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THE MEDIEVAL URBAN COMPLEX OF LUBLIN
A study of its spatial development

Summary

Lublin was not one of Poland's main cities or settlements during the Piast dynasty (10th–14th cents). Indeed, it was not until the Jagiellonian period, from the close of the 14th century, that Lublin began to figure among Poland's leading urban centres. In contrast to numerous other Polish urban centres – e.g., Cracow, Poznań, Wrocław, or even Sandomierz, which was closely tied to Lublin in history – medieval Lublin has not been the subject of thorough scholarly inquiry. And yet Lublin's role in Poland's eastern frontier lands during the Middle Ages is one which deserves close attention. In this context the town's spatial development emerges as an issue worthy of special focus. This is because the translocation of the town's centre can be seen to directly reflect political and administrative developments, whether during the early period of Polish statehood, during the subsequent period of the Polish state's breakdown into regional polities, or during the state's reconstruction by the last of the Piasts in the 14th century.

The chronological scope of this work extends from the beginning of the 6th century, and thus, from the dawn of early Slavic culture in the Lublin area, to the close of the 14th century, when the process of defining the town's location had finished.

Research into the town's spatial development required determining a host of conditioning factors, from the historical, cultural and civilizational, to socio-economic and geographical ones. In the studies of Lublin carried out to date, the question of morphology, one of the central features of the town's identity and an essential developmental condition, has not been the subject of specialist studies. Here it need be stressed that Lublin's historical settlement, and thus, the location of today's town, crystallized topographically on the basis of key settlement concentrations in the direct vicinity of the Bystrzyca, Czechówka, and Czerniejówka river valleys. Over the course of history these sites underwent partial anthropogenic transformations. The present work, in reconstructing the way Lublin's single most important elements took shape – namely, Castle Hill and Old Town Hill – makes important strides toward recognizing the natural determinants that influenced the shape and extent of the Lublin agglomeration's spatial development.

The results of archaeological and historical research into Lublin, seen in the context of the history of Polish lands, have been providing an ever broader basis for the reconstruction of the town's evolution and development. A significant element of the process of settlement and urbanization was the differentiated exploitation of the higher grounds that were occupied for settlement purposes at the conjunctions with river valleys. This process was connected with the repeated translocation of the settlement centre. In the development of Lublin's early medieval agglomeration, several stages of metamorphosis can be distinguished.

Between the 6th and the 7th centuries, and thus, during the earliest period of the medieval inhabitation of Lublin and its immediate environs, a dense complex of open settlements began to form along the valley of the Bystrzyca and its tributaries, namely, the Ciemięga, Czechówka, Czerniejówka, and Krężniczanka. Archaeological research conducted on Czwartek Hill, situated in the centre of today's Lublin, discovered remains of settlements dating back to the 6th century. During excavations at the Castle Hill and the Old Town Hill sites, which are adjacent to Czwartek Hill, artefacts of the same date were found.

The Lublin area's settlement pattern underwent distinct change in the next period of the Early Middle Ages, when the areas along river valleys began to be settled. This is clear from the significant growth in the number of archaeological sites and relics dating to the period of the 8th to 10th centuries. Besides the quantitative increase in settlement sites, we also observe the qualitative differentiation of the way the land was utilised. Present research into that time allows us to reconstruct a picture of settlement wherein pride of place fell to the stronghold on Old Town Hill. This lay in the centre of a complex of surrounding settlements and including burial-mound cemeteries. It would seem quite likely that the Lublin stronghold of that period was one of the main tribal centres of the people known as the *Lędzianie*.

In the 10th century the tribal stronghold on Old Town Hill was destroyed. The settlement centre then shifted to the north-east, toward the Czechówka river. This new centre was situated near the trade route running from the east to the Baltic, just a short distance from where it crossed the Bystrzyca. The stronghold (*gród* in Polish) here above the Czechówka valley soon took on the leading role in the area. Indeed, from the 14th century it was known as *Grodzisko* – which connotes a large or powerful *gród*. It seems quite certain that to the north-east, on the adjacent rise in the Czechówka valley, there was an

associated settlement, one we may surmise to have been subordinate to its larger neighbour. However, the results of the limited archaeological research carried out to date on Białkowska Mount, as it is called, do not provide sufficient basis for full acceptance of that conclusion: it must therefore remain in the realm of hypothesis.

To the west, at some distance from the stronghold, was an agricultural settlement that coexisted with the stronghold's hill. It was located on the spur of Czwartek Hill. This settlement also shifted toward the Czechówka valley. Archaeological investigations have found traces of the somewhat scattered settlement of that time on Old Town Hill, located to the south-west of the stronghold-complex.

Following the mid-12th century yet another translocation of the stronghold centre occurred, this time in the direction of the valley's distinct Castle Hill. The results of archaeological work here give grounds for believing that the stronghold on Grodzisko Hill might have functioned for some time in tandem with the new stronghold. This parallel functioning, lasting until the 13th century, most likely derived from the fact that the transfer of administrative organization happened gradually, in step with the construction of the new stronghold, a process which required time.

At least two churches are known to have existed during the Early Medieval Period of the Lublin settlement complex. Tradition in Lublin, based though it is on legends, places the oldest church in the area to the north of the Czechówka. This was supposedly the Church of St. Nicholas on Czwartek Hill, ascribed to the 10th century. However, we lack any evidence to support that account. Indeed, no such church can be identified within the existing stone construction, which dates to the first half of the 16th century. Nonetheless, bearing in mind the meagre amount of early written documents concerning Lublin, most of them from the 14th century, we may however assume that well before the mid-16th century – and certainly in the mid-14th century, as we know from records – there must have been a church on Czwartek Hill, one which may well lay claim to being Lublin's oldest „proto-parish” place of worship. Its erection (presumably due to princely initiative) most probably occurred after the period of instability in the 1030s (when there was a violent pagan backlash on Polish lands), that is, during the reconstruction of state and ecclesiastical structures by King Kazimierz the Restorer, who reigned from 1038 to 1058. As the law of patronage would indicate, in all likelihood it passed to private hands during its refounding.

Thus, prior to the mid-12th century and the translocation of the stronghold to Castle Hill, we may further assume that, along with the church on Czwartek Hill built at princely initiative, there must also have existed a trading settlement of local importance. It was tied to the aforementioned trade route that ran from the east, one that seems to have forked in Lublin north to Mazovia and Wielkopolska, and south-west in the direction of Sandomierz and Cracow.

A number of circumstances, among them ones of general significance for Poland, had an influence on the translocation of Lublin's settlement centre to the high ground between the Bystrzyca and Czechówka rivers, namely to the Castle and Old Town hills. Not without significance was Cracow's assumption from the mid-11th century of the role of Poland's main town in terms of state and ecclesiastical power. Of further importance was Poland's breakdown into regional polities following the death of King Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed (ruled 1102–1138). As a consequence of those political and administrative developments, Lublin became more closely tied to Poland's southern lands with their main hubs Cracow (the capital of the Cracow province) and first and foremost Sandomierz, then the pre-eminent stronghold of Sandomierz province. Earlier, up to the mid-12th century, the stronghold of Lublin had found itself primarily in the sphere of influence emanating from Gniezno and Poznań – and later from Płock.

The creation of a strong administrative centre having military significance between the Vistula and Wieprz rivers was connected with the effort to integrate those lands with the Sandomierz province. The existence of a divided Ruthenia prompted the rulers of the Cracow–Sandomierz principedom to direct their attentions eastward. We need assume that their resultant eastern policy engendered a strengthening and a promotion of the development of the newly formed Lublin as a base for future operations. In these new circumstances the functions of settlement centre were shouldered by Castle Hill, where the stronghold was located. In line with the new centre's needs, the area of Old Town Hill was also drawn upon. The carrying out of the prince's idea for a new spatial organization for Lublin no doubt caused changes in the previous functions of the agglomeration. One result of the translocation enacted must have been the population's migration between individual elements of the complex, along with the gradual alteration of the status of existing population concentrations.

In the light of considerations to date, the moment of the centre's organization, expressed, among other

things, in the stronghold's new localization, can be assigned to the time following the emergence of a separate Sandomierz province, and most certainly to the early second half of the 12th century – perhaps to the period right after Henryk of Sandomierz's return from the Crusades. Lublin then swiftly became a leading stronghold among the centres beyond the Vistula.

Thus, according to the present state of research, the Lublin stronghold emerges as an essentially bipartite complex. The main element was located on the higher, western part of the hill, while an external courtyard was situated on the eastern portion with a characteristic depression running perpendicular to the longer (east-west) axis of the Hill, with a rather wide opening on the north side. The way in which the land was adapted, i.e., the way the ground for the stronghold was raised, suggests its perfect exploitation with the aim of creating a strong centre with a lookout and defensive function.

Surviving written sources (i.e., the Peter's Penny inventory) indicate that the stronghold on Castle Hill included, at least from 1326, a chapel in honour of the Holy Trinity. A stone church with that dedication exists to this day within the 14th-century castle that replaced the stronghold, although it is dated to the period of 1335–1370. Architectonic investigations have demonstrated that the structure has a uniform character, and thus it cannot be identified with the chapel mentioned in the above-mentioned source. Thus, it need be accepted that within the context of the founding of the stronghold that preceded the 14th-century castle complex there must have been a chapel that was located elsewhere and in another form. The hypothetical reconstruction of Castle Hill suggests that the area of the church's original location could not have been the eastern part of the stronghold, and that it therefore must have been in the western part, in the vicinity of the assumed bailey, where archaeological studies have discovered several graves dating to the 12th century.

To the south-west of the stronghold, on Old Town Hill, in the area where settlement had previously been somewhat scattered, a new stage was initiated with the 12th-century reorganization of the Lublin urban complex. Archaeological investigations carried out on Old Town Hill have unearthed the existence of traces of 12th century settlement comprising archaeological layers and artefacts of this period. In considering Old Town Hill in this period one must bear in mind the question of function of the area. Archaeological investigations have shown that in the period approximating to the translocation of the stronghold, the settlement existing on the Old Town

Hill was an open one and formed a *suburbium*, one of the elements of the stronghold complex. It probably fulfilled this function alongside the Czwartek settlement. The development of the Old Town Hill settlement should be linked with the institution of the region's archdeaconry, which operated in Lublin as early as 1198. The prince, who supported the efforts of the Church to evangelise the population and construct ecclesiastical structures, to help meet the needs of the newly created ecclesiastical administration, handed over to the bishop the lands on Old Town Hill, where he set up the archdeaconry. This involved the stretch along the eastern edge of the hill. It embraced the existing non-churchyard inhumation cemetery originating here in the 12th century. The cemetery, now absorbed within the developing settlement outside the stronghold by the archdeaconry, was absorbed within the town after the mid-13th century. This had a direct connection with the building of the new Archangel Michael parish church, intended for the Old Town Hill's new socio-economic and spatial structure. It would seem that this was no isolated case. Indeed, non-churchyard cemeteries dating to the 11th century also appear in nearby Sandomierz, occupying a peripheral position vis-à-vis settlement concentrations. And they, too, were overtaken in the 12th century by urban settlement.

While discussing the question of the *suburbium*, we cannot omit the matter of the church that served it, one that researchers to date have identified with the Archangel Michael church, which, sadly, was demolished in 1856. As in the case of the St. Nicholas church, the legendary founder of the Archangel Michael church was believed to be a 13th-century prince, Leszek the Black. However, archaeological examinations conducted within the cemetery on Old Town Hill have not confirmed the presence of a church that would have arisen before the early 14th century. Moreover, neither have investigations outside the cemetery revealed relics indicating the existence of an earlier house of worship. Thus, we have no basis for locating a church in the part of the *suburbium* that did not belong to the bishop. Nonetheless, we may venture the hypothesis (one supported by late medieval written sources), that within the confines of Lublin's archdeaconry there was a church located across from the cemetery in the area that belonged to the bishop. It was probably known as the Holy Cross church. That church was handed over to the Dominicans who arrived in Lublin in the 1360s. Historical research would corroborate such a hypothesis, as similar cases are to be noted in the first half of the 12th century in Cracow,

Wrocław, Gdańsk, and Sandomierz. In Łęczyca, as well, the archdeaconry handed over the Holy Cross parish church to the Cistercians active there.

The latter part of the first half of the 13th century in the Lublin area was characterized by Mongol, Ruthenian, and Lithuanian invasions. No doubt they directly affected Lublin. The warfare lasted, albeit with interruptions, all the way to the century's end – and this must have entailed the destruction of the town. Prior to 1302 on Old Town Hill a new spatial structure arose. In a 14th-century document it was dubbed *Lublin novum*. Such a name would clearly seem to bespeak the town's fundamental spatial transformation.

In previous research into Lublin's development, the act of the town's founding on German law was connected with the person of Władysław Łokietek ("the Elbow-high" – ruled 1306–1333, as king from 1320), who in granting military command of the Lublin March in 1317 to Maciej, the commander (*wójt*) of Opatowiec, at the same time granted Magdeburg rights to Lublin's inhabitants. It should be mentioned that another view has also been tabled, namely, that the deed of 1317 was preceded by an earlier founding. There is also the opinion that the above act of the prince is strictly a document of bequeathing command to Maciej of Opatowiec, and that said document contained merely a decorative clause granting Magdeburg rights to Lublin, but without force. In this view, the document need not be connected with the town's founding. In light of the scarcity of written documents, the attempt to verify at least a portion of these interpretations has led to focusing attention on the primary evidence, that is, the town plan itself. Historical and urbanistic research to date have not encompassed in their purview exacting analyses of Lublin's medieval town plan. Studies currently being conducted have demonstrated that its layout is comprised of two spatially commensurate halves. In the borders as delineated by the town walls two urban plans can be distinguished – a northern one extending out along Grodzka street before spreading wide up to Po Farze Square, and a southern semicircular one with a market in the shape of a trapezoid, and with curving streets radiating around it. These create a kind of irregular grid, although it arises from a regular checkerboard plan. This is in fact a rather typical layout for the Middle Ages. Each of the two halves described here was marked out in use of differing units of measurements. The basic measurement for the northern portion was that of a grid divided up into units with a length of 45 yards. In the southern portion the analogous measurement is 75 yards.

Again, for measuring each of the portions of Lublin's town plan differing units and principles for measuring the land were applied.

Exact surveys of the plan of the developed northern part of Old Town Hill show that the urban plan of that portion of Lublin was based on a plan governed by strict geometrical rules. In analysing the northern portion of the Old Town Hill's plan it was established that the basic unit of measurement was the foot (0.303 m in length) and the yard (0.606 m in length). This system of measurement is understood to have been used prior to the mid-14th century, and even in the 13th century. Grodzka street and the smaller ones that cross it, such as Ku Farze and others, created blocks, their size was the result of multiplying the basic unit, as based on the residential lot of 30 x 90 feet (9.09 m x 27.27 m). One cannot help but note the somewhat small size of these lots, something which can be explained in terms of the limited extent of lands designated for homes around the town.

Exact geometrical surveys of the developed southern part of Old Town Hill indicate that for its layout the basic units of measurement were the foot (0.288 m in length) and the yard (0.576 m in length), ones characteristic for the 14th century.

Until recently it was assumed that within the Old Town Hill were conditions for delineating a regular checkerboard town plan. But today this has to be rejected. For the architects of each subsequent stage of the town's rise were compelled to take into account two conditions that were essential for laying out any plans. First of all was the existing town plan in the north, and secondly, the two vast, dry valleys encircling the highlands and separating (from the south and west) the area running up to the new section of the town, thereby posing a natural series of elements defending the town. One of the valleys sloped down toward the Czechówka river valley, the other to the Bystrzyca valley. Thus, the inclusion within the town's boundaries of valley areas would have forced major levelling work, and above all would have demanded (in shifting the defensive ramparts outside the valleys) the creation of artificial moats separating the town centre from the highlands stretching to the west and southwest. This fundamental difficulty, along with the economic and social conditions, elicited the need to adapt the idea of a regular checkerboard plan to local topographical conditions.

The basic question, in light of the above, is to date the two phases of Lublin's development. The first phase, which entailed the emergence of the northern portion of the settlement plan on the Old Town Hill, may be connected with the destruction wrought by

the Mongol invasion in the mid-13th century, and the later reconstruction of the town of Lublin. The act of founding the town would thus fall between the years 1259 and 1279, and would be connected with the person of Prince Bolesław Wstydlivy („the Shy”).

The final quarter of the 13th century is again written in the history of the town of Lublin's rise in terms of the numerous military campaigns waged from the north and from the east. No doubt they had various results – and destruction – for the town as it was then building itself based upon German law. Perhaps it was precisely as a result of the tragic developments that the first founding act did not meet its intended objectives. Or perhaps this destruction caused – in a relatively short time, at the beginning of the 14th century – the town's reconstruction to be undertaken on a grander scale. Nor can it be ruled out that the actions pursued were aimed at expanding a feebly developing town, and thus at attracting a larger number of settlers. Władysław Łokietek, in endeavouring to reunite Poland, well appreciated the role of Lublin as an important administrative and military hub. In 1317, while still a prince (he was not crowned king until 1320), he bestowed Lublin with a new town law on the Magdeburg model, and thereby strengthened Lublin economically. The subsequent founding of the town, just as the first, lasted some time. The activities Łokietek undertook was continued in the reign of his successor, Kazimierz the Great. Was it also in that time that the expansion of the town's boundaries took place, in connections with the expansion of the town's vast holdings? When Prince Władysław gave regional military command to Maciej of Opatowiec, he also gave the town 100 *lan* of agricultural and non-agricultural lands. That land was to provide Lublin the wherewithal for its development, assuring the town and its inhabitants of suitable revenues. To date in works on the history of Lublin the matter of the lands Łokietek bequeathed to the town has appeared but sporadically and been discussed only in general. In evaluating the issue of the bases for Lublin's medieval town plan, it was held that an integral element of research should be that of the town's surrounding properties, determining their extent, and – to the degree possible – determining the way they were marked out along with the unit of measurement used. The primary difficulties impacting the results of such studies were the later intensive urbanization of the former lands around the early town and the dearth of cartographic materials. One map is of much value: the 1783 map done by J.St.N. Łęcki, known from 19th and 20th century copies. Nor do written sources offer a complete

picture of the town's land holdings. The attempt made here is based on a retrospective analysis of cartographic documents and published materials concerning the question of land ownership. It shows that Lublin's foundation lands were surveyed in reliance on the measurement unit of the Frankish *lan*, equal to 26.77 hectares. However, it is not certain if the town truly owned the 100 *lan* given by Prince Władysław Łokietek, and if the lands that indisputably belonged to it were part of the original founding act. This type of question arises from analysis of the unit of measurement used to mark out the first, northern part of the town plan on the basis of German law, and to mark out farm lands.

No doubt one of the town's most important stone structures, one that was erected after Łokietek's foundation, was the parish church dedicated to the Archangel Michael. Its construction was possible not until the conflict between Prince Władysław and Cracow's bishop Muskata had ended. This was further associated with the rebellion of Albert, Cracow's *wójt* (military commander), and with the ascension of Cracow's new bishop, Nanker, in 1320. Only then, once these conflicts had ended, were there favourable conditions for building the church in Lublin. And indeed, archaeological research indicates precisely that time, as do the architectonic forms of the surviving fragments of the church.

It would seem that Maciej of Opatowiec did not fully succeed in carrying out Prince Władysław Łokietek's aims. In 1342 the king sold the office of military commander in Lublin to a German settler, Franczko of Mainz. At that same time he also regulated relations with the Church via repurchasing from the archdeaconry his lands on Old Town Hill. The king thereby eliminated the basic barriers encumbering the objective of pushing ahead with the town's second development plan. The steps taken by King Kazimierz the Great allowed for the definitive conclusion of the foundational work begun by his predecessor on behalf of the Dominican Order, and for finalizing the town's delineation in the vicinity of today's Złota and Archidiakońska streets. The decisions of Kazimierz the Great concerning Lublin led to other decisions, ones connected with the reconstruction of the stronghold on Castle Hill, where the timber and earthen fortifications were replaced by masonry constructions. Probably the top of Castle Hill was also levelled and transformed into the parts that, already in the 15th century, were called the Lower Castle (the eastern part) and the Higher Castle (the western part). Within its walls a new, brick chapel (of the Holy Trinity) was built. Its chancel was an integral element of the town's defence

system. The town itself, in 1341 struck by another Tatar invasion, was provided by the king with a system of walls and town gates. Work on their construction lasted until 1370, and this date represents the close of the period of Lublin's foundation.

Work on a new synthesis of Lublin's medieval history has highlighted a range of research areas that require further inquiry. The authors of the previous synthesis have often called for an expansion of research into Lublin's history. And those calls have not lost their validity today. However, it need be noted that the condition for success in their

realization is the need to create a consistent, interdisciplinary research program. The attempt made within the project of the Polish Academy of Sciences Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, entitled "Poland at the turn of the millennia", may create the basis – let us hope – for a discussion the ultimate goal of which would be the formulation of a comprehensive research plan, one that would bring to fruition significantly expanded knowledge on Lublin and other early medieval urban centres of analogous rank and foundation on Poland's territorial extremities.

translated by Philip Earl Steele
