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THE CATHOLIC SECTION OF VILNIUS IN THE 14th AND BEGINNING OF THE 16th CENTURY

Summary of doctoral dissertation
Humanities, History (05 H)

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VILNIAUS MIESTO KATALIKIŠKOJI DALIS XIV – XVI AMŽIAUS PRADŽIOJE

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**Introduction**

A town represents a multifunctional formation that, in principle, is open to different cultures, confessions or ethnic groups. Lateness and absence of Roman roots is characteristic to the development of towns both in Lithuania and in its neighbouring countries. Trade and local administration requirements determined development of Scandinavian towns, meanwhile, in Russia that largely depended on the need to secure the Greek-Varangian trade route and on social changes. According to its character development Vilnius is very similar to town development processes that took place in Poland, where emergence of towns was closely related to establishment of the state and should be looked upon as one of the instruments to achieve the ruler’s goals. A distinctive feature in development of Vilnius is its multi-confessional surrounding and its competitive communities such as pagan, orthodox and catholic. Invitation of newcomers to Vilnius served the ruler as one of the ways to reach his goals. At the same time it incited blending of different cultures and public development.

**Subject of Research.** The present research analyses one of the three confessions of Vilnius. The Catholic confession has been chosen as it was one of the most influential within the region in the period under discussion and the one that determined the European direction of the state’s civilization. The present work aims at revealing development of urban structure and community of Vilnius in the 14\textsuperscript{th} and beginning of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century through research of the Catholic section of Vilnius.

The present work carries research of development of the Catholic section of Vilnius from its appearance at the close of the 13\textsuperscript{th} century. The beginning of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century has been chosen as the final date of the research as it marks significant confessional, social, economic, urban and other changes. Construction of the town defence wall at the 1\textsuperscript{st} quarter of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century is a visual reflection of the town incorporation into an integral space. The period under research has been the least covered in written sources, therefore archaeological findings serve as the main source of information in the present work.

Historiography does not suggest a well-established name of the town section that has been under research in the present work. Therefore it has
been titled “The Catholic section of Vilnius”. This is a rather wide notion covering the entire territory of research in different periods and providing the best reflection of the formation under research. Catholicism is a confession that is underlined in the title. Inhabitants of the entire western part of the present Old Town of Vilnius represented different confessions, however Catholicism dominated.

**Problem of Research.** The main problem of the present research deals with the role of the Catholic Community in the history of Vilnius, processes of urbanisation, changes of catholic settlement as well as with specific traits, status and influence of the Community. Other resultant problems include the integral role of Catholics in the European direction of the state civilisation as well as peculiarities of their establishment within the Baltic Sea region.

**Relevance and Originality of Research.** The present work aims at systemising and including historic sources and vast archaeological research material of the town of Vilnius into scientific circulation. It is in the nature of archaeology to effectively reflect spatial aspects, to research in detail development of the territory populated by Catholics within the time passage, to evaluate material culture of the community including monumental objects and their surroundings. It also enables to trace and to explain spatial formation of the town that is related with more profound processes in the public development. The history of the Catholic Community’s establishment in Vilnius is being researched within the context of co-European town development and Christianisation processes singling out elements that are distinctive and exceptionally characteristic of Vilnius.

Fragments of household ceramics found during archaeological excavations in the western part of the present Old Town of Vilnius serve as one of the main sources of the present research. This is a classic method applied in archaeology that provides information on three spheres, which are: dating, i.e. the time of production and period of use; the area of spread, i.e. the place of production and trade ties; function or status, i.e. usage for certain purposes. Specified or newly assigned fragment dating allows distinguishing few phases in the town development. Consolidation of the obtained information with other material enables to trace evolution and
development of the Catholic section of Vilnius, to define the size and population of its territory as well as to define characteristic traits of the community within a certain time passage. Archaeological data is used both as main and as suppletory material. For example, typology of ceramics and its spread do not point out a confession of its users, meanwhile consolidation of that information with other information sources allows for arriving at conclusions in relation to development and settlement of the Catholic section of Vilnius.

In pursuance of understanding and explaining history of the Catholic section of Vilnius, first of all, reasons and circumstances that determined appearance of Catholics in Vilnius are pointed out. Great attention is given to the earliest catholic settlement at the south-western foot of Gediminas Hill. The research reveals shifts of status of the Catholic community as well as changes of the territory populated by members of the confession (foot of the hill – outskirts of the town – part of the town). Specific traits of the Catholic section of Vilnius, parameters within the time passage from the first mission and the earliest signs of Smėlynė settlement (“German town”) up to merging into the general plan of the town are analysed in detail in separate chapters of the work.

**Goal of Research.** The goal of the present research lies in performing the analysis in respect to formation, localisation, change and growth of the western part of the present Old Town of Vilnius in the 14th and beginning of the 16th century.

**Tasks of Research**
1. Define reasons and circumstances that caused emergence of the Catholic Community of Vilnius.
2. Perform analysis of the Catholic Community establishment process at the south-western foot of Gediminas Hill.
3. Analyse reasons for assimilation of the western part of the present Old Town of Vilnius (emergence of “German town”) and define the time and traits of that process.
4. Itemize development and peculiarities of the Catholic section of Vilnius following christening in 1387.
5. Identify the end of formation of the Catholic section of Vilnius and discuss its integration into the town of Vilnius.
Methods of Research. The present research applies five principal methods, which are: comparison, analysis, synthesis, induction and deduction.

In respect to material information a new method in Lithuanian archaeology of recording and treatment of material information is applied, which means 3D scanning of household ceramics based on structural light. The method is characteristic of great accuracy, reliability and allows performing treatment of information in large amounts. The method was used by the author of the present research applying the computer program *David lasercanner 3* and the pictures processed using *Netfabb Basic program*. The recorded ceramics was dated with reference to dr. G. Vaitkevičius, scientific consultant of the present work (data tables are annexed to the present work). Dating is primarily based on household ceramics analogue found during research work performed within the territory of Vilnius castles, the Crooked Town, the Old Arsenal, etc. Chronology of other fragments was defined in accordance with standard dating practice established in Archaeology.

**Propositions to be defended by the present research.**

1. Emergence of the Catholic Community in Vilnius is related to the town development and Christianization processes.
2. First Catholics in Vilnius had settled at the south-western foot of Gediminas Hill as part of the lower ward community.
3. Social and political changes in the 2nd half of the 14th century caused population resettlement to the western part of the present Old Town of Vilnius.
4. Emergence of “German town” in Smėlynė had been due to the policy of Great Duke of Lithuania Jogaila. This formation marks a new stage in the town development.
5. Extreme growth and intensive settlement of the Catholic section of Vilnius in the 4th quarter of the 14th century was mainly caused by christening in 1387.
6. At the end of the 14th and at beginning of the 16th century the western part of the present Old Town of Vilnius had been an integral territory in respect to confession matters but some parochial differences should be observed.
7. It would be right to characterize the Catholic section of Vilnius as a separate formation within the town up to the start of political, religious, demographic and spatial town structure changes in the 1st quarter of the 16th century.

**Historiography and sources**

**Written sources**

Vilnius has been regarded as a catholic town since 1387, however written sources with information about the territory settled by members of the Catholic Community are very scarce. The earliest source dates back to 1298. It was a Treaty between Great Duke of Lithuania Vytenis (1295-1316) and townsmen of Riga, in which Vytenis had vaguely undertaken a vow to adopt Christianity. Another source includes letters written by great Duke of Lithuania Gediminas (1316-1341) within the period of 1322-1323. Due to those letters there was a long time existing assurance that German merchants and craftsmen had settled in Vilnius during the rule of Gediminas. One more document related to the letters is a report of the Pope’s legates dating back to November 3, 1324 about their mission in Lithuania. Another chronologically closest document providing information about Catholics in Vilnius is a privilege of February 17, 1387 by Great Duke of Lithuania Jogaila awarded to Archbishop of Vilnius. The name of Smėlynė (*in Arena*, in Latin, *na Piaskach*, in Polish) at the springs of Vingriaï had been firstly mentioned in the Bychovc Chronicle written in the 1st half of the 16th century. Later documents include church foundation acts, papers of subsidies donated to Franciscan monks, etc. Sources of major significance are indicated in separate chapters of the present work.

**Archaeological sources**

Archaeological research of Vilnius started in the midst of the 20th century. Up to then major or minor research had been performed nearly in all streets of Old Town of Vilnius, especially, on the former castle territory. Numerous findings of the research allow to look for a new approach towards the town history and to attach proper placing of archaeological findings within the present work.
The present research concentrates on the western part of Vilnius. Its northern, western and southern lines coincide with the defence wall built in the 1st half of the 16th century, whereas the eastern line matches the present line of Pilies and Didžioji streets. The entire territory covers a 50 ha area that includes 29 historic sections comprising 37 streets of the present Vilnius. Almost 300 archaeological reports have been compiled from that part of the city. Extent of investigation of the territory varies but joining all objects into one provides a dense network with only few “white spots”.

289 reports of archaeological investigations currently held at the archives of the Lithuanian Institute of History, Vilnius District Administration, Lithuanian National Museum and Culture Inherit Department were used by author of the present research. A review and new dating of the pottery fragments found in the western part of Old Town of Vilnius have been performed. The research applied a 3D scanning method that allowed processing a great amount of information in short time and achieving high reliability. Scanning excluded any imagination or human error and enabled perfect observation of the fragment form and ornamentation. Another advantage of scanning lies in a possibility to get a three-dimensional view of a fragment, which transferred into a respective program can be turned into an image, shifted to one or another direction, examined from all sides, precisely measured and scaled; it also makes it possible to calculate its diameter, get a sectional view, transfer an image onto graph paper, etc. A 3D scanning applied in the present research enabled to discern details of any separate fragment and make exact definition of its chronology.

The received information is put into tables with descriptions of the earliest fragments of each object (the period from the 14th to beginning of the 16th century) in order to determine the earliest accommodation date of each object. Informative aspect of ceramic fragments was also taken into account, which means that fragments of unclear or too wide chronology had not been included into the tables. The tables comprise the following information: address of the object, date of investigation, author and name of the investigation report, inventory number of a scanned fragment, analogue on which dating was based, chronologic limits and peculiarities of a finding layer (if such, indicating the layer and dating of the findings
produced by author of the account). Each table is supplemented with a general characteristic of an investigated object based on the specified dating of ceramic fragments and record information. On the grounds of the tables the schemes were laid focusing on activity and spread of habitants of a relative period.

**Historiography**

So far there are no works intended to investigate a specific part of Vilnius inhabited by Catholics. Scarce information about the said formation is found in scientific studies related to other problems in connection with the history of Vilnius. Here one can find general information about the Catholic inhabited part of town, i.e. localisation and approximate date of settling. Therefore, in this respect, any information about first catholic churches and Franciscan monks in Vilnius must be considered to be of great importance. Especially so, as history of the Catholic Community is inseparable from the history of Catholicism development in Vilnius, whereas locality of the first Catholic church is automatically interrelated with the territory inhabited by Catholics.

At the start of the period from the 19th to beginning of the 20th century historiography focuses on the search of the first Catholic Church in Vilnius and on the Franciscan martyrdom. In this respect Great Duke Gediminas’ letters serve as the main source. So emergence of catholic merchants and craftsmen undoubtedly dates back to the rule of Gediminas. True, some authors state that Franciscans appeared in Vilnius during the rule of Great Duke Vytenis but construction of St. Nicolas church is dated at the time of rule of Great Duke Gediminas. The settlement of Smėlynė is related with the Goštautas family and with resettlement of Franciscans following the martyrdom during the rule of Algirdas. However the territory itself is not investigated confining to the fact that in the 14th century the Catholics had already been among the population of Vilnius.

In later works, authors confine to the theory that St. Nicolas church is the earliest Catholic temple in Vilnius. Similar ideas are dominant in the works written by Lithuanian authors in emigration and in the interwar period, in which they maintained that first German merchants and craftsmen had arrived in Vilnius during the rule of Great Duke Gediminas,
settled within the region of Vokiecių and Trakų streets with St. Nicolas church considered to be the earliest Catholic church in Vilnius.

In the soviet period no new or relevant ideas or theories had originated about the Catholic section of Vilnius. The discussed period can be characterized by logical sequence of events initiated on the grounds of available sources: during the rule of Gediminas German merchants and craftsmen arrived in Vilnius; in their place of settlement Gediminas built St. Nicolas church; “German town” started to develop around the church, which means that settlement of Smėlynė started in the first half of the 14th century. Thus two errors had immersed in Lithuanian historiography. First, no due appreciation was given to the role of Great Duke Vytenis in development of Vilnius, and, second, Smėlynė had not been the very first place inhabited by Catholics. For a long time, conclusions about emergence of Catholics, monks and a catholic church in Vilnius were based on Great Duke Gediminas’ letters. The Treaty between Great Duke Vytenis and townsmen of Riga as well as continuity of Vytenis’ policy declared by Great Duke Gediminas in his letter of 1322 although noted in historiography, had not been duly assessed up to the 2nd half of the 20th century.

It is obvious that up to the end of the 20th century an exceptional attention was given to the political aspect of the Catholic history of Vilnius. It had been caused both by political situation and lack of information. Scarce written sources prevented a detailed analysis of Vilnius development. A possibility to expand knowledge about the 13th-15th century Vilnius turned up only in the last decade of the 20th century when data of archaeological and other applied research started to be included into scientific circulation.

Following Restoration of Independence research of political history of the country does prevail. The situation, when hypotheses spring up from the same scarce written sources, now can be changed by entry of new, first of all archaeological, data into research, which contributes to abandoning alienation between historians and archaeologists.

Thus in the 21st century a number of studies about development of Vilnius, establishment of the Catholic Community and about the Catholic church history of Vilnius start to originate. However the western part of the
town as a separate and specific formation remains outside of the field of research.

Preconditions and circumstances for establishment of the Catholic Community in Vilnius

Emergence of the Catholic Community in Vilnius had not been of incidental character. In order to realize preconditions and circumstances that had caused emergence of the Community, it is essential to evaluate the situation the country found itself in the period of the 13th-14th century as well as to review the surrounding environment. It had been town areas where newcomers appeared (Catholics in our case) and induced Christianisation processes. Therefore development of the town and the Christianisation process (arrival of Franciscans) must be looked upon as two main preconditions for establishment of the Catholic Community in Vilnius. In this respect, Christianisation should be perceived as a process of penetration of Catholicism into the society followed by changes of the latter.

Development of the town

First signs of settlement in medieval Vilnius date back to the 2nd half of the 13th century. Traces of human activity were found on the territory of Gediminas Hill, in the Crooked Town and in the eastern part of the present Old Town of Vilnius, which had been the place of the Orthodox Community development since the 2nd half of the 13th century.

Our field of interest includes evolution from the settlement at the foothill to the town type settlement and the role of Catholics in the said evolution. Therefore in order to understand the stage of Vilnius development in the period from the end of the 13th to the beginning of the 14th century it is most essential to define a notion “lower ward” (or “baily”). In Lithuanian historiography this term is often confused with the term “fore-work”. The main difference between these two lies in their purpose: the fore-work was exceptionally designed for defence; meanwhile the lower ward was designed also for living purpose. Craftsmen and merchants serving the ruler used to settle at the lower ward. In Vilnius such sites are found at the northern and south-western foot of Gediminas Hill.
The latter had been a settlement of Catholics. From geographic and economic points of view it complies with a lower ward specifics (presently there is no information about legal or administrative aspects). Craftsmen, merchants and clergy of the settlement had fully answered the ruler’s needs but the next stage of the foothill life development points to another stage in the town development, which is establishment of an obligatory town community. Investigation of the lower ward settlement is of major importance with the view of understanding development of Vilnius as a town. The lower ward settlement means an advanced step in the development process of the town. Thus emergence of the Catholic Community in Vilnius reflects the ruler’s purposive ambition to stimulate growth of the town in the 1st half of the 14th century.

**German colonisation**

Emergence of the Catholic Community in Vilnius matches the ruler’s interests, which is the usual thing in the history of European towns. Furthermore, it coincided with German colonisation within the Baltic Sea region known as *drang nach Osten*. The Catholic Christianisation should also be considered as an inseparable part of the process. Peaceful migration had been in the interest of Lithuanian dukes (invitations to foreigners in 1298 and in 1323, Franciscan monks among them).

The Franciscan Order was founded around the year 1209. The Order’s exceptional role was predetermined by its specific character. Analysis of the Order’s specifics allows explaining establishment of the Order as regular and logically grounded. Invitation to Franciscans had mostly been influenced by their specific activity. Therefore it must be presumed that the Franciscan presence in Vilnius not only conditioned establishment of the Catholic Community but also provided miscellaneous protection of the Community. Due to their specific activity Franciscan monks became one of the agents that helped to join pagan Lithuania to the rest of the Catholic world. In this respect, it should be noted that unlike in Scandinavian countries some ages before the ruler of Lithuania did not invite catholic missions with the aim of spreading religion among local pagans. They were invited to be pastors for the Catholic Community of newcomers.

For a long time that historiography paid most attention to mentioning of Catholic Church in Great Duke Gediminas’ letters, and therefore
emergence of Catholics, monks and their church were linked with the name of Great Duke Gediminas. But after systematisation of early archaeological stratigraphy and including dendrochronology data into scientific circulation, the statement about existence of a catholic church in Vilnius in 1298 had acquired an additional argument. It is obvious that political, economic, social and even religion context points to settlement of the first Catholics in Vilnius during the rule of Great Duke Vytenis. The question is: where and how did they settle?

**Catholics at the south-western foot of Gediminas hill**

In the period between the end of the 13th and beginning of the 14th century Gediminas Hill with its foothills and the Crooked town had already been settled, whereas only the eastern part of the present Old Town of Vilnius was assimilated and known as “Civitas Rutenica” (Russian town). Thus the first catholic settlements and the church must be searched for in the present castle territory. The statement that the Franciscan church and mission had to be situated at the ruler’s manor could be implicitly supported by written sources, one of which is a report of the Pope’s legates. The text of the report suggests that it had been “within arm’s reach” from the manor. However archaeological and architectural data provide the most reliable evidence. A foreign culture element comes out at the south-western foot of Gediminas Hill. Here fragments of a Livonian type of ceramics had been found. Thus on the grounds of archaeological findings it is supposed that in the 1st and 2nd decade of the 14th century a settlement with some specific Livonian features had formed at the south-western foothill. Livonian influence was primarily reflected in the construction technique: fragments of wooden framework characteristic of wooden architecture in Riga of that period. Besides, at the same time there appeared bricks, floor slabs and glaze tiles. Appearance of new construction material must be explained by foreign culture influence. The suggestion that construction technologies might have been taken over from immigrants, who were familiar with it, could be supported by Livonian culture reflection in the household ceramics of daily use mentioned above.
The south-western foothill settlement
A settlement at the south-western foothill covered a comparatively small (1.7 ha) but topographically exclusive territory. Surrounded by the Vilnia River on three sides (except the eastern one) it occupied an advantageous defence position. In addition to natural defence means few hundred meters to the east there was one more security guarantor – the ruler’s castle. A road network traced with reference to archaeological sources and early street network of Vilnius had been another important aspect of the settlement’s position. Actually, the foothill was a crossroad of all most important travel routes: north and north-west to Livonia, south-west to Rūdininkai, south to Medininkai and north-east to Daugpilis. Meanwhile the Vilnia River constituted a natural water barrier. Location in close proximity of the river – the source of drinking water and food, had also contributed to settlement of the territory. Thus the south-western foothill was a convenient spot from a viewpoint of defence, communication, relief, and water resource matters. That was an isolated territory convenient for a small community to settle. In accordance with archaeological data it is suggested that the foothill had not been inhabited till the end of the 13th century and was used as a metal production and treatment site.

Traces of masonry construction in Vilnius also lead to the south-west foot of Gediminas Hill. Therefore settlement of the foothill must be linked with construction of a brick church finished around the year 1320, which is referred to in the letters of Great Duke Gediminas. Erection of the first defence wall (minor enclosure) at the south-west foothill around the year 1328 is also considered the outcome of settlement.

It seems expedient to start search of the first Catholic Church on the territory of the foothill. Thus it is logical to locate the first Franciscan church in the place of the present Cathedral. The said localisation of the church and of the Franciscan mission outright rejects two opinions that prevailed in historiography and in the general public until now. First, that the first Catholic Church in Vilnius (built by Great Duke Gediminas) was St. Nicolas church in the south-west of the present Old Town of Vilnius, and second, that up to the year 1387 in the place of the present Cathedral there had been theocratic centre (Perkūnas temple).
Because of lack of information, it would be right to propose a hypothesis that in the 1st half of the 14th century the minor enclosure included a Franciscan mission (their hospicium), the ruler’s office and a masonry construction, which formed an official catholic space inhabited by monks and craftsmen serving the ruler’s needs (mostly bricklayers and jewellers). A later enclosure (construction of which began in the midst of the 14th century) included a brick church and the rest of the territory inhabited by members of the Catholic Community (together with wooden constructions to the west from the church).

In the early period the Catholic Community must have been rather small, as according to scientific studies, under the rule of Great Duke Gediminas there were no favourable political conditions for migration from German towns because of the Order’s resistance. Besides, the town of Vilnius of that period had been in a primary development stage and Catholics had settled there as a group of people that served the ruler and benefited to strengthening of the ruler’s power and growth of the town. The Catholic Community of that period had mainly consisted of clergy and Franciscan monks who attended to spiritual needs of the Community. In addition to spiritual service the monks had also served in the ruler’s office. The other part of the Community consisted of craftsmen who were developing strategically important crafts such as brick produce and stonework technologies. Finally, there were merchants or tradesmen whose presence can be proved by survival of peace and trade treaties and findings of imported goods.

**Development of the settlement past the year 1323**

Development of the settlement at the south-western foot of Gediminas Hill past the 3rd decade of the 14th century has not undergone amplified studies yet, and thus information is mostly based on evaluation of the historic context. No data exists about lifetime of the settlement. It is estimated that it existed no longer than the year 1399 when Vilnius was devastated by fire.

In 1369 the Franciscans in Vilnius suffered their second martyrdom. It is assumed that then the entire Franciscan monastery of Vilnius was murdered. It must be stressed that those were monks who were murdered, whereas craftsmen and tradesmen continued to liaise with pagans.
Nevertheless it must be noted that the said date is close to the time of emergence of a new formation in the western part of the present Old Town of Vilnius. Emergence of “German town” should undoubtedly be considered continuation of the Catholic Community development in Vilnius. But is it right to propose resettlement of Catholics from the southwest foothill to Smėlynė? Or was it a new community? In any case, it was a new status community within the townsmen commune. Thus a question arises if the changes taking place in the 2nd half of the 14th century within the foothill settlement contributed to settlement of Smėlynė and whether those changes were the direct ones? Also, what had stimulated settlement of people on new territories, farther from the ruler’s castle? The beginning of the resettlement process as well as its character must also be defined.

Assimilation of the western part of Vilnius

Historiography traditionally describes “German town” as a formation in the western part of Old Town, i.e. the present Vokiečių and Trakų streets, in the territory known as Smėlynė. A great number of written documents, such as lawsuits, trial dockets, guild papers, the toponymy itself (Vokiečių street, i.e., German street) and a historic context point to the fact that at the turn of the 14th century the said territory was settled by Catholics (most often, by Germans from Livonia). However the question about the start of the territory assimilation has not been answered yet. According to historic sources there exists information about foundation laid for a suburb by Great Duke Jogaila in 1387. The question arises: was “German town” the first settlement (suburb) of the Catholic Community in Smėlynė and had it been founded on a newly assimilated territory?

Preconditions for resettlement to Smėlynė

It is of major significance to define preconditions for resettlement of Catholics and other inhabitants of Vilnius to a new territory as well as to indicate the reasons for choice of the territory. We suggest several factors that caused resettlement from the foot of Gediminas Hill to a new territory situated in the present Old Town of Vilnius.

Firstly, it must have been growth of population (natural and man-made, which is relocation of people). Only a limited number of people could be
accommodated on 1.7 ha area. The territory at the foothill became too small both due to natural growth of population (birth-rate) and to a new German colonisation wave in the midst of the 14th century. Archaeological data from that period confirms intense surge of people.

Secondly, a growing requirement to strengthen defence within the castle area (construction of a defence enclosure) in the midst of the 14th century required transfer of some part of the south-west foothill inhabitants. Following the battle of Strėva in 1348, and especially after 1365, excessive campaigns of the German Order were approaching Vilnius. The situation required reconsidering defence strategies. Thus in the midst of 14th century strengthening of defence had begun, which demanded clearing the territory and/or rarefying density of the settlement.

Thirdly, change of a political-confessional situation since 1369 had also stimulated assimilation of Smėlynė. The martyrdom story of 1369 is a vivid illustration of significant shifts in the attitude towards Catholicism. Differently from the first martyrdom of Franciscans under the rule of Great Duke Gediminas which was carried out on the ruler’s initiative, the second one was condemned by the ruler. Great Duke Algirdas ordered cruel execution of murderers. Meanwhile the martyrdom incident itself could have prompted resettlement of Catholics from the south-west foot of Gediminas Hill to the present territory of Old Town of Vilnius.

Fourthly, political changes that took place after 1377 with the rule of Great Duke Jogaila had also stimulated development of Vilnius outskirts. Information exists that at the end of the 14th century large territories in the western part of Old Town belonged to catholic Hanul who was Jogaila’s confidant. He was a German from Riga, a close ally and adviser to Great Duke Jogaila. Hanul had probably acquired a vast domain in the town of Vilnius in return for his help in Jogaila’s struggle against Great Duke Kęstutis. Thus development of “German town” must be related to Livonian Germans’ arrival in Vilnius. In this connection we should research development of an absolutely new character Catholic Community. Those were town outskirts inhabited by catholic townsmen whose primary interest concerned economic and trade opportunities.

Such urban evolution is also reflected by changes of social and legal status of the Catholic Community. Eventually, the former lower ward
dwellers became economically independent enough and turned from the ruler’s servants to townsmen with their own trade market and definite social, political and legal status. Thus economic and social changes had also caused resettlement of people to the western territory of the present Old Town of Vilnius. Archaeological findings show when the process was well under way – middle – 2dn half of the 14th century when a qualitative and quantitative leap in production of ceramics is noted.

Evaluation of the reasons causing resettlement to the western part of the present Old Town of Vilnius proposes that the said territory could have been inhabited both by the former lower ward dwellers and catholic newcomers (neophytes likewise).

**Traces of early settlement**

It becomes obvious that preconditions for resettlement to the western part of Old Town of Vilnius emerged in the midst of the 14th century. In order to explicitly trace the further chronology and the degree and character of the process, archaeological material must be taken into account.

Rich findings of ceramics dating back to the 3rd quarter of the 14th century had been discovered within the area of St. John church, Rūdininkai Gates and Žemaitijos Street.

Systematisation of the said material shows that a convenient position of the western part of Old Town of Vilnius had been evaluated even before development of the settlement around St. Nicolas church. However a specific feature of that period cultural layer is its fragmentary character and rather poor survival, which points to the scarcity of accommodation and rather passive economic activity under the rule of Great Duke Algirdas. The findings suggest the existence of single households with few more numerous concentrations situated mainly at travel routes or crossings. The material reflects a spontaneous development mostly determined by natural environment (water resource, plain relief) and economic factors (travel routes). Absence of a definite cultural layer and rather scarce accommodation of the territory prevent the definition of boundaries of assimilated territories and assessment of the inhabited area of the town. Spread of ceramics might rather reflect limitations (dependant on
spontaneous wish or confessional differences) aimed at keeping a distance from Civitas Rutenica (remaining uninhabited area).

It is evident that accommodation of the western part of the present Old Town of Vilnius must have started in the 3\textsuperscript{rd} quarter of the 14\textsuperscript{th} century, however lack of data prevents from defining the inhabitants’ confessional dependence. Although members of both the pagan and catholic faith might have settled on the said territory, there are no grounds to maintain the idea of intentional formation of the settlement under the rule of Great Duke Algirdas, which excludes existence of “German town” at that time.

“German town”

In accordance with archaeological information the second chronological period of the western part settlement must be the 4\textsuperscript{th} quarter or the 8\textsuperscript{th} - 9\textsuperscript{th} decade of the 14\textsuperscript{th} century. “German town” with its first Catholic Church of St. Nicolas emerge as the most fundamental object of the period. Thus if the previous period did not allow to determine confessional dependence of the area inhabitants, the following period allows speaking of “German town” inhabited by Catholics. At this stage the impact of Livonian Germans seems to be more prominent, whereas Polish influence becomes dominant following adoption of Catholicism in 1387.

Ceramic findings dating back to the 4\textsuperscript{th} quarter of the 14\textsuperscript{th} century discovered within the western part of Old Town are basically concentrated within 2 territories: around St. John and Holy Spirit churches and within an oval form territory that stretches from Trakų Street in the north and runs by St. Nicolas church towards Rūdininkai Gates. Although in that period there remain major ceramic concentrations of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} quarter of the 14\textsuperscript{th} century, their density changes and, most importantly, Smėlynė, the territory round the St. Nicolas church and the Franciscan monastery stands out according to the concentration of findings.

Consolidation of archaeological research results and spread of ceramics allows arriving at the conclusion that in the 8\textsuperscript{th} - 9\textsuperscript{th} decade of the 14\textsuperscript{th} century (under the rule of Great Duke Jogaila) a settlement in Smėlynė had formed, approximately within 50-80 m range around St. Nicolas church. Simultaneous spread of ceramic types and intensive cultural layer point to impetuous development and dense population within 1 or 2 decades. Fragments of wood constructions (Žemaitijos Street) had also been
discovered. Further research suggests that the said territory remains densely populated throughout the entire 15th century. Early brick constructions have also been found within the area.

It is observed that under the rule of Great Duke Jogaila, up to the year 1387, the western part of Vilnius, “German town” excluded, undergoes a very chaotic and rather slow process of settlement. A more expedient assimilation of the territory started after christening. Up to then, settlement of the territory had been spontaneous enough and mostly related with resettlement of local pagans. Meanwhile development of “German town” had been due to the leap of financial potential during the rule of Great Duke Jogaila, which prompted settlement of German tradesmen and craftsmen around St. Nicolas church and impetuous assimilation of the territory by courtesy of the ruler.

“German town” was meant to become a new urban centre of attraction. Differently from the isolated and strictly limited settlement at the foot of Gediminas Hill the territory around St. Nicolas church points to settlement of a different type of community. Although the foothill settlement was secure enough, it did not have any growth perspective. Meanwhile the principal factor of settlement in Smėlynė lay in its advantageous position and development opportunities. The settlement at the south-west foot of Gediminas Hill, called a foothill settlement, had been the means and instruments of implementation of the ruler’s politics and should be considered as beginning of a new urban system, whereas Smėlynė marks a transfer to a higher qualitative and quantitative degree of town development. Here new scales and growth perspectives are being reflected. Furthermore, a new defence system is designed, which consists of the Jogaila rampart erected at the end of the 14th century, the 15th century turmhaus designed both for defence and living purpose and the defence wall erected in the 1th quarter of the 16th century.

Ceramic findings suggest that “German town” of the early period might have covered the territory of a little more than 6 ha.

**Natural environment**

Natural environment is one of the most significant factors in the choice of the place of settlement. “German town” in the western part of Old Town of Vilnius is characteristic of even and smooth relief. It is situated within
an amphitheatre surrounded by moraine heights. From a defence viewpoint the place is less secure or naturally isolated than the former foothill settlement but a smooth relief of the place provided for more comfortable living conditions.

“German town” was located at the east-west direction route that was determined by topography of the spot (optimal slope). Water accessibility was another important factor for development of the settlement. The Vingrė rivulet was used as a natural barrier with the Jogaila rampart on the right bank and the waterlogged north bank. Springs, lakes and rivulets of Vingriaı served as a drinking water resource.

**Defence fortifications**
The privilege of 1387 by Great Duke Jogaila refers to an embankment: *<...> and the road that runs on the other side up to the house of Češkus at the embankment and the churchyard of St. Nicolas <...>*. This suggests a hypothesis about a fortified western part of the present Old Town of Vilnius. Historiography presumes that the 14th century Vilnius had a defence enclosure.

Systemization of the material allows presuming that in the 2nd half of the 14th century “German town” had been at least partially fortified. In the western part there were defence erections such as embankments and ditches. However, we believe that the said erections should be linked with the town defence system in general: it must be kept in mind that “German town” was situated at the western boundary of the town. There’s no talk about a separate fortification of “German town” and no way to put stress on any eventual inside threat on the part of other town dwellers (pagans or the Orthodox).

**Street network**
“German town” started developing close to a large communication junction, at the crossing of the main routes. We suppose that the site had been chosen in consideration of the existent network of the main routes, which means that emergence of a new formation had been deliberately planned. Meanwhile the internal street network, its directions and development were dependent on natural environment of “German town”, directions of regional and local roads, development of the town as a whole, links of the Catholic section with separate parts of the town and a number
of other factors. Situated in the western part of the town “German town” was the last point on the way to the West. To the north and east there lay the castle territory and pagan inhabited sections and further on – the Orthodox formation “Civitas Rutenica”. All that together with specifics of the relief determined formation of streets and change of their network.

Two routes ran along the territory of “German town”: one of them extended along the present Trakų Street, the second wound in the south direction turning to the present Naugardukas Street in the west. One more route ran close by “German town” along the present Rūdininkai Street. If chronology of the two first routes is not clear enough and it is hard to say whether they had really existed in the early stage of “German town” development (the 4th quarter of the 14th century), the third one had already been centre of attraction to newcomers since the 3rd quarter of the 14th century.

At the time of “German town” settlement there might have existed all three main tracks but a choice to start a catholic settlement in the place of the present Naugardukas street had probably been due to its convenient position. In the course of time the suburb expanded in the direction of Rūdininkai route and the present Trakų Street. Abandonment of Naugardukas and Mėsinių tracks was caused by erection of the defence wall in the 1st quarter of the 14th century.

Space (buildings)

The privilege by Great Duke Jogaila refers to several objects, which are St. Nicolas church, the house of Češkus and the Franciscans home. This information, when supplemented with archaeological data, enables to restore the picture of “German town” up to the year 1387.

It is obvious that newly arriving Catholics could not do without their own church within a pagan town. The fact that the Franciscan church of St. Nicolas had been built prior to christening in 1387 would be based on the text of the privilege of Great Duke Jogaila to the archbishop of Vilnius. A churchyard mentioned in the privilege means that the church had already been functioning for some time. Dating of the brick church to the 2nd half of the 14th century is grounded on the analysis of brick ceramic composition and brick marking. Thus with reference to the said privilege, the brick church of St. Nicolas must have been constructed prior to the year
1387. It must be taken into account that construction of a brick church had been a long lasting process. Considering the fact that St. Nicolas church had already been finished at 1387, its construction must have started much earlier. Therefore we propose that construction of the church must date back to the beginning of “German town” development, which is the 8th - 9th decade of the 14th century.

Another object mentioned in the privilege is the Franciscans Home. It must have been a home of Franciscans who served the Catholic Community. With reference to the privilege it had to be close to St. Nicolas church, to the north from it, most likely, in the place of the present Franciscan Monastery. The house of Češkus, mentioned in the privilege, stood by the embankment and St. Nicolas churchyard.

We suppose that St. Nicolas church had been one and only brick building in the ”German town” of the 14th century and that other brick constructions appeared much later. The Braun atlas marks a number of brick buildings on the territory of “German town” but they date back to the 16th century. As to wood structures, archaeological research in the present Žemaitijos street shows that they had existed at the end of the 14th century. The presence of buildings in “German Town” in the 8th decade of the 14th century is also confirmed by historical data.

**Specifics of the Catholic Community within pagan Vilnius**

Emergence of the Catholic Community in Vilnius is not a unique phenomenon. As it was mentioned before, in the Middle Ages Lithuania had undergone the process of German colonisation.

At first sight settlement of the Catholics in Vilnius is very similar in character to the German colonisation process in Poland that began since the 13th century. Firstly, it was a peaceful process on the ruler’s initiative. Newcomers’ position suited the ruler because being strangers they had no family ties and were dependent on the ruler, and thus were faithful to him. Secondly, colonisation had not been due to religious but to economic reasons. Thirdly, migration had not been too numerous – the number of newcomers was small in comparison with the local population. And fourthly, representatives of different social strata moved to Poland and settled both in towns and in the countryside.
But here we should discern differences between the German colonisation in Poland and settlement of Catholics in Lithuania. First, at the time of the German colonisation in Poland the country had already adopted the Catholic religion. Thus the factor that differentiated local inhabitants from newcomers was not their religion but their origin, and in this respect there can be no talk about a separate Catholic Community. In the Middle Ages it was religion that divided people. Therefore assimilation process in Poland had been speedy enough.

Settlement of Catholics in Livonia was of quite a different character and aggression had been its typical feature. Catholicism came to Livonia together with colonisation and its implementation was followed by development of new religious and political structures. It marks one more significant difference between Vilnius and Livonia. In the latter those were not newcomers but local inhabitants who had to adopt themselves to new conditions.

Emergence of Catholics in Scandinavian countries in the period of the 8th – 12th century proceeded still under different circumstances. Here powerful rulers would invite catholic missions with the aim of Christianisation that suited their political and economic interests and stimulated centralisation of Scandinavian countries.

Still another way of catholic settlement is typical of Russia. Trade merchants’ factories started developing in Russia since the 12th century (Hanza towns). Specific feature of the Hanza merchants is reticence of their communities.

An essential difference between “German yard” in Novgorod (and any other Hanza merchant colony) and “German town” of Vilnius lies in the purpose of the two formations. The Hanza merchant colony of Novgorod is a reticent, purely economic and trade unit. Meanwhile “German town” is a settlement/community of tradesmen, craftsmen, clergy, and wealthy townsmen or even prominent politicians. It is not a rigidly separated territory of newcomers. On the contrary, the community constitutes an integral part of the town.

A review of Christianisation and catholic settlement processes in the neighbouring countries allows discerning specific features of Vilnius development, which differ from earlier described examples. What were the
reasons for such differences? We propose that one of the main reasons had to be the ruler’s strong position and centralisation of power. Catholics arrived in Vilnius on the ruler’s invitation, which suited his interests. The ethno-confessional situation of Vilnius must be the second factor. Prior to arrival of Catholics Vilnius was inhabited by pagans and the Orthodox. Thus the Catholics did not enjoy a privileged position but had to find their place between the two communities that had settled in Vilnius some time before. And third, although Catholics started to settle in pagan Vilnius, but since 1387 the Catholic religion became dominant.

**The Catholic section of Vilnius past christening in 1387**

In historiography the catholic section of Vilnius is often identified with “German town”. However our research suggests that the said formation must be considered to be one of the stages of the Catholics’ settlement in the western part of Old Town. In 1387 the situation changed and that date must be looked upon as one of the most significant in the life of the Catholic section of Vilnius. The former infidels in a pagan town became representatives of an official religion. Within 100 years the Catholic section of “German town” grew from a 6 ha territory to 30 ha “Latin town” stretching over the entire western part of the present Old Town of Vilnius.

**Growth of the Catholic section in the period from the end of 14th century to the 1st quarter of the 15th century**

At the end of the 14th century there appear new types of ceramics in Vilnius. Their chronology leads to the 1st quarter of the 15th century. Occurrence of the said type ceramics within the western part of Old Town is a vivid reflection of the town development past christening in 1387. Scarce data does not allow defining nationality of the people who inhabited that part of the town. However archaeological material indicates that after christening the entire area, despite it being catholic, had not been a one-peace or evenly assimilated territory. Several main concentration points of ceramics still remain, which are the “German town” environment with St. Nicolas church, the territory of St. John church, the crossing of Gaono and Stiklių streets, etc. This notwithstanding, now it becomes obvious that the people’s activity proceeded developing in one or other direction.
Development of “German town”

Christening in 1387 was followed by foundation of two new churches (Franciscan the Virgin Mary Assumption church and St. John church) and a Franciscan monastery in the western part of Old Town of Vilnius. The foundations reflect strengthening of Catholicism as well as the ruler’s policies and interior affairs of the town.

Settlement in the west and southwest part of Old Town becomes especially dynamic at the end of the 14th and beginning of the 15th century and is mostly concentrated around “German town”, the present Trakų Street, and later by Rūdininkai Gate. In the north the territory reaches the Vingrė river bed and peaty areas to the west from the present Pylimo Street. In the east it spreads around St. Nicolas church and the Franciscan monastery, whereas in the south its boundaries reach the Rūdininkai route and come close to Civitas Rutenica. The western line running along the right bank of the rivulet is especially distinct. That was a long-time line used as a natural barrier in the 1st quarter of the 16th century when the defence wall of Vilnius was being erected. The inhabited area between the two territories covered approximately 17 ha. Thus during several decades after christening the territory had expanded from 6 ha to 17 ha. Such sudden growth reflects both a rather favourable position of the Catholic community in Vilnius following the official christening, as well as an increase of population and economic development of the town. It was also a period of growing intensity in trade-financial relations in Lithuania.

At the end of the 14th century and beginning of the 15th century there could be singled out three catholic centres located around the three catholic churches, which were “German town” around St. Nicolas church, the second one focused around the Assumption church and the Franciscan monastery and the third one – the territory around St. John church. The first two centres were closely connected as both were under the Franciscan Order’s control and inhabited by foreign ethnic groups. So St. Nicolas church environment associated with Livonian Germans, meanwhile the Franciscan monastery environment had close links with Polish monks (in early period, outright after christening). Furthermore, since 1392 St. Nicolas church together with all it surrounding sites fall into subordination of the Franciscan church and the monastery. In our opinion, the third centre...
situated around St. John church was in close association with the Lithuanian neophyte community. Since 1387 it had been within the Archbishop’s jurisdiction (as usual, parish churches would fall under Archbishop’s jurisdiction).

Thus at the turn of the 14th century there appear catholic parishes, which meant belonging to a particular church and parish or a residential quarter. Therefore we suppose that St. John church and parish should not be considered to be symbols of ethnic rivalry (rivalry among Lithuanians, Poles and Germans) but rather a rivalry between townsmen and clergy, which was characteristic of West Europe. St. Nicolas and Franciscan churches as well as the Franciscan monastery rendered financial support and benefited Franciscan monks, whereas the parish church of St. John benefited the town dwellers as well. However congregational differences were not especially vivid because from a confessional viewpoint that was an integral part of Vilnius.

The Catholic town in the period from the 2nd quarter of the 15th century to the beginning of the 16th century

The period encompasses chronological limits from the 2nd quarter of the 15th century to erection of the defence wall of Vilnius in the 1st quarter of the 16th century. Fast assimilation of the western part of Old Town of Vilnius that had started after the year 1387 continued throughout the 15th century. The most specific feature of the period was an increasing density of population, whereas the town boundaries remain the same. Intensive activity is proceeding within earlier inhabited residential quarters and population density is growing. Cultural layer of the period is thick, concentrated and rich in findings, which reflects a growing scale of activity and active everyday life. The number of brick structures is also growing: fragments of the 2nd half of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th century constructions were discovered during various archaeological researches.

The most significant event of the period was opening of a marketplace in the town square in the 2nd quarter of the 15th century. Following christening in 1387 and privileges granted by Great Duke Jogaila to the town of Vilnius and its citizens a town hall had to be built. As there is no
any information about location of the first town hall, we suppose that it had been built on the site of the present town hall. However that dating is not based either on material analysis or written sources. The oldest town hall of Vilnius standing on the site of the present town hall was mentioned only in 1432. Remains of some earlier rectangular masonry structure had been discovered at the south-eastern corner of the present town hall. Our guess is that there stood a turmhaus that at the beginning of the 15th century was reconstructed, enlarged and readjusted to the town hall requirements.

The town hall environment changed only in the 2nd quarter of the 15th century when the main market-place of the town started to form. Construction fragments found during archaeological researches reflect its development. Since the midst of the 15th century the market-place in the town-hall square becomes a centre of attraction and population density around it increases. The market-place reflects impact of separate confessions on the town planning. The square joins/separates spaces between the Catholic section in the west and the Orthodox section in the east. Subject to research of ceramics concentration points it becomes obvious that the said two sections of the town had been getting closer to each other throughout the 15th century but had never merged together. A very clear division between them exists, which is a strip between the two north-south direction routes (from the castle territory towards Medininkai and Rūdininkai directions). Since the midst of the 15th century the town hall with its market-place became centre of the division. Only starting with the 16th century there might be some presumptions about a likely merge of the two sections.

In the 2nd quarter of the 15th and beginning of the 16th century the inhabited area of Old Town of Vilnius comes close to the boundaries that had been enforced with a defence wall in the 1st quarter of the 16th century. The build-up becomes denser, cultural layers more concentrated and discovery sites become richer, which points to growth of population and economic development.
Integration and significance of the Catholic section of Vilnius

A new stage of Vilnius development is observed since the 1st quarter of the 16th century. Still prior to the beginning of the 16th century there were signs of different parts of the town coming closer to each other and mingling of living spaces of different nationalities or confessions. Catholic and Orthodox sections of the town were coming closer and the Jewish section (Ghetto later) had also joined the general plan. In the 16th and especially in the 17th century Jews, the Orthodox and many others started to settle beside the Catholics. The Catholics also begin settling in the former Orthodox territories. That mingling is visually reflected by defence wall of Vilnius erected in the 1st quarter of the 16th century, which had joined separate parts of the town into the whole.

The necessity to surround Vilnius with a defence wall arose at the beginning of the 16th century when the tartar attacks became more frequent. Such great funds, workforce and hard control requiring project could be implemented given firm power of the ruler and increasing population. The 16th century, known as a prosperity period of Vilnius, is linked with the reign of Žygimantas the Old and Žygimantas Augustas as well as with firm establishment of Catholicism. Since then attention must be directed not to separate sections of the town but to Vilnius as a whole surrounded by defence wall.

Changes of a political and confessional situation at the beginning of the 16th century had been another factor. Improvement of the Catholics’ position in Vilnius is observed since the beginning of the 4th quarter of the 14th century. After Catholicism had been adopted as an official religion the western part of the present Old Town of Vilnius was constantly growing both in area and in construction density. If “German town” embodied a small catholic community within a pagan town, then the period after 1387 symbolises firm positions of the official religion members. The beginning of the 16th century must be regarded as the point when it is time to stop talking about the Catholic section of Vilnius as a separate formation because the whole of Vilnius turned catholic. Reformation shows up as one more phenomenon of that period. In the period from the 16th to 17th century members of at least 7 religions such as Catholics, Unites, Orthodox,
Calvinists, Lutherans, Jews and Muslims had settled in Vilnius. With a given situation there’s no point or grounds to single out the Catholic section of Vilnius or pursue confessional distribution of the population. It is time to speak about townsmen of Vilnius in general.

In order to understand the role of the Catholic section of Vilnius two factors can be singled out. First, it is impact of the Catholic Community on political, cultural and economic development of the town. The Catholic settlement, in large part, impacted establishment of the German law into the legal system of the country. In order to attract newcomers to a pagan and thus dangerous country, Lithuanian rulers had to secure their rights by German law that had been established in a number of West European states. Eventually, it started to be applied to local residents as well. Thus settlement of the German community in Vilnius expedited self-management of the town. The Catholics stimulated formation of a townsmen caste. If in the initial period they were the ruler’s servants and dependant on him, their settlement in Smėlynė and emergence of “German town” marks development of a townsmen caste, providing the market with their production and growth of independence. The conflict between Great Dukes Kęstutis and Jogaila also points to significance of the Catholic’s role, as according to E. Gudavičius the political position at that time had been determined by small but very influential German Community.

We should not forget that prior to 1387 Catholics in Vilnius were considered as strangers. After christening they became representatives of the official religion. The Catholics played a significant role in strengthening craftsmen’s position in the 2nd half of the 14th century and stimulated brick construction. Appearance of newcomers in Vilnius in the 1st half of the 14th century should be looked upon as an impulse that some hundred years later resulted in an extensive production leap and establishment of fraternities and guilds.

The second aspect lies in the significance of the Catholic section in connection with spatial structure of Vilnius. New construction types, such as church buildings, had changed the landscape of Vilnius. “German town” as the outskirts developed around the oldest St. Nicolas church within the present Old Town and brought adjustments into formation of the street network. After christening, when construction of the Assumption church
and the Franciscan monastery started, the people’s activity expanded to the south-western part of the present Old Town. So in the 15th century the former suburb became a very important part of the town. The Dominican church with the monastery, St. Ann church and the Bernardine monastery and other structures built in the period of the 15th-16th century continued alteration of space and scenery of the town.

Conclusions

1. Emergence of the Catholic Community in Vilnius must be linked with the state modernisation policy pursued by Lithuanian rulers in the period from the end of the 13th to the 1st half of the 14th century. Favourable conditions for newcomers to settle in Vilnius coincided with formation of a multicultural town represented by people of different confessions. Written and archaeological sources reveal that the first Franciscan mission in Vilnius had probably emerged under the rule of Great Duke Vytenis, whereas in the 1st quarter of the 14th century, during the rule of Great Duke Gediminas, the first Catholic Community was established at the ruler’s estate. Specifics of the Catholic Community’s establishment in Vilnius lay in the fact that unlike in Lithuania neighbouring countries, settlement of Catholics in Vilnius was not caused by religious or military but by economic and political reasons.

2. Systematised archaeological and historic data allows arriving at the conclusion that in the 1st half of the 14th century the first Catholic mission and settlement were located at the south-western foot of Gediminas Hill. They settled within pagan environment as a new element assigned to meet the rule’s requirements. Thus Franciscan monks served the ruler’s office and provided the Catholic Community with pastoral service. Tradesmen and craftsmen were invited as specialists who would assist in craft development (changes reflected in ceramics) and masonry construction (erection of enclosure at the foot of Gediminas Hill). According to archaeological findings and written sources they were arriving from Livonia. The south-western foothill covering 1.7 ha area suited a new community’s purposes. It was isolated, compact, close to water resource and main routes, while the ruler’s castle secured its safety.
3. Changes that were taking place in Vilnius in the 2nd half of the 14th century had significant impact on the Catholic Community’s position. The said changes included the population growth (birth-rate and arrival of newcomers), alterations of the defence system (erection of the enclosure at the south-western foothill), economic changes (trade-market expansion, development of crafts), and shifts in legal position (the lower ward community’s turn into a townsman’s community). All those changes induced assimilation of the western section of the present Old Town of Vilnius, which is vividly reflected by archaeological findings (household ceramics) and spread of the cultural layer. Based on the research data it is clear that during the rule of Great Duke Algirdas people’s settlement in the western part of the present Old Town of Vilnius had been of spontaneous character and was mostly determined by economic reasons (at the main routes) and advantageous natural environment (relief of the territory, convenience for everyday life, closeness of water resources). It is hard to define a confessional dependence of the people at that stage of settlement. Our guess is that in the 3rd quarter of the 14th century Catholics might have started settling in the western part of the present Old Town of Vilnius, however development of a planned suburb (“German town”) is not observed yet. Poor intensity of activity and a character of the cultural layer show that in the 3rd quarter of the 14th century economic potential had not been strong enough to assimilate vast territories, however convenience of the site had received due evaluation.

New changes become evident in the 8th decade of the 14th century during the rule of Great Duke Jogaila. Shifts in political, social and economic life under the rule of Great Duke Jogaila enabled founding of Smėlynė, i.e. a settlement of a large territory at one go. The Duke’s policy resulted in emergence of “German town” when a definite territory had been allotted to German tradesmen and craftsmen (primarily, to the Livonians) and a permission was given to build a church there. According to archaeological findings settlement of 6 ha territory had been fast and intensive, which points to growth of economic potential and strengthening of townsman’s position. At this stage there are obvious signs of a catholic formation in the western section of the present Old Town of Vilnius. St.
Nicolas church confirms its confessional dependence. But at this stage the Catholics remain to be treated as strangers within a pagan settlement.

4. The year 1387 marks essential shifts in history of the Catholic Community in Vilnius. Following official christening Catholics, from a strange element within a pagan town, turn into representatives of the dominant religion. This change is followed by growth of the Catholic section of Vilnius reflected by people’s intensive activity. Archaeological material and spread of the cultural layer point to increase of density outright after christening. Numerous finding places on new territories and growth of population density are observed in earlier assimilated quarters. Development of the territory around St. Nicolas church, the Assumption church and the Franciscan monastery is especially striking. Another striking place of findings is situated around St. John church built on the occasion of christening. While the first settlement centre is primarily linked with activity of arrivals from Livonia and Poland, the second one is related to Lithuanian neophytes. Although in the town plan there remain differences between separate parishes or between convention and parish churches, the communal catholic confession unites the entire territory of the settlement.

Intensive activity continues throughout the 15th century. All available data enables to trace development of the town towards the town boundaries that in the 1st quarter of the 16th century was surrounded by defence wall of Vilnius.

5. Changes of the Catholic Community’s position in Vilnius are reflected in vicissitude of locality and are dependent on the town development. In the 1st half of the 14th century the Catholics settled at the south-western foot of Gediminas Hill as part of the lower ward community. Political, economic and social shifts that took place in the 2nd half of the 14th century resulted in emergence of “German town” in Smėlynė. Throughout the 15th century the territory inhabited by Catholics turned from outskirts into a separate part of the town. The 1st quarter of the 16th century marks a new stage of the town development. Together with intensive settlement of the western part of Old Town, separate sections of the town (Catholic, Orthodox, former pagan) come closer to each other. The Jewish section (later Ghetto) joins the general plan of the town as well.
The period is notable for growth of population, economic potential (reflected by spread of ceramics, intensiveness of cultural layers, and development of masonry construction), variety of confessions and strengthening of the townsmen’s position. From a spatial viewpoint, the said changes are confirmed by erection of the defence wall within the period 1503-1522.

By consolidation of archaeological material, written sources and the data of geologic and architectural research the present research succeeded in defining reasons and circumstances of the Catholic settlement in Vilnius within the period of the 14th to the beginning of the 16th century. The work specifies chronology of the Catholic Community development, traces specific traits and changes of the Catholic living space and aims at linking Catholics’ life in Vilnius with the town development, Christianisation and political processes. The research enabled to trace the Catholic Community’s contribution to modernisation of the country and to highlight the scope and scale of Lithuanian Great Dukes’ policies.

In order to reveal interaction between separate sections of the town and trace trade relations with neighbouring countries, it would be wise to perform systematisation of the 14th-16th century household ceramics found in other territories of Vilnius (Civitas Rutenica, territories inhabited by pagans and Jews) and to include archaeological material of other countries (Livonia, in particular). Profound historic researches in this direction would enable to define the Catholics’ contribution to development of self-management, establishment of gilds and fraternities, administration policies, etc.

Translated by Birutė Jonaitienė
Vilniaus miesto katalikiškoji dalis XIV – XVI amžiaus pradžioje
Santrauka

Vilniaus miesto erdvinį formavimąsi, kuris yra susijęs su gilesniais procesais visuomenėje. Katalikų kūrimosi Vilniuje istorija nagrinėjama bendraeuropinių miesto kūrimosi ir katalikiškos christianizacijos procesų kontekste, išskiriant savitus, tik Vilniui būdingus bruožus.


Siekiant suprasti ir paaiškinti katalikiškos Vilniaus dalies istoriją, pirmiausiai analizuojamos priežastys, kodėl katalikai atsirado Vilniuje, bei aplinkybės, kuriomis jie kūrėsi. Didelis dėmesys skiriamas ankstyviausiai kataliku gyvenvietei, egzistavusiai pietvakarinije Gedimino kalno papėdėje. Šis tyrimas atskleidžia kataliku bendruomenės statuso pokyčius ir kartu šio tikėjimo žmonių apgyventos teritorijos kaitą (papilys – priemiesčius – miesto dalis). Darbo archeologinei detalėi nagrinėjami katalikiškos Vilniaus dalies bruožai, parametrai laiko bėgyje, nuo pirmosios misijos ir ankstyvųjų Smėlynės apgyvendinimo ženklių („Vokiečių miesto“) iki šiame mieste iškilių į šį bendrą miesto planą.


bažnyčia. Tačiau ir šiuo laikotarpiu katalikai pagoniškame Vilniuje išlieka kitatikiais.


Žmonių veiklos intensyvumas vakarinėje dabartinio Vilniaus senamiesčio dalyje išlieka per visą XV a. Turimi duomenys leidžia atsikratyti šiuo laikotarpiu vykusią plėtrą iki tų ribų, kur XVI a. I ketv. buvo pastatyta Vilniaus gynybinė siena.

paplitimas ir kultūrinių sluoksnių intensyvėjimas, mūrinės statybos plūmas), konfesijų įvairovė, miestečių luomo stiprėjimas. Erdvinį požiūriu šiuos pokyčius įtvirtina miesto gynybinės sienos statyba 1503–1522 m.


Siekiant atskleisti sąveiką tarp atskirų miesto dalių, atsekti prekybinius ryšius su kaimyniniais kraštais, ateityje būtų tikslina susisteminti buitinę keramiką iš kitų XIV–XVI a. apgyvendintų Vilniaus teritorijų („Civitas Rutenica“, pagonių, žydų), taip pat įtraukti kitų šalių (ypač Livonijos) archeologinę medžiagą. Gilesni šios krypties istorinių tyrimų leistų nustatyti katalikų tikėjimo atstovų indėlį į miesto savivaldos plitimą, brolijų ir cechų kūrimą, administracinių gyvenimą.
Topic related Scientific Publications
Mokslinės publikacijos disertacijos tema


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