

Lords and Towns in Medieval Europe

The European Historic Towns
Atlas Project

*Edited by Anngret Simms
and Howard B. Clarke*

ASHGATE

Chapter 11

Polish Town Plans as Expressions of Political and Economic Power

Roman Czaja

In the second half of the twelfth century in countries situated east of the River Elbe there appeared a new type of town, characterized by urban liberties (granted by charter) and a regular spatial layout. These elements did not exist in earlier towns in this part of Europe. They usually had a polycentric urban structure, whose inhabitants came under the authority of the prince, like inhabitants of villages.¹ The process of urbanization in Europe took place to a large extent with the use of the legal and organizational forms developed in western and southern Europe from the second half of the eleventh century. The establishment of new towns (the foundation charter) or the restructuring of already existing towns was connected with defining legal conditions for urban development, the most important of which was the granting of town rights and the legal regulation of duties towards the territorial ruler. On the other hand, the foundation charter directed the location of a town and its layout. In central European countries, as in other parts of Europe, the founding of towns had become one of the main means of building up territorial authority and of strengthening the economic, social and military potential of the country (*melioratio terre*, 'land improvement'). New towns were not only centres of trade and production; they also played an administrative and religious role, as well as being strategic military centres.²

¹ J. Piekalski, *Von Köln nach Krakau: der topographische Wandel früher Städte* (Bonn, 2001), *passim*; W. Schich, 'Die slavische Burgstadt und frühe Ausbreitung des Magdeburger Rechts ostwärts der mittleren Elbe', in D. Willoweit and W. Schich (eds), *Studien zur Geschichte des sächsisch-magdeburgischen Rechts in Deutschland und Polen* (Frankfurt, 1980), pp. 22–61.

² B. Zientara, 'Socio-economic and spatial transformation of Polish towns during the period of location', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 34 (1976): 57–83; W. Schich, 'Stadtwerdung im Raum zwischen Elbe und Oder im Übergang von der slavischen zur deutsche Periode', *Germania Slavica*, 1 (1980): 191–238; W. Schich, 'Die Bildung der Städte im westslawischen Raum in der Sicht der älteren und der jüngeren Forschung', in E. Müller-Mertens and H. Böcker (eds), *Konzeptionelle Ansätze der Hanse-Historiographie* (Trier, 2003), pp. 123ff; S. Gawlas, *Die zentrale Funktion der Städte in Ostmitteleuropa in der Zeit des Landesausbau*, in

In the thirteenth century the Polish kingdom was divided into a number of duchies ruled by dukes from the Piast dynasty, who were competing against each other. This did not create favourable conditions for the reception of a new type of town. The first Piast ruler to use colonization and the establishment of towns as a means of strengthening and modernizing his new duchy was Henry I (the Bearded). Town foundation in Silesia in the first three decades of the thirteenth century mainly involved the adaptation of new areas (mostly forests) and the development of mining. In the second stage of the urbanization of Silesia (from the 1240s) older towns were rebuilt and market settlements were granted town charters. By the end of the thirteenth century 128 towns had been created, constituting 76 per cent of all Silesian medieval towns. From the mid thirteenth century neighbouring duchies (mainly in Lesser Poland, Greater Poland and central Poland) started to follow the example of Silesia. Nevertheless it was not until the fourteenth century that regional urbanization developed.³

The creation of the Prussian State by the Teutonic Order affected the development of the new form of urban life in central and eastern Europe. The Piast prince, Conrad I of Masovia, granted the Chełmno region to the Teutonic Order in 1228–30. In the course of the next 50 years the knights conquered Prussia, a country inhabited by pagan tribes. The last stage of the formation of the Prussian State was the conquest of Danzig Pomerania (1308–9), which was part of Poland until the beginning of the fourteenth century.⁴

The plans of the oldest towns in Silesia and Lesser Poland have been a subject of scholarly debate for many years. Difficulties in reconstructing the original layout of towns arise from a lack of suitable sources. Large-scale nineteenth-century cadastral plans are no longer considered a reliable source of information about the topography of medieval towns. These cadastral plans cannot constitute the basis for the analysis of urban topography at the time of foundation. The plans of most towns, particularly big ones, were not created as a result of one single action, but were formed gradually, with the result that they are palimpsests whose correct interpretation cannot be reduced merely to

R. Czaja and C. Jahnke (eds), *Städtelandschaften im Ostseeraum im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Toruń, 2009), pp. 9–29.

³ W. Kuhn, *Die deutschrechtlichen Städte in Schlesien und Polen in der ersten Hälfte des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Marburg, 1968), pp. 143–61; M. Młynarska-Kaletynowa, 'Sieć miejska na Śląsku na przełomie XII/XIII i w XIII w.' [Town network in Silesia at the turn of the twelfth and in the thirteenth century], *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, 28/3 (1980): 349–61; R. Czaja, 'Miasta i mieszczaństwo na ziemiach polskich na przełomie XIII/XIV w.' [Towns and townspeople in Poland at the turn of the thirteenth century], in W. Fałkowski (ed.), *Polska około 1300* (Warsaw, 2003), p. 62. By the beginning of the fourteenth century 18 per cent of the medieval towns had been established in Lesser Poland and 25 per cent in Greater Poland and central Poland.

⁴ M. Biskup and G. Labuda, *Die Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen. Wirtschaft – Gesellschaft – Staat – Ideologie* (Osnabrück, 2000), pp. 118–19; T. Jasiński, 'Die Rolle des Deutschen Ordens bei der Städtegründungen in Preußen im 13. Jahrhundert', in U. Arnold (ed.), *Stadt und Orden. Das Verhältnis des Deutschen Ordens zu den Städten in Livland, Preussen und im Deutschen Reich* (Marburg, 1993), pp. 97ff.

metrological analysis.⁵ Archaeological excavations and architectural research are necessary for an analysis of all stages of urban development.⁶

The earliest plans of Silesian towns date back to the 1220s. At that time Henry I the Bearded granted urban liberties to Wrocław/Breslau. From the results of archaeological investigations it can be assumed that the axis of the original urban layout followed the main trade route leading from the south to the crossing of the River Oder (Figure 11.1).

Streets were laid out in an east–west direction. The wide street market, which characteristically follows the main communication route, was also used as the model in other towns established at that time in Silesia.⁷ In mining towns the influence of the main communication route on the spatial arrangement is clearly visible: Złotoryja/Goldberg–Monas Aurens, Lwówek/Löwenberg (Figure 11.2) and Środa Śląska/Freimarkt–Novum Forum (Figure 11.3), constituting the basis for the rural settlement.

All of these towns were established on the so-called *Via Regia* ('king's highway'), the main trade route leading from east to west. Employing such a form of street plan may be regarded as the reception of the street market layout (*Straßenmarkt*) commonly used in western and central Europe at that time. On the other hand, in some Silesian towns (for example, in Środa Śląska) the street market is evidence of the oldest rural settlement from the pre-charter period, where the wide village street played the role of a market.⁸ The influence of the spatial arrangement of villages on the development of urban street systems is also visible in the small towns of Lesser Poland. It is believed that the street arrangement was used in the first foundation of Cracow from about 1220 under the influence of Silesian models. Its impact on the later street plan is the principal axis formed by Stolarska Street and Mały Rynek (Little Market) (Figure 11.4).⁹

⁵ J. Piekalski, 'Przemiany topografii miast Europy środkowej w XII–XIII wieku. Aktualne problem badawcze' [Transformations of towns' topography in central Europe in the twelfth–thirteenth century. Current research problems], in L. Leciejewicz and M. Rębkowski (eds), *Civitas Cholbergensis. Transformacja kulturowa w strefie nadbałtyckiej w XIII w.* (Kolobrzeg, 2005), pp. 76–7.

⁶ In the past 20 years intensive archaeological works have been conducted in the biggest Polish towns: Wrocław (Breslau), Elbląg (Elbing), Gdańsk (Danzig) and Cracow: H. Paner, 'The spatial development of Gdańsk to the beginning of the 14th century. The origins of the Old and Main Town', in P. Urbańczyk (ed.), *Polish Lands at the Turn of the First and the Second Millennium* (Warsaw, 2004), pp. 15–32; C. Buśko and J. Piekalski, 'Die Altstadt von Breslau im 13. bis 15. Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters*, 23–4 (1995–6): 155–81; T. Nawrołski, 'Probleme archäologischer Untersuchungen der Altstadt in Elbing', *Archaeologia Elbingensis*, 1 (1992): 45–54.

⁷ R. Eysymontt, *Kod genetyczny miasta. Średniowieczne miasta lokacyjne Dolnego Śląska na tle urbanistyki europejskiej* [The Genetic Code of the Town. Medieval Chartered Towns of Lower Silesia against the Background of European Town Planning] (Wrocław, 2009), pp. 568–9, 621; M. Młynarska-Kaletynowa, 'Von den Anfänge bis zur Aussetzung der Stadt nach Deutschem Recht', in M. Młynarska-Kaletynowa with R. Eysymontt, *Wrocław/Breslau* (Atlas historyczny miast polskich/Historischer Atlas polnischer Städte, vol. 4, no. 1, Wrocław, 2001), p. 18.

⁸ R. Eysymontt and M. Goliński, 'Urban development of Środa Śląska. A historical outline', in Środa Śląska/Neumarkt (Atlas historyczny miast polskich/Historischer Atlas polnischer Städte, vol. 4, no. 2, Wrocław, 2003), p. 19; Eysymontt, *Kod*, pp. 519–21.

⁹ B. Krasnowolski, *Lokacyjne układy przestrzenne na obszarze ziemi krakowskiej w XIII i XIV wieku* [Location Town Planning in the Cracovia Region in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth

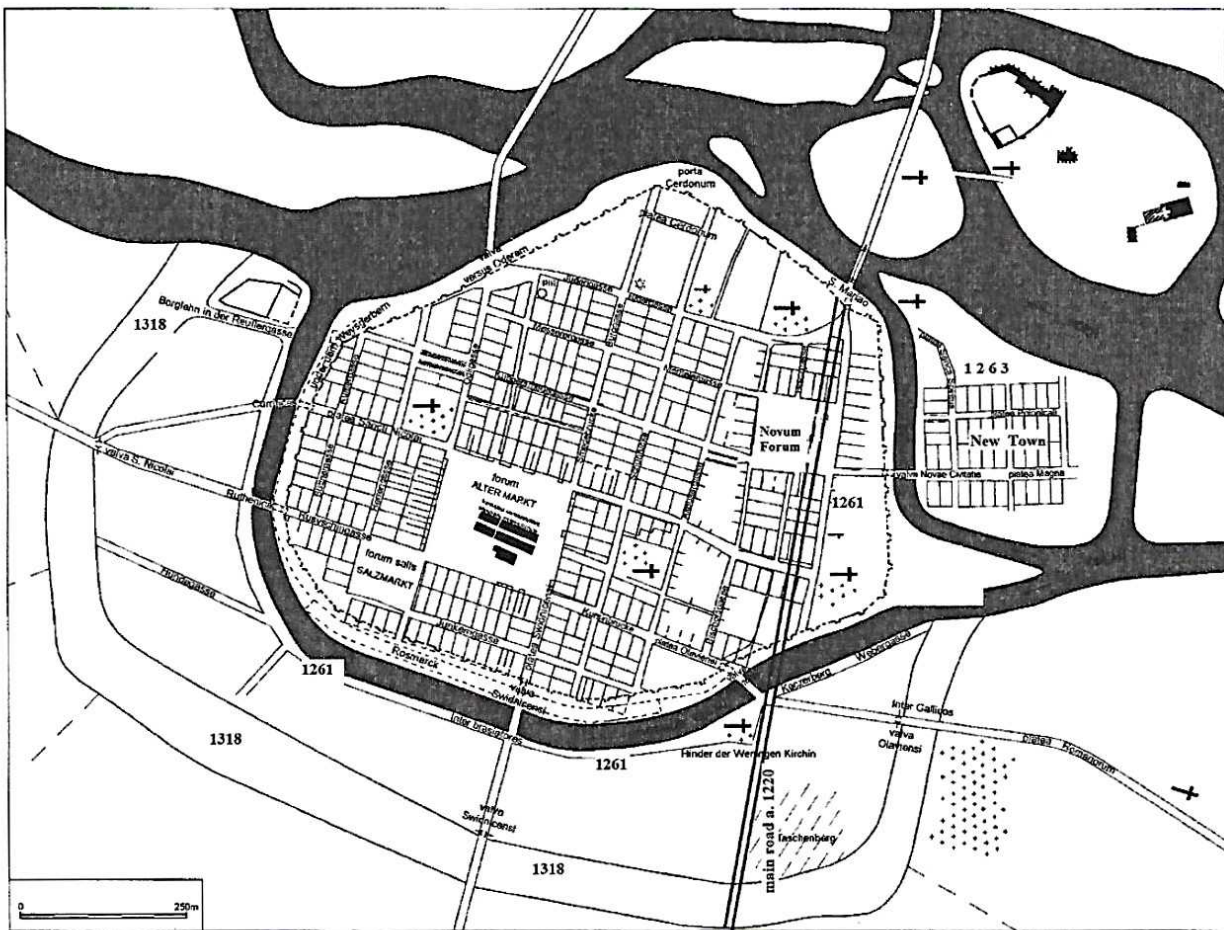


Figure 11.1 Reconstruction of the spatial development of Wrocław/Breslau in the thirteenth century. M. Chorowska, *Wrocław (Atlas historyczny miast polskich, vol. 4, Śląsk [Silesia], no. 1, Wrocław, 2001), map 3.*

The urban layout based on a market in the shape of a wide street, measured out along the main road leading through the town, existed in many variations. The diversification of street plans of this kind resulted from the pace of the social and economic development of a town. It was also influenced by the nature of the main through-route, which could become wider and have the shape of a spindle, or could split into two parallel streets, or could turn towards the river crossing in the shape of an arc. In small towns the street and plot system was limited to the main road and two parallel rows of buildings. In some towns, in the course of time, there appeared additional parallel and crosswise streets, which led to the creation of complex plans with as many as five rows of streets added at right-angles to one another. A perfect example of the transformation of a simple spindle-shaped layout into a regular, seemingly uniform, rectangular form is the street plan of Środa (Figure 11.3),

Centuries] (2 vols, Cracow, 2004), vol. 1, pp. 88–90, 163–6; B. Krasnowolski, 'The German-law foundation', in Z. Noga (ed.), *Kraków (Atlas historyczny miast polskich/Historischer Atlas polnischer Städte, vol. 5, no. 1, Cracow, 2007), p. 49.*

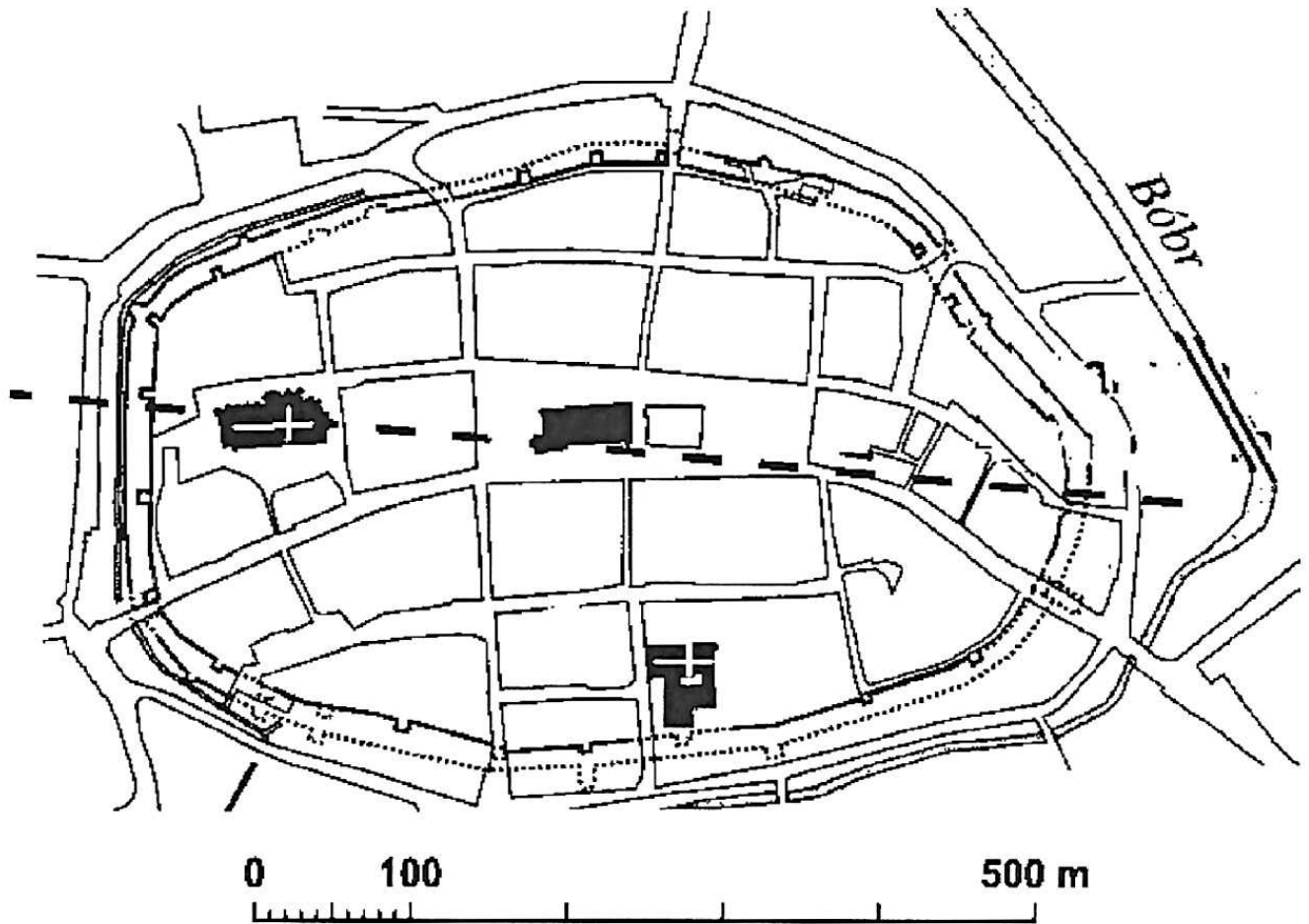


Figure 11.2 Reconstruction of the earliest town plan of Lwówek/Löwenberg. R. Eysymontt, *Kod genetyczny miasta. Średniowieczne miasta lokacyjne Dolnego Śląska na tle urbanistyki europejskiej* [*The Genetic Code of the Town. Medieval Chartered Towns of Lower Silesia against a Background of European Town Planning*] (Wrocław, 2009), p. 398.

which was created in two stages and developed over almost half a century. The original arrangement, including the main street with buildings on one side only, was enlarged in the second half of the thirteenth century, when the castle became a part of the urbanization plan. It must be noted that the wide street-market model was used in Silesia in the thirteenth century in all types of town, irrespective of their function – large trading centres, smaller mining towns and towns acting as local markets for agricultural produce.

In the 1240s a new layout for the chartered town appeared – the so-called ‘chequered pattern’ – the characteristic features of which are a central four-sided market, usually rectangular, and a division of the urban space into regular blocks. The plan of the second foundation of Wrocław in 1242 can be regarded as the first successful realization of this concept. The centre of the new plan was a market measuring 172×207 m, created on a relatively sparsely inhabited area. From the corners of the market radiated streets at right-angles, dividing the urban space into regular blocks. In the vicinity of the main market there appeared an auxiliary market, the so-called Plac

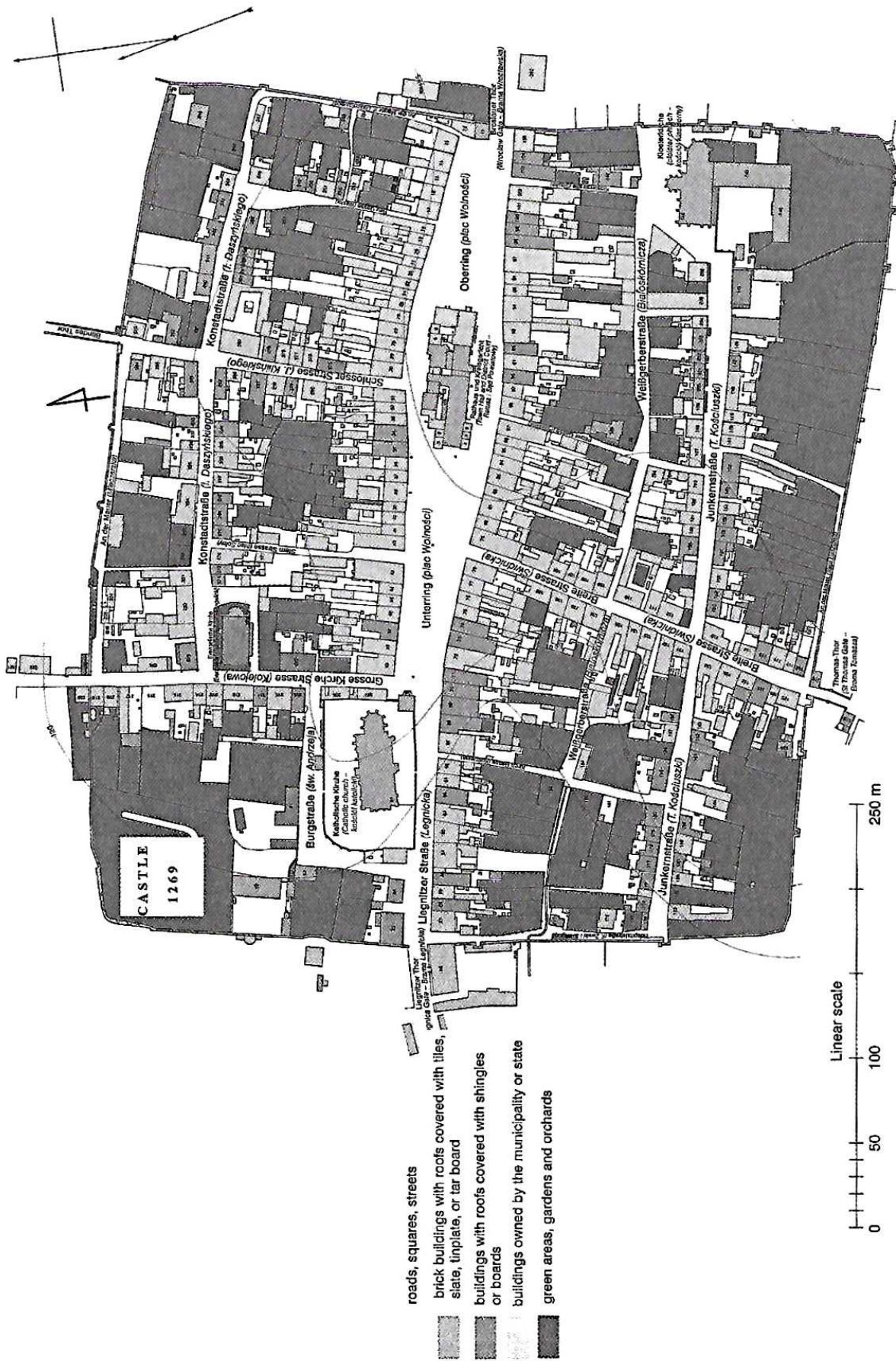


Figure 11.3 Cadastral plan at 1:2,500 of Środa Śląska/Free market c.1905. R. Eysymontt and M. Goliński, Środa Śląska (Atlas historyczny miast polskich, vol. 4, Śląsk [Silesia], no. 2, Wrocław, 2003), map 1.

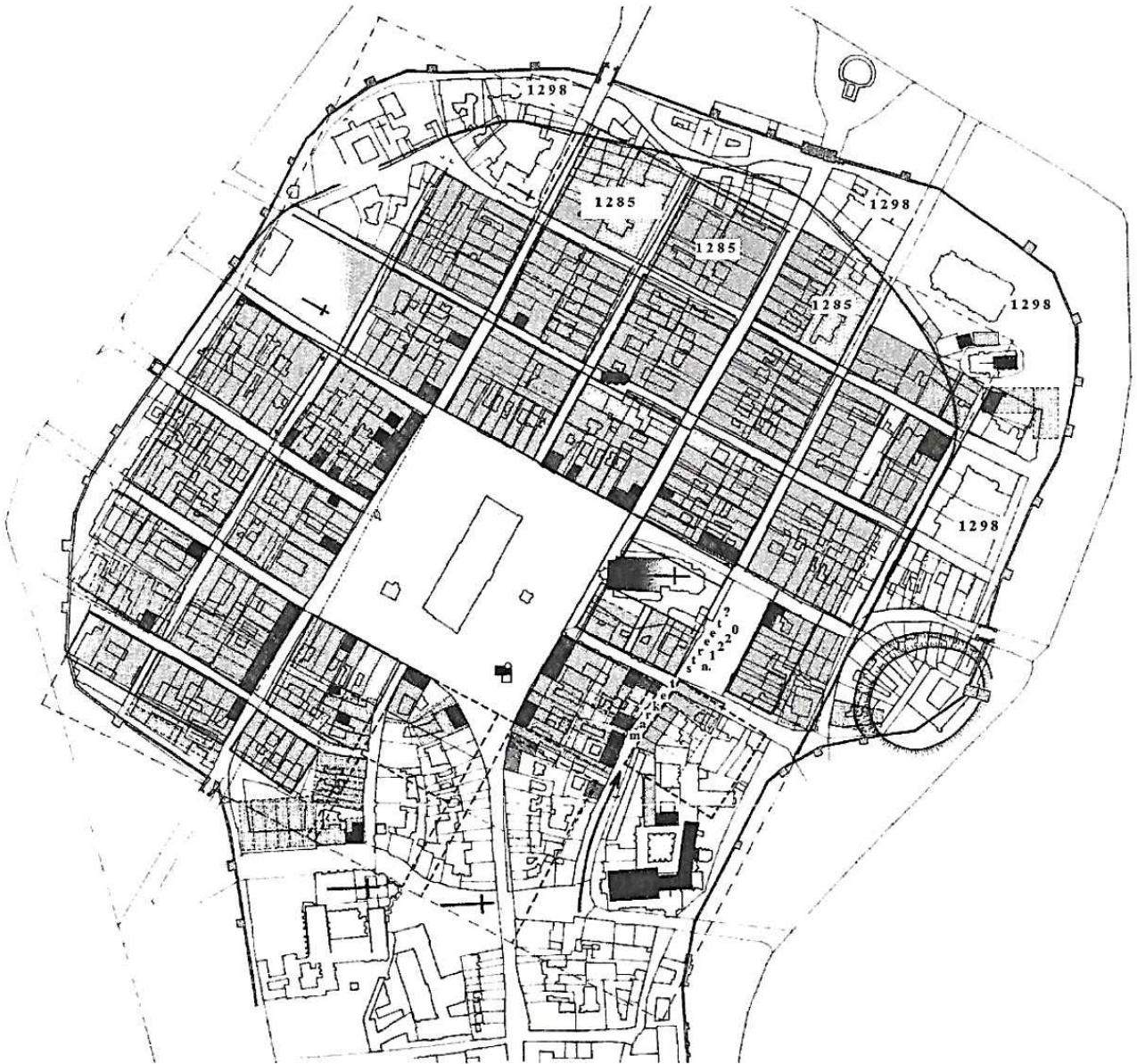


Figure 11.4 Reconstruction of the layout of the oldest part of Cracow in the thirteenth century.
 B. Krasnowolski, *Lokacyjne układy przestrzenne na obszarze ziemi krakowskiej w XIII i XIV wieku*
 [Location Town Planning in the Cracovia Region in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries] (Cracow, 2004).

Solny (80 × 120 m). It can be assumed that originally the whole of the town resembled a square. The duke's castle bordered the town on its northern side, near the crossing of the Oder. Rapid socio-economic development caused the change in the town plan. At the beginning of the 1260s the town was enlarged eastwards by incorporating areas developed during the first foundation, where the rectangular Nowy Targ (New Market) took on the function of an old street market. In 1263 the Nowe Miasto (New Town) was developed on the eastern side and by the beginning of the fourteenth century the area between the inner walls (1261) and the outer fosse (1318) had been built up.¹⁰

¹⁰ Krasnowolski, *Lokacyjne układy*, pp. 88–90, 163–6; Krasnowolski, 'German-law foundation', p. 49.

Despite long debates about the plan of Wrocław, there is no clear answer to the question of the origin of the chequer plan and its centrally situated rectangular marketplace. Undoubtedly such a layout was influenced by ducal power. The concentration of marketing and trading in the marketplace facilitated the control of income from market rights (*regalia*).¹¹ The functional and aesthetic aspects of the new town layout of Wrocław were quickly appreciated and used in other regions of Poland. In the years 1249–52 Przemysław I commissioned a plan for a new urban centre at Poznań, which was to become a focus of ducal authority in Greater Poland. The central element of the plan of Poznań was a square marketplace (140 × 140 m) surrounded by a very regular street plan (Figure 11.5).

The characteristic feature of Poznań's town layout was the combination of two systems used in the Middle Ages – a regular chessboard and the cross plan with a square marketplace.¹² In 1257 Prince Bolesław the Shy, together with townsmen from Silesia, granted a foundation charter to Cracow. It was connected with the realization of the new spatial concept, modelled on the plan of Wrocław. The centre of Cracow's plan consisted of the biggest market in central Europe (200 × 200 m), near which an auxiliary market was built (Figure 11.4). A new plan of the town was developed in the vicinity of older settlements that had probably been destroyed in the course of a Tatar attack. Metrological analysis shows that the urban layout of Cracow is not homogeneous. It includes many irregularities, resulting from the adaptation of the older spatial arrangement and the subsequent extension of the town. In c.1285 the town was extended northwards when earthen fortifications and a fosse were constructed. The town was again extended northwards and eastwards when a stone defensive wall was built in c.1298.¹³

Urban solutions applied to the biggest towns (Wrocław, Cracow and Poznań) could be repeated in the establishment of other, smaller ones. Undoubtedly the chequer plan with a centrally located rectangular marketplace became the dominant form in the layout of middle-sized and small towns in Lesser Poland and Greater Poland from the mid thirteenth century. This was influenced by the plans of the biggest towns. The rapid spread of this form resulted from its functionality and from the fact that it distinguished the essential layout of small towns of an agricultural character from that of villages established under German law whose layout was based on the orientation of the main road.¹⁴

Unlike in the Polish kingdom, the urbanization of the Prussian State did not draw on older town forms in the pre-charter period. There appeared only

¹¹ Gawlas, *Die zentrale Funktion*, pp. 12, 20–21.

¹² M. Chorowska, 'Rozplanowanie średniowiecznego Poznania na tle miast śląskich' [The layout of medieval Poznań compared with Silesian towns], in Z. Kurnatowska and T. Jurek (eds), *Civitas Posnaniensis. Studia z dziejów Poznania* (Poznań, 2005), pp. 207–24.

¹³ Krasnowolski, 'German-law foundation', p. 50; Krasnowolski, *Lokacyjne układy*, pp. 91–110.

¹⁴ Krasnowolski, *Lokacyjne układy*, pp. 178–80.

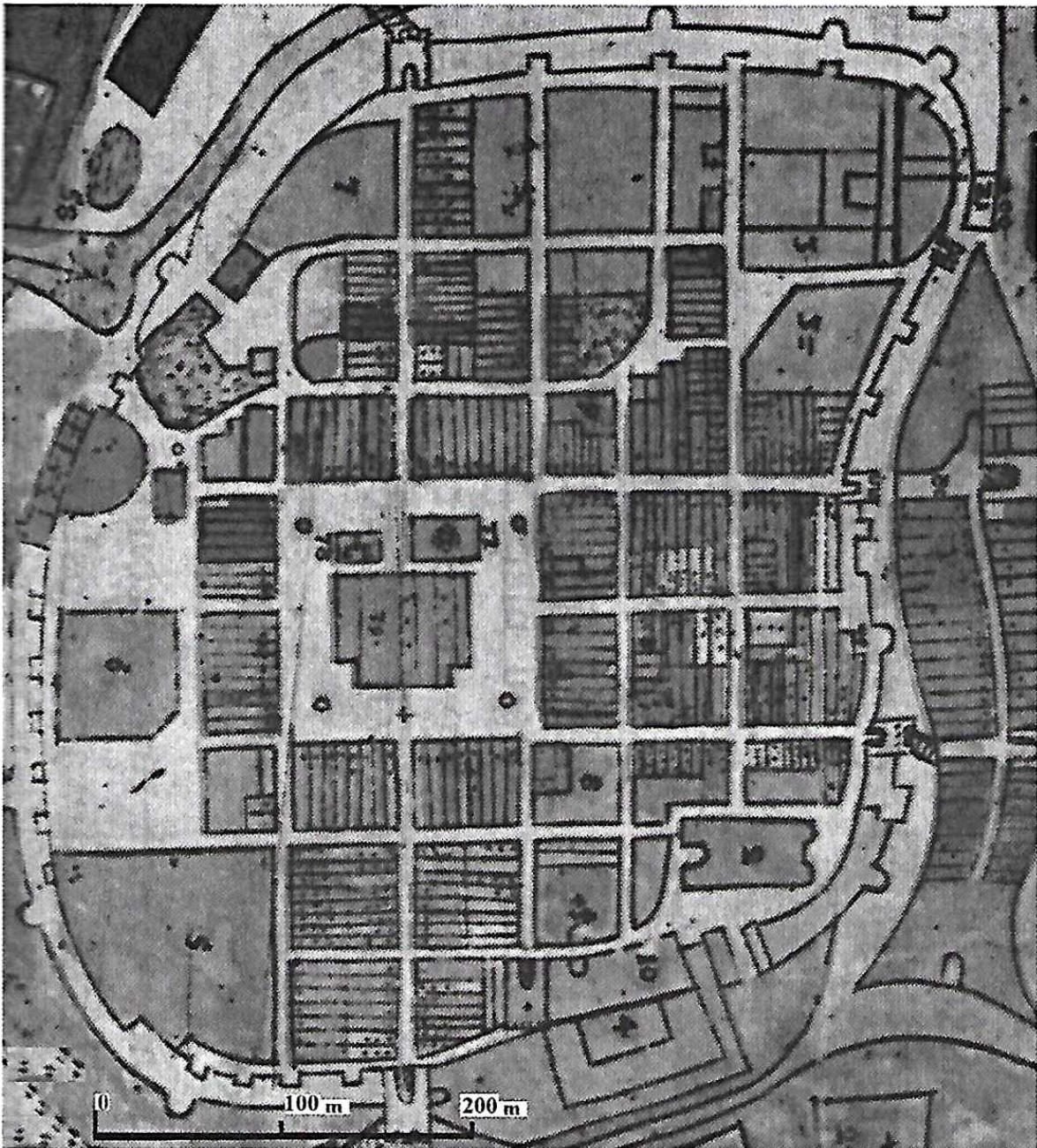


Figure 11.5 Extract from the town plan of Poznań/Posen, 1728. J. Topolski, *Dzieje Poznania* [History of Poznań], vol. 1 (Poznań, 1988).

one centre with an early urban character in the Piast period – the camp at Chełmno (*castrum in Culmine*). In Prussia down to the thirteenth century no form of urbanization came into being apart from local markets.¹⁵ Analysis of the process of urbanization in areas never before affected by town life clearly shows conditions defining the spatial aspects of urban development, the choice of location and the town plan. In the Prussian State and in territories belonging to Prussian bishops, two stages of urbanization can be distinguished. In the

¹⁵ W. Chudziak, 'The early Romanesque building from Kaldus, Voivodeship of Toruń – chronology and function', *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae*, 4 (1999): 197–209.

first – lasting until the 1280s – the most important factors were those connected with building up the structures of territorial rule. Towns established then, together with castles, constituted pillars of defensive organization as well as starting points for conquering the country. It was in towns that the basic legal systems originated. Towns were also centres of church and missionary organizations. After the completion of the military conquest the second stage started, when the basic factor determining the development of the town became needs connected with generating trade and a production base. This stage was most intensive from the end of the thirteenth century to the 1360s. In the Prussian State and bishop's territories, 96 towns had been established by the mid fifteenth century, 72 of which were set up by the Teutonic Order and 24 by bishops and cathedral chapters.¹⁶

As mentioned above, the origins of towns in the Chełmińskie region and in Prussia were closely connected with conquest and the creation of the territorial authority of the Teutonic Order. Thus the choice of location was determined by military and transport needs. In 1231 the army of the Teutonic Order, supported by the knights of the Polish prince Conrad I, crossed the River Vistula and started to conquer the Chełmińskie region. Military action began with the construction of Toruń Castle, next to which there appeared a town. The castle and the town were set up next to the Vistula crossing, providing the territories of the Teutonic Order in Kujawy/Kujawien with a connection to the main centre at Nessau. In 1232, on the hill next to the Vistula crossing towards Pomerania, the Teutonic Order established a castle and a town, which took its name from the Slavic castle, situated 1 km south in *Culmine* (Chełmno/Kulm). In 1234 the regional governor (*Landmeister*), Hermann von Balk, built a castle at Radzyń/Rheden and a few years later (certainly before 1238) he set up a town in the vicinity. The castle and the town of Radzyń, established in the years 1234–8, were situated on a neck of land between lakes, along which ran the old road from Prussia (through the Chełmińskie region and Kujawy).¹⁷ The construction of the town was influenced by military and transport factors. For one thing it constituted a base for conquering Prussia and for another it was to protect access to the centre of the Chełmińskie region. Transport conditions also determined the building of the *castrum* and the establishment of the town of Elbląg/Elbing in 1237 at the mouth of the River Elbing – this made it possible to link the Prussian State and Baltic routes.¹⁸

¹⁶ M. Biskup, 'Entwicklung des Netzes der altpreußischen Städte bis zur zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 53 (1986): 5–27; Jasiński, 'Die Rolle', p. 110; K. Kasiske, *Die Siedlungstätigkeit des Deutschen Ordens im östlichen Preußen bis zum Jahre 1410* (Königsberg, 1934), *passim*; K. Kasiske, *Das deutsche Siedelwerk des Mittelalters in Pommerellen* (Königsberg, 1938), *passim*.

¹⁷ R. Czaja, 'Die Formung der Städtelandschaft im Kulmerland im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert', in D. Bulach and M. Hardt (eds), *Zentrum und Peripherie in der Germania Slavica* (Stuttgart, 2008), pp. 250–54.

¹⁸ R. Czaja and Z. Kozieł, *Elbląg/Elbing* (Atlas historyczny miast polskich/Historischer Atlas polnischer Städte, vol. 1, no. 1, Toruń, 1993), p. 5.

The characteristic feature of the first stage of the urbanization of Prussia was the relatively frequent relocation of towns. After a few years of a town's existence, it appeared that the original location, conditioned by military and transport factors, did not create the best conditions for urban development. Since the ground where the castle and town of Toruń had been built was endangered by flooding, in 1236 the town was relocated 10 km to the east, to a terrace 18 m above the normal water-level. At the end of the 1240s the Teutonic Order relocated the castle again. The convenient defensive location of Chełmno, together with the castle on the terrace, did not contribute to economic development, because its great distance from the Vistula made it difficult for townsmen to control shipping and to participate in trade. Hence in 1239 Chełmno was relocated closer to the river, to the suburb of Rybaki. The castle, however, remained on its old site, being named Stare Chełmno or Starogród (Old Town). The new location of the town turned out to be problematic, however, owing to the threat of flooding from the Vistula. That is why in c.1251 the town was relocated on the hill.¹⁹ The origins of Elbląg are also connected with the relocation of the castle, which was established on the island where the river flows into the Vistula's delta. Wetlands on which the first stronghold was established did not create favourable conditions for the development of a settlement. Thus in summer or autumn 1237 the castle was relocated to a new site and construction of the town began. After conquering Pomerania in 1308–9, the Teutonic Order introduced many important spatial changes to the towns set up during the reign of the Pomeranian princes (in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries). Prussian influence on town location is clearly evident at Świecie, which developed before 1308 on the Vistula river-terrace whilst the castle of the principality was situated where the Wda river joins the Vistula. Having captured Świecie in 1309, the order started to construct a castle on the site of the ruined Pomeranian one and in 1338–75 the town was relocated closer to the Wda river. This was a result of the tendency to combine the town and castle in a homogeneous defensive system. From a settlement point of view, the drawback of the new site was the threat of the Vistula flooding (Figure 11.6). For this reason, in the second half of the nineteenth century the town was relocated once more, this time to the river-terrace.²⁰

The characteristic feature of thirteenth-century Prussian towns was the combination of town and castle in one defensive system, as at Toruń, Chełmno, Elbląg, Malbork/Marienburg and Grudziądz/Graudenz.²¹ Undoubtedly this

¹⁹ Z.H. Nowak and Z. Koziół, *Chełmno/Kulm* (Atlas historyczny miast polskich/Historischer Atlas polnischer Städte, vol. 1, no. 3, Toruń, 1999), p. 6; J. Tandecki and Z. Koziół, *Toruń/Thorn* (Atlas historyczny miast polskich/Historischer Atlas polnischer Städte, vol. 1, no. 2, Toruń, 1995), p. 6.

²⁰ F. Benninghoven, 'Das Stadtbuch von Schwetz 1374–1454', *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung*, 21 (1972): 51–62; G. Kötz, 'Die Verlegung der Stadt Schwetz aus der Weichselniederung', *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für den Regierungsbezirk Marienwerder*, 46 (1908): 7–78.

²¹ W. Sieradzan and Z. Koziół, *Grudziądz/Graudenz* (Atlas historyczny miast polskich/Historischer Atlas polnischer Städte, vol. 1, no. 4, Toruń, 1997), p. 5; W. Długokęcki and

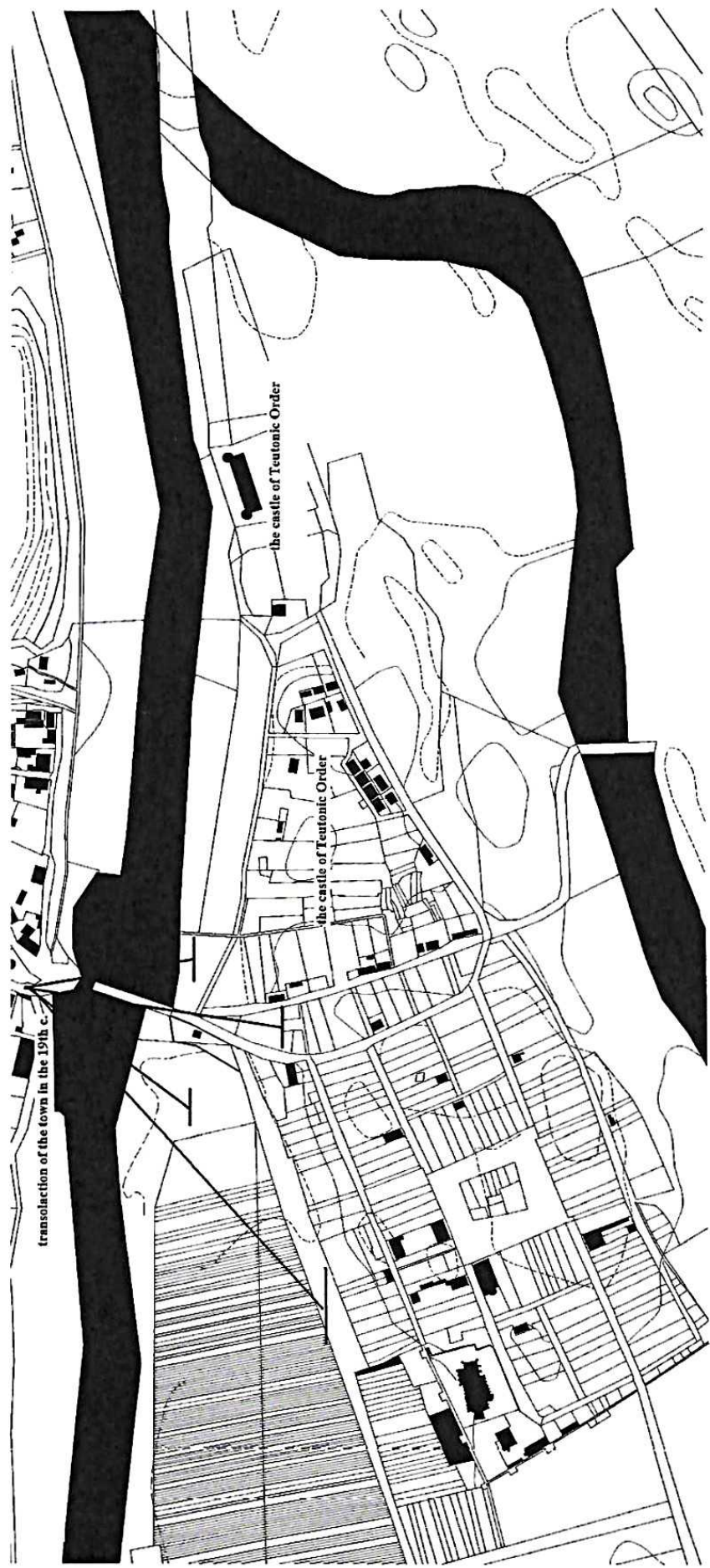


Figure 11.6 Extract from the cadastral plan at 1:2,500 of Świecie/Schwetz, 1882–1942.
R. Czaja, Świecie (Atlas historyczny miast polskich, vol. 1, no. 6, Toruń, 2012), map 1.

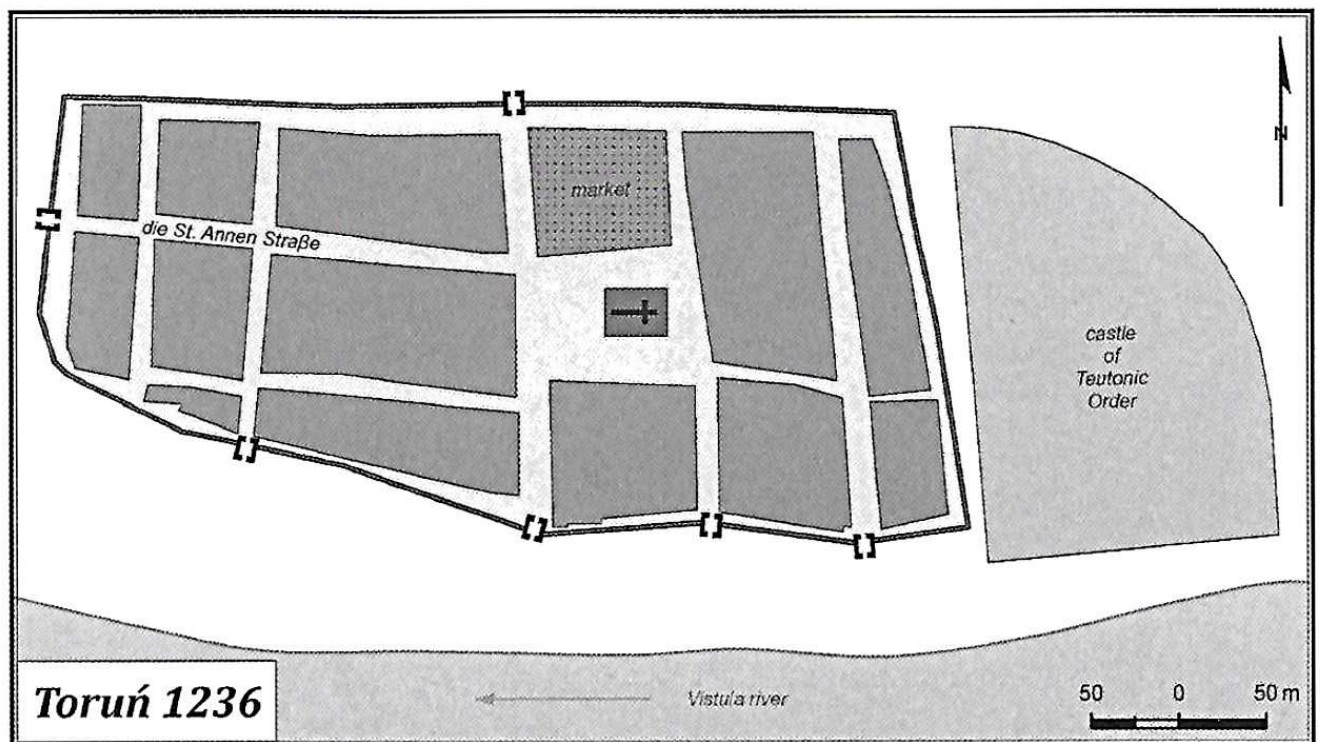


Figure 11.7 Reconstruction of the layout of the oldest part of Toruń/Thorn, 1236–50.

urban model was imposed by the Teutonic Order. One may agree though that, owing to the threat from Prussian and Lithuanian tribes, this concept also suited the needs of townsmen.

The plans of the majority of Prussian towns, large and small, tended to create regular and enclosed urban complexes. The oldest type of regular town plan was the spacious one, in which a broad market street functioned as the axis of the town and its main transport route. Some researchers claim that the model for this type in the Baltic region was the plan of Lübeck, particularly its centre near the church of the Virgin Mary. Another hypothesis arises from a comparison of the layout of Toruń and of Elbląg. The central axis of Toruń (founded in 1236) became St Ann's Street, which was a prolongation of the road from the west (Figure 11.7).

This street led to the block designed to include a cemetery and a parish church, as well as to that intended to be a market square with the necessary trading facilities. The shambles, which existed until the end of the eighteenth century, demonstrated the original function of the street. After an enlargement of the town in the 1250s the market and its facilities were moved to a new, rectangular market square. The block opposite the parish church was divided into plots of land on which houses were built (Figure 11.8).

A similar town layout was employed at Elbląg (founded in 1237). There are to be found both a wide market street and a church block at the end of

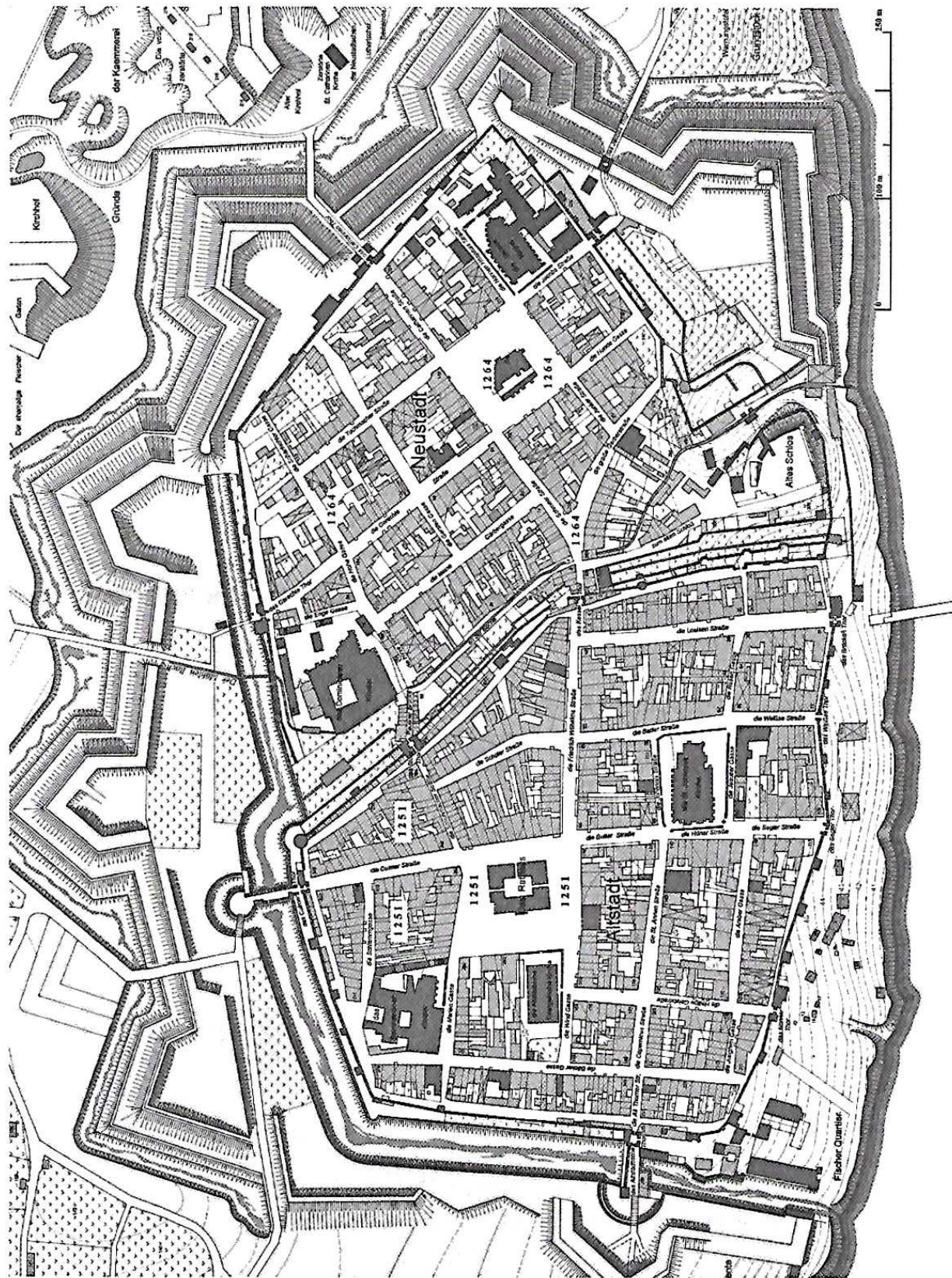


Figure 11.8 Reconstruction of the spatial development of Toruń/Thorn in the thirteenth century. J. Tandecki and Z. Kozielec, *Toruń* (Atlas historyczny miast polskich, vol. 1, no. 2, Toruń, 1995), map 2.

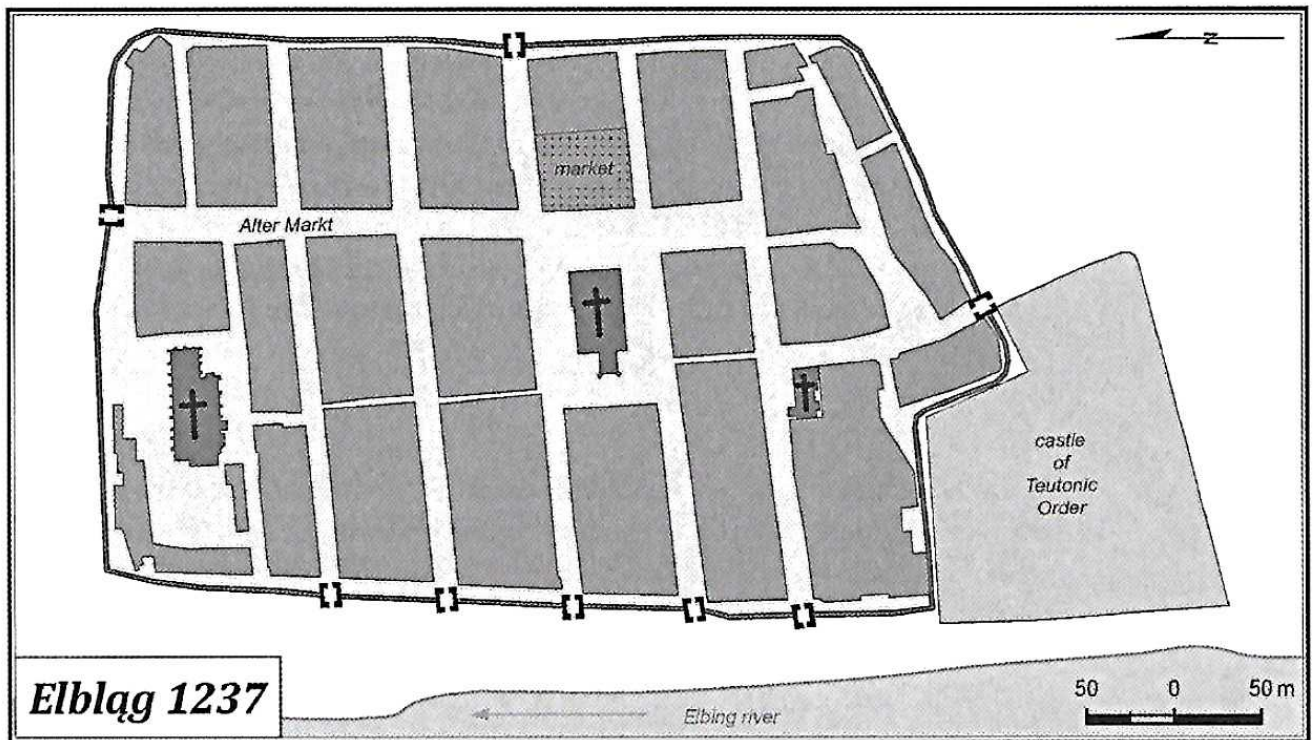


Figure 11.9 Reconstruction of the layout of the Old Town at Elbląg/Elbing in the thirteenth century.

this street, with another block intended for the town hall and market facilities located opposite (Figure 11.9). As the creation of Toruń and Elbląg involved different groups of townsmen (in the case of Toruń these were people from Silesia, and in the case of Elbląg townsmen from Lübeck and settlers who came to Prussia with the margrave of Meissen (Heinrich)), it can be concluded that the similarity of the layout of both towns was the result of the influence of the territorial ruler – that is, the Teutonic Order.

The relocation of Chełmno in 1251 was enormously significant in shaping the layout of Prussian towns. The town plan is one of the greatest monuments of the medieval surveyor's art in Europe. An unknown surveyor laid down the town boundary along the perimeter of the hill, taking advantage of natural defensive conditions. This difficult hill site of 28 ha was divided into equal squares. In the centre of the site there was established a rectangular market measuring 20 roods by 30 roods (156 × 112 m). The characteristic feature of Chełmno's layout is the uniform width of the streets (3 roods, roughly 13 m). Such a concept is supposed to have come from the south (Wrocław, Poznań) (Figure 11.10).

From the 1230s Silesian merchants and merchants from Halle, who reached Greater Poland and Prussia through Guben, maintained trading contacts with Toruń. The first inhabitants of Chełmno were people from Silesia and Halle.²²

²² Czaja, 'Die Formung', p. 255; R. Czaja, 'Die Kulmer Handfeste, das kulmische Recht und die Stadt Kulm, ihre Rolle in der Gestaltung der Städtelandschaft im Ordensland Preußen', in Czaja and Jahnke, *Städtelandschaften im Ostseeraum*, pp. 73–86.

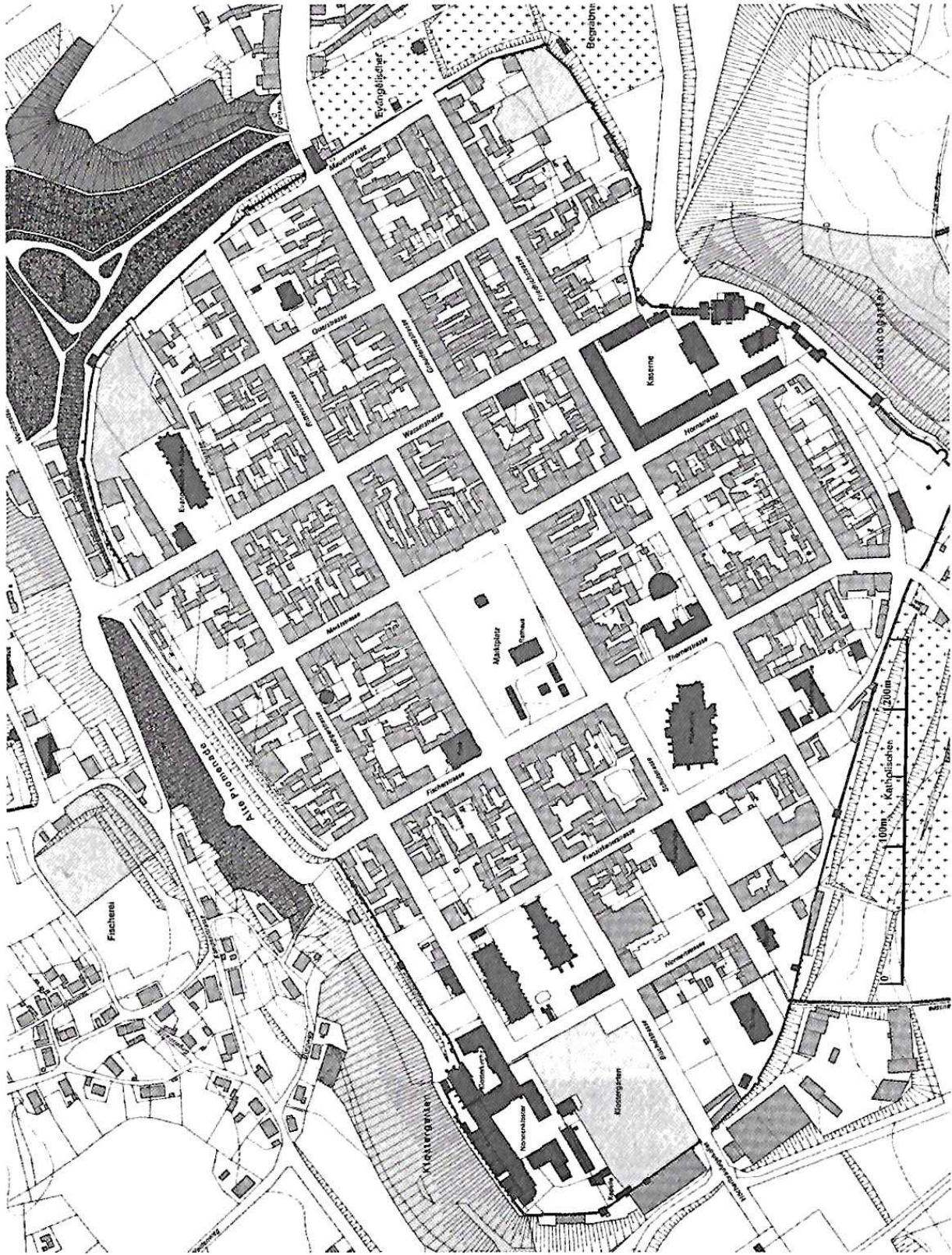


Figure 11.10 Extract from the cadastral plan at 1:2,500 of Chelmo/Kulm c.1910. Z.H. Nowak and Z. Koziej, *Chelmo* (Atlas historyczny miast polskich, vol. 1, no. 3, Toruń, 1999), map 1.

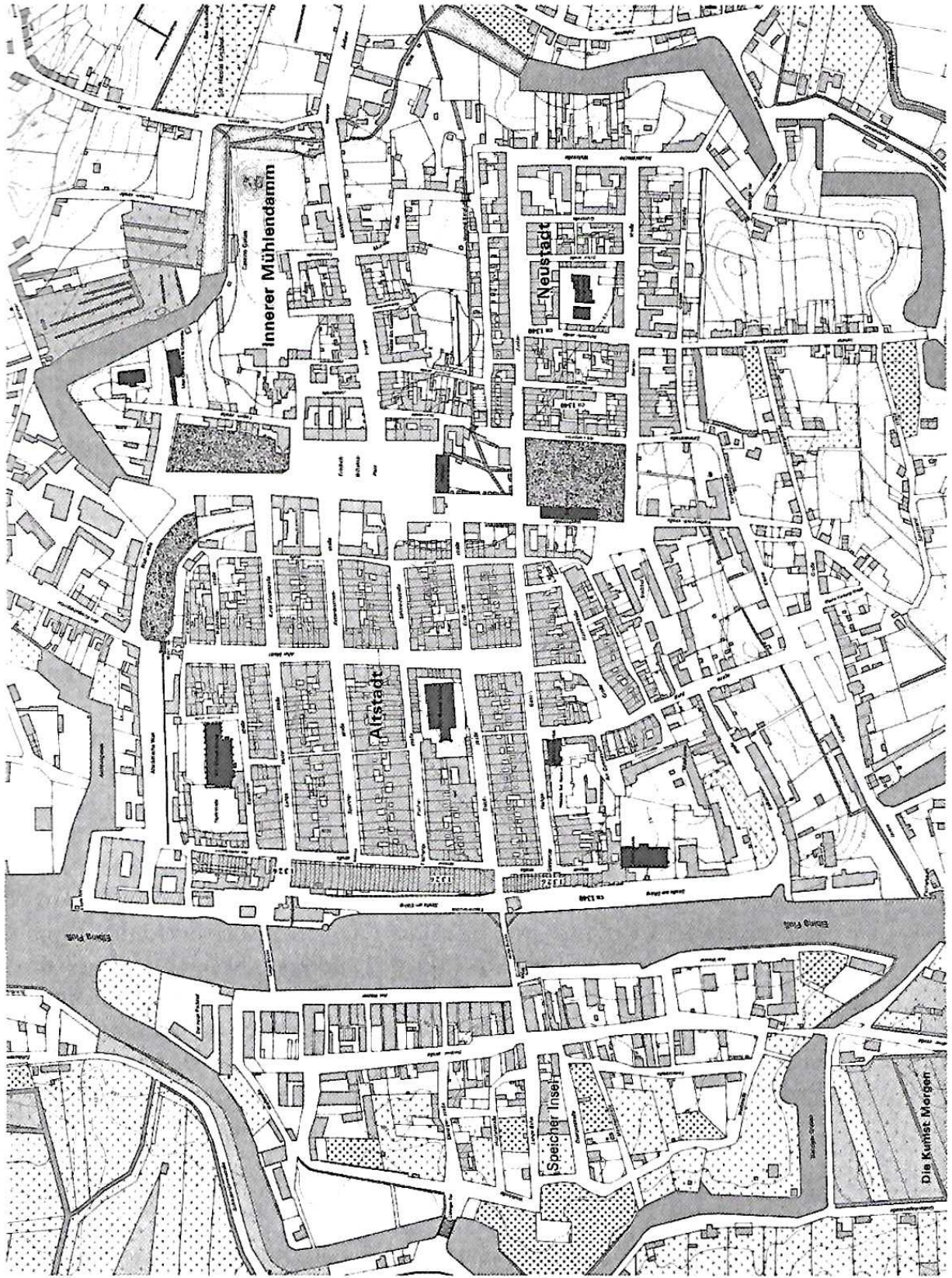


Figure 11.11 Extract from the cadastral plan at 1:2,500 of Elbląg/Elbing c.1839. R. Czaja and Z. Koziet, *Elbląg/Elbing* (Atlas historyczny miast polskich, vol. 1, no. 1, Toruń, 1993), map 1.

The innovative nature and success of the town layout at Chełmno reflects the desire of the Teutonic Order, expressed in 1251 in the location charter, that it should be a capital city and better built than certain others.²³ In the 1250s the plan of Chełmno was used in the enlargement of Toruń and in the layout of its New Town, founded by the Teutonic Order in 1264.

In the Prussian State progress in town foundation (as in Lesser and Greater Poland) occurred at the end of the thirteenth century, after the establishment of the chequer plan with a rectangular marketplace. Consequently such a model was used in most Prussian towns. The layout of most Prussian towns consisted of a rectangular marketplace and adjoining blocks. The model of the street market was to be found only very rarely in Prussian towns. It was used mainly in port towns and a few towns situated far from the coast (for example, Malbork/Marienburg). Towns founded along important communication routes developed plans with a triangular or a rectangular marketplace, which can be regarded as something in between the street and ribbon development system and the chequer one.

In Prussia, unlike in other countries in central Europe, the territorial ruler managed to maintain power over towns. That is why the Teutonic Order controlled urban processes to a large extent, concerning mainly the stages of spatial development. As already mentioned, in the 1250s Toruń was enlarged to the north, involving the creation of a new rectangular marketplace. In 1326 Elbląg received a charter from the grand master of the Teutonic Order, which permitted incorporation of the areas by the river (Figure 11.11). In 1340–48 the Teutonic Order became actively engaged in enlarging the old town of Danzig (Figure 11.12).

The Teutonic authorities made the Dominican friars and the inhabitants of Osiek leave the area to the north of the old town. Subsequently the network of streets was drawn up and St John's Church was erected (before 1349). The change in property and street layout strengthened the position of the old town of Danzig, which was established by the Teutonic Order after 1309 at the expense of areas that had belonged to the colonial town under the law of Lübeck in the Pomeranian period (before 1308). It must be noted that, despite being termed 'the New Town' in 1345, this addition did not create a distinct town but constituted part of the old town of Danzig that was later known as St John's. In the same manner, in other small towns the area called 'new town' became a part of the enlarged town, with the permission of the Teutonic Order. It must be stressed that the knights accepted the enlargement of big towns only to a certain extent.²⁴ Politically and financially it was much more

²³ G. Kisch, *Forschungen und Quellen zur Rechts- und Sozialgeschichte des Deutschordenslandes* (Sigmaringen, 1978), pp. 110–25: 'quia eandem civitatem capitalem esse volumes ac digniorem inter iam constructas et, si que infra Wizlam, Ozzam et Driwantzam construentur'.

²⁴ A. Gołębniak, 'Własność dominikańska w przestrzeni powstającego Gdańska' [Dominicans' property in Gdańsk], in D.A. Dekański (ed.), *Dominikanie. Gdańsk – Polska – Europa* (Gdańsk and Pelplin, 2003), pp. 437–55; Z. Maciakowska, *Kształtowanie przestrzeni*

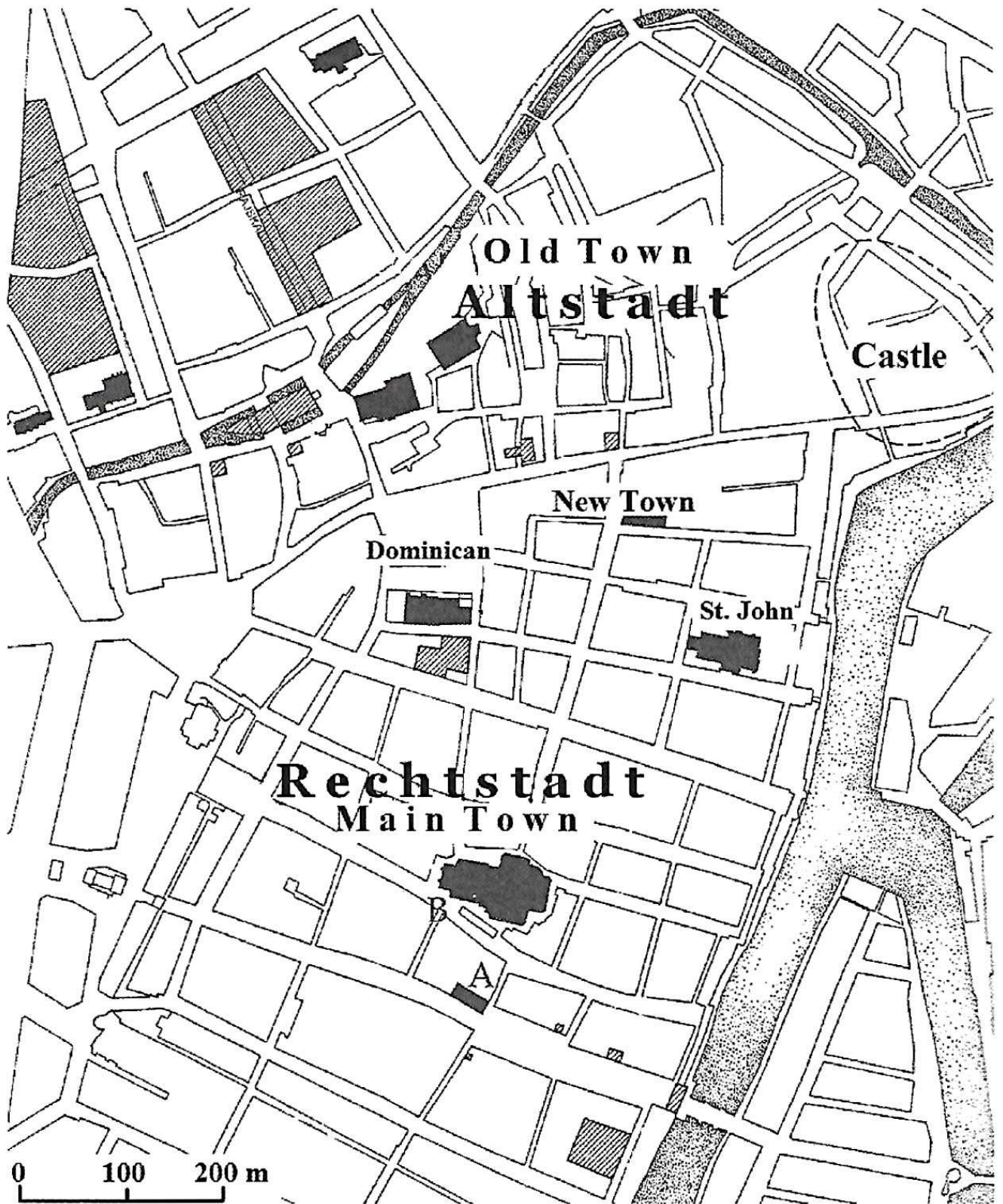


Figure 11.12 Reconstruction of the layout of Gdańsk/Danzig in the fourteenth century.

profitable to set up a new town near an old one. This was what differentiated the Prussian State from others in Europe, where new towns were created in the vicinity of rapidly developing, large trading centres. In Prussia new towns were set up at Toruń/Thorn, Elbląg/Elbing and Braniewo/Braunsberg, whilst at Kaliningrad/Königsberg and Gdańsk/Danzig two new towns were created.²⁵ Economically and socially, the creation of 'new towns' was connected with the development and economic prosperity of 'old towns'. Granting town liberties to new towns was the responsibility of the territorial ruler, who profited from the relocation. In areas where territorial rulers did not exercise much power over big towns, new towns relatively quickly became incorporated into old towns. In Teutonic Prussia, owing to massive State power, the process of the loss of independence of new towns did not commence until 1454, when the order ceased to be the territorial ruler.

To sum up, it can be stated that in the researched area there exists a relationship between the chronology of a town's foundation and its spatial arrangement. Down to the 1240s different forms of street market existed in Poland and in the Prussian State. As from the 1240s, when Breslau was founded, the chequer with a centrally located marketplace became the basic form of town plan. This was used regardless of the function of a town or its size. In small towns the chequer plan was used to a very limited extent. Analysis of the process of town foundation in Lesser Poland, Greater Poland and the Prussian State shows clearly that the interests of the territorial ruler constituted only one of the factors determining the town's development. Hence, when choosing a town's location, territorial rulers had to take into account the needs of settlers. It must be noted, however, that the influence of the territorial ruler over the urban development of big towns took place only in the preliminary stage and concerned only the plan and extent of the town. The infrastructure and building process inside the town walls and suburbs were beyond the capacity of the territorial ruler.

miejskiej Głównego Miasta w Gdańsku do początku XV w. [*The Formation of the Town Space in the Old Town of Danzig to the Middle of the Fifteenth Century*] (Gdańsk, 2011), pp. 46–50.

²⁵ Z.H. Nowak, 'Neustadtgründungen des Deutschen Ordens in Preußen. Entstehung, Verhältnis zu den Altstädten, Ende der Eigenständigkeit', in Arnold, *Stadt und Orden*, pp. 129–42.