

On Towers, Power, and Memory: Terminating Vistas in the Space of Medieval Cracow

Piotr PAJOR

Abstract:

This article examines the role of towers in shaping the urban space and civic identity of late medieval Cracow. Focusing on the early 14th century—a period marked by political upheaval and social transformation—it explores how towers, both private and public, functioned as instruments of power, memory, and spatial organization. Drawing comparisons with Central European and Italian cities, the article highlights visual strategies of architectural alignment and symbolic appropriation. It argues that the cityscape of Cracow became a site of contest between ducal authority and urban elites, reflecting competing visions of society and collective identity.

Keywords: Cracow; urban planning; towers; 14th century; architecture; civic identity

Towers rank among the most characteristic and splendid structures of medieval architecture. They were also widespread and multifunctional, as they could be erected as parts of churches, castles, town halls, or as free-standing structures. In almost all cases, towers—despite their practical functions as defensive structures or belfries—also served as universal symbols of power and domination. In late medieval Central Europe, this aspect was explicitly addressed by the Bohemian chronicler Beneš Krabice of Veitmile, who noted that Emperor Charles IV (1347 – 1378 as king of the Romans) built two towers at Prague Castle because he wished to display the glory and magnificence of Bohemia to the dukes, officials, and nobles visiting the city.¹ In a less direct way, the anonymous author of the contemporary *Chronicle of*

the Cracow Cathedral Chapter also emphasized that King Casimir the Great (1333 – 1370) adorned the Wawel Castle in Cracow with numerous admirable houses, towers, sculptures, paintings, and roofs of great beauty.² In this article, I would like to reconsider how towers of various functions were used to shape the space of Cracow during the dramatic period of the early 14th century, when a series of historical events and social changes forged the city's late medieval form and its role within the Kingdom of Poland. The article will conclude with an analysis of the mutual relationship between the urban commune and the spatial setting in which it existed—a setting molded by the commune according to the needs of the civic elites, but also employed by the supreme authority as an instrument for shaping social identity.

¹ “(...) dominus noster imperator, quoniam ad ipsum confluebant principes et proceres ac nobiles de omnibus partibus mundi, volens ostendere magnificenciam glorie regni sui Boemie, fecit cooperis duas turres regles in castro Pragensi, unam ad orientem, aliam ad occidentem”; after NĚMEC, R.: *Architektura – vláda – země. Rezidence Karla IV. v Praze a zemích Koruny české*. Praha 2015, p. 75.

² “Inprimis castrum Cracoviense mirificis domibus, turribus, sculpturis, picturis, tectis nimium decoris ornavit”; *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, 2. Ed.: BIEŁOWSKI, A.: Lwów 1872, p. 625.

First towers in the agglomeration of Cracow

The first towers in Cracow were erected on Wawel, the rocky hill dominating the area that would become the city's center. The hill housed both the ducal and episcopal residences. The oldest of these towers belonged to the basilica of St. Mary of Egypt, built in the 11th century.³ The cathedral, consecrated in 1142, also featured three towers.⁴ Around the same time, stone defensive towers were constructed near the adjacent ducal residence and at the western gate of the entire complex.⁵ This naturally elevated seat of ecclesiastical and political authority thus gained further visual dominance over the settlement at the foot of the hill.

Surrounding Wawel was a wide network of scattered settlements. One of them, located just to the north of the hill and referred to in the 14th century as Okół, was fortified and clearly held dominant importance.⁶ At its center stood the church of St. Andrew, founded in the late 11th century by the powerful palatine Sieciech. Its original form, how-

ever, is uncertain, as it was significantly rebuilt after several decades. It was during this reconstruction that the church received a façade flanked by two octagonal towers.⁷

In the area north of Okół—later occupied by the chartered city—small churches (St. Adalbert's, St. John's), open settlements, and a large cemetery existed at the time. According to tradition, in 1222 Bishop Iwo Odrowąż founded St. Mary's Church there as a seat of the new parish for the developing city.⁸ Earlier reconstructions often depicted its original form as a basilica with a two-tower façade. Unfortunately, this interpretation—popularized by Wiktor Zin and Władysław Grabski—was based on a misinterpretation of the earlier church's foundations.⁹ In fact, we know nothing about the appearance of the earliest building. Recently discovered round structures attached to the façade of the Holy Trinity Church have also been interpreted as towers, although this interpretation seems questionable—especially since that part of the church was likely constructed shortly after it had been taken over by the Dominicans in 1222.¹⁰

³ The church, known only from the sparse remains, is often referred to as “the St. Gereon's basilica” but it is uncertain whether the dedication known from the written sources was really connected to this building. In the 14th century, when it was heavily reconstructed into a palace chapel, its patron was already St. Mary of Egypt. It was usually dated to c. 1050, but in the recent opinion of Teresa Rodzińska-Choraży, it could be built in 1080s. See RODZIŃSKA-CHORAŻY, T.: Główne problemy związane z formą i interpretacją najstarszych relikwów krakowskiej grupy katedralnej w świetle badań archeologicznych i historyczno-artystycznych. In: *Działalność fundacyjna biskupów krakowskich*. Ed.: WALCZAK, M.; Kraków 2016, pp. 63 – 66.

⁴ See FIRLET, J. – PIANOWSKI, Z.: Przemiany architektury rezydencji monarszej oraz katedry na Wawelu w świetle nowych badań. In: *Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki*, Vol. 44, 1999, pp. 225 – 234; RODZIŃSKA-CHORAŻY 2016 (see in note 3), pp. 53 – 57.

⁵ FIRLET, J. – PIANOWSKI, Z.: Wawel przedromański i romański w świetle nowszych badań archeologicznych. In: *Kraków romański. Materiały sesji naukowej odbytej 13 kwietnia 2013 roku*. Ed.: BOCHENEK, M.; Kraków 2014, pp. 97 – 100.

⁶ RADWAŃSKI, K.: *Kraków przedlokacyjny. Rozwój przestrzenny*. Kraków 1975, pp. 57 – 149; ZAITZ, E.: Settlement colo-

nization on the area of Krakow in the early Middle Ages. In: *Kraków w chrześcijańskiej Europie X–XIII w.* Ed. FIRLET E. – ZAITZ, E.; Kraków 2006, pp. 238 – 252; POLESKI, J.: *Małopolska w VI–X w. Studium archeologiczne*. Kraków 2013, passim.

⁷ RODZIŃSKA-CHORAŻY, T. – WŁODAREK, A.: Kościół św. Andrzeja w Krakowie – znany i nieznan. Problemy badań nad architekturą. In: *Kraków romański. Materiały sesji naukowej odbytej 13 kwietnia 2013 roku*. Ed.: BOCHENEK, M.; Kraków 2014, pp. 169 – 180.

⁸ Joannis Dlugosii *Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*, libri V–VI. Warszawa 1973, p. 235.

⁹ GRABSKI W. – ZIN, W.: Wczesnośredniowieczne budowle Krakowa w świetle ostatnich badań. In: *Rocznik Krakowski*, 8, 1966, pp. 64 – 67; this reconstruction was falsified in FIRLET, J. – KADŁUCZKA, A. – PIANOWSKI, Z.: Kościół Mariacki w Krakowie. Problem początków i przekształceń architektonicznych w średniowieczu (preliminaria badawcze). In: *Czasopismo Techniczne. Architektura*, Vol. 3, 2011, pp. 342 – 344.

¹⁰ BOJEŚ-BIAŁASIK, A. – CZECHOWICZ, J. – ŁYCZAK, M. – SZYMA, M.: Krakowski kościół Świętej Trójcy w średniowieczu. Fazy budowy w świetle najnowszych badań. In: *Rocznik Krakowski*, Vol. 88, 2022, pp. 282 – 288.

The tower houses c. 1300

The turning point in the history of Cracow was the year 1257, when Duke Boleslaus the Chaste established a self-governing commune by granting the city a charter under the Magdeburg law. Along with the legal system and communal institutions, Cracow acquired a new, regular urban layout centered around St. Mary's Church.¹¹ During its first decades the chartered city lacked monumental public buildings apart from the preexisting churches and relatively simple merchant stalls on the Main Market Square.¹² The earliest tower-like structures erected in that period were tall multi-storey stone houses, several of which have been identified near the Main Market Square. The only one that has preserved its original height – and thus whose reconstruction is not controversial – is the tower on Bracka Street, which in the late 13th century belonged to the mayor (Ger. *Vogt*, lat. *advocatus*) Henry the Younger.¹³ (Fig. 1) His notorious brother Albert, the future leader of the burghers' rebellion of 1311 – 1312, appears to have

owned a similar, but much worse preserved property at the corner of the Market Square and Szewska Street, which he sold in 1302 to Henry Suderman.¹⁴

It has been suggested that Henry's tower house may also have served a semi-official function and was used as a meeting place for city officials, particularly the council and the *scabini* (members of the municipal bench).¹⁵ However, this type of dwelling was likely not reserved exclusively for the highest-ranking officials. Remains of similar structures have been identified elsewhere within the blocks surrounding the Main Market Square and clearly belonged to the broader patrician class.¹⁶ Nevertheless, their role as displays of status and power appears evident. In this regard, the situation in Cracow was quite similar to that in other major centers of Central Europe, such as Trier, Zurich, Regensburg, Prague, Wrocław or Vienna.¹⁷ As noteworthy as their appearance, however, is how quickly the towers disappeared. By the mid-14th century, most had been absorbed into townhouses, a much faster transition than in Italian cities, Regensburg or even other towns in Central Europe.

¹¹ The commune established by Boleslaus in 1257 was probably not the first of its kind in Cracow, as some form of municipal self-government existed in the city from the 1220s; see WYROZUMSKI, J.: *Kraków do schyłku wieków średnich*. Kraków 1992, pp. 153 – 60; Idem: Eine Lokation oder mehrere Lokationen Krakaus nach deutschem Recht? In: *Rechtsgestaltung und Stadtentwicklung im mittelalterlichen Polen*. Ed.: MÜHLE, E. Köln 2011, pp. 245 – 274; RAJMAN, J.: *Kraków. Zespół osadniczy, proces lokacji, mieszczanie do roku 1333*. Kraków 2004, pp. 173 – 182; Idem: Krakowska civitas soltysów Piotra i Salomona. In: *Spółczesność Polski Średniowiecznej* 12. Ed.: GÓRZYŃSKI, S. Warszawa 2012, pp. 47 – 68. Among the vast literature on the chartered city in Cracow see KRASNOWOLSKI, B.: *Lokacyjne układy urbanistyczne na obszarze Ziemi Krakowskiej w XIII i XIV wieku* 1. Kraków 2004, pp. 86 – 134; OKNIŃSKI, P.: *Narodziny Miasta Komunalnego. Struktury ustrojowe, ramy przestrzenne i podstawy gospodarcze Krakowa w XIII wieku*. Warszawa 2018; NIEZABITOWSKI, M.: Krakau. Eine europäische Metropole des Magdeburger Rechts. In: *Faszination Stadt. Die Urbanisierung Europas im Mittelalter und das Magdeburger Recht*. Ed.: KÖSTER G. – LINK, Ch. Magdeburg 2019, pp. 232 – 237.

¹² The first complex of stalls built after 1257 was situated slightly eastward from the later (and still existing) monumental building of the Cloth Hall and consisted of two rows of small chambers and an internal passage; DRYJA, S. – GŁOWA, W. – NIEWALDA, W. – SŁAWINSKI, S., *Przemiany architektoniczne Kramów Bogatych i Kramów Bolesławowych*.

In: *Krzysztofor. Zeszyty Naukowe Muzeum Historycznego Miasta Krakowa*, Vol. 28.1, 2010, pp. 155 – 163.

¹³ LINIECKI, T.: Dom wójta Henryka z wieku XIII w Krakowie. In: *Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki*, Vol. 33, 1988, pp. 287 – 297; KOMOROWSKI, W. – OPALIŃSKI, W., O wieży wójta krakowskiego raz jeszcze. Komunikat. In: *Czasopismo Techniczne. Architektura*, Vol. 108, 2011, pp. 119 – 129.

¹⁴ RAJMAN 2004 (see in note 11), p. 245.

¹⁵ LINIECKI 1988 (see in note 13), p. 292.

¹⁶ ŁUKACZ, M.: Zabudowa pierzei Rynku Głównego w Krakowie w okresie średniowiecza. In: *Krzysztofor. Zeszyty Naukowe Muzeum Historycznego Miasta Krakowa*, 28.1, 2010, pp. 85 – 86; KOMOROWSKI, W.: *Średniowieczne domy krakowskie. Kamienice, pałace miejskie i rezydencje kanonicze. Trwałość gotyckiego modelu w nowożytności* Kraków 2014, pp. 138 – 146.

¹⁷ PERGER, R.: Wohntürme im mittelalterlichen Wien. In: *Beiträge zur Mittelalterarchäologie in Österreich*, Vol. 8, 1992, pp. 103 – 115; PÖLLATH, K.: "Ein sonderbar Zierd dieser Stadt... ist die Meng vieler hoher Thürm". *Profane mittelalterliche Türme in Regensburg. Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Funktion*. Regensburg 2019, pp. 158 – 179; MRUCZEK R. – LEGUT-PINTAL, M.: Residential Towers of the Left-Bank Wrocław. An Unusual or a Forgotten Phenomenon in the Medieval Cityscape? In: *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, Vol. 86, 2024, pp. 31 – 50.

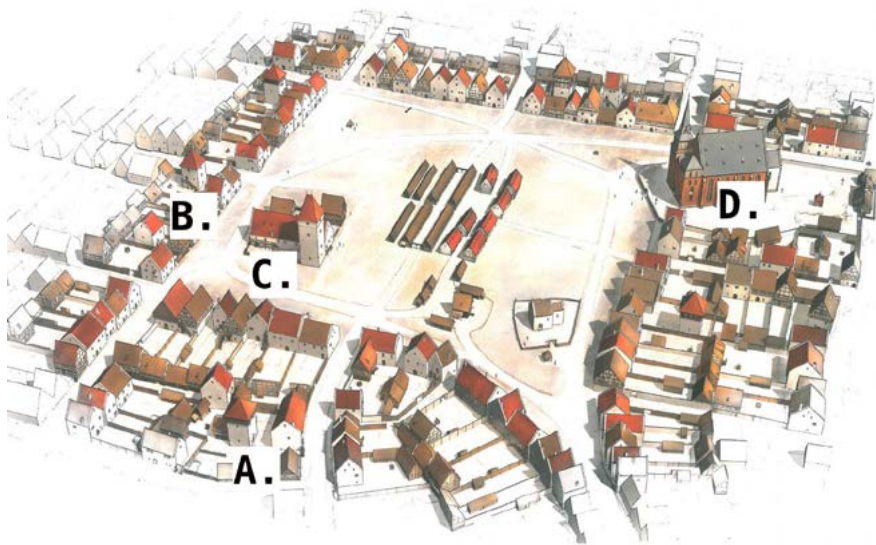


Fig. 1: Cracow, the Main Market Square in the early 14th century: A – tower house of Mayor Henry; B – tower house of Mayor Albert; C – city hall; D – St. Mary's Church. After KOMOROWSKI, W.: *Architektura Rynku Głównego w Krakowie od założenia do dzisiaj*. In *Rynek krakowski odkryty na nowo*. Ed.: caps, E. Kraków 2014, fig. 102. Modification: Piotr Pajor.

Both Albert and Henry played leading roles in the burgher revolt of 1311 – 1312, known as the Rebellion of Mayor Albert. The burghers attempted to depose Duke Ladislaus the Short (king of Poland between 1320 – 1333), who had gained control over the city in 1306. Initially, the rebels besieged Wawel and summoned Bolko, Duke of Opole, to Cracow, offering him the throne. However, they were unable to capture the castle and ultimately failed to defend the city against Ladislaus's forces. The rebellion was crushed.¹⁸ Most of its leaders were brutally executed, with one significant exception: Albert, who was kidnapped by Bolko during his retreat from Cracow. Ladislaus also confiscated the rebels' properties and significantly restructured the city's government by abolishing the office of the hereditary mayor and reducing the influence of the municipal bench in favor of the city council.¹⁹ At least two of the rebels

owned tower houses: Mayor Henry the Younger and Henry Suderman, the latter having acquired Albert's tower on Szewska Street. Although direct evidence is lacking, it is worth considering whether Ladislaus the Short may have responded to the uprising by prohibiting the construction of tower houses, which symbolized civic autonomy. It may therefore be no coincidence that the best-preserved tower house—Henry the Mayor's—was, as early as 1334, granted by King Casimir the Great (Ladislaus's son) to Spytko I of Melsztyn, a nobleman and high official (castellan of Cracow) at his court. The tower may well have suited Spytko's social and political standing.²⁰ In other Central European cities, such buildings were indeed subject to legal restrictions; for example, in Basel from 1180 onward the emperor's edict prohibited the construction of defensive towers without the permission of the local bishop, the regulation was

¹⁸ In the early modern tradition, as well as in the 19th and 20th c. scholarship, the rebellion was treated as an ethnic conflict, as the rebels were burghers of mostly German origin; see especially re-edition of the classical work DŁUGOPOLSKI, E.: *Władysław Łokietek na tle swoich czasów*. Kraków 2009, pp. 159 – 186. See also WYROZUMSKI 1992 (see in note 11), pp. 199 – 212. Current state of research was summarized in OKNIŃSKI, P.: *Webikuty pamięci. Przeszłość i władza w*

dawnym Krakowie (do końca XVIII wieku). Warszawa 2023, pp. 105 – 158.

¹⁹ Recently OKNIŃSKI 2018 (see in note 11), pp. 131 – 146.

²⁰ *Akta grodzkie i ziemskie z czasów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z archiwum tak zwanego bernardynskiego we Lwowie*. Lwów 1872, 1–2, no I; RAJMAN 2004 (see in note 11), pp. 246 – 247.

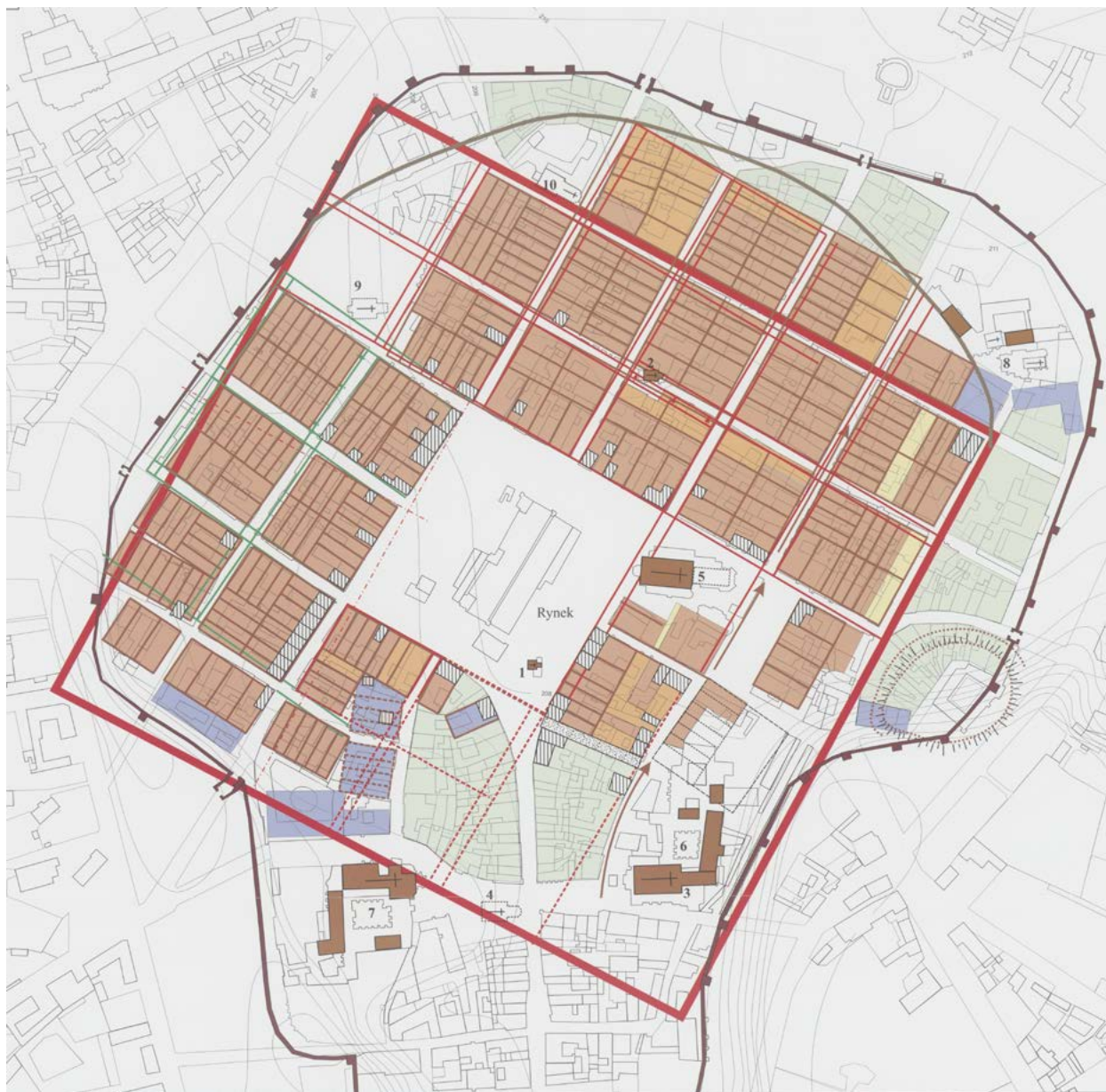


Fig. 2: The chartered city of Cracow: theoretical delineation according to Bogusław Krasnowolski. St. Mary's Church in the middle, near the north-western corner of the Main Market Square. 5 – the St. Mary's church. After *Atlas historyczny* (see in note 46), map V 1.

perhaps supposed to reserve this privilege to nobles living in towns.²¹ A prohibition on the construction of private towers was likely also in effect in Siena

under the rule of the Noveschi, as the only tower erected after 1287 was the Torre del Mangia, the new display of the commune's collective power.²²

²¹ SCHNEIDER, J.: Der mittelalterliche Steinbau in Zürich. In *Stadthoft, Hirsebrei und Bettelmönch: die Stadt um 1300*. Ed.: FLÜELER, M. – FLÜELER, N. Stuttgart 1992, p. 241.

²² GABBRIELLI, F.: *Siena Medievale. L'architettura civile*. Siena 2010, p. 180.

The north tower of the St. Mary's Church

Also in Cracow the decline of private residential towers coincided with the rise of public ones. By 1316, Cracow already had a town hall, which—according to Waldemar Komorowski—from the very beginning included a tower. Though its exact construction date is unclear, if the hall was built after Albert's rebellion, when the council gained a dominant role, this reference may mark the institution's early years.²³

Around the same time, an even more significant undertaking was well underway: the construction of the two-tower façade of the new St. Mary's Church. The rebuilding of the city's main parish church likely began in the 1290s and was completed around 1320.²⁴ Its new form was not only a splendid and modern structure—fitting for a city of rapidly growing economic and political importance—but also engaged with the urban context in a remarkably creative way. Following the major urban charter of 1257, the plot occupied by St. Mary's assumed a rather unusual position at the Main Market Square. Its exact size and boundaries at that time remain unclear, but there is evidence of later alterations—such as a 1313 donation by the mother of Mayor Albert, who gave land to enlarge the church cemetery.²⁵

The church built at the turn of the 14th century dominated the square's eastern side with its imposing two-tower façade. However, it does not align with the grid of the chartered city; instead, it stands at a diagonal. (Fig. 2) Scholars long believed this misalignment resulted from reusing the foundations of Bishop Iwo Odrowąż's church from the 1220s, but recent excavations have shown that the visible foundations date to the late 13th century and were constructed using debris from the earlier building.²⁶ This misalignment, in fact, produces a strikingly precise visual effect:



Fig. 3: Cracow, view of Floriańska Street with the north tower of St. Mary's Church. Photo: Piotr Pajor.

the north tower projects just far enough beyond the Main Market Square frontage to align perfectly with the axis of Floriańska Street—the route connecting the square with the city gate of the same name. The effect appears deliberate and suggests that the early 14th-century builders intentionally designed a vista

²³ KOMOROWSKI, W.: Ratusz krakowski. In *Urbs celeberrima: księga pamiątkowa na 750-lecie lokacji Krakowa*. Ed.: GRZYBKOWSKI, A. Kraków 2008, pp. 174 – 176. The oldest known mention about a city hall (Rathus) only refers to it as an orientation point: “Item in eodem iudicio Dominus Vladizlaus Dux Cracouie, Sandomirie et Regni Polonie, Lutkoni dicto Rone per nobilem virum dominum Spitkonem aream, que iacet in Circulo contra Rathus mandauit iure hereditario dari et eciam resignari.” *Najstarsze księgi i rachunki miasta Krakowa od r. 1300 do 1400*. Ed.: PIEKOSIŃSKI, F. – SZUJSKI, J. Kraków 1878, vol. 1, no 366.

²⁴ For the general information of the church in this phase see ADAMSKI, J. – PAJOR, P.: *The Gothic Cathedral in Cracow and the European Architecture Around the Year 1300*. Turnhout 2026 [in print].

²⁵ *Najstarsze księgi*, vol. 1, (see in note 23), no 270; see also RAJMAN 2004 (see in note 11), p. 244.

²⁶ FIRLET – KADŁUCZKA – PIANOWSKI 2011 (see in note 9).



Fig. 4: Florence, Via del Proconsolo and the tower of the Bargello. Photo: Piotr Pajor.

that would terminate the line of sight from the city's main entrance. (Fig. 3) Although some scholars, notably František Hoffmann and Bogusław Krasnowolski, have questioned the ability of Central European

medieval planners to conceive of three-dimensional urban compositions,²⁷ similar strategies can be observed in early 14th-century Tuscany, particularly in Florence and Siena. Marvin Trachtenberg has analyzed numerous subtle geometric adjustments in the layout of Florence's main squares, which enhance the visual presentation of the city's most prominent public buildings: the Baptistry, the Cathedral, and the Palazzo Vecchio. In the context of Cracow, however, the simpler example of the Via del Proconsolo is perhaps more relevant. This street leads southward from the Piazza del Duomo and is slightly curved, allowing its perspective to frame the slender tower of the Bargello, then the seat of the podestà, one of the city's key magistrates.²⁸ (Fig. 4) The layout of the Piazza del Campo in Siena is even more remarkable. Three short streets connecting the square with the rest of the city—Via Rinaldini, Costarella dei Barbieri (the main entrance to the Campo), and Chiasso del Bargello—all converge visually on the Torre del Mangia, the colossal tower constructed between 1338 and 1349 as part of the Palazzo Pubblico, which housed the city government and the podestà's residence (Fig. 5–6). The precision of the entire composition is striking: although Via Rinaldini—and especially Chiasso del Bargello—are very narrow, they are nevertheless perfectly aligned with the tower.²⁹

Visual alignments of this kind appear somewhat later in Central Europe. In Gdańsk—part of the Teutonic Order's state in the 14th century—the short and narrow Kaletnicza Street forms a visual link between Długa Street, a section of the city's main axis, and the massive tower of St. Mary's Church. The church, begun in 1343, served as the main parish of the city and as the religious center for the local patriciate.³⁰

²⁷ HOFFMANN, F.: *Středověké město v Čechách a na Moravě*. Praha 2009, pp. 144 – 145; KRASNOWOLSKI, B.: The Sacred in the Spatial Arrangements of Chartered Cities in Malopolska in 13th – 15th Centuries. In: *Folia Historica Cracoviensia*, Vol. 21, 2015, pp. 8 – 9; in opinion of the latter, "(...) the Middle Ages did not consciously build panoramic vistas and the spatial order of a medieval city was—unlike the order in the much less numerous modern cities—to a far greater degree the result of economic rather than aesthetic intentions (...)."

²⁸ TRACHTENBERG, M.: *Dominion of the Eye. Urbanism, Art, and Power in Early Modern Florence*. Cambridge 1997, pp. 74 – 76.

²⁹ TRACHTENBERG, M.: *Building-in-Time. From Giotto to Alberti and Modern Oblivion*. New Haven; London: 2010, pp. 244 – 248; GABBRIELLI 2010 (see in note 22), pp. 177 – 187; NEVOLA, F.: *Siena: Constructing the Renaissance City*. New Haven; London 2008, pp. 19 – 20.

³⁰ PILECKA, E.: Czternastowieczna bazylika Najświętszej Marii Panny w Gdańsku. Przyczynek do badań genezy formy artystycznej. In: *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Zabytkoznawstwo i Konserwatorstwo*, Vol. 17, 1991, pp. 197 – 214. The church built around the middle of the 14th c. was quickly replaced with the new, bigger one, but its tower was incorporated into the new structure.



Fig. 5: Siena, *Via Rinaldini* and the *Torre del Mangia*. Photo: Piotr Pajor.



Fig. 6: Siena, *Costarella dei Barbieri* and the *Torre del Mangia*. Photo: Piotr Pajor.

(Fig. 7) A similar alignment exists along the much longer Złotników Street on the church's northern side. Teresa Zarebska has also identified a comparable distortion in the frontage of Długa Street, which exposes the Town Hall. The street's slightly curved course allows the building to terminate the visual axis for those entering the city through the main western gate. The Town Hall, constructed in the mid-14th century, likely did not originally include a tower, so the vista would have been closed by the rectangular brick mass of the building itself.³¹ (Fig. 8)

³¹ ZAREBSKA, T.: Kontekst urbanistyczny ratusza Głównego Miasta w Gdańsku. In: *Ratusz w miastach północnej Europy. Materiały z sesji „Ratusz w miastach nadbałtyckich”, Gdańsk 23 – 25 XI 1993*. Ed.: LATOUR, S. Gdańsk 1997, pp. 53 – 77.

A similar approach to visual planning is evident in the Church of St. Martin in Landshut, begun in the 1380s. Its tower was visible from almost every part of the town due to its immense height. Moreover, it was fully exposed in the vista along the town's main market street, known as the Altstadt, as its lower section projects slightly beyond the frontage line of the surrounding buildings. Achieving this effect required considerable effort, including the demolition of an earlier municipal tower and the relocation of the town hall.³² (Fig. 9)

³² KNESCH, G.: *St. Martin zu Landshut: Bauwerk und Architektur*. Regensburg 2009, pp. 17 – 20.



Fig. 7: Gdańsk, Kaletnicza Street and the tower of St. Mary's Church. Photo: Piotr Pajor.

What makes the case of St. Mary's Church in Cracow particularly distinctive is the function of its north tower, which by the 15th century was owned by the city. This arrangement may have originated earlier, as by the 1390s the tower was clearly regarded as a public, municipal structure. It served as the city's main watchtower—in 1392, the city council was already paying a “vigilator super torris beate Virginis” (watchman on the Virgin's tower).³³ The origins of this usage are unclear, as earlier records of the city's expenses have not survived. During the same period, the tower also housed the city's first public clock, which was likely replaced in 1395 by a larger and more elaborate mechanism. Until the early 16th century, the clock had only one face, located on the western wall facing the Main Market Square; a second face, oriented toward Floriańska Street, was added in 1529.³⁴

³³ *Najstarsze księgi*, Vol. 2, (see in note 23), p. 302.

³⁴ DREŚCIK, J.: Zegar wielki na wieży wyższej kościoła Mariackiego, jego dzieje i znaczenie. In: *Rocznik Krakowski*, Vol. 65 – 66, 1999 – 2000, pp. 39 – 41.



Fig. 8: Gdańsk, Długa Street and the city hall. Photo: Piotr Pajor.



Fig. 9: Landsbut, Altstadt Street and St. Martin's Church. Photo: Piotr Pajor.

The poor state of preservation of medieval records also obscures the financing of the construction of the church—including its facade—in the early 14th century. A *vitricus* (church overseer) appointed by the city council is only documented

³⁵ *Najstarsze księgi*, Vol. 2, (see in note 23), no. 1090.

from the 1330s,³⁵ and the council's direct involvement in the building process can be traced only in the preserved bills from the 1390s, when another great reconstruction of the nave was close to the finish.³⁶ In this context it is noteworthy, that despite the complete demolition of the nave from c. 1300, the facade was left intact and incorporated to the new building, however the towers were later heightened. Nevertheless, early 14th-century testaments of Cracow's citizens contain bequests to the church, and in 1294 some burghers – along with the parish priest – established the village of Bronowice to support the church financially.³⁷ This suggests that even the second iteration of St. Mary's, like its successor, was a civic project, funded and guided by the local community.

The north tower, aligned with the view down Floriańska Street—the city's main ceremonial entry and central axis—was clearly designed as a symbol of municipal autonomy. The town hall tower, built later and positioned less prominently, lacked such commanding presence, even after its complex reconstruction at the turn of the 15th century.³⁸

The St. Andrew's church and the problem of Okół after the rebellion

A similar effect of visual alignment can be observed on Grodzka Street, which, when viewed from the Main Market Square, is visually closed by the towers of St. Andrew's Church. The origin of this vista, however, is more complex than that of St. Mary's Tower, which was consciously aligned with an already well-formed and largely single-phase street. (Fig. 10)

St. Andrew's Church dates to the late 11th century, although the present structure was erected several decades later.³⁹ Its original spatial context within the



Fig. 10: Cracow, view of Grodzka Street with the north tower of St. Andrew's Church. Photo: Piotr Pajor.

fortified settlement at the foot of the Wawel Hill is unclear. The original course of the main road of this settlement, in the 14th century called Okół, is unknown, but it seems that the church had to be situated close to it. The locations of the later churches of St. Mary Magdalene (around the middle of the 13th

³⁶ The sources related to the late 14th century works were recently summarized in ADAMSKI, J.: Kim był Heynricus parlierer zatrudniony przy wznoszeniu kościoła Mariackiego? Uwagi o architekturze korpusu fary i przemianach w organizacji prac budowlanych w późnośredniowiecznym Krakowie. In: *Jako serce pośrodku ciała... Kultura artystyczna kościoła Mariackiego w Krakowie*. Ed.: WALCZAK, M. – WOLSKA, A. Kraków 2020 – 2021, pp. 127 – 136.

³⁷ See RAJMAN, J.: "Unsere liebe Fraue". Wspólnota miasta i

kościół w Krakowie w XIV wieku. In: *Średniowiecze Polskie i Powszechne*, Vol. 8, 2012, pp. 153 – 155.

³⁸ See WALCZAK, M.: The Tower of the Medieval Town Hall in Cracow. Remarks on the Reception of 'Parlerian' Influences in the Architecture and Stone Sculpture of Lesser Poland (14th/15th c.). In: *Atem ad vita. sborník k počtě historika umění Ivo Hlobila*, Ed.: DÁŇOVÁ, H. – MEZIHORÁKOVÁ, K. – PRIK, D. Praha 2012, pp. 363 – 379.

³⁹ See above, the note 7.

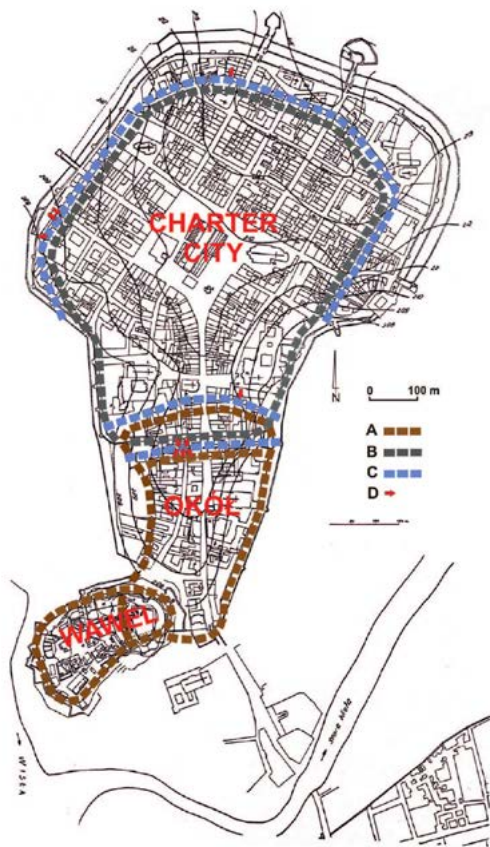


Fig. 11: Development of Cracow's fortifications in the 13th century, according to Dariusz Niemiec: A – ramparts of Okół; B – reconstructed ramparts by Leszek the Black (after 1285); C – moats; D – locations of archaeologically confirmed moat remains. Based on NIEMIEC 2018 (see in note 41), p. 182.

century?) and St. Peter (of highly uncertain dating) suggest that this original road likely followed a route more or less similar to the present southern section of Grodzka Street.⁴⁰

Okół was originally not included into the chartered city and remained separated from it by the early medieval earth ramparts whose northern curtain in some time in the 13th century, probably already before 1257, was moved southward, limiting the area of the settlement.⁴¹ (Fig. 11) In the 1280s, the southern boundary of the chartered town was marked by another rampart, in the following decade replaced by a stone wall. Also the ramparts of Okół were probably replaced by a wall; the identical building technique suggests that this construction campaign took place c. 1300 as well.⁴² The status of Okół in this transitional period remains uncertain. A document issued by Bishop Muskata in 1304 refers to a location of one property in that area as *suburbio Civitatis Cracoviensis, inter ecclesias Sancti Andree et sancti Martini*, indicating that Okół was then regarded as a suburb of Cracow.⁴³

The origin of the northern segment of Grodzka Street also remains unresolved. This section cuts diagonally through the otherwise regular grid of the chartered city and connects to the corner of the Main Market Square via a characteristic fan-shaped opening. The most widely accepted hypothesis holds that this course generally preserves the line of a pre-charter road, though Bogusław Krasnowolski has suggested the possibility of a later distortion of the originally regular grid.⁴⁴

While there is no strong evidence for post-charter reconfiguration of this area, the preservation of the earlier road should not be explained as urbanistic inertia. Rather, the northern section of Grodzka should be understood as a deliberate design choice by the planners of the 1257 charter. It served both to optimize communication with the older settlement of Okół and the ducal Wawel Hill, and to create a monumental frame for this important thoroughfare.

⁴⁰ GWIAZDA, T.: *Tempus edax rerum. Utracone kościoły Krakowa wzniezione w okresie od X do XVIII wieku*. Rzeszów 2020, pp. 107 – 113.

⁴¹ NIEMIEC, D.: 13th-century fortifications of Kraków. In: *Recherches Archéologiques. Nouvelle Serie*, Vol. 10, 2018, pp. 190 – 192.

⁴² Ibidem, p. 193.

⁴³ *Kodeks Dyplomatyczny Małopolski*, vol. 1. Ed.: PIEKOSIŃSKI, F. Kraków 1876, p. 163, no. 134.

⁴⁴ See KRASNOWOLSKI 2004 (see in note 11), pp. 94 – 96. Two perpendicular streets emerge from the three regularly planned corners of the Main Market Square. Grodzka is now the only street at the southeastern corner; however, another street originally ran eastward from the square to Stolarska Street. Its path was regular, but, unlike other streets radiating from the Market Square, it did not reach the chartered city's boundary and was distinctly narrower. It was removed during the late Middle Ages and consequently became known as "the lost street" (*platea perdita*); TOMKOWICZ, S.: *Ulice i place Krakowa w ciągu dziejów, ich nazwy i zmiany postaci*. Kraków 1926, pp. 45 – 46.

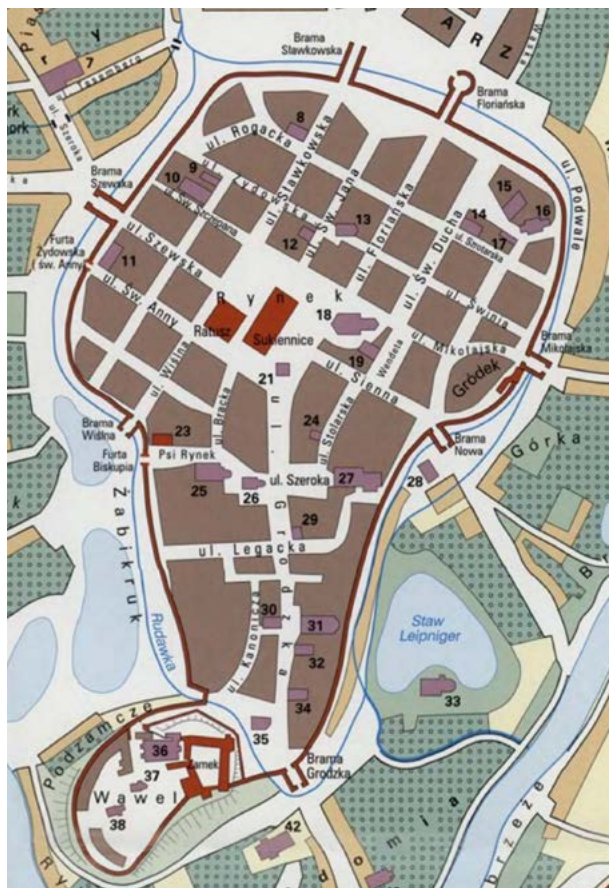


Fig. 12: *Cracow within its fortifications: reconstruction of the city's state in the 16th century. After Atlas historyczny Polski. Województwo krakowskie w drugiej połowie XVI wieku. Ed.: RUTKOWSKI, H., CHŁAPOWSKI, K. Warszawa 2008, map 1:6.*

For those arriving from Okół, the fan-shaped opening offered a view of St. Adalbert's Church and the surrounding commercial architecture of the square.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ The monumental building of the Cloth Hall, which still dominates the square today, was constructed in the late 14th century. Other commercial structures, including the Rich Stalls and two weighing houses, were demolished in the 19th century. The first facilities of this type, erected shortly after 1257, were cloth stalls located slightly to the east of the later Cloth Hall. These early stalls were arranged in two rows—an outer and an inner one—and were likely modest structures, possibly with timber-frame walls. Notably, the axis of the entire complex did not conform to the compositional grid of the chartered city. DRYJA – GŁOWA – NIEWALDA – SŁAWIŃSKI 2010 (see in note 12), pp. 158 – 163.

Initially, the view in the opposite direction—from the Market Square southward—would have been obstructed by the aforementioned double line of ramparts belonging to Okół and the chartered city, most likely incorporating gates. By the 1290s, at least the latter had been replaced with stone walls. Thus, between 1257 and around 1285, the vista along Grodzka Street would have been closed by the gate of Okół—of unknown form—and later by a gate belonging to the chartered city itself. Their demolition, however, would not have been sufficient to create the present-day view of the towers of St. Andrew's Church. A crucial additional factor was the alignment of the eastern frontage of Grodzka Street, which, near the church—in the area later occupied by the Jesuits—shifts significantly eastward, forming a small square.

Although some subdivision of regular plots near Wawel had already occurred at an uncertain point in the 13th century—an event Waldemar Niewalda, perhaps with some exaggeration, refers to as the “first urban regulation of Okół”⁴⁶—the spatial layout that remains generally legible today was likely established only after the rebellion of Mayor Albert. (Fig. 12) At that point, a major reorganization produced an elongated rectangular square (now mostly occupied by the block bounded by Grodzka, Kanonicza, and Senacka Streets), intersected by a broad transverse street running between what are now Senacka and Poselska Streets. The construction of two buildings on this square appears to have been part of the same undertaking. The larger of the two—partially preserved within the later Collegium Iuridicum—consisted of two rows of two-storey chambers separated by a central passage. Regardless of the unclear meaning of the term *gaulerium*, under which

⁴⁶ NIEWALDA, W. – KRASNOWOLSKI, B.: Układy urbanistyczne Okołu – próba rekonstrukcji. In: *Teka Komisji Urbanistyki i Architektury*, Vol. 15, 1981, pp. 69 – 78; NIEWALDA, W. – ROJKOWSKA, H.: Układy urbanistyczne Okołu do połowy XIV wieku. In: *Atlas historyczny miast polskich*. Ed.: CZAJA, R., vol. 5: *Małopolska*. Ed.: NOGA, Z., 1: *Kraków*. Kraków 2007, p. 27. Both articles contain significantly different reconstructions of the hypothetical spatial layout of the “first regulation” of Okół including the whole area between Wawel and the St Peter's church. Premises for any reconstruction of that kind, however, seem very weak, which was stressed by Sławomir Gawlas and Mateusz Goliński

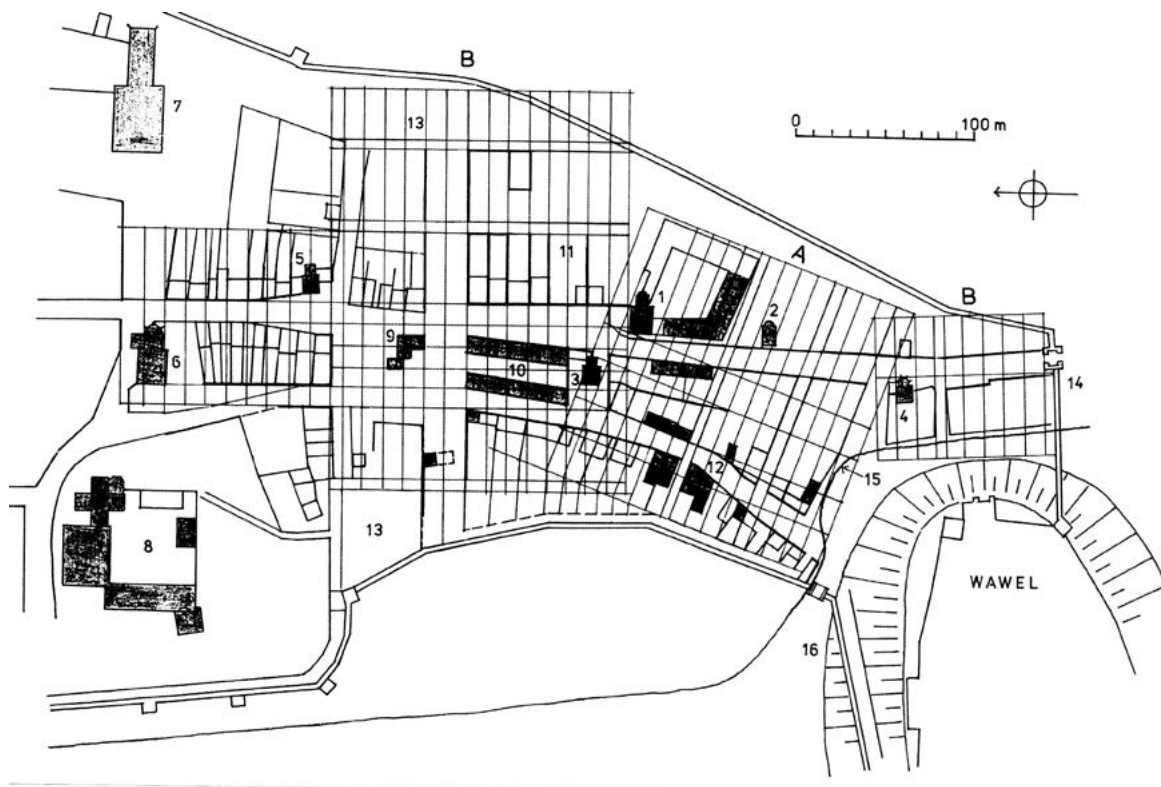


Fig. 13: The so-called second urban reorganization of Okół (New Town?) around 1312, according to Waldemar Niewalda. 1 – St. Andrew's Church; 3 – St. Mary Magdalene's Church; 5 – St. Peter's Church; 8 – Franciscan Monastery; 9 – "Merchant House" (town hall?); 10 – market stalls (*gaulerium*). After NIEWALDA, ROJKOWSKA 2007 (see in note 46), p. 28.

this structure seems to be referred to in written sources, it must be interpreted as a hall of merchant stalls.⁴⁷ The smaller building, situated further north, has been interpreted by Niewalda as a "merchant house"; however, its ground floor plan, featuring a two-aisled hall, is reminiscent of early town halls.⁴⁸ (Fig. 13)

Creation of the northern part of this layout required the removal of latitudinal segments of

the walls of Okół and chartered city, along with the moat between them, situated in the line of the present Poselska Street.⁴⁹ One of the goals of this enterprise, therefore, was the spatial integration of the two formerly distinct urban sectors. This, however, collides with the most controversial issue regarding the history of Okół in the 14th century. A longstanding hypothesis claims that Ladislaus the Short chartered an entirely new, independent town

(GAWLAS, S.: Nova civitas in Okol. Fragment z dziejów Krakowa. In: *Spółeczeństwo Polski średniowiecznej* 6. Warszawa 1994, p. 106; GOLINSKI, M.: *Wokół socjotopografii późnośredniowiecznej Świdnicy* 1. Wrocław 2000, pp. 84 – 85).

⁴⁷ NIEWALDA, W.: Kramy handlowe w centralnej części Nowego Miasta na Okole. In: *Czasopismo Techniczne. Architektura*, Vol. 100, 2003, pp. 163 – 172; SZYMA, M.: Zanim powstała uczelnia – historia Okołu w murach Collegium Iuridicum zapisana. In: *Collegium Iuridicum*. Ed.: CHWAŁBA, A. Kraków

2015, pp. 29 – 35. Marek Słoi argued that the name *gaulerium* comes from the word *gaulum* (tax, customs) and interpreted the building as a ducal customs chamber; SŁOŃ, M.: *Miasta podwójne i wielokrotne w średniowiecznej Europie*. Wrocław 2010, pp. 296 – 298.

⁴⁸ NIEWALDA – KRASNOWOLSKI 1981 (see in note 46); SZYMA 2015 (see in note 47), p. 32.

⁴⁹ NIEMIEC 2018 (see in note 41), p. 190.

in Okół. This question remains unresolved. Several sources dated between 1317 and 1338 mention a New Town (*Nova Civitas*, only once as *Nova Civitas in Okół*), but all of them regard transactions on some properties in the area in question registered by a Cracow municipal bench.⁵⁰ Thus, there is no written trace of any institution of the hypothetical town, nor of a person holding any office. On the other hand, the new urban layout appears to have been integrated directly into the fabric of Cracow. Yet, the creation of a market square with stalls and a building which can be interpreted as a town hall, along with various indirect sources, suggests that a separate commune may indeed have briefly existed in this area.⁵¹

If the New Town did in fact exist as an independent commune, its unusual coexistence with the main city may have resulted from one of Duke Ladislaus the Short's central goals following Mayor Albert's rebellion: connecting the fortifications of the chartered city with those of the castle on Wawel Hill—and thus also with Okół, which lay between them. Ladislaus assumed power in Cracow in 1306, when he swiftly secured control over all of Lesser Poland after the sudden death of Wenceslaus II, King of Bohemia and Poland (duke of Cracow from 1291, king of Poland 1300–1305), and the unexpected assassination of his son, Wenceslaus

III. Among the privileges granted to the burghers of Cracow, Ladislaus promised not to join those fortifications—a promise he likely bitterly regretted when besieging the city in 1312, and one which he demonstratively broke after suppressing the revolt.⁵² It was probably at this time that the final course of Grodzka Street, in a form close to its present layout, was determined—establishing a straight, continuous axis through the southern section of the city.

According to reconstruction by Niewalda, based on archaeological and architectonic research, a distortion of the eastern frontage of Grodzka Street (and of the Okół square) north of St. Andrew's Church, the very same that left the church tower unobstructed by houses and thus allowed the street's vista to terminate in a prominent ecclesiastical landmark, was created during the same phase.⁵³ Since the whole reconstruction of Okół, despite its legal context, was clearly initiated by Ladislaus the Short, there is no doubt that also this regulation was in accordance with the duke's will.

Some time afterward, the duke also altered the function of St. Andrew's Church. Until then, it had been under the patronage of the powerful Topór family and belonged to the Benedictine abbey in Sieciechów. The formal transfer was not legally finalized until 1320, when Ladislaus exchanged it

⁵⁰ *Najstarsze księgi*, vol. 1 (see in note 23), no. 777, 791, 794, 954, 959, 968, 1015, 1051, 1053, 1082, 1083, 1162, 1200, 1249, 1254, 1264. Several later notes mention properties in *Okół*, which, however, is not called “civitas” anymore. The literature on the problem of the New Town is very complex, and many significant issues were interpreted differently even among scholars who accepted the existence of the independent commune in Okół. The question of the New Town was firstly introduced by Józef Szujski, in whose opinion it was established sometime earlier, during the reign of Wenceslaus II; SZUJSKI, J.: *Kraków aż do początków XVgo wieku. Wstępne słowo do najstarszych ksiąg tego miasta*. In: *Najstarsze księgi* (see in note 23), pp. XIX–XX, XXV–XXVI. Among later works see especially GAWLAS 1994 (see in note 46); WYROZUMSKI 1992 (see in note 11), pp. 155 – 160. Recently the state of the research was summarized by OKNIŃSKI, P.: *Czym był krakowski Okół?* In: *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, Vol. 131, 2024, pp. 417 – 453. On the other hand, Marek Słoń argued that Ladislaus the Short in fact forcefully joined Okół to the chartered city, and so the name “Nova Civitas” should be rather understood as “a new (part of the) town”. SŁOŃ 2010 (see in note 47), pp. 295 – 303.

⁵¹ As Okniński has noted, no sources survive concerning Okół from the period between 1312 and 1317, and all property transactions recorded by the Cracow municipal bench up to 1325 pertain to estates in the old chartered city, purchased by individuals from the New Town. This led him to conclude that the New Town lost part of its autonomy in 1325, although it was not fully integrated into Cracow until about a decade later (OKNIŃSKI 2024 (see in note 50), pp. 434, 441). Another indication relates to Gierasz, a Cracow burgher who apparently did not take an active part in Albert's rebellion and later maintained close ties with Ladislaus the Short. Although Gierasz was a member of the Cracow municipal bench, he disappears from the sources between 1312 and 1319; according to Okniński, this suggests that during this period he may have held a prominent office in the New Town (ibidem, pp. 439 – 441).

⁵² WYROZUMSKI 1992 (see in note 11), pp. 185 – 186 and 212 – 218.

⁵³ NIEWALDA – KRASNOWOLSKI 1981 (see in note 46), pp. 80 – 82; NIEWALDA – ROJKOWSKA 2007 (see in note 46), pp. 28 – 29.

for St Giles' Church, located nearby, close to the Grodzka Gate.⁵⁴ In fact, St Andrew's must have been taken over by the duke at least as early as 1318, when it was already being used by the convent of Poor Clares, relocated from the town of Skala to Okól. The nuns moved to Cracow no later than 1316 (and possibly even a few years earlier), though it remains uncertain whether they initially settled by St. Andrew's.⁵⁵ Through this act, Ladislaus the Short aligned himself with a regional tradition of secular support for mendicant orders while also asserting dynastic continuity. The convent of Poor Clares he took under his protection had been founded in 1245 in Zawichost under the patronage of Boleslaus the Chaste, Duke of Cracow and Sandomierz (1243 – 1279), and his sister Salomea, both ardent supporters of the Franciscans. Moreover, Salomea joined the convent as a nun herself. In 1257, the community was moved to a remote site in the Prądnik Valley. By the early 14th century, however, the monastery had likely been sacked and partly ruined, and it was experiencing serious problems with water supply.⁵⁶ Ladislaus thus stepped in to protect and revive an important dynastic foundation established by his predecessor.

This was not his only such gesture. Even before Albert's revolt, Ladislaus had buried his two sons, who died prematurely in 1306 and 1312, at the Franciscan church in Cracow—thereby expanding the dynastic necropolis that already housed the tombs of Boleslaus the Chaste and Salomea.⁵⁷ Around 1320, he also appears to have founded a new church for the Poor Clares in the town of Stary Sącz, where the

convent had originally been established by Kinga, the wife of Boleslaus the Chaste, who likewise became a nun after her husband's death.⁵⁸ Yet none of these acts carried the same urban and spatial significance as the transformation of the setting around St. Andrew's Church in Cracow. That intervention created a dominant architectural feature in the vista from the Main Market Square along the city's principal axis, linking the urban center with the ducal castle.

The case of Gródek

In addition to emphasizing the visual prominence of St Andrew's Church tower, Ladislaus the Short appears to have undertaken a project of a rather opposite nature in the aftermath of the burghers' rebellion. As recorded in the *Annals of the Cracow Cathedral Chapter*, the duke confiscated the house of Mayor Albert.⁵⁹ This did not refer to the tower house on the Main Market Square, which Albert had sold in 1302, but rather to a newer residence located near the eastern edge of the city, close to the Butchers' Gate. This area had likely lain outside the territory defined in the original city charter and beyond the perimeter of the earliest ramparts; it was incorporated into the urban fabric only with the construction of the new line of stone walls around 1300.⁶⁰

Ladislaus demolished Albert's house and replaced it with a small castle, the so-called *Gródek*. While nothing is known of the appearance of Albert's residence, the castle must have been significantly larger, as it absorbed the easternmost section of Mikołajska Street—which had previously followed a

⁵⁴ *Kodeks Dyplomatyczny Małopolski*, 1, (see in note 43), no 165; SANDER, E. OSC: *Błogosławiona Salomea i klasztor Klarysek w Skale i Krakowie do końca XV wieku*. Kraków 2015, pp. 96 – 103.

⁵⁵ *Kodeks Dyplomatyczny Małopolski*, 1, (see in note 43), no. 153.

⁵⁶ PAJOR, P.: The Poverty and the Power: Duke Boleslaus the Chaste's Patronage of the Franciscans in 13th-century Lesser Poland. In: *Umění/Art*, Vol. 65, 2017, pp. 106 – 122.

⁵⁷ *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, 3. Lwów 1878, 174, p. 188; JASIŃSKI, K.: Franciszkańskie pochówki Piastów. In: *Franciszkanie w Polsce średniowiecznej 2 – 3: Franciszkanie na ziemiach polskich*. Ed.: KŁOCZOWSKI, J. – BORKOWSKA, U. Kraków 1989, p. 188.

⁵⁸ ADAMSKI, J. – PAJOR, P.: The Architecture of Poor Clares' Nunnery in Stary Sącz. Early Fourteenth-Century Artistic Relations between Lesser Poland and Upper Rhineland. In: *Royal Nunneries at the Center of Medieval Europe: Art, Architecture, Aesthetics (13th – 14th Centuries)*. Ed.: BENEŠOVSKÁ, K. – MICHALSKY, T. – RYWIKOVÁ, D. – SCIROCCO, E. Turnhout 2022, pp. 22 – 37.

⁵⁹ *Monumenta Poloniae Historica series nova 5: Najdawniejsze roczniki krakowskie i kalendarz*. Ed.: KOZŁOWSKA-BUDKOWA, Z. Warszawa 1978, p. 104; WYROZUMSKI 1992 (see in note 11), p. 199.

⁶⁰ NIEMIEC 2018 (see in note 41), p. 197.

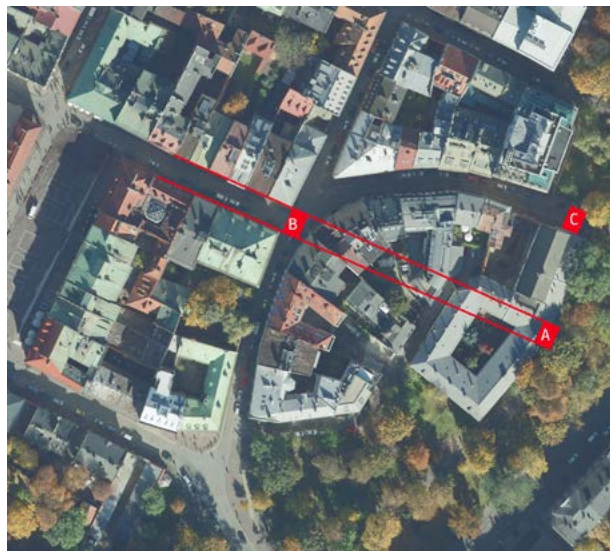


Fig. 14: Cracow, the Gródek area: A – location of the new Butchers' Gate (c. 1300–c. 1312); B – approximate location of the old Butchers' Gate (c. 1285–c. 1300); C – approximate location of the St. Nicholas' Gate. Photo: www.geoportal.gov.pl. Modification: Piotr Pajor.

straight course—as well as the Butchers' Gate at the street's terminus.⁶¹ (Fig. 14) According to the *Annals*, Ladislaus also erected a new gatehouse, which was no longer named after the butchers' guild but instead bore the name of St. Nicholas, after the church outside the walls dedicated to that saint.⁶²

The form of the castle is also unclear, as it existed only a few decades and its area was later divided into plots and now is occupied by several houses and the 17th century Dominican nuns' monastery. Its only preserved part is paradoxically a section of the city fortifications annexed by it—a former city wall with the simple barbican once adjacent to the aforementioned gatehouse visible within the complex of the monastery. (Fig. 15) Despite all doubts, Gródek effectively blocked the perspective of the original straight street and as if replaced the Butchers' Gate



Fig. 15: Cracow, the barbican of the new Butchers' Gate. Photo: Piotr Pajor.

in its vista; the new eastern section of the street is curved and encircling Gródek from the north; also the new Mikołajska (St. Nicholas') Gate was situated further north than the original gatehouse. As Piotr Okniński has pointed out, Ladislaus the Short, apart the obvious act of revenge on mayor Albert, could possibly have another motivation for remodeling the area in question. When his older step-brother, Leszek the Black, Duke of Cracow and Sandomierz (1279–1288), died without an issue, the rule over his domain was a subject of a succession war between several dukes of the Piast dynasty. Ladislaus briefly

⁶¹ Spatial relations between Mikołajska Street and the relics of the Butchers' Gate were recognized by ŚWISZCZOWSKI, S.: *Krakowski Gródek*. Kraków 1977, pp. 30–55.

⁶² “Eodemque anno castrum in civitate, destructa domo prefati advocati, construxit, et turrin in valva ducente ad sanctum Nicholaum edificavit;” see note 59. A similar account is found in the mid-15th-century chronicle by Jan Długosz, who added

that the primary purpose of the Gródek was to maintain control over the city in the event of another rebellion: “Ex domo autem advocati arcem erigit et in valva sancti Nicolai turrin extollit atque illic militum collocat presidium, vacillantem ceterorum Cracoviensium civium fidem arce ilia et presidio fidam sibi de cetero effecturusa.” Ioannis Długoszi *Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*. Liber 9. Warszawa 1978, p. 84.

gained control over Cracow, but was betrayed by the butchers, who let Duke Henry Probus of Wrocław into the city through the gate in their custody.⁶³ In fact, the gate involved was likely not the same building that was consumed by future Gródek, since the earthen ramparts existing at the time of the conflict lay slightly closer to the Market Square than the later stone walls. However, the new gate continued both the traditional name and the guild's custodianship of its predecessor. Thus the liquidation of the Butchers' Gate may be seen as a kind of architectural *damnatio memoriae*, regarding not only a strategic city entrance but also the memory of Ladislaus' former defeat.

Conclusion

The examples discussed above—concerning the treatment of towers in the urban space of Cracow during the late 13th and early 14th centuries—slightly predate the beginning of the city's long golden age. After 1320, Cracow became the undisputed capital of the Kingdom of Poland, finally restored by Ladislaus the Short. It emerged as a true residential city: the site of coronations and burials, the stage for major political events, and a central locus for the display of royal power.⁶⁴ Despite many reconstructions and extensions that followed, the core of the city during this period remained—and in many respects still remains—defined by structures built or at least planned earlier. The entire urban agglomeration was visually and politically dominated by the residence on Wawel Hill, which in its earliest form dated back to the early Middle Ages. Moreover, the city's two principal streets, leading from its most important northern gate toward Wawel, culminated in powerful visual axes, marked by the towers of St. Mary's and St. Andrew's churches.

Shaping the space of the medieval residential city was a crucial instrument of a ruler's propaganda—medieval, ancient, or early modern alike.⁶⁵ Indeed,

several of the measures undertaken by Ladislaus the Short following the rebellion led by Mayor Albert were aimed at manifesting his power. These actions also had a serious strategic program: the fortifications of Cracow were connected to those of Wawel, and, together with the Gródek fort—another military installation adjacent to the city walls—they made the city vulnerable to intervention by ducal forces.

Yet both the reconstruction of Okół, which involved the demolition of a section of the city walls, and the construction of Gródek carried strong symbolic weight. The vista down Grodzka Street was dominated by the towers of St. Andrew's Church—an ancient structure seized by the duke and granted to the Poor Clares. In this way, it became a renewed manifestation of his power and piety, while also, through the convent's historic associations, presenting him as the rightful heir of Boleslaus the Chaste—perhaps a key assertion for a duke who had nearly lost his throne.

At the same time, the (hypothetical but probable) ban on constructing tower houses curtailed the symbolic authority of individual burghers, whose tall residences could no longer dominate the cityscape. The principal victim of this policy was, without doubt, the dynasty of hereditary mayors: Albert's house—along with the gate entrusted to the treacherous butchers—was completely erased, and Henry's tower was ultimately taken over by a family from the Lesser Polish nobility, a group traditionally hostile to the urban elite.

It is difficult to determine to what extent the duke's actions reinforced the burghers' collective initiative to create a new civic architecture, including the city hall and its tower. In fact, the most refined—and arguably the earliest—urban composition emphasizing a tower, namely the visual framing of the north tower of St. Mary's Church along the vista of Floriańska Street, predates the reconstruction of Okół and was unquestionably the work of the bur-

⁶³ OKNIŃSKI 2023 (see in note 18), pp. 112–113; According to Jan Długosz, Ladislaus was rescued by the Franciscans, who pulled him down from the city wall adjacent to their friary – an episode that may further explain the duke's later patronage of the order. See Ioannis Dlugossi *Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*. Liber 7/8. Warszawa 1975, p. 258.

⁶⁴ See OPAČIĆ, Z.: Architecture and Ceremony in Cracow and Prague, 1335–1455. In: *Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology in Cracow and Lesser Poland*. Ed.: ROŻNOWSKA-SADRAEI, A. – WĘCŁAWOWICZ, T. London: 2014, pp. 95–117.

⁶⁵ For general issues see ROLLASON, D.: *The Power of Place: Rulers and Their Palaces, Landscapes, Cities and Holy Places*. Princeton 2016, pp. 169–240.

ghers. This spectacular message of civic autonomy and power, to recall once more the words of Beneš Krabice of Veitmile—visible to every duke, official, and noble visiting the city—was both the earliest and the most mature urban composition of its kind in Cracow, and contemporary with the great town-planning compositions of Italy in the same period.

In this way, the urban space of Cracow became a stage for symbolic contestation between the city and

its sovereign—a conflict not merely between rival political forces, but between two competing visions of society and its collective memory.

Acknowledgment: This paper originated as part of the research project no. 2023/51/D/HS2/00535 kindly financed by the Polish National Science Center (Narodowe Centrum Nauki).

O vežiach, moci a pamäti Ukončené výhľady v priestore stredovekého Krakova

Résumé

Štúdia skúma úlohu veží pri formovaní mestského priestoru a občianskej identity v neskorostredovekom Krakove, so zameraním na koniec 13. a začiatok 14. storočia – obdobie poznačené politickými nepokojmi, architektonickými inováciami a priestorovou reorganizáciou. Prináša argumenty, že veže, či už súkromné alebo verejné, cirkevné alebo svetské, fungovali nielen ako utilitárne alebo obranné stavby, ale aj ako silné symboly authority, rivality a komunálnych aspirácií. Sleduje počiatkové fázy výstavby veží na vrchu Wawel a v osadách pred udelením mestských práv, a nasledovný rozmach viacpodlažných patricijských vežových domov po udelení mestských práv podľa Magdeburského práva v roku 1257. Tieto budovy, ktorých príkladom je veža starostu na ulici Bracka, slúžili ako znaky postavenia a autonómie, ale v priebehu niekoľkých desaťročí zmizli, pravdepodobne ako politická reakcia na vzburu mešťanov v rokoch 1311 – 1312. Paralelne s týmto úpadkom vznikli monumentálne verejné veže, najmä severná veža Kostola sv. Márie.

Vďaka zámernému vizuálnemu zaradeniu do ulice Floriańska – hlavnej slávnostnej osi mesta – sa táto veža stala symbolom mestskej moci, porovnateľným s dobovými mestskými kompozíciami v Toskánsku, ale má aj niektoré neskoršie stredoeurópske paralely.

Štúdia tiež analyzuje rekonštrukciu štvrte Okół po vz bure a premenu ulice Grodzka tak, aby rámcovala dvojicu veží Kostola sv. Ondreja – čo bol akt prejavu urbanistickej integrácie aj kniežacej moci. Ďalej, zbúranie rezidencie starostu Alberta a výstavba pevnosti Gródek odhaľujú, ako mohla architektúra slúžiť politickej pomste a pretváraniu kolektívnej pamäte.

Štúdia kombináciou architektonickej analýzy, mestskej topografie a politickej histórie ukazuje, ako bolo neskorostredoveké mestské prostredie Krakova dejiskom súťaže priestorových stratégií: konsolidácia moci vládcu verzus prejav autonómie komúny. Tieto zásahy nielen zmenili fyzickú podobu mesta, ale aj sprostredkovali vzťahy medzi priestorom, autoritou a komunitou v stredovekom mestskom prostredí.

dr Piotr Pajor

Institute of History of Art and Culture
Pontifical University of John Paul II in Cracow
ul. Ślawkowska 32, 31-014 Kraków
piotr.pajor@upjp2.edu.pl