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Infrastructure and Centrality in Town during Annual Fairs. Three Polish Examples (1385–1655)

Anna Paulina Orłowska & Patrycja Szwedo-Kielczewska *

Abstract: »Städtische Infrastruktur und Zentralität während der Jahrmärkte. *Drei polnische Beispiele (1385–1655)*«. The aim of this paper is to reflect on how annual fairs challenged the urban spatialities of trade in medieval and old-regime towns. It is also to pose the question of centrality under the point of view of both the centrality of commercial towns in regional and international networks and the urban centrality of spaces dedicated to trade activities. The study is based on the example of three towns of Greater Poland in the late Middle Ages and Early Modern period. Focusing on trade facilities and on the management of the city space during annual fairs (extraordinary times in the life of cities, when the guild monopoly was suspended and many foreign merchants and ordinary people were gathering in the city), the aim here is to analyse the way in which urban authorities handled the organisation of such big endeavours and how the city space was managed, valorised, and utilized.

Keywords: Fairs, Greater Poland, Poland, trade, trade infrastructure, urban space, markets.

1. Introduction

In order to understand, how annual fairs influenced centrality, we first examine the trade facilities used on an everyday basis and if centralization or decentralization processes can be observed. We then analyse the changes that occurred within towns during annual fairs. We define centrality as the concentration of trade activities, trade infrastructure, and trade places within

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one designated space in order to control it. We will also use the concept of horizontal and vertical centrality, where the horizontal centrality is inclusive, giving similar access to the different social groups, and vertical centrality is more exclusive (Arnaud 2018, 296-7).

This study is based upon the examination of royal charters, city council books, and tax registers. We mainly used books of the royal office such as books of copies of privileges issued (Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych, Metryka Koronna [The Central Archives of Historical Records, Crown Metric] further as AGAD, MK) and resources of municipal and further local archives kept in the State Archive in Poznan (Archiwum Państwowe w Poznaniu: Akta miasta Poznania, Acta Consularia, Akta miasta. Further as APP, AMP; APP, AC; APP, AMG).

We employ a very generic definition of a fair (Pol. *jarmark*), which allows us to study the general characteristics of fairs regardless of their individual differences. We consider a fair to be a cyclical trade event, mostly wholesale, taking place in a given place once a year at the same date, and producing a temporal suspension of the usual trade limitations allowing the access to a town's market for all visitors. With time, however, some restrictions were implemented to protect local vendors and producers.

Our research period begins with a turning point for Polish cities, especially those in the area of Greater Poland: establishing a new polity in the wake of the Polish-Lithuanian Union in 1385, which enabled the charting of a new route to the East and accelerated the increase in overland commercial traffic on the East-West axis. This political union coincided with further political events that had significant influence on the European economy (Małowist 1973). Our research period closes with the beginning of the Second Northern War in 1655, which had significant effects on the Polish economy and serves as a logical endpoint.

Greater Poland was, along with Lesser Poland, the most important part of the Kingdom of Poland. Situated in the north-west part of the country, it bordered with Silesia, Pomerania, and Saxony, which were important and economically well developed. It served as a crossroads of routes from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to Western Europe and from the South to the Baltic region, with its primary port in Gdańsk. Since the union with Lithuania weakened the traditionally dominant position of southern Poland at the end of the 14th century, Greater Poland became an area particularly robust in economic development and closely involved in European trade (Samsonowicz 1973, 712; Zaremska 1973; Wiesiołowski 1980).

In the 16th century, two parts of the Greater Poland province – the voivodeships of Poznań and Kalisz – were home to 160 towns mostly of average size, with less than 2,000 inhabitants. Of course, not all of those towns played a role in European trade; most of them were relevant mainly for regional and local markets. But a few formed important nodes in the

European trade network. Trade issues and the development of the trade network in Greater Poland and in Central Europe were analysed by several researchers (Topolski 1962; Koczy 1930; Groth 1927; Leitgeber 1929; Rybarski 1929; Baszanowski 1977). The network of cities in Greater Poland has been a constant object of research (Wiesiołowski 1980; Słoń 2016b; Słomski 2016). In general, the development of urban settlements in Poland has been examined by Bogucka and Samsonowicz (1986).

The role they played in trade is one of the most important factors that differentiate the towns chosen for this case study, as one of them – Kalisz – had only regional importance; two of them – Poznań and Gniezno – played a significant role in international trade. These characteristics should allow us to compare how the different intensity of the trade activities during an annual fair impacted the centrality within the town.

All three were royal towns, chartered in the 13th century on German Law, using the structures of older, economic prospering settlements, connected to the gords (Münch 1946; Gawlas 2005; Przybył 2005; Jurek 2005; Słoń 2016b; Baranowski 2010; Dunin-Wasowicz 2011; Sawicki and Bis 2018). However, neither Kalisz nor Poznań were located in exactly the same spot as their previous settlements; both were moved to more convenient sites. Both played an important role in the administrative structures of the state. Poznań and Gniezno hosted important institutions of the Catholic Church. All three towns were bigger than average in the province: Poznań had around 8,000 inhabitants in the second half of the 16th century, Gniezno around 4,000, and Kalisz around 2,500.

The trade infrastructure in Polish towns was quite typical for Central Europe, but a short overview should help to clarify Polish terminology. Town halls (Pol. *ratusz*) were both the seat of the town council and a site of trade as they sometimes included shops, vaults, and market halls (Bartoszewicz 2014; Komorowski 2002).

The weighing house (Pol. *waga*) was one of the most important institutions for trade. Incoming merchants payed a small fee in order to weigh and measure their merchandise according to standards compliant with the town council's regulations. The weighing house was usually in the direct vicinity of the town hall, sometimes even within it. The weighing house – which was named in Latin *pondus*, *pensa*, or *libra*; in Polish *waga* or *ważnica* – is quite often described in primary sources as a part of the town hall. In Lukow, it was granted by the king: “*donamus medium pretorii domo stateram seu libram pro communi opidi illius Lukow utilitate et comodo potestate*” (AGAD MK 21, f. 156). In 1584, the town of Kraśnik paid circa 4 zloty¹ to the carpenters, who build a

¹ Zloty was a booking currency used in the Polish Crown based on silver coins. Zloty should be an equivalent of a minted gold coin similar to Rhenish gulden. However, due to changing the gold-silver-ratio it was not always the case.

new weighing room within the town hall (Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie, Akta miasta Kraśnika, I, k. 60v.)

The Międzyrzecz town hall is described in one of the primary sources as follows: “*Cum vero habeant cives seu oppidani praedicti in animo pro commodo ejusdem oppida ad ornamentum domum consilii publici [...] libram etiam in domo eadem [...] habebunt*” (Becker 1930, 283-4). The charter of Rogozno too described the town hall with a weighing room (Gašiorowski and Jasiński 1990, no. 1128). In bigger towns, where the weighing house was used heavily due to more intense merchant activities, it tended to be in a separate building or even in few buildings; the use of which depended on the type of goods for weighing (Kucia 2011, 259-67).

The simplest trade infrastructure was a bench (Pol. *ława*). Over the course of time, benches often were expanded and developed into stalls or even booths; however, their name in the town often remained fixed with the reference to their earlier form. Stalls (Pol. *kram*) were simpler than booths; they were often comprised only of a bench and a roof, but they could also have side walls. Booths (Pol. *buda*) were small compartments, usually built from wood, that were about six feet in length and were equipped with a bench that was lockable from the outside using an iron rod and a padlock. In some towns, booths also had an additional floor, which could be used as a flat or for storage. In Poznań, booths were extended by building so many additional floors that they became very narrow houses with an arcade on the ground level. The name for these types of vendor's booth houses (Pol. *domki budnicze*) indicated that they were a compound of a house and a booth. They were described in Latin as *domo sive buda sua* (Kaczmarczyk 1925, no. 1060). Any of these types of spaces for trade could belong to the town or to a private person, such as an owner of a house situated by the market square.

There were two kinds of market halls. *Smatruz* was the name for one in which differentiated merchandise was offered. Usually, a *smatruz* had no booths or other divisions of the space but was a huge hall; the goods were exposed on the benches. The cloth hall (Pol. *sukiennice*) was identified by the merchandise that was traded inside rather than the form of the building. Cloth production in Poland was relatively minor, so Polish cloth halls featured primarily imported goods. Thus, the existence of a cloth hall in a town was a sign that the town was well integrated into larger trade networks. Contrary to their name, cloth halls tended to consist of a number of booths rather than being actual halls.

2. Kalisz

Kalisz fairs, while not inferior, never became as dominant a node in the network of fairs as Gniezno and Poznań fairs, even despite its exquisite

starting conditions. The new town chartered as a capital of principality between 1254 and 1260 on Magdeburg's Law was established on a grand scale, which allowed an uninhibited development of trade (Wędzki 1977, 65). The market square of Kalisz alone has an area of 1 ha, while the whole town inside its walls measured 18 ha (therefore the market square takes up 5.55 per cent of the town area).

Figure 1 Kalisz in the Second Half of the 16th Century



autor: Urszula Sowina, Tomasz Związek, Tomasz Panecki; map: Tomasz Panecki, Katarzyna Słomska K. Chłapowski, M. Sion (eds.), Wielkopolska w drugiej połowie XVI wieku, vol. 1: Mapy (Warszawa, 2018)
Modified by Tomasz Panecki and Anna Paulina Orłowska

By – ul. Bydłęca	1. Town hall	built-up area (city)	bridges
D-T – ul. Długa lub Toruńska	2. Stalls	built-up area (suburb)	walls
Fu – ul. Furteczna/Forteczna	3. Parish church – St. Nicolaus	built-up area (village)	gates, towers
KSz – droga „Ku szubienicom”	4. Parish church – Holy Virgin Mary collegiate church	gardens or agricultural land	moats
La – ul. Łazienna	5. Franciscans – monastery and St. Stanislaus church	agricultural land	hospitals
Mi – ul. św. Mikołaja	6. Synagogue	gardens	mills
Mn – ul. Mnichów	7. Castle	pastures or meadows	wells
NMP – ul. Najświętszej Marii Panny	8. Archbishop palace	cemeteries	slopes
Pie – ul. Piekarska	9. Territory of later Jesuits monastery		
Prz – ul. Przeznica	10. „Piskorzewo” gate		
Pl – ul. Piskorzewska	11. Mill		
Wr – ul. Wrocławska	12. Toruń gate / Tyńiec gate		
Zim – ul. Zamkowa	13. East gate (without a name)		
Zy – ul. Żydowska	14. Bath gate		
	15. „By the canal” gate		
	16. Wrocław gate		
	17. Mill at Wrocław gate		
	18. Holy Spirit church and hospital		
	19. Bernardine church and monastery		

Source: Sowina, Związek, and Panecki [Panecki and Słomska, cartographers] 2017. Modified by Tomasz Panecki and Anna Paulina Orłowska.

Furthermore, the town was able to freely develop as it was not surrounded by the kinds of independent church settlements (Pol. *jurydyka*) that inhibited Gniezno's development nor were there other towns in the vicinity, as in the

case of Poznań (Truściński 2021, 135). The town was also, again like Poznań, a capital of the land (Kalisz voivodship), and a seat of governorship (Pol. *starostwo grodowe*), which meant it was a seat of a court, therefore an important administration centre, which is usually considered as a factor of economic development of a town. Furthermore, it obtained staple right in the year 1404 (Maisel 1973, no. 28).

It is conceivable that one of the causes of Kalisz's lack of domination in fair commerce is related to the fact that the town's right to hold fairs was granted relatively late. The first preserved privilege for an annual fair in Kalisz comes only from 1338, and it involved only one date – St. Margaret's Day (13 July) (Zakrzewski 1878, no. 1180). Analysis of the document suggests that this was the first fair in the town. The next privilege, issued in 1425, granted the town two more fairs, on SS. Jacob and Philip's Day (1 May) and on St. Martin's Day (11 November) (Piekosiński 1908, no. 1050), which were at most a moderate success. In 1512, the citizens of Kalisz managed to request a privilege for two additional fairs from the king – on St. Wit's Day (15 June) and on Septuagesima Sunday (70 days before Easter) (AGAD, MK 25, 147v-148). Accounting sources from the 17th century indicate that four fairs were held on Septuagesima Sunday, on St. Wit's Day, on St. Margaret's Day, and on St. Martin's Day (Herbst 1962, 97; Nowak 1977, 169). The one on Septuagesima Sunday was the most widely attended, but the St. Martin's fair was also popular. Whilst one might assume that the winter date would be unfavourable for commerce, the dominance of the Septuagesima Sunday fair reflects the early modern tendency to uniform distribution of trade throughout the year and thus the increase in quantity of winter fairs. Moreover, Kalisz repeatedly attempted to adapt their fair schedule to the network needs. Even though the Kalisz fairs were not dominant in the fair network, they definitely played an important role in the life of the town. Their significance was equal to the most important holidays – Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. E.g., the rules of guilds the period before annual fairs was regulated identical as the periods before the most important catholic festive days (Maisel 1975, 261). However, the low influx of incoming merchants affected the town's everyday life to lower extent than in both other towns.

Trade facilities in Kalisz developed very early. Their foundations constitute not only the aforementioned sufficiently large space of the town itself and its market square but also the street layout. Differing slightly from Poznań and Gniezno, the main route leading to Kalisz bifurcates beyond the town gates, forming a spindle shape (Sowina 2021, 12, 91, 103). This attribute allows for very efficient communication in both directions, alleviates traffic, and reduces risk of conflicts. The market square occupies the whole breadth of the spindle, rendering it accessible to the merchants travelling in either direction. The unobstructed traffic flow was ensured by a prohibition on building arcades by the houses on the market square and by the main street

(Maisel 1972, 226, no. 53). Limitation of trade to within the market square area relied on similar reasoning. This rule was repeated multiple times, making it clear that residents were not to block the road for those going to the market square (Maisel 1972, 209, no. 24; Rusiński 1961, 187). There were next to no exemptions from this obligation during the fairs, which contrasts starkly with Gniezno, where during the fairs the trade was both in town and in *jurydykas* and even places of worship. It shows markedly the importance of the basic town infrastructure, especially sufficiently large and well organized space.

Within the market square, further trade infrastructure had been planned – such as benches and butchers’ houses – and their construction started swiftly. They were intended both for the products manufactured locally, such as meat or bread, and for imports, such as broadcloth (Fig. 1: 2). Kalisz had a cloth hall as early as 1291 (Zakrzewski 1878, vol. 2, no. 665), and the king granted its income to the town. The town hall, mentioned in 1372, was also situated within the market square (Sowina, Związek, and Panecki 2021, 1469-70). Its underground hosted shops and vaults that were rented out to merchants. The weighing house was kept within the market square, for some periods within the town hall, for some in a separate building. The significance of these facilities to the town is evident by the fact that after the fire in 1537 they were rebuilt without delay, in the case of the town hall within just a dozen or so weeks (Sowina, Związek, and Panecki 2021, 1469-70). The buildings of the market square changed along with the development of the town. The layout of rows parallel to the town hall was preserved, but the structures evolved from simple benches through stalls to booths. The tax register from 1608 enumerates 17 shops, out of which 9 were divided into several trade compartments. For the St. Wit’s fair in 1635, the tax register lists seven spice booths, nine cloth booths, eight “big Scotsman” booths (wholesale merchants), eight “small Scotsman” booths (retail merchants), two Lithuanian merchants’ booths, a Jewish booth, an iron works stall, and a few smaller booths, including one of book vendors (Nowak 1977, 170). In Kalisz, trade remained within the market for the whole research period.

Two council resolutions pertaining to the booths within the market square contain the most interesting information about their usage during fairs (Maisel 1972, 229, no. 59, 60). In 1631, the council decided that the town treasurers would prepare the booths for merchants. Five spice vendors should pay 10 zloty for the booth yearly and an additional charge of 2 or 5 zloty during the fairs. Similarly, the herb vendors and cloth makers were supposed to pay an extra rent in an amount specified in the town books during fairs. Those two examples corroborate the observations from other trade centres that the permanent trade infrastructure was used much more intensively during the fairs. For the fair periods, which lasted around 7 per cent of the year, one must have paid fees as high as 170 per cent of the general charge.

Increased interest in market goods during the fairs explains why an exception from the general rule to trade only within the market square space was made: During fairs, the butchers were allowed to buy cattle in any location (Maisel 1975, 313, no. 19). When no fair was held, butchers were obliged to wait for cattle in the market square (Maisel 1975, 313, no. 18). However in the Early Modern Period, the trade of particular animal species was divided, forming the so-called pig market near the Toruń Gate and a horse market within the town walls (Nowak 1977, 170) (Fig. 1).

In summary, Kalisz is a case of a town with very horizontal centrality, that was not impacted much by the annual fairs, due to their minor importance in the network of annual fairs and therefore a limited number of visitors. As the annual fairs responded primarily to the local demand, the economic pressure from the wholesale merchants had only a small impact and therefore the shift from horizontal to vertical centrality did not occur even during these economic intensive periods. Aside from the cattle trade, all trade institutions were held within the market place for the whole research period. Infrastructure as well as legal regulations became means of preserving horizontal centrality, and the latter were clearly more egalitarian, as the guilds held no right to control the goods brought into the fair, as was a standard practice in case of Poznań. Such regulations were only implemented in Kalisz after the research period.

3. Poznań

Poznań presents a complex case, as it was a centre of administrative and religious power as well as cultural and economic development (Wiesiołowski 1980; Słoń 2016a). It was a seat of the king, though he seldom visited. Administrative power, on behalf of the king, was in the hands of the senior governor (Pol. *starosta generalny*). Thus, Poznań became a political capital of the region and a voivodship (Malinowski 1956, an extensive list of references and sources there).

Poznań also played an important role in the ecclesiastical structure, as the seat of a bishop was located there. Three ecclesiastical towns: Śródka (belonged to bishop), Ostrówek and Chwaliszewo (belonged to chapter), were in its direct vicinity as well (Dembiński 2021). In the years 1562–1599, an ephemeral noble city of Stanisławowo existed.

Thus Poznań, with its power centres, suburbs, and surrounding church settlements, constitutes a multifaceted object of analysis (Wiesiołowski 1996, 8). Such a neighbourhood posed an array of problems and is of great importance for the issue of the town's centrality, hereby discussed. Poznań was a place of great economic development owing to its burghers who actively participated in European trade exchange.

In the 15th century, Poznań's fairs were organized as follows: on Invocavit Sunday (42 days before Easter, probably lasting four weeks), on St. John the Baptist's Day (24 June) and St. Michael's Day (29 September) (each of them lasting presumably five weeks), and on St. Lucia's Day (13 December).

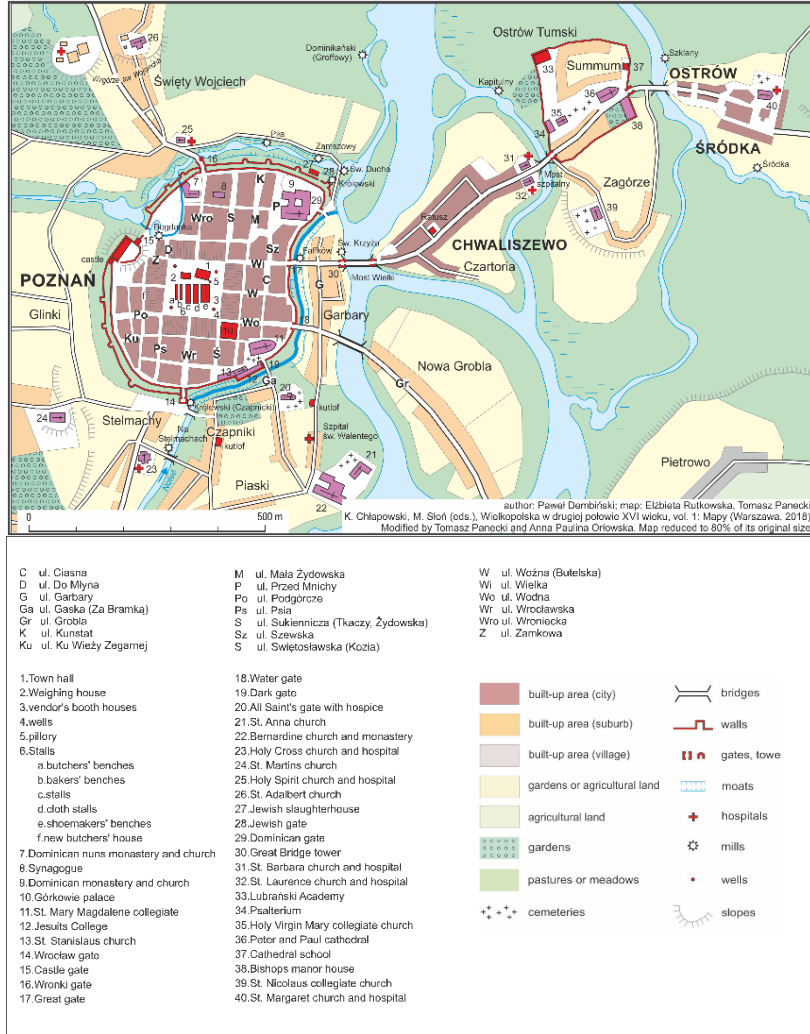
At the same time, two additional annual fairs also took place in the bishop's town of Śródka on St. Margaret's Day (13 July) and St. Michael's Day (29 September), which were seen as competition to the ones in Poznań. That is why Władysław II Jagiełło, for the benefit of his own town, prohibited the sale of dyed cloth during the fair in Śródka (Gašiorowski and Jasiński 1989, no. 1032). In 1430, the Poznań vendors appealed to the king to stop the trade activities that took place on the embankment between Poznań and Ostrów Tumski, on the road to Toruń and Warsaw, because they impinged on Poznań's economic interests (Gašiorowski and Jasiński 1990, no. 1240.). The illegal market place, along with its own structure, soon grew into a proper town – the aforementioned Chwaliszewo, established in 1444 (Piekosiński 1908, no. 733). The issue of Poznań centrality in the region and the interplay of economic relations between Poznań and the surrounding towns requires more attention. However, because of the limitations that the primary sources present, we will focus only on the Poznań town commune (Pol. *gmina miejska*).

Development of Poznań was parallel to the growths of its role in international and state trade. The town of Poznań was originally located on the right bank of the Warta River, where later Śródka was located. There was a Dominican fair established as early as 1244 (Wiesiołowski 1996, 7). In 1254, the Dukes of Greater Poland decided to relocate the town of Poznań and expand its infrastructure in order to increase the town's ability to partake in profits from the steadily increasing trade between Saxony and Prussia (Jasiński 2005; Gawlas 2005). The new town of Poznań had an extensive market (comprising 2 ha of the 27 ha total area of the town within the walls, i.e., 7.4 per cent of the town area) so the centralization of the trade within the market square was easily achievable. In the location act, the Dukes agreed to build permanent trade facilities and reserved for themselves fees from all the stalls to be built. The oldest parts of the market square were centrally located stalls and a cloth hall (Zakrzewski 1877, no. 321). A document issued by the Duke Przemysław II in 1280 shows that just under 30 years later, the vendors' stalls and the bakers', shoemakers', and furriers' benches, as well as butchers' booths, operated on the town of Poznań's market square (Zakrzewski 1877, no. 494).

Those facilities quickly filled up the central and northern parts of the market square. The square was also paved, and water was supplied to it via wooden pipes (Maisel 1953; Rogalanka 2017; Wiesiołowski 1982). At the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries, the weighing house, the town hall, and the

cloth cutting house were built between the northern wall of the stalls and the road encircling the square (Fig. 2: 1, 2).

Figure 2 Poznań Agglomeration in the Second Half of the 16th Century



Source: Dembiński and Rutkowska [Rutkowska and Słomska, cartographers] 2017. Modified by Tomasz Panecki and Anna Paulina Orłowska.

Permanent trade infrastructure was partly modernized and rebuilt with brick in 1386 (APP, AMP, D 192; Maisel 1994, no. 23). Eight years later, the town obtained a three-day staple right on all merchants' products (Raczyński 1840,

no. 107; Wuttke 1864, no. 28; Zakrzewski 1879, no. 1944). Such staple rights are usually seen as an obstacle for merchants, who could not travel undisturbed and were forced to offer their merchandise in the particular town. However, they can also be seen as a chance for the merchants to offer their goods for a specified period of time, usually in the best spot in town.

A detailed look at the infrastructure of Poznań's market square demonstrates a development that initially enabled horizontal centrality by putting the town hall and all kind of trades in the same place, thereby supporting equal participation in trade both for all interested sellers and for consumers. Poznań's market square was subdivided into segments dedicated for products of the same kind: each group of vendors had its own space. The central area, along the route from Silesia to Western Pomerania, was given to stalls and cloth benches (Fig. 2: 3 c, d.). In the 15th century, these were impressive edifices and had the right to conduct retail trade (Leitgeber 1929, 44-5). Town charters clearly distinguished materials that should be offered by tradeswomen in the separate market hall called *smatrux* (Maisel 1968, vol. 2, no. 101). The salt market was located between the weighing house and the town hall (Fig. 2: 1, 2), and it included stalls selling salted herrings in bulk, while the retail herring and fish markets were in the eastern part of the square, in front of the vendors' booth houses (Fig. 2: 3). The town council charter from 1418 describes vendors' booths, also called "herring shacks," having a window which opened to the gutter. From 1551, the vendors had at their disposal measures and scales affixed with a town seal. They could share them for a price (Łukaszewicz 1838, 186). The eastern part of the square was allotted to the shoemakers, but it is presumed that it was not fully put to use, so it was shared with other craftsmen (Wiesiołowski 1982, 143). In the 15th century, the town authorities attempted to dedicate some space in the weighing house to furriers (Kaczmarczyk 1925, no. 670). The initiative encountered considerable resistance among them (Kaczmarczyk 1925, no. 144), probably because they traded in the eastern parts of the square, relatively far from the weighing house. Sources from the 16th century indicate that during the fairs, Poznań furriers set up stalls also in the south-east corner of the square, near the pillory (Wiesiołowski 1996, 12). In the west corner of the market square, outermost positions were taken by butchers (Fig. 2: 3 a), preceded by bakers' and shoemakers' benches (Fig. 2: 3 b). The parts of the square without permanent trading infrastructure were occupied by the various types of trade, e.g., millstone, ironware, or flea market vendors (Wiesiołowski 1996, 12). In the 16th and 17th centuries, there was a wreath market between the town hall facade and the other buildings in the central part of the market square (Maisel 1968, vol. 2, no. 190; 1953, 688).

In the 15th century, due to the town's growing needs, infrastructural expansion reached the town square's limits. As the space in the central area of the market was scarce, new butcher's houses were built at the back of the

adjacent houses (Wiesiołowski 1996, 10) (Fig. 2: 3 f). To maximize the use of available space, the permanent market square buildings were expanded, renewed, and modernized in the 16th century. New floors and basements as well as arcades (also for fire protection) were built (APP, AC, I.6, f. 407-408v; Wiesiołowski 1996, 10; Maisel 1953). Development of infrastructure went in parallel with the economic growth of the town, which hired artists from as far away as Italy to improve buildings on the market square (Maisel 1953; Kądziołka 1960).

Official limitation of trade in the town to the market square (*theatrum*) or such other appointed places as the new butchers' houses was directly connected to benefits the town drew from the trading fees and the attempts to control measures and the quality of goods. Prohibition of any trading activities outside the designated area appears for the first time in charters enacted before 1462, which banned trade on the outskirts as well as on the roads leading to the town (Maisel 1968, vol. 1, no. 23). Those regulations must have been breached frequently, since they had to be repeated over and over again and the rule of no exceptions had to be emphasized (Maisel 1968, vol. 1, no. 21, vol. 2, no. 71, 72, 98, 100, 114, 116, 130; Leitgeber 1929, 46-7). Nevertheless, the attempts to evade any control and avoid paying the fees were ubiquitous. Underhanded trade was carried out in the alleys, in front of the gates, and in taverns. Town council charters contain information about cloth which was purchased on the outskirts (Maisel 1968, vol. 2, no. 26, 100), about metalwork offered there (Maisel 1968, vol. 2, no. 116), and about herrings and salt sold illegally in private houses (APP, AC 126, f. 202v-3v; Maisel 1968, vol. 2, no. 72). To maintain equal access to the market and avoid speculation, there were strict hours when the local tradesmen could stock their stalls, guaranteeing the locals equal shopping opportunity. The town council also prohibited resale of oxen (Maisel 1968, vol. 1, no. 47) and buying up the oats as well as the purchase of bread outside of the bakers' shops.

Poznań's market square and its buildings, integrated in crossroads of trade routes, constituted a transportation hub both on the local and international level. Unlike the central and northern parts of the market square, the southern part was not permanently occupied. It has been surmised that it was left at the disposal of the merchants that displayed their products under the three-day staple right or those who visited the town for its fairs (Wiesiołowski 1996, 12). According to estimates, during that time the number of trading posts in the town increased rapidly, reaching up to a thousand (Wiesiołowski 1996, 12). The town's market space, usually well organized and orderly, took on a different atmosphere during the fairs.

Ensuring adequate space for the merchants while keeping the traffic flow within the market square was a serious challenge. The high number of merchants visiting the town during the fairs in 1496 propelled the authorities towards issuing regulations that allowed merchants to set up stalls in any area

of the market in front of the burgher houses. Vendors worked in provisional stalls or directly from their wagons (Maisel 1968, vol. 1, no. 64). Preserved censuses of revenue from stalls leased to the merchants during annual fairs in 1629, 1630, and 1631 (APP, AMP I.879) show that the stalls were leased to the merchants from Silesian towns, as well as to gingerbread makers from Toruń (APP, AMP I.879).

This concession by the authorities, which can be seen as an attempt at decentralization of market space, was in fact supposed to keep the trade within the town's borders. It seems that evasion of fees for trade in Poznań was fairly frequent, which was the main reason for the town council's decision. During a fair, a rise in expenditures on law enforcement, which prosecuted the illegal trade, could be observed.

The aforementioned resolution from 1496 prohibited newcomers from trading in rented houses on the outskirts, by the trade routes, or in villages belonging to the town. To keep trade within the walls of the town, the council issued a separate regulation in 1485 (Kaczmarczyk 1948, no. 1432), which prohibited visitors from staying in the inns and other places of questionable reputation outside the town walls. At the same time, retail of beer produced in Poznań was banned on the outskirts, outside the town walls. This restriction was to be upheld during the fairs and for eight days after.

In 1569, the Merchants' fraternity sought to specify measures, scales, and minimal quantity of imported goods that were sold (Kaczmarczyk 1931, no. 1722; Maisel 1968, vol. 2, no. 84) so that they could limit the access to the market for foreign merchants, also during annual fairs. The attempts toward such limitations can also be observed earlier, as town charters from 1496 indicate that foreign merchants were allowed to trade in rented houses or other lodgings, but within very small limits, e.g., one stone of pepper. Also, furriers undertook efforts to eliminate outsiders from the market even during annual fairs. Custom charters from 1576 had been issued for merchants from Lithuania and Russia, and for Jews trading in furs, who were not allowed to sell stitched-up furs to the detriment of Poznań furriers and had to sell their unfinished products in bulk quantities (Maisel 1968, vol. 2, no. 99).

Efforts to avoid fees certainly posed a challenge, as some of the potential buyers left the town to meet the merchants coming to Poznań. Transactions were being made on the roads and in the forests. It would seem that this issue pertained mostly to the livestock trade, especially cattle (Wolański 1961; Baszanowski 1977; Blanchard 1986). The Butchers' Guild statutes prohibited purchasing cattle and other animals further than a mile from the town – on the outskirts, in the streets, in Śródka, or in Chwaliszewo. Livestock trade, which could possibly have a destructive influence on merchandise on the market square, was most probably conducted on a designated square where the animals had a direct access to water and feed. Huge herds likely stayed in rented pens or near to the place designated for the trade. Authorities

demanded that the animals be moved to a customary market place and sold there. Breaching the rules resulted in facing a huge fine, and those who persistently ignored the regulations could have their cattle confiscated and led to the marketplace.

The marketplace for cattle and horse trade was situated in Piaski – the biggest suburb of Poznań, lying south of the city walls along the traditional oxen trade route (Wiesiołowski 1996, 12). Two town slaughterhouses were situated there, as were the guilds' cattle pens (Wiesiołowski 1996, 13). The Piaski area was also attractive due to its water access. A document from 1418 indicates that Poznań butchers, who specialized in this kind of trade at Silesian and Prussian fairs, owned a spot close to the lake which they used as a pasture (Piekosiński 1908, no. 839). Fifteenth-century sources are insufficient to determine the existence of a market place in that location. Subsequent sources from the 18th century point to a place behind the walls and fortifications instead, at the foot of the castle between the embankments and the shooting range (APP, AMP, I.1908). Regardless of its exact location, it is certain that during the fairs a special place for livestock trade was designated (Orłowska and Szwedo-Kielczewska 2021).

Over time during the period here under study, the centrality in Poznań manifested itself in a variety of ways. For the first period, lasting until the end of the 15th century, a strong preference toward horizontal centrality can be observed. The town council invested a lot of effort in order to keep the whole trade within the market square and to guarantee equal access to the market for all purchasers. Access for the sellers was limited to burghers with two exceptions. The first was temporal and lasted for the period of annual fairs, when all the people were allowed to bring any goods to the town, which, due to the long duration of annual fairs in Poznań, provided open access to the market for roughly more than a quarter of the year. The second possibility was the staple right, which forced, but at the same time allowed, the merchants from other towns to present their goods in town. The second phase indicated the decline of horizontal centrality both within the space and in areas of legal regulations. This shift towards vertical centrality, expressed also in spatial decentralisation, was a result of the rising role of Poznań in the trade as the volume of traded goods expanded massively leading to the domination of wholesale trade as well as the intense competition for space and further the specialisation of markets. So on the one hand, the markets were decentralized regarding space because of the increased volume of merchandise transferred through the city, which rendered the space within the market insufficient. The decentralization can be observed especially in the cattle and meat trades as both the new butchers' house and an additional market place for cattle were placed outside the market square. This led to increased stratification between sellers giving favours for the wealthier and therefore promoted change from the horizontal to vertical centrality. For the

annual fairs, there was also a major shift toward decentralization as trade in private houses outside the market square was allowed. The incline of vertical centrality can also be observed in the limitation of access to the market during annual fairs as the merchandise had to be approved by the guilds.

4. Gniezno

Unlike Kalisz and Poznań, Gniezno held only minor functions in state administration, but despite being only a district town, it played a vital role both in trade networks and in ecclesiastic administration, as the archbishop's seat was situated in the immediate neighbourhood of the town. The archbishop's church housed a major set of relics – those of St. Adalbert, whose cult was important to the identity of the Polish state. St. Adalbert's Day attracted great crowds to Gniezno, including both clergy and laymen, from the local area and from more distant places. Thus, it came as no surprise that, from the 24 April on, one of the most important trade fairs in the country was held for a few weeks in Gniezno – St. Adalbert's Day fair. Despite some frictions, the two events – religious and economic – functioned in symbiosis, increasing each other's attendance among the populace. Another significant fair was beginning on St. Bartholomew's Day (24 August), even though during the period in question no place of worship devoted to that saint existed within the town. The advantageous date, neatly fitting into the farmers' calendars, allowed the fair to boast great popularity and attendance. In the 15th century, the cathedral was granted a papal bull of indulgence for, among others, this particular date, which exemplifies the influence of the fair on the religious (Szyborski 2011, 554, no. 1530).

The third fair was starting on Trinity Sunday (56 days after Easter) and related to the holiday of a parish church of the Trinity. It held much less importance, despite the town's effort to provide it with an international dimension. In 1581, the King of Poland established the fourth fair on St. Andrew's Day (30 November). Nonetheless it seems that the fair, even though the date was advantageous from an economic standpoint, never started operating.

Even though this attempt failed, the annual fairs in Gniezno were one of the most important merchant gatherings in for the Polish Crown. The scale of the trade was massive. The total number of wagons with merchandise was estimated at 1,000 in the beginning of the 17th century: therefore, also nearly 2,000 horses were present in the town (Topolski 1977, 230). As it can be presumed that the number of visitors during annual fairs was higher than the number of inhabitants, the impact of annual fairs on the town had to be enormous.

Research on space of medieval and early modern era Gniezno entails considerable difficulties, since both primary sources and archaeological evidence are lacking. Similar to Poznań and Kalisz, Gniezno was chartered on Magdeburg's Law using the structures of the older settlement. The charter has not been preserved but it was probably given in the fourth decade of the 13th century, as it existed already in year 1241. However, Gniezno faced a major problem with development: the possibilities for its growth were severely limited, as the royal town was quite quickly surrounded by independent church settlements (Pol. *jurydyka*), and it had only one section of the town's outskirts available for its own suburb (Orłowska 2021) (Fig. 3).

Figure 3 Gniezno Agglomeration in the Second Half of the 16th Century



author: Anna Paulina Orłowska; map: Tomasz Panecki, Katarzyna Słomska
 K. Chłapowski, M. Słoń (eds.), *Wielkopolska w drugiej połowie XVI wieku*, vol. 1: Mapy (Warszawa, 2018)
 Modified by Tomasz Panecki and Anna Paulina Orłowska

N-Prz – ul. Nad Przekopem	11. St. Anna church and hospital		built-up area (city)		bridges
Sln – pl. Sólny	12. Monastery of the order of the Holy Sepulchre		built-up area (suburb)		walls
T-Poz – Trakt Poznański	13. St. John church		built-up area (village)		gates, towers
Tu – ul. Turńska	14. St. Michael church		gardens or agricultural land		moats
Zy – ul. Żydowska	15. Holy Spirit church and hospital		agricultural land		hospitals
1. Town hall with weighing house	16. Voight house		gardens		wells
2. Synagogue and school	17. St. Nicholas church		pastures or meadows		slopes
3. Poor Clares monastery	18. St. Laurence church		cemeteries		
4. St. Anthony church and Poor Clares oratory	19. Archbishop castle				
5. Franciscans monastery	20. Cathedral and school				
6. Toruń gate	21. St. Stanislaus church and graveyard				
7. Parish church gate	22. St. George church				
8. Parish church Holy Trinity and school	23. St. Peter church and school				
9. "Słomianka" mill	A Smałruz				
10. "Tum" gate	B Cloth hall				
	C Forum equestre				

Source: Orłowska [Panecki and Słomska, cartographers] 2017. Modified by Tomasz Panecki and Anna Paulina Orłowska.

The area within the town walls was a mere 6 ha, the market was, naturally, correspondingly smaller – 0.5 ha. It has to be remarked that even if objectively it is the smallest area of a market square between the analysed towns, it is the biggest one in relation to the area of the town (8.33 per cent). Despite those limitations, the town quickly became one of the dominant centres of fair commerce in Poland. Lack of space is evidenced by location of a Jewish district (stretching around the Żydowska [Eng. Jewish] street), traditionally far away from the market, in Gniezno – located not only on the plots abutting the town walls but also next to the market square, even if at its back. Similarly, the Franciscan monastery, usually on the outskirts, in Gniezno was situated directly next to the market square.

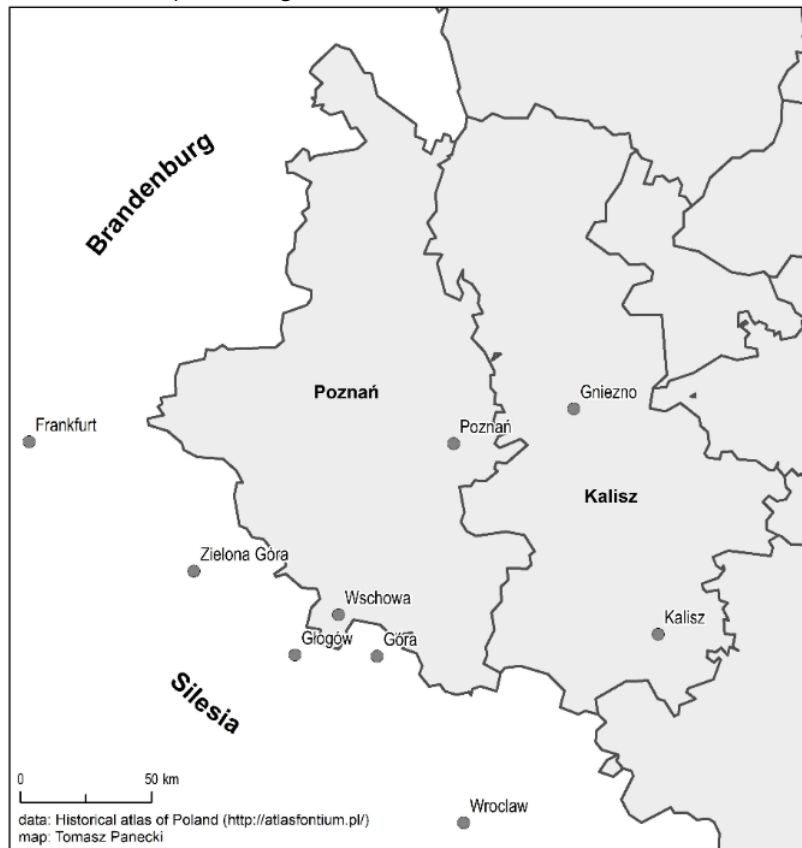
Since primary sources are lacking, we cannot precisely describe the evolution of trade infrastructure in Gniezno before 1613. This is especially the case for the town hall, as neither the date of its erection nor building material is known. The first mention in the primary sources dates from 1388, however, the building was probably erected much earlier (Topolski 1965, 145). Its ground floor was used for trade purposes until the market hall was built (Warschauer 1918, 27). The existence of a weighing house is confirmed for the 15th century, and in 1557, the town council decided to reconstruct it with stone instead of wood (Warschauer 1918, 113). The butcher's and baker's shops were in the direct vicinity of the town hall and weighing house (Warschauer 1918, 17; Topolski 1965, 146). In the same year, the market hall (Pol. *smatruż*) was built on the town's budget and was situated within the town walls, in the most prestigious location by the market square. The cloth hall, built in the mid-16th century on the initiative of the Górka noble family, lay just beyond the town walls (Warschauer 1918, 120; Karwowski 1892, 107). Situating such an important commercial building outside the town walls clearly shows how small the space within the town walls was and how this lack of space forced decentralization of the trade within the town. A need to erect such a building dedicated to commerce overlaps with the 16th-century intensification of long-distance trade.

This intensification of long-distance trade of course took place mainly during annual fairs. What was the impact of annual fairs on the town and its trade infrastructure?

As we know from the description of town losses due to the fire in 1613 (Wspomnienie 1838), the merchants from four towns lost their houses in the market square, the most prestigious and expensive location in Gniezno. The houses were rebuilt, as tax sources starting from 1631 (pol. *podymne*) show (APP, AMG I 122, p. 4, 20, 34, 41, 47). These towns – Wschowa, Głogów, Zielona Góra, and Góra Śląska – are located between 130km and 170km away from Gniezno (the latter three outside of Poland) (Fig. 4), and were centres of

well-developed cloth industries, producing popular varieties of cloth, widely sold on Polish markets.

Figure 4 The Economic Landscape of Gniezno Textile Trade – Weaver Towns and Important Regional Centres



We can presume that Gniezno became such an important market for cloth and linen that citizens of towns with strong cloth production could benefit from maintaining permanent infrastructure that allowed selling those products. This is corroborated by the fact that such infrastructure was not kept by merchants from such towns as Poznań, Gdańsk, Toruń, Lublin, and Wrocław, which, while keeping intensive commercial connections with Gniezno, were not production centres but merely re-exported the cloths, sometimes improving their quality first. This influx of foreign capital expelled the burghers from the best spot in town, so that the annual fair led to a permanent gentrification of the town centre.

Parts of infrastructure and facilities – such as lobbies, basements, chambers, and shops – were acquired during the fair period by changing its ordinary purpose in favour of fair commerce (Topolski 1977, 243). It can be presumed that the inhabitants of those spaces lost their accommodation for the period of annual fairs.

Also the owners of booths – towns as well as private persons – wanted to achieve additional gain during the annual fairs. Surprisingly, the additional fees for the booths for the annual fairs were not higher than in Kalisz. In Gniezno, booths were rented for a period of three to six years, while the rent was determined either for a particular fair or annually. In the first half of the 17th century, charges for the booths were 2 to 5 Polish zloty for one fair, sometimes more (Topolski 1977, 242). As the business of booth renting was so lucrative, it should not come as a surprise that the tenements' owners ensured their right to keep booths even with the help of royal privileges (APP, AMG, I 3), a process that cannot be observed in Kalisz. The booths were concentrated in the vicinity of the market square, whereas the stalls were distributed over the whole town, with many of them outside the town, near the cathedral.

There were attempts to fight against trade adjacent to the cathedral – in 1499, Archbishop Fryderyk prohibited stopping the wagons and horses loaded with goods near the church doors as well as use of recesses in the cathedral or even the graveyard as a sleeping place (Topolski 1977, 242). This prohibition was repeated in 1526 (*ibid.*). As evident, the need for trading space was so overwhelming that, in view of the insufficient area of space within the town walls, even a conflict with the church could be risked. In any case, it would seem that the church ceased that fruitless fight and found it appropriate to leverage what it could not combat, as in 1562 the chapter requested that the bishop obtain a right from the king for stalls selling fish, meat, and other food as well as for collecting trading fees. A toll roll from 1597 demonstrates that the town charged two thirtieths of a Polish zloty from the stalls by the cathedral, so it would seem that the chapter failed to take over the income from that cumbersome trade (Topolski 1977, 242).

Gathering horses in such number in one place obviously created an opportunity to trade them as well. Intensity of such trade is evidenced by the fact that one of the market squares in Gniezno's suburb was called 1645 *forum equestre* (Fig. 3) (Teki Dworzaczka, 1864 [Nr. 337] 1645). Cattle trade was also ubiquitous, supported by the natural conditions of Gniezno's location, as it lies in the vicinity of lakes and vast pastures. Infrastructure needed for livestock trade was thus ensured – water access, feed storage, and the opportunity to keep large animal herds in close proximity to the town. Oxen trade intensified towards the end of the 16th century, and Gniezno became one of the central points on the export route. Guidelines for the custom officials enlist the St. Adalbert's fair in this context and name it as the main fair, that is the one of the highest importance (Orłowska, Nowożycki, and Pac

2016). The supremacy of that fair emerged from environmental conditions – oxen from Ukraine and Moldova were wintered on the Lesser Poland territory and driven west after the first grass appeared (Baszanowski 1977). In view of the domination of cattle on the St. Adalbert's fair, the town made efforts to transfer the trade of other goods to the Trinity fair, which took place two months later. This shift might have resulted in more efficient, balanced use of the town infrastructure and reduced the tensions, limiting the costs for inhabitants, but this attempt failed.

In summary, the case of Gniezno shows that a strong impulse for establishment of a fair can overcome infrastructure limitations in the form of a very limited town space. Such constraints propelled the town to utilize the available infrastructure to the highest possible extent, including attempts to distribute the traffic – not only in space, but also in time – by trying to move the visit of some guests a few weeks forward. Furthermore, in the case of Gniezno, the necessity to diversify infrastructure functions in time can be seen very early and vividly. Also, the attempts of centralizing the commerce could have only been very limited – due to scarce space. Even the permanent trade infrastructure was not built only within the market square or even within the town, e.g., the cloth hall, which is quite an exceptional solution. Due to small space and high economic pressure of wholesale traders from outside of the town, the shift from horizontal to the vertical centrality happened probably already in the 15th century. The local trade was dominated by the wholesale trade, even outside of the annual fairs, and was pushed from the central market as a number of houses were bought by the cloth sellers.

During the annual fairs the process escalated, especially considering decentralisation. The infrastructure needed for the annual fairs sprawled into the whole town and its outskirts. The economic pressure was so intense that even the conflict with the church could not stop this process.

The precise analysis of the influence of annual fairs on the inhabitants of Gniezno regarding the specific social groups is impossible due to lacking sources, however, the analysis of town books allows us to presume that the burghers profited from renting out spaces in their houses as well as from taking part in the trade or offering services to the visitors. The increase in consumption caused by the fairs can be illustrated, for example, by the fact that the fire of 1613, which destroyed the town, was a result of brewing beer for the coming fair. The influence on the inhabitants, who were not burghers, was mixed, as the annual fairs involved both the chance for additional income but also a time of a competition for living space.

5. Conclusion

The three cities examined in this text show similarity of infrastructure due to their similar history – the place and time of founding the city. They have typical street layouts for Central European cities founded in the mid-13th century on the Magdeburg Law, with a large central square in the middle of which was located the town hall and other buildings serving commercial purposes. This infrastructure ought to establish horizontal centrality giving both buyers as well as sellers, at least the ones with town origins, equal access to trade.

However, there were fundamental differences in the use of space both under normal conditions and during fairs, which affected the patterns of centrality. Kalisz preserves the intense horizontal centrality over the entire research period, both under normal circumstances and during the annual fairs. This type of centrality is somewhat limited – there is a clear hierarchy between sellers, but nonetheless, they all share the space designated for trade. Gniezno, on the other hand, is a town that was decentralized already in the Middle Ages, and the time of annual fairs only exaggerated this process. The reason for this decentralization is the scarce space of the town resulting in a limited trade infrastructure that also lead to the shift from the horizontal to the vertical centrality already in Middle Ages. Poznań is the most differentiated case that started with very intense horizontal centrality, which was enforced by the town council, but then developed towards spatial decentralization, on the one hand, and vertical centrality, on the other hand. Poznań's guilds were first to limit the access to the market, also during annual fairs.

As far as the factors influencing the centrality are concerned, it seems that the size of a town measured by its population numbers is of little importance. Kalisz, the most centralized town of the three, is, at the same time, the smallest, while Gniezno, the middle in terms of size, is significantly more decentralized. In comparison, Poznań, the town with the clearly highest number of inhabitants, was fairly centralized. An interesting finding is a correlation between the size of the town and its market. Kalisz had a relatively small market, comprising only 5.55 per cent of its entire area, while Gniezno's market was 8.33 per cent and Poznań, in the middle in terms of centrality, also had the middle ratio (7.4 per cent) respectively. This relation might be coincidental. The absolute size of the market square and the intensity of trade exchange, both during fairs and in the remaining times of the year, appear to be of greater importance. The smaller the square and greater the intensity of exchange, the more rapid the decentralization as well as the tendencies to shift from horizontal to vertical centrality. Further works should include the comparison of towns with different patterns of trade development, e.g., those

shoved out from far trade and with different structures of urban space. These comparisons are now limited through the small number of towns for which the spatial data are easily accessible as well as due to insufficient research on annual fairs.²

Another issue which still requires our attention and may be a subject of further investigations is the influence of a church administration present, which in some European towns significantly impacted the every-day trade and the town centrality. All in all, it would also be worth considering the comparative analysis of the type of centrality manifested by those towns where multiple communes compete with each other. And finally, it should be asked whether such towns could be studied separately from their suburbs, or whether researchers should take the entire urban area into consideration.

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² Both of these problems are addressed by the research projects of “HiSMaComp – Historical survey maps and the comparative study of the functionality and morphology of urban space. Standardisation – Digital processing – Research” and by “Configurations of European Fairs. Merchants, Objects, Routes (1350-1600).”

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