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ACROSS THE BORDER: SOME MUTUAL INFLUENCES ON THE LIFE OF THE LATE MEDIEVAL CITIES OF KOŠICE AND KRAKÓW

**Za granicą – wzajemne wpływy na życie późnośredniowiecznych miast:
Koszyce i Krakowa**

Abstract: This study explores the mutual influences between two East-Central European medieval royal cities, Košice and Kraków, focusing on the adoption of specific models in urban administration and economic organization. Košice, an important trading center in the Kingdom of Hungary, maintained close ties with Kraków, the hub for merchants and capital of the Kingdom of Poland. The study analyzes migration patterns between the towns, the organization of markets, and administrative structures. It focuses on similarities between the guilds of wealthy merchants, the layout of marketplaces, and the existence of the *Lohnherren* office in both towns. The aim is to promote further comparative research and a deeper understanding of the interconnection of urban communities in medieval Europe.

Keywords: Medieval Poland, medieval Kingdom of Hungary, medieval towns, town administration, town marketplace, comparative research.

Abstrakt: Niniejsze studium analizuje wzajemne wpływy między dwoma królewskimi miastami Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w średniowieczu: Koszycami i Krakowem, koncentrując się na przyjmowaniu konkretnych modeli administracji miejskiej i organizacji gospodarczej. Koszyce, ważny ośrodek handlowy w Królestwie Węgier, utrzymywały bliskie kontakty z Krakowem – centrum kupiectwa i stolicą Królestwa Polskiego. Analizie zostały poddane wzorce migracyjne między tymi miastami, organizacja targów oraz struktury administracyjne. Szczególną uwagę poświęcono podobieństwom między cechami bogatych kupców, układowi przestrzennemu rynków oraz istnieniu urzędu *Lohnherren* w obu ośrodkach. Celem pracy jest zachęta do dalszych badań porównawczych i pogłębienia wiedzy na temat wzajemnych powiązań społeczności miejskich w średniowiecznej Europie.

Słowa kluczowe: średniowieczna Polska, średniowieczne Królestwo Węgier, miasta średniowieczne, administracja miejska, targ miejski, badania porównawcze.

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Introduction

The issue of the migration of people and ideas – especially on an international level – is an important research topic in the study of medieval and early modern Europe. Even regarding East-Central European towns, considerable scholarly attention has already been devoted to understanding their mutual economic, legal, ethnic, and cultural exchange. The ongoing work of historians continues to deepen our understanding of the various personal and institutional contacts between urban communities. However, there is still ample room for in-depth research aimed at uncovering the causes, course, and consequences of such contacts and migrations. Moreover, it is not sufficient merely to state the extent of travel and relocation of people in the past. At the same time, it is necessary to ask: what specific outcomes of the migration of people and ideas can be identified in the sources? What recognizable traces have personal contacts or cross-border resettlement left behind? What elements were transferred in practice from one place to another?

Many such questions offer promising avenues for research. One area that remains relatively unexplored is the cross-border adoption of specific models in urban administration and the organization of economic activities. Therefore, this article presents a small case study within the broader field: the prominent royal city of Košice in the Kingdom of Hungary (modern-day Slovakia), which maintained lively contacts with cities and towns in the neighboring Kingdom of Poland – especially with its capital, Kraków – serves here as an illustrative example of such mutual influences.

Košice and Kraków

The town of Košice was likely founded in the 1240s, in the aftermath of the Mongol invasion. It was probably preceded by only a small settlement. The main group of new settlers consisted of Germans, as was the case in most other Hungarian towns.² In the following decades, economic contacts between Hungary and the nearby Polish lands deepened considerably. Mutual trade proved so profitable that a remarkable concentration of royal towns specializing in commerce and craft – such as Levoča, Bardejov, Prešov, Kežmarok – emerged in the northeast of the kingdom (in present-day eastern Slovakia).³ Among them, Košice took a leading position. In addition to these trading centers, the region also included important mining towns such as Gelnica and Smolník.

The merchants of all these towns served as intermediaries in cross-border trade, which extended from the Polish frontier deeper into Hungary, especially toward its southeast region – Transylvania. Košice's strong position within this network of trade routes was reinforced by the grant of the staple right in 1347, which was further strengthened in 1361.⁴ According

² A brief overview of the medieval history of the town: M. Slezáková, K. Nádaská, *Košice*, in: *Lexikon stredovekých miest na Slovensku*, eds. M. Štefáňik, J. Lukačka, Bratislava 2010, p. 194-212.

³ On the rise in importance of the local trade route in the 13th century: K. Szende, *Changing patterns of long-distance trade and the urban network of medieval Hungary*, in: *Towns and Communication II. Communication between towns*, eds. H. Houben, K. Toomaspoeg, Congedo Editore 2011, p. 207-209. An overview of medieval history of the named towns: *Lexikon stredovekých miest na Slovensku*, eds. M. Štefáňik, J. Lukačka, Bratislava 2010.

⁴ B. Weisz, *The legal background of the trade life of Košice in the Middle Ages*, in: *Košice in the Coordinates of European History*, eds. M. Haujduová, M. Bartoš, Košice 2014, p. 94-111.

to entries in Košice town court books, textiles were the most profitable trade commodity in this town at the end of the 14th century,⁵ while in the 15th century copper and wine emerged as key exports alongside textiles.⁶

By the second half of the 15th century, Košice, with a population of up to 6,000,⁷ was one of the largest and most important economic centers of the entire kingdom.⁸ Toward the end of the Middle Ages, some changes in preferences in exported goods and merchant routes from Hungary led to a decline in Košice's role in long-distance foreign trade.⁹ Nevertheless, the town remained a significant economic, military-administrative, and cultural hub in northeastern Hungary into the early modern period.¹⁰

On the other side of the border, in Poland, Kraków had developed since the early Middle Ages into a well-established crossroads of long-distance trade routes. In the mid-11th century, it became the seat of Polish rulers, later serving as the center of an autonomous duchy during the period of the kingdom's fragmentation. Its status was later strengthened with the reunification of the Kingdom of Poland around 1320. Merchants from Kraków maintained close connections with the cities of the Hanseatic League along the Baltic coast. By the end of the Middle Ages, the capital of Poland with its surrounding suburbs had a population exceeding 20,000. In 1364, a university was founded in Kraków, which became a major intellectual center.¹¹

By contrast, medieval Hungary lacked a permanent university. As a result, Kraków became a sought-after destination for higher education among the sons of Hungarian nobles and burghers, particularly those from northeastern Hungary – who enrolled at the university in significant numbers.¹²

⁵ Zs. Teke, *Kassa külkereskedelme az 1393-1405. évi kassai bírói könyv bejegyzései alapján*, „Századok”, 137/2003, no. 2, p. 386f.

⁶ On medieval Hungarian-Polish trade and the role of Košice and Kraków within it: O.R. Halaga, *Košice-Balt I. Výroba a obchod v styku východoslovenských miest s Pruskom (1275-1526)*, Košice 1975. From Polish historiography, for example: S. Kutrzeba, *Handel Krakowa w wiekach średnich na tle stosunków handlowych polski*, Kraków 1902; J. Dąbrowski, *Kraków a Węgry w wiekach średnich*, „Rocznik Krakowski”, 13/1911, p. 187-250; F. Kiryk, *Związki handlowe i kulturalne miast Małopolskich ze Słowacją w XV i XVI stuleciu*, „Historické štúdie”, 2000, vol. 41, p. 9-33 (here mainly the town of Bardejov). The latest on the copper trade: E. Mayerová, M. Lacko, *Der Thurzo-Kodex. Eine einzigartige Quelle zum europäischen Bergrecht und Münzwesen um 1500*, Studienverlag 2022.

⁷ The size of the population is still a debated issue. From more recent works see: Gy. Granasztói, *A városi élet keretei a feudális kori Magyarországon. Kassa társadalma a 16. század derekán*, Budapest 2012; M. Bodnárová, *Zásady výpočtu obyvateľstva stredovekých miest a demografická štruktúra mestského obyvateľstva so zameraním na Košice v 16. storočí*, in: *Obyvateľstvo Karpatskej kotliny I.*, eds. P. Kónya, R. Matlovič, Prešov 1997, p. 11-21; D. Magdoško, *Suburbs of Medieval Košice: Origin, Topography and Population*, „The City and History”, 2023, vol. 12, no. 2, p. 8-41.

⁸ An overview of the medieval history of Hungarian towns: Gy. Granasztói, *A középkori magyar város*, Budapest 1980.

⁹ O.R. Halaga, *Košice-Balt I.*, p. 265f.

¹⁰ About the towns of northeastern Hungary in the early modern period: M. Marečková, *Východoslovenská města a měšťanstvo na prahu novověku*, Brno 1995. An overview of the related Slovak historiography: P. Fedorčák, *Dejiny Košíc v 16. – 18. storočí v slovenskej historiografii*, in: *Košice a dejiny – dejiny Košíc*, ed. Š. Šutaj, Košice 2011, p. 59-68.

¹¹ On the history of medieval Kraków: J. Wyrozumski, *Dzieje Krakowa. Kraków do schyłku wieków średnich*, Kraków 1998.

¹² A general overview of students from northern Kingdom of Hungary (present-day Slovakia): *Humanizmus a renesancia na Slovensku v 15. – 16. storočí*, eds. L. Holotík, A. Vantuch, Bratislava 1967.

Košice and neighboring Hungarian towns maintained economic relations not only with Kraków, but also with several other towns in the Polish, Prussian, and Bohemian lands. As early as the 14th century, the personal journeys of Košice merchants to cities such as Toruń and Gdańsk are documented.¹³ In the 1360s, a trade route through northern Hungary – linking the eastern part of the kingdom with Silesia (and its capital Wrocław) and Moravia – was adapted for long-distance commerce.¹⁴ Nevertheless, Kraków continued to play a key role in trade for northeastern Hungary. In the 15th century, when Košice merchants' long-distance travel beyond Kraków became restricted, the Polish capital's importance in their commercial activities grew even further.

The economic potential of Kraków's merchant class surpassed that of merchants in Hungarian towns, including Košice. Municipal records from Košice, including the town court book from 1393-1405¹⁵ as well as another from 1489-1528,¹⁶ reveal that Kraków merchants often possessed significantly greater financial capital than their Košice counterparts, who frequently appeared as debtors to their Polish partners. Trade transactions with Kraków merchants are among the largest and most frequent entries concerning foreign trade in Košice's records. Still, the economic cooperation between the two cities remained pragmatic and mutually beneficial, contributing to the growth of wealth and commercial networks on both sides. Moreover, Kraków's prominence extended beyond trade. Of the 222 Košice residents documented in writing to have studied at foreign universities between 1372 and 1530, 151 (68%) chose the University of Kraków.¹⁷ Many citizens of Košice, therefore, became well-acquainted with the capital of Poland.

Migration to Košice

The oldest preserved Košice court book, covering the years 1393 to 1405, does not yet include a list of newly admitted citizens.¹⁸ However, the analysis of the geographical origin of personal surnames in this early record indicates frequent contacts with Polish and Prussian towns around the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries. A significant number of individuals also appear to have originated from the lands of the Bohemian Crown – Silesia, Moravia, and Bohemia. Others came from the Holy Roman Empire, including several from Flanders and Italy.¹⁹

Lists of newly registered citizens of Košice are available from the second half of the 15th century, coinciding with a more continuous series of town books.²⁰ The geographical origins of new citizens from the period 1489-1528 have been analyzed by historian Miloš Marek.

¹³ O.R. Halaga, *Košice-Balt I.*, p. 133f.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 138.

¹⁵ Zs. Teke, *Kassa külkereskedelme*, p. 387.

¹⁶ E. Fügedi, *Kaschau, eine osteuropäische Handelsstadt am Ende des 15. Jahrhunderts*, „Studia Slavica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae II.” Budapest 1956, p. 206f; O.R. Halaga, *Košice-Balt I.*, p. 277f. On the trade of Košice in the second half of the 16th century: Gy. Granasztói, *A városi élet keretei*, p. 141-155.

¹⁷ J. Caproš, *Košickí študenti na univerzite v Krakove v 15. a na začiatku 16. storočia*, „Historický časopis”, 55/2007, no. 2, p. 249-266.

¹⁸ It is the only edition of the medieval and early modern Košice court books: O.R. Halaga, *Acta iudiciaria civitatis Cassoviensis 1393-1405. Das älteste Kaschauer Stadtbuch*, München 1994.

¹⁹ Zs. Teke, *Kassa külkereskedelme*, p. 391-403.

²⁰ On the town chancery latest: D. Magdoško, *Samospráva mesta Košice v stredoveku*, Košice 2017, p. 13-16, 155-167.

His research indicates that, in addition to migrants from other parts of Hungary, newcomers arrived from the Czech and Polish lands, as well as from various regions of Germany, northern Italy, and present-day Switzerland. By comparing contemporary data from several towns in northern Hungary (present-day Slovakia), he concluded that Košice had the most geographically diverse population of new burghers in the late Middle Ages.²¹

Gradual changes in the origins of incoming citizens – already noted by historians Ondrej R. Halaga and György Granasztói – reflect the changing in the economic orientation of Košice from the late 15th century onwards, as well as the incorporation of Hungary to the Habsburg monarchy after 1526. In the 16th century, only a small number of new citizens from Poland was documented, while the number of newcomers from the territory of Germany and Austria increased significantly. The lands of the Bohemian Crown, especially Silesia, continued to be well represented.²² Naturally, the poorer population – those who did not acquire citizenship – moved to Košice primarily from the surrounding region.²³

According to the town books from the years 1471-1476 and 1489-1528, an average of 21 new citizens settled Košice annually. In the 1470s, the preferred form of contribution upon receiving citizenship was a material gift to the town – for example, a crossbow – whereas in later years, monetary payments became more common, typically amounting to one florin, and in exceptional cases, up to three or four florins. New male citizens were required to purchase a house and establish a family in Košice within a year and a day. Guarantees from local burghers were frequently provided to support applicants. Unfortunately, the geographic place of origin of new citizens is mentioned in significantly fewer than half of the recorded cases, which limits the interpretative value of these lists.²⁴

In fact, the issue of citizenship and – more broadly, migration – has not yet been the subject of targeted research in the context of Košice. The information presented above derives from the works of historians who primarily studied the town's economy, society, and administration within selected time frames. Each of them applied own methodology in processing data about new citizens and categorizing them by geographical origin. A more comprehensive review of migration to medieval and early modern Košice is therefore needed. This topic should be approached over a broader chronological period, using a consistent methodological framework, and treated in a holistic manner.²⁵

Surnames derived from geographical origins provide only a partial view of the phenomenon. Nevertheless, such heuristic methods are often practical and, in many cases, the only available approach. Due to the current state of incomplete research, we lack, for example, explicit data confirming that new citizens of Košice originated directly from Kraków. In the Košice court book from the years 1393 to 1405, there is no surname indicating Kraków.

²¹ M. Marek, *Vplyv prisťahovalectva na etnické pomery stredovekých miest na Slovensku*, „Mesto a dejiny”, 2/2013, no. 1, p. 20-22.

²² O.R. Halaga, *Košice-Balt I.*, p. 265-267; Gy. Granasztói, *A városi élet keretei*, p. 259-263.

²³ M. Marek, *Vplyv prisťahovalectva na etnické pomery*, p. 20-22.

²⁴ D. Magdoško, *Samospráva mesta Košice*, p. 134, 178. For more information on the status of a citizen in medieval Hungarian towns, see: K. Szende, *Polgárnak lenni. A polgárjog megszerzésének elvei és gyakorlata a késő-középkori Sopronban*, „Urbs, Magyar várostörténeti évkönyv”, 2006, vol. 1, p. 85-107.

²⁵ The research approaches of German historiography offer suitable examples. Overviews: M. Nodl, *Raně novověké městské migrace: perspektivy, tendence a metodické podněty německého bádání 70. až 90. let*, „Mediaevalia historica Bohemica”, 1997, vol. 18, p. 289-304; *Neubürger im späten Mittelalter. Migration und Austausch in der Städtelandschaft des Alten Reiches (1250-1550)*, ed. R.Ch. Schwinges, Berlin 2003.

However, around the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries, two men named Knobloch – Michael and Ladislaus²⁶ – served as councilors and merchants in Košice. At the same time, a merchant named Michael Knobloch is also documented in Kraków.²⁷ This suggests at least the possibility of personal or familial ties between the two cities. For the later decades, at the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of modern period, it is already partially possible to trace some individual economic relationships and instances of elite migration between the two towns.²⁸ Further prosopographical research will undoubtedly yield more insight into these interurban connections.

Regardless of the currently known numbers of new citizens, it is clear that Kraków was frequently visited by members of the Košice economic and political elite, as well as their representatives, throughout the Middle Ages. Such ties between the two towns were also reflected in the mutual adoption of certain customs, as will be demonstrated in the following sections of this study.

Trade and marketplace

Several Slovak and Hungarian historians have already addressed, albeit partially, the guild of wealthy merchants in Košice, whose first statutes were approved and recorded by the town council in 1446.²⁹ Historian Miroslava Slezáková suggested that this guild was probably created following the example of a similar association of merchants in Kraków, though she did not explore this idea further.³⁰ It is, therefore, reasonable to assert that this assumption is likely correct. In Kraków, merchants bearing the same appellation were first mentioned in 1441.³¹ Although rich stalls (in Polish *bogate kramy*) and the wealthy merchants associated with them (in Polish *bogaci kramarze*) also existed in several other medieval trading towns in what is now Poland,³² the close chronological proximity between the approval of the Košice guild's statutes and the first mention of the Kraków merchants strongly suggests that the wealthy merchants of Košice were inspired by the contemporary developments in Kraków when establishing their own guild and its purposes. These entrepreneurs dealt primarily in luxury goods, textiles, spices, and similar high-value merchandise.³³

²⁶ D. Magdoško, *Samospráva mesta Košice v stredoveku*, 246-247; idem, *Suburbs of Medieval Košice*, p. 19.

²⁷ Zs. Teke, *Kassa külkereskedelme*, p. 387-389; D. Magdoško, *Samospráva mesta Košice v stredoveku*, p. 246-247.

²⁸ Z. Noga, *Geografia imigracji do krakowskiej elity władzy w w średniowieczu i epoce nowożytnej (do połowy XVII w.)*, in: *Elita władzy Krakowa i jej związki z miastami Europy w średniowieczu i epoce nowożytnej (do połowy XVII wieku)*, ed. Z. Noga, Kraków 2011, p. 27.

²⁹ For more information and literature: D. Magdoško, *Trhové krámy na náměstí Košic v neskorom stredoveku a ranom novoveku*, „*Studia Historica Nitriensia*”, 27/2023, no. 2, p. 336f.

³⁰ M. Slezáková, *Obchodné aktivity košických mešťanov ako špecifický prejav komunikácie s okolitým svetom*, in: *Stredoveké mesto ako miesto stretnutí a komunikácie*, eds. J. Lukačka, M. Štefánik, Bratislava 2010, p. 181.

³¹ J. Wyrozumski, *Dzieje Krakowa. Kraków do schyłku wieków średnich*, Kraków 1998, p. 395.

³² For instance, in Wrocław, the capital of Silesia, which was part of the Bohemian Crown lands in the late Middle Ages and early modern period, and also in Świdnica and Głogów. See: J. Blaise, I. Dudek, *Different faces of one 'idea'. Architectural transformations on the Market Square in Krakow. A systematic visual catalogue*, AFM Publishing House 2016, p. 247, 273; M. Chorowska, T. Dziedzic, M. Krzywka, *Trzy Kramy Bogate odkryte we Wrocławiu*, „*Architectus*”, 2015, vol. 3(43), p. 35-46.

³³ J. Blaise, I. Dudek, *The catalogue of architectural objects. Architectural transformations on the Market Square in Krakow. A systematic visual catalogue*, AFM Publishing House 2016, p. 159; M. Slezáková, *Members of the mer-*

In contrast to Kraków, where the guild of wealthy merchants persisted longer, the Košice guild ceased to exist a century after its foundation. This decline was caused by both external pressures and shifting socio-economic conditions in the town at the transition from the Middle Ages to the early modern period. During the Hungarian civil war following 1526, when two crowned kings competed for the throne, Košice supported Ferdinand of Habsburg. When his rival, John Zápolya, overtook the town in 1536, he expelled 55 leading burghers and their families from there, members of the local political and economic elite.³⁴ This expulsion also marked the end of the activities of the guild of wealthy merchants. Although a substantial part of those exiles returned to Košice after the town reverted to Ferdinand's control in 1552, attempts by some merchants to re-establish the guild were unsuccessful.³⁵ This suggests that the circumstances in Košice had changed in the meantime and were no longer conducive to sustaining such an exclusive elite association of local merchants. Later, another guild of merchants was established in Košice, similar to those found in other Hungarian trading towns in the early modern period. However, it was not a direct continuation of the former medieval guild of wealthy merchants.³⁶

The guilds of wealthy merchants in Košice and Kraków were, in fact, associations of proprietors of the so-called rich stalls, which stood in the squares of both towns, adjacent to the cloth stalls. They could therefore also be called as guilds of rich stalls holders. In late medieval Kraków, the cloth stalls were concentrated in the monumental brick building known as the Cloth Hall (Pol. *Sukiennice*), with the rich stalls located along one of its sides.³⁷

As recent research into the topography of the Košice marketplace has demonstrated, the rich stalls there were likewise situated next to the cloth stalls, specifically to the south of the town hall, at the center of the square.³⁸ However, the morphology of the two towns' squares differs significantly: Kraków's marketplace is roughly square in shape, while Košice's has the form of a narrow, elongated lens-shape street. Whereas the topography of Kraków's medieval marketplace is well known – and parts of it, such as the Cloth Hall and the underground exhibition, have survived to the present day, Košice's all the market buildings, including the town hall, have disappeared. They were later replaced by a theater and parks. Because historical maps recorded the local stalls in Košice only to a limited extent, our knowledge of the former appearance of its marketplace remains fragmentary.

The second statutes of Košice's guild of wealthy merchants, issued in 1475, confirm the guild's connection to these stalls. The guild referred to as the "brotherhood of stone

chant guild in Košice in the Middle Ages, in: *Transformation of Central European Cities in Historical Development (Košice, Krakow, Miskolc, Opava). From the Middle Ages to the End of the 18th Century*, eds. H. Hrehor, M. Pekar, Košice 2013, p. 29-37.

³⁴ Gy. Granasztói, *A városi élet keretei*, 58f.

³⁵ In fact, the guild's book ends in 1536, and only a few other entries date from 1553. For more literature: D. Magdoško, *Trhové krámy na náměstí Košic*, p. 335-339.

³⁶ T. Tandlich, *Artikuly obchodných cechov v slobodných kráľovských mestách Košice, Prešov a Levoča*, „Slovenská archivistika“, 32/1997, no. 1, p. 58-70.

³⁷ W. Luszczykiewicz, *Sukiennice krakowskie. Dzieje gmachu i jego obecnej przebudowy*, Kraków 1899; J. Blaise, I. Dudek, *The catalogue of architectural objects*, p. 159-166; A. Sudacka, *Wyniki kwerendy archiwalnej dotyczącej zabudowy handlowej Rynku w Krakowie*, „Krzysztofory. Zeszyty Naukowe Muzeum Historycznego Miasta Krakowa”, 2008, vol. 26, p. 77-102.

³⁸ D. Magdoško, *Trhové krámy na náměstí Košic*, p. 334-342.

stalls,” – a term reflecting the local terminology for these shops.³⁹ This alternative designation suggests that – unlike in Kraków – the rich stalls in Košice were the only ones constructed entirely of brick. After the dissolution of the Košice’s guild of wealthy merchants, the term “stone stalls” disappeared from municipal records. Of course, they did not vanish. It can be assumed that in the town’s account books preserved from the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, these same structures were already referred to as the “stalls under the town hall.”

At that time, probably the same stalls were called by the royal commissioners in one of their military reports (from 1604) as a low brick market building (*Kaufhaus*). This was probably the same hall identified on a map from 1780 – just before its demolition – as the *Pro-pileum*.⁴⁰ Today, one of the parks occupies this site, featuring a large fountain; unfortunately, the area was developed without any documented archaeological research.

It is quite likely that the rich stalls of Košice had a similar floor plan and function as those in Kraków, although the latter were certainly larger. Historian Judit Benda estimates that there may have been a total of 24 such shops in Košice, or possibly even up to 32. Together, they formed a building, simply referred to as the *Crom*. Celebrations of the Košice guild of wealthy merchants were also held in this building.⁴¹

On the opposite side of the Cloth Hall in Kraków, shops for lower-status vendors – craftsmen, in fact – were located in a building known in Polish as *Smatruz* and in German as *Schmetterhaus*.⁴² The so-called poor small stalls (in contemporary German known as *Armenkrenleyn*, *Armen kremleyn*) in Košice, attested in the town accounts from the late Middle Ages, probably served a similar function. These stalls were also intended for craftsmen. While their exact location remains unknown, they were probably also situated somewhere near the center of the square – close to the town hall, the cloth, and the rich stalls. The poor stalls, too, were no longer mentioned in Košice’s municipal documents after the 1530s, likely replaced in the early modern period by other shops with updated purposes and names.⁴³

It might seem that the presence of both rich and poor stalls in late medieval Košice was an ordinary feature or a natural consequence of Kraków’s influence. However, it is a noteworthy fact that, among the contemporary Hungarian towns, only Košice is known to have possessed market structures designated by such specific terms. Although other towns in northeastern Hungary also maintained frequent economic, cultural, and family ties with the same Lesser Polish and Silesian towns as Košice – especially with the capital of Poland – no specialized stalls referred to as rich and poor, nor a guild of wealthy merchants, emerged in them. This indicates Košice’s exceptional position in regional trade networks and in the web of personal contacts maintained by its leading merchants with Kraków. It may also imply that the economic and political elites of this Hungarian town were particularly receptive to adopting certain models from the Polish metropolis that were perceived as beneficial to the development of their own commercial activities and urban community.

³⁹ Ibidem, p. 337-338.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 337-339.

⁴¹ J. Benda, *Kis középkori kalmárbolt-tipológia*, in: *Hatalom, adó, jog. Gazdaságtörténeti tanulmányok a magyar középkorról*, eds. I. Kádas, B. Weisz, Budapest 2017, p. 533-534. However, for the location of Košice’s rich stalls, see: D. Magdoško, *Trhové krámy na námestí Košíc*, p. 337-339.

⁴² J. Blaise, I. Dudek, *Different faces of one ‘idea’*, p. 247, 269-270; Blaise J., Dudek I., *The catalogue of architectural objects*, p. 139-142.

⁴³ D. Magdoško, *Trhové krámy na námestí Košíc*, p. 340-341.

In addition, at least one other similarity between Košice and Kraków can be found in the structure of municipal offices.

Town administration

The administrative structure of the leading Hungarian royal cities was quite similar. From the time founding privileges were granted, local urban communities could elect a judge and a town council, which in the late Middle Ages usually consisted of 12 members. The judge and the council jointly dealt with all judicial and administrative matters, so that there was no need for an additional head office or the involvement of a royal commissioner. This was also the case in Košice.⁴⁴ Only in some Hungarian towns was the office of mayor established, which nonetheless remained part of the municipal self-government and shared competences with the judge.⁴⁵

In July 1347, King Louis I granted Košice the privileges of Buda, the foremost town of Hungary and its capital from the 15th century onward. Shortly before that, two prominent burghers of Buda had become members of the Košice town council, so the subsequent transfer of privileges was obviously influenced by personal interests.⁴⁶ It is clear from further developments that Košice adopted certain administrative patterns from Buda while also preserving its own traditions. From the second half of the 15th century, for instance, it is documented that the judge and council of Košice were elected by the college of *seniores* (also referred to as *communitas* or *electa communitas*), which functioned as an analogue of Buda's college of "hundred men" (*centum viri*). In the 15th century, Košice and other towns – especially in the northeast of the kingdom – aligned their electoral procedure with those of Buda in several respects. On the other hand, the royal towns of northeastern Hungary, including Košice, retained their own election term in the first half of January, differing from Buda's practice (held on St. George's Day, April 24).⁴⁷ While Buda had its own law book, compiled in the early 15th century from various foreign sources and customary practices,⁴⁸ Košice adopted the South German *Schwabenspiegel* in 1430. The impetus for the compilation of the *Schwabenspiegel* in Košice may have been come from the prominent local burgher John Hebenstreit, who served as judge of Košice for several years in the 1430s. He likely came from Nuremberg, providing another example of personal influence shaping local institutional development.⁴⁹

While the chief institutions of the free royal towns in medieval Hungary exhibited close structural similarities, the development of lower levels of urban administration tended to be more individual. The structure of the offices established for the purpose of managing

⁴⁴ Idem, *Samospráva mesta Košice v stredoveku*, p. 75f.

⁴⁵ For instance, the towns Sopron and Bratislava (and others): J. Majorossy, K. Goda, *Stadtische Selbstverwaltung und Schriftproduktion im spätmittelalterlichen Königreich Ungarn. Eine Quellenkunde für Odenburg und Pressburg*, „Pro Civitate Austriae”, 2008, vol. 13, p. 60-98.

⁴⁶ D. Magdoško, *Kassa város bírái és tanácsának tagjai a 14. század második feléig*, in: *Kapocs, érme, rovás. Gazdaság- és várostörténeti tanulmányok a magyar középkorról*, eds. I. Kádas, B. Weisz, Budapest 2024, p. 334f.

⁴⁷ Idem, *Samospráva mesta Košice v stredoveku*, 66-70. On the origin of the college of *seniores* in Košice and briefly in other Hungarian towns: *ibidem*, p. 110-116.

⁴⁸ K. Mollay, *Das Ofner Stadtrecht*, Budapest 1959.

⁴⁹ D. Magdoško, *Samospráva mesta Košice v stredoveku*, p. 98-100. It is not yet known, however, to what extent this legal collection was applied in Košice court practice.

municipal property and security – such as mills, grain, construction, market, patrols and others – was broadly comparable across towns, but the names of such offices, the scope of their activities and their number could differ slightly due to local circumstances. The issue of the management of Hungarian medieval towns, especially in the northern regions (present-day Slovakia), remains only partially explored in historiography. Based on current knowledge, one notable difference lies in how towns managed and recorded their municipal finances. In the northwest of the kingdom, a separate office of chamberlain was established for this purpose (e.g., in Bratislava),⁵⁰ whereas in northeastern Hungarian towns such as Prešov, municipal finances were typically maintained by a notary.⁵¹ Košice, however, represented an exception in this respect.

In Košice, an office known by the German name *Lohnherren* (Latin: *dispensatores*) was documented from 1469, although it certainly existed earlier – at least as early as 1420. This office was held by two councilors, in accordance with the general custom of assigning most municipal offices to pairs of officeholders. The duties of the *Lohnherren* included the weekly payment of wages to municipal employees as well as the recording and annual accounting of the substantial portion of town revenues and expenditures. These financial records were submitted around the time of the municipal elections for approval by the community, represented in practice by the aforementioned body of elders. To fulfill their duties, these two officials took over the finances from the profit of the other municipal offices. The office remained part of Košice's administrative structure well into the modern era, when it was referred to as *Zahlherren* in German and *Fizetőtiszt* in Hungarian.⁵²

To date, research published so far has not identified another town in northeastern Hungary – or indeed anywhere in the whole kingdom, including Buda – that had an office bearing this particular name within its administrative structure. Nor was such an office present in the Silesian towns with which Košice maintained frequent contacts. In cities such as Wrocław, similar functions were performed by a chamberlain (Ger. *Cammerherr*, *Kämmerer*).⁵³ To the north of Hungary, however, the nearby town of Kraków had an equivalent office with a similar scope of duties established at the end of the Middle Ages. It is noteworthy that according to current research, the office called *Lohnherren* was introduced in Kraków only in 1507. Prior to this date, the town's finances (the treasury) had been managed by two or three members of the town council who were not specially designated, meaning that the role did not yet constitute a distinct office.⁵⁴ Thus, based on the available data, Košice appears to have had such an office earlier than Kraków. A question for further research remains whether the creation of the office in Kraków stemmed from an older, undocumented oral

⁵⁰ P. Sedláček, *Hospodárenie mestskej komory v Bratislave na základe rozboru komorných kníh mesta Bratislavy z rokov 1434-1528*, „Historický časopis“, 65/2017, no. 3, p. 411-444.

⁵¹ M. Domenová, *K hospodáreniu mesta Prešov na základe daňovej-účtovnej knihy z rokov 1528-1537*, „Annales Presovienses“, 11/2011, no. 1, p. 26. A broader overview: D. Magdoško, *Samospráva mesta Košice v stredoveku*, p. 170.

⁵² D. Magdoško, *Samospráva mesta Košice v stredoveku*, p. 171-173, 190-191.

⁵³ E. Wólkiewicz, *Urzednicy i służby municypalne w miastach późnośredniowiecznego Śląska. Zarys problematyki*, in: *Sociální svět středověkého města. Colloquia mediaevalia Pragensia 5*, ed. M. Nodl, Praha 2006, p. 138-139.

⁵⁴ S. Kutrzeba, *Finanse Krakowa w wiekach średnich*, Kraków 1899, p. 65; Z. Noga, *Die Selbstverwaltung der Stadt Krakau in vorindustrieller Zeit*, „Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska“, Sectio F, vol. 72.

tradition, or whether the town council there may have been influenced by developments of Košice and other towns in naming this new office.⁵⁵

Even in the towns of German lands, *Lohnherren* was not a widespread name for such a financial office. Leading free imperial cities there typically used different titles for a more or less similar function – for instance, *Losunger* (Nuremberg), *Kämmerer* (Lübeck), *Rentmeister* (Cologne), and so forth.⁵⁶ However, far from East-Central Europe, on the western fringes of the Holy Roman Empire, there were several cities in whose administrative structure the office of *Lohnherren* operated as, for instance, Strasbourg, Basel, Soest, and Bielefeld.⁵⁷ Although the exact responsibilities may have varied from case to case, the office was usually linked to wage payments and the supervision of municipal finances. Thorough comparative research will likely shed more light on the geographical and chronological spread of *Lohnherren* office across Europe. It might also help explain how knowledge of its existence reached members of the town councils in Košice and Kraków.⁵⁸

An additional small but interesting fact can be found in the records of Košice's court book from the end of the Middle Ages, where a few men were referred to with the attribute *circulista*. The meaning of this term remains unclear, but these individuals may have been paid personnel responsible for security in the town – a function that otherwise fell under the authority of *Hutherren* office.⁵⁹ Comparable employees existed in Kraków, where they were called *circulatores*.⁶⁰

In fact, the adoption of certain administrative models and institutional structures from other towns – both domestic and foreign – was undoubtedly a common phenomenon throughout broader European region (in the scope of this study, inhabited by German populations).⁶¹

Conclusion

May the reader kindly forgive the author for the slight stylistic hyperbole in the title of this study. It is true that the above observations concerning “mutual influences” between late medieval Košice and Kraków relate only to a few phenomena attested by the sources – namely,

⁵⁵ In one of my previous works, I suggested that Košice took the name and function of this office from Kraków. However, this remains uncertain, as documents date its appearance in Kraków later than in Košice: D. Magdoško, *Samospráva mesta Košice v stredoveku*, p. 190-191.

⁵⁶ E. Isenmann, *Die deutsche Stadt im Mittelalter 1150-1550*, Köln–Weimar–Wien 2014, p. 435-436.

⁵⁷ M. Alioth, *Gruppen an der Macht. Zünfte und Patriziat in Straßburg im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert : Untersuchungen zu Verfassung, Wirtschaftsgefüge und Sozialstruktur*, Basel 1988, p. 151f; G. Fouquet, *Bauen für die Stadt. Finanzen, Organisation und Arbeit in kommunalen Baubetrieben des Spätmittelalters. Eine vergleichende Studie vornehmlich zwischen den Städten Basel und Marburg*, Köln–Weimar–Wien 1999, p. 162f; K. Diekmann, *Die Herrschaft der Stadt Soest über ihre Börde*, Diss. jur., Münster 1962, p. 129f; R. Vogelsang, *Der Rat der Stadt Bielefeld im Mittelalter*, „Jahresbericht des Historischen Vereins für die Grafschaft Ravensberg”, 1974, vol. 69, p. 29f.

⁵⁸ In late medieval Strasbourg, the Knobloch family belonged to the city elite, excelling especially in the 14th century, shortly before individuals with the same surname appeared among merchants in Košice and Kraków. However, the connection between these families remains unproven, given the widespread nature of the surname. Furthermore, the given names of the Strasbourg Knoblochs differed significantly from those in Košice and Kraków: J.K. Knobloch, *Das goldene Buch von Straßburg*, t. 1, Straßburg 1885.

⁵⁹ D. Magdoško, *Samospráva mesta Košice v stredoveku*, p. 202-203.

⁶⁰ S. Kutrzeba, *Finanse Krakowa w wiekach średnich*, p. 89.

⁶¹ Even more similarities can be found in the administrative structure of the medieval Hungarian town of Bratislava (present-day capital of Slovakia) and of Vienna in Austria: D. Magdoško, *Samospráva mesta Košice v stredoveku*, p. 111, 170.

the guild of wealthy merchants, the typology of certain stalls in the marketplaces of both towns, and perhaps also a single office within their administrative structures. These pieces of evidence do not indicate any systematic process, but rather the occasional and incidental adoption of some unrelated elements from various spheres of urban community life that were deemed useful for the governance of the town in question. Nevertheless, the aim of this study is primarily to stimulate further, large-scale comparative research. It is also proving increasingly valuable to search for cross-border connections in issues that have hitherto been considered predominantly on the local level of individual towns or countries. On the one hand, the similarities noted above – particularly between Košice and Kraków – support the close ties between these towns already recognized in historiography. On the other hand, they further reveal a wider network of European urban contacts, the extent of which may not be immediately apparent. In exploring the theme of migration, it is therefore worthwhile to move beyond the framework of tracking the movement of individuals and to enrich our understanding by seeking out shared ideas and institutional models. For behind every idea there was a person.

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