The more transformations we can document on a given edifice, the more complex its lifeline is.

Well that is not so. Complexity is primarily related to the amount and quality of the information we have on each transformation. Accordingly, the lifeline of a large, well-documented edifice, even if very often transformed, may be much easier to interpret and analyze than the lifeline of a smaller edifice, transformed only once or twice, but for which precise knowledge is missing.

On this visualisation, called **visual measure of complexity**, we show relative patterns of complexity for artefacts: (1) dedicated to private or semi-private trading; (2) dedicated to collective administration of trading, (3) dedicated to the administration of the town. The visualisation focuses on alternative paths (*i.e.* moments in the lifeline of the artefact when there are several alternative possibilities about what really occurred). When there are no such alternatives between two transformations, the two transformations are merged inside a single rectangle [9].

Note on the bottom right the simplicity of the diagram for Krakow's Town Hall's tower. For this particular artefact 32 successive transformations are documented (plus 2 archaeological investigations). However since each of these transformations is rather well documented and does not call for interpretation, the artefact's visual measure of complexity is limited to *one* rectangle. Note also, that unsurprisingly artefacts dedicated to private or semi-private trading (1) appear harder to analyse. This is due notably to the fact that information related to public buildings were preserved in town archives, unlike accounts of changes concerning private buildings.

Note 9.   cf. Chapter 5.1.3

Fig. 15 Relative patterns of complexity of lifelines depending on the function and/or status of artefacts:
(1) private or semi-private trading facilities
(2) collective administration of trading
(3) town administration