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PIASKI

This study is part of a comprehensive spatial analysis of the historical area of Poznań, as it developed until the end of the 18th century. At that time, the former city comprised 28 settlement units forming a characteristic wreath surrounding historic Poznań. This article examines the settlement complex located on an island south of the chartered city. This area was known as Piaski.

Keywords: Gaski, Czapniki, Rybaki

SANDS (GASKI, CZAPNIKI, RYBAKI)

On one of the islands south of Poznań, the Piaski Islands were located. Historically, this name referred to both the buildings and the island's area. Piaski consisted of three main settlements: Gaski, Czapniki, and Rybaki (ed. J. Topolski, *History of Poznań*, Volume I, Part One, A. Gąsiorowski, „Późnośredniowieczna konurbacja poznańska”, PWN, Warszawa, Poznań, 1988, pp. 226-228). Together with other settlement structures in Poznań, they formed a characteristic wreath directly surrounding the main chartered city of Poznań. The island was surrounded by three watercourses: the Struga Karmelicka (Kamionka), the Noteć River, and a branch of the Warta River. The Noteć River flowed around Piaski from the west and north, the Struga Karmelicka River flowed around it from the south, and a branch of the Warta River surrounded the island from the east (fig. 1).

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Fig. 1. Location of individual settlements on the island and in the Settlement of Piaski
[author's compilation]

It's worth mentioning that the word „noteć” once meant something additional, connecting, and many watercourses bore this name. Today, „Noteć” refers to a river located in northern Greater Poland, and the word is primarily associated with it.

The spatial shape of the individual settlements located on Piaski was directly subordinated to the island's shape and the communication routes that ran through it (fig. 1). This arrangement meant that the spatial structure of Rybaki, Czapników, and Gaski was perceived as a single entity, and their boundaries were difficult to define (fig. 1), so their locations can only be approximated. In the western part was Rybaki (today's area around Rybaki Street) (fig. 4), in the center was the settlement of Czapniki (today's area around Strzelecka Street) (fig. 3), while on the eastern side was Gaski (today's area around Bernardyński Market Square) (fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Bernardyński Square. Until the end of the 18th century, the main area of the Gaski Settlement
[photography author]



Fig. 3. Strzelecka Street. The Czapniki Settlement was located in this area
[photography author]



Fig. 4. Rybaki Street. The main area of the former Rybaki Settlement was located here [photography author]

The plans indicate that each of these settlements had a distinct square as a center around which the life of these small communities revolved. In Gaski, in particular, in front of the Bernardine Church, there was a much larger square than the others (today's Bernardine Market Square). Horse markets were held there.

Among the settlements discussed, the earliest to appear was Rybaki (ed. J. Topolski, „History of Poznań”, volume I, part one, A. Rogalanka, „Poznań at the threshold of location”, PWN, Warszawa, Poznań, 1988, pp. 171-173) [14, pp. 20-39], even before the founding of left-bank Poznań, i.e., before the 13th century. They were among the service settlements owned by Piast rulers residing on Ostrów Tumski. Later, during the foundation period of the town, Rybaki became a jurydyka belonging to the Starost General of Greater Poland. The other two settlements, Gaski and Czapniki, appeared later, most likely in the 14th century, as a result of Poznań's dynamic economic and social development at that time.

The occupational profile of the inhabitants of Rybaki, Gaski, and Czapniki was quite diverse. In Rybaki, as the name suggests, the inhabitants mainly engaged in fishing, and in Czapniki – in headgear making. Meanwhile, the people of Gaski worked in various professions.

A significant portion of Piaski's residents engaged in the so-called poorer crafts and took lower-paying jobs. Many were bunglers, meaning artisans not affiliated with guilds. Additionally, some of the town's townspeople had workshops here. The professional and social mix was highly diversified [14, pp. 7-19].

Three churches and monasteries dominated the entire spatial structure of Piaski: the Bernardine Church and the Church of the Transfiguration of Our Lord in Gaski, and the Corpus Christi Church of the Calced Carmelites in Rybaki, founded and funded by the Polish King Władysław Jagiełło. Although the Corpus Christi Church and monastery were located south of the island, they were vitally important to Rybaki and Czapniki, as can be seen on the map (fig. 1-5).



Fig. 5. Fragment of the Plan of Lasota from 1784, where the island and the Settlements of Rybaki, Czapniki, and Gaski are visible
[from the collections of the National Museum in Poznań (MNP)]

Among the buildings other than residential and workshop structures is the Czapnik mill, which was located in the Czapniki settlement by the Noteć stream, near the road leading to the Wrocław Gate of the chartered town. Today, this is Strzelecka Street near Kupiec Poznański Street. The island also contained two additional elements, which were more closely related to the life of the neighboring chartered town than to the settlements discussed here. On the northern side of the island,

at present-day Za Bramką Street, were a small cemetery for Poznań residents, along with the All Saints' Church, and the nearby garden of the Jesuit College, which now houses a park behind Poznań City Hall (figs. 1-5). All the spatial components of the Piaski composition presented here, along with the surrounding natural complexity, created a unique and rich landscape (fig. 1-5)

The status of these small spatial structures was the same – they were all owned by the city of Poznań until the end of the 18th century (ed. J. Topolski, „Dzieje Poznania”, volume I, part one, A. Gąsiorowski, „Późnośredniowieczna konurbacja poznańska”, PWN, Warszawa, Poznań, 1988, p. 227).

In 1797, the new Prussian occupation authorities incorporated the area of these three settlements into Poznań's administrative boundaries, thus losing their distinctive character. Significant compositional and spatial transformations affected Rybaki, Gaski, and Czapniki already at the beginning of the 19th century. The new plan of the Prussian urban planner and architect D. Gilly, implemented after the great fire of 1803, also encompassed the island in question. Instead of a spatial layout embedded in the natural context, a simple orthogonal street network was introduced, ignoring the existing composition and natural forms that formed the rich mosaic of pre-partition Poznań (fig. 6).

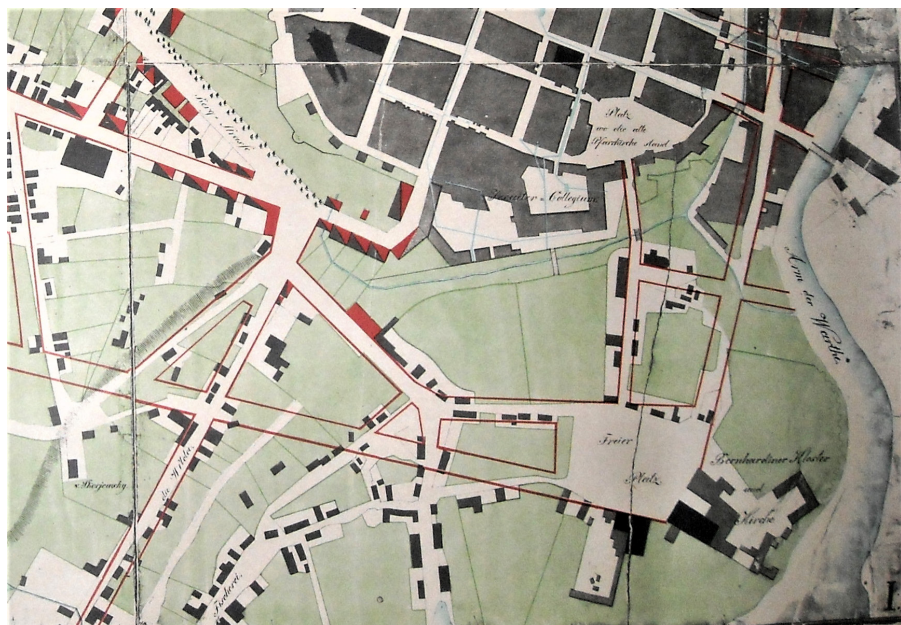


Fig. 6. Fragment of the Regulatory Plan for Dawid Gilly's 1803 plan.
The plan shows a new street layout in relation to the existing spatial and natural context
[from the collections of the University Library in Poznań]

The only historical element that found a place in the new composition was the Bernardine Church with its characteristic towers (fig. 7).



Fig. 7. Długa Street. One of the main streets in the 1803 plan, intersecting the former compositional layout of the Piaski Settlement.

At the end are the towers of the Bernardine Church
[photography author]

The new development plan, negating the existing context, turned the historic water system into an unnecessary, even obstructive, element.

In the following decades, it was systematically dismantled, and disappeared completely by the end of the 19th century, when the sewer system was constructed. In many places, where rivers once flowed, buildings now stand, and it is difficult to trace their course in the current area. The result of the transformations made in the early 19th century is an unclear and randomly composed space without beginning or end (fig. 8).

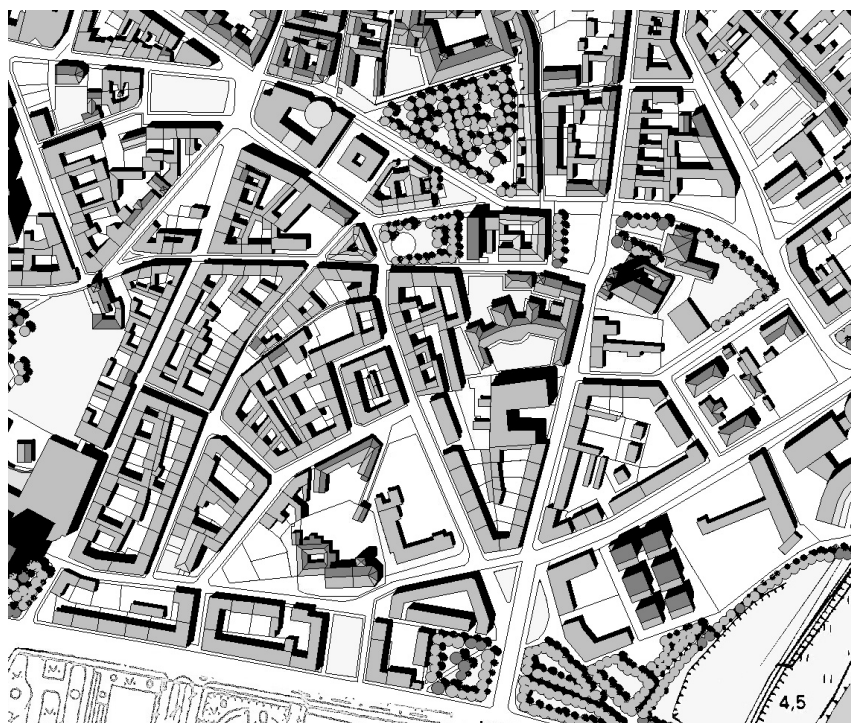


Fig. 8. Contemporary development of the area of the historic Settlement of Piaski
[author's compilation]

In addition to factors related to new directions in spatial development, political factors must also be considered. By simplifying a complex space, control over the community living in such a place is significantly facilitated (cf. the reconstruction of Paris in the mid-19th century according to the ideas of G.-E. Haussmann). The current appearance of the former Rybaki, Piaski, and Czapniki areas is a direct result of changes introduced in the early 19th century (fig. 6-8). Contemporary activities in these historic settlements are, unfortunately, a continuation and thus a promotion of 19th-century urban planning, which was of a less than sophisticated quality.

BUILDINGS

The basic buildings in Rybaki, Piaski, and Czapniki were residential, workshop, and farm buildings arranged in such a way that they formed characteristic courtyards, as in many other settlements in Poznań. Unfortunately, their shape is unknown. It is also unknown whether there were any differences between the buildings located in Rybaki, Gaski, or Czapniki. One can only assume that they differed based on the crafts used. Panoramas of Poznań by F.B. Werner from 1740 (fig. 9)

and Stragon from 1706 provide some information on their size and shape, despite their imperfections.



Fig. 9. Fragment of Werner's Panorama from 1740, showing the development of Piaski [edited by J. Topolski, „Histories of Poznań”, volume one, part two, K. Kuklińska, „Credit”, state scientific publishing house, Warsaw, Poznań, 1988, illustration no. 115, pp. 656-657]

There are also others made in the 18th and 19th centuries, but their quality is of no informative value. Only one building, located on Mostowa Street (the so-called Rybakówka), has survived to this day (fig. 10).



Fig. 10. Mostowa Street. The only building that surrounded from the pre-partition period.
The so-called Rybakówka
[photography and author's article]

Until recently, buildings located on Za Bramką Street still existed, but they were demolished (fig. 11).



Fig. 11. Za Bramką Street. The area of the Gaski Settlement.
Buildings that still existed until recently. A unique richness of detail
[from the collections of the Poznań History Museum]

In photographs from the second half of the 19th century, tenement houses predominate, and the lower buildings make it difficult to determine whether they were built before or after the partitions. There are also several engravings by K. Alberti in 1798 (fig. 12), K.W. Kielisiński in 1840, and J. Minutoli in 1833. However, these mainly depict the Corpus Christi and Bernardine churches; no residential buildings are visible.



Fig. 12. A Gouache by K. Alberti from 1798 depiction of the corpus christi church with the surrounding residential buildings
[E. Płomińska-Krawiec, E. Połczyńska „Hoffmann in Poznań 1800-1802”, Poznań Publishing House, Poznań 2004, p. 104]

Despite such limited iconographic resources, it is possible to fairly generally determine the form and scale of residential buildings. Given the complex social structure of Piaski, with its diverse occupational and affluent background, it can be assumed that the architecture here was also quite diverse. Both brick and wooden buildings likely existed side by side.

The majority of the wooden buildings were of half-timbered frame construction. In many places, there were also mixed buildings – brick and timber. The predominant form was single-story buildings covered with pitched gable roofs, sometimes with hipped roofs and other decorative roof elements such as kaffirs and gables (fig. 9-12). This indicates that many of them also had attics. Workshops and farm buildings located deeper in the property were predominantly single-story, wooden, with half-timbered or log frame construction. The picture of churches and their accompanying monasteries in the Rybak, Gasek, and Czapników study area is much clearer. Their appearance from various angles is depicted in engravings and photographs, mainly from the 19th century. A significant portion of these buildings has survived to this day (fig. 13-14).



Fig. 13. Bernardine Square and the Bernardine Church and the Bernardine Church of the transfiguration of the Lord. Main area of the former Settlement of Gaska
[photography author]



Fig. 14. Corpus Christi Church with the Monastery of the Trzewickow Carmelits
[photography author]

In the 18th century, a mill called Czapnik also existed in Piaski. Unfortunately, its shape is unknown. Like the vast majority of Poznań's mills, it was certainly a wooden building with a frame structure, clad with planks, and a pitched gable or hipped roof.

RECREATION OF THE LANDSCAPE OF RYBAK, PIASKI, AND CZAPNIKÓW, ALONG WITH THEIR IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS

PROPERTY LAYOUT

The basis for reconstructing the plot shapes of these settlements is a map of the contemporary ownership division of the studied area (fig. 15).



Fig. 15. Fragment of the plan of the contemporary ownership division,
including the areas of historic Gaski, Czapniki, and Rybaki
[author's compilation]

A map most likely a regulatory plan for D. Gilly's plan from 1803 (fig. 6) was used as a comparative source. In addition to new streets, it also shows the former ownership layout, including buildings, and the surrounding water system. To analyze the layout of the property, the inventory plan by Rosler and Gotzheim from 1862 was also used, which precisely defined the shape and size of the plots (fig. 16).



Fig. 16. Fragment of Rosler's Gotzheim Plan from 1862, showing the area of the Gaski, Czapniki, and Rybaki Settlements
[D. Książkiewicz-Bartkowiak, „Plans of Poznań”, 1st edition, Wydawnictwo Miejskie, Poznań 2010]

Plans from the pre-partition period were also used: I. Lasota's plan from 1784 (fig. 5) and K. Grund's plan from 1780. Based on these, the lines of contemporary ownership division that survived from the pre-partition period were identified (fig. 17).



Fig. 17. Fragment of the Plan of the contemporary ownership division
with the lines that were created in the pre-partition period underlined in red
[author's compilation]

In this analysis, to fully illustrate the layout of the properties of individual settlements located in Piaski, the former water system was also taken into account. This system was recreated in the third chapter devoted to water, and a fragment of it is shown here on the map (fig. 18).



Fig. 18. Recreated 18th-century water system graphed on a contemporary ownership plan
[author's compilation]

The water system surrounding the analyzed settlements determined not only the shape of Piaski Island but also the property boundaries. Based on the materials presented here, a map was created showing the layout of the Piaski settlement properties from the pre-partition period (fig. 19).

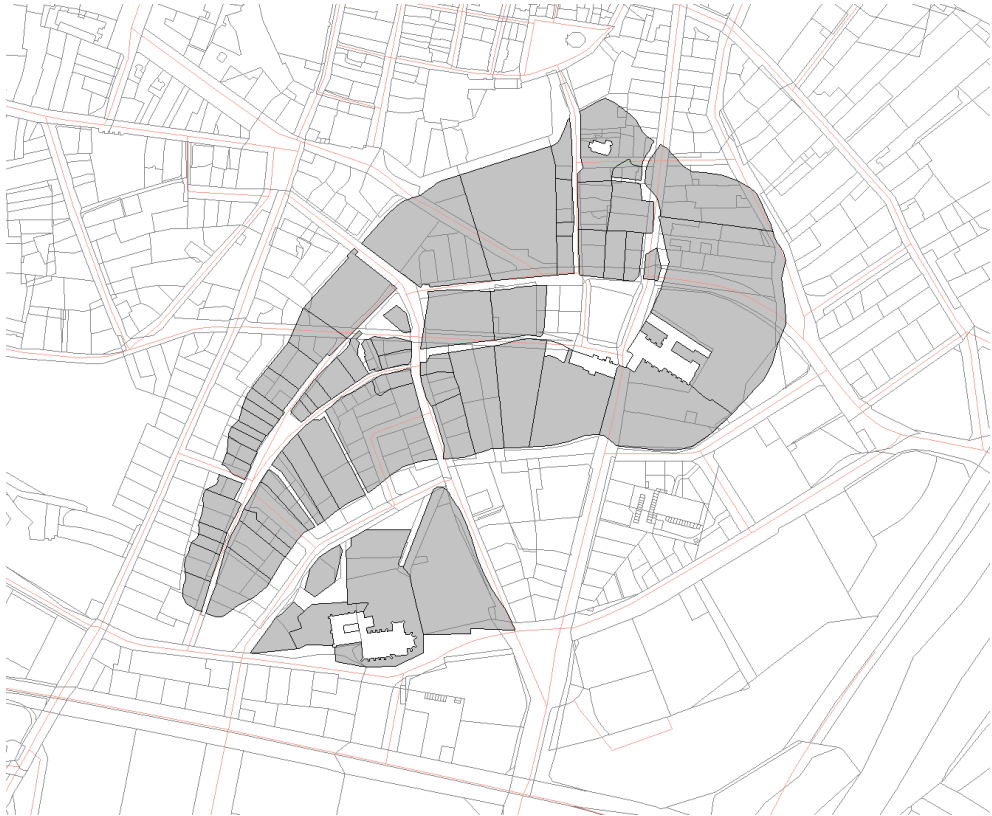


Fig. 19. 18th-century plot layout on a contemporary ownership plan
[author's compilation]

BUILDINGS

Among the maps that most likely and fully reflect the building layout of the Piaski settlement from the pre-partition period, the 1803 plan is worth mentioning. As mentioned earlier, it served as a regulatory plan for D. Gilly's plan (fig. 6). In addition to the ownership division, it also shows the building layout. However, it does not show the entire settlement; a section of the southern part is cropped out. The rest can be seen on the Rosler and Gotzheim plan from 1862. Although it was created much later, it was included here because, as in other settlements located in the so-called lower town zone near the Warta River and its floodplains, the buildings had changed little until the second half of the 19th century. The plan shown below shows the building layout, along with reconstructed 18th-century plots, on a modern ownership plan (fig. 20).



Fig. 20. Buildings of the Piaski Settlement with reconstructed plots shown on a plan of contemporary ownership division
[author's compilation]

TERRAIN

The basis for reconstructing the terrain of the historic 18th-century settlement of Piaski is the current appearance of the study area, recorded as a system of contour lines, along with marked historical buildings and their elevations (fig. 21).

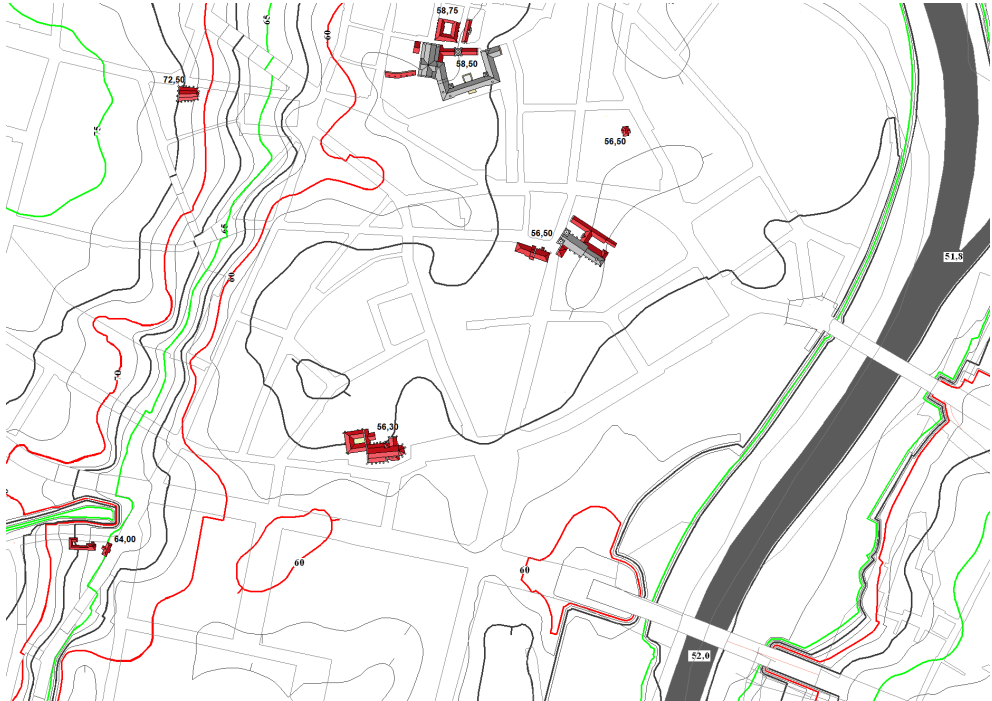


Fig. 21. Current terrain of the historic Piaski area. The elevations of the historic buildings preserved to the present day are marked on the plan
[author's compilation]

Another essential element of this analysis is the no longer existing water system, along with its elevational coordinates, which historically formed the compositional and spatial framework of Piaski (fig. 22).

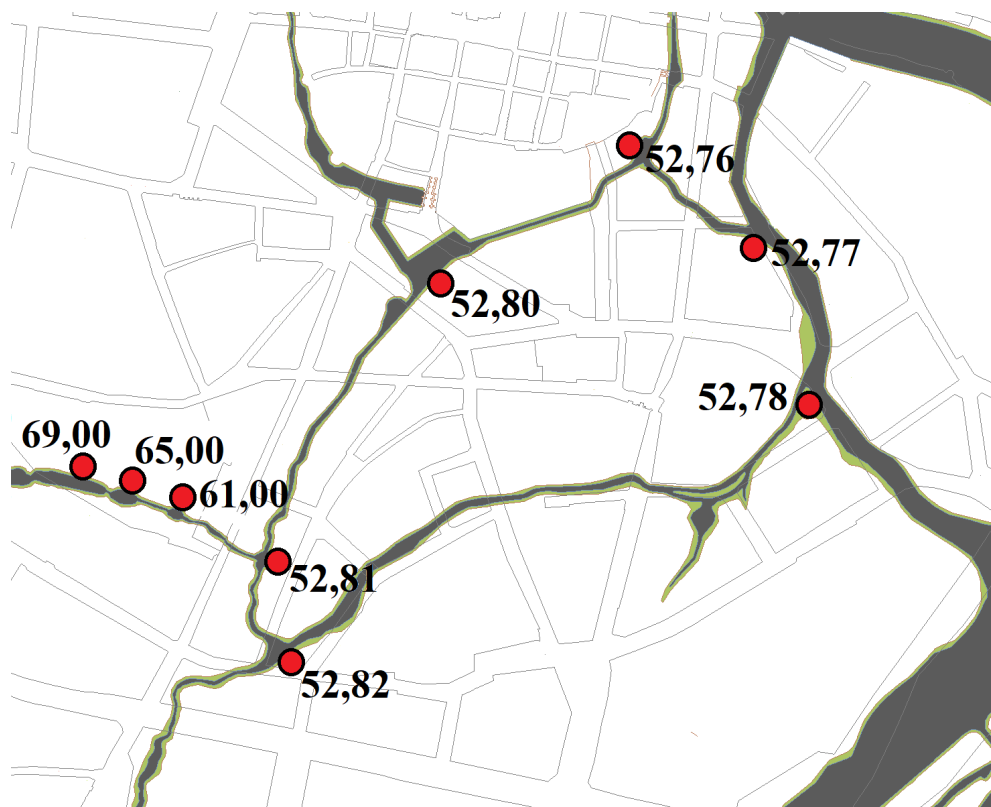


Fig. 22. Water system with elevational elevations surrounding the Settlement of Piaski in the 18th century
[author's compilation]

The final item is maps from the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, illustrating the terrain. Of the many maps, the most relevant is a Prussian map by an unknown author from 1820 (fig. 23), which quite precisely reflects the existing relief in line form.



Fig. 23. Fragment of a Prussian plan from 1820, by an unknown author
[D. Książkiewicz-Bartkowiak, „Plans of Poznań”, first edition,
City Publishing House, Poznań 2010]

A comparative analysis of the maps presented here allows us to conclude that, aside from the filling of the surrounding watercourses, this area has changed little in shape and elevation. It is largely flat, with a very slight slope eastward to the Warta River. The lack of significant changes in this regard is confirmed by the preserved historical buildings of the Bernardine Church and the Transfiguration of Our Lord, which are entered from the current ground level. Only the Corpus Christi Church is lower than the current ground level by approximately 1 meter. This is because the earthen ramparts of the Prussian fortifications of the Poznań Fortress ran along the southern side, and the entire area south of the church was raised several meters by the scattering of fortification ramparts. This is a trace and remnant of these fortifications.

Taking into account the conditions presented in this analysis, a preliminary determination of the terrain in the 18th century was made (fig. 24).

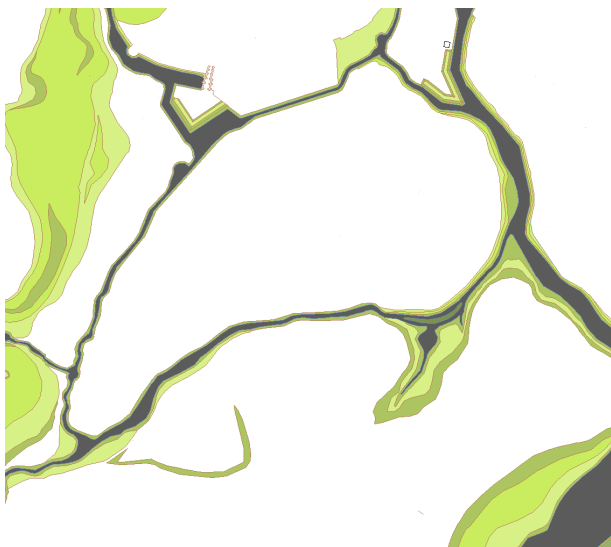


Fig. 24. Preliminary determination of the terrain of the historic Piaski area
[author's compilation]

Based on this, a map was prepared showing the probable terrain of the Piaski settlement in the 18th century (fig. 25).

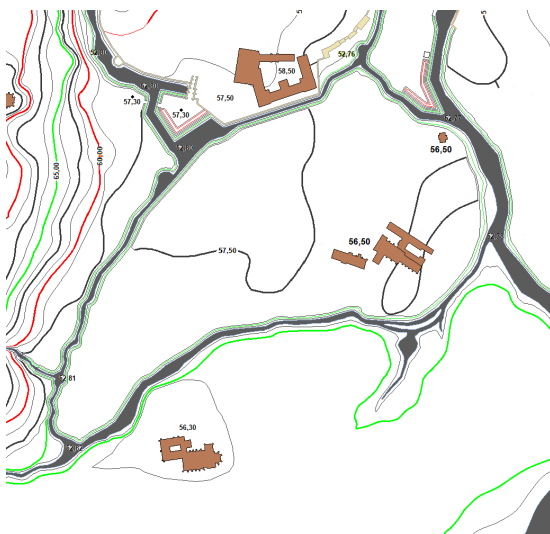


Fig. 25. Terrain of the Piaski Settlement area in the 18th century
[author's compilation]

For a more complete picture of the settlement, it is worth adding the plots and associated buildings to the terrain (fig. 26).

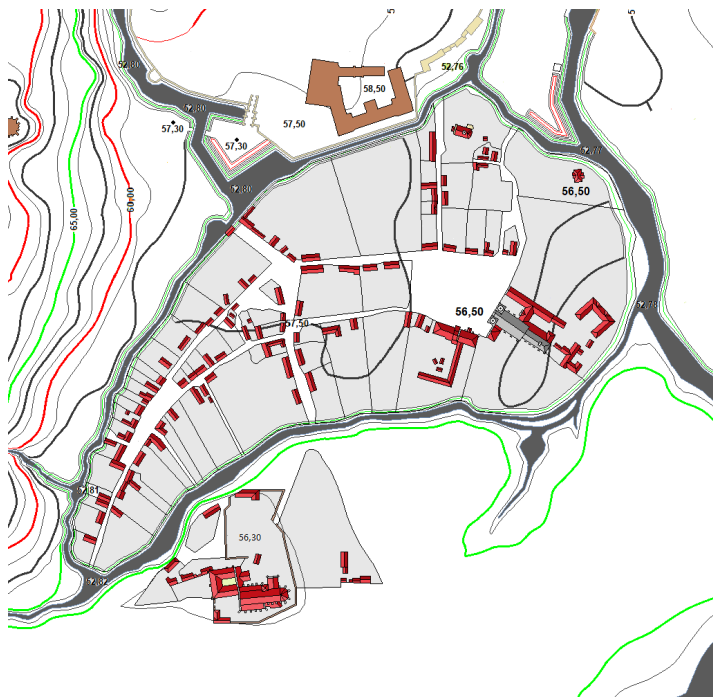


Fig. 26. Terrain lay with buildings of the Piaski Settlement
[author's compilation]

GREENERY

In the area of the historic settlement of Piaski, there was no significant or distinctive greenery in public spaces. This is evident in the engravings of J. Minutoli, K.W. Kielisiński, and K. Alberti from the first half of the 19th century. Trees occurred primarily in home gardens and the gardens of monasteries: the Jesuits, the Bernardines, the Bernardine Sisters, and the Calced Carmelites. The only distinguishing feature was the avenue of trees leading to Corpus Christi Church from the north (it still exists today). Among the greenery in public spaces in the Piaski area, noteworthy were the one growing in the Poznań cemetery on what is now Za Braką Street, and the trees and shrubs along the watercourses surrounding the settlement. However, this greenery was not structured and did not occupy any significant area. What was distinctive about the greenery in Piaski was its overall impact, creating a harmonious whole with the buildings and the surrounding water. And this was its undeniable value. The probable layout of the greenery in the Piaski settlement zone is shown on the adjacent plan (fig. 27).

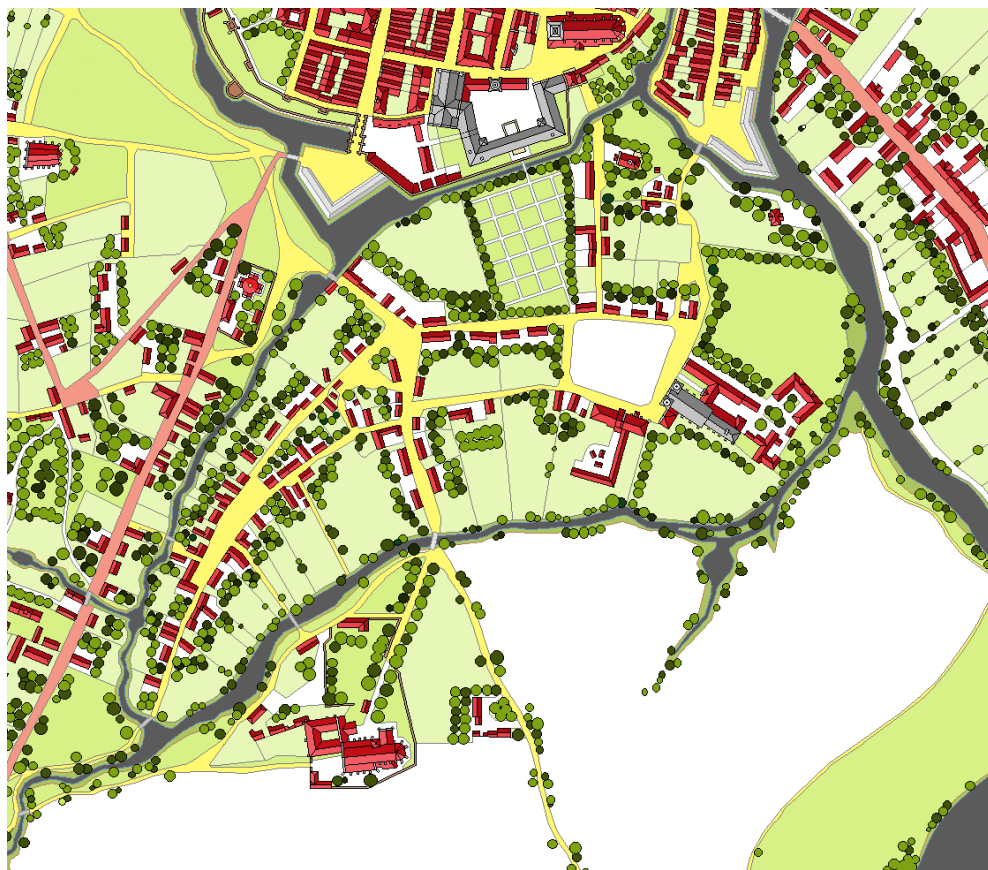


Fig. 27. Ownership division of buildings and greenery in the area of the Piaski Settlement
[author's composition]

Finally, it is worth presenting the results of the analyses conducted here in the form of visualizations, depicting the spatial and natural layout of the island and its context related to the immediate vicinity of the chartered city. This example illustrates how most settlements in the Poznań conurbation, including Piaski, built their individuality and uniqueness thanks to the surrounding nature, and the positive effects achieved in both the internal space and the surrounding landscape (fig. 28-36).

The visualizations presented here are not, it should be emphasized, a true representation of the analyzed settlement structure of Piaski. The paucity of iconographic material prevents this. The images of the site presented here have been interpreted by the author based on the scholarly works presented in this chapter and the few historical photographs and engravings. The aim of this study was to convey the atmosphere and character of the site to the extent possible, in order to depict the landscape of old Poznań as fully as possible.



Fig. 28. Main area of the Rybaki Settlement, currently Rybaki Street. View from the south.
In the distance, the tower of the now non-existent collegiate and Parish church is visible
[author's compilation]



Fig. 29. Main area of the Rybaki Settlement, currently Rybaki Street. View from the south
[author's compilation]



Fig. 30. Main area of the Czapniki Settlement, currently Strzelecka Street.
View from the south towards the incorporated town
[author's compilation]



Fig. 31. Main area of the Czapniki Settlement, view towards the west.
Straight ahead is a mill called Czapnik, located on a stream called Noteć
[author's compilation]



Fig. 32. Street connecting the Czapniki Settlement with Osa Gaski
(currently Zielona Street). View towards the east
[author's compilation]



Fig. 33. View of the eastern part of the Gaski Settlement.
In the foreground is the so-called Fisherman's House, which still exists today
[author's compilation]

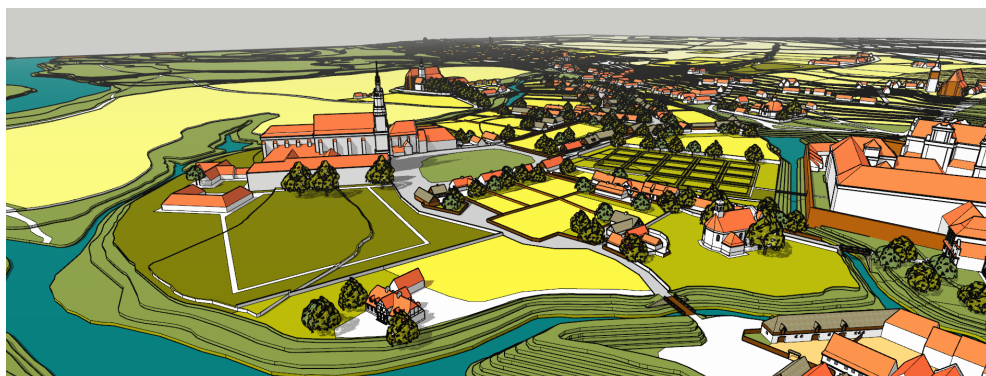


Fig. 34. A bird's-eye panorama showing the entire Piaski site, view from the east
[author's compilation]



Fig. 35. View of the entire Piaski area from the west.
The Rybaki Settlement is visible in the background
[author's compilation]



Fig. 36. View of the entire Piaski area from the south
[author's compilation]

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PIASKI

Streszczenie

Niniejsze opracowanie jest elementem całościowej analizy przestrzennej historycznego obszaru Poznania kształtowanego do końca XVIII w. W tamtym czasie w skład dawnego miasta wchodziło 28 jednostek osadniczych tworzących charakterystyczny wianuszek otaczający historyczny Poznań. W tym artykule zajęto się zespołem osadniczym położonym na wyspie znajdującej się na południe od miasta lokacyjnego. Obszar ten nazywany był Piaskami. Na jednej z wysp położonych na południe od Poznania rozlokowane były Piaski. W przeszłości nazwy tej używano dla określenia zarówno zabudowań, jak i obszaru wyspy. W skład Piasków wchodziły trzy główne osady: Gaski, Czapniki i Rybaki (pod red. J. Topolskiego, *Dzieje Poznania*, t. I, cz. I; A. Gąsiorowski, *Późnośredniowieczna konurbacja poznańska*, PWN, Warszawa, Poznań 1988, s. 226-228). Wraz z innymi strukturami osadniczymi Poznania tworzyły one charakterystyczny wianuszek bezpośrednio otaczający główne miasto lokacyjne – Poznań. Wyspę otaczały nurty trzech cieków wodnych: Strugi Karmelickiej (Kamionki), Noteci oraz odnogi Warty. Noteć opływała Piaski od zachodu i północy, Struga Karmelicka – od południa, natomiast odnoga Warty otaczała wyspę od wschodu.

Słowa kluczowe: Gaski, Czapniki, Rybaki