemorated the patronage of the saint and the important role of Cracow.

Since the beginning of the 16th century, kings-elect followed a similar route in accordance with Zbigniew Oleśnicki's decrees on coronation (*Ordo coronandis*).⁴⁴ The importance of this ceremony was quite different from that of the May processions.⁴⁵ While the annual celebrations were enlivened by the dynamic story of the saint and commemoration, the expiational procession of Polish kings from Wawel Castle to Skalka on the eve of their coronation was a pilgrimage of penance, a rite of passage, albeit also a commemoration, but with a different meaning than the May processions. It also had a profound meaning for society more widely. Through the expiational pilgrimage, the people were given the opportunity to participate in the initial stage of the royal

38 Nowak 1995, p. 64; Rożnowska-Sadraei 2008, pp. 311–312.

39 Schedel 1493, fol. 269. See also Wyzumski 2010, pp. 35–44; Pieradzka 1937, p. 191.

40 Przybyszewski (ed.) 1987, no. 1093.

41 Przybyszewski (ed.) 1987, no. 1094.

42 Przybyszewski (ed.) 1989, no. 6.

43 Przybyszewski (ed.) 1989, no. 32. See also Przybyszewski (ed.) 1997, no. 1513.

44 Kutrzeba (ed.) 1909–1913.

45 Rożnowska-Sadraei 2008, pp. 325–334. See also Gieysztor 1978b, pp. 13–14; Gieysztor 1990, pp. 152–164; Crossley 2002, pp. 61–64; Crossley 2005, pp. 103–123.

ritual, and transformed the hitherto closed coronation into a truly public act of communion.⁴⁶ The rite of passage marked the beginning of a monarchical spiritual transformation for the secular heir to the Lord Christ. It was a melancholy journey leading to the dark past of the Polish nation and its monarchy. After all, the future king followed the path that St. Stanislaus used to flee the king's wrath; the same path was to be followed, in the consciousness of the participants of the ceremony, by his murderer, the elect's predecessor, Bolesław "the Bold". This time, however, the path led not to transgression, but to humility before the majesty of the holy bishop. This important reminder of history and its symbolic reversal was a perfectly orchestrated performance, aimed at reminding the future monarch of the crime burdening the 'body of the Polish king' and established the king's relationship with the Polish – or rather Cracovian – Church. Ernst Kantorowicz's concept of the two bodies of the king – the idea that the eternal body of the monarchy coexists in the physical body of the king – is inscribed in the historiosophy of St. Stanislaus's hagiographers, especially Jan Długosz, according to whom, the murder of the bishop committed by King Bolesław the Bold weighed upon the entire Piast dynasty and their successors, the Jagiellonians.

5. Kleparz – the Polish Florence

It was not without reason that the townswoman Veronica's vision of the heavenly procession in Długosz's account, started at the St. Florian Collegiate Church in Kleparz.⁴⁷ This scene is closely connected with the process of creating the pantheon of the Polish Kingdom's patron saints in the first half of the 15th century by Bishop Oleśnicki. The desire to increase the number of Polish holy intercessors was probably not the only reason for including the patron saint of the Collegiate Church in Kleparz in this elite group. As mentioned above, before taking over the bishopric of Cracow, Oleśnicki was the prefect of St. Florian's Church. Perhaps then the ambitious politician hatched the idea of reactivating the cult that Bishop Gedko failed to initiate in the second half of the 12th century. After taking the helm of the bishopric in 1423, Oleśnicki's reference to the ecclesiastical policy of his 12th-century predecessor became even more justified. Later Jan Długosz further emphasized its merits for the Cracow Church. The chronicler described with appreciation the transfer of St. Florian's body in 1184 from Italy to Cracow in his *Annales* and in the *Catalogue of Polish Bishops*. In the latter work, Długosz emphasized another characteristic feature of Gedko, who, seeing the oppressive taxation falling on the people under Mieszko III's rule, stood up for the downtrodden, imitating his holy predecessor St. Stanislaus.⁴⁸ Gedko gained further significance in history through this comparison to the saint standing up against the monarch. In a similar manner, Bishop Oleśnicki, often in open conflict with rulers, enjoyed comparing himself with St. Stanislaus.⁴⁹ Thus, the renewal of the cult of St. Florian was, at the same time, a personal task resulting from his past function as a prefect of the Collegiate Church, and the culmination of the work begun by his predecessor Gedko.

46 Gieysztor 1978b, p. 14; Rożnowska-Sadraei 2008, p. 329.

47 Dobrowolski 1928, pp. 14–46.

48 Polkowski/Pauli (ed.) 1887, p. 394.

49 Długosz 1982, pp. 102–103, 207–209.

The evolution of the name of the Kleparz settlement was closely linked with the invocation of the Collegiate Church. In a document from Bolesław the Chaste dated 1258, the land north of Cracow was to be purchased from the Tyniec monastery and incorporated into the city. The area apparently did not yet have a name of its own, but was referred to in relation to the church, “*terre, que circa ecclesiam beati Floriani*”.⁵⁰ This settlement was similarly named in documents from the first half of the 14th century.⁵¹ The city charter published by Kazimierz II the Great on 25 June 1366, is the next step in the evolution of its name. From that time, by the will of the ruler, the suburb located near St. Florian’s Church was to be called Florence (“*Florenzia*”), in reference to the chapel.⁵² The new term had been promoted for some time already, since the Cracow city charter issued by King Kazimierz in 1358 mentioned the name “*Florenzia*” as in “*hoc est circa sanctum Florianum*”.⁵³

Apart from the name of the church and the town, two other elements of urban space can be located in this part of the agglomeration, which have been named after a holy martyr. The first of which was the Florian City Gate Tower, mentioned as early as 1307, and was an integral part of the city’s defences. One of the city’s most important arteries, St. Florian’s Street (*platea sancti Floriani*) led from the gate to the Main Market Square, rounding out the sacred area.⁵⁴ Just as the annual processions in honour of St. Stanislaus went from the holy tomb in Wawel Cathedral through St. Stanislaus’s Street to St. Stanislaus Church, so it was with the 4 May processions in honour of St. Florian, which began at the holy tomb in the Cathedral, up St. Florian’s Street, through St. Florian’s Gate and into St. Florian’s Church in *Florenzia*. On the way back, the procession entered St. Mary’s Cathedral and then went to Wawel Hill, where “*Beatus vir Venceslaus*” was traditionally sung.⁵⁵

Participation in annual and ornamental processions, served the function of enforcing particular cults, but also imagined a historical continuity, sometimes by presenting a dramatic story, such as the ceremony of the king-elect’s pilgrimage to Skalka on the eve of his coronation. Past events were evoked by the fact of walking through places associated with the history of saints, and the urban framework was the setting for this performance. As the city dwellers walked along paths purposefully chosen by the organizers, they could identify themselves more fully with the territory and its authorities: both Church and state. The processions united the Cracow agglomeration at last by crossing the gates and bridges dividing the area, though the Wawel Cathedral always served as the site of each ceremony’s culmination. The capital city of Cracow and the Polish Kingdom’s holy patrons’ prominent position in the processions, accentuates the cohesion of the Kingdom. In Veronica’s vision, St. Adalbert recommended that the city celebrate processions between churches, providing evidence of the deep meaning contained in the Church leadership’s agenda in the 15th century. Długosz and Oleśnicki realised how important the processional rite was for burgher piety and how it could be exploited.

50 Kętrzyński/Smolka (ed.) 1875, no. 21. See also Dzikówna 1932, p. 13.

51 Chmiel 1909, p. 149; Dzikówna 1932, p. 15.

52 Wyrozumska (ed.) 2007, p. 38.

53 Wyrozumska (ed.) 2007, p. 34.

54 Piekosiński/Szujski (ed.) 1878, no. 47. See also Muczkowski 1911, p. 32.

55 Missale Cracoviense 1509, fol. CCXXIII; Missale Cracoviense 1510, fol. CXCII; Missale Cracoviense 1516, fol. CCII–CCIV; Missale Cracoviense 1532, fol. 224.

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Building identity

Town halls of small Polish towns as a symbol and a sign of urban character and identity (14th–16th century)

Maciej T. Radomski

In popular imagination a mediaeval town is a densely built up, stonewalled, crowded and busy settlement with sky scraping spires of churches and town halls. In reality, in case of many small chartered towns, there was little difference between them and villages, except legal status. With scarce budgets, they struggled with municipal projects. However, a number of them invested great amounts of resources and effort to build town halls. Analysing evidence from the small towns (less than 2000 inhabitants) of the Kingdom of Poland, I explore in this paper a role played by their municipal buildings in constructing urban identity and manifesting their urban character.

Allgemeinhin denkt man, dass eine mittelalterliche Stadt eine dicht bebaute, von Mauern umgebene Siedlung mit großen Türmen, Kirchen und Rathäusern ist. Jedoch sahen viele kleine mittelalterliche Lokationsstädte eher wie größere Dörfer aus. Ihr rechtlicher Status (als Stadt) war der einzige Unterschied. Aufgrund der knappen finanziellen Ressourcen hatten sie eine schlecht entwickelte Kommunalwirtschaft. Trotz der wirtschaftlichen Schwierigkeiten bauten viele dieser Kleinstädte jedoch ein Rathaus. In diesem Artikel werden Kleinstädte (kleiner als 2000 Einwohner) des Königreichs Polen und die Rolle ihrer Rathäuser bei der Konstruktion urbaner Identität sowie bei der Ausgestaltung ihres urbanen Charakters untersucht.

1. Introduction

Since town halls were established as emblems of urban settlements in the Middle Ages, they have remained the immanent element of urban character to the present day. This notion is so strong that some scholars even mistakenly assume that a medieval chartered town could not function without a town hall. Although most knowledge about medieval municipal buildings is based predominantly on the evidence from large urban centres, it has often been assumed to be universal for towns of all sizes, leading to various misconceptions.

1. 1. Research questions and hypotheses

The aim of this paper is to explore the symbolic functions of town halls in small towns. The main research questions are: 1) what was the symbolic meaning of the town halls of small urban centres; 2) how were they built; 3) which ac-



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Featured Image

Detail of the map of Poland by Wacław Grodecki, printed in Ortelius's Theatrum orbis terrarum (Antwerp 1573); Public domain. From the copy of the State Library of New South Wales.

tors used town halls to construct and express urban identity; and 4) for whose benefit was it done? Based on the analysed material,¹ the following hypotheses were made: 1) in settlements having the legal status of a town but characterised by a low level of urbanisation and urban material culture, the need to manifest urban character could be the principal motivation for building a town hall; 2) in small towns, a town hall was more an egalitarian and universal symbol of a whole urban community rather than a tool and emblem of the power and authority of a town council and its governing elite.

1. 2. Chronological and geographical scope

The study investigates towns of Greater Poland, Lesser Poland, and Masovia² – three provinces of the Kingdom of Poland – the urbanization of which had comparable chronologies and dynamics, and which took place in similar socio-economic and political conditions.³ The chartering of new towns as well as the reorganising of older settlements according to the so called ‘German law’ (*ius Theuthonicum*) began in those lands in the 13th century (although it was noticeably delayed in Masovia). This process intensified in the mid-14th century, with subsequent waves observed in the 15th and 16th century, when the majority of small towns were established, predominately by nobles (private owners).⁴ Since town halls were quite rare in the 13th century even in the largest urban centres, and as the 17th century brought new baroque cultural (and architectural) models and ideas, our focus will concentrate on the period from the 14th to the 16th century.⁵

1. 3. Small towns

Finding a universal definition of a small town for the studied period (as in fact for any period) is as impossible as finding a universal definition for a town. In the Polish historiography, the traditional typology dividing towns into four tax categories based on 15th and 16th century tax registers is often used.⁶ These tax categories did not, however, directly resemble the size of urban settlements and often did not even indicate their real economic position.⁷ The amount of tax paid by specific towns (and so the tax category) could vary significantly depending on time. Moreover, the tax registers contain no complete lists of towns and their respective categories for any given time (because of, for instance, temporary tax exemptions). Therefore, it was impractical to use this system for the purpose of the present study. Instead, an imperfect

1 This paper is the result of an ongoing research project on town halls of small(er) Polish towns up to the end of the 16th century.

2 The voivodships of Poznań, Kalisz, Kraków, Lublin, Sandomierz, Płock, Rawa, and Masovia in their borders in 1569 (before the Union of Lublin). See Stoń (ed.) 2014; Chłapowski/Stoń (ed.) 2017. The material for the urban settlements of Cuyavia (Kujawy) and the voivodships of Łęczyca and Sieradz (belonging to the province of Greater Poland) have not been analysed yet.

3 Janeczek 2001, p. 163.

4 Janeczek 2001, pp. 161–163.

5 Although, the new cultural ideas of humanism and the Renaissance became widespread in 16th century Poland, urban culture and urban society, especially in small towns, were in essence still late medieval.

6 Bogucka/Samsonowicz 1986, pp. 114–118; Kulejewska-Topolska 1956, pp. 262–263.

7 See e.g. Stoń 2016, pp. 99–104; see also Wiesiołowski 1980.

but practical criterion of a population of less than 2000 in the second half of the 16th century – based on estimates from the *Atlas Historyczny Polski. Mapy szczegółowe XVI wieku* [Historical Atlas of Poland in the Second Half of the 16th Century] – was chosen.⁸ For the end of the 16th century, 482 towns (settlements with the urban law *Lokationsstädte*) were identified in the studied lands, of which 442 (92%) had less than 2000 inhabitants. More than two-thirds of the urban settlements were inhabited by less than 1000 people, while a population of almost a half did not exceed 500.

	Royal		Ecclesiastical		Private (noble)		Total
Greater Poland	27	18%	24,5	16%	100,5	66%	152
Lesser Poland	61	30%	39	19%	104	51%	204
Masovia	31	36%	13	15%	42	49%	86
Total	119	27%	77	17%	247	56%	442

Table 1 The structure of ownership of the small towns in Greater Poland, Lesser Poland and Masovia (the second half of the 16th century).

Most of the analysed small towns were chartered and owned by private noble owners (**Table 1**), who had a decisive say in matters of their administration, development, and finances, leaving no space for an autonomous local urban government, especially in the 16th century. The situation was similar in towns belonging to various ecclesiastical institutions. In theory, urban centres which were a part of royal domain (often the oldest and the largest of the studied settlements) had the highest level of autonomy. However, a majority of them were leased (with hereditary rights) to noblemen, who commonly treated those towns as private property and dominated their governance.⁹ Therefore, it is non-urban actors who often decided on the possibilities and ways of manifesting urban character, and who must also be included in this study.

1. 4. Methods and sources

The symbolic meaning of town halls as signs of urban autonomy, the power of urban authorities, and as expressions of communal pride and unity, is traditionally reconstructed through analyses of architectural features, iconographic programmes, and the furnishings of existing municipal buildings.¹⁰ This methodological approach was, however, impossible to adopt in the case of the medieval town halls of small Polish towns as no such structures survive today. Instead, various written sources and archaeological evidence were examined to gather information on the buildings' construction, architectural form, location in urban space, and how they were perceived. Nevertheless, in most

8 Dunin-Wąsowiczowa 1993, pp. 78–83; Gieysztorowa 1973, pp. 78, 83–85; Suproniuk 2008, pp. 72–75; Suproniuk 2017, pp. 212–221; Wojciechowski 1966, pp. 30–32; an English edition of several volumes of the atlas is Chłapowski/Słoń (ed.) 2017. As a criterion to distinguish between small and middle-sized (and large) towns, a population of 2000 inhabitants at the end of 16th century has been used before, e.g., Janeczek 2001, p. 166.

9 Janeczek 2001, pp. 159–161.

10 See e.g. Albrecht 2004; Bogucka 1997 (esp. pp. 85–89); Eysymontt 2014; Jakimowicz 1997; Jiřová 2014; Zlat 1997.

cases, it was only possible to determine if a particular town's council seat was constructed during the studied period. Yet, the very fact that a town hall was built at all in settlements with a low level of urbanisation and urban material culture, is significant. Consequently, the first step was to establish the number of towns in which such a municipal building was built (or its construction was intended or planned). In the next stage, the gathered data was compared with the material culture model of a medieval town hall, which was constructed based on the evidence from middle-sized and large cities, to explore if the studied buildings replicated its basic elements (and so their symbolic meaning). Finally, the organisational aspects of constructing and maintaining town halls were analysed in order to identify attitudes towards them shown by different urban and non-urban 'actors' and 'spectators'.

Among the various types of written sources, urban records were the most important for the purpose of the current study. Especially useful were accounts and summaries of town finances, which in several cases provided some detailed information about the architecture of the town halls and their features (towers, clocks, bells, etc.). However, such urban registers survived for less than half of the studied towns (commonly lacking for the smallest, private urban settlements), and they date mostly from the second half of the 16th century. Town charters and ordinances granted by owners were useful in analysing motivations behind the decision to found a council seat in these towns. Some evidence was also provided by surveys of royal and ecclesiastical estates. A few archaeological reports allowed for a reconstruction of the general shape of a small number of the investigated buildings. No relevant pictorial sources were found.

2. 'Rurality' of the urban environment of small towns

In the popular imagination medieval towns are densely built-up, walled, crowded and busy spaces with sky scraping spires of churches and town halls. Such an image is reinforced by pop-culture, with filmmakers and videogame creators commonly using it to represent any urban settlement located in various fantasy realms inspired by medieval Europe – see, for instance, depictions of Wyzima, Oxenfurt, or the Free City of Novigrad in the *Witcher* game series (produced by CD Projekt) and King's Landing in the *Game of Thrones* television series (produced by HBO). The use of this image is, however, by no means a new phenomenon as towns have been described and pictured in that way since the Middle Ages (**Fig. 1**), making it a principal research problem of a separate discipline that combines art history and urban studies.¹¹ Ideograms used on early maps to mark locations of towns and cities were often a simplified version of the described image, consisting of a few lines and shapes resembling towered buildings and walls. In Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (as on many other maps from that period), such pictograms were universally used to represent towns regardless of their size, location, and cultural region (**Fig. 2**). Therefore, when people in the second half of the 16th century looked at the map of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by Wacław Grodecki

11 See e.g., Kleinschmidt 1999; Simane 1999. The number of studies concerning the image of a medieval town is vast. For recent comprehensive list of the most important works see Lichert et al. 2014, fn. 1.



Fig. 1 View of Nysa (Silesia), from the Nuremberg Chronicle (Schedelsche Weltchronik), 1493. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

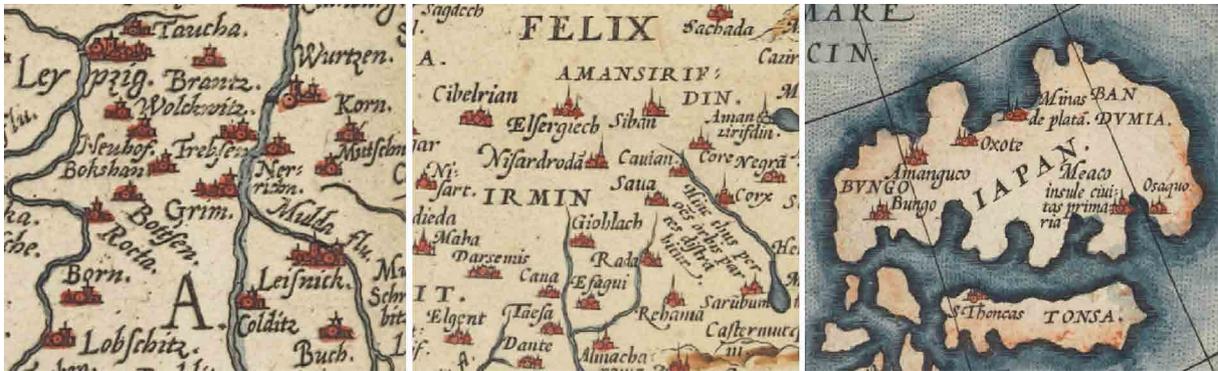


Fig. 2 Details of the maps from Abraham Ortelius's *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (Antwerp 1573); from the left: Saxony, Arabia, Japan. Public domain. From the copy of the State Library of New South Wales.



Fig. 3 Detail of the map of Poland by Wacław Grodecki, printed in Ortelius's *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (Antwerp 1573); Public domain. From the copy of the State Library of New South Wales.

(from Ortelius's atlas) they found no visual distinction between major urban centres with more than 10,000 inhabitants (e.g., Lviv, Poznań, Toruń) and tiny towns like Mińsk (Mazovia), Wągrowiec (Greater Poland), or Żelechów (Lesser Poland) (Fig. 3). Although all those municipalities had the same legal status of a chartered town (*Lokationstadt*), in terms of their material culture and urban landscape they were completely different. Polish small towns often resembled

rural settlements more than urbanised space.¹² In many cases, the only feature they shared with cities and larger towns was the urban grid layout, albeit in a reduced form, consisting of only a central square and adjoining building blocks. Otherwise, they were loosely built up with mainly timber (or timber-framed), one-storey buildings and encircled with palisades, earthworks, and frequently just simple wooden fences rather than stone walls. Their landscape was dominated by farms, gardens, pastures, and fields, as agriculture was the principal activity of a substantial part, if not the overall majority, of the inhabitants.¹³

3. Town halls in the small towns

The built environment of the small towns was also influenced by the municipal economy, or rather the lack of it. Even large and middle-sized medieval and early modern urban centres of the Kingdom of Poland had limited annual budgets: understood as funds needed for administrative expenses, providing necessary services, utilities (security, waste disposal, water supply, etc.), and public facilities.¹⁴ For the lesser towns, struggling with everyday expenditures, constructing any public building or structure was a major and difficult endeavour. Nonetheless, in many of those settlements, town halls were erected with a great financial effort.¹⁵ Because of the limited funds, such building projects tended to take years, even if a particular town hall was a modest wooden or timber-framed structure. Moreover, finished buildings needed constant repairs, making them an ongoing burden on the urban budget.¹⁶ In Kraśnik (Lesser Poland), which was one of the larger and more prosperous of the studied settlements (it was even encircled with masonry walls), a town hall was built in the second half of the 16th century.¹⁷ The construction of the main timber building and the timber tower took seven years (1571–1577), with additional works continuing for another decade. During the first stage, the annual costs of the building project exceeded 60% of the yearly expenditure of the town. Even before the work was finished, the town hall's structure needed repairs; the first such expenses were recorded in 1575 and afterwards were regularly listed in the financial registers.¹⁸ Furthermore, there is evidence that the Kraśnik councillors started gathering funds for the building project as early as 1557, which means they prepared for it for almost 15 years.¹⁹

Contrary to popular belief, sometimes also presented by scholars,²⁰ town halls were not a requisite for the proper functioning of a chartered town or a

12 Important observations on the phenomenon are described by Samsonowicz 2002.

13 However, even in large cities of medieval and early modern Europe, there were extensive green, undeveloped and abandoned spaces; see Cembrzyński/Radomski 2022.

14 See e.g., Starzyński 2010; Goliński 2010, Sowina 2010; Noga 2010. Although the need for studies on municipal finances and the municipal economy of Polish medieval towns was expressed almost 20 years ago by Halina Manikowska (Manikowska 2001, pp. 109–110), these topics have not yet been extensively studied using modern methodological approaches. The few works published on the subject (the examples cited in this footnote) concern only the largest urban centres of the Kingdom of Poland and Silesia (Cracow, Wrocław, Gdańsk, etc.).

15 Bartoszewicz 2014.

16 A town hall could also be a source of income, if it housed facilities like weights or shops.

17 AP Lublin, AM Kraśnik, sign. 1, fols. 35v–89v (council register, on the cited folios' financial records for 1570–1600).

18 AP Lublin, AM Kraśnik, sign. 1, fols. 43v–44r.

19 AP Lublin, AM Kraśnik, sign. 1, fol. 6v.

20 See e.g., Kuśnierz-Krupa 2012, p. 83; Kuśnierz-Krupa 2013, pp. 93–95; Mrocza 2015, pp. 28–29; Wyrobisz 1970, pp. 588–589.

town council. For the most part of the studied period, the majority of urban centres in the Kingdom of Poland did not have a permanent seat for town officials, as even in the largest cities, town halls were constructed decades (and sometimes more than 100 years) after their chartering (*Lokation*).²¹ Moreover, municipal buildings were often destroyed in frequently occurring urban fires, especially in small towns as they were commonly built of timber. Councillors, aldermen and judges often met and held court in their private houses.²² Municipal facilities (such as weights, a cloth-cropping house) could be located in separate, sometimes private, buildings, while an urban archive (registers, charters, seals, etc.) were stored in churches or kept by town officials. In Urzędów, a royal town located near the aforementioned Kraśnik, a separate weighing house and market stalls stood on the central square. There was no typical town hall, instead, in the second half of the 16th century, councillors and aldermen fulfilled their official duties in rooms on the upper floor of one of the town gates, while documents and urban funds were safely deposited in the parish church.²³ The town hall of Old Liw (Masovia), which completely burnt down in 1589, had still not been rebuilt by the mid-17th century, to the frustration of the local noblemen who had used it for their terrestrial court sessions. They repeatedly petitioned the king and the Parliament (*Sejm*) to force the reluctant Liw burghers and the town council to reconstruct the building, but with no success.²⁴

	Royal			Ecclesiastical			Private (nobles)			Total		
	All	With a townhall	%	All	With a townhall	%	All	With a townhall	%	All	With a townhall	%
Greater Poland	27	8	30%	24,5	5	20%	100,5	9	9%	152	22	14%
Lesser Poland	61	32	52%	39	12	31%	104	26	25%	204	70	34%
Masovia	31	13	42%	13	2	15%	42	2	5%	86	17	20%
Total	119	53	45%	77	19	25%	247	37	15%	442	109	25%

Table 2 Small towns with a town hall by the end of the 16th century.

However, in a quarter of small urban settlements a town hall was constructed and functioned before the end of the 16th century, that is its presence sometime during the period has been confirmed either in the written sources or in the archaeological material (**Table 2**). The actual number of towns with a municipal building – a permanent seat of urban officials – was probably much greater in every province and in every ownership category. The data is the least accurate for Masovia and the Sandomierz voivodeship (the part of Lesser Poland with the greatest number of towns), as the overall majority of the urban records from these lands were destroyed when the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw were burnt down during the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944.²⁵ Also, the calculation for private towns, which were the most numerous, is an underestimate because the written evidence for them is the

21 Bartoszewicz 2014, pp. 162–163.

22 AN Kraków, VCV, sign. 100, fols. 145v, 147–148v, 150; AP Lublin, AM Baranów, sign. 1, p. 147; Jawor et al. 2001, nos. 62, 80, 92, 100, 104, 105, 114; Bartoszewicz 2014, pp. 163–165.

23 AP Lublin, AM Urzędów, sign. 2/1, fol. 5v; Godlewska 1963, p. 68.

24 Moniuszko 2013, p. 48.

25 Wolff 1957.

least extensive. As private property, they were not surveyed by royal officials and their records formed a part of the private archives of noble families and were often not preserved. The high percentage of royal towns with a town hall is a result of relatively well kept and diversified written records and the fact they tended to be older, larger, and richer urban centres. Moreover, municipal buildings in the settlements belonging to the royal domain, were frequently used by non-urban officials, e.g. for terrestrial court sessions, local assemblies of noblemen (*dietine*, *sejmik*), and state tribunals. As a result, their construction and maintenance were often financed directly from the royal purse or by taxes and monopolies granted to towns by a royal privilege, such as in Czersk (Masovia),²⁶ Rogoźno,²⁷ and Koło²⁸ (Greater Poland).

As town halls could be viewed, in a sense, as an expensive commodity, not being indispensable for towns to prosper, the construction of such buildings in at least a quarter of small urban settlements is significant. It seems that their utilitarian function – as a seat of urban officials – for which cheaper and available substitutes could be easily (and in fact were) found, was not the principal, and certainly not the only reason, for building them. Instead, their desirability derived from their symbolic meaning and the fact they were a distinctive sign of urban character, as they acted as a visual, material link between the largest cities and small towns.

4. The material culture model of a medieval town hall, its symbolic meaning and its reception in small towns

The universality of the architectural forms of medieval European town halls, whose roots can be traced to the architecture of public buildings of the Roman Empire through Carolingian and Ottonian imperial palaces, has been repeatedly discussed in scholarly works. For the purpose of this study, the papers of Krasnowolski, Zlat, and Eysymontt, who analysed the evidence from the Kingdom of Poland and neighbouring countries, were the most relevant and allowed a reconstruction of the material culture model (and the symbolic meaning) of a medieval town hall present in large and middle sized urban centres.²⁹ In the Kingdom of Poland, municipal buildings were typically located somewhere in the middle of a central square,³⁰ a sign of the central role of self-government in the functioning of an urban community. Commonly, they were rectangular oblong (rarely square) structures.³¹ Their dominant feature was a soaring tower, which housed municipal bells and clocks, and was distinctly visible in an urban landscape.³² (Figs. 4, 5, 6) In the late Middle Ages, oriels, battlements, and crow-step gables were added, making town halls' facades look like those of castles and palaces (Fig. 7).³³ Indeed, the deliberate reflec-

26 Kozłowski 1858, pp. 576–577 (here the edition of the royal privilege).

27 Gąsiorowski/Jasiński 1990, no. 1128.

28 AGAD, MK 17, fol. 301r.

29 Krasnowolski 2014; Zlat 1997; Eysymontt 2014 (esp. pp. 57–61, 71–74). They also give an extensive list of further literature on European town halls and their symbolic meaning.

30 Krasnowolski 2014, p. 82. Only incidentally was a town hall located in one of the building blocks adjacent to a central square (or a main street): Krasnowolski 2014, pp. 80–82, Eysymontt 2014, pp. 71–74 (Silesian towns).

31 Zlat 1997, pp. 11–19; Krasnowolski 2014, pp. 84–85, Komorowski 2014, pp. 247–248.

32 Zlat 1997, pp. 20–24, Krasnowolski 2014, pp. 83–85, 87–89, 93; Manikowska 2014, p. 33.

33 Zlat 1997, pp. 24–27; Krasnowolski 2014, p. 90.



Fig. 4 Town hall in Biecz (Lesser Poland), the 16th c. tower. Photo by Henryk Bielamowicz, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.



Fig. 5 Town hall in Lwówek Śląski (Silesia), the 15th c. tower. CC BY-SA 4.0. Photo by Enamo, CC BY-SA 3.0 PL, via Wikimedia Commons.



Fig. 6 Town hall in Namysłów (Silesia), the 14th c. tower. CC BY-SA 4.0. Photo by Efka de, CC BY-SA 2.5, via Wikimedia Commons

tion of the architectural forms of an early medieval *palas* and later castles and palaces – buildings connected with exercising sovereign power and authority – made a town hall a symbol of urban autonomy.³⁴ With towers, oriels, and battlements – characteristic features of military architecture – the *Rathäuser* also imitated the castles of knights, thus expressing the burghers' intention to take an equal place in medieval society to that of noblemen.³⁵ A town hall's tower was especially viewed in this way, making it an object of pride for a whole urban community.³⁶ It was such a strong symbol of a town that towers

34 Zlat 1997, p. 31.

35 Krasnowolski 2014, p. 85.

36 Zlat 1997, p. 20. Krasnowolski 2014, pp. 85, 90.



Fig. 7 Town hall in Wrocław (Silesia). CC BY_SA 4.0. Photo by Jacek Halicki, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

Fig. 8 Town hall tower in Cracow. The rest of the building was demolished in the 19th c. CC BY_SA 4.0. Photo by Mach240390, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

are often the only element of medieval town halls surviving to the present day (Fig. 8). However, imposing and luxurious municipal buildings were also a sign and a tool used by urban officials to show their dominant position in a town's society and to exercise control over burghers and other town inhabitants through symbolic violence.³⁷ These include, according to Pierre Bourdieu, various means (architecture, attributes, ceremonies, customs, etc.) employed (sometimes unconsciously) by the ruling classes to cement their social status and power and to subordinate the lower orders without resorting to physical violence.³⁸ For instance, councillors proclaimed their ordinances from oriels and balconies standing high above townsmen gathered on a square. With bells and clocks, they regulated the pace of everyday life of a whole community, indicating the time for work and rest.

As mentioned above, it was possible to recreate the architectural form of a few of the town halls built in small towns. In most cases, only a few details and features were discovered. The most frequent was information about the town halls' location in the urban space. All municipal buildings but two stood in the middle of a central square: in Wieliczka (Lesser Poland), a town hall was constructed in a building block flanking the market square,³⁹ while the upper floors of a town gate were used for the seat



37 Krasnowolski 2014, pp. 29–33.

38 Bourdieu 2016, pp. 792–793.

39 Krasnowolski 2014, p. 81.

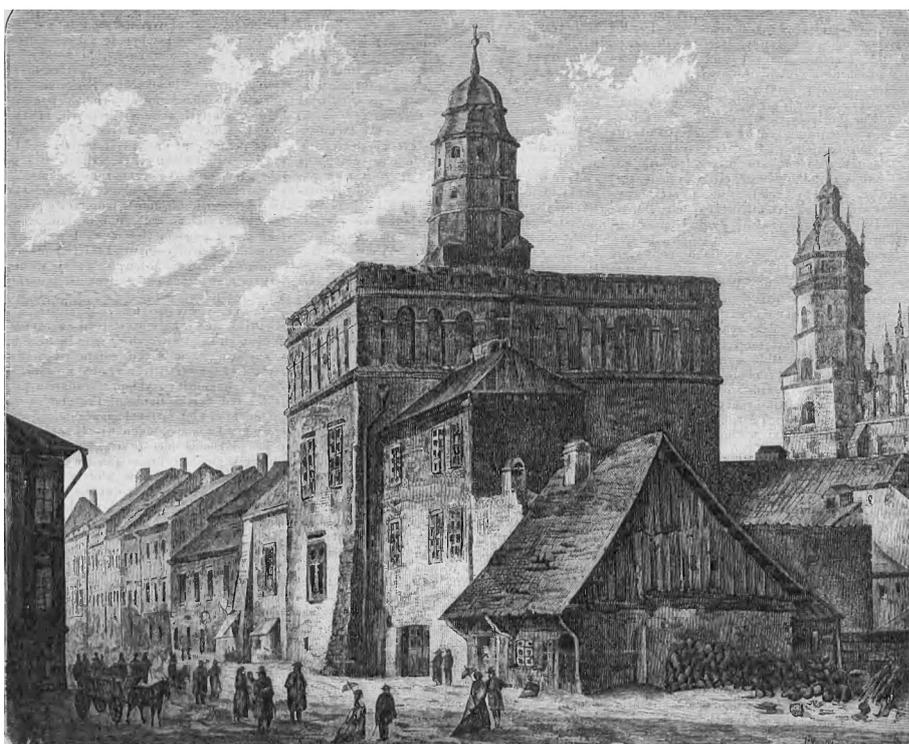


Fig. 9 Town hall in Kazimierz (near Cracow) before the renovation in the second half of the 19th c. Woodcut by A. Kühlewein, based on a water-colour by A.K. Gryglewski, after: *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 1878 (V/136). Public domain.

of councillors and aldermen in the town of Urzędów.⁴⁰ Towers were the element of the town halls' structure whose presence was most often confirmed in the existing evidence. A tower of the town hall in Kraśnik was at least three storeys high, and like the rest of the structure it was built of timber and clad with wooden shingles. There was a painted ball on its top, which formed a base for a metal weather vane. It also housed town bells and a clock.⁴¹ Clocks and bells were also mounted on town hall towers in Bochnia,⁴² Czychów,⁴³ Kazimierz,⁴⁴ Pilzno,⁴⁵ Urzędów,⁴⁶ and Wojnicz⁴⁷ (Lesser Poland), for example. Remains of 16th-century town halls were found during archaeological excavations in Kielce and Iłża (Lesser Poland).⁴⁸ The municipal building of the latter town is quite well known from a survey conducted before its demolition in the 1820s. It was a masonry, rectangular, three-storey building (approx. 16.5 x 9 m) with a six-storey tower adjacent to one of its longer sides.⁴⁹ Archaeologists argue that Kielce town hall was very similar (but larger) than the one in Iłża, as they were built in the same period, their foundations had the same layout, and both towns belonged to the bishops of Cracow.⁵⁰ All the other *Rathäuser* whose archaeological remains were explored had similar rectangular plan and dimensions: the ratio of their sides' length was 3:1; 2:1; 3:2.⁵¹ Nothing is known about particular elements of the facades of small town municipal buildings. Only in the case of Kraśnik is there some evidence that the building had crow-

40 Godlewska 1963, p. 68.

41 AP Lublin, AM Kraśnik, sign. 1, fol. 45r.

42 Kuraś/Sułkowska-Kurasiowa (ed.) 1969–1974, vol. 6, no. 1845.

43 AN Kraków, AM Czychów, sign. 29, fol. 33r.

44 Chmiel (ed.) 1932, p. 1.

45 Ossolineum, sign. 2083 II, fol. 1r.

46 Wyczański (ed.) 1959, p. 96.

47 Szymański (ed.) 1994, nos. 22, 34.

48 Gliński/Glińska 2011, pp. 96–106; Gliński/Glińska 2012, pp. 29–30.

49 Nowakowski 2012, p. 70; Kupisz 2014, p. 47.

50 Gliński/Glińska 2011, pp. 96–97.

51 Komorowski 2002, pp. 247–248; Komorowski 2012, p. 32.



Fig. 10 The 18th c. town hall in Sulmierzyce (Greater Poland). CC BY-SA 4.0. Photo by Dawid Galus, CC BY-SA 3.0 PL.

step gables, which were repeatedly destroyed by storms.⁵² Their constant repairs, recorded in the town's expenditures, could be a sign of great determination by the town councillors, who wanted to replicate this architectural feature typically seen in the masonry of gothic architecture in their timber town hall. It is difficult to illustrate the architecture of the studied buildings as, unfortunately, of all the town halls of small towns, only the one in Kazimierz (near Cracow) has survived to the present day (**Fig. 9**). However, it was rebuilt after fires in the 17th century and in the 19th century, so its original medieval and renaissance features are not visible. Some clues as to the appearance of the timber examples (the majority of the small urban settlements' town halls) are provided by later structures, like the 18th century one in Sulmierzyce (Greater Poland) (**Fig. 10**).

Despite the scarce evidence, it seems that the town halls of small towns were consistent with the described material culture model of a medieval town hall. Moreover, its features which were most commonly replicated were those most clearly representing urbanity and the urban community: the central position in the urban space and the tower with bells and a clock.⁵³ Therefore, by erecting municipal buildings in this particular form, small towns displayed and confirmed their urban character and authority.

5. The town halls as signs and tools: actors and spectators

In large urban centres, the building of a town hall was in most cases an initiative by the urban authorities, notably town councils. Sometimes it was a powerful statement in a struggle for autonomy against a feudal lord, like in Worms where the town hall was built by the community without the bishop's consent and had to be demolished in 1180.⁵⁴ However, urban communes commonly

52 AP Lublin, AM Kraśnik, sign. 1, fols. 66v, 78v.

53 Manikowska 2014, p. 33.

54 Zlat 1997, p. 33.

sought the assent of their sovereigns.⁵⁵ For councillors, town halls were a useful tool of ‘symbolic violence’ employed to exercise their authority over townsmen. So, it was they who petitioned kings and dukes for the necessary privileges to build such a structure and laboured to gather sufficient funds for its construction. The practice was similar in the small towns belonging to the royal domain. Royal privileges are often the first (and sometimes the only) trace of a town hall’s existence.⁵⁶ However, in the case of small urban settlements, there is evidence that the construction and maintenance of a town hall was often not the sole endeavour of municipal authorities. In *Książ Wielki* (Lesser Poland), a special chest with three locks was made for keeping the money gathered for the construction of a municipal building. The keys to the chest were held by the town council, by the royal official, and the representatives of the burghers (*seniores communitatis*) who contributed the funds.⁵⁷ The burghers (*communitas*) of Wojnicz decided to buy a clock for the town hall’s tower, and after its construction frequently demanded that the councillors should keep it in a good condition.⁵⁸ In private and ecclesiastical towns, a construction of a town hall was commonly an initiative of non-urban actors. The municipal buildings of Kilece, Iłża, and Bodzentyn were financed by the bishops of Cracow,⁵⁹ while the erection of the one in Skierniewice (Masovia) was ordered and paid for by the Archbishop of Gniezno.⁶⁰ Abbots or abbesses gave assets for the town halls in Kostrzyn (Greater Poland), Jędrzejów, and Skawina (Lesser Poland).⁶¹ Private town owners frequently specified upon a town’s foundation (in urban charters and ordinances) that a *Rathaus* should be constructed, and they provided the necessary materials and funds for it, e.g. in Czemiń and Kórnik (Greater Poland); and Kurów, Odrzywół, Strzyżów, Głogów, Janowiec, and Oleśnica (Lesser Poland).⁶² In the case of private towns, only the construction of Kraśnik town hall was on the initiative of the local councillors, who sought the town owner’s assent in 1557.⁶³ Therefore, it seems that the town halls of small urban settlements were more egalitarian (i.e. used and cared for by a whole community) and more diverse (i.e. used by urban and non-urban actors) as symbolic tools, than those municipal buildings in the large cities.

The more varied character of the group of actors involved also strongly suggests that the symbolic meaning of a town hall was somewhat different in the case of the small towns. As town halls were erected by the orders of town owners (both private and ecclesiastical) they could not symbolise urban self-government and autonomy, in fact most of the small towns had no autonomy. Similarly, they were not viewed as a manifestation of the power of a town council because they were treated as a common good by a whole community of burghers. Instead, the *Rathäuser* became symbols of urban character – material signs of the legal status of a town – and objects of communal

55 Zlat 1997, pp. 31–33.

56 See e.g. AGAD, MK 17, fols. 301r–302r; Becker 1930, pp. 283–284; Górski et al. (ed.) 1994, p. 332.

57 AN Kraków, VCV, sygn. 99, p. 24.

58 Szymański (ed.) 1994, nos. 22, 34.

59 Gliński 2014, p. 21.

60 Ulanowski (ed.) 1920, p. 135.

61 Ney 1843, p. 81; Piekosiński 1905, no. 1348; Kuśnierz-Krupa 2012, p. 84.

62 See e.g. Ruszczynski 1929, p. 23; AP Poznań, AM Kórnik, sign. 1; Kuraś/Sułkowska-Kurasio-wa (ed.) 1969–1974, vol. 3, no. 593, vol. 5, no. 1279; Wyrozumski 1980, pp. 138–142; Kowalczyk 2012, p. 40; Wyrobisz 1999, pp. 30–53; AGAD, AKRSW, sign. 2165c, fols. 146–147.

63 AP Lublin, AM Kraśnik, fol. 6v.

pride showing wealth and prosperity. They were often described in that way in urban records. In 1521, the councillors of Czchów ordered the movement of a town clock from the tower of the parish church to the newly built town hall for the “adornment of the town”.⁶⁴ Similarly, the burghers of Wojnicz demanded that the town councillors should take good care of a town hall’s clock, naming it their “greatest treasure”.⁶⁵ Therefore, town halls also acted as tools for creating a sense of urban unity among burghers, especially if their construction was a joint venture by a whole community (of both burghers and municipal authorities).

As a display of urbanity, the symbolic statement of a town hall was intended primarily for outside spectators: noblemen, clergy and peasants, as well as citizens of other towns who were coming to a market or just passing through the town. It seems that such symbolic meaning and function was widely understood in the society of the period. Provisions for the construction of a town hall frequently made in town charters and urban ordinances granted by non-urban issuers, show the widespread belief that a town should have a town hall. Nowhere is it more clearly stated than in the 1480 ordinance of Strzyżów – a tiny town in Lesser Poland – in which the town owners “give the aforementioned burghers of Strzyżów a town hall, commonly known as ‘wietnica’ [...] as it is the custom in other towns [...]”.⁶⁶

6. Conclusions

The common adoption of the established material culture model of a town hall indicates that the symbolic meaning of a municipal building was an important reason for its construction in small urban settlements. However, this symbolic function seems to be limited to it being a material sign of urbanity. By manifesting the legal status of a town, a town hall became an object of pride and care for a whole community, as it visualised the rights of burghers as freemen. In that sense it was much more of an egalitarian symbol than the *Rathaus* of a larger city, which apart from being a municipal emblem, acted as a tool of ‘symbolic violence’ for exercising the councillors’ authority over townsmen. Another change in meaning – the effective abolition of a town hall’s significance as a mark of urban autonomy and self-government – was necessary for it to be used by non-urban actors, that is ecclesiastical and private town owners. The commonplace founding of town halls by noblemen and ecclesiastical institutions was, in fact, both the source and an outcome of this conceptual shift, something especially characteristic of the 16th century. It could be argued that the change was also a symptom of the general crisis in urban centres and the advancing restrictions on urban autonomy in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 16th–17th century.

64 “*propter decorem civitatis*”: Bartoszewicz 2014, p. 168.

65 “*Zegar, który mamy jako największy skarb*”: Szymański 1994, no. 34.

66 “*Item damus et ascribimus praedictis civibus Strzewow praetorium vulgariter ‘wietnica’ [...] prout mos est in aliis civitatibus [...]*”: Wyrozumski 1980, pp. 139–140.

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Expressing urban identities through medieval secular badges

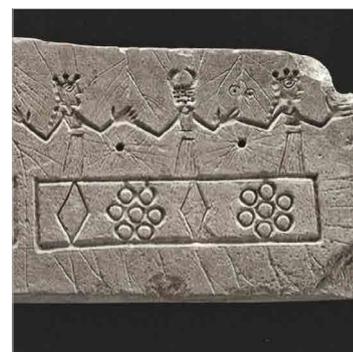
Jakub Sawicki

Material culture is often a conscious part of an identity of a given group. However, communities are not static entities. They are formed for shorter (e.g. travelling pilgrims distinguished by badges and staffs) or longer periods (e.g. guilds), and are susceptible to change. I will focus on how the 'material expression' of different urban communities can be related to archaeological finds. I will discuss ways of showing an affiliation through an analysis of the following objects: livery badges, probably worn by followers of a lord; lead miniature axes, used by supporters at tournaments or miniature crossbow badges attributed to marksman guilds; as well as other items typical of local fashion and lifestyle.

Die materielle Kultur ist oft ein bewusster Teil der Identität einer bestimmten Gruppe. Gemeinschaften sind jedoch keine statischen Entitäten. Sie bilden sich für kürzere (z.B. im Fall reisender Pilger, die sich durch Abzeichen und Stäbe auszeichnen) oder längere Zeiträume (z.B. bei Zünften), und sie sind anfällig für Veränderungen. Ich werde mich darauf konzentrieren, wie der „materielle Ausdruck“ verschiedener städtischer Gemeinschaften mit archäologischen Funden in Verbindung gebracht werden kann. Ich werde auch auf die Art und Weise eingehen, wie sich die Zugehörigkeit zu einer Gemeinschaft zeigen lässt. Dies wird anhand folgender Objekte untersucht: Embleme (*Impresa*), die wahrscheinlich von den Gefolgsleuten eines Herrn getragen wurden; Miniaturäxte aus Blei, die von Anhängern bei Turnieren verwendet wurden, oder Miniatur-Armbrustabzeichen, die den Schützengilden zugeschrieben werden, sowie andere Gegenstände, die für die örtliche Mode und den Lebensstil typisch sind.

1. Introduction

Material culture is consciously or unconsciously used to show one's relation to a certain group. In this article, I will show how medieval dress accessories, primarily secular badges, can be attributed to showing one's affiliation with certain urban communities. To discuss the given problem, I will mostly focus on finds from Poland and the Czech Republic. These are, in fact, peripheries, regions where badges are present but are very rare. However, this study is aimed at being much broader and describing general interregional tendencies. Chronological frames will embrace the late medieval period, understood as the 13th-15th century for the region in question, which corresponds to the rise



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Featured Image

Magdeburg, mould for casting diadems. After: Berger 2006, p. 163, A-6.

of towns and the development of their inhabitants' identities. The study will firstly focus on the actual archaeological finds, which, where possible, will be described against a broader context, drawing on works of historians and art historians.

From an archaeological perspective, dress accessories are a specific group of finds which have their own, relatively rich literature.¹ Among them are belt buckles, belt mounts, brooches, buttons, strap ends and also badges.² As textiles are rarely preserved, dress accessories are usually the only archaeological finds which can be related to broader issues, such as dress or fashion. They are also covered by a definition of dress presented by Joanne B. Eicher:

“Dress is a coded sensory system of non-verbal communication that aids human interaction in space and time. The codes of dress include visual as well as other sensory modifications (taste, smell, sound, and feel) and supplements (garments, jewellery, and accessories) to the body which set off either or both the cognitive and affective processes that result in the recognition or lack of recognition by the viewer. As a system, dressing the body by modifications and supplements often facilitates or hinders the consequent verbal or other communication. The body modifications and supplements that mark the ethnic identity of an individual are the ethnic dress.”³

This definition clearly stresses the aims of this paper: to focus on dress accessories as a code of a communication used to distinguish specific groups of people. To follow this thought, I first would like to discuss what I understand as a community and how it relates to the material culture.

2. Communities

According to the Oxford Dictionary,⁴ a community is:

1. A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.
2. The condition of sharing or having certain attitudes and interests in common.

Communities can also be observed from different perspectives. One point of view comes from within the community, which can be stated in words such as ‘we are a group and that is why we express it by a certain material culture’. In this case, this material culture becomes part of this identity. The second perspective is an external one; a way in which society perceives others as a ‘community’ due to them using certain items, a specific dress or a general lifestyle, although ‘membership’ of this group is somewhat accidental or unconscious. In other words, for the purpose of this text, I understand a ‘community’ as a group of people which consciously expresses affiliation to a certain group with the use of a specific material culture, or where the interactions with the material culture allow others to identify a given group as a separate community. Following this definition and these perspectives, I propose to distinguish two

1 Egan/Pritchard 2002; Sawicki 2017; Fingerlin 1971; Willemsen 2009, pp. 67–93; Krabath 2001; Rose Standley 2013; Standley 2020, pp. 742–759.

2 See below.

3 Eicher 1995, p. 1.

4 <https://www.oed.com>, “community”.

different types of community which have a different mutual relationship with material culture.

The first are structured communities, either based on social arrangements, like family ties, or formal organisations or institutions. Members of this sort of group are conscious of their identity, and whenever they decide to wear or use any particular distinctive objects, they do it to somehow manifest their allegiance. For instance, such structured communities might be guilds, companies, or people serving specific lords. Similarly, such groups might be ethnic or class oriented.

Temporarily formed communities are the second type I will examine. This group is a little more difficult to describe as it is not formal, and sometimes the 'members' of this community might not feel part of it, but they are recognised to be a part of it from the outside. Pilgrims can be, for instance, considered to be among such communities. They are easily identified by others as they are typically wearing pilgrim material culture: badges, hats, flasks, cloaks, bags, and pilgrim staffs. However, they are not permanently associated as pilgrims, and, as a group, their identity exists only for the duration of the pilgrimage.

This proposed division is subjective and is not meant to cover all possible situations or exceptions. In this article, for instance, I will not focus on objects solely related to social status, as this issue has its own rich literature.⁵ Rather, the main purpose of this proposed classification of communities is to provide a framework in which to show different relationships with a material culture.

3. "Might I but know thee by the household badge?"⁶

One of the most distinctive types of medieval material culture, which can be referred to as dress accessories, are medieval badges.⁷ This specific group includes highly ornate and symbolic plaques, often with pins, mostly made of lead and tin alloys (pewter). They can be divided into two main groups:⁸ pilgrim and secular badges. Pilgrim souvenirs are thought to be proof of a completed pilgrimage – a badge bought at a specific holy place – with its image corresponding to certain relics of saints related to the given place.⁹ Secular badges, in contrast, have much more diversity in their content, ranging from sexual scenes through to heraldic signs, to the representation of mundane objects. Their meaning is often ambiguous and can be interpreted in more than one way¹⁰.

Both types are mostly known from western Europe,¹¹ and even though some finds from the eastern part of central Europe might not have survived, the distribution of badges is quite clearly visible. Pilgrim souvenirs (**Fig. 1**) appear in most of western, northern and central Europe, with some difference in the eastern part of central Europe, in the western territory of modern Po-

5 Blockmans/Janse (ed.) 1999.

6 William Shakespeare, History of Henry VI, Part II, Act V, http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/views/plays/play_view.php?WorkID=henry6p2&Act=5&Scope=act&pleasewait=1&msg=pl.

7 Spencer 2010; Sawicki 2014; Koldeweij 2006; van Beuningen/Koldeweij (ed.) 1993; van Beuningen/Koldeweij/Kicken (ed.) 2001; van Beuningen et al. (ed.) 2012; Paner 2016.

8 This division has been made by most scholars: see footnote 5.

9 For more on this, see Paner 2016.

10 Sawicki 2014.

11 Compare both Fig. 1 and Fig. 2. Both maps were created thanks to a project realised at the University of Nijmegen: <https://kunera.nl/>.



Fig. 1 Map of distribution of pilgrim badge finds across Europe. After: <https://kunera.nl/>.

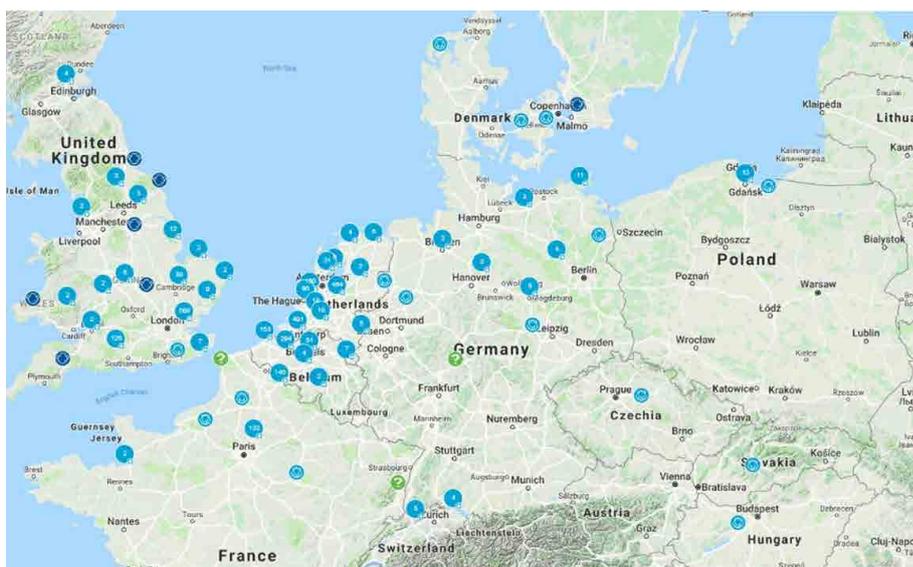


Fig. 2 Map of distribution of secular badge finds across Europe. After: <https://kunera.nl/>.

land and Romania, which might be associated with the penetration of German settlers in (mostly) the 13th century. Secular badges, on the other hand, are mostly found in the territories of the modern United Kingdom, Netherlands, and France, and to a lesser extent in the North Sea and Baltic basins (Fig. 2). The eastern part of central Europe is not entirely absent of badge finds, but it is definitely a periphery.¹²

Badges are not the only objects which can help to identify a certain community, but they are probably the most precise, even if sometimes they are difficult to read. Other dress accessories might also communicate an affiliation, especially a broadly understood ethnicity,¹³ but their meaning is often

12 Gdańsk is an exception here. Recent publications and an online catalogue of finds (archeoportal.pl; Paner 2016) show this.

13 Like temple rings, see below.

ambiguous. Identity is not only visible through dress. For instance, there is also some very interesting research on the use of German stoneware in Hanseatic towns as a lifestyle and a group identity marker.¹⁴ However, here I will only focus on urban communities and dress accessories.

4. The materiality of structured communities

Some urban communities might in fact be legalised, formal organizations. Today many of them, especially corporations, insist on some kind of distinction showing their affiliation from their members. This varies from school uniforms, through to worker outfits with company logos (like McDonald's) to more discrete signs, like for instance company badges. We cannot be certain with such an interpretation when it comes to medieval badges; however, some might be interpreted as showing an affiliation, if not to a specific company at least to the profession of the wearer. The badges depicting ships (Fig. 3) are an example which might show the wearer's trade as a sailor or at least someone who wants to be considered as one. There are badges identifying a ship's crew by personified phalluses,¹⁵ but this phenomenon is considered to be related to upside down world motives.¹⁶

There are also pilgrim souvenirs with ships, but they are only shown as a part of a larger scene depicting saints, like Thomas Beckett¹⁷ or Ursula.¹⁸ Another marine theme which might show ones' profession is a badge in a form of an anchor. They seem to be much rarer than ship badges, and only one example is known, from Gdańsk (Fig. 4).¹⁹ The anchor can be related to St. Klemens/Clement,²⁰ for example in London, two guilds existed which took St. Clement as their patron, the bakers of *The Worshipful Company of Bakers* and *The Guild of the Glorious and Undivided Trinity* who took care of light ships and lighthouses.²¹ In London, such anchors could show an affiliation to one of those guilds, however if we try to follow this interpretation in Gdansk, the given anchor would rather be evidence of an imported badge. A specimen discovered in Kutna Hora²² can also be interpreted as a guild-related badge, possibly related to a local miner guild: it has an openwork frame with a figure of a miner wielding two pickaxes (Fig. 5). At the moment there are no other badges known to me which can be related to a company or professional affiliation.

Miniature crossbow badges (Fig. 6) can be connected with another form of formal community: an archery and crossbow guild.²³ Such organisations were responsible for teaching burghers how to shoot and practise marksman skills to be able to defend city walls when needed. They had their own traditions as well as insignias, often in the form of birds, either popinjays or roosters.²⁴ On a specimen belonging to St. Jorisgilde of Den Dungen, dating to ca. 1500,



Fig. 3 Miniature ship from Gdańsk, cat. nr. 5399, Photo: J. Szmit. Gdańsk.



Fig. 4 Miniature anchor. Gdańsk, in: Kocińska/Trawicka 2005, p. 19.



Fig. 5 Kutna Hora, openwork badge with a miner, in: Velímský 1998, p. 445, 2.11.

14 Mehler 2009, pp. 89–108; Immonen 2007, pp. 720–732; Gaimster 2005, pp. 408–423.

15 Van Beuningen/Koldeweij (ed.) 1993, p. 261, fig. 643.

16 Among others see: Koldeweij 2006; Jones 2004.

17 Spencer 2010, p. 80 fig. 34a.

18 http://archoportal.pl/kolekcja/6/zabytek/202?search_id=Jb7cPNeTb.

19 Kocińska/Trawicka 2005, p. 18; Sawicki 2014, p. 111 fig. 25c.

20 Mitchiner 1986, p. 242.

21 Mitchiner 1986, p. 242.

22 Velímský 1998, pp. 435–455.

23 Sawicki 2014, pp. 19–21.

24 Jones 2000, pp. 214–229; Sawicki 2014.

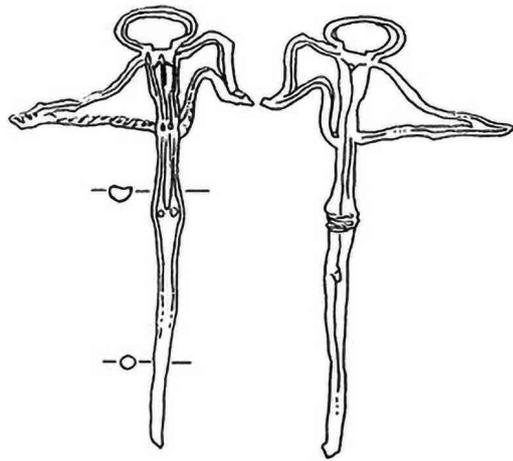


Fig. 6 Miniature crossbow from Prague, after: Huml 1991, p. 212, fig. 14.



Fig. 7 Shooting a rooster, a miniature from the Balthasar Behem Codex, early 16th century, Biblioteka Jagiellońska in Krakow, after Podlecki/Fabiański 2000, p. 61.

known from the's-Hertogensbosch Noordbrabants Museum, a miniature crossbow is attached.²⁵ There are not many finds of such miniature crossbows in central Europe, but two examples are known from Gdańsk,²⁶ one is from Prague,²⁷ and one is from Brno,²⁸ a mould is known from Elbląg.²⁹ A competition involving shooting a bird on a tall stake was used as a practice tool for marksman guilds, as is depicted on the miniature from the codex of Balthasar Behem from Krakow (Fig. 7). Badges in the form of roosters are also known,³⁰ some of them have love inscriptions,³¹ but others might have been marksman guild badges, like those with miniature crossbows.

A different kind of legal community was the house of a nobleman. Some kinds of badges, called livery badges, are interpreted as demonstrating an affiliation to a certain family or a particular lord. They mostly seem to be British, however many have also been found in the Netherlands, Belgium, and France.³² According to Spencer,³³ there is considerable evidence that the devices and badges of kings and nobility were worn by their retainers and servants as a

25 Sawicki 2014, p. 94 fig. 8d.

26 http://archoportal.pl/kolekcja/6/zabytek/278?search_id=axkEWdDIEH and http://archoportal.pl/kolekcja/6/zabytek/145?search_id=axkEWdDIEH.

27 Huml 1991, pp. 187–237.

28 Procházka 1990, pp. 99–109.

29 Sawicki 2014, p. 20.

30 Sawicki 2014, pp. 19–21; see also: <https://archoportal.pl/>.

31 Like an example from Gdańsk with the inscription AMOR VINCIT OMNIA: Sawicki 2014, p. 54. See also: http://archoportal.pl/kolekcja/6/zabytek/548?search_id=0hXxHEz2cz.

32 See <https://kunera.nl/>.

33 Spencer 2010, p. 278.

visible form of allegiance. “The badges identified their wearers as persons who were formally attached, or, in some way, beholden, to a particular magnate (or to the king himself) and who, in return, enjoyed their lord’s protection or patronage”.³⁴ These were also symbols of friendship and alliance. Spencer recalls a correspondence from 1388 between Juan I., King of Aragon and the French King: “Concerning your device of the Flying Stag, we are agreeable, most dear brother, that it should be sent by you, for we shall willingly wear it for love of you.”³⁵

Badges were of different materials depending on the owner’s status: those in the upper household ranks received a gold badge, those in the middle a silver gilt one, and the lesser members a silver one. The surviving badges, mostly archaeological finds, are of a base metal: a lead and tin alloy. Pewter badges were most likely too paltry for the servants of noblemen, and it is thought that they were worn by the lowest social level of followers.³⁶ British archaeological finds of livery badges have been discussed by Spencer,³⁷ while more general data on heraldic badges in England and Wales has been gathered by Siddons.³⁸

In central Europe, livery badges seem to be almost non-existent, however a few finds from this area can be attributed to this group of badges. There are basically two different types that we can distinguish among those few finds discovered: heraldic shields with emblems and heraldic animals, in this case, lions and eagles.³⁹ The known miniature shield badges from Poland are simple specimens, and are only decorated with fields (Fig. 8). It is difficult to tie these objects to any particular family, and it might be that they were not an emblem evidencing an affiliation to a particular community, but rather an object connected with medieval popular culture.

A large and well-made openwork badge from Wrocław, dated to the 14th century and depicting a rampant lion (Fig. 9), reminds one of the Czech lion in a shield frame. However, its tail is missing, an identifying feature in this case: if it was a double tail, that could easily confirm this hypothesis. Similar known examples with a single tail⁴⁰ are from the Netherlands. Other badges with lions are known from Gdańsk,⁴¹ but they are not in shield-shaped frames. In this case their meaning might be not connected with livery badges, but might be in fact be related to feats of arms and courage.⁴² This is a similar group of badges but with a different interpretation, that is one which is more related to the wearer’s personal achievements or identity (as brave and courageous) than with being a part of a certain community.

Some central European badges depicting eagles have an unclear association to livery badges, and only a few exist. Older 13th century examples in round frames (from Wrocław and Szczecin⁴³) could also be considered as representations of the Holy Ghost in a form of a dove or an eagle of St. John. Another find from Wrocław, from Nowy Targ square, definitely has a more emblematic character. It is a large, oval, open-work badge with a heraldic eagle

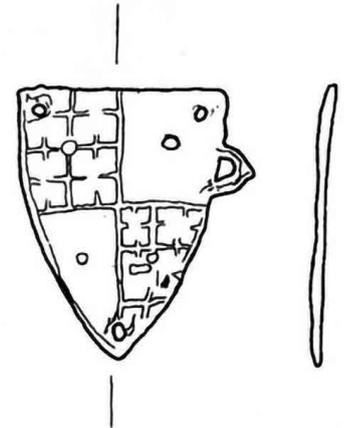


Fig. 8 Wrocław, Rynek. Miniature shield. After: Bresch/Buśko 2001, p. 128, ryc. 24 d.



Fig. 9 Wrocław, Nowy Targ square. Heraldic badge with a lion rampant, inv. no. 455/10. Photo: J. Sawicki.

34 Spencer 2010, p. 278.

35 Spencer 2010, p. 278, with other literature.

36 Spencer 2010, p. 280.

37 Spencer 2010, pp. 278–299.

38 Siddons 2009.

39 Sawicki 2014, p. 30.

40 See Sawicki 2014, p. 32.

41 Sawicki 2014, pp. 13–17. Newer finds are also viewable at: <https://archoportal.pl/>.

42 Sawicki 2014; Spencer 2010.

43 Sawicki 2014, pp. 34–37.

with outstretched wings holding a globe in each of its claws (Fig. 10). So far, a precise interpretation of this object has not been possible.⁴⁴

In contrast to the well-documented examples of British livery badges, the interpretation of the central European ones are, at the moment, only hypothetical. Also, their small number (even from Gdańsk, which is one of the places where most of the badges were found) rather indicates that such customs were not popular in this part of Europe, and affiliations to certain lords have not been manifested through archaeologically preserved evidence.

The broadest communities are those with an ethnic basis. Pastoreau mentions marks of shame which were applied to Jewish clothing from the 13th century.⁴⁵ They were textile, sewn on cloth badges, often yellow in colour, in the form of a circle, star, or a ribbon. In France, according to the ordinance of King Louis IX from 1269, Jews were required to wear a yellow circle:

As we want to be able to recognise a Jew and distinguish him from a Christian, we command every Jew, regardless of gender, to wear the following sign: a circle of felt or cloth yellow in colour, sewn onto the top of the garment, on the breasts and the back for better distinction. The circle should be four fingers in diameter and be as large as the size of a hand. If despite this, according to the order, some Jew will not wear this mark upon some of his clothing, it will fall to one who spotted the Jew.⁴⁶

There is no known archaeological evidence of such cloth badges, however they are known from iconography.⁴⁷

Ethnicity can also be shown by other dress accessories, such as temple rings (Fig. 11). They seem to appear during the course of the 10th century in western Slavonic regions and continue to be used into the 14th century.⁴⁸ They were worn by women, some as common jewellery, and are one of the most frequent finds in burials. They differ greatly from the yellow circles which the Jewish communities were forced to wear, as we can assume that temple rings were worn willingly. Stefan suggests that temple rings in grave furnishings were not related to status but rather to the age of the deceased, which might indicate that the way temple rings were worn was dictated by custom. Temple rings went out of fashion in the 13th century, which probably relates to the arrival of settlers from the West among other factors. An interesting find was discovered in Wrocław.⁴⁹ It is a pewter spoon bowl with a courtly love scene (Fig. 12), on which the lady is most probably wearing temple rings. This leads to the possibility that the courtly motifs adopted by elites with the arrival of western settlers and the Magdeburg Law,⁵⁰ were in turn adopted by the local (Slavic) communities.



Fig. 10 Wrocław, Nowy Targ square. Heraldic badge with an eagle, inv. no. 3455/11. Photo: J. Sawicki.



Fig. 11 Wrocław, Nowy Targ square. Temple ring, inv. no. 4636/11. Photo: J. Sawicki.



Fig. 12 Wrocław, Nowy Targ square. Spoon bowl with a courtly scene, the lady is wearing temple rings, inv. no. 7691/11 and 1336/11. Photo: R. Szczerek.

44 Sawicki 2014, p. 35.

45 Pastoreau 2006, p. 229.

46 Pastoreau 2006, p. 230. Translation by author.

47 For instance, in Jan Polack's *St. Stephen's Dispute with the Jews*, a painting dated to between 1483-1489.

48 Štefan 2009, pp. 171–206.

49 Sawicki 2014, p. 42.

50 Sawicki 2015, pp. 212–232.

5. The materiality of temporary communities

Temporary community distinctions are more difficult to observe in a material culture than permanent ones, and they are more difficult to identify as well. However, the largest informal community strongly connected with badges, are the aforementioned pilgrims. This group of people, often formed during the start of the pilgrimage itself, on the road or during stops, was distinguished by a specific material culture (Fig. 13). Pilgrim staffs, hats with sewn on badges,⁵¹ travel bags, and pilgrim flasks,⁵² were among the objects worn by them. Those objects were clear signs of an identity, allowing others to distinguish them as a pilgrim, or allowed the pilgrims themselves to more easily gather in groups. Pilgrims were supposed to receive help during the pilgrimage (water, a place to sleep), so actually looking like a pilgrim was beneficial. All of the mentioned material evidence (except the staff) have also been discovered archaeologically within very varied contexts. Badges are often found at water sites – canals, rivers or on islands – which might relate to magical behaviour: offering those objects to gain favour. Many badges are also found at the places of pilgrimage, like the production sites from the pilgrimage sanctuary in St. Michel in France,⁵³ or at Trzebnica,⁵⁴ an important Lower Silesian pilgrimage destination associated with the cult of St. Jadwiga and a unique badge (Fig. 14). However, the collection from Wrocław mainly comes from a place which served as one of the town's market squares.⁵⁵ Pilgrim souvenirs, in the form of badges, are thought to have been bought at the pilgrim's destination place (the sanctuary where they travelled to) as proof of a fulfilled pilgrimage. The accumulation of badges in the market square may indicate that such items were (illegally) traded and, as such, the pilgrim identity as well, and, at the same time, mem-



Fig. 13 Fragment of painting with a legend of St. Jakobus with a scene where the innkeeper is giving a silver cup to the pilgrim's son, ca. 1475–1478. Esztergom (Hungary), Keresztény Múzeum, IN 55. 41. After: <https://realonline.imareal.sbg.ac.at/en/detail/nr-008147/>.



Fig. 14 Trzebnica. Badge with St. Hedwiga and St. Bartholomew. Photo: J. Sawicki.

51 They are not only visible on numerous medieval paintings, but are even mentioned in texts.

52 Sawicki/Wachowski 2018, pp. 719–746.

53 Labaune-Jean (ed.) 2016.

54 Wachowski 2005, pp. 104–128.

55 Sawicki/Wachowski 2018.

bership in this informal community could thus have been easily bought. Also, from the same market place, other items were discovered – flasks, a leather bottle, and rattles⁵⁶ – which are thought to have been part of a pilgrim's equipment for processions and travel. It seems that buying a pilgrim identity, or even a badge from a distant sanctuary,⁵⁷ was not a difficult task.

In contrast to modern sport supporters organised into clubs, often with a long tradition and with their own colours and symbols, medieval material culture related to sport is almost non-existent. The most popular sport, with widely organised events, seems to have been knightly tournaments. Badges are associated with them in the form of miniature axes.⁵⁸ They remind one of miniature toys, especially as some of them have a place for a wooden shaft. However, most of them depicted heraldic motifs; some were only in a form with a general reference to heraldry – a heraldic shield with unknown emblems – while others relate to the existing families of the time. Their meaning is not exactly clear. There are suggestions that such objects might have been given to the crowd by the participants themselves to support their team.⁵⁹ Most axe finds come from the territories of England and the Netherlands, but a large number of them are known from Gdańsk.⁶⁰ An interesting miniature axe is also known from Krosno (Fig. 15).⁶¹ It is a fairly plain example, which complicates its interpretation, but the most important aspect of it is that it is one of the few found outside the north-western areas of Europe. Its appearance in this region might be explained by a tournament organised in Krosno between 1447 and 1454, in which an unnamed English knight took part,⁶² and which corresponds with the dating of the miniature axe. This is, of course, not enough to provide proof of the 'supporter' hypothesis; however, it fits the idea of a major tournament taking place in Krosno known from iconography and descriptions.⁶³

Besides badges in the form of axes, lead-alloy diadems are also known. They are rare finds,⁶⁴ and most of them date to the end of the 13th and beginning of the 14th centuries. They vary in form, from plain ones (Fig. 16) through

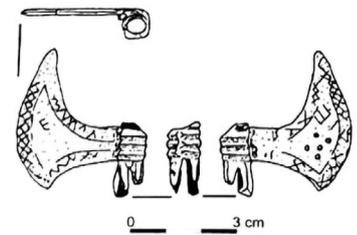


Fig. 15 Krosno. Miniature axe badge. After: Kotowicz/Muzyczuk 2008, p. 134, fig. 5.6.

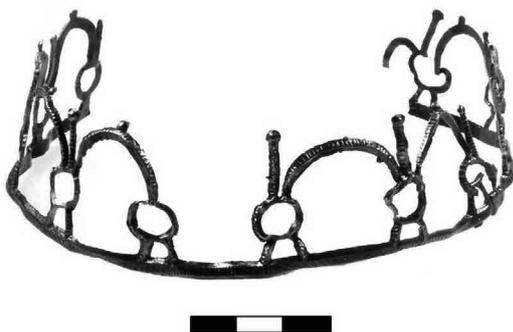


Fig. 16 Wrocław, New Market Square. Diadem, inv. no. 1967/11. Photo: J. Sawicki.

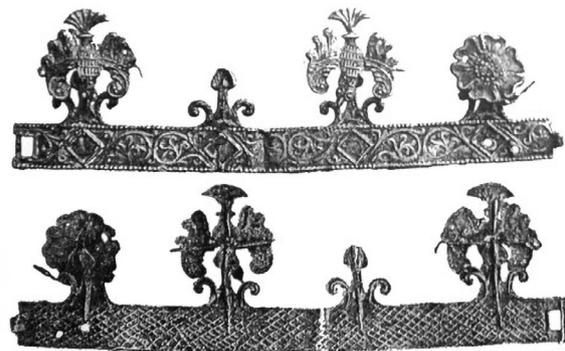


Fig. 17 Stralsund, Apollonienmarkt 15. Diadem with eagles. After: Samariter 2010, p. 46.

⁵⁶ Spencer 2010; Sawicki/Wachowski 2018.

⁵⁷ In Wrocław, as in many other places, badges from Rome and Rocamadour in France were found.

⁵⁸ Spencer 2010.

⁵⁹ Spencer 2010, p. 303.

⁶⁰ Paner 2016. See also: <https://kunera.nl/>.

⁶¹ Kotowicz/Muzyczuk 2008, pp. 125–187.

⁶² Kotowicz/Muzyczuk 2008.

⁶³ Sachs 1983, pp. 249–255; Sachs 1986, pp. 41–42.

⁶⁴ Sawicki 2014; Sawicki 2015.

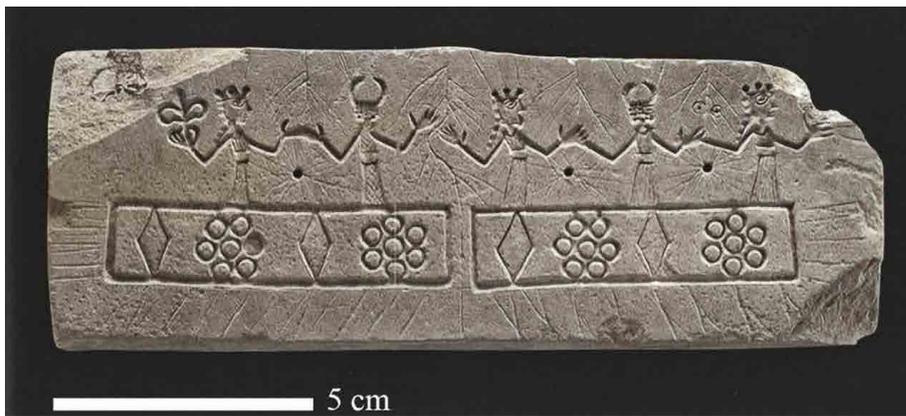


Fig. 18 Magdeburg, mould for casting diadems. After: Berger 2006, p. 163, A-6.

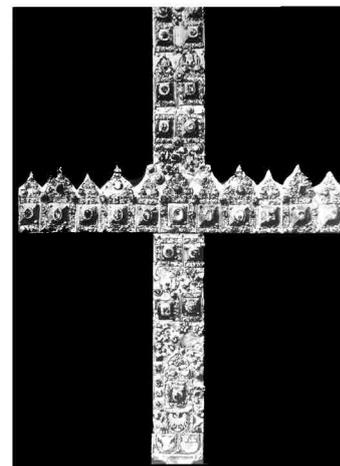


Fig. 19 Illustration from the Codex Manesse depicting Duke Henryk IV Probus. After: <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg848/0018>.



a

b



c

Fig. 20 Cross made of diadems, 13th century, the treasury of Krakow Cathedral. After: Walicki (ed.) 1971, pp. 298–301, figs. 1133–1137.

to examples with eagles⁶⁵ (Fig. 17) to more complicated figural forms (Fig. 18). This last type is especially reminiscent of festive scenes from cultural tournaments known from the Codex Manesse (Fig. 19) among others. As such, they reassemble the well-known find from Magdeburg called the *Zinnfigurenstreifen*, which is thought to be a part of a tournament diadem.⁶⁶ According to Sachs, this object resembles the story of the German version of *Parsifal* by Wolfram von Eschenbach. The depicted scene is related to the part of the poem where Parsifal's father, Gahmuret, triumphs in a tournament.⁶⁷ Other diadems also survive, this time clearly associated with high culture, but with a similar narration. One is kept in Kraków (Fig. 20), and is related to Yolanda, a daughter of

65 See below.

66 Sachs 1983; Berger 2006.

67 Sachs 1986, p. 40.

King Bela of Hungary and wife to Boleslaw the Pious. The scenes presented on this diadem, according to recent readings, relate to the *Erec and Enide* by Chretien de Troyes and in German versions by Hartmann von Aue.⁶⁸

These diadems can also be related to other kinds of temporarily-formed communities also related with formal celebrations: weddings. Among them, one of the most distinctive is a famous find from Środa Śląska, considered to be a wedding gift to Blanche de Valois, the first wife of Charles the IV, the Holy Roman Emperor.⁶⁹ Pietrusiński⁷⁰ suggests that the motif of an eagle holding a ring in his beak is a testimony of the good news, which suggests that such crowns were wedding gifts. Diadem segments with a similar motif, but made of common and cheap lead-tin alloys are also known from Wrocław⁷¹ and Stralsund,⁷² similarly dated to the 13th century and the beginning of the 14th century (Fig. 17). They might indicate that the lower social classes were also using such diadems during celebrations. Wreaths, crowns, and diadems are known from numerous iconographies related to weddings and marriage proposals, including on oven tiles (Fig. 21) among other known forms. It is worth noting that the difference between a wreath and a simple diadem in this case is negligible, and the Latin word *corona* also means wreath. A wedding ceremony was described by Boccaccio in the *Decameron*, in the story of Griselda. She is portrayed wearing a beautiful, rich wreath when she marries Gualtieri, the Marquis of Saluzzo.⁷³ Also, some *lex sumpteria* from Wrocław forbid expensive, sumptuous weddings. Servants at the ceremony, as well as grooms-men and bridesmaids, were only supposed to receive, among other things, a cheap wreath.⁷⁴

Another popular motif, the joined hands, is also connected to 'love culture'. It is often depicted on specific dress accessories: the so called *hanttruwebratzen* brooches and rings.⁷⁵ It is thought that they might be related to engagement ceremonies. Rębkowski mentions a specimen with an inscription clearly showing its intentions: DU MIN ICH DIN.⁷⁶ Engagement, according to medieval Polish law, had a similar power to a formal wedding, and an engaged couple could not marry anyone else.⁷⁷ It is certainly an over interpretation to think of newlyweds and those engaged as a community, and to interpret *hanttruwebratzen* rings and brooches as evidence of belonging to such. However, it should be noted that these items, together with diadems and miniature axes,



Fig. 21 Jankowo Dolne, site 21. Tile with a wedding scene. After: Janiak 2003, p. 84, fig. 143.

68 Mühlemann 2001, pp. 5–39.

69 Pietrusiński 1996, pp. 9–63.

70 Pietrusiński 1996, p. 34.

71 Sawicki 2015; Sawicki 2014.

72 Samariter 2010, pp. 42–55.

73 Taken from the Polish edition of the *Decameron*, translated by E. Boyle.

74 Sawicki 2014, p. 52.

75 Heindel 1986, pp. 65–79.

76 "You are mine, I am yours": Rębkowski 1988, p. 524.

77 Biegeleisen 1928, p. 50.

are part of the customs associated with public events referencing higher culture. The provided examples confirm that cultural and social events (like weddings, ceremonies, tournaments) call for a specific setting, which find their reflection in the material culture of all social classes.

6. Conclusion

Communities are very diverse; they can be formalised, structured organisations, like guilds, or newly formed groups sharing the same goals and interests. Sometimes the difference between the two is very fluid. However, there is a certain urge among community members to somehow manifest one's affiliation and sense of belonging in material form. From an archaeological point of view, it is difficult to find such an expression in material culture, however secular badges (as a group of artefacts) seem to be an exception. Wearing them is supposed to manifest the owner's affiliation either to a specific group, to the followers of a certain nobleman's house, to a guild or profession, or even to a group of people taking part in a particular cultural event, like a tournament, wedding, or funeral. We know of badges in the form of ships and anchors – which could have been worn by sailors – as well as examples in the form of heraldic shields or emblems (like lions), which might have served as retinue markers. There are miniature crossbows and birds related to marksmen guilds, and some badges (yellow circles) that could mark Jewish ethnicity. Similarly, ethnicity or traditions could be manifested by wearing temple rings, typically in Slavic jewellery.

The proposed meanings of the presented badges are, of course, debatable, even though the use of them (especially livery badges⁷⁸) is well documented. We also need to remember that the meaning of such badges could change over time and vary between regions. Most of the presented interpretations are based largely on British scholarship, which is mostly due to the lack of research on this topic from other regions (with the exception of France, Belgium, and the Netherlands) as well as the nature of the finds, explicable by the estimated range of secular badge discoveries (**Fig. 2**). On the other hand, the perspective from the eastern part of central Europe, a perspective of the periphery, offers an interesting point of view, for instance in the case of the Krosno miniature axe find. In all likelihood, the knights in the tournament, with their custom of showing support with such a miniature, had little understanding of the local population. Yet, the customs of the marksmen guilds with their similar insignias (birds, crossbows), seems to be common in many places. After all, many of these badges, especially out of their original context, might have simply been seen as an interesting object, or may even have had a popular culture resonance which no one paid much attention to, but still remained as an unconscious cultural code of Latin medieval Europe.

7. Acknowledgments

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78 Spencer 2010, p. 278.

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Sacrum in the Service of the Community

The Chapel of Cracow City Council in the Comparative Perspective of Late Medieval Europe

Monika Saczyńska-Vercamer

The town hall was modelled on the castles of rulers. It imitated not only their internal features, but also certain elements of their interior order and character. The chapel belonged to such elements. The locating of a sacral space within the seat of power legitimized this power. It also raised its prestige as both coming from God and being sanctified by God. With the example of Cracow town hall, we can observe that the councillors used the privilege of a portable altar (obtained at the end of the 14th century) in order to create their chapel. They used the same strategy of ‘building’ a chapel within their seat of governance as had the knights of Lesser Poland at the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries for a similar purpose. The portable altar as a fixed altar was an additional element distinguishing the receivers of this spiritual favour. The liturgy performed on it – similar to the liturgy in private chapels, which included the chapel in the town hall – was not to replace the Sunday mass of obligation, but was used for pious practices.

Analog zu den Herrschaftssitzen weltlicher Herrscher imitierte das Rathaus bestimmte Elemente ihres Innenraums und dessen Charakter. Dazu gehörte auch die Kapelle. Die Einführung des sakralen Raums in den Sitz der stadtbürgerlichen Herrschaft legitimierte deren Macht. Sie verstärkte das Ansehen eines Herrschers als von Gott gegeben und geheiligt. Am Beispiel des Krakauer Rathauses kann gezeigt werden, dass die Ratsherren ein am Ende des 14. Jahrhunderts erteiltes Privileg eines tragbaren Altars nutzten, um eine Kapelle zu installieren. Sie bedienten sich dabei ähnlicher Strategien des „Bauens“, die auch die Ritter von Klempolen an der Wende des 14. zum 15. Jahrhundert nutzten. Der Übergang des Tragaltars zu einem festen Altar war ein zusätzliches Element, das die Bedeutung seiner Empfänger hervorhob. Die in der Ratskapelle vor dem Tragaltar vollzogene Liturgie diente – ähnlich wie die Liturgie in den Privatkapellen, zu denen auch die Kapelle im Rathaus gehörte – nicht den christlichen Pflichten, sondern den religiösen Praktiken.

1. Introduction

The town hall, as a symbol of the city authorities and the city’s identity and independence, imitated the seats of rulers and knights in its form and architectural organisation; it was “a castle of the townspeople”.¹ This imitation was cre-

¹ The term burgher’s castle (*Bürgerschloss*) was used to describe the town hall by Reinle 1976, p. 67. See also Czerner 2002, p. 60, Komorowski 2008, p. 175. Research on town halls has



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Featured Image

Boniface IX, pope, allows the councillors of Cracow to use the portable altar Rome, 17 November 1396 (detail) (National Archive in Cracow, Collection of parchment documents, sign 29/657/107).

ated through a replication of patterns taken over from other social groups who were higher in hierarchical standing, but was above all a sign of the municipality's independence. The castle embodied the strength and independence of the political and legal power of its owner, and was also the centre of this power. The castle of the townspeople had the same functions.² Not only the external form but also elements of the interior referred to the representative seats of the mighty. One of them was the chapel located in the town hall, similar to castle chapels. The *sacrum* was incorporated into the area of the seat of power not only as a space for prayer and liturgy, but also, and perhaps above all, as a sign of divine support for the power located therein. The *sacrum* served to legitimise the authorities; without divine support, the legitimacy of secular power could be questioned.³ The chapel sacralised the activities taking place in the town hall, above all the legal acts, i.e., the exercise of power.⁴ It was also the place for the collective city council to gather for devotional practices. There is another important element connected with this space, namely the climate of urban religiosity (*religion civique*). What should be mentioned among the features characteristic of this type of devotion are: its attitude towards time and the characteristic urban lifestyle, the multiplicity of patronage cults (those of the diocese, city, guild, parish, brotherhood, individual cults), a commercial attitude toward God ('buying' grace and salvation, examples of which are phenomena such as endowments for funeral masses, legacies for pious works, multiplication of prayers) and – of particular importance – the strong presence of corporate forms of piety, which was directly shaped by the nature of the community's urban social ties and relationships between people.⁵ Corporate piety was manifested primarily in the activities of fraternities and the community devotional practices of various groups operating in the town. One such group was indeed the town council.⁶

2. The private chapel of the city council

The importance of such chapels in town halls is evidenced by the efforts made by councillors to create them. In this article, I am interested in the private chapel of the city council – specifically Cracow's city council – located in the town hall. Through this example, I wish to show the mechanism of creating a sacral space in the area of the seat of power in a city. The starting point and the basis for my further deliberations will be the specific situation in Cracow and related circumstances.

a long tradition. At this point, I will only draw the reader's attention to a few more recent works which also deal with issues relevant to this article, and in which the reader will find references to older literature. There is a great deal of interest in research on individual objects, their form and transformation, and on town halls from individual European regions. Of the more recent works, the work of an art historian should be mentioned: Albrecht 2004. Apart from valuable architectural, archaeological, and art history research, the problems of the functions (and their transformations) performed by town halls are also reflected upon there. Other recent works are also worth mentioning: Heckert 1993, pp. 139–164; Zlat 1997, pp. 13–36; Scheutz 2012, pp. 19–66; Albrecht 2012, pp. 67–90; Opll 2014, pp. 37–51; Jíšová 2014, pp. 109–118; Šedivý 2019, pp. 161–198.

2 Albrecht 2004, pp. 13–24.

3 Heckert 1993, p. 139.

4 Zlat 1997, p. 27.

5 See Manikowska 2002, p. 13.

6 Heckert 1993, pp. 139–164; Czaja 1997, pp. 106–119.

We read in a document issued by Cardinal Demetrius on 29 August 1383:

*Ideo nos horum consideracione vobis [sc. consilibus Cracouiensis] humiliter a nobis supplicantibus auctoritate nostre legationis, - - , duximus concedendum, ut dum et quando vos - - in dicto vestro pretorio aut alio loco pro vestro consilio apto, tempore celebrationis missarum preuenti fueritis et prepediti, missam in eodem vestro pretorio vel vestri consilij loco, tuto videlicet et mundo ac ad id apto, in altare viatico, quotiens necesse fuerit, mediante dicta nostra auctoritate audire possitis atque valeatis.*⁷

[Therefore, after consideration, we decided in our authority to give you (that is to say the councillors of Cracow), who humbly asked us, a concession that, in your aforementioned town hall or other place suitable for your council, you may and are able, by the same authority of ours, to listen to the Mass, when and whenever [there is] a proper time for celebrating the Mass, in that town hall of yours or other place of the council, that is apt and suitable for it, before the portable altar.]

Cardinal Demetrius granted the town councillors of Cracow the right to listen to holy mass at the town hall (*in – – pretorio*) or at any other place suitable for their meetings (*alio loco pro vestro consilio apto*). The mass was to be celebrated on a portable altar at a permissible time of day. This document proclaims the privilege of a portable altar, which is one of the spiritual favours granted by the pope or by those who had received such authority from him, for instance, legates. It is not, therefore, an exceptional and unknown grace at that time. But the way in which it was granted, and given the recipient, and especially the circumstances of its bestowal, this document becomes very interesting.

The privilege of a portable altar was one of three favours associated with the sacrament of the Eucharist. The two others were: the privilege of listening to the mass in an area that was under interdict; and listening to the mass *ante lucem* (at dawn). The provision in the document for the Cracow councillors specifying the time for celebrating a liturgy at a portable altar clearly indicates that the right to celebrate the mass outside the permitted time, that is from morning until noon, was not being bestowed. The group of spiritual favours also included privileges related to the sacrament of Penance: the licence for choosing a confessor and absolution *in articulo mortis*.

Initially, favours in spiritual matters were granted to monarchs and members of their families. The oldest known privilege is the one granted on 9 March 1224 to King Louis VIII of France, allowing him to listen to mass in a place under interdict.⁸ The earliest such privilege known from Polish lands is the same right to listen to mass in a place under interdict granted on 1 February 1296 by Boniface VIII to the Prince of Wrocław (Breslau) and Brest, Henry V the Bellied (*Brzuchaty*).⁹ We then see an absolution *in articulo mortis* granted to Prince Ladislaus, called the Elbow-High, and his wife Hedwig, on 11 September 1319, as well as to the Bishop of Włocławek, Gerward of Ostrów.¹⁰ In the 14th and 15th centuries favours in spiritual matters were broadened to

7 Piekosiński (ed.) 1879, no. 59.

8 Barbiche (ed.) 1975, no. 256.

9 BP, vol. 1, no. 927.

10 BP, vol. 1, no. 1119, 1120, 1125. It is interesting that these favours were granted to Bishop Gerward during his legation in Rome, the main purpose of which was to obtain papal consent for crowning Prince Ladislaus as King of Poland. On the legation and its circumstances, see,

a wider public; those granted these privileges were now Church dignitaries, representatives of the secular elite, knights, and also townsmen. The range of this phenomenon in Polish lands in the late Middle Ages is illustrated by the following tables.

	Privileges related to the sacrament of Penance		Privileges related to the sacrament of the Eucharist			TOTAL
	Absolution <i>in art. mortis</i>	Confessor	Portable altar	Mass	<i>Ante lucem</i>	
Nobility	54	2	21	8	6	91 (44.6 %)
Clergy	48	3	5	3	2	61 (30 %)
Townspeople	44	-	-	-	-	44 (22 %)
Unidentified	7	-	1	-	-	8
TOTAL	153 (75 %)	5	27 (13.2 %)	11	8	204 (100 %)

Table 1a Grants of papal privileges for individual Polish recipients in the 14th century, according to social group.

	Privileges related to the sacrament of Penance		Privileges related to the sacrament of the Eucharist			TOTAL
	Absolution <i>in art. mortis</i>	Confessor (<i>lett. confessionalis</i>)	Portable altar	Mass	<i>Ante lucem</i>	
Nobility	74	62	101	40	12	290 (42 %)
Clergy	66	111	55	21	7	260 (38 %)
Townspeople	40	27	6	15	-	88 (13 %)
Unidentified	21	20	3	3	-	47 (7 %)*
TOTAL	201 (29.3 %)	220 (32.1 %)	166 (24.2 %)	79 (11.5 %)	19 (2.9 %)	685 (100 %)

Table 1b Grants of papal privileges for individual Polish recipients in the 15th century, according to social group.

I have included in these tables data from the Gniezno metropolis, but excluded the diocese of Wrocław (Breslau). I refer to the Silesian data in this text only comparatively and only with reference to the 14th century.¹¹ Also, the chronological range is narrowed. While the material I have collected covers the whole of the 14th century, for the 15th century I have only partial data. To some extent the caesura is the chronological range of the *Bullarium Poloniae*, the last volume of which includes the revelations from the Vatican archives about Polonica up until the end of the pontificate of Paul II, i.e., up to 1471.¹² However, I have supplemented this material with data collected in the archives of the Apostolic Penitentiary,¹³ which granted numerous privileges in matters of spiritual favours, especially the privileges of the confession letter, but also

among others: Abraham 1900, pp. 1–34; Liedtke 1971, pp. 91–107; Bieniak 1973, pp. 469–483; Maciejewski 1996, pp. 128–132.

11 Silesia was not part of the renewed Kingdom of Poland in 1320. In the 14th century the process of its further dependence on Czech rulers continued. The last independent prince of the Piast dynasty in Silesia was Bolko II the Small (d. 1368), Prince of Świdnica (Schweidnitz) and Jawor (Jauer). Thus, in spite of the fact that the diocese of Wrocław belonged to the province of Gniezno, as early as the 14th century (and even more so in the 15th century) Silesia, as it was outside the borders of the Polish Kingdom, should be treated independently.

12 BP, vols 1–7.

13 On the basis RPG vols. 1–8 and my own research in Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Penitenzieria Ap., Reg. Matrim. et Div., vols. 1–26, 28–50.

quite a number of privileges relating to portable altars. In spite of these shortcomings, I include here statistical summaries because, in my opinion, they display general tendencies.

3. The privilege of a portable altar

Most commonly obtained by recipients from the Polish Church province were spiritual favours associated with the sacrament of Penance, i.e. the absolution *in articulo mortis* and the choice of a confessor, or various types of confession letters (15th century). This is particularly evident in the comparison made for the 15th century. Among the privileges associated with the sacrament of the Eucharist, the most popular was the permission to have a portable altar. In the 14th and 15th centuries I have recorded almost 200 privileges of this type granted to recipients from the Gniezno metropolis.

The first known privilege of a portable altar for a recipient from the Gniezno province is a spiritual favour dated 13 June 1349 for the Prince of Głogów (Glogau), Henry the Iron (*Żelazny*).¹⁴ In Silesia in the 14th century the majority of recipients of this privilege were the Piast princes.¹⁵ The first known recipient of the favour of a portable altar from the Kingdom of Poland was a trusted collaborator and diplomat of Casimir the Great, the Castellan of Cracow, Jan Jura. During his diplomatic mission in Avignon in 1360, he was granted the right to use the portable altar, as well as two other privileges: the absolution *in articulo mortis* and the privilege of listening to the mass *ante lucem*.¹⁶ The first known privilege of a portable altar for a Polish ruler comes only at the beginning of the 15th century and it was a spiritual favour for Ladislaus Jagiełło and his future wife Anna of Cillia, granted by Boniface IX on 21 April 1401.¹⁷ Earlier, Jagiełło's cousin, the Duke of Lithuania Vytautas (4 August 1394) received such a privilege,¹⁸ as well as Jagiełło's brother-in-law, the Prince of Masovia Siemowit IV and his wife Aleksandra (19 September 1394).¹⁹

14 This privilege was granted, along with three others: the privilege of absolution *in articulo mortis*; the privilege of listening to mass at a place under an interdict; and listening to mass *ante lucem*: see BP, vol. 2, nos 427–430.

15 All 15 spiritual favours for the portable altar known from the 14th century, granted to people from the diocese of Wrocław, were received by lay representatives of the highest local elite; 12 spiritual favours were granted to the Piast princes. Apart from the mentioned favour granted to Henry the Iron (*Żelazny*), the other favours were later and almost all of them come from the 1360s and 1370s: BP, vol. 2, no. 1228, 25 Sept. 1363; no. 1309, 7 May 1364; no. 1434, 6 June 1365; no. 1436, 6 June 1365; no. 1557, 22 Sept. 1367; no. 1568, 24 Nov. 1367; no. 1590, 12 April 1368; no. 1612, 13 Nov. 1368; no. 1680, 5 Jan. 1371; no. 1934, 3 July 1372; BP, vol. 3, no. 588, 4 April 1399. The recipient of one favour was Princess Hedwig, the wife of Prince Rupert of Legnica (Legnitz), widow of Casimir the Great (BP, vol. 2, no. 2399, 5 June 1377), and two favours were given to representatives of the nobles (BP, vol. 2, no. 1312, 8 May 1364; no. 1775, 12 May 1371).

16 BP, vol. 2, nos. 1011–1013. The aim of Jan Jura's legation was to obtain a dispensation for the marriage of the grandson of Casimir the Great, Kažko, to the daughter of the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Olgierd. For the career of Jan Jura and his diplomatic missions, see Szczur 1986, pp. 73–83.

17 BP, vol. 3, no. 754. This privilege also included permission to listen to the mass in a place under an interdict and to listen to the mass "after midnight and before dawn". At the same time, Boniface IX's dispensation for Ladislaus Jagiełło and Anna of Cillia comes from the same date (Anna was related at a third degree to Jagiełło's first wife Hedwig d'Anjou). Privileges were obtained on this occasion (*ibidem*, no. 753).

18 BP, vol. 3, no. 377.

19 BP, vol. no. 399. Both princes were also granted the privilege of absolution *in articulo mortis* and the privilege of listening to the mass *ante lucem* (BP vol. 3, no. 399).

The above lists show us that in the 14th century the privilege of the portable altar was relatively rarely granted to recipients in the Polish Church province (13% of the recipients of all papal privileges), and its recipients were mostly representatives of knightly status. In the following century we have already recorded multiple spiritual favours of this type (166, which constituted almost one-quarter of all known papal privileges for recipients from the Gniezno metropolis). The recipients of portable altar privileges were still mainly knights (102 privileges, i.e., over 60% of all graces of the portable altar from the 15th century); the second largest group were clergy (over 30% of the recipients of such privileges). The townspeople were recipients of a portable altar only in individual cases.

A portable altar privilege was used to create the holy space needed for divine services in situations where the recipient did not have access to a church, i.e., a permanent place of worship. The consecrated object – the portable altar – allowed one to ‘build’ a portable chapel in a place where it was set up; for example, such altars were very often used to celebrate mass during a journey. Along the way, the sacred space was set up at random places and in varying conditions; the only important thing was that it needed to be possible to set up a liturgical tent, i.e., a portable chapel.²⁰ The portable altar was also used to create sacral space within secular buildings, for example in a castle.

The privilege of the portable altar was well known among the elite of late medieval Poland, although it was very rarely granted to townspeople; so, the privilege in 1396 from Cardinal Demetrius granting the councillors from Cracow this type of spiritual favour should be considered exceptional. It is also exceptional in that this privilege does not use the fixed formula for the spiritual favour of the portable altar, which had been in force in the Papal Office since the time of John XXII, and was observed throughout the late Middle Ages.²¹ This gives us a better idea as to the city councillors’ motivation in requesting this privilege.

The privilege contains a complaint from the councillors who, due to their duties for the city and the practices of the court, could not, they say, go to the parish church for mass. For this reason, they asked for the spiritual favour of listening to the mass celebrated on the portable altar in the town hall. What has changed here is that this is a situation in which a portable altar is being used as a substitute for a permanent altar. We can guess that the desire to

20 It was precisely because of the bad weather (strong winds) and the resulting difficulties in setting up the liturgical tent that the mass was not held the day before the Battle of Grunwald (Tanneberg) at a stopover in Dąbrowno; however, on the day of the battle it was in fact possible. See Długossius 1997, libb. X–XI, pp. 86–87.

21 Tangl 1894, pp. 307–311. The forms of spiritual favours for individual recipients date back to the Avignon era and were introduced under the pontificate of John XXII (1316–1334). These forms belonged to a whole group of new formulas which differed from those used previously. The forms introduced by the Avignon popes – new formulas were also added by Clement VI (1342–1352) and Innocent VI (1352–1362) – were ready-made models according to which documents could be drawn up. They concerned a number of different matters, including a large group of spiritual favours (e.g. the grace of the portable altar, the privilege of absolution *in articulo mortis* and others) and dispensations (see Tangl 1894, p. XLIX). *Litterae gratiosae*, to which the group of papal documents included the privilege we are interested in, were not to be changed. This means that the format used at the office was to be repeated exactly in each individual case. Only variable elements were to be introduced (the name of the pope, the name of the recipient, the date, and relevant grammatical changes). However, in practice it was different, and a detailed analysis allows one to find numerous exceptions, with privileges written in a formula other than the prescribed one: Tangl 1892, p. 39; Tangl 1894, p. L).

listen to mass at the town hall was combined with the designation of a permanent place for the chapel. I also suppose that the reason given in the privilege for seeking a portable altar is merely an excuse to justify the councillors' request, whereas the real reasons were different and were not formulated explicitly. However, let us start by considering the argument raised by the councillors, namely the difficulty they allege they were encountering in fulfilling their Christian duties.

A difficulty in attending church services as a reason for asking for the privilege of a portable altar was a common rationale. Among much later documents – from the second half of the 15th century, which are collected at the Apostolic Penitentiary – we find numerous examples of portable altar pieces. We find requests from a community living far away from a parish church and having problems with travelling to participate in a mass. One example from the Gniezno metropolitan area is the privilege that George Bock from the Diocese of Włocławek applied for in 1486. He asked the Holy See (the Apostolic Penitentiary) for permission for a portable altar not only for himself but also for other people from the village of Gisków, and he describes the circumstances of sending his petition to the Penitentiary. George, a noble, had built *suis propriis expensis* a chapel in Gisków *pro sua devotione et diversorum hominum omnis utriusque sexus habitatorum dicte ville*. These people were not able to attend their parish church especially during winter *propter pulvias, nives et alia viarum discrimina*. For these reasons George asked the Holy See whether any clergyman in good standing could say a mass using a portable altar in the chapel in Gisków. He and the community of the village were granted the privilege.²² This was not an isolated case. Communities asked for the privilege of a portable altar *propter longam distantiam et tempestates ac viarum pericula*.²³ It was also pointed out that some people could not reach the church because *sine sacramentis obierunt*.²⁴ The communities that submitted the petitions pointed out that they already had a special place for the celebration of the liturgy (a church, chapel, altar), but it had not yet been consecrated, and that was why they asked for the privilege of a portable altar in order to be able to attend masses without having to wait for the consecration of an already built sacred place.²⁵

These petitions show us the actions of the groups who were forced to look for an *ad hoc* solution. The portable altar, used as a permanent altar, would allow the whole community access to the sacrament of the Eucharist. In such cases, the community desired, through the privilege of the portable altar, to be able to fulfil its Christian duties. It was not, therefore, about some special form of devotion, about deepening religious life, but rather about meeting the basic religious needs of the group and fulfilling the obligations imposed by Church law. The Cracow councillors had no problems getting to their parish church. Let us note another group seeking privileges of a portable altar. Fraternities also applied for this spiritual favour, and a certain scheme is repeated: a fraternity wanted to use its chapel or altar, which was not consecrated, and therefore asked for the privilege of a portable altar, and this object would be used in place of a permanent altar.

22 RPG vol. 7, no. 1665, 9 April 1486.

23 For example: RPG, vol. 5, no. 1481, 29 Jan. 1468.

24 RPG, vol. 3, no. 306, 28 Feb. 1456.

25 For example: RPG, vol. 5, no. 1810, 25 Aug. 1470; no. 1904, 25 March 1471.

We have many such examples of applications sent to the Apostolic Penitentiary from the diocese of Liège. On the 20 February 1468, the Saint George and Saint Sebastian Fraternity obtained a portable altar privilege because their chapel was not consecrated.²⁶ And we have other examples when a given fraternity asked and received permission to use a portable altar because their altar had been built but had not yet been consecrated. There were also privileges given for fraternities of the parish church in Weert: on 29 January 1468, the Corpus Christi Fraternity received a privilege for using a portable altar *quod altaris [in honorem Corporis Christi construxerunt] nondum consecratum existit*.²⁷ The next year the Saint Jacob Fraternity and Saints Peter and Paul Fraternity received the same privilege and for the same reason.²⁸ We also know of many other permissions for using a portable altar that were granted to fraternities in the diocese of Liège.²⁹

Apparently, we are dealing with a situation similar to that described in the petitions sent by groups in villages which were far away from a parish church. The community wants to use an unconsecrated altar or chapel for divine services; the portable altar will replace the permanent altar and thus create an area suitable for contact with the sacred. However, there is a very important difference. Brotherhoods that ask for the right to use a portable altar were not deprived of access to the sacraments. Therefore, a portable altar was not serving to meet basic Christian needs. The fraternities were asking for the privilege of performing their own devotional practices. The members of the fraternities wanted to participate in the rituals to which the group was obligated, and which additionally served to build up the community and identity of the group.

Examples of the privileges for using a portable altar granted to brotherhoods follow closely the privilege accorded to Cracow's councillors in 1396. In spite of the remoteness in time, we are dealing with a similar situation in both cases. The Cracow councillors, like the members of the fraternities in the examples mentioned above, were not deprived of access to the sacraments and could fulfil their Christian duties in the parish church without any obstacles. Admittedly, the councillors stressed that their duties towards the city (they write about judging – *iuramentum* – among other things) made contact with this *sacramentum* difficult. It is, however, difficult, given Cracow's situation, to recognise this *sacramentum* as a Christian duty. This should be viewed rather as the collective devotional practices of the town council itself.

The privilege of Cardinal Demetrius is part of a longer process in which the Cracow city council made efforts to obtain a private chapel. The council's ordinance from 1375 stated that a city priest should celebrate mass in the town hall.³⁰ It was approved by the Bishop of Cracow, Florian of Mokrsko (1367–1380), but a comment "*non*" was written in a contemporary hand in a cartulary of the council's ordinances. Therefore, it was not possible to organize such a service at the town hall at that time.³¹ The privilege of Cardinal Demetrius would be another attempt (29 August 1383) to create the town council

26 RPG, vol. 5, no. 1479, 20 Feb. 1468.

27 RPG, vol. 5, no. 1482, 29. Jan. 1468.

28 RPG, vol. 5, no. 1635, 12 Feb. 1469; RPG, vol. 5, no. 1636, 5 Feb. 1469.

29 RPG, vol. 4, no. 1076, 13 Nov. 1459; RPG, vol. 4, no. 1085, 17 Nov. 1459; RPG, vol. 5, no. 1697, 4 Sept. 1469.

30 Estreicher 1936, vol. 2, no. 5, 16 March 1375, pp. 23–24.

31 Wyrozumska 1995, p. 42. Wyrozumska believes that this shows that the chapel at the town hall was not functioning at the time, a view with which I can concur.

chapel, this time in a very honourable form, through the city council obtaining a prestigious privilege. Further facts indeed confirm that this time the effort was successful.

The expense for the painting of an altar was recorded in the city financial accounts under that year.³² It must relate to the town hall because the expenses for the parish church were registered separately. Therefore, it gives evidence that an altar for a chapel in the town hall had been obtained. It is worth considering whether the expense was for the making of a portable altar or for an altarpiece, with the latter being more probable. An altarpiece was not an obligatory element for the celebration of liturgy, but it could indicate the construction of a fixed chapel or a refurbishment of an existing one.

Four years later, on 17 November 1396, Cracow's councillors received another privilege of a portable altar from Pope Boniface IX (see Fig. 1).³³ This time the document follows the standard form, which is the one used in the Apostolic Chancery. Therefore, it posed no restrictions on the use of the portable altar to only be in the town hall and its chapel. However, this privilege cannot be dissociated with the functioning of the chapel in the town hall. The privilege of Boniface IX should be regarded as a greater distinction for the Cracow councillors, greater than the privilege of Cardinal Demetrius. Perhaps the town councillors themselves thought that the privilege granted directly by the pope was more prestigious. There may also be some doubts as to whether the cardinal's privilege was "sufficiently important and legitimate".³⁴

One entry from the inventory of the treasury of St. Mary's Church from 1424 confirms the existence of the chapel in the town hall (and probably its functioning). It was recorded that beside the portable altar located in the treasury, there was another one *in pretorio apud dominos consules Cracouienses*.³⁵ It is impossible to know if that was the altar made in connection with Cardinal Demetrius' privilege. However, what we are sure of is that the note mentions a portable altar, which formed a chapel for councillors at the town hall.

The use of the portable altar to create a town hall chapel should not come as a surprise. We also know of other examples in other towns where the town council acted exactly as we assume they did in Cracow. In 1345, the Bishop of Wrocław, Przeclaw of Pogorzela, allowed a chapel with a portable altar to function in the town hall in Wrocław, and in 1358 he confirmed that the town

32 Piekosiński/Szujski (ed.) 1878, vol. 2, p. 301.

33 Piekosiński (ed.) 1879, vol. 1, no. 85, 17 November 1396.

34 We have much later and indirect information suggesting that the actions of papal legates sometimes met with doubts from the public. A clergyman from the Diocese of Włocławek, Albert Fischer, submitted a petition to the Penitentiary for a dispensation *de defectu corporis*. In his request, he explains that he had already applied for such a dispensation and obtained it from the papal legate. He later served as a priest for many years, but doubts have arisen as to whether the legate had the right to grant him a dispensation, and therefore whether it was valid, and thus whether he himself was committing a crime while serving at the altar. He therefore asked the Penitentiary to grant him the dispensation again, which he received (RPG, vol. 8, no. 2968, 6 May 1500). We can only regret the fact that the petition did not contain a more precise record of what caused Albert's doubts, and on what point he questioned the legate's rights and the validity of the dispensation he had been issued. However, this example may also suggest that there were unreasonable doubts. It is not so much the legate who may not have had the power to grant a dispensation, but a dispensation granted by him correctly may have seemed 'worse' than the one obtained directly from the papal office: the Apostolic Penitentiary.

35 Piekosiński (ed.) 1891, p. 67.



Fig. 1 Bonifacy IX, pope, allows the councillors of Cracow to use the portable altar Rome, 17 November 1396 (National Archive in Cracow, Collection of parchment documents, sign 29/657/107).

council of Wrocław had the right to build a chapel in the town hall.³⁶ We can assume that this was similar to what occurred in Cracow with the initial chapel functioning only in the form of a portable altar.

The fact that the Cracow bourgeoisie – or more precisely the Cracow councillors – obtained the privilege of a portable altar, introduced them into an exclusive group of people who could use this object. Let us recall that in the Gniezno metropolis the main recipients of the privileges of a portable altar were knights. In the 14th century they accounted for 77% (21 privileges from among 27 graces of this type) of recipients, in the 15th century it was 61% (102 privileges from among 166 graces of this type) of recipients of portable altar privileges. It was also one of the privileges that kings and princes received, as I have pointed out. The townspeople were recipients of this spiritual favour only very occasionally. We are therefore dealing with a privilege linked to the elite. In our interesting case, the privilege of having a portable altar was granted not only to townspeople, but to a strictly defined group of people: members of the town council. It was not so much the group of people belonging to significant and privileged families in Cracow that was distinguished, but rather the Cracow town council. Those who belonged to the group of councillors could benefit from the privilege. Thanks to the privilege of Cardinal Demetrius, the councillors were given the possibility of performing a separate and exclusive liturgy intended for them and taking place in the building they occupied.

The liturgy celebrated on a portable altar distinguished the group and gave them a sacred status of a community bound together by prayer. As a group they could worship ‘at home’, and in a sense on their own terms. Another benefit of the privilege granted to Cracow’s councillors was the possibility of creating a private chapel, at the town hall. The chapel introduced a sacred element into the seat of the city authorities. The *iuramentum* performed by the councillors did not make it very difficult to reach the *sacramentum*, but the council needed this *sacramentum* to gain in importance and power. Placing a

36 Korn (ed.) 1870, p. 163, no. 182, 31 March 1345; Czerner 2002, p. 51. The chapel, whose origins perhaps also date back to 1345, was also in Świdnica. To this day you can still admire this hall, although in the form it received at the end of the 17th or the beginning of the 18th century: Czerner 2002, pp. 51–52. We also know about the chapel at the town hall in Brzeg (Brieg), although its first appearance in the sources is rather late: from 1493: Czerner 2002, p. 51; Grünhagen (ed.) 1870, no. 1118, 25 October 1493.

chapel in the town hall sacralised the city authorities, but also indirectly sacralised the whole city community.

I have already given examples of the use of a portable altar by communities – inhabitants of one village, brotherhoods – as a substitute for a permanent altar to create a permanent religious space. A similar activity was the ‘creation’ of a portable chapel within the seat of power by using the altar. This is not only exemplified by the work of the Wrocław councillors, which I mentioned above; we can also find more examples of such actions from other areas.

Philip Mattox draws our attention to this kind of activity in the *Casa vecchia Medici*. An inventory from 1418 does not mention the chapel, but a privilege of a portable altar for Cosmos and his wife, granted by Martin V, comes from 1422. Mattox suggests that the chapel was created in the main hall on the *piano nobile* by inserting the necessary objects for the liturgy.³⁷ Jan Długosz, while describing the murder of Sigmund, Duke of Lithuania and son of Kęstutis, stated that the Grand Duke of Lithuania was staying at Trakai (Troki) Castle on Palm Sunday (20 March) 1440, where he listened to mass in his chamber. The prince was virtually alone, as his courtiers (*curiales*) listened to the service in the parish church at the time. The assailants took advantage of this circumstance.³⁸ In this story, it is important not only to testify to the celebration of the liturgy in a secular environment, but also to the fact that Sigmund, son of Kęstutis, used a portable altar to create a sacred place for himself and, in a way, in opposition to other believers who participated in the Eucharistic sacrifice in the parish church during this festive time.

During my research on knightly and magnate chapels, I observed a certain correlation of source material from the Lesser Poland region at the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries. Namely, the moment of construction or significant reconstruction of a knight’s seat coincides with the owner obtaining the privilege of a portable altar. It clearly suggests that the privilege of a portable altar was an element of a planned strategy when creating a knight’s seat.³⁹ The seat, which was not only appropriate for the social position of the owner, but also raised his prestige, since owning a chapel even gave him a divine sanction. Examples cited from different areas and at different times indicate that certain patterns of using the portable altar were repeated and persisted for a long time.

In particular these near contemporary examples of activities related to knightly residences in the Lesser Poland region led me to guess that it was likely that a similar mechanism of action was used by Cracow’s councillors. Their receiving of the privilege of a portable altar could have been dictated from the start by the intention to create a town council chapel in the town hall. Thus, the portable altar was, from the beginning, intended as a substitute for a permanent altar. The choice of such a method for doing this could have been less expensive, easier and quicker, despite the costs and efforts that had to be made to obtain the privilege and to have the altar made, and the necessity of having the altar consecrated by the bishop.

37 Mattox 2006, p. 661.

38 Długossius 2001, libb. XI–XII, p. 216. I have analysed this case more thoroughly elsewhere: see Saczyńska 2010, pp. 111–127.

39 Saczyńska 2016, pp. 307–324, esp. 316–321.

4. Conclusion

Cracow's councillors built a chapel in the town hall. The group received an additional, sacred, distinguishing feature to their identity. The liturgy being celebrated for the councillors in the town hall confirms the unity and identity of this group, an identity founded on an altar stone, as we may say poetically. The stone is a symbol of the centre of the world, *axis mundi*, on which the whole world is based. The rite of consecration of an altar (portable and fixed) includes references to the symbolism of the stone on which Jacob offered his sacrifice to God, and on which he had previously slept and had the vision of a ladder with angels ascending and descending. There are also references to Golgotha and the Cross of Christ in this rite, two powerful symbols marking the place where earth and heaven meet.⁴⁰ Thus, an object of such great symbolic significance – the 'gateway to heaven' – was now placed in the town hall and at the disposal of the councillors who had obtained power over the sacred site. In the end, the portable altar had been incorporated into the image of power. This powerful symbol of the connection between the earth and heaven, the temporal and the eternal, the place where the sacrifice of Christ was celebrated, was now 'locked' in the town hall, which was the seat of the town authorities. The *sacrum* sanctifies the profane, but at the same time the *sacrum* is subordinated to the profane. It was also a breakthrough in the Church's monopoly of creating places of contact with the *sacrum*. The chapel of Cracow council, like other private chapels, is an element of a wider phenomenon growing in the late Middle Ages, which can be identified as a step towards the secularisation of devotion.⁴¹

40 Saczyńska 2009, pp. 433–451.

41 Philip Mattox, who has analysed sacred spaces in Florentine palaces in the 15th century, also points to such conclusions; see Mattox 2006, pp. 672–673.

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