

TRADITION AND HERITAGE IN THE IMAGE OF KRAKÓW

Abstract

The paper briefly describes the historical development of Kraków (also Cracovia or Cracow), one of the old cities whose past most clearly determines its current development. Some of the city's characteristic processes, traditions, and features have been stressed, which has been shaping the current image of the city throughout its millennia-plus long history. Formerly an important burghers' emporium and influential centre of politics, economy, science, and diverse cultures – although degraded to the role of a provincial centre – Kraków manifested a remarkable vitality and creativity. It is now rebuilding its position, drawing from its tangible and intangible heritage, as well as local and cosmopolitan traditions.

Keywords: Kraków, historic development, evolution of townscape, civitas, metropolitan functions, urban heritage

1. The Origins

The first settlement on the Wawel Hill began in the Palaeolithic Age. In the early Middle Ages, the Hill constituted an area convenient for the construction of a motte-and-bailey. In the immediate vicinity of the Vistula River (Wisła) – the country's main water artery – a natural roads intersection was established and a main trade hub emerged, one that focused on long-distance routes which used to connect Greater Poland (Wielkopolska) and Masovia with Moravia, and Hungary, as well as Bohemia and Silesia with Ruthenia.

For several centuries, Kraków grew organically as an agglomeration of several urban settlements located at the foot of Wawel Hill. A plateau of Prądnik Cone, adjoining the Wawel on the north, and cutting into the swampy area of the Vistula River Valley, complied with the requirements of defensive settlements which progressively grew northwards, starting from the fortified towns of Wawel and Okół.

During the course of the 9th century, Kraków became an important *urbs* that consisted of diverse functions and designated sites of public ceremony and burial. The fortified town was the centre of a socio-political structure transcending the traditional tribal boundaries.¹ Kraków became a main proto-state centre for the Western part of Lesser Poland (Małopolska).²

In the 10th century, the Piasts' dynasty, the Greater Poland rulers, incorporated the Kraków province into their principality. Around 990, Kraków became one of the centres of church organisation. A bishopric, confirmed in 1000, stimulated construction activities on a larger scale,³ and in 1038,

the city achieved the position of the main centre of the Piast's royal authority; Wawel Castle became the residence of Polish kings.⁴ At the beginning of the 13th century, nearly 30 churches overlooked the Kraków agglomeration, almost all of them connected to some kind of settlement, which denoted that Kraków had become the leading centre of urbanisation in Central Europe, comparable only to Prague.

The economic centre of the city moved northwards, outside the walls of Okół, at first to the market square (the present Dominican Sq.) at the front of the then parish church of Holy Trinity.

2. Implementation of Magdeburg Rights

Since the 13th century, Magdeburg's system of privileges became the inspiration for many town charters and served as a model for law adopted by numerous cities in Germany, Bohemia, and Poland. Through founding new towns and villages, feudal rulers of Central Europe encouraged migrations to their under-populated lands. Most settlers came from Saxony. In the 1220s, Leszek the White, Prince of Kraków and Sandomierz, granted to 'Roman and German' (*Romani et Teutonici*) settlers the privilege to govern themselves and impose taxation according to their own law. Soon afterwards the same law started to be applied to Polish settlers as well.⁵

In Kraków, the first borough founded on the Magdeburg Rights, ca. 1220, presumably would have had a striated-street outline, with its axis corresponding to the present course of Stolarska Street, the Small Market Square, and Szpitalna Street.⁶ Several landmarks appeared at that time in this area: the new parish church of St. Mary (1222), the Dominican complex with the rebuilt church of the Holy

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¹ K. Radwański, *Cracow's Giant Mounds: An Attempt at Clarifying their Chronology*, [in:] *Rocznik Krakowski*, t. LXIX, TMHiZK, Kraków 2003, pp. 5-23.

² K. Radwański, *Pre-Christian Kraków* [in:] J. Wyrozumski (Ed.), *Kraków: nowe studia nad rozwojem miasta*, Biblioteka Krakowska Nr 150, TMHiZK, Kraków 2007, pp. 89-119

³ M. Graczyńska, *Kraków na tle głównych ośrodków władzy Europy Środkowej w X–XI wieku*, [w:] M. Bochenek (Ed.), *Kraków romański: Materiały sesji naukowej 13.04.2013*, Seria Kraków w dziejach narodu, Kraków: TMHiZK, 2014, pp. 27-43.

⁴ J. Firlet, Z. Pianowski, *The Wawel up until 1300*, [in:] J. Wyrozumski (Ed.), *Kraków: nowe studia...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-66.

⁵ J. Wyrozumski, *Foundation or Foundations of Kraków under German Law?*, [in:] J. Wyrozumski (Ed.), *Kraków: nowe studia...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-151.

⁶ B. Krasnowolski, *The Foundations and Development of Kraków, Kazimierz, and Okół: Issues related to the Realisation of Urban Projects*, [in:] J. Wyrozumski (Ed.), *Kraków: nowe studia...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 355-426.

Trinity (1222), the Franciscan priory (1237), and the Holy Spirit hospital complex (1244).⁷

However, the present Old City area is shaped by an even more ambitious master plan which was a manifestation of the Great Foundation Charter of Kraków; it was granted by Duke Boleslaw the Chaste in 1257 to revive the city after the devastating Mongol invasion of 1241.⁸



Fig. 1. The Great Charter of Kraków (1257). Photo by I. Krieger. Source: *Rocznik Krakowski*, t. 6, TMHiZK, Kraków 1904, p. 7

The new borough was pasted together with the previous one, but covered a much larger area and was based on a network of perfectly orthogonal streets. The general composition presented itself as a square ca. 600 × 600 m, divided into nine smaller squares, ca. 200 × 200 m each, the central one being the Main Market Square and each of the outer ones being divided by intersecting streets into four urban blocks. Each block consisted of eight plots of 21 × 42 m each.⁹ There were some irregularities: several existing churches had to be included in the plan, while the ‘funnel’ of Grodzka St. at the southern corner of the Main Market Square may be treated either as an original form or an early deformation.¹⁰ The Square (the largest one in medieval Europe), featured imposing city hall and buildings devoted to trade and retail.¹¹

⁷ B. Krasnowolski, *Historyczne przemiany krajobrazu Krakowa* [in:] Małecki J.M. (Ed.), *Krajobraz Krakowa wobec zagrożeń*, Materiały Sesji Naukowej TMHiZK, 22.04.2007, Seria “Kraków w dziejach narodu” nr 26, TMHiZK, Kraków 2007, pp. 7-46.

⁸ The Great Foundation of Kraków under Magdeburg Law was issued at a public meeting in Kopernia. Cf. K. Radwański, *op. cit.*

⁹ 36 × 72 Kraków ells (1 Kraków ell = 0.586 m).

¹⁰ B. Krasnowolski, *The Foundations... op. cit.*

¹¹ In respects of scale and composition, Kraków Old Town is regarded as a leading realisation of an ideal medieval city pattern. The entire medieval Old Town is among the first sites chosen for the UNESCO’s original World Heritage List in 1978. Cf. UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, Second Session, Washington, D.C. (USA) 5 to 8 September 1978, Final Report (CC-78/CONF.010/COL.1).

The Great Charter provided not only a framework for spatial development, but also the new foundation for legal and economic organisation. The city acquired self-government, its own law court, and exemption from most feudal dues. The Bench and the Council soon achieved primacy among the city’s governmental institutions.

The Charter also contained the Duke’s decision to grant the city a wide area of land, to contribute to its economic background in the functioning of its farms, pastures, forest and meadows (e.g. the Błonia common preserved until today) and also in enterprises, such as mills, brickyards, inns, etc. Some of the farms changed in time into semi-independent suburbs and even an independent town of Kleparz (chartered in 1366). During the 14th and the first decades of the 15th century, city authorities tended to acquire new areas for economic development, especially land rich in building materials – as well as ground with rights to establish river ports and fish ponds – and with enough fast running water to erect millraces to propel mills, sawmills, fulleries, tanneries, and metalworkers’ wheels.¹²

The next privileges, granted by Duke Leszek the Black (1285), gave grounds for construction of a defensive system which marked the limits of the city proper for the next several centuries. The first defensive line consisted of a rampart and a moat and was soon displaced northwards. To feed the moat and Kraków waterworks, a new banked-up channel of Młynówka Królewska (King’s Leat) was constructed, starting from Rudawa River in Mydlniki, across the villages on the northern side of the city.¹³ The first brick-and-stone fortifications (ca. 1298) consisted of a wall and four gates, as well as several defensive towers in strategic places. The number of city towers grew in time to reach 47, including seven gate towers. Between 1390 and 1405, a second line of walls was built and a double-moat was dug. The outer moat, 6-10 m wide and 3,5 m deep, was a permanent course of a leat.

3. The Kraków Metropolis

The status of Kraków as a capital of the Kingdom was confirmed in 1320 by the coronation of Władysław the Elbow-High at Wawel Cathedral.

In 1358, King Kazimierz III the Great confirmed and expanded Kraków’s rights and privileges. The privileges fostered a further influx of Germans and other foreigners.¹⁴ In the 14th century, Kraków’s *intra-muros* was inhabited by ca. 5,000 Poles, 3,500 Germans and 800 Jews. They got on relatively well and were a fine example of multicultural co-existence.¹⁵ The dynamic development of craft and trade

¹² J. Laberschek, *Spatial Development of the Kraków Settlement Complex Extra Muros from 13th to 18th Century*, [in:] J. Wyrozumski (Ed.), *Kraków: nowe studia... op. cit.*, pp. 297-354.

¹³ B. Krasnowolski, *Młynówka Królewska – geneza i przekształcenia*, [in:] *Rocznik Krakowski* nr 69/2003, pp. 25-33;

¹⁴ J. Wyrozumski, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ Z. Noga, *Poles, Germans and Italians in Early Modern Cracow*, [in:] *Rocznik Krakowski*, t. LXXX, TMHiZK, Kraków 2014, pp. 6-12.

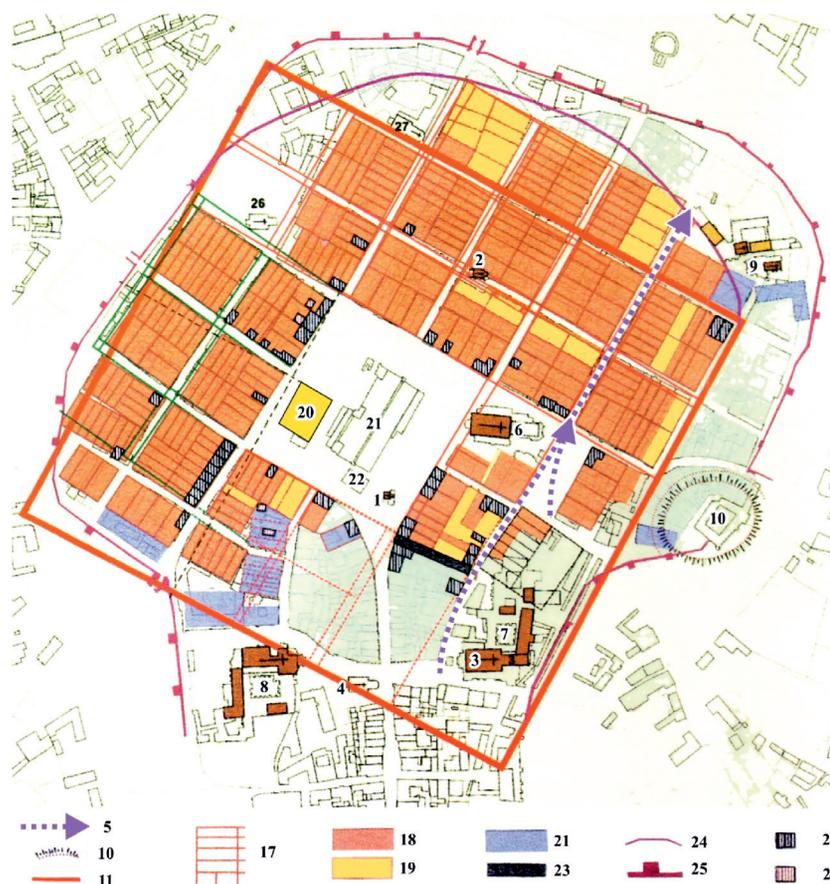


Fig. 2. Establishment of the Medieval layout of Kraków, according to B. Krasnowolski [27]. Scheme drawn by T. Szpytma

Features existing before 1257:

- 1) St Wojciech's Church,
- 2) St Jan's Church,
- 3) Holy Trinity Church,
- 4) All Saints' Church,
- 5) Supposed axis of the striated-street outline of the borough established ca. 1220,
- 6) St Mary's Church,
- 7) Dominican's Priory,
- 8) Franciscan's Priory,
- 9) Holy Spirit Hospital complex,
- 10) Vogt's mansion;

Elements of the Great Foundation (1257):

- 11) Idealised border of the layout,
- 17) Modular division of plots, (36×72 ells or 18×72 ells),
- 18) and 21) Regular plots,
- 19) Irregular plots,
- 20) City Hall,
- 21) Stalls / Cloth Hall,
- 22) Great Scales,
- 23) 'Lost' street,
- 24) Line of Kraków rampart found 1285,
- 25) Line of Kraków defensive system built 1298–1312,
- 28–29) The oldest houses.

in the 14th century enabled the city to actively participate in international exchange. Capitalising on its royal privileges, Kraków established direct trading relations with the Baltic ports and Flemish towns. It was rapidly becoming one of the largest trading emporia in late medieval Europe. Its importance as a trader in metals especially grew. This led to a closer relationship with the Hanseatic League, the most powerful trade organisation in the medieval world.

The city developed a specialisation in transit trade, supplying Northern Europe with the copper mined in Spis, exporting Baltic herring to the South, and trading in English, Flemish, and Dutch cloth.¹⁶ In the middle of the 14th century, the new Rich Stalls were built at the Main Market Square and the wooden Cloth Hall was replaced by a brick

¹⁶ J. Purchla, *Cracow in the European Core*, Bosz, Olszanica 2008.

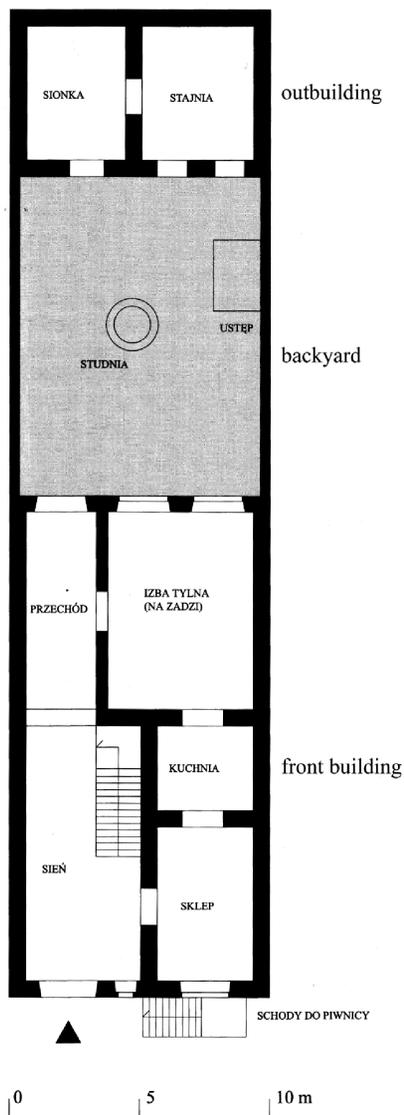


Fig. 3. Plan of a typical Kraków townhouse's ground floor, based on: W. Komorowski [23]

and stone, a hundred-meter-long, monumental Sukiennice, one of the city's principal symbols. At the turn of the century, the previously wooden buildings of the Great and Small Scales were rebuilt in masonry and extended at the Square, likewise a notary's house and other buildings devoted to trade and representing various branches of municipal institutions.¹⁷

The Hanseatic episode in Kraków's history was an effective way of avoiding autarchy and short-sighted leaning on Wawel's strong political position. Large-scale trading with Northern Europe, through Toruń (Thorn), and Gdańsk (Danzig), enabled Kraków, as never later, to utilise the Vistula as a natural freight route.¹⁸

Apart from the great north-south transit traffic in copper and cloth, transcontinental trade with the Levant, as

¹⁷ W. Komorowski, *The Urban and Architectural Development of Kraków Intra Muros in the Middle Ages*, [in:] J. Wyrozumski (Ed.), *Kraków: nowe studia... op. cit.*, pp. 153-188.

¹⁸ J. Purchla, *op. cit.*

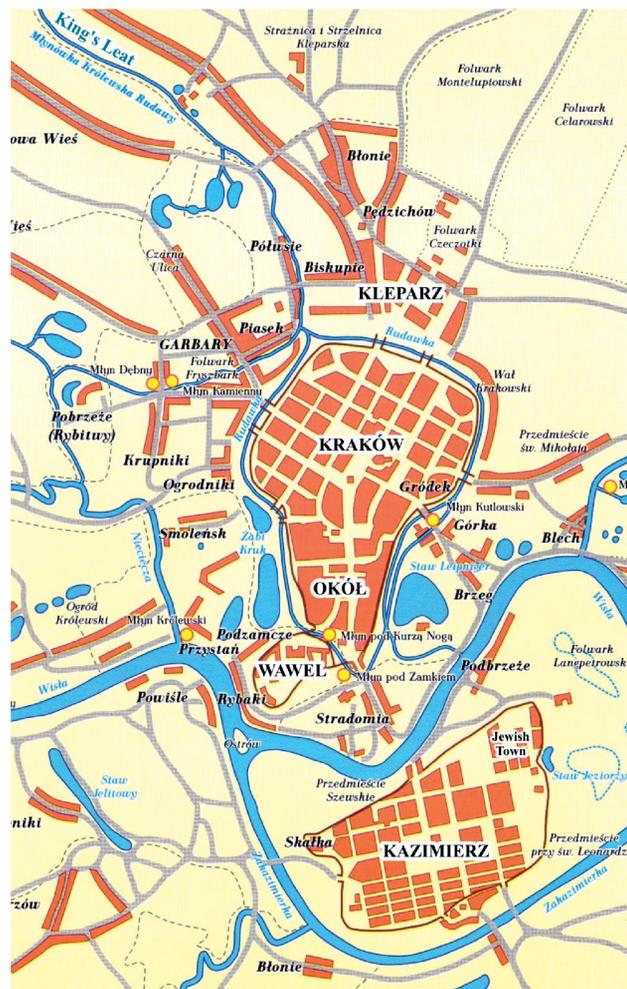


Fig. 4. Waterway network of the Kraków agglomeration in the 16th century, according to J. Laberschek [28]

well as from Nuremberg, Prague, and Wrocław (Breslau), to Lwów (Lviv), Kiev, and further east, was becoming a more and more important part of Kraków's economy. Spices, silk, cattle, leather and wax were imported from the Black Sea region to which the merchants of Kraków had direct access. Kraków exported salt¹⁹ and lead, textile manufactures, and 'Nuremberg goods'.

During the reign of Kazimierz (1333–1370), the characteristic urban tissue of Kraków definitely crystallised. Terraced houses were fitted into the consolidated grid layout. The type of Kraków townhouse which was established in the 14th century is a specific, local phenomenon of social, cultural, and architectonic nature. This type can be found only in the area of medieval Kraków and some enclaves of Kazimierz. It evolved on the basis of the original location plan (1257) where blocks were divided into large curial plots (42 × 21 m), subsequently divided in two construction plots, with the unusually big, stone-and-brick front houses, at least three-story high, about 10 m wide and at least as deep.

¹⁹ From the Royal Salt Mines of Wieliczka and Bochnia, UNESCO World Heritage Sites since 1978.

In 1367, the so far customary standards were codified in a code regulating border walls. The code contributed to the development of a local type of a frontage townhouse with outbuildings, and a backyard between them, with galleries running round the upper floors. The standard tenement was 10m wide and 42 m deep. The main building occupied half the plot. This model, established in the 14th century, used to be carried out for several centuries, regardless of a proprietor's social status. The differences were expressed in decoration, furnishings, and functional features. Many of the Main Square properties by the end of the 14th century had been converted into palaces, but in their overall structure they hardly differed from the neighbouring houses.²⁰

In the 14th century, the greatest works of the full Gothic ecclesiastical architecture were created, such as the redeveloped basilicas of the Holy Trinity and St. Mary's.

In 1364, the king founded the University of Krakow, completing the establishment of a multi-functional municipal model, one gripping on political, religious, economic, cultural, and scholarly affairs.²¹

In the same year, a congress of monarchs was held in Krakow, attended by Emperor Charles IV, Louis of Anjou, King of Hungary, Valdemar IV, King of Denmark, and Peter, King of Cyprus, convened for negotiations to set up a collective defence system to counteract the Ottoman threat. One of the wealthy burghers, Mikolaj Wierzynek, gave a banquet in his house at the Main Market Square in honour of the monarchs. The event symbolised the growing status of Krakow's townsfolk.

The incredible growth of brick-and-stone housing was a sign of the affluence and stabilisation of the burgher class. In the late Middle Ages, the city dwellings of wealthy burgers, possessing their houses near the Market Square, equalled the country estates of the magnates, competing with them in the realisation of the early humanist ideals of harmony and ornamentation.²²

4. The Kraków Agglomeration

By the late 14th century, the city and its satellites constituted the largest production centre in Central Europe. Numerous brickworks, lime quarries, copper foundries, and the region's earliest paper mills functioned in Kraków's environs. One of the city's specialities was tanning and the production of leather goods. Kraków's craftsmanship was organised in well over 30 municipal guilds.²³

Four rivers played an important part in Kraków's economic life:

- Vistula, the main transport artery, which also enabled the functioning of fishing villages and harbours;

- Rudawa, whose branches (such as King's Leat) irrigated fishponds and gardens, and propelled numerous mills and other industrial machinery while also supplying Kraków's and Wawel's waterworks and moat;²⁴

- Prądnik and Wilga, which served mainly as sources of energy.²⁵

Within its defensive walls, the city was already so densely urbanised that the monarch founded two new, independent cities adjacent to it. The first, established in 1335, took its founder's name: Kazimierz.

The Royal City of Kazimierz

Kazimierz (chartered in 1335) obtained and absorbed several settlements on the right bank of the Vistula. It was given a regular chessboard layout, consisting of a large Central Market Square (188 × 141 m)²⁶ and a subsidiary Cattle Market (called Dog's Market), both surrounded by a regular grid of streets and blocks. Already in the 14th century, the burgher houses around the Central Square of Kazimierz adopted forms similar to Krakow's Market Square's frontages with characteristic stoops.²⁷

Two main Gothic basilicas were included in that layout: the Corpus Christi and the SS. Catherine and Margaret's. After the incorporation of the village of Bawół, the whole area was surrounded with fortifications,



Fig. 5. Reconstruction of the ideal scheme of Kazimierz (1335), according to B. Krasnowolski [27]

²⁰ Komorowski W., *Townhouses and Palaces in the Cracow Market Place in the Middle Ages*, [in:] Rocznik Krakowski, t. LXVIII, TM-HiZK, Kraków 2002, pp. 53-74.

²¹ J. Purchla, *op. cit.*

²² W. Komorowski, *op. cit.*

²³ J. Purchla, *op. cit.*

²⁴ Over 40 major enterprises obtained a permit to use King's Leat water. In 1995 the 8,5 km linear park was created to partly reconstruct the course of the King's Leat (Mynówka Królewska). Cf. A. Hebda-Małocha, M. Małocha, *The Economic Role of Mynówka Królewska in Kraków and Its Influence on the Spatial Planning of the City*, [in:] Czasopismo Techniczne z. 2-Ś/2007, pp. 123-134.

²⁵ J. Laberschek, *Spatial Development...*, *op. cit.*

²⁶ 4 × 3 cords (1 cord = 10 perches = 150 feet; 1 foot = 0.314 m).

²⁷ B. Krasnowolski, *Historyczne przemiany...*, *op. cit.*

together with the older settlements at Skałka and St. Jacob's church, which undergone urban regulations before. The left-bank Kazimierz' suburb of Stradom (also called the Royal Bridge) developed soon on the route leading out of Kraków.

In 1495, King Jan I Olbracht transferred Kraków Jews from their quarter – which was destroyed by fire – to the royal city of Kazimierz, which gave rise to its bustling Jewish quarter and a major European centre of the Diaspora for the next centuries. The first Jewish quarter, within the limits of the Gentile town of Kazimierz, concentrated in the area of Szeroka St. and later expanded westward as far as Jacob's St. and south to St. Wawrzyniec's church and Nowy Sq.²⁸ With time it turned into an architecturally distinct, virtually separate and self-governed 34-acre Jewish Town (*Oppidum Iudaeorum*), a model of every Central and Eastern European *shtetl*.

The town of Florentia Minor alias Kleparz

The first foundation of *Alta Civitas* (High Town) *Florentia* (ca. 1321) by Władysław the Elbow-High, followed by the second chartering in 1366 by Kazimierz the Great, gave it the grid patterned layout with a vast Market Square (the present Matejki and Kleparski Squares) surrounded by single-row plots. It overlapped the proto-town settlement already existing around St. Florian's Collegiate Church (built 1184-85) in the form of a so-called Ovate, an extended street-square, built on a longitudinal axis ribbon development.²⁹



Fig. 6. Reconstruction of the plan of Alta Civitas Florentia, by B. Krasnowolski [27]

²⁸ B. Krasnowolski, *The Foundations... op. cit.*

²⁹ Z. Beiersdorf, *Kleparz*, [in:] Wyrozumski J. (Ed.), *Kraków: nowe studia... op. cit.*, pp. 427-454.

In spite of the charter and the autonomous layout, a town the size of just half of a Flemish *lan*,³⁰ squeezed between Kraków and its landed property, showed a strong connection to the city. The main function of Florentia, later known as Kleparz (Lat. Clepardia), was to attend to the needs of Kraków's trade and visitor accommodations. It also used to be a centre for food trade and textile craft, but primarily of taverns, inns, smithies, and stables for thousands of horses.

As in most Polish medieval chartered towns, a block of buildings arose in the middle of the square, consisting of a town hall, butchers' and cobblers' booths, bakers' stalls, and a well. Apart from St. Florian's, there were two more churches in the very town, and a few suburban churches connected to the town's Common, a hospital, and a hospice for lepers.

In spite of pushing out the southern frontage of Kleparz, as a consequence of incorporating into Kraków the area occupied by the second line of fortifications and construction of a Barbican, the vast Kleparz Market preserved for centuries its basic form and function as a great fair for horses, cattle, and agricultural products.

Okół

Historically the first Kraków town-like settlement outside Wawel, Okół had developed before the 9th century, but lost its prominent position in about 1220 when the chartered market borough was established at its northern gate. Destroyed during the Mongol invasion in 1241, it lost most



Fig. 7. St Andrew's Church (built 1079–1098). The baroque helmets date from the 17th century. Photo by Cancre

³⁰ The size of ½ *lan* is small in comparison with the areas of Kraków of the Great Charter (2 *lan*) and Kazimierz (1,5 *lan*). *Ibidem*.

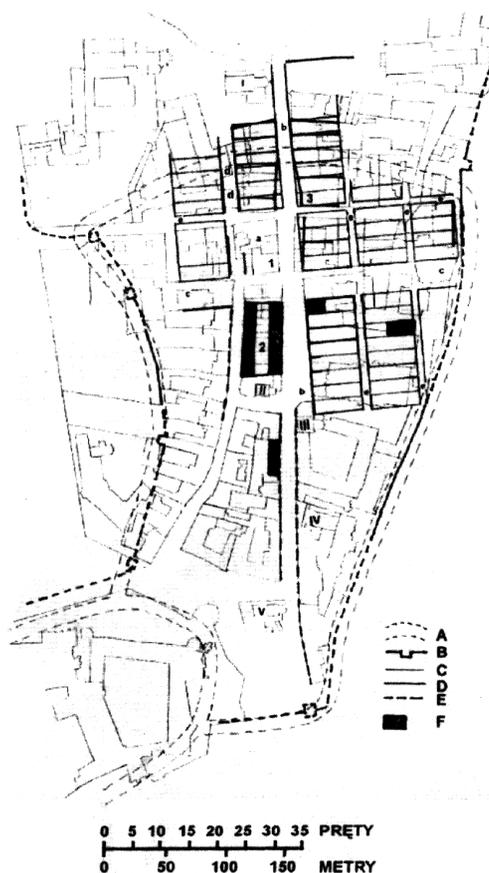


Fig. 8. Reconstruction of the plan of Nova Civitas Okół, by B. Krasnowolski [27]

of its building substance except the fortress-church of St. Andrew that served as a haven for the Okół inhabitants.

In 1335, King Kazimierz issued a foundation charter for *Nova Civitas in Okół*. The never regular, cross-shaped layout made Grodzka St. the main axis, 2.5 perches (almost 12 m) wide. The transversal street was twice as wide, with a quadrangle market square at the crossing, and a market hall in the middle of the square. Nova Civitas did not survive long as a separate market borough and was soon incorporated into Kraków. The remnants of brick-and-stone stalls are visible today in the *Collegium Iuridicum* buildings, since after 1400 the market complex was bought out by the Kraków Academy and incorporated into the expanding university structures.³¹

After 1400, the revived university built new halls and *collegia*, and the most outstanding ones, which surrounded the courtyards of *Collegium Maius* and *Collegium Iuridicum*, combined late Gothic forms with functions and programmes modelled after humanistic architecture of Italian *trecento* and *quattrocento*.³²

Extra-mural settlements

By the end of Kazimierz's reign, at the foot of his Gothic residence on Wawel, the triple city with an ethnically mixed population of twenty thousand Poles, Germans,

³¹ B. Krasnowolski, *op. cit.*

³² B. Krasnowolski, *Historyczne przemiany..., op. cit.*

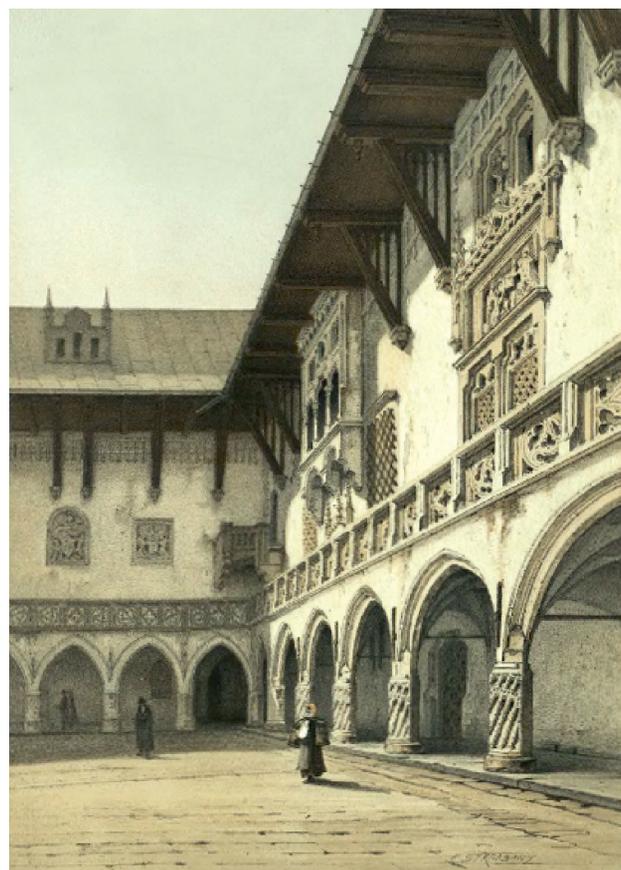


Fig. 9. Collegium Maius Courtyard. Lithograph by F. Stroobant, 1862

Jews, Hungarians, Czechs, Italians, and Ruthenians was still growing.

King Kazimierz's Great Privilege (1358) mentions significant smaller settlements, which played an important role in the economy of medieval Kraków. One of them was industrial Piasek, also known as the "suburb beyond the Cobbler's Gate (Lat. *suburbium ante Portam Sutorum*)" and later called Garbary (Tanneries). It was the place where the King's Leat fed city waterworks and local public baths, as well as powered gristmills, a grindery, and an oak bark mill. In 1401, the Papal Bull confirmed the foundation of the Carmelite monastery at Piasek, with a church that became a landmark of the suburb's main street. The church was extraordinarily popular among the residents of the whole Kraków urban cluster during the 15th century.³³

The Kraków of 1400 was just a midsize European city, but it had uncommon international relationships, a flourishing university, and a commercial centre. In the 15th century, the most prosperous time in the city's history began. The pressurized water supply system – a symbol of civilisational achievements – embraced almost the whole of Kraków.³⁴

³³ J. Wyrozumski, *The Foundation of the Carmelite Monastery at Piasek*, [in:] *Rocznik Krakowski*, t. LXXVII, TMHiZK, Kraków 2011, pp. 9-14.

³⁴ W. Komorowski, *op. cit.*

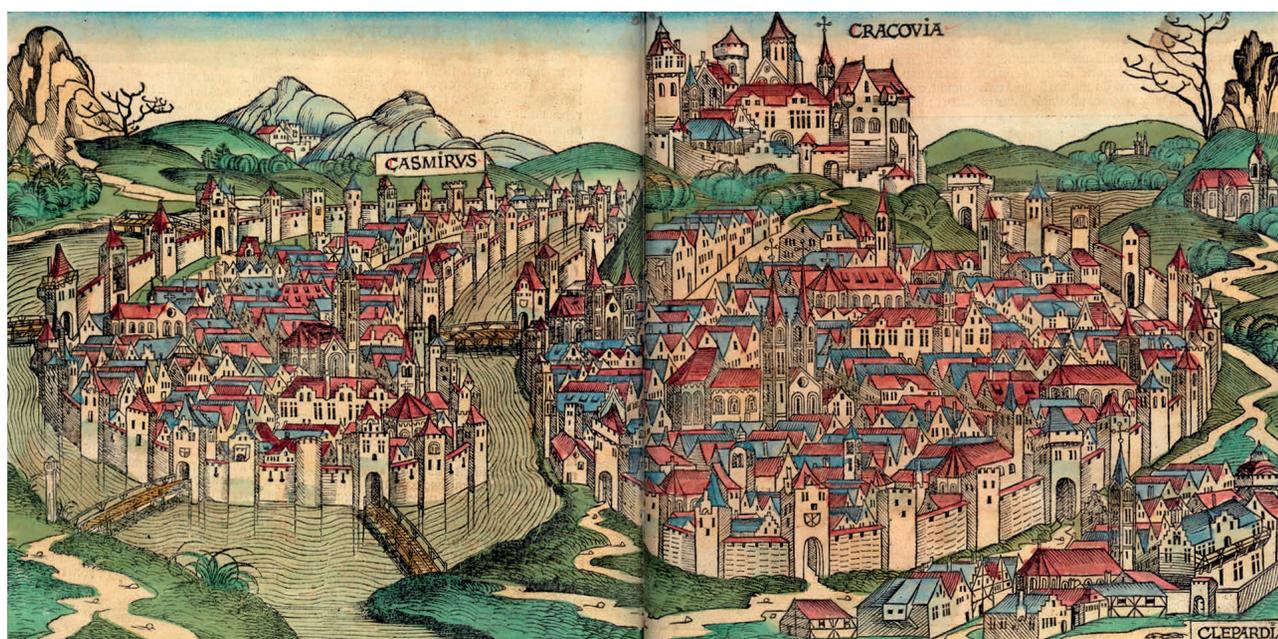


Fig. 10. Woodcut of the triple city of Kazimierz: (Casmirus), Kraków (Cracovia), and Kleparz (Clepardia), view from the north.
From: H. Schedel's *World Chronicle*, Nuremberg 1493

The area of the three cities (Kraków, Kazimierz, and Kleparz) had obtained its final form by the beginning of the 16th century when the process of inclusion of new areas stopped and the borders of the metropolitan complex became permanent.³⁵

5. Golden Age

The city's most flourishing era occurred at the end of the 15th century when it was the thriving metropolis of a vast and prosperous kingdom. At the summit of the Jagiellons' power, the dynastic policy resulted in the Jagiellons ruling over nearly the whole of Central and East Europe, from the Baltic and the Dvina in the north, to the upper Elbe, the Adriatic, and the Black Sea in the south. Their successes laid the foundations for the "Jagiellonian idea", a concept of a multi-ethnic, federal union of states and nations.

Both the court and university played key roles in the establishment of Humanism. Intellectual activity was connected to early printing in Krakow, the first traces of which go back to 1473. By the end of the century, it became one of the major centres of printing in Europe, not only producing the first printed works in Polish, but also in Hungarian, Hebrew, Ruthenian, and Wallachian, including the first prints in Cyrillic script around 1490.

The university had entered its first peak of academic excellence. Every year, over 200 new students enrolled. The record-breaking was the first decade of the 16th century with 3,215 graduating students. Aside from Poles, the university was also attended by Hungarians, Ruthenians, Lithuanians, Germans, Czechs, the Swiss, the English, the Dutch, the French, the Spanish, Italians, and Tatars. Among

the professors of this age there were two eminent jurists: Stanisław of Skarbimierz and Paulus Vladimiri (Paweł Włodkowic). The later contributed greatly to the field of political and legal theory and the construction of medieval international law. One of his remarkable natural law affirmations was the moral equality of pagan and Christian states.³⁶ The studies of Nicolaus Copernicus, who enrolled as a student in 1491, became emblematic of the University's pursuit of the natural sciences, especially mathematics and astronomy. Bernard Wapowski was a pioneer of cartography. Maciej Miechowita published the first accurate treatise on the geography and ethnography of Eastern Europe.³⁷ Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski (Modrevius) – one of the greatest theorists of political thought in Renaissance Europe, a passionate proponent of the peaceful resolution of international conflicts – in his most famous work, *On the Improvement of the Commonwealth*,³⁸ postulated equality of all before the law, division between state and church, and demanded the reform and secularisation of education. Another political thinker, popular and influential in the West, was Wawrzyniec G. Goślicki (Grimalius), a staunch advocate of religious tolerance and law which is above the ruler. His study entitled, *De optimo senatore* (*The Counselor* in the 1598 English translation), was influential abroad, exporting the ideas of Poland's Golden Freedom and democratic system, proving immensely important in Britain, among forces opposed to the Tudor monarchy, and later,

³⁶ S.F. Belch, *Paulus Vladimiri and His Doctrine concerning International Law and Politics*, Mouton & Co., The Hague 1965.

³⁷ M. Miechowita, *Tractatus de duabus Sarmatiis Asiatica et Europiana et de contentis in eis*, Jan Haller, Kraków 1517.

³⁸ A.F. Modrzewski, *Commentariorum De Republica emendanda libri quinque*, Łazarz Andrysowic, Kraków 1551, Johannes Oporinus, Basel 1554.

³⁵ J. Laberschek, *Spatial Development...*, *op. cit.*

during the period leading up to the British Civil Wars of the 1640s.³⁹

Under the Jagiellons, Poland's political system was transformed from an estate-based monarchy to the Nobles' Democracy (1505–1795). The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – styled “Serenissima Respublica” – possessed features unique among contemporary states, such as strict checks upon monarchical power. These checks were enacted by a legislature (*Sejm*) controlled by the nobility (*szlachta*) which made up 8–12% of the Commonwealth population.⁴⁰ This idiosyncratic system was a precursor to modern concepts of democracy, constitutional monarchy, federation of autonomic regions, and even pacifism. The *Sejm*'s usual veto of wars has been described as an example of democratic peace theory. The political system of the Commonwealth was praised by philosophers such as Erasmus, and, during the Counter-Reformation, was known for near-unparalleled religious tolerance, with peacefully coexisting Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, Eastern Orthodox and Muslim communities.⁴¹

Kraków City Council made various ethnic, denominational and trade groups search for compromise and, as a result of discussions, the feeling of community was shaped, and a specific local patriotism grew in the city, which used to be called *res publica* (common matter). When the Council became alienated from the city's society, the so-called *quadragintavirat*, a representation of commoners, was formed in 1548 to halt an oligarchisation of the municipality.⁴²

³⁹ Grimalius (W.G. Gościński), *De optimo senatore*, Venice, 1568. The book was also widely quoted and cited in pamphlets and leaflets during the period leading up to the British Civil Wars of the 1640s. It subsequently appeared in four English translations: as *The Counsellor* in 1598, *A commonwealth of good counsaile* in 1607, *The Accomplished Senator... Done into English... By Mr. Oldisworth* in 1733, and most recently as *The Accomplished Senator* in K. Thompson's translation in 1992. In 1587, Gościński acceded to the Warsaw Confederation.

⁴⁰ All the sizeable noble class (*szlachta*) were equal in rights and privileges, and the Parliament could veto the king – *Primus inter Pares* (First among Equals) – on important matters, including legislation, foreign affairs, declaration of war, and taxation. The population who enjoyed those political rights was a substantially larger percentage than in most progressive European countries even in the 19th century.

⁴¹ The principles of religious toleration were confirmed by the *Confederation of Warsaw* (1573), which proclaimed freedom of religion, guaranteed peace between followers of different religions and equality of rights to dissidents, and forbade religious persecution by secular authorities. The country became what Cardinal Hozjusz called “a place of shelter for heretics”, where the most radical religious sects, trying to escape persecution in other countries of the Christian world, sought refuge. Official toleration included the Jews, who in the sixteenth century flowed into Poland in great numbers (mainly expelled from Germany, Bohemia and Moravia) and set up large communities in many towns. The Confederation governed the principles of religious life in the Republic for over two hundred years. Cf. UNESCO, Memory of the World, *The Confederation of Warsaw of 28th of January 1573: Religious tolerance guaranteed*, Registered Heritage, <http://www.unesco.org>.

⁴² Z. Noga, *Role of Local Government in the Development of the City Between 13th and 18th Century*, [in:] J. Wyrozumski (Ed.), *Kraków:*

In the 16th century, Kazimierz became the centre of Talmudic scholarship, and its school attracted students from the whole of Europe. It educated rabbis for the Jewish communities in the entire Jagiellonian state, and its professors included some of the chief Jewish intellectuals. The most renowned, Moses Isserles Remuh (ca. 1525–1572), codified the Ashkenazic religious laws. As refugees from all over Europe kept coming to find a safe haven in the Kazimierz Quarter, its population reached 4,500 by 1630.

Kraków Renaissance architecture

Buildings fully embracing the Renaissance appeared with the activity of Francesco Fiorentino (in Kraków from ca. 1502), Bartolommeo Berecci (in Kraków from 1516)⁴³ and Benedykt of Sandomierz, who together rebuilt the Wawel Royal Castle after it burnt down in 1499. The most important work of Berrecci is the Sigismund Chapel at the Wawel Cathedral (1517–1533), considered to be the most beautiful piece of Italian Renaissance architecture outside of Italy. The stylistic changes which started at the Wawel quickly resonated in the city. From the middle of 1540s, Renaissance became a common style in Kraków. The architecture of grand palaces referred to the forms found in the residential buildings of the castle. Most of the old townhouses were modernised with the use of Renaissance forms, but the patrician and nobility dwellings soon started to outnumber and dominate the burgher abodes.

No Catholic churches were built in the 16th century. The medieval ones, as well as cloisters and friaries, preserved their Romanesque or Gothic shape, even if rebuilt after a fire or destruction, whereas almost all the municipal buildings, except the Town Hall, were transformed in some way, and some were built anew.⁴⁴ The Cloth Hall, rebuilt after a fire, gained an innovative *attica* – a characteristic, ornamented parapet, which contributed to the development of a form of so-called ‘Polish parapet’, commonly used in the country during Renaissance.⁴⁵

A significant number of residential buildings situated at the Main Market Square were added a storey, but the medieval model was generally kept: a townhouse

nowe studia... op. cit., pp. 455-492; N. Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland*, Vol. 1, The Origins to 1795; Columbia University Press, New York 2005.

⁴³ Many Italian artists and other prominent personalities immigrated to Poland since the late 15th century, including Francesco Fiorentino, Bartolommeo Berecci, Santi Gucci, Mateo Gucci, Bernardo Morando, Giovanni Battista di Quadro, as well as other thinkers and educators, such as Filippo Buonaccorsi (Callimachus), and merchants such as the Boner and Montelupi families. Many of them settled in Kraków.

⁴⁴ W. Komorowski, K. Follprecht, *The Urban and Architectural Development of Kraków Intra Muros in the Modern Times*, [in:] J. Wyrozumski (Ed.), *Kraków: nowe studia... op. cit.*, pp. 189-295.

⁴⁵ Curl J.S., “Polish parapet.” A Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, 2000. Retrieved May 01, 2016 from Encyclopedia.com: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O1-Polishparapet.html>.



Fig. 11. In the mid-16th century the Cloth Hall was converted into a Renaissance style. Its *attica* is still one of the principal tokens of Krakow. Photo by S. Mucha, ca. 1940

consisting of several stories at the front and a two-storied annexe connected by a balcony. The most significant change in the architectural form of the townhouses was the construction of sunken roofs⁴⁶, concealed by ‘Polish parapets’ diversely ornamented with blind arcades, aedicules, pilasters, pedestals, pediments, pyramids, etc.⁴⁷ Their popularity in Kraków came from a mundane reason: in 1541, the City Council passed a fire-fighting resolution that ordered sunken roofs, hidden by the parapets, on every new and modernised building. That way, the steepness of gothic roofs was gradually replaced by a new Italian-like harmony of vertical and horizontal lines, with a horizontal top. Simultaneously, the brick-and-stone frontages were replaced with plastered ones, with fresco or sgraffito decorations.⁴⁸

Kraków élite, inspired by the Italian fashion for country villas, built numerous holiday houses and palaces with terrace gardens around the city.



Fig. 12. Suburban Villa Decius under Sowiniec Hill, by Giovanni Cini, Zenobius Gianotti, and Filippo of Fiesole (1528–1535). Oil by S. Świerzyński, 1868

⁴⁶ W. Komorowski, K. Follprecht, *op. cit.*

⁴⁷ J.S. Curl, *op. cit.*

⁴⁸ B. Krasnowolski, *Historyczne przemiany...*, *op. cit.*

The powerful city’s patriciate was exceptionally diverse, containing the descendants of immigrants from German-speaking countries and, to a lesser extent, from Italy.⁴⁹ They quite quickly assimilated into Polish life and culture; still, the population of Kraków retained for several centuries a multicultural profile. The ethnic mix was changing as new migrants kept pouring in. In the 16th century, the city admitted ca. 6,760 new residents, only 70% of them Poles. Around 1600, Kraków was inhabited by ca. 13,000 Poles (85%), 1,500 Germans (10%), ca. 450 Italians (3%), as well as about 100 Scots, 50 Hungarians and 50 French. The presence of Italians in Kraków can be traced back to the Middle Ages, but in the 16th century, on the wave of fascination with Italian culture, artists and master builders from Italy arrived in greater numbers. The marriage of King Zygmunt I and Bona Sforza brought a significant



Fig. 13. View of Wawel, near the end of the 16th century. Fragment of M. Merian’s copperplate view of Kraków, 1619

impulse to this migration. In the 16th century, out of the ca. 900 Italians about 40% were connected with the royal court and 40% were artists or scholars. 264 Italian families living in 17th century Kraków made up the largest Italian colony in Poland, with a significant representation in local governments and courts. They had their own guild at the Franciscan church, but most of them quickly settled into the local milieu.⁵⁰

Contemporary travellers describe Kraków both as a centre of spiritual and religious life and thoroughly secular in nature. Italian Giovanni Paolo Mucante was impressed by its role as a trading hub and a centre of culture with a multicultural population. German Martin Gruneweg, in his illustrated descriptions of Kraków’s buildings and churches (1583), compares the city to Rome, confirming the appellation “second Rome”, bestowed in the 15th century.⁵¹

⁴⁹ W. Komorowski, K. Follprecht, *op. cit.*

⁵⁰ Z. Noga, *Poles, Germans and Italians...*, *op. cit.*

⁵¹ P. Hapanowicz, *A Description of Cracow by the Dominican Martin Gruneweg (1562—c.1618)*, [in:] *Rocznik Krakowski*, t. LXXX, TMHiZK, Kraków 2014, pp. 39-56.



Fig. 14. E. van der Rye, Panorama of Kraków (1617), Ibidem

6. Relocation of the Royal Court

From 1609 on, successive kings, after their coronation in Kraków, chose to reside in Warsaw where the country's political centre had moved. Warsaw's status rose thanks to its more central location in the Commonwealth. Since 1569, it became the venue for joint parliamentary conventions for the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, including royal elections, which rallied the electorate from all the Commonwealth's territories.

When the royal seat gradually distanced itself from Kraków, the vicinity of Wawel was no longer an attractive place for the nobility who sold or donated their residences in Okół to the newly created religious orders. In 1595, the Jesuits laid a cornerstone of SS. Peter and Paul's Church which initiated in the Baroque epoch in Kraków. Medieval churches were modernised and small ones lost their original shape, being slightly enlarged. The scale and artistic standards of the ecclesiastical architecture of the first half of the 17th century placed Kraków among the leading European cities.⁵² The sacralisation of townscape was not only a Catholic phenomenon. Six new synagogues were built in the Jewish Town in the second half of the 16th century and the first half of the 17th century.⁵³

Kraków formally retained its capital status till 1791. Here the insignia of statehood – the royal treasury and archives – were lodged. All the main state occasions, coronations, and royal weddings were held at Wawel Cathedral which also remained the royal burial place. Although the departure of the king and his court was a serious blow, for a time the city retained the character of a metropolis comparable with Prague and Vienna. In 1617, the sixth volume of *Civitates* was published in Köln, with views of Kraków accompanied by a description: *By the splendour of its buildings both private and public, and the plenitude of everything necessary for the needs and comforts of life, as well as by the numbers, civility, and elegance of its people, the city itself not only*

*finds no equal among the other towns of the North, but indeed rivals the principal cities of Germany, Italy, and France.*⁵⁴

7. Decline

The first half of the 17th century brought a fundamental change in the European set of forces. The civilizational centre of Europe moved from the Mediterranean toward the West. The European economic crisis increased the power of countries like the Netherlands and England, which succeeded Italian cities as civilizational leaders. Kraków, being for centuries strongly connected with the Latin culture, failed to cope with adverse circumstances of a political, economic, and military nature.⁵⁵ Most of Commonwealth's borderlands were engulfed in chronic defences against Sweden, Muscovy, and Turkey, as well as episodic, but impoverishing armed conflicts with Tatar, Cossack, Transylvanian and Brandenburg-Prussian forces. On the one hand, the parliamentary government in Poland served the principles of civil rights, but on the other hand, limited royal power did not succeed in carrying out the fiscal, military, and political reforms, which in other parts of Europe opened the way to absolutism, but also laid the foundations for modern state and army structures.

The period of prosperity in Kraków definitively came to an end with the Swedish invasion in 1655. The ensuing Swedish occupation lasted two years, debilitating the city's economy, and perpetrated the plunders of many of its invaluable art treasures and libraries. It marked the beginning of a string of misfortunes for the state and particularly for Kraków. Throughout the second half of the 17th and the whole of the 18th century, it suffered a series of sieges, epidemics, foreign occupations, and pillages. The military passages of hostile troops devastated Kraków. In 1659, three quarters of Kazimierz were described in a parliamentary

⁵² W. Komorowski, K. Follprecht, *op. cit.*

⁵³ B. Krasnowolski, *Historyczne przemiany..., op. cit.*

⁵⁴ G. Braun (Ed.), *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*, vol. VI, Braun and Hogenberg, Köln 1617.

⁵⁵ K. Zamorski, *A Review of the Population Changes in Kraków throughout its History*, [in:] J. Wyrozumski (Ed.), *Kraków: nowe studia nad rozwojem miasta*, Biblioteka Krakowska Nr 150, TMHiZK, Kraków 2007, pp. 841-887.

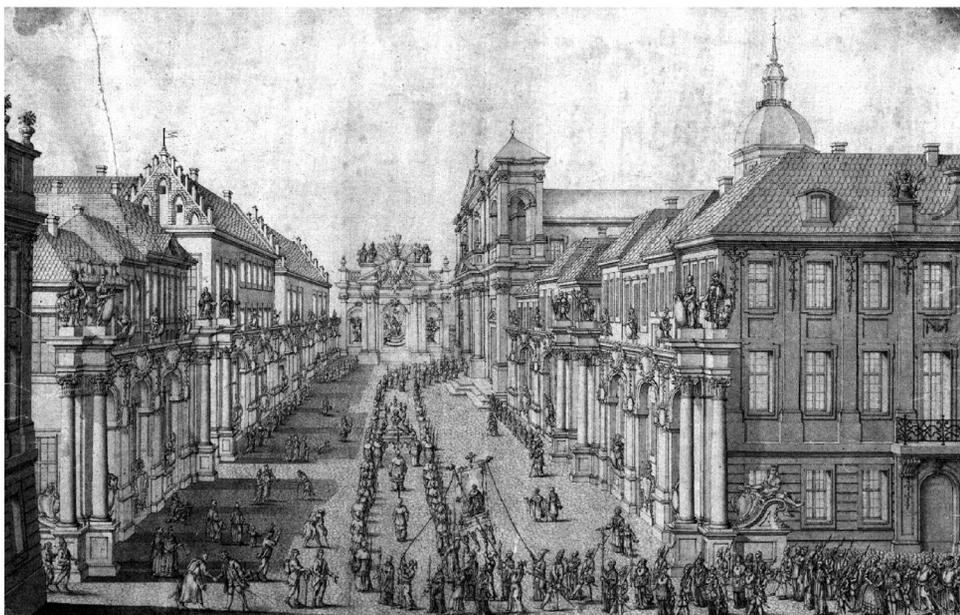


Fig. 15. St Anna St. on F. Placidi's drawing (1775). On the right: the University Quarter; on the left: St Anna's Church and Pod Baranami Palace. Source: Jagiellonian Library, BJDz.Gr.IR501

document as ruined and completely depopulated.⁵⁶ Due to the war, and the destructive social and economic processes which followed, the population of Kraków had dwindled to a mere 10,000 by 1699.

The burgher houses, looted and destroyed during the Swedish “deluge”⁵⁷ were neglected or their renovation was not enough to prevent them from falling into ruin. The city waterworks were burned and not rebuilt (the machinery and pipes were made of oak), and the moat was partially buried. In Kazimierz, the gradual ruination of the town building structure led to the disappearance of some elements of the foundation's layout, including the Market Square, Dog's Market and some streets.⁵⁸ In Kleparz, all townhouses were burned. The town hall, all the commercial buildings, and all the churches were ruined. Kleparz was only partially rebuilt. Another

Polish-Swedish war (1702-06) stopped the process of its redevelopment.⁵⁹

Against the background of general collapse, some conspicuously outstanding works of architecture were erected at that time, such as the palace *Pod Krzysztofory* (1682-84) by Jacob Solari and the richly decorated academic church of St. Anna (1689-1705) by Tylman van Gameren (with interiors by Baltazar Fontana and Karol Dankwart). The new Church of Transfiguration (1718-28) by Kacper Bażanka, axially closing the vista of the medieval St. Jan's Street, could be regarded as an excellent example of Baroque cityscape composition. Although the first half of the 18th century was the period of the most severe crisis in the history of Kraków, at the same time its role as a centre of religious life was strengthened. Fights with Protestant invaders enhanced public trust in Counter-Reformation and rebuilt the power of the Roman

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁷ The term “deluge” denotes a series of mid-17th-century campaigns in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Weakened by a rebellion of Zaporozhian Cossacks as well as wars with Crimean Tatars and the Tsardom of Russia, the Commonwealth was invaded by the Swedish Empire from the north, supported by Brandenburg-Prussia from the west, and the Principality of Transylvania from the south. During the wars (1655-67), the Commonwealth lost approximately one third of its population as well as its status as a great power. Swedish invaders completely destroyed and burned 188 cities and towns, 81 castles, and 136 churches in Poland, and robbed the Commonwealth of its most important riches: thousands of works of art, books and valuables, and even windows, stairs, chimneys, sculptures, mantelpieces, floors, doors and gates. Goods were loaded on boats and transported along the Vistula to the Baltic Sea, and then to Sweden. Most of these items are still kept both in private Swedish hands, as well as museums, churches, libraries, and archives in Sweden. Cf. I. Ihnatowicz, et al., *Dzieje gospodarcze Polski do roku 1939*, Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 1988, p. 233.

⁵⁸ B. Krasnowolski, *The Foundations... op. cit.*



Fig. 16. Church of St Anna (interior), Photo by Z. Put

⁵⁹ Z. Beiersdorf, *op. cit.*



Fig. 17. Krakow site ownership in the 18th century.
Map by K. Bąkowski, 1896

Catholic church. Both monastic and secular clergy influenced social life. The bishops supported the city, simultaneously interfering with its internal matters. During the Saxon dynasty's rule (1697–1763), the ecclesiastical architecture and representative residential buildings flourished even more, while municipal and townhouses were in regress. At the time of the deepest decline of the city, the greatest number of new and modernised churches, monasteries, convents and secular palaces were built next to or in place of ruined townhouses.⁶⁰ Baroque Kraków produced an impressive array of architectural monuments, usually of outstanding artistic merit.⁶¹

During the 17th and 18th centuries, suburban *jurydykas*⁶² grew uncontrollably, being in keen competition for

trade, craft, and food production markets with Kraków's agglomeration towns, and bringing about the constant destabilisation of the economic life of Kraków.⁶³ *Jurydykas* were enclaves exempted from the Council's jurisdiction, the same way as the university, churches, convents and friaries.⁶⁴

In the second quarter of the 18th century, almost all townhouses were seriously damaged in their structures. Characteristic buttresses, which supported the weakened outer walls, were used on a large scale, which is visible to this day. The reappearance of the country-manor like buildings in the city proves that a process of agrarisation was taking place in Kraków as well as in other towns in Poland.⁶⁵ With the weakening importance of the burgher class, Kraków's elite consisted of nobility and clergy. In the very centre of the city, groups of burgher houses, seized by the noblemen, were frequently converted: three or four of them were joined together to make up a single dwelling. In consequence, they were losing their original character.⁶⁶

The Fall of the Commonwealth

The first partition of Poland (1772)⁶⁷ broke and separated the coherent Kraków agglomeration into two parts. Vistula became a border river with the Austrian Empire. On the right bank, owing to the privilege granted by Emperor Joseph Habsburg in 1784, the settlement of Podgórze obtained its town rights, and owing to its strategic position, soon became an economic centre competing with Kraków.

The time of reformatory Great Sejm⁶⁸ (1788–1792) and following period, was the time of a considerable political improvement. The ideas of Enlightenment, fostered by King Stanisław August Poniatowski, resulted, among other things⁶⁹ in the secularisation of Church property and the

⁶³ J. Laberschek, *Spatial Development...*, *op. cit.*

⁶⁴ Z. Noga, *Role of Local Government...*, *op. cit.*

⁶⁵ W. Komorowski, K. Follprecht, *op. cit.*

⁶⁶ *Ibidem.*

⁶⁷ Partitions of Poland (1772, 1793, 1795), three successive territorial seizures of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, perpetrated together by the Russian Empire, the Kingdom of Prussia and Habsburg Austria, in the end resulted in the elimination of the sovereign Crown of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania for 123 years.

⁶⁸ The Great Sejm, also known as the Four-Year Sejm was a prolonged session of Parliament of the federative Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. Its principal aim became to restore sovereignty to, and reform the Commonwealth, politically and economically. The Sejm's great achievement was the adoption of the Constitution of May 3, 1791, Europe's first modern state constitution, and the world's second, after the U.S. Constitution. It was designed to redress long-standing political defects of the Commonwealth. The Constitution introduced political equality between townspeople and nobility and placed the peasants under the protection of the government. The Constitution abolished pernicious parliamentary institutions such as the *liberum veto*, and sought to supplant the existing anarchy fostered by some of the country's reactionary magnates, with a more egalitarian and democratic constitutional monarchy. The reforms instituted by the Great Sejm and the Constitution of May 3, 1791, were undone by the Targowica Confederation and the intervention of the Russian Empire.

⁶⁹ Such as the formation of the Commission of National Education, created by the Sejm and the King on October 14, 1773. Because of

⁶⁰ W. Komorowski, K. Follprecht, *op. cit.*

⁶¹ A. Malkiewicz, *Rome and Cracow's Baroque Architecture*, [in:] *Rocznik Krakowski*, t. LXIX, TMHiZK, Kraków 2003, pp. 47–75.

⁶² *Jurydyka* was a private landed property, independent of the city, with jurisdiction in the hands of the property owner. Cf. B. Krasnowolski, *The Foundations...*, *op. cit.*

abolition of religious orders. The attempts to reverse the decline in Kraków were connected with the activities of the Good Order Commission (1787-91) which e.g. annulled the anachronistic independence of suburbs, *jurydykas*, and satellite towns of Kazimierz and Kleparz. When the condition of the city funds improved, more important works in municipal buildings began, but the city council's attempts to introduce specific urban ventures did not materialise.⁷⁰ The most characteristic expression of the new tendencies was the reform of the university and its new investments in astronomical observatory and botanic garden, as well as the first university hospital (1788) which initiated the whole district of hospitals in the former *jurydyka* Wesoła.⁷¹

In 1794, after the second partition and a failure of the Kościuszko Insurrection⁷² against Imperial Russia and the Kingdom of Prussia, the Prussian Army entered Kraków and captured Wawel Castle, subsequently turning it into a fortress. The content of the Crown Treasury was transferred to the Berlin City Palace, where it was purposefully destroyed in 1809.⁷³ Kraków symbolically lost its significance as a formal capital city.

In 1795, after the third and final partition of Poland, Kraków became a border town of Galicia – the part of Commonwealth annexed by the Habsburg Austria. The whole Wawel Hill was transformed into an Austrian citadel. It meant the construction of new edifices and the demolition of historic structures. The defensive wall, two

its vast authority and autonomy, it is considered the first Ministry of Education in European history.

⁷⁰ J. Laberschek, *Spatial Development...*, *op. cit.*; also: W. Komorowski, K. Follprecht, *op. cit.*

⁷¹ B. Krasnowolski, *Historyczne przemiany...*, *op. cit.*

⁷² The Kościuszko Insurrection of 1794 was a failed attempt to liberate Poland, Belarus and Lithuania. General Tadeusz Kościuszko, the leader of the insurrection, was a military engineer and Polish commander in the American War of Independence. As an accomplished military architect, he designed and oversaw the construction of state-of-the-art fortifications, including those at West Point, New York, and Kraków, Poland. In 1794, Kościuszko announced the uprising in Poland and assumed the powers of the Commander in Chief of all of the Polish forces. As a declared republican, he aimed "not to use these powers to oppress any person, but to defend the integrity of the borders, regain the independence of the nation, and to strengthen universal liberties." In order to increase the Polish forces, Kościuszko formed large units composed of volunteering peasants. In 1798, Kościuszko wrote a will dedicating his considerable American assets to the education and freedom of U.S. slaves. He entrusted it to his close friend, Thomas Jefferson, as executor. Though the American will was never carried out, its legacy went to found in 1826 an educational institute for African Americans in the United States, bearing Kościuszko's name. There are monuments to Kościuszko around the world, beginning with the highest mountain in Australia, Mount Kosciuszko, and Kościuszko Mound (1823), overlooking Kraków, modelled after its prehistoric mounds. Cf. A. Storozynski, *The Peasant Prince: Thaddeus Kosciuszko and the Age of Revolution*, St. Martin's Press, New York 2009.

⁷³ On 17 March, 1809, in accordance with the personal decision of Frederick William III of Prussia, the ancient crown regalia of the Kingdom of Poland and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were all melted down. The gold was reused to make coins. The precious stones and pearls were handed to the Directorate of Maritime Trade in Berlin.



Fig. 18. Kościuszko taking the oath on Main Market Sq. (24 March 1794). In the background: St Mary's towers and the City Hall complex. Oil by F. Smuglewicz, 1797. Source: Polish Army Museum

churches and twenty-one houses were razed to the ground. The oldest town on Wawel virtually ceased to exist.⁷⁴

8. Free City

During the 120 years of Austrian domination, there were several, distinct phases of its rule over Kraków. The repressive periods were alternated with times of relative liberalism and autonomy. First, the Napoleonic Wars raised hopes for independence. In 1809, Polish troops entered Kraków, led by Prince Józef Poniatowski, who was later to become a Marshal of the French Empire. Kraków was incorporated to the Duchy of Warsaw (1807–1815) which was an independent Polish state created thanks to Napoleon. After the fall of his Empire, at the Congress of Vienna (1815), Kraków became again the object of rivalry between Austria, Prussia, and Russia. As a result of the compromise, from 1815 to 1846, it formally functioned as an independent republic, a Free City, bordered by the three Partitioning Powers.



Fig. 19. The Prince Poniatowski's entry into Kraków (1809) against a background of Main Market Sq. and the 'funnel' of Grodzka St. Oil by M. Stachowicz, 1821. Source: Polish Army Museum

⁷⁴ R. Skowron, *Changes Made to the Town's Building Structure on Wawel Hill – From 14th to 20th Century*, [in:] J. Wyrozumski (Ed.), *Kraków: nowe studia...* *op. cit.*, s. 65-88.

The strategic location of the “Free, Independent, and Strictly Neutral City of Kraków with its Territory” (aka Republic of Kraków) contributed soon to the development of the city’s economy and aspirations. It was also a period of territorial expansion of the city. Numerous villages were incorporated and 10 toll gates were built to collect the entrance charges.⁷⁵

The Senate of the Kraków Republic embarked on a large urban planning scheme. An original concept for the establishment of the Planty Gardens – well over three-km ring of public gardens encircling the medieval town – was devised already in 1817–1821. Its systematic implementation in the 1820s came along with the completion of a ring road, running around its outer edge, with radiating transport arteries, some of them closed off by impressive perspective views. Planty constitutes the Free City’s greatest achievement in town planning. They became the core for the General Plan for Kraków, which passed in 1833 and gave the framework for a concentric and radial structure of the modern city.⁷⁶ Planty became a model for Vienna and other European cities which in the second half of the 19th century started to transform rings of their medieval fortifications into elegant boulevards and greenbelts.

Another important accomplishment of the Free City era was rebuilding of Kazimierz, with new public spaces of Wolnica Sq. Mostowa St., and Gazowa St. In several places in the city, new avenues were formed, ideally straight, according to Enlightenment taste, and planted mostly with fast-growing Lombardy poplars.

In 1820–1823, Kraków acquired a new outstanding landmark, the Kościuszko Mound, a monument of the republican hero, erected by people of all ages and classes who were coming to Kraków from all the former Commonwealth territories to voluntarily participate in construction. It was modelled after Kraków’s prehistoric mounds and reached 34 m in height, over the natural hill of Sikornik. A serpentine path leads to the top with a panoramic view of the Vistula River and the city.

A characteristic feature of the Free City days was the Romantic attitude and the birth of a nostalgic reverence for historic monuments. After a typical Age of Enlightenment ‘beautification’ action, brutally treating depreciated buildings, mainly squalid churches and old fortifications, Kraków soon switched from a demolition phase to a policy of restoration, thereby giving rise to the Polish tradition in conservation. The paradigm shift was provoked by the discussion concerning the old defensive walls of Kraków, which by the beginning of the 19th century had been falling into disrepair. After Emperor Franz I ordered them to be dismantled in 1817, Professor Feliks Radwański of Jagiellonian University managed to convince the Senate

of the Republic of Kraków to legislate the preservation of the most valuable section of old defensive system, namely: the Florian Gate with the adjoining Barbican (one of only three such fortified outposts still surviving in Europe), and Arsenal, together with the three defensive towers of the Guild of Haberdashers, the Joiners-and-Rope-Makers, and Carpenters, with curtain walls connecting them all.⁷⁷

Building on that success, in 1820, Radwański obtained a governmental position of conservator vested with special powers to give his opinion on all the projects submitted to the Building Department and concerning Kraków’s historic buildings. Even more pioneering was Artur Potocki’s proposal submitted in 1825 to the lower house of the Kraków Republic Parliament, to establish an institutional, legal form of care of the monuments.⁷⁸



Fig. 20. Building of Kościuszko Mound. Oil by T. B. Stachowicz, 1859. Source: National Museum in Kraków



Fig. 21. Contemporary view from Kościuszko Mound. Kraków Common on the left. Photo by J. Wierzchowski

The Romantic view of history facilitated a new interpretation of the myth of Kraków. The city now became the symbol of the great past of a nation deprived of its independence. The most important projects that followed the animated debate at the turn of the 1830s included

⁷⁵ M. Mikulski et al., *Defensive System in Kraków of the 19th and 20th Century*, [in:] Wyrozumski J. (Ed.), *Kraków: nowe studia... op. cit.*, s. 757-839.

⁷⁶ J. Purchla, *Spatial, Urban and Architectural Development of Kraków in the Times of the Galician Autonomy and the Second Republic*, [in:] J. Wyrozumski (Ed.), *Kraków: nowe studia... op. cit.*, pp. 619-661.

⁷⁷ Some relics of walls survived also at the backs of three convents and the properties of the Canons of the Kraków Chapter. H. Rojkowska, W. Niewalda, *Kraków Defensive Walls up Until Demolition*, [in:] J. Wyrozumski (Ed.), *Kraków: nowe studia... op. cit.*, pp. 493-527.

⁷⁸ A. Kadłuczka, *Ochrona Zabytków Krakowa. Historia i Teraźniejszość* [w:] Materiały Konferencyjne Międzynarodowej Konferencji Konserwatorskiej Kraków 2000, *op. cit.* pp. 58-59.

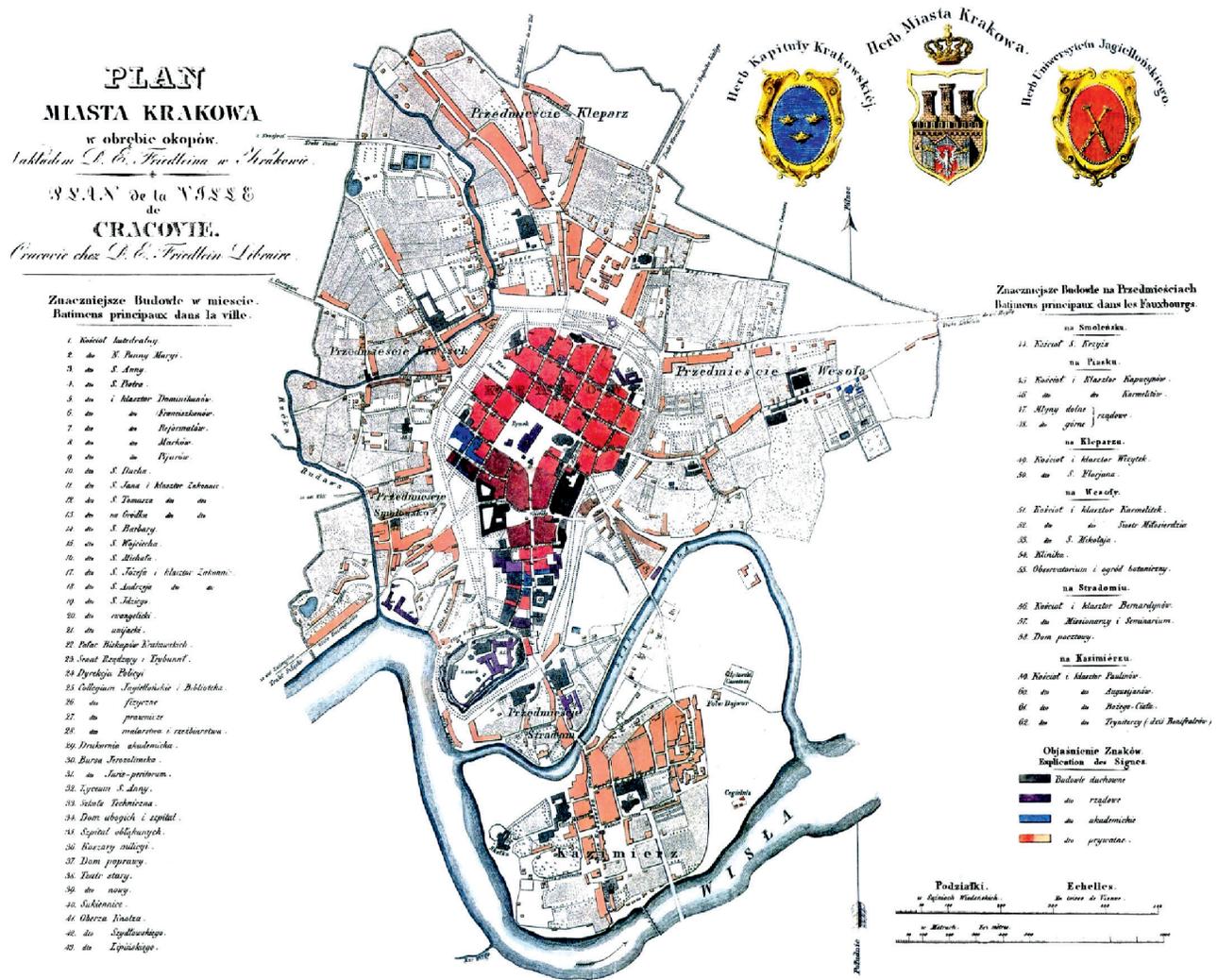


Fig. 23. Plan of the City with a list of notable buildings, by T. Żebrawski, 1836

a restoration scheme for Wawel Castle, and the restoration of the Barbican, the Florian Gate, and the Collegium Maius.⁷⁹

9. Austrian Fortress

Austria's second annexation of Kraków in 1846 undermined the basis for the relative economic prosperity of the 1830s and '40s. For a long time, Kraków was to become a peripheral city without administrative functions of any significance. A combination of political and economic causes made Kraków remain a non-industrial city with a fairly slow rate of growth. In 1856–1866, according to a design made by Viennese engineer August von Caboga, Kraków was fully transformed into an Austrian border fortress and military camp. By 1885, the city was constricted by the three lines of embanked fortifications with numerous polygonal forts. Until 1909, Kraków, by then with a population of over 100,000, was clamped into a small

area of just under 6 sq. km. Up to 1918, the city remained a huge fortress and an Austrian border zone garrison.

Austria's annexation of the Free City radically reoriented its economic situation and was followed by a black decade of political and fiscal oppression, outbreaks of cholera and the Great Fire (1850) which devastated 1/3 of the area

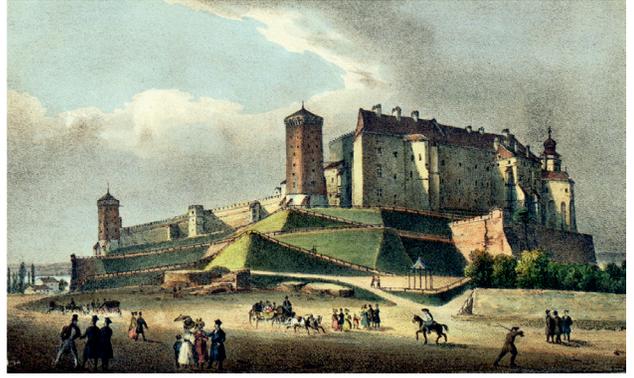


Fig. 22. Wawel Castle in 1840s. Lithograph by J.N. Głowacki, *Widoki miasta Krakowa i jego okolic...*, Kraków 1848

⁷⁹ J. Purlha, *Cracow in the European Core*, Bosz, Olszanica 2008.

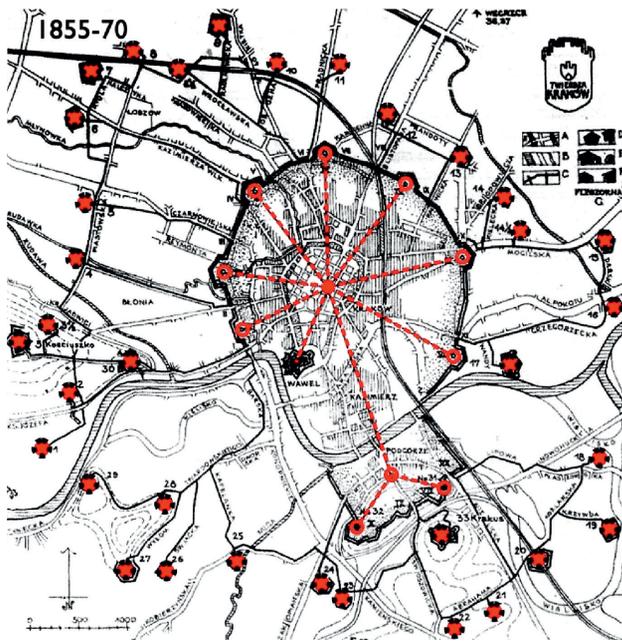


Fig. 24. The Kraków Fortress composition (1855–1870), according to J. Bogdanowski, *Warownie i zielen Twierdzy Kraków*, W. Literackie, Kraków 1979



Fig. 25. Dominican Sq, the Great Fire of Kraków in July 1850. Oil by T.B. Stachowicz. Source: MHK, 2466-III

of the Old Town – one of the oldest parts, which used to be the city centre before 1257.

In the same year, 1850, the Kraków Committee of Archaeology and Fine Arts was set up to support restorations after the fire. It was important to the development of new methods of conservation in architecture. Destruction revealed the complicated strategy of buildings and forced the new viewing of the monument, not as a defined message of a certain period, but an intricate, multilayer architectural structure. This paved the way for the new principle of tolerance for the lack of stylistic homogeneity.

10. Restoration of autonomy

In the 1860s, as the Austrian Empire started on the road of political and constitutional change, Galicia was given a broad autonomy. Polish was admitted as the province's official language and the new administrative apparatus was soon dominated by Poles. The devolution of power opened

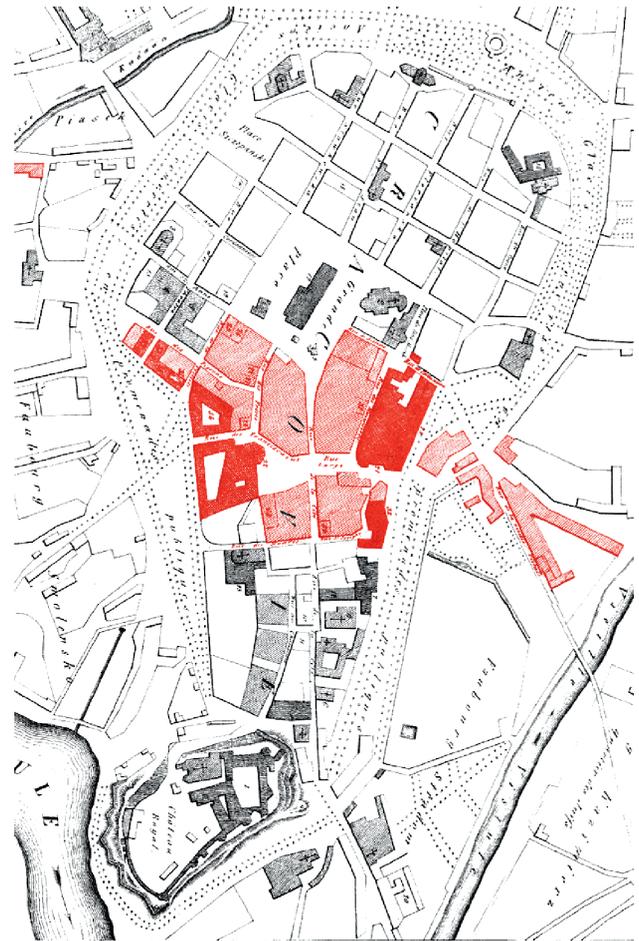


Fig. 26. Fire damage map by M. Niewiarowski, 1850

to them a unique chance to lay the foundations for a future revival of Polish statehood. The autonomy of the university was restored in 1860. In 1866, city councils elected by the citizens were reinstated in Kraków and Lwów (Lviv). From its first term, the Kraków Council had to deal with urgent issues of renovation of the most precious monuments on the Wawel Hill, and the historic Cloth Hall. In 1874–1879, Tomasz Pryliński turned the nearly derelict Hall into a showpiece emblematic of the city's modernisation.

The edifice's commercial functions were felt on the ground floor while the upper storey was adopted to house the first Polish National Museum. It represented the image of Kraków as a spiritual capital of the nation.

The liberalism that came in the 1860s, together with the power of the old metropolitan tradition, was the essence of the Kraków phenomenon of that period: there was no simple relationship between the city's size and its function as the chief centre for Polish cultural and academic life.⁸⁰ For the municipal council, the restoration of the monuments was being associated with the spiritual impact emanating from them into all the Polish territories. There was a clear contradiction between the city perceived as a symbol of national identity and a fortress which symbolised foreign domination, but the political freedom given to liberal and seditious Kraków turned it soon from a recent hotbed of

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*.



Fig. 27. Wawel Cathedral conservation by S. Odrzywolski and Z. Hendel. Photo by I. Krieger, 1890s

conspiracy into a grand aristocratic drawing room. A host of important art collections were inaugurated. One of the highlights in this process was the transfer of the Czartoryski Museum (founded by Princess Izabela in 1796), a first-rate collection of European art and a repository of national mementoes. The crowning masterpiece of the collection is the “Lady with the Ermine” by Leonardo da Vinci.⁸¹

The issues of monument protection and cultivation of national traditions were supported by the presence of the university with its faculties of Archaeology and History of

monument protection. The Association of Western Galicia Conservators, which organised its first Kraków convention in 1888, widely developed activities devoted to science, publishing and fundraising.⁸²

The fundamental feature of the mid-19th century conservation was a connection between artistic historicism and the newborn art history. There was no clear separation of artistic architecture and restoration. Monument protection became the domain of science to a larger extent when modern art abandoned historicism. Such a scientific approach was clearly characteristic, for example the historic preservation officer and art historian, Stanisław Tomkowicz.⁸³

In the second half of the 19th century, the methods of conservation evolved, reflecting the discussion full of diverse and sometimes divergent concepts. Alois Riegl’s theory of values – opposed to reconstructions and to the removing of accumulated historic layers – was at odds with the Eugène Viollet-le-Duc’s doctrine of ‘stylistic purity’. Ruskin’s principle of non-interventionism clashed in Poland with a more creative approach to preservation, allowing for reconstructions where supported by scientific or artistic reasons. Successive works on restoration of the Wawel complex (by Lanci, Pryliński, Odrzywolski and later also Hendel and Szyszko-Bohusz) sustained the discussion and helped to crystallise a model of programming and accomplishment of conservation projects as based on collective decisions of a circle of specialists, mostly researchers, qualified and formally entitled to advise and decide.⁸⁴

One of the most serious urban ventures of the end of the 19th century was the filling in of the Old Vistula River bed (1878-80). The construction of a broad boulevard, with rows of residential buildings, called Dietl Planty, was



Fig. 28. Dietl Planty in 1890s. Photo by I. Krieger

Art. The Academic Society of Kraków (since 1815) and the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (since 1872) both gathered academics and enlightened citizens devoted to

⁸¹ *Ibidem*.

⁸² M. Woźny, *The Beginnings of the Circle of Inspectors in Western Galicia in the Light of Cracow Materials*, [in:] *Rocznik Krakowski*, t.LXXVII, TMHiZK, Kraków 2011, pp. 77-88.

⁸³ E. Małachowicz, *Ochrona środowiska kulturowego*, Wydawnictwo PW, Wrocław 1982.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*.

commenced in that place in 1887. Together with the location of a new Municipal Theatre at the Holy Spirit Sq., it was an attempt to move the city centre from the Main Market Square towards the railway station. In the western section of the city, the complexes of elegant residential architecture were constructed, such as the rows of townhouses designed by Teodor Talowski at Retoryka St. – another former river channel transformed into a boulevard.



Fig. 29. The Municipal Theatre. Photo by S. Kolowiec

The primary role of Kraków's strong architectural circle at the end of the 19th century was based rather on development of intellectual life than on a construction boom. Although the dominant perspective of national identity had to be contrasted with liberalism and the openness of a capitalist urbanisation, Kraków was still more a laboratory for artistic experiments than a fast developing city. Every tender for a mayor building project was decided upon by means of competition, which inspired creative discussion. After a period of influences by various schools (primarily Munich, Berlin, Vienna, and Paris), the architectural circle of Kraków entered a phase of shaping its own, specific aesthetics of forms. It was based on a creative use of local tradition, which favourably distinguished it even from other Polish cities, giving it a specific character. The crowning achievement of the school of Kraków, and its quest to embrace the national and the modern, was the Exhibition

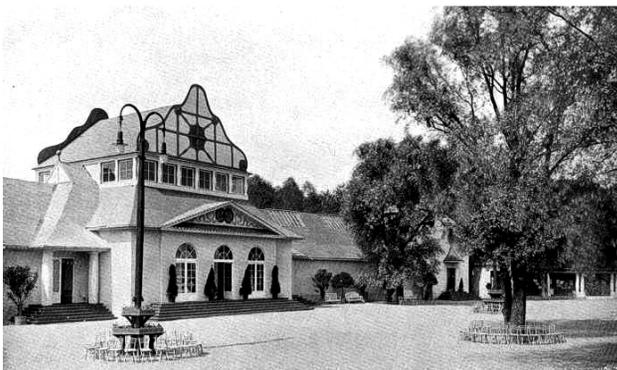


Fig. 30. The main pavilion of the Exhibition of Architecture and Interiors in Garden Surroundings, Błonia Common (1912). Source: Ronet.pl

of Architecture and Interiors in Garden Surroundings (1912).⁸⁵ From that event a “country manor style” arose, as a result of a constant search for a national style, for the creation of which the architects from Kraków felt particularly responsible.

Shortly before the fall of the Habsburg monarchy, Kraków entered the road to its third period of creative development (after the Medieval and Renaissance phases). It was again a city of contradictions arising from its extraordinary social heterogeneity. Kraków was home to the conservative aristocracy and the large numbers of Catholic clergy; the prudish bourgeoisie and the liberal intelligentsia associated with academia; the artists, both academic and avant-garde; the Jewish circles of wealthy burghers, and the vivid, motley shops and stalls in Kazimierz; the factory workers and the suburban villagers with their specific folklore; the twelve-thousand-strong Austrian garrison, and the independence campaigners under the leadership of Socialist Józef Piłsudski, as well as Russian émigrés, led by Lenin, who made preparations here for his revolution.⁸⁶

The Fortress Kraków was being modernised and extended until 1917. It grew into a complex of about 200 known military objects over an area of over 1000 ha. Its design was the last in Europe which referred to the Renaissance concept of an ideal city, with a geometrical centre and regular axes of individual forts extending every 40 degrees from the centre. The construction of the ring of earthen ramparts forced the creation of a new, rigid transportation network to serve them. With time this system grew into the urban layout of the city's outskirts. Even more important in the role of shaping

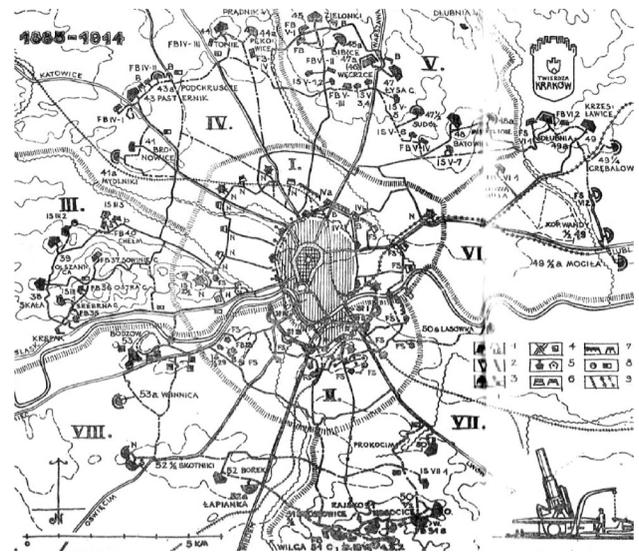


Fig. 31. The Kraków Fortress development (1885–1914), according to J. Bogdanowski, op. cit.

Kraków urban structure was a stretch of core fortifications. First, they had an effect of the ‘iron ring’, obstructing the development of the 19th century city. Several decades later,

⁸⁵ J. Purchla, *Spatial, Urban and Architectural...*, op.cit.

⁸⁶ J. Purchla, *Cracow in the European...*, op. cit.

they marked the course of the representative second ring, which followed the Planty Gardens pattern.

The partial dismantling of the inner fortifications after 1900 opened up new prospects for the city's development. When the city's mayor, Juliusz Leo, put forward a proposal to create Greater Kraków, it meant a broadening of the administrative area of the city from 5.77 to 46.9 sq. km, but more importantly, to join several outer communes and push the city on the track of truly capitalist development.

The Greater Kraków Masterplan Competition, held by the authorities in 1909, confirmed the pioneering role of Kraków in the creation of modern Polish ideas in urban planning.

The Kraków School of Architecture, established in the period immediately prior to the Great War, continued its activities after the rebirth of the Polish State in the aftermath of World War I.

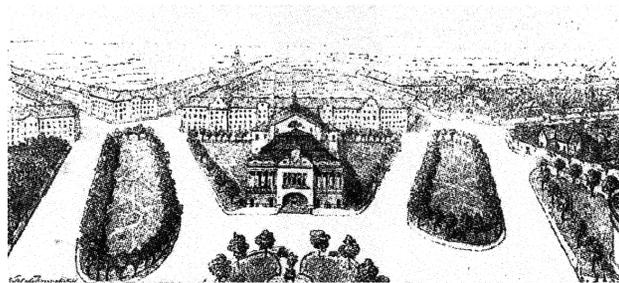


Fig. 33. From the same project: Karmelicka St. crossroads with the 2nd ring road. Drawing by W. Ekielski, 1910

most significant were the monographs by J. Gałęzowski (1916), *The Rebuilding of the Polish Town* and S. Szyler (1917), *Traditions of the Vernacular Building*. The pattern



Fig. 32. First Prize winning Greater Kraków Masterplan project by Czajkowski, Ekielski, Stryjeński, Wojtyczko, and Wyczyński, 1911

10. Kraków in the Second Republic of Poland

For Polish statehood, reborn during the First World War, monument protection appeared as a crucial condition for national integration and identity. The *Decree on Care of Monuments of Arts and Culture*, dated 31 October 1918, was among the first legal instruments issued by the Polish authorities. The Local Conservator Services were organised, and vested with special powers. The state declared financial support in justified cases of maintenance of historical substance.

In the Kraków milieu, efforts to refer to the national features in urbanism were undertaken already in 1916. The

books which included analysis of squares, streets, and townhouses, were drawn up, elevating the importance of the provincial, small-town style of architecture and urbanism.⁸⁷

During the interwar period, Kraków's multifunctional character was confirmed. It was a centre for academic and cultural life and the regional administrative headquarters, but it grew also as an economic centre of increasing importance. However, the ideas for Kraków's future were not oriented towards large-scale urbanisation. In the 1930s, Kraków also lost its pre-eminence in Poland's academic and cultural affairs in favour of Warsaw. City authorities

⁸⁷ E. Małachowicz, *op. cit.*



Fig. 34. Floriańska St. in 1936. Source: <http://monovisions.com>

envisaged Kraków as a medium-sized, modern, convenient centre for science and culture. They made efforts to develop a good network of communication with Western European centres and be attractive for both domestic and foreign tourists thanks to the unique heritage. They settled on the qualitative transformation of Kraków into a luxury city with a harmonious combination of past heritage with modernity.

Testimony of this trend is provided by the monumental stretch of a second ring road, the Three Bards Avenues (Aleje Trzech Wieszczów), built in place of the former fortifications. It was designed as an elegant boulevard in the form of a gently curving dual roadway separated by a central green strip – originally a pedestrian promenade. Particular significance was attached to the visual attributes of the junctions with the radially arranged streets.⁸⁸

The Avenues made a harmonious connection to the city's core with the outer zone. In response to the need for a monumental style, stressing the solid base of a young state in the architecture of public utility, a trend called Academic Classicism emerged. However, the most significant



Fig. 35. Inwalidów Sq. at the 2nd ring road Three Bards Avenues in 1930s. Source: NAC, 1-U-2468

⁸⁸ J. Purchla, *op. cit.*

accomplishment of the School of Kraków was the Polish variant of Art Deco. Its significance did not last long due to the development of functionalism and its domination in the circle of Warsaw where the centre of Polish architectural life moved in the 1930s.⁸⁹

The building boom of the 1930s meant a rapid development of the outer zone, carried out with the control of regulatory plans. The significant achievement was the conservation and re-composition of the large stretches of public green areas in the western part of the city, which led off from the wedge-shaped valley of the Rudawa towards the Wolski Wood and Sowiniec Hill. The combination of a monumental layout with a unique quality of park areas turned into the showpiece of the interwar Kraków.

During the 20 interwar years, Kraków managed to develop into a modern regional centre with advanced infrastructure, a high standard of monumental and residential architecture, and clearly preserved wedges of greenery spreading from the line of the second ring road and surrounding new residential quarters.⁹⁰



Fig. 36. Professor's House at 15 Słowackiego Ave. Project by L. Wojtyczko et al., 1928.⁹¹ Photo by K. Erbele

12. Second World War

Kraków remained the most important city in the southwest part of Poland until September 1939 when the Third Reich and the Soviet Union invaded the country and divided it between themselves. On the German-occupied territory the Nazis created a protectorate with their governor-general's residence in Kraków. Germanisation

⁸⁹ J. Purchla, *Spatial, Urban and Architectural...*, *op. cit.*

⁹⁰ *Ibidem.*

⁹¹ On 6th November 1939, soon after the Germans had captured Kraków, most of the building's residents, along with other academics of the Jagiellonian University, were arrested by the SS and sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

of the city was accompanied by an escalating reign of terror and an unprecedented attempt at disinheritance. The Jewish community suffered the most tragic fate. On the eve of the Second World War, 65,000 Jews lived in Kraków, out of a total city population of 250,000. In March 1941, the German war administration forced all Kraków Jews to resettle into the ghetto organised in the Podgórze borough. It was liquidated two years later on March 13, 1943. Most of the ghetto inhabitants perished in the Nazi concentration camps. About a thousand people were saved by Oskar Schindler thanks to his Enamel Factory at 4 Lipowa Street.

The Jewish community in post-war Kraków shrank to 2,000, but since the 1990s, the city's significance as a centre of Jewish culture is growing again, among restored necropolises and renovated synagogues, several of which represent the best in the traditions of Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, and neo-Romanesque architecture. On old narrow streets of the eastern part of Kazimierz one still finds a unique atmosphere of the Jewish past of this area. The Museum of Judaism found its place in the stately 15th century brick building of the Old Synagogue at Szeroka Street.

13. Aftermath of World War II

Of the five Polish civilisational centres before 1939,⁹² Kraków emerged from the Second World War with the lightest material damage. Warsaw was razed to the ground, Lwów and Wilno (henceforth Lvov and Vilnius) were lost to the Soviet Union, and Wrocław and Gdańsk, while reclaimed, were devastated. After 1945, the country appeared a subservient state, a satellite of the USSR, and directed by a totalitarian doctrine. When the Soviet occupation started, from the very outset of the new regime, Kraków symbolised 'the forces of reaction and resistance to the new reality'.⁹³

Nowa Huta

Spatial and architectural development became subordinate to political aims. In 1949, the government decision to build a huge metallurgical plant just 10 km to the east of Kraków's centre – together with the new town, Nowa Huta, which would house 100,000 – became a turning point in the city's history and led to the creation of a new social and spatial order. The decision was emblematic of the conflict between heritage and a vulgar notion of progress, and was carried out with absolute ruthlessness. It carried within itself the programmatic devastation of the cultural landscape of old suburban villages and an attempt to obliterate the tradition and meaning of the historic Kraków – a symbol of a receding past.

The foundation of the new city was a huge social, environmental, and economic experiment, developed without common sense, in violation of tradition and of the law, and without considering any of the consequences for the

environment.⁹⁴ The bourgeois nature of Kraków was to be neutralised by the neighbouring city for the proletariat. At the same time, densely populated villages, with unusually fertile soil and rich cultural landscapes had to be destroyed. Obligatory expropriations were directed mainly at local farmers, with compensations covering only 5–10% of the value of lost houses, fields, and forests.

The image of Nowa Huta clearly shows the influence of the 'socialist realism' doctrine imposed between 1949 and 1954, with urban compositions designed to symmetric preferences. However, the master plan of Nowa Huta, designed by a team of young local architects⁹⁵, was more than just a simple transfer of the Soviet pattern. The plan makes clear references to the concepts of Renaissance and Baroque ideal towns, but it also results from the local landscape and its features. The cityscape composition is compact, symmetrical, hierarchical, has well-defined spaces and clear dominants, and is based on visual axes and the location of key landmarks. The urban blocks created a network of well-defined, public, semi-public, and semi-private spaces. Height zoning was enforced, limiting buildings to two storeys on the outskirts and to six in the urban core.



Fig. 37. Scale model of Nowa Huta, by T. Ptaszycki et al. Photo by W. Łoziński, Miastoprojekt Kraków, 1951

An important element of the composition is the broad slope of the Vistula valley. The Central Square was placed close to the edge of it. The majority of the routes reflected historical roads, with the Sandomierz Road ancient roadside trees mainly preserved. The eastern edge was shaped in accordance with the course of the Dłubnia River Valley, which constitutes an area of isolated and recreational greenery between the city and the steelworks.

The functional composition of Nowa Huta was based on the neighbourhood unit concept, grouping a specific number

⁹² The others were: Warsaw, Lwów, Poznań, and Wilno.

⁹³ J. Purchla, *op.cit.*

⁹⁴ S. Juchnowicz, *Nowa Huta, przeszłość i wizja. Z doświadczeń warsztatu projektowego* [w:] *Nowa Huta – przeszłość i wizja. Studium muzeum rozproszonego*, Biblioteka Krzysztoforska, Kraków 2005, p. 179.

⁹⁵ The team made up of: Tadeusz Ptaszycki (the head of the team), Bolesław Skrzybalski, Stanisław Juchnowicz, Tadeusz Rembiesa, Janina Lenczewska, and Stefan Sitarski.

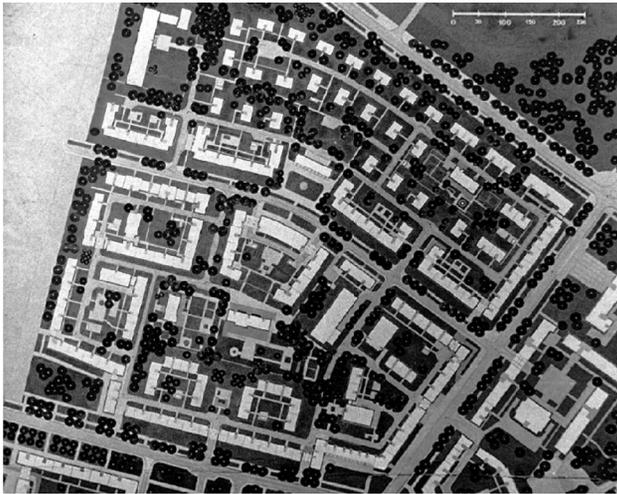


Fig. 38. Project of B2 quarter of Nowa Huta, by S. Juchnowicz, 1950



Fig. 39. View through one of characteristic gateways during the construction of the B2 quarter, photo by S. Juchnowicz, 1952

of inhabitants around the elements that shape social bonds. The designers knew of that concept from its earlier applications, primarily in the Regional Plan of New York by Clarence Perry (1929). They created four residential complexes, each for about 20,000 residents, and composed of three to four estates of 5000–6000 people. The complexes concentrate the most important social and commercial services in a walking distance. In effect, the new city turned out to be a consistently planned and implemented synthesis of urban design traditions and modernity. The original district of Nowa Huta is compact, green, and multifunctional.⁹⁶ Today

⁹⁶ T. Jeleński, 'Old' Nowa Huta, [in:] J. Kronenberg, T. Bergier (Eds), *Challenges of Sustainable Development in Poland*, Sendzimir Foundation, Kraków 2010, pp. 245-248.

it is regarded as one of the most liveable new towns constructed in the second half of the 20th century.⁹⁷

Still, the overall process of industrialisation, which lasted until the 1970s, was unbalanced, extensive, and out of proportion with what the results were worth. Due to industrial sprawl, anonymous tower-block housing estates engulfed Kraków. The crippling construction of mono-cultural housing, which started in the 1960s, did not keep up with industry development. The aim of Communist authorities was to create a one-million agglomeration. Apartment blocks also were built in the areas of old layout and among single family houses.

The originally independent Nowa Huta was soon incorporated by Kraków. The developmental axis of the city was re-oriented from the north-south to east-west, and its compact, radiating, and ringed layout at first was changed into dual polarity and then – after the construction of housing estates in Czyżyny, which completed the process of merging Nowa Huta with Kraków – into a loose, ribbon-like layout.⁹⁸ Despite architectural circles' efforts to preserve ecological corridors, since the 1970s building development increased in the Vistula Valley where thermal inversion occurs, which has been facilitated the accumulation of pollutants at an even deeper level.

On the verge of disaster

A politically suspect Kraków for decades found itself beyond the sphere of any privilege. The legal conditions – like an abolition of landlords' freedom to dispose of their properties and influence rents – was much more than just a severe assault on the propertied class. The fabric of Polish historic cities in the 1960s and '70s was subject to an escalating process of material exhaustion and degradation. The disparity between achievements in conservation and the less and less effective protection of entire municipal complexes was still growing.

There was an essential paradox about the preservation of historic monuments under Communism in Poland. On the one hand, there were spectacular achievements in the reconstruction of entire old towns like Warsaw and Gdańsk. On the other hand, the new system was completely helpless in the face of what was seemingly a much simpler task: the maintenance of the existing, authentic, historic fabric of cities like Kraków, which had survived wartime damage. It was a direct outcome of the system's pathological economy. In the long run it brought a depletion of resources and sank to its nadir in the 1970s and '80s.

Wastage of Kraków's potential was attended by an unprecedented ecological disaster. By the 1980s, with over 700,000 inhabitants, its steelworks producing annually 6,7 million tonnes of steel and emitting 9% of the gaseous

⁹⁷ K. Pozniak, *Contesting the Past in Nowa Huta, Poland*, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario 2011; J. Cienski, *Nowa Huta: a Socialist Showpiece Forged in Hard Times*, [in:] *Financial Times*, September 21, 2010.

⁹⁸ E. Firlet, *Spatial and Urban changes of Kraków Between 1939 and 2006*, [in:] J. Wyrozumski (Ed.), *Kraków: nowe studia... op. cit.*, pp. 663-714.



Fig. 40. Kanonicza St. in 1979. Photo by J. Tyrakowski

pollution in the whole of Poland, the city was clearly crossing the limits of environmental sustainability. The pollution was equally damaging to residents and, mainly because of acid rains, to monuments.

14. Rebirth of civil society

Despite the numerous inauspicious circumstances, Kraków society manifested a remarkable vitality and creativity. In the 1950s and '60s, it bred a diversity of globally renowned talents like the composer Krzysztof Penderecki, film directors Andrzej Wajda and Roman Polański, theatre reformer Tadeusz Kantor, writers Sławomir Mrożek, Stanisław Lem, Wisława Szymborska (recipient of the Nobel Prize in literature), Karol Wojtyła, then archbishop of Kraków, later Pope John Paul II, and many others. Cultural elite spared no effort to change the fate of Kraków. The turning point came in 1978 when the entire Old Town was chosen to be among the 12 sites inscribed on the first UNESCO World Heritage List.⁹⁹

The success was even greater as the first list also included – as a separate site – the Wieliczka Salt Mine, so inextricably intertwined with the history of Kraków. The town of Wieliczka lies within the Kraków metropolitan area. The Wieliczka and Bochnia Royal Salt Mines, together with Vistula River salt ports, formed the Kraków Saltworks (*Żupy Krakowskie*), a mining company which has been operating continuously from 1290 when it was set up by the Polish Crown. It is believed to be the world's 14th-oldest company and, with an output of over 30,000 tons of salt a year, it gave birth to the largest industrial centre in Europe until the 18th century, both in terms of the number of employees and its production volumes. Today, both mines, with hundreds of kilometres of galleries, partly function as museums, with works of art sculpted in the salt, the tools and machinery, spacious underground chambers arranged and decorated in ways that reflect the

miners' social and religious traditions, and the Saltworks Castle, which administered the establishment for centuries. They illustrate the historic stages of the development of mining techniques in Europe from the 13th to the 20th centuries.¹⁰⁰

Also in 1978, Karol Wojtyła was elected Pope. For the Kraków intelligentsia, the recognition of the city and aroused interest from behind the Iron Curtain was a chance to initiate a charity called the Public Committee for Kraków Monuments Conservation (SKOZK). The initiative gained formal support from state authorities and financial support from state-owned companies. The Committee focussed its energies on the most urgent tasks to begin with halting the degradation of the priceless complexes of town palaces at Kanonicza St. and the Main Market Square area. From 1985, the Committee gained stable financial support from the newly created National Fund for Kraków Monuments Restoration – the first Budget source for conservation of Kraków urban heritage since World War II.

The Polish Ecological Club was founded in Kraków in 1980, during the early days of the Solidarity opposition movement. It was the first legally established independent, non-profit, environmental NGO in the Eastern Bloc, the first organisation to openly protest against the governmental policies which imposed an energy-intensive economy based on heavy industry, treating the environment as ownerless and valueless. The first significant achievement of the young environmental movement was closing down, in January 1981, the extremely harmful aluminium smelter in Skawina, at the southern border of Kraków. Solidarity, which was a multidimensional movement of ten million members, also brought about a breakthrough in planning policies, conservation practices, and stopped planned depopulation of historic districts.¹⁰¹

In 1980s, the Solidarity movement showed that Nowa Huta, which was to be a proletarian stronghold, turned out to be particularly dangerous for the Communist authorities. Alongside the shipyards of Gdańsk and the Silesian mines, the steelworks in Nowa Huta grew into the new vanguard of the workers' opposition, and the strike held there in May 1988 finally induced the dictatorial regime to negotiations with Solidarity, which were brought to the agreements reached at the Round Table. The Polish peaceful revolution between autumn 1988 and spring 1989 opened up the road to sovereignty and democracy for Poland and other nations of Central and Eastern Europe, and gave Europe an opportunity to unite.

⁹⁹ UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, Second Session, Washington, D.C. (USA) 5 to 8 September 1978, Final Report (CC-78/CONF.010/COL.1), (online): http://whc.unesco.org/archive/1978/cc-78-conf010-10rev_e.pdf (date of access: 1.05.2015).

¹⁰⁰ UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, Decisions adopted by the World Heritage Committee at 37th session, Phnom Penh, 2013 (WHC-13/37.COM/20), pp. 213-214.

¹⁰¹ Beiersdorf Z., *Ochrona i konserwacja dóbr kultury w Krakowie w latach 1944–1989. Próba oceny*, [w:] J.M. Małecki (Ed.), *Kraków w Polsce Ludowej*, Materiały Sesji Naukowej TMHiZK, 27.05.1995, Seria "Kraków w dziejach narodu" nr 15, TMHiZK, Kraków 1996, pp. 91-114.

15. Kraków in the Third Republic

Immediate steps were taken to soften the impact of heavy industry pollution on Kraków. The most harmful plants around the city were closed and the modernisation of remaining installations significantly reduced the environmental damage. The democratic government decided to strengthen the financial support for the Committee of Conservation which in the meantime changed into a truly non-governmental organisation, associating the most renowned personalities and specialists. In the mid-‘90s the process of restoration for the first time overtook the degradation and decay of the historical substance. Thanks to the stable financing from the Budget, the Committee has been able to subsidise and supervise the conservation of over one hundred listed buildings every year.¹⁰²

Since 1993, as the first city in Poland, Kraków has been adopting a policy of sustainable mobility, such as introducing and gradually expanding zones of pedestrianisation and restricted parking areas. Kraków’s Old Town is currently (2015) the world’s most extensive pedestrian city zone (3,4 km of roads; over 85,000 m²).¹⁰³ Still, the migration away from the centre causes increased car dependency in spite of considerable investments in the public transport system.

Regional metropolis

Kraków is the only city situated between Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Bratislava, and Budapest – of such a size and historically established metropolitan functions – that has been degraded to the role of a provincial centre.¹⁰⁴ However, it is one of the old cities whose past most clearly determines its current development. After 1989, it went relatively gently through the difficult process of economic transformation, reinforcing its function as one of the largest academic centres in Central Europe. Its universities and colleges now have a host of over 200,000 students. Based on a wide range of well-educated specialists and the large number of local and foreign hi-tech companies, Kraków became the world’s primary location for investment in global BPO projects, and has been trying to position itself as Europe’s Silicon Valley. In 2008, it was chosen to be one of the centres of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT).

Today, Kraków, with a population of about 1,000,000 residents and students, is again the second Polish city in respect to its size and importance. It covers an area of five previously independent towns and 76 villages, occupying an area of 326,8 km². It is one of the leading centres of education and culture. With approximately 8.5 million people living within a radius of 100 km, Kraków is also one of

Central Europe’s most important economic centres. There are about 50 large multinational companies in the city. Sixty percent of the city’s population is below the age of 45. Since the year 2000, the Third Campus of the Jagiellonian University¹⁰⁵ has been in construction, with the LifeScience Park, and bordering the Kraków Technology Park and the Kraków Special Economic Zone. The investment area covers 150 ha of compactly built-up area adjoining a complex of Jurassic Landscape Parks.

Kraków’s success in tourism (over 10 million visitors per year) also means that Kraków has prevailed over the consequences of the crisis caused by Communism. Successful conservation of historic monuments has been possible thanks to the grassroots initiatives of local intellectuals, the generosity of numerous private donors, and a special form of state patronage through the independent National Fund for the Restoration of the Historic Monuments of Kraków. In the course of almost four decades, expensive conservation projects on hundreds of historic sites have been financed or supported by the national budget.



Fig. 41. Kraków’s Main Market Square.

Source (online): www.lifo.gr

Despite historic adversities, successive urban layouts realised from the Middle Ages until the mid-20th century have been mostly preserved in the city’s structure. It does not apply, however, to historic villages and landed estates, which were mostly obliterated during the last stages of the city’s expansion. Since the 1970s, suburbanisation has become the most problematic process in the spatial development of Kraków. Numerous housing estates and detached houses are being built, many of them in areas of high ecological and scenic values. The breakthrough of 1989 even intensified those processes.

A question of heritage

The recent years have been bearing testimony to a clash of opposing tendencies. On the one hand, the extent of view on heritage and the possibilities for its protection have potentially widened. On the other hand, one can hardly fail to notice the marginalisation and exploitation of heritage. The transition from a static way of treating heritage, perceived

¹⁰²1,200 Kraków buildings are registered in the national register of historic monuments and over 5000 are described as having other historical values. Cf. (online): <http://www.skozk.pl> (date of access: 1.05.2015).

¹⁰³For comparison: Strøget, Copenhagen’s famous central pedestrian network, has so far expanded to 3,2 km of roads in total.

¹⁰⁴J. Purchla, *Cracow in the European...*, op. cit.

¹⁰⁵Officially named: *Campus of the 600th Anniversary of the Jagiellonian University Revival*.

as something that is sacrosanct and definite, to the need for protection in the realities of commercialisation and privatisation pressure on public space, calls for more effective ways to manage assets and the potential of heritage.

The contemporary dominant perception of heritage is still broadening. There is some ambivalence towards the heritage of the 20th century, but there is no more controversy over a question of conservation and cultural importance of such phenomena as Nowa Huta or the remains of Fortress Kraków. The latter was brought about in the interest of a foreign occupant, but with the economic and intellectual participation of the local community; it has an unquestionably high cultural value as one of the best examples of the 19th century fortification system. Nowa Huta, thanks to the outstanding activity of local NGOs, has been facilitating a change of the borough's image which had been for a long time perceived as an exemplification of the despised Communist system. In 2005, the area of the original Nowa Huta layout was listed on the register of historic monuments. The majority of architectural restoration projects there have not been accomplished yet, since the revitalisation activities were so far being dominated by the spheres of environmental protection, economic stability, local culture and small community projects such as courtyard gardening. Currently Nowa Huta is the most green and socially active borough of Kraków, with numerous grass-root initiatives. They still wait for an adequate support from the City Hall, which would enable them to restore an image of its once stylish, but presently squalid, centre.

15. Planning strategies

Until the 1990s, thanks to the long-standing efforts of Kraków's academic and architectural circles, the conservationist attitude generally prevailed against careless ideas of modernisation and transformations. Since the 1820s, starting with the plan by Tomasz Majewski and Ignacy Hercok, successive plans continued the evolutionary idea of the garden-city-like structure¹⁰⁶ of concentric and radial development, based on an array of historic settlements. The last plan which followed that idea thoroughly was the one by Anna Ptaszycka (1955).

The historical continuity of planned growth was broken in the 1970s, when a mega-grid of road infrastructure was imposed. That way the technical network predominated over the organic pattern characteristic of all the previous phases of city growth.¹⁰⁷

The 1977 plan, however, established the conservatory zones, which were mapped out covering characteristic spatial compositions of historic towns, boroughs, and suburbs. According to contemporary knowledge and public opinion, not only medieval structures, but also the valuable later complexes, sites, vistas, and panoramas, were treated as cultural achievements, ranked within one of two basic

¹⁰⁶Ebenezer Howard called Kraków a "naturally grown Garden-City". E. Howard, *Miasta-ogrody*, [in:] *Architekt*, 12/1912, p. 82.

¹⁰⁷Bogdanowski J., *Urbanizacja krakowska w dobie PRL*, [in:] Małecki J.M. (Ed.), *Kraków w Polsce Ludowej... op. cit.*, pp. 9-22.

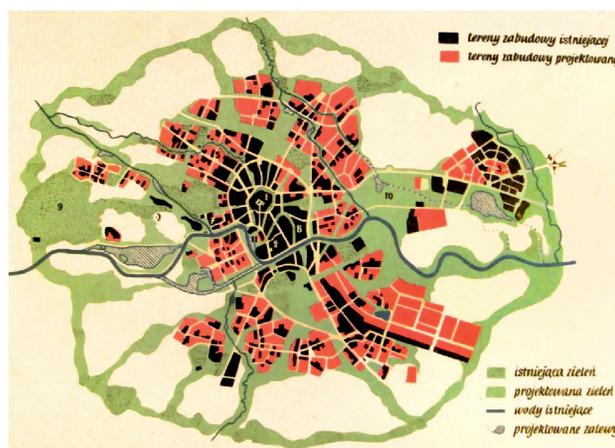


Fig. 42. The scheme of the city structure by A. Ptaszycka, 1953



Fig. 43. Comparison of the planned city structures: traditional – radial (Ptaszycka, 1955) and functional – grid (Seibert, 1977). Sketches by J. Bogdanowski [4]

zones: the main, internal zone of close urban conservation, and the external zone of partial conservation and close scenic protection.

Such regulation soon appeared insufficient, especially since more and more conservation sites and views around the city were threatened by urban sprawl.

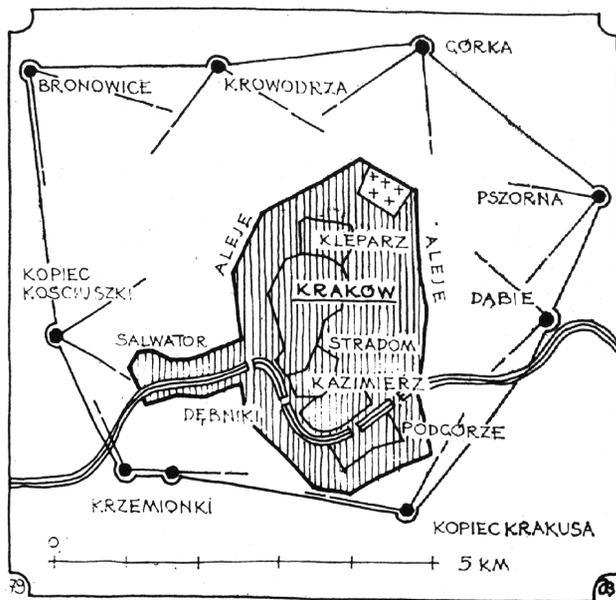


Fig. 44. Conservation zones from the plan of 1977, outlined by J. Bogdanowski. Source: Bogdanowski [4]

The historic landscape values were carefully treated in the 1988 plan by Z. Ziobrowski, which comprised the most complete set of regulations, mainly based on zoning policy. It was aimed at the protection and shaping of scenic values in connection with environmental protection, cultural heritage protection, and development intensity. The correction to the plan made in 1993–1994 complemented it with a coherent composition of zones to protect and shape scenic views and vistas. It was the last legal document covering the whole administrative area of Kraków, based on thorough landscape and townscape study¹⁰⁸ and fairly well equipped with relatively effective zoning and

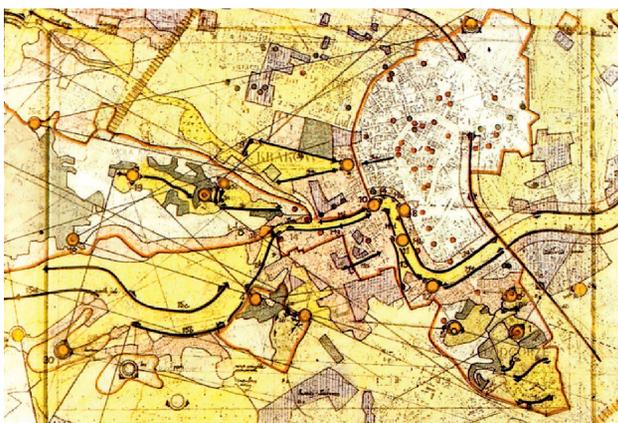


Fig. 45. Scenic value conservation zones study for the City Revopment Plan (Studium), by K. Dąbrowska-Budziło [9]

¹⁰⁸Studium Krajobrazowe wyk. zespół Instytutu Architektury Krajobrazu pod kier. A. Bohma. Strefy ochrony ekspozycji oprac. K. Dąbrowska-Budziło, K. Dąbrowska-Budziło, *Panorama Krakowa jako przejaw dziedzictwa kulturowego*, [w:] J.M. Małecki (Ed.), *Krajobraz Krakowa wobec zagrożeń*, Materiały Sesji Naukowe TMHiZK, 22.04.2007, Seria "Kraków w dziejach narodu" nr 26, TMHiZK, Kraków 2007, pp. 47-67.

land use ordinances.¹⁰⁹ It unfortunately expired in 2002, as a result of the centrally imposed liberalisation of the planning system.

17. Planning crisis

In 1990s, just after the city regained autonomy, the discussion of the new vision of Kraków was animated and knowledgeable. Simple reserves had been used to efficiently overcome problems accumulated during Communism, although soon the clash became visible between the developmental wave and the inadequacy of competence and instruments for spatial planning in the conditions of a free market economy. The municipal authorities turned out to be virtually vulnerable to market forces and a pressure of short-term benefits.

The conflict between private and public interests is the essence of today's problems with chaotic urban sprawl and visual pollution. The practised planning tools seem to be inadequate, and property lobbying evidently impresses the image of the city at the cost of the public domain. It should be the municipal government's duty to weigh the arguments of both groups, but side with the public good if a conflict is unresolved. The recent passivity of local government is against the tradition of the Kraków municipality which, from its beginning in the 13th century, and again from its restoration in the 19th century, was at the forefront of the urban order.

The second key factor in the planning crisis is the lack of long-term vision. Creative abilities might be restored on the foundation of the cannons of traditional values. A clash of traditionalism with innovation and globalisation may be creative. According to Purchla,¹¹⁰ the question is how the recent crisis over the traditional thinking of the city and the landscape – the crisis of the values, vision, leadership, and planning – is a function of a crisis of the community (*civitas*).

The third factor is the lack of coordination of spatial management, arising due to inadequacy of dialog between various local administration departments, between neighbouring municipalities, different levels of local and regional government, and other public stakeholders, such as central agencies or railway.

Major metropolises, which are global centres of business, have the ability, proportional to their size, to adopt innovations, including those which come out in their townscape and skyline. Lack of protection of their panoramas and historic tissues does not stop their dynamic development. Kraków evidently is not such a metropolis and never will be. It can be an important point on the map of European academic centres and one of the main sites of culture and tourism – like Venice, Florence, Avignon, or Edinburgh, which are mid-size cities with regards to their population and area, but giants of culture and touristic attraction. If Kraków is to place itself permanently among them, it needs

¹⁰⁹J. Purchla, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁰*Ibidem.*

to base its developmental strategy on the constant increase of living quality, sustaining local traditions, heritage, and cultural landscape.¹¹¹

Recently created institutions on the metropolitan level – particularly Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI), whose aim is to streamline territorial strategies – start to overcome systemic and communication problems characteristic for the last decades. The key to success again seems to be the leading role of local and regional NGOs, cooperating closely with academia, and functioning together as agents of change.

¹¹¹J. Purchla, *Kryzys planowania czy kryzys miasta?*, [w:] J.M. Małecki (Ed.), *Krajobraz Krakowa wobec zagrożeń*, Materiały Sesji Naukowe TMHiZK, 22.04.2007, Seria “Kraków w dziejach narodu” nr 26, TMHiZK, Kraków 2007, pp. 87-93.

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