

Between Greeks and Latins: Pilies Street in Medieval Vilnius

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Pilies Street is one of the oldest in the city of Vilnius, the capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The street's name is connected with its starting point, the territory of the castles of the grand dukes. In the early 15th century, Vilnius City Hall was erected at the south end of Pilies Street. Pilies Street is not only an inseparable part of the city's earliest spatial structure, but is also directly connected with the Christian communities of Vilnius, when it was still a pagan city. During the earliest period of the city's development Christian immigrants, both Orthodox and Catholic, gathered around Pilies Street. The paradox is that very little information is available about the emergence and formation of the central street of the city. The purpose of this paper is to examine more carefully the early history of what is perhaps the main street in Vilnius and the changes over the course of time. This becomes possible after combining archaeological material with the sparse information from written sources, and also after making use of data from the investigation of the historical natural environment.

Introduction

Pilies (Castle) Street (Figure 1, red line) is one of the oldest arteries in the city of Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. The street's name is connected with its starting point, the territory of the medieval castles of the grand duke of Lithuania (Figure 1: 1). From there the road led south towards other important duchy centres and beyond towards the lands of Poland and Ruthenia. In the early 15th century, Vilnius City Hall, which is still performing its functions to this day, was erected at the south end of Pilies Street (Figure 1: 2). Rotušės Square (or City Hall square) acted as the oldest known city marketplace.¹ In the 16th century two gates of the city's defensive wall: Medininkai or Aušra (Figure 1: 3) and Rūdininkai (Figure 1: 4), were built to the south of City Hall. From at least the 16th century, a suitable name for Pilies Street has been the Royal Road or *via regia*.² The envoys of various countries as well as processions used to enter and leave the city via this road. Pilies Street was the most opulent in the city as it was lined by palaces, high society homes, and merchants' guilds. In addition, it was precisely this street that

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1. For more, see Irma Kaplūnaitė and Rytis Jonaitis, "Numizmatiniai ir sfragistiniai radiniai iš Rotušės aikštės," *Numizmatika* 6 (2009): 79-88.

2. For ex. Antanas Rimvydas Čaplinskas, *Vilniaus gatvių istorija. Pilies gatvė. Antra knyga. Didžioji gatvė* (Vilnius: Charibdė, 2002), 9.

served as a boundary between the separate territories inhabited by the communities in the city of Vilnius.

The name for Pilies Street has changed more than once. Previously the entire segment from the castle territory in the north to the City Hall in the south bore this name. Other names were also used for the entire street or different parts of it.³ This street is currently divided into two separate streets: Pilies (north part) and Didžioji (south part). For the sake of clarity in this article the general name of Pilies Street is used. The entire street bore this name already in 1636.⁴ South of the City Hall building it splits into two branches, present-day Aušros Vartų and Rūdninkų Streets, which led in the Middle Ages to Medininkai and Rūdninkai, i.e., to two other important centres of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

Pilies Street is not only an inseparable part of the city's earliest spatial structure, but is also directly connected with the Christian communities of Vilnius when it was still a pagan city. A multi-religious nature is in general one of the features characteristic of the city of Vilnius. Although until the 1387 official Catholic baptism Lithuanians (at least the majority) were pagans, Christian immigrants, both Orthodox and Catholic, had settled in Vilnius from the last third of the 13th century.⁵ The coexistence of the different communities left traces in the history of Vilnius. During the earliest period of the city's development the communities gathered around Pilies Street. In this way the Orthodox Christian residents of Vilnius settled on its east side, creating a separate suburb, which was called the Civitas Ruthenica or Ruthenian City.⁶ On the west and southwest side of the street a Catholic suburb, the German City, formed.⁷ The local pagans settled in the north (closest to the royal castle) and south parts of the street. After the 1387 official Catholic baptism the former pagans moved to the west part of the street.

3. For ex. Pilies Didžioji Street (Vladas Drėma, *Dingęs Vilnius* (Vilnius: Vaga, 1991), 168-195), Didžioji, Plačioji, Turgaus, etc. (Čaplinskas, *Vilniaus gatvių istorija*, 81). Sometimes the street is divided into Upper and Lower Castle Street (cf. David Frick, *Kith, Kin and Neighbors. Communities and Confessions in Seventeenth-century Wilno* (London: Cornell University Press, 2013), 22-26).

4. Mindaugas Paknys, *Vilniaus miestas ir miestiečiai 1636 m.: namai, gyventojai, svečiai*, (Vilnius: Vilniaus dailės akademijos leidykla, 2006), 20-22.

5. For more about the settlement of Christians in pagan Vilnius, see Darius Baronas and Stephen C. Rowell, *The Conversion of Lithuania. From Pagan Barbarians to Late Medieval Christians* (Vilnius: The Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 2015); Rytis Jonaitis and Irma Kaplūnaitė, "Panašūs ar skirtingi? Dvi krikščioniškos bendruomenės pagoniškame Vilniuje", *Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis* XXXIII (2016): 73-95.

6. This name was mentioned for the first time in a 1383 context, in the chronicle by Wigand of Marburg (Vygandas Marburgietis, *Naujoji Prūsijos kronika* (Vilnius: Vaga, 1999), 185). The Civitas Ruthenica was investigated more broadly in a 2013 dissertation by Jonaitis (see Rytis Jonaitis, *Civitas Rutenica Vilniuje XIII – XV a* (Klaipėda University, 2013).

7. The Catholic part of the city of Vilnius was discussed more broadly in the doctoral dissertation by the present author (see Irma Kaplūnaitė, *Vilniaus miesto katalikiškoji dalis XIV – XVI amžiaus pradžioje* (Klaipėda University, 2015).

This division of the urban space lasted a long time, and memories of this division of communities into Greek and Latin rites were recorded in written sources even in the 17th century.⁸ In addition, traces of this former division have survived in the street toponyms even in the current plan of Vilnius, where Catholic and Orthodox places of worship can be seen, each on their own side of Pilies Street.

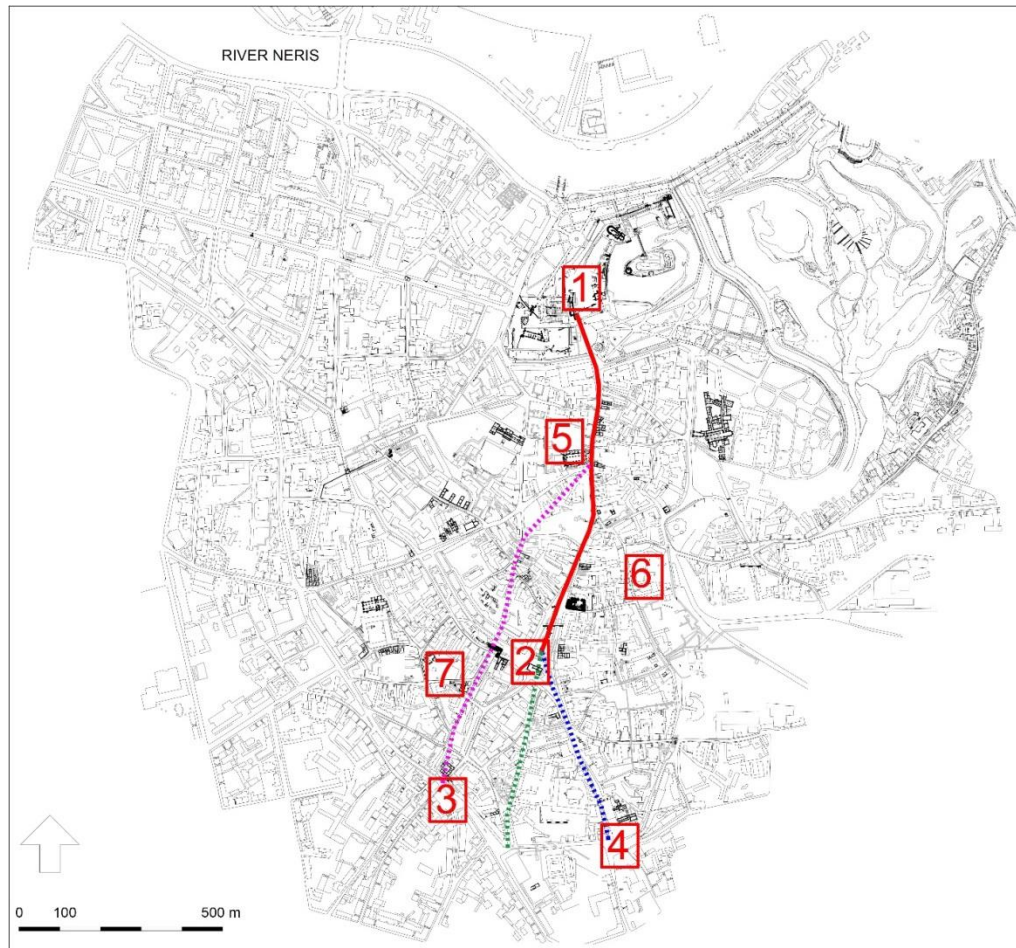


Figure 1. Plan of Vilnius

Note: Red line – investigated segment of Pilies Street; Violet dotted line – southwest branch of Pilies Street; Blue dotted line – present-day Aušros Vartų Street, the continuation of Pilies Street in the direction of Medininkai; Green dotted line – present-day Arklių Street, the suspected continuation of the early Pilies Street in the direction of Medininkai; 1 – Castle territory; 2 – Vilnius City Hall; 3 – Rūdininkai Gate; 4 – Medininkai (Aušra) Gate; 5 – Present-day Church of St John; 6 – Civitas Ruthenica; 7 – German City.

Source: Vaitkevičius, Gediminas, Valionienė, Oksana and Sarcevičius, Saulius. *Vilniaus archeologijos atlasas*. Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 2006; additions by I. Kaplūnaitė.

The paradox is that very little information is available about the emergence and formation of this central street of the city. The first authentic plan of the city

8. Frick, *Kith, Kin and Neighbors*, 22-26.

of Vilnius (in the so-called Braun Atlas) is known from only the 16th century. The lack of early, 13th–15th-century written sources is in general a very big problem in researching the city of Vilnius. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania remained pagan until 1387 and did not have its own script. The situation with the lack of available written sources⁹ greatly hinders any research into the everyday life of early Vilnius, as well as into its urban spaces, the street network, and the early Christian communities in the city. It is Lithuania's political background that is more often investigated thoroughly. In such a situation, other data can provide more information, especially the material from archaeological investigations. For example, Vilnius was first mentioned in a letter written by Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas (1316–1341) and dated 25 January 1322.¹⁰ But the archaeological data allow one to speak about the earlier creation of the city.¹¹ Diverse archaeological investigations have been intensively conducted in Vilnius since the mid-20th century and the city has been fairly well investigated archaeologically. The accumulated data allow one to investigate in greater detail the early stage of the development of Vilnius, the settling of spaces and their further expansion, and the development of the territories inhabited by the separate communities.

The purpose of this article is to examine more carefully the early history of what is perhaps the main street in Vilnius, Pilies Street, and the changes over the course of time. It discusses in what way this road was exceptional as well as when and how people settled along it. It seeks to examine how this street's settlement reflects in general the development of the city of Vilnius. This becomes possible after combining archaeological material with the sparse information from written sources, and also after making use of data from the investigation of the historical natural environment. The article first of all presents Pilies Street as part of the everyday life of the city's residents. It accents its role as the boundary between the city's different communities. It focuses on the early stage of its development, the 14th century, prior to the street becoming the 'Royal Road'. This period has been

9. For ex. some of the sources created in countries inimical to Lithuania (i.e., Christian) are frequently distinguished by their subjectivity or even propaganda where the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is portrayed as a barbarian land, for example, the description of the 1341 martyrdom of the Franciscans in Vilnius in the *Chronica XXIV Generalium Ordinis Fratrum Minorum* (written c.1374), published in Darius Baronas, *Vilniaus pranciškonų kankiniai ir jų kultas XIV – XX a* (Vilnius: Aidai, 2010), 238–241.

10. In four of his letters written in 1322–1323, Gediminas invited Catholic merchants and craftsmen to come to Vilnius, his capital, '*civitate nostra regia*' (our royal city) (see S. E. Rowell (Ed.), *Gedimino laiškai. Chartularium Lithuaniae res gestas magni ducis Gedeminne illustrans* (Vilnius: Vaga, 2003).

11. In 2006, the development of Vilnius was investigated in detail by Katalynas on the basis of primarily archaeological data; in 2010 by Vaitkevičius; and in 2019 by Valionienė (Kęstutis Katalynas, *Vilniaus plėtra XIV–XVII a.* (Vilnius: Diemedžio leidykla, 2006); Gediminas Vaitkevičius, *Vilniaus įkūrimas (Vilniaus sąsiuviniai t. I)* (Vilnius: Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus, 2010); Oksana Valionienė, *Viduramžių Vilniaus erdvės evoliucija (XIII a. vidurys – XVI a. pirmas ketvirtis)* (Vilnius: Lietuvos Istorijos Institutas, 2019).

covered the least in the written sources and has been investigated the least in historiography.

Sources and the Condition of the Research

The available sources, which allow one to speak about the early stage of the development of Pilies Street, are very few in number and provide little information. The earliest iconographic source,¹² which presents an image of Vilnius, is the 1581 *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* by Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg.¹³ Although it contains numerous inaccuracies, is missing some of the streets, and portrays some of the objects loosely,¹⁴ a wide thoroughfare, Pilies Street, is clearly distinguishable in the plan, but it has been substantially shortened. Nevertheless the main landmarks are very recognisable, the street runs from the castle territory to the Rotušės Square, and in the south part, as it should, leads to the Medininkai Gate. The plan reflects the situation in the 16th century when the city had already been surrounded by a defensive wall (built in 1503–1522).

Another source is a panoramic image of the city of Vilnius made by Tomas Makovskis c. 1600.¹⁵ From it, it is possible to create an impression about the city's development that existed at that time and to notice the houses and main landmarks that stood on Pilies Street. Pilies Street is also marked in the 1672 description made by the metropolitan of Kiev.¹⁶ This document is especially significant in researching the separate parts of the city of Vilnius, Catholic and Orthodox. The locations of the Orthodox churches that existed in 17th-century Vilnius are fairly accurately marked on the plan. The boundary position of Pilies Street, i.e. the concentration of Orthodox churches exclusively to the east of it, is very well reflected in this source. Another source, which needs to be addressed, is the so-called Fürstenhoff plan made in 1737.¹⁷ This plan is distinguished by especially high accuracy and detail, the explication names 115 of the city's most

12. The newest and most complete digest of the plans of the city of Vilnius was compiled in 2016 (I. B. Tamošiūnienė, R. Vitkauskienė, and A. Žilevičiūtė (Eds.), *Vilniaus miesto planai* (Vilnius: Lietuvos Nacionalinis Muziejus, 2016). Digital versions of old plans are available on websites, for ex. The city of Vilnius in topographic maps and plans, http://www.maps4u.lt/lt/viewpage.php?page_id=59. [Accessed 18 February 2020.]

13. Georg Bruyen and Frans van Hoogenbergh, *Plan of the City of Vilnius. Orbium praecipuarum totius mundi. Liber tertius. Colonia Agripina*, 1. 59, 1581.

14. The plan was investigated in detail by Drėma already in 1991 (Drėma, *Dingęs Vilnius*, 28–33).

15. Tomasz Makowski, *Vilniaus miesto panorama* (Ofortas, 1600).

16. *Инвентарь и реестры Митрополитальной юрисдикции в Вильне* (Saint Petersburg Institute of History Archive, Fund. 52, File No. 206, 1672).

17. Johann Georg Maximilian Fürstenhoff, *Plan von der Stadt Wilda oder Willna in Littauen* (1737).

famous architectural landmarks of that time.¹⁸ But it needs to be noted that all of the above plans date to the Modern Era and reflect the situation of that time.

A similar chronological problem exists with the written sources. The archival data usually goes back to a period no earlier than the 17th century and many of them only to the end of that century or the 18th century.¹⁹ Very few sources reflect the 16th century, not to mention an earlier period, only some privileges and house and/or plot purchase documents being known from that time.²⁰ This situation in large part occurred due to historical circumstances; in 1655–1661 Vilnius was devastated by a Muscovite army and a large part of the sources were destroyed during a fire.²¹

A 1636 Vilnius census, which was made in receiving guests of the city, needs to be mentioned as an exceptional document. It thoroughly describes the arrangement of the contemporary houses in the city, the condition of the buildings, and their owners.²² Pilies Street receives a great deal of attention with detailed descriptions of the houses that stood on it and their ownership. As is seen from the description, Pilies Street was an exceptional part of the city in the 17th century, a place where representatives of the elite, important political figures, priests, and merchants lived and pharmacies, shops, inns, and bookbinders as well as various craftsmen, barbers, many stables, etc. could be found.²³ As Paknys, an investigator, has noted, obtaining a large plot on Pilies Street was difficult and erecting a masonry house there already a sign of great ambition.²⁴ In modern terms, it is possible to call Pilies Street a prestigious city street.

In historiography, both in 19th-century²⁵ and in the latest works as well as in popular travel guides,²⁶ Pilies Street is described as one of the oldest and most important of the city's streets. But there is a complex situation with the written sources, which usually focus on the street's late history beginning in the 18th

18. For greater detail, see Drėma, *Dingęs Vilnius*, 40.

19. Some magistrate acts and information, which have survived from the 17th century, are also included in the Lithuanian Metrica (the document archive of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) (cf. Paknys, *Vilniaus miestas ir miestiečiai*, 14).

20. Čaplinskas investigated the earliest references to individual houses on Pilies Street (Antanas Rimvydas Čaplinskas, *Vilniaus gatvių istorija. Pilies gatvė* (Vilnius: Charibdė, 2005).

21. For more, see, for ex. Elmantas Meilus, "Rusų okupacinė valdžia Vilniuje 1655–1661 m.," in *Lietuva ir jos kaimynai: nuo normanų iki Napoleono: Prof. Broniaus Dundulio atminimui* (ed.) I. Valikonytė, 278–295 (2001).

22. Mindaugas Paknys presented this source in detail in a separate publication (Paknys, *Vilniaus miestas ir miestiečiai*).

23. For a description of each house, see Paknys, *Vilniaus miestas ir miestiečiai*, 85–114.

24. Ibid, 21.

25. for ex. Adomas Honoris Kirkoras, *Pasivaikščiojimai po Vilnių ir jo apylinkes* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1991).

26. For ex., V. Kandrotas (Ed.), *Įdomiausios kelionės po Lietuvą. Kelionių žinynas* (Vilnius: Terra Publica, 2017), 15.

century, the early period being described using fairly cliché phrases that call the street one of the earliest in Vilnius and one of the most opulent.

The late 19th – early 21st century saw the appearance of several works, which presented and investigated Vilnius houses on the basis of archival and iconographic sources. The benchmark among them was a book written by Vladas Drėma in 1991 *Dingęs Vilnius*,²⁷ which discusses in detail the houses that stood on Pilies Street. One work from the series *Vilniaus gatvių istorija* by Antanas Rimvydas Čaplinskas is devoted exclusively to Pilies Street²⁸ and presents Pilies Street during the 18th–20th centuries. David Frick's monograph presents data about the 17th-century history of Pilies Street in English.²⁹

In such a situation where researchers are working with late written sources, it is understandable that one needs to look for more information elsewhere. The inclusion of archaeological material in research can especially give things a push. Several works that investigate the history of Vilnius on the basis of archaeological data have so far been written. The first of these is the monograph by Kęstutis Katalynas, which presents the development of Vilnius during different chronological periods.³⁰ Then there is the book by Gediminas Vaitkevičius that is devoted to the emergence of the city of Vilnius.³¹ It is possible to also mention several others based mostly on archaeological material. First is a doctoral dissertation written by Linas Girlevičius about the defensive installations of Vilnius during the 14th–18th centuries.³² Another work, a dissertation by Rytis Jonaitis, investigates the Orthodox Christian suburb of Vilnius.³³ The dissertation by the author of this article is devoted to the part of the city settled by Catholics.³⁴ Inevitably more or less attention is devoted to Pilies Street in these. The last two, the dissertations by Jonaitis and the present author, present two Christian immigrant communities in Vilnius and therefore inevitably also mention Pilies Street, all the more since in the Middle Ages it was the boundary separating/joining these communities. Nevertheless the main object of the research in the aforementioned books was not this street and therefore the information in them about Pilies Street is more secondary.

Another investigator who needs to be mentioned is Urban Researcher Oksana Valionienė, whose dissertation³⁵ and latest 2019 monograph³⁶ investigate

27. Drėma, *Dingęs Vilnius*.

28. Čaplinskas, *Vilniaus gatvių istorija*.

29. Frick, *Kith, Kin and Neighbors*, 22–26.

30. Katalynas, *Vilniaus plėtra*.

31. Vaitkevičius, *Vilniaus ikūrimas*.

32. Linas Girlevičius, *Gynybiniai įrenginiai XIV–XVIII a. Vilniuje* (Vilnius, 2008).

33. Jonaitis, *Civitas Rutenica Vilniuje*.

34. Kaplūnaitė, *Vilniaus miesto*.

35. Oksana Valionienė, *Vilniaus erdvinė raidos struktūra viduramžiais* (Klaipėda University, 2015).

36. Valionienė, *Viduramžių Vilniaus erdvės*.

the spatial structure of Vilnius. Although the author accents the importance of an east-west road³⁷ somewhat more than that of Pilies Street in early Vilnius history, she also presents significant insights about the north-south road. The investigation conducted by Valionienė at the start of Pilies Street (near the royal castle) was important.³⁸ On the basis of the data from numerous archaeological excavations conducted in the territory of the Lower Castle in Vilnius and the dendrochronological analysis of the wood discovered there, Valionienė showed that the moment of Pilies Street's 'birth' is the 1320s, roughly 1326–1327.³⁹ But only the street's north segment was so dated, meanwhile the south segment of Pilies Street, according to the author, formed somewhat later, around the mid-14th century.⁴⁰ As will be shown below, the archaeological data does not conflict with such a statement.

In addition to the historical sources and archaeological material, the analysis of the natural environment is also very important for the investigation of Vilnius Streets. Historiography contains few works on this topic, but several works do devote space to the relief and geology of the old city. One of the significant investigations is the 2012–2013 project by the Lithuanian Institute of History and the Lithuanian Institute of Geology 'Transformation of natural conditions in Lithuanian cities, 1st stage, on the example of 14th–18th century Vilnius', the results of which have been discussed in two articles.⁴¹ As is seen below, they also devote space to the environment of Pilies Street.

Several works important to the present investigation have been mentioned. But the street's boundaries, its more precise development, and possible reasons for these changes have yet to be established. The early history of the people who settled around Pilies Street remains especially problematic, the influence of the city residents, as the living heart of the city, on the street's formation processes has not been investigated. But an analysis of the existing research has shown that the inclusion of archaeological material can be especially promising in this situation. These data allow one to examine the street and its history from a somewhat different perspective.

37. Ibid, 96-97. The hypotheses about importance of the east-west road were first posed by investigators in the first half of the 20th century (Mieczysław Limanowski, "Najstarsze Wilno," *Wilno i ziemia Wilenska t. 1* (1930): 127-143; Marian Morelowski, *Vilnius prieš 1655 metus. Rekonstrukcinio plano 318 numerių paaiškinimas* (Vilnius, 1940–1942).

38. Valionienė, *Vilniaus erdvinė raidos*, 141-145; Valionienė, *Viduramžių Vilniaus erdvės*, 135–138.

39. Valionienė, *Viduramžių Vilniaus erdvės*, 138

40. Ibid, 282-283, il. 33.

41. Regina Morkūnaitė, Aldona Baubiniienė, Gediminas Vaitkevičius and Daumantas Bauža, "Geografinė-istorinė gamtinių sąlygų interpretacija Vilniaus miesto kūrimosi ir plėtros eigai atkurti," *Geologijos akiračiai*, no. 3 (2015): 15-22; Aldona Baubiniienė, Regina Morkūnaitė, Daumantas Bauža, Gediminas Vaitkevičius and Rimantas Petrošius, "Aspects and methods in reconstructing the medieval terrain and deposits in Vilnius," *Quaternary International* 386 (2015): 83-88.

The Archaeological Investigation of Pilies Street

The archaeological investigation of Vilnius began in the mid-20th century. Various modern investigations have been conducted in nearly all of the Vilnius Old Town streets, especially in the territory of the former castles.⁴² But the extent of these investigations varies from field surveys and monitoring to excavations. Joining all of these objects into one whole, however, has yielded a dense network of investigated areas. In speaking specifically about Pilies Street, the history of the city's development has hindered the archaeological investigations there. The street is considered prestigious and various construction and reconstruction work occurs there routinely. In addition, the majority of the buildings have basements, which were built by destroying the earlier cultural layers. Nevertheless several objects excavated on Pilies Street or beside it have yielded significant information. An analysis of the incidence of the earliest cultural layer and archaeological material (especially household pottery)⁴³ has provided more information for the recreation of the 14th-century development of Pilies Street. On the basis of systemised research data, it is possible to distinguish several contemporary find spot concentrations. Let us now discuss them, beginning with the northernmost part of the street and its beginnings and then moving south.

The start of Pilies Street is the territory of the castles of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania (Figure 1: 1).⁴⁴ The early city consisted of several parts: the residential Castle on Gediminas Hill (or the Upper Castle), the so-called Crooked City (*Curvum Castrum*) opposite Gediminas Hill,⁴⁵ and the hill's foot, inhabited since the late 13th century, with the Royal Palace (or the Lower Castle) at the southwest foot.⁴⁶ Several fragments of wooden paving running in the same direction as later

42. The archaeological investigations conducted prior to 2006 in Vilnius were systemised by Katalynas (*Katalynas, Vilniaus plėtra*). The archaeological situation of the east part of Vilnius was discussed by Jonaitis (*Jonaitis, Civitas Rutenica Vilniuje*). The archaeological investigation of the territory of the German City and the incidence of the household pottery have been investigated in detail in the dissertation by the present author (*Kaplūnaitė, Vilniaus miesto katalikiškoji dalis*). A summary of the latest archaeological research (up to 2019) is presented in the monograph by Investigator Valionienė (*Valionienė, Viduramžių Vilniaus erdvės*).

43. This article uses information from archaeological investigation reports. Some of the household pottery was dated anew by the present author and Archaeologist Dr Vaitkevičius (For complete data and the dating of each sherd, see *Kaplūnaitė, Vilniaus miesto katalikiškoji dalis*, 147-180, annex No. 13).

44. Archaeological excavations have been conducted in the castle territory from 1987 to the present day. This is a priority archaeological investigation site in the city.

45. It was burnt on 16 September 1390 (Gediminas Vaitkevičius and Milda Lidija Kiškienė, "Kreivasis miestas," in *Miestų Praeitis 2* (ed.) G. Vaitkevičius).

46. For greater detail about the Vilnius find spots of layers and structures from the 1290s, see Vaitkevičius, *Vilniaus įkūrimas*, 49-62; Saulius Sarcevičius, Oksana Valionienė

Pilies Street, the earliest of which dates to the 1320s, were discovered during the archaeological investigation in the southwest area of the territory of the Lower Castle.⁴⁷ On the basis of these data and an analysis of the spatial structure, Valionienė agrees with the hypothesis, previously proposed in historiography, that Pilies Street is not necessarily the oldest street to connect the castle with the city and that its formation should be dated to roughly 1326–1327.⁴⁸ This hypothesis is based on archaeological material and corresponds to the historical context. In addition, a dendrochronological analysis confirms that such a date for the appearance of the direction of future Pilies Street also corresponds with a new stage in the development of the royal castle, i.e. various reconstructions.⁴⁹

Moving south from the castle territory, another concentration of 14th-century finds important for the investigation is around the 1387 Catholic Church of St John (Figure 1: 5). Although the earliest human activity in this area should be associated with the period after the official Catholic baptism of Lithuania, the relatively numerous ceramic finds allow the beginning of this area's settlement to be moved back to the third quarter of the 14th century. The assumption has been proposed that one of the early city's marketplaces could have existed at this location.⁵⁰ Finds and a cultural layer dating to this period were also discovered nearby, to the east and west of the later church.⁵¹

and Virginijus Pugačiauskas, *Kreivoji pilis: tarpdisciplininių tyrimų atvejis* (Vilnius: Lietuvos Istorijos Institutas, 2016); Valionienė, *Viduramžių Vilniaus erdvės*, 73-74, 147-155.

47. Rutilė Pukienė, "Mediniai XIV a. kelio grindiniai Vilniaus žemutinėje pilyje. Dendrochronologinė analizė ir datavimas," *Vilniaus žemutinė pilis XIV a. – XIX a. pradžioje. 2005 – 2006 m. tyrimai* (2007): 190-191; Valionienė, *Viduramžių Vilniaus erdvės*, 135.

48. Valionienė, *Viduramžių Vilniaus erdvės*, 135-138.

49. Ibid, 138.

50. Morelowski, *Vilnius prieš 1655 metus*.

51. For ex. Universiteto St. 1-2 (Stasys Patkauskas, 1978 m. *archeologinių tyrimų Vilniuje, Universiteto g. Nr. 1/2 ataskaita* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, File No. 647, 1979), on the grounds of present-day Vilnius University (Liudvikas Dzikas, *VVU kiemuose vykdytų mechanizuotų žemės kasimo darbų archeologinės priežiūros ir fiksacijos ataskaita* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, File No. 649, 1979); Albertas Lisanka, 1976 – 1977 m. *Vilniaus m. Universiteto kiemuose vykdytų inžinerinių-geologinių žemės darbų archeologinės priežiūros ir fiksacijos ataskaita* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, File No. 722, 1979). Pottery dated to the first quarter and mid – third quarter of the 14th century was discovered at Pilies St. 24 to the east of the church (Algis Kuzmickas, *Archeologiniai tyrimai Vilniuje, Pilies g. 24. Ataskaita. T. 1* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, File No. 2404, 1995), sherds dated to the second quarter of the 14th century on the west side of Pilies Street at present-day Šv. Ignoto St. 9 (Daiva Luchtanienė, *Vilniaus senajo miesto vietos (1610 K1), Šv. Ignoto g. 9 Vilniaus mieste archeologinių tyrinėjimų 2002 metais ataskaita* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, File No. 3972, 2003), annex No. 13).



Figure 2. *Pilies Street Segment and the Church of St John*

Source: I. Kaplūnaitė.

On the basis of the archaeological data, it is possible to propose the assumption that the Pilies Street segment from the castle territory to the future Church of St John (Figure 2) began to form already in the first half of the 14th century, although more intense activity is observable already in the second half of the century. It is thought that such early settlement of an area beside a future church could be explained as a question of convenience. The area is near the royal property (350–370 m to the south of the south-southwest foot of Gediminas Hill), its location in a level field is near sources of water (about 200 m to the north and northwest), and it had convenient communication with the Crooked City during the period under discussion. Several other foci of human activity somewhat further from Pilies Street can also be associated with precisely this convenient communication in this direction.⁵² On the basis of the available data it is seen that an intersection of two

52. For ex. at Dominikonų St. 16, Šiltadaržio St. 6, in the vicinity of Šv. Mykolo Street (Evaldas Vailionis, *Vilniaus senamiesčio (AR 5 a, c), Šv. Mykolo g. 10 2000 m. archeologinių žvalgomųjų tyrimų ataskaita* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, File No. 3805, 2002); Jonas Stankus, *Archeologinių tyrinėjimų Vilniaus senojo miesto vietos su priemiesčiais (A1610K2), Šv. Mykolo g. Nr. 12, buto Nr. 1 būsimame rūsyje, 2002 m. ataskaita* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, File No. 3942, 2003), and on the grounds of the present-day Vilnius Academy of Arts (Gediminas Vaitkevičius, *Valstybinis Dailės institutas Vilniuje, Maironio g. 6. Vykdytų archeologinių tyrimų (1986–1987 m.) ataskaita* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, File No. 1585, 1988).

roads leading in two main directions (north-south and east-west) could have existed at the future site of the Church of St John already in the first half of the 14th century. In this way, this early segment of Pilies Street joined the castle territory with one of the nuclei of the new city.

The earliest segment of Pilies Street has been fairly precisely identified and dated, but the street's further development poses more questions. The present-day street's path runs due south to City Hall. But it has not been established whether such a situation already existed in the first half – mid-14th century. The hypothesis has been proposed that the street at that time probably did not exist at the present location but led more to the southeast.⁵³ This direction of the early Pilies Street should be associated with special features of the city's development. At this point it is necessary to discuss an object, which could have influenced the street's direction, i.e., the aforementioned part of Vilnius settled by Orthodox Christians, the Civitas Ruthenica. This entity was on the east side of present-day Pilies Street (Figure 1: 6). Aside from the castle territory, this was perhaps the earliest settled part of present-day Vilnius Old Town.⁵⁴ The earliest object in the territory of the Civitas Ruthenica is the cemetery on Bokšto Street, which dates to the last third of the 13th – early 15th centuries.⁵⁵ The growth of the Orthodox Christian suburb can be observed throughout the 14th century and Pilies Street should definitely be considered its long-time western boundary.⁵⁶ It needs to be noted that this suburb could have also been a factor, a magnet pulling Pilies Street more to the southeast in the first half of the 14th century.

In the northwest part of the Civitas Ruthenica, right beside Pilies Street, is one of the earliest Orthodox churches, the Church of St Paraskevi (Figure 3). It is thought that it could have been built no later than 1346.⁵⁷ The location of this church is important in that a Church of St Paraskevi is often built near the marketplace in Kievan Rus' cities. It is possible to propose the assumption that in the same way, one of the earliest marketplaces could have stood near precisely this church in Vilnius. The importance of the site in the spatial structure of the

53. cf Valionienė, *Viduramžių Vilniaus erdvės*, 280–281.

54. For more about the Civitas Ruthenica, see Jonaitis, *Civitas Ruthenica Vilniuje*. For an article in English, see Rytis Jonaitis, "Civitas Ruthenica in Early Vilnius in the 14th and 15th Centuries. The Socio-cultural Aspect," *Archaeologia Baltica* 18 (2012): 256-269; Rytis Jonaitis and Irma Kaplūnaitė, "The Excavation at Bokšto St. 6, Vilnius," *Archaeological Investigations in Independent Lithuania. 1990 – 2010* (2012): 156-159.

55. The dating is based on archaeological material as well as 14C testing conducted on 26 bone collagen samples (for the results, see Rytis Jonaitis and Irma Kaplūnaitė, *Senkapis Vilniuje, Bokšto gatvėje. XIII – XV a. laidosenos Lietuvoje bruožai* (Vilnius: Lietuvos Istorijos Institutas, 2020), 257-275). This object was presented in a book by Jonaitis and Kaplūnaitė (ibid).

56. Jonaitis, *Civitas Ruthenica Vilniuje*, 31.

57. Юлиан Фомич Крачковский, "Православные святыни города Вильны," *Труды девятого археологического съезда въ Вильне 1893* (1897): 225.

new city is shown by the fact that roads from two directions, Minsk and Polotsk (present-day Belarus), intersect there.⁵⁸ In this way it is possible to date this segment of Pilies Street between the Catholic Church of St John and the Orthodox Church of St Paraskevi to the first half or mid-14th century.



Figure 3. *The Church of St Paraskevi and the Southeast Part of Vilnius Old Town*
Source: I. Kaplūnaitė.

Other traces of human activity along Pilies Street date to the third quarter of the 14th century. The archaeological layer and artefact find spots in the territory of Old Town show that at that time Pilies Street could have had another branch in the southwest (Figure 1, violet dotted line). After evaluating the archaeological material it is seen that several foci of human activity are arranged in this direction, almost in one stretch.⁵⁹ The find spots are scattered from the Church of

58. Valionienė, *Viduramžių Vilniaus erdvės*, 150.

59. A concentration of third quarter of the 14th-century pottery incidence points were observed in the vicinity of present-day Stiklių Street (Tauras Poška, *Archeologijos tyrinėjimai Vilniuje, Stiklių g. 7, 7a 2001 m. Ataskaita* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, File No. 3716, 2001); Danutė Bešėnienė, *Vilnius, teritorijos tarp Stiklių gatvės ir Stiklių skg. žvalgomųjų archeologinių tyrimų ir žemės kasimo darbų priežiūros bei fiksacijos ataskaita* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, File No. 472, 1978); Povilas Tebelškis, *Žemės kasimo darbų, vykdytų pastato Stiklių gt. Nr. 7 remonto-restauracijos metu archeologinės priežiūros ir fiksacijos ataskaita* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, File No. 642, 1979). These points were further supplemented by the find spots laid out in the same line at present-day Mėsinių St.

St John right to the Rūdininkai Gate of the 16th-century defensive wall (between Figure 1: 5 and Figure 1: 3). A clear concentration of third quarter of the 14th-century pottery and the remains of a wooden fence were also found beside the site.⁶⁰ The finds are not numerous and it is possible to only speak of non-intense human activity. Nevertheless it is clear that the ceramic incidence points echo the direction of the road from the castle territory towards Rūdninkai. Thus, the emergence of the southwest branch of Pilies Street was connected precisely with movement in this direction. The city at that time, in the mid-14th century, was not yet so economically capable that large areas could be settled at once and therefore only several points of human activity (isolated farmsteads) along a significant direction can be distinguished. The main road in medieval cities was very important for the directions of their growth and expansion, especially in continental cities where trade roads were more important than rivers.⁶¹ For example, it was noticed in 13th-century England that a city was laid out no longer around the ruler's castle or the monastery gate, but at a communications hub; thus better commercial possibilities became more important for a city than the ruler's aegis.⁶² Such a situation can be seen in Vilnius in the third quarter of the 14th century where the importance of a road was appreciated and people began to settle beside it. This is natural because the Rūdninkai road was very important domestic direction.

One more object, which influenced the spatial development of Vilnius and at the same time the development of Pilies Street, needs to be discussed at this point, namely the Catholic German City/suburb (Figure 1:7), which began to form in the 1370s.⁶³ In the early development stage this part of the city did not seem very connected with Pilies Street, i.e., it was distant from it. As is asserted in historiography, this suburb location, which is not beside a main road, seems at first glance to be fairly strange.⁶⁴ But after evaluating that one branch of Pilies

8/11 (Audrius Astrauskas, *Vilnius, Mėsinių g. buv. namo Nr. 11/8 vietoje vykdytų žemės kasimo darbų archeologinės priežiūros ir archeologinių tyrimų ataskaita. Pirmas etapas* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, File No. 1587, 1988), in the district of Ašmenos, Mėsinių, and Dysnos Streets (Valdas Vainilaitis, 2002 m. *archeologijos tyrimai tarp Ašmenos, Mėsinių, Dysnos gatvių Vilniuje* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, File No. 3961, 2003), and in the east part of Vokiečių Street (Stasys Patkauskas, *Vilnius, Muziejaus g. 6, 8, 10. Archeologinių tyrimų ataskaita* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, File No. 1446, 1986).

60. Saulius Sarcevičius, 1999 m. *Vilniuje, Pylimo-Rūdninkų gt. kampe, šalia miesto gynybinės sienos vykdytų archeologijos tyrimų ataskaita* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, File No. 3346, 1999).

61. John Schofield and Alan Vince, *Medieval Towns. The Archaeology of British Towns in Their European Setting* (London: Equinox, 2003), 37.

62. Ibid.

63. Kaplūnaitė, *Vilniaus miesto katalikiškoji dalis*, 60-66.

64. Morkūnaitė, Baubinienė, Vaitkevičius, Bauža, "Geografinė-istorinė gamtinių sąlygų interpretacija", 20.

Street could have at that time run more southwest, it becomes clear that the early German City was founded beside precisely this road. It needs to be noted that an analysis of the natural environment can also provide an explanation for the position of the street, i.e., it is possible connect the road's formation at precisely this location with favourable natural conditions. In the south part, the road runs not over the hill but around it where there is more level relief, i.e., more southwest (roughly present-day Mėsinių Street, Figure 1, violet dotted line). In addition, this road runs along a gravel corridor.⁶⁵ The importance of the territory is shown by the fact that in the 16th century one of the city's gates was built there.

The situation changed even more in the period after 1387. After the Catholic baptism the growth of the German City accelerated greatly, both Catholic immigrants and former pagan Lithuanians settling there. While the suburb grew more in the southwest part of the city up until then, in the late 14th – early 15th centuries it expanded east, to the very line of present-day Pilies Street, which became its eastern border. Thus, from the third quarter of the 14th century it is possible to talk about the creation of Orthodox and Catholic communities in the east and west parts of Vilnius, respectively. And from at least the 14th–15th centuries the communities approached one another and Pilies Street became the clear dividing line between them.

Now to examine the end of Pilies Street in the city, i.e. present-day City Hall on Rotušės Square (Figure 1: 2). The City Hall must have been built after Grand Duke Jogaila (1377–1392) of Lithuania granted the city of Vilnius and its residents privileges during the 1387 baptism. Because there are no data about the location of the first City Hall, it has been speculated that it was at the site of the present-day City Hall building. But in the sources the oldest Vilnius City Hall at this site is marked in only 1432.⁶⁶ An earlier, late 14th-century masonry wall was discovered in the southeast corner of the building.⁶⁷ The hypothesis has been proposed that in the late 14th century this was the site of a tower house,⁶⁸ which, in the 15th century, was reconstructed, expanded, and adapted to become the City Hall.⁶⁹ Such a tower house location is not accidental; usually these buildings acted as control points, had a defensive purpose, were frequently erected at the site of important intersections, and marked both the city's outer limits and important

65. As natural environment research has shown, the early main streets of Vilnius coincide with such gravel corridors, of which there are at least 5 in the territory of the Old Town (ibid).

66. Drėma, *Dingęs Vilnius*, 146.

67. Idalija Bėčienė, *Vilniaus rotušė, Didžioji g. 31 žvalgomieji architektūriniai tyrimai* (Vilnius: Vilnius Regional State Archives, Fund 2, File No. 719, 1995), 2-3.

68. A tower house (*Turmhaus*) is a building with tower proportions and a dual defensive/residential purpose that dominates the surrounding area.

69. Irma Kaplūnaitė and Fumito Tomoi, "Bokštiniai namai Vilniuje," in *Miestų Praeitis* 2 (ed.) G. Vaitkevičius (Vilnius, 2010).

internal points. In addition, in this case of Vilnius, precisely this location was the boundary between the areas settled by Orthodox and Catholic Christians.

Archaeological investigations have been conducted in Rotušės Square since 1976,⁷⁰ and excavations in 2005–2007.⁷¹ The analysis of the cultural layer stratigraphy confirmed that prior to second quarter of the 15th century no marketplace had existed there. The situation in the vicinity of the City Hall building changed only in the second quarter 15th century when a city marketplace began to form there (Figure 4). From the mid-15th century it grew to become the main city marketplace and at the same time a magnet, building density increasing around it. At the same time the marketplace reflects the effect of different religions on the plan of the city. The market square joins (separates) the spaces between the Catholic part of the city in the west and the Orthodox Christian part in the east. During the course of the entire 15th century, these two city districts came closer to one another, but did not merge and between them, as has already been mentioned, remained a very clear boundary, i.e., Pilies Street. In addition, the natural condition must have played a not insignificant role at this location. As the investigation of the natural environment showed, to the south of the later City Hall building the Catholic and Orthodox Christians were separated by a natural boundary, a steady stream of water flowed through the quarter until it was urbanised in the 16th century by channelling the surface water.⁷² It is possible to talk about the merging of these two districts only from the 16th century.

70. Irena Jučienė, *Žvalgomųjų archeologinių tyrimų už šiluminių tinklų trasos (Muziejaus g. – Bokšto g., einančios į Paupio – Rasų rajoną) atkarpa nuo Vilnelės iki A. Vienuolio mokyklos ir ties Dailės muziejumi, ataskaita* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, File No. 1058, 1976).

71. Arūnas Puškorius, *Vilniaus rotušės aikštėje ir jos prieigose 2005 m. vykdytų archeologijos tyrimų ataskaita (rankraštis)* (2005); Rytis Jonaitis, *Vilniuje, senajo miesto vietoje (A1610K1), Rotušės a. ir jos prieigų, 2006 m. vykdytų archeologijos tyrimų ataskaita* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, File No. 5143, 2006); Irma Kaplūnaitė, *Vilniuje, senajo miesto vietoje (A1610K1), Rotušės a. ir jos prieigose, 2007 m. vykdytų archeologijos tyrimų ataskaita* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, File No. 4933, 2007).

72. Morkūnaitė, Baubiniienė, Vaitkevičius, and Bauža, "Geografinė-istorinė gamtinių sąlygų interpretacija", 19.



Figure 4. *Archaeological Excavations at Rotušės Square, 2005*

Source: Rytis Jonaitis.

Although Pilies Street ends at City Hall, it is expedient to remember its continuations. One of them, the southwest (Rūdininkai) road was presented in examining the location of the German City. More questions arise concerning the street's continuation towards Medininkai (and beyond that, Minsk and Lida, i.e., present-day Belarus). Already in the early 20th century the assumption arose that the early southern continuation of Pilies and Didžioji Streets ran not along present-day Aušros Vartų Street (Figure 1: blue dotted line), but further south, along present-day Arklių Street (Figure 1, green dotted line), and corresponded with the boundary between the Orthodox and Catholic parts of the city.⁷³ The archaeological and geological data provide more clarity.

On the basis of the geological investigation data it was established that present-day Aušros Vartų Street (Figure 1:4) was formed only in the 16th century because springs and peaty areas had existed there up until then.⁷⁴ Thus, the old Medininkai road must have been located elsewhere. It is possible that it ran further south (Figure 1, green dotted line). The archaeological data has confirmed this road location. Several second half of the 14th-century artefact and cultural

73. Maria Lowmianska, *Wilno przed najazdem Moskiewskim 1655 roku* (Wilno: Magistrat m. Wilna, 1929).

74. Morkūnaitė, Baubiniienė, Vaitkevičius, and Bauža, "Geografinė-istorinė gamtinių sąlygų interpretacija", 20.

layer find spots were located along the suspected route.⁷⁵ During the 14th and 15th centuries, this area was convenient to settle: a leveller field, to the south and west of which lay swampy, watery areas, and to the east, i.e. towards present-day Aušros Vartų Street, higher ground and a forest.⁷⁶ Thus, a location more convenient for movement was selected. Meanwhile the formation of the Pilies Street southeast continuation (Figure 1, blue dotted line) should be associated now with only the 16th century. At that time, in building the city's defensive wall and gates, the water was managed at this site and the route extended and connected with City Hall and the already existing streets.⁷⁷

The systemised data show that the importance of Pilies Street was already appreciated in the 14th century. Its significance especially grew in the second half of the century when human settlement intensified in the territory of present-day Old Town, the Vilnius suburbs settled by members of two branches of Christianity forming and growing there. It was no accident that the end of Pilies Street was selected as the site of City Hall. The street's role grew even more in the first half of the 15th century when a central marketplace, the largest in the city, began operating there. Thus the street joined two centres: the royal castle and City Hall. The peak of the development of Pilies Street should be associated with the construction of the defensive wall (1503–1522), when the city's defensive gates were built on the street's two branches.

75. Material dating to the third quarter of the 14th century has been discovered in present-day Visų Šventųjų Street (Saulius Sarcevičius, 1999 m. *Vilniuje, Visų Šventųjų gt. Nr. 5–4 žvalgomųjų archeologinių tyrimų ataskaita* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, File No. 3364, 2000); Atas Žvirblys, *Vilniuje, Visų Šventųjų 5–1, 2010 m. archeologinių tyrimų ataskaita* (Vilnius: Lithuanian National Museum Archive, File No. 766, 2011), second half of the 14th-century material at present-day Arklių g. 5 (Vytautas Ušinskas, *Valstybinio Jaunimo Teatro priešscenis Vilniuje, Biržų g. Nr. 2 (Arklių g. Nr. 5). Inžinerinių-geologinių tyrimų archeologinės priežiūros ir fiksacijos ataskaita* (Vilnius: The Lithuanian Institute of History, Manuscript Section, 1978).

76. Morkūnaitė, Baubiniienė, Vaitkevičius, and Bauža, "Geografinė-istorinė gamtinių sąlygų interpretacija," 20.

77. Ibid.

Conclusions

One of the exceptional features of Vilnius is the convenience of its zoning where different communities were able to settle at the same time, but separate from one another. As the conducted investigation showed, the development of Pilies Street is closely connected with the emergence and development of these separate Vilnius zones. In other words, the earliest human settlement in the first half of the 14th century in the present-day territory of Vilnius Old Town is inseparable from Pilies Street, the north-south road. The analysis of the former natural conditions showed that the natural geological situation in the city had created a crucial influence for Pilies Street. The location of gravel corridors, small hills, bodies of water, springs, and forests in large part affected the street's location. In other words, considering the natural conditions, it was situated at the most convenient location that was the easiest to adapt to movement.

The birthplace of Pilies Street was the castle territory in the 1320s. The earliest segment, which formed in the first half of the 14th century, ran between the castle territory and the present-day Catholic Church of St John (founded in 1387). This territory should be associated with pagan elements in the new city of Vilnius. On the basis of an analysis of the archaeological material it is seen that from there the earliest continuation of Pilies Street formed in the direction of the Civitas Ruthenica, the Orthodox Christian suburb. Pilies Street became its western boundary. In the mid-14th century it is possible to talk about the part of the street at the Orthodox Church of St Paraskevi. The street's further development was a branch to the southwest, in the direction of another important centre of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Rūdininkai. The development towards precisely this city had to have determined the importance of this road in the internal system. The initial, although not yet intense, settlement of people along this road can be traced archaeologically from at least the second half of the 14th century. At that time, from the 1370s, a Catholic German City, another entity influencing the development of Pilies Street, formed in the southwest part of Pilies Street. In the course of time it expanded right up to present-day Pilies Street, which became its eastern boundary. In the late 14th century, the southern point of Pilies Street, a suspected tower house at the site of present-day City Hall, has also become clear. There was not only an intersection there, but also the boundary between the city's two Christian communities, the Orthodox and Catholic suburbs.

At the site of a tower house in the first half of the 15th century, the Vilnius City Hall was built and beside it a central city marketplace began to operate. The heyday of Pilies Street should be connected with precisely the formation of City Hall and the marketplace. These objects became the main magnets, another reason to live in this part of the city. In the 15th century, another Vilnius community, the Jews, began to settle beside the street. The peak of the development of Pilies Street was the construction of the city's defensive wall in the first quarter of the 16th century. At that time a large reorganisation in the urban system occurred and the

wet places were drained. All of that created conditions to straighten and extend Pilies Street and make it even more convenient and attractive for human activity. Since the 16th century, a steady increase in housing density can be seen around the street. In this way it became the city's dominant, representative street, which is well reflected in later written sources. Nevertheless, the conducted investigation shows that the road's significance was already appreciated earlier. The street's evolution was not a momentary event. It grew and became ever more significant over a long period of time from the first half of the 14th century. And one of the street's initial development stages is marked by the formation of two Christian suburbs on both sides of it. The history of Pilies Street is inseparable from the people and communities which existed beside it. The street formed as an everyday part of the life of the city's residents and the everyday needs inevitably contributed to the special features of its development. All of the circumstances came together so that Pilies Street would become the city's predominant communications artery.

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