Kożuchów is one of the oldest cities of the Middle Odra. It is probable that, in the early middle Ages, a castle was situated here, which was part of the tribal state. Kożuchów could have been one of twenty communities mentioned by the (so-called) Bavarian Geographer.

Near the city lay the crossroads for important trade routes leading from Wroclaw to Krosno, and from Poznan to Glogau. This preferred location of the castle meant that, in this vicinity, a market settlement developed, which according to tradition, was already in place by 1125 had enclosed a church. The name Kożuchów (Diegotrych castelanus in Cosuchov) appeared in a document for the first time, at the time of the rule of Duke Konrad I (1273, Piast dynasty) when Kożuchów was most likely already fully established, and the city was within the limits of the duchy Głogów.

The second half of 13th century saw a significant influx of German settlers to the city, conducive to the privileges granted by Duke Henry III and the legal translocation conducted on the Magdeburg Law. Since then, the role of a German agent in the town was growing. By the confirmation of this favorable legal situation, Kożuchów emerged under the German name - Freystadt (Ger: Frey=free, stadt=city).

The basis of the population in Kożuchów in the Middle Ages was crafts and trade. Within the city several strong guild organizations enjoyed prosperity. Foremost among them were clothiers, weavers, furriers, butchers, blacksmiths, carpenters, and brewers. Agriculture also played an important role, including cultivated corn and vine (vintners) as well as shepherding. Kożuchów merchants maintained regular contacts with other cities in Silesia and Wielkopolska (Greater Poland). They had permanent stalls at the city fairs, including Poznan. These privileges, which the princely rulers ratified to the city, favored its development. In the mid-15th century, Kożuchów was granted the right to mint its own coins, which confirmed the economic position of the city.

These developments tended to change the city’s urban planning. Fortifications of high stone walls were built. In the years 1340 - 1369 with the financial support of Prince Henry V, a new parish church was constructed (the former parish church burned down in 1339). A few years before the city walls were erected, funded by Henry IV, a hospital for the poor and the indigent was built and next to it the Church of the Holy Spirit. A third church, St. Wawrzyniec (St. Lawrence) was erected in 1403 followed by the
Rauthaus (City Hall) in 1489. The outlying suburbs grew. The dynamic development of the town was inhibited in the 14th – 17th centuries by numerous disasters: outbreaks of the "black death" epidemic, harvest failures and numerous fires, which destroyed the city even in the eighteenth century.

In the Middle Ages Kożuchów was a place of major political events. In the second half of the 15th century the city was a place of permanent residence of the Dukes. The last princes of Głogów resided here - Henry VIII, Henry IX and his son Henry XI. The last of the Dukes, Henry XI, died in the castle Kożuchów in 1476. During the wars of succession to the duchy Głogów (1476-1489), Kożuchów was besieged twice by warring parties (in 1476, the city was occupied by the army of Zagań’s Duke John II, and in 1488, by the Hungarian King Matthias Corvinus). At the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, the duchies of Kożuchów and Głogów experienced new prosperity. The Jagiello dynasty contributed to this action, for they served as governors of Silesia. Prince Sigismund Jagiello, later a Polish king, seated a strong squad in Kożuchów castle, whose principal task was to combat rampant robberies in the region. In 1516 the castle came into possession of Kożuchówian Hans von Rechenberg. Lutheranism was introduced under his rule.

Particularly severe for the city were the events of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648). The presence of the army contributed to increased rape, looting and numerous fires that incinerated the city and suburbs. There were also religious persecutions. After the war Kożuchów lost many of their rights and privileges. The population fell sharply. Slowly, however, the city was rising from the fall. Many buildings were rebuilt and remodeled, including the parish church and town hall. In 1678 a water supply was established by diverting water from the nearby hills. A suburb developed. In one of them a Protestant Cemetery was established (today's Lapidarium). During the Northern War (1700 - 1721) the Swedish army of Charles XII entered Kożuchów. The Swedish presence significantly affected the position of the Protestant population. In 1709, beyond city walls, a Lutheran church was built; a few years later a school. In 1740, the Prussian king Frederick II entered the city at the head of his troops. The Prussian transition in Kożuchów was not conducive to its development. The imposed taxes and general fiscal pressure characterized by the Prussian state system caused a clear decline. There were burdens associated with the Silesian wars and, above all, the seven-year war. In 1759,
Kożuchów, like nearby cities, was completely plundered by Russian troops. A year later, the city was consumed by fire, which destroyed more than 200 homes, along with the city hall. During the rebuilding of the city, most of the perimeter fortification walls were torn down, used as building blocks in putting up new homes. Decades later Kożuchów survived another humiliation. In the years 1806-1807 Kożuchówskí burghers "hosted" Napoleon’s troops. The French arrived again in 1813, this time in addition to the city contributions they had to deal with wounded soldiers. After the departure of the French came to the Russians, who also demanded a huge contribution.
The text is about the history of Kożuchów, a town in Poland. It mentions that the town did not agree on many issues because the road Berlin - Wrocław ran through Kożuchów. Eventually, the road, whose construction began in 1817, crossed the town of Nowa Sól (New Salt) and Kożuchów remained on the sidelines of important routes. In 1849, he Kożuchów city hall was enlarged, and a new hospital was opened in 1869. County authorities received new headquarters. In 1909, electric lighting and a running water supply introduced to urban areas, eliminating kerosene lamps, wooden pipes, and water tanks.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, suburbs developed, particularly on lands lying on the east side of town. There a railway station was built, and in the years 1889 to 1990 Kożuchów received a railway connection with the Nowa Sól and the town of Żagan. At the beginning of the 20th century, Kożuchów launched several industrial plants. The biggest ones were: tanneries, a radiator factory, and founded in 1929, motorcycle and automotive engine factory. In the western part of town, in the 1930s, there were large military barracks.

Kożuchów was spared the hostilities of World War II. In November 1939, the city established a hospital for Polish prisoners of war. A dozen soldiers who died here were buried in the cemetery (after the war, a military cemetery remained here.) At the end of 1943 a branch of a German concentration camp (Gross – Rosen) was organized in. The prisoners were employed in local factories. In the city and the surrounding area there were also hundreds of Polish forced laborers employed in agriculture and handicraft workshops. The camp was liquidated on the eve of the
occupation of the region by Soviet troops. On February 14, 1945, the city was occupied by Soviet troops, and later that summer a Polish administration was organized. After the war, Kożuchów was still the seat of the county, which now included an organized Polish settlement and education following the displacement (expelling) the German population.

In 1953, the district eliminated Kożuchów as the county seat and all administration was moved to Nowa Sól.
Panoramic view of Kożuchów:
Left to right: High School, Evangelical Church, Primary School, Roman Catholic Church, Ratusz (City Hall), Water Tower, Castle, Two Housing Developments
Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Ko%C5%BCuch%C3%B3w

Greater gmina (community) of Kożuchów, 2011
Source: http://www.kozuchow.pl

Town of Kożuchów, City Plat: 2011
1 – Ratusz (City Hall)
2. Zamek (Castle)
3. Baszta Krośnieńskiej (Krosno Gate Tower)
6. Remnants of City Wall Enclosure
Lower Left: Lapidarium (Cemetery)
Source: http://www.kozuchow.pl
References and Further Reading:

- The Bavarian Geographer (Latin: Geographus Bavarus) is a conventional name given by Jan Potocki in 1796 to the author of an anonymous medieval document Descriptio civitatum et regionum ad septentrionalem plagam Danubii ("Description of Cities and Lands North of the Danube"). The short document was discovered in 1772 in the Bavarian State Library, Munich by Louis XV’s ambassador to the Saxon court, Comte Louis-Gabriel Du Buat-Nançay. The document contains a list of the tribes in Central-Eastern Europe east of the Elbe and north of the Danube to the Volga rivers to the Black and Caspian Sea (most of them of Slavonic origin). The provenance of the document is disputed. Although early commentators suggested that it could have been compiled in Regensburg, the list seems to have been taken from Codex Reginberhtinus II, recorded in the 9th century in the library of the Reichenau Abbey and named after a local librarian. Based on these findings, Bischoff attributes it to a monk active at Reichenau from the 830s to the 850s.


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