

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA AS EVIDENCE OF CULTURAL INTERACTION BETWEEN THE TEUTONIC ORDER AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES: PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES

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### Abstract

The political and economic situation in the southeast Baltic region changed dramatically when two main powers, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Teutonic Order, emerged in the 13th century. These political structures tried to involve local communities in the social organisation of their newly established states. Archaeological material (pottery) is analysed in this article. It could help us understand the processes happening in what is now western Lithuania during the Medieval period. Local and Western pottery is assessed as evidence of contacts between the Crusaders and the local people. These contacts are interpreted as part of the cultural interaction process between the two different communities.

Key words: Medieval archaeology, cultural interaction, Teutonic Order, pottery, western Lithuania.

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### Introduction

There is a prevailing opinion in Lithuanian historiography that after the arrival of the Teutonic Order in west Lithuanian territories, most local people had to flee due to the constant fighting. This article aims to elaborate on this issue, in order to clarify or even change the description in the historiographic record. This will be done through a consideration of archaeological records, more specifically pottery finds, which provide a valuable insight into interaction between the Teutonic Order and the local communities during the Medieval period.

The article concentrates on the period from the 13th and the early 14th century. This was a time when significant events were taking place across western Lithuania, which shaped not only the geopolitical situation but also the social environment. These changes are seen to have been directly caused by the appearance of the Teutonic Order, which led to the transformation of the wider southeast and east Baltic Sea regions.

The area discussed in this study spans the western region of Lithuania, or the former border land between the Teutonic Order and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Settlements and towns such as Klaipėda, Palanga, Žardė, Veliuona and Medvėgalis are located within the region. A comparative study has been conducted using archaeological material recovered from these sites, with the objective of identifying different types of pottery which might have been traded between the settlements by members of the Order and the local community. The results of a comparative analysis have

shown that ‘German’ ceramic vessels are present in the local settlements, just as pottery from the local tradition is often encountered in Medieval cultural layers in Klaipėda. It should be noted that, in terms of the technique used for the production of pottery, local and Western European style ceramic vessels differ significantly, and, as such, represent distinct technical traditions. Thus, an analysis of the archaeological material retrieved from various sites, as well as its interpretation, is presented in this study as evidence for processes of interaction, adaptation, rejection or appropriation.

### Definition of wheel-turned and wheel-thrown pottery

As has been established above, this article focuses on pottery as the main artefact type for the study, because it is the most abundant find, but has received surprisingly little attention from researchers. Analyses of pottery finds in field reports and scholarly articles are usually limited to describing their type and overall appearance, based on a methodology established during the 1990s. The situation is changing for the better, however, with pottery becoming central in archaeological studies. The same tendency, as inspired by wider European studies, is becoming increasingly popular in Lithuania as well.

In this study, two types of pottery are central:

1. wheel-turned
2. wheel-thrown.

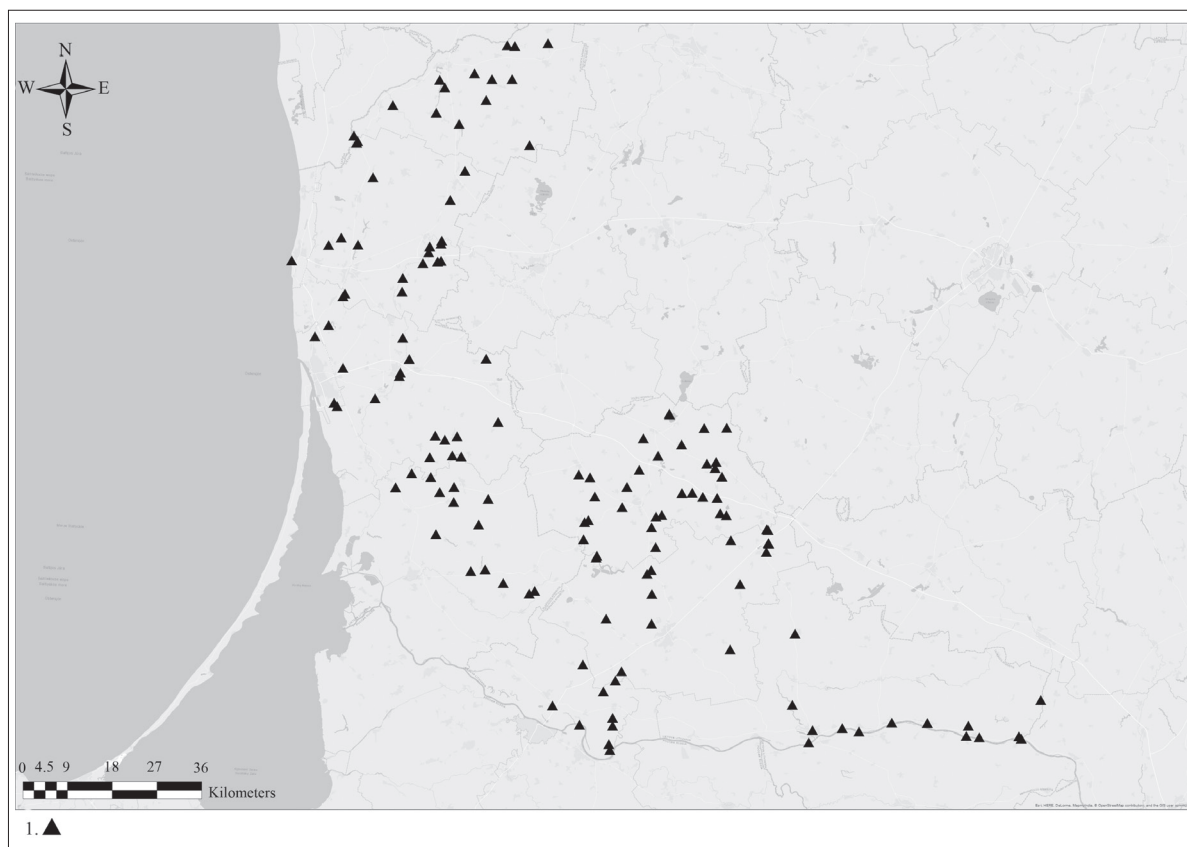


Fig. 1. All known hill-forts in western Lithuania (until 2005).

Definitions of them in Lithuanian historiography are often confused, because the terminology has not been clarified and settled. Therefore, the use of terminology has to be explained first. Wheel-turned pots are vessels which were shaped by hand, and then smoothed and finished on a potter's wheel. This definition was proposed by R. Vengalis (2008, pp. 50-51), and accepted by other scholars (Žulkus 2013, p. 104). Even so, recent publications still often contain incorrect descriptions, wherein wheel-turned pots are called wheel-thrown or early wheel-thrown pottery. Wheel-turned pottery appeared in this region at some time between the late tenth and the 11th century. Wheel-thrown pots, on the other hand, are vessels which were produced on a mechanical potter's wheel by centering a chunk of clay on the wheel, opening it, and drawing up the walls. The production process has been described as above or similar by a number of authors: G. Vaitkevičius (1999, p. 38; 2004, pp. 213-124), J. Poškienė (1996, pp. 21-22) and R. Vengalis (2008, pp. 50-51). Even though it is known that wheel-thrown pots were actually imported by Prussian lands during the Viking Age (Pilo, 2011), they differ visually, and are easy to discern from the wheel-thrown grey ware vessels that were mass-produced in German towns around 1200 (Lüdtke 2001; Drenkhahn 2015). The latter type is found in abun-

dance across Teutonic Order castle and settlement sites (Pluskowski, pp. 105-109). However, in the towns of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the production of this type of pottery started only at some time between the late 15th and the 16th century (Vaitkevičius 2004, pp. 213-214).

To sum up, it has been established that the two types of pottery under discussion differ completely in terms of the production method used. Even though the terminology appears to have been established in Lithuanian historiography, recent publications and archaeological reports still often employ incorrect descriptions, as is common in older accounts.

#### Archaeological data

For this study, all known hill-forts and settlements in the region under discussion were selected, with the intention of avoiding potential bias. In total, 138 sites were studied, by employing data published up to 2005 (Zabiela, Baubonis 2005) (Fig. 1). However, not all the sites have been archaeologically investigated: 66 out of 138 have not been excavated yet. Field reports and articles published in *Archeologiniai tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje* (Archaeological Investigations in Lithuania) present data on 107 sites. Archaeological material retrieved

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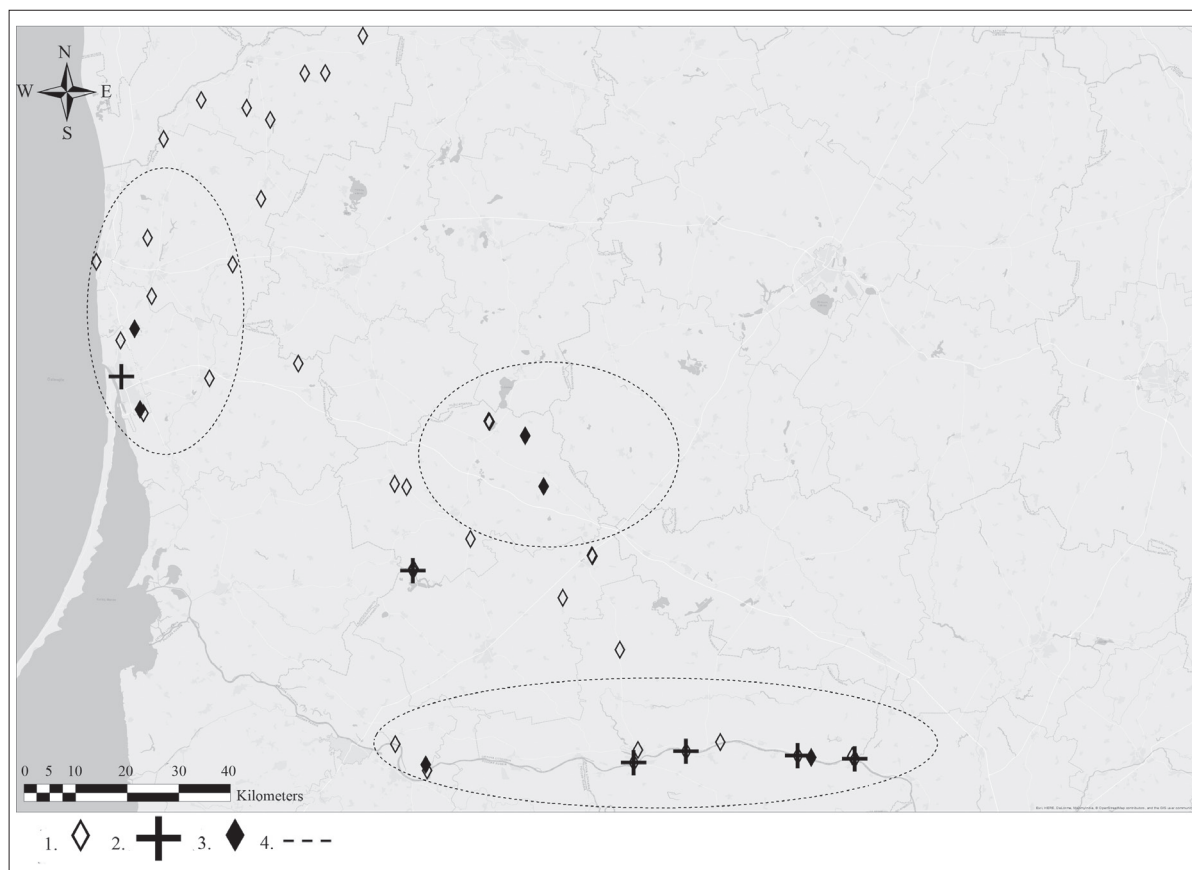


Fig. 2. Hill-forts and settlements mentioned in historical sources: 1 local settlements or hill-forts mentioned in written records; 2 Teutonic Order castles or settlements; 3 settlements (hill-forts) with wheel-thrown pottery finds; 4 excluded zones.

from the hill-forts and settlements concerned is held in the National Museum of Lithuania, the Museum of the History of Lithuania Minor, and museums in Šilutė, Gargždai, Kretinga, Jurbarkas, and elsewhere. Because the archaeological material is spread across different collections, this sometimes results in limited access for studying the artefacts.

Other useful sources of information have been written documents, which confirm the presence of settlements and activity on certain sites during the Medieval period, or after the arrival in the area of the Teutonic Order. Forty-one settlements have been located with the aid of written records in the region concerned; six of them are known to have been established by the Order (Fig. 2).

Fragments of wheel-turned pottery were identified during the visual analysis of pottery finds recovered from settlements and the upper archaeological layers of hill-forts (Fig. 3: 4-7). This suggests that 43 of the sites were actively used in the period between the 11th and the 13th (14th) centuries. However, these pots cannot be dated with certainty to the Medieval period (13th and 14th centuries), due to a lack of fixed classification

systems for this type of pottery (establishing a classification system for this type of pottery is perhaps not even possible). This is the case when written sources help a great deal: if a written record is available, the presence and period for the existence of certain settlements can be confirmed. Another valuable chronological indicator is a type of wheel-thrown pottery which stands out from other pottery finds due to its appearance: it has a smooth surface, a fine and even texture, a regular colour (although in some cases there were visible lines on some sherds), and its walls are considerably thinner than those of wheel-turned vessels (Fig. 3: 1-3, 10). Thus, this specific type of pottery is considered to be an indicator of settlement activity from the 11th to the 13th (14th) centuries.

To sum up the results of the visual analysis of pottery finds: it was determined that six of the hill-forts and adjacent settlements studied, which were thought to have been settled by local communities, contained wheel-thrown pottery finds. Two other hill-forts and adjacent settlements where the Teutonic Order established castles contained wheel-turned pottery finds.

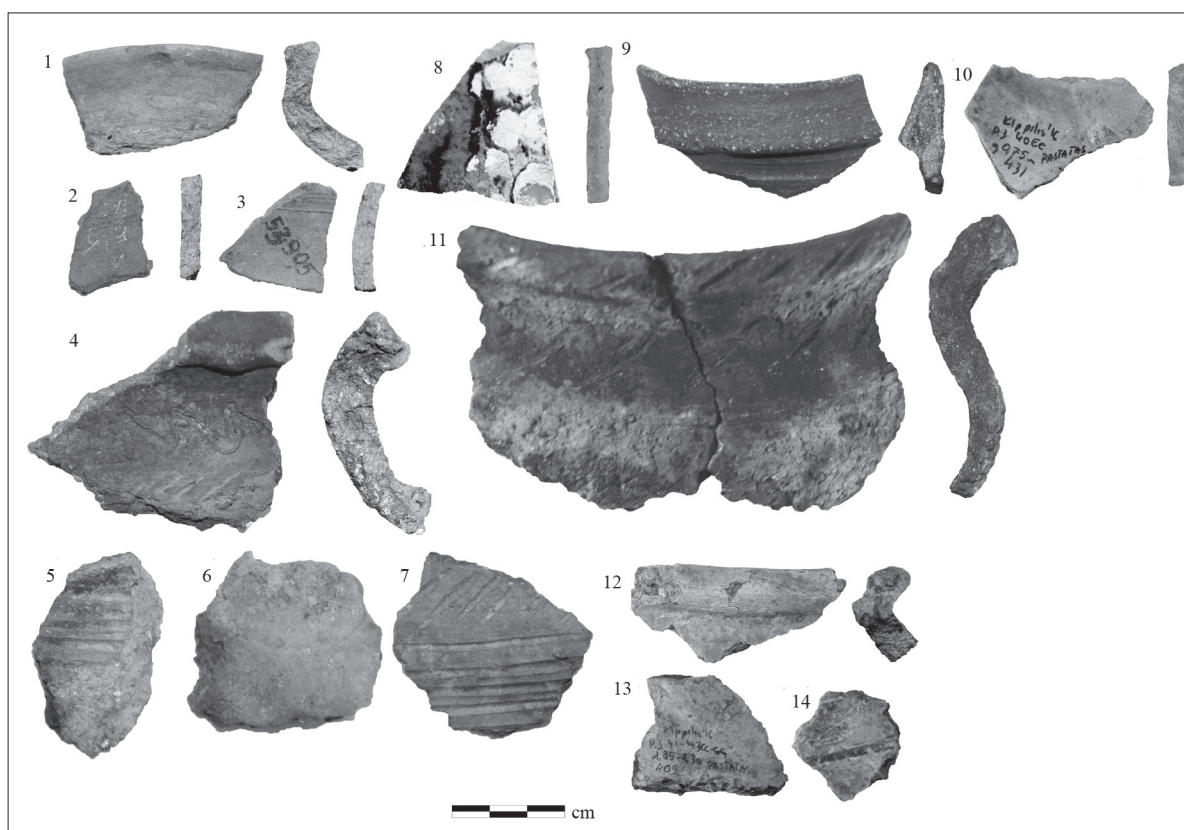


Fig. 3. Selected pottery examples: a) pottery from the western Žardė settlement: 1-3 wheel-thrown grey ware; 4-7 wheel-turned; b) pottery from Medieval Klaipėda: 8 glazed decorated Medieval red ware; 10 Medieval grey ware; 11-14 wheel-turned.

## Problems

Problems and issues that arose in the preparation of this article should be noted and explained, since they are part of the study. This will also help towards a better understanding of the nature of the archaeological material being studied, and of the questions raised at the beginning.

During archaeological investigations of hill-forts, attention is usually focused on determining stages in the development of their fortification. However, the hill-fort itself was often only part of an entire settlement system (Vengalis 2009, pp 154-156; Zabiela 1995, pp. 54-55). This is especially true of settlements dating from between the Late Iron Age and the Medieval period (the 13th to the 15th century). Thus the earthworks at the foot of hill-forts and other spaces of varying function remain only partially investigated, or completely ignored. This, in turn, results in an incomplete picture of the archaeological record.

Another issue which should be acknowledged is the thoroughness of the analysis of pottery. Studies of pottery dated to between the Late Iron Age and the Medieval period are limited, and lack attention from

scholars. That is, classification systems or typologies have not yet been established or systematised. This is especially true of pottery finds recovered during archaeological investigations in western Lithuania, as studies of pots have not been performed or published. One exception is the study of ceramic artefacts from settlements in Palanga (Žulkus 1997). However, since it was written 21 years ago, it is inevitably becoming out of date. The biggest collection of ceramic finds from this region is the material from the investigations at Imbarė, assembled between 1968 and 1992. Unfortunately, it has not been studied or published. The situation with pottery studies is much better for the material from southern Lithuania, where R. Vengalis is actively conducting settlement investigations, paying special attention to ceramic finds. His work is particularly valuable, because there is a clear classification system for pottery (Vengalis 2009); it is also analysed in the context of settlements and other related topics.

Another problem which complicates studies of ceramic vessels is the lack of a fixed and clear terminology. Different terms are often used in archaeological publications and field reports, which makes the analysis of material much more difficult. Furthermore, the analy-

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sis of archaeological finds is often based on artefact descriptions: only the colour, temper and form of ceramic vessels are stated. Analysis and classification according to technical aspects and groups are not usually considered. This limited approach to ceramic studies results in the need for a new list of pottery finds, with more thorough analysis and descriptions.

The last issue to note is just as important for a study of this kind: the attitude and position with which researchers approach archaeological data. In some cases, researchers are found to approach material with the aim of finding objects to suit their knowledge and position on the subject. Thus, a great bias is found to affect the methodology of an investigation and the listing of finds. In the case of this particular study, there is a fixed assumption concerning the chronology of certain pottery finds: it is widely considered that there cannot be wheel-thrown pot sherds in layers dated to between the Late Iron Age and the Medieval period, because they were presumably only produced and used from the 16th up to the 20th century. This assumption is largely based on pottery finds from archaeological investigations around Vilnius and its castles, and from Kernavė and other towns dated to later periods (the 16th to 18th centuries). The archaeological record from these areas does actually suggest the absence of wheel-thrown pottery. Thus, it was found that sometimes this type of ceramics is excluded from certain contexts as evidence, or the result, of post-depositional processes. There were also instances when wheel-thrown pot fragments were separated from other pot finds and kept in different archives; or they were thought to have been mixed in pottery assemblages accidentally, and so were not recorded in field reports at all.

The overview of various problems encountered during the study of pottery finds demonstrates the complexity of the archaeological data. It also shows that there was no systematic approach to collecting and recording data. Nevertheless, the systematic analysis of ceramic artefacts remains a valuable approach to studying the nature and processes of interaction between the Teutonic Order and local communities.

### Analysis of data

After analysing the archaeological data, a map was produced which helped identify three areas as evidence for contact between the Order and the local people (Fig. 2). In this chapter, three case studies, and the historical context for interaction processes, will be discussed.

The first area is in the sphere of influence of the Livonian Order. Two or three archaeological sites (Eketė, Žardė, Laistai?) which contained fragments of wheel-

thrown pottery were identified during an analysis of material found at Late Iron Age settlements and hill-forts around Kretinga and Klaipėda. The dates for these finds are likely to range between the second half of the 13th and the early 14th century, or even later. In Eketė, fragments of wheel-thrown pottery were found alongside wheel-turned and handmade pottery and other artefacts, in a cultural layer which has been ploughed (Merkevičius 1972, 1974). In the case of Laistai, there was no possibility to check the artefacts retrieved; therefore, we had to rely on the historiographic record. It was noted by V. Žulkus that fragments of pottery typical of the Teutonic Order were retrieved (Žulkus 1984, 2002; Januskaitė 2017, p. 11).

In Samogitia, or Lower Lithuania, wheel-thrown pottery has been identified at two sites only: Medvėgalis and Pagrybis. Since the find context is relatively complicated and unclear, these sites are only conditionally considered a space of interaction. However, a written record exists stating that the nobility of Medvėgalis (and the wider territory of Lower Lithuania) did negotiate with the Order on various issues. Furthermore, it is known from studies of written documents that the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (thus, presumably, Lower Lithuania as well) signed various cooperation contracts (Baronas 2010; Mažeika 1993). In 1253-1254, Mindaugas gave Lower Lithuania away to the Teutonic Order (Gudavičius 1989, pp. 105-106). The question of Lower Lithuania is not entirely clear; however, it is assumed that during the second half of the 13th century, the relationship with the Order was relatively close, and they might even have cooperated on some occasions (Nikžentaitis 1997, pp. 82-83; Dubonis 2011). Furthermore, in 1329, the army of the Order besieged Medvėgalis (the centre of the land of Medininkai). The local inhabitants surrendered and were baptised (Dusburgietis 1985, p. 252; Marburgietis 1999, pp. 49-50). Even though they apostatised soon afterwards, this event is considered evidence of cultural exchanges between the two communities. It is thought that Lower Lithuania, or at least parts of it, remained under the influence of the Order until the end of the 14th century.

The third area as a likely space for interaction between the Order and the local communities has been identified as being along the River Nemunas, in the sphere of influence of the Teutonic Order. A number of castles (settlements?) established by the Order were concentrated around this area: Kalnėnai (Georgenburg), Seredžius II (Dubysenburg), Skirsnemunė (Kristmemel) and Veliuona II (its German name is not known). These were fortifications enclosed by moats, typical structures built by the Order as starting establishments for castles and settlements (Zabiela 2001). All of them were built and used between the 14th and the early 15th century.

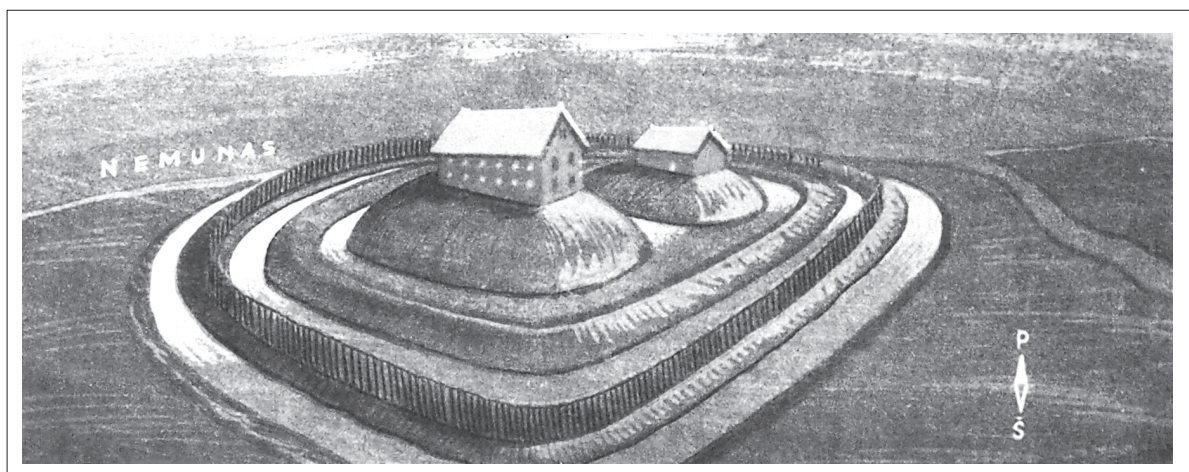


Fig. 4. A reconstruction of the Teutonic Order's castle near Veliuona (by A. Tautavičius, 1965).

Two of the probable castle/settlement sites have been investigated archaeologically. The first is Dubysenburg castle site. Archaeological excavations were conducted in 2002, when an area of ten square metres was investigated (Kvizikevičius 2003). A manor stood there during the 17th century, which is the reason for the disturbed cultural layers and the wide chronology of finds. A considerable amount of wheel-thrown grey ware pottery fragments was recovered from this site; however, it cannot be known for certain whether or not they belong to the Medieval period. The situation is even further complicated by the fact that during the 16th and 17th centuries pottery was produced in the towns of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania using analogous techniques. Consequently, dating these finds to a more specific period is impossible.

The second case study is the castle site of Veliuona II. It was investigated by A. Tautavičius in 1965 (1965a). Even though part of the site (sections of ramparts and other fortifications) was already washed away by the River Nemunas, nevertheless a considerable amount of valuable material was gathered. During the excavations of two hillocks, various fortification structures and a significant number of weapons and household tools were discovered (Tautavičius 1965a, 1965b, 2001). A reconstruction of the moat-type castle at Veliuona was made based on the data gathered in these excavations, with the emphasis on the main structural features (Fig. 4). All the ceramic finds retrieved were wheel-thrown pottery fragments. Most of them were grey ware, typical not only of the towns of the Order, but also of other German and Hanseatic League cities. Since no pottery fragments associated with the local pottery making tradition were found at this site, it cannot be considered as a space for interaction between the local and the German communities.

Veliuona and other settlements were concentrated along the River Nemunas. This shows the Order's intention to control the river route by establishing positions along both banks. Archaeological finds such as metal sheathing for shipbuilding and repairs serve as evidence of shipping activity. Other examples of this type of metal sheathing have only been found in Lithuania in the context of Medieval Klaipėda. There are also records of ships being used by the Order in written sources. For instance, the use of ships was documented during the building of Kristmemel castle (Dusburgietis 1985, p. 207). The establishment of castles along the right bank of the River Nemunas not only suggests the Order's intention to control this river route, but also confirms their aspiration to expand their sphere of influence towards Kaunas. Archaeological finds from Šereitlaukis could be considered further evidence of the Order's expansion (Zalapūgienė 2013). Here, common material in the towns of the Order was found in pits: there were fragments of wheel-turned vessels, as well as a considerable amount of wheel-thrown pottery.

In summary, it can be seen that the three zones discussed above illustrate three situations, which differ in terms of location and chronology. The wheel-thrown pottery fragments found in sites around Klaipėda, in the Livonian sphere of influence, reveal a relationship between two groups whereby one of them was dominant. This is also evidence of direct contact which took place in the period from the mid-13th to the early 14th century. In the case of Lower Lithuania, finds from this region suggest interaction of a more commercial nature, concerned with trade and exchange. These contacts took place during the 14th century, when Lower Lithuania was given to the Teutonic Order on the basis of a treaty between the Order and the Grand Duchy of

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Lithuania. Even in this situation, the Lower Lithuanian region remained an independent power, communicating with the Order as such. The last case discussed was a territory in the sphere of influence of the Teutonic Order. This was an area intended for the expansion of control, and is therefore considered to be evidence of confrontations between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Order.

### Two settlements mean two different narratives

The area which falls in the sphere of influence of the Livonian Order deserves a broader discussion. Two places here, Žardė and Klaipėda, are of particular interest. The aim of this chapter will be to identify possible points of interaction and contact between the two sites. The question of a possible relationship between these particular places has not yet been analysed. There are a number of possible explanations for the lack of studies on this theme: the first could be the tendency for scholars to concentrate on describing objects rather than analysing them, studying the wider contexts or performing comparative studies. As a result, publications concerning the sites under discussion are mostly monographs focusing on each site separately, such as Klaipėda, Žardė, Palanga and Kretinga. The studies lack insight into how they are connected and what distinguishes one place from another, and to what extent communities interacted and communicated with each other. Even though the communities of places under discussion lived at the same time and within close proximity of each other, the degree to which the question of interaction is neglected in studies is surprising.

The first case study to be analysed is Klaipėda, and the following are key facts which introduce the historical context in the second half of the 13th century: the establishment of Klaipėda began with the building of a wooden castle in 1252. By the following year, a brick castle stood there. It is known that in 1254 there was an attempt to procure a charter for the settlement located within the outer bailey; however, it is likely that this was granted only in 1258. Further development was planned with the intention of establishing Klaipėda as a regional centre, with a cathedral and a bishop's chapter. However, these plans failed at the end of the 13th century. The archaeology of Klaipėda is becoming better known: a significant number of finds from the castle and the Medieval town can be dated to the second half of the 13th and the early 14th century. However, many of the artefacts were retrieved from later cultural layers, which complicates their interpretation. In 2016, archaeological investigations were carried out in the castle site (led by G. Zabiela, with R. Kraniuskas, M.

Urbonaitė-Ubė and E. Ubis), during which artefacts and structures dating from a period between the second half of the 13th and the early 14th century were recovered. The most significant finds were a wooden building sunk into the ground (basement) with a well nearby, a wooden platform with the remains of building structures, and various artefacts and fragments of ceramic vessels (Zabiela 2017). Finds from previous investigations were dated more accurately thanks to these excavations. Furthermore, new archaeological data allows for a wider discussion of Klaipėda, not only as a castle site, but as a whole town.

The second case study is Žardė, one of the most important centres in the region under discussion, which existed from the ninth to the 13th (14th?) century. It is thought that the site consisted of a hill-fort with a settlement at its foot, which was relatively densely built up (Genys 1994, 2012). The settlement is considered to have thrived between the tenth and the 11th centuries, or the Viking Age, when the level of expansion of settlements and the material culture were at their peak, due to the well-established links with Scandinavia. However, it is hard to say what the situation was later during the 13th century. It seems that at that time the settlement was of local importance, with its development being determined by the resources available and according to local demand. The settlement definitely existed in the mid-13th century, during the construction of Klaipėda castle and the adjacent town. The presence of a community in Žardė is also evident from archaeological data from burial sites (Petrauskas 2017, p. 193). It is known that the Curonian nobility collaborated with the Order; however, what the role of Žardė was in the wider context of the region cannot be described more specifically. There is no written evidence about resistance or conflicts between the new inhabitants and the locals during the construction of the castle in Klaipėda or afterwards. V. Žulkus has put forward the idea that there might have been a wooden castle at Laistai hill-fort built by the Order. However, no further studies have been conducted on this matter. There is some evidence indicating contact and interaction between the Order and local communities: it was recorded that in 1323 three castles around Klaipėda were burnt down during an attack by the Lithuanians (Dusburgietis 1985, p. 217). The castles belonged to recently baptised locals, which suggests a shifting social environment, whereby the Order was attempting to involve local communities in establishing the socio-cultural structures of a new state. Archaeological records allow for the consideration of earlier phases at the Žardė archaeological complex; however, the focus of this study is on the latest stages in its development and their archaeological investigation. Fragments of

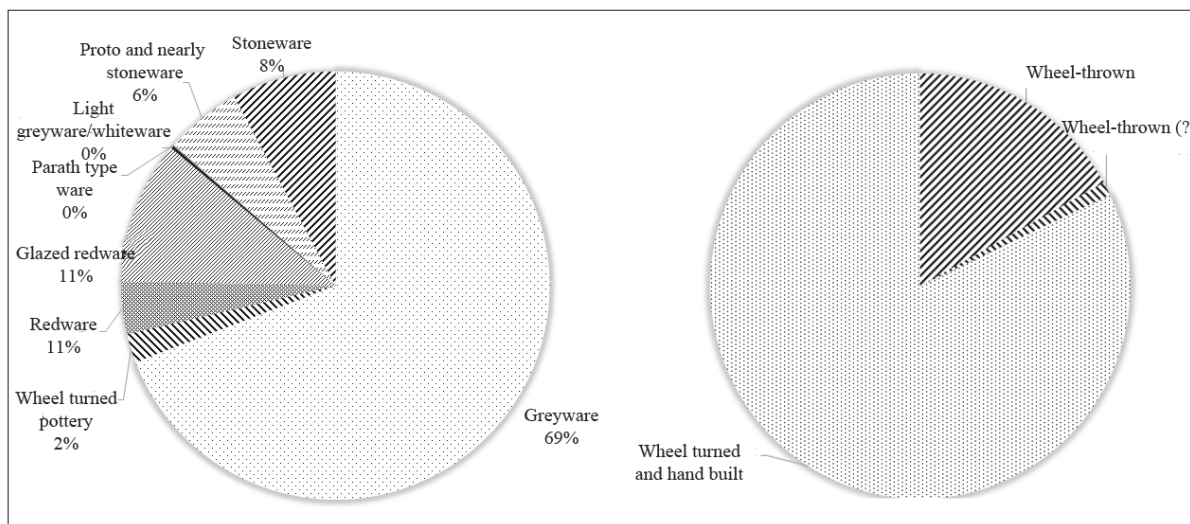


Fig. 5. Pottery distribution by weight in Klaipėda (1200-1600) (left), and in Žardė (right) by pieces.

pottery were retrieved in the latest cultural layers of the western settlement at Žardė, which indicates that after the establishment of the castle and the town of Klaipėda, cultural exchanges began between the Order and the local communities.

Even though the coexistence of Klaipėda and Žardė are not denied in historiographical records, the relationship and possible connections between the two have not been reflected upon. Thus, this chapter has shown to what extent archaeological investigations and material gathered can help towards revealing not only the presence of communication between local communities and newcomers, but also how their interaction developed through time and space.

### A comparative analysis of pottery finds at Klaipėda and Žardė

Archaeological investigations at Klaipėda took place from 1968 up until 2016. During this period, an extensive collection of pottery vessels and fragments was gathered. On the other hand, investigations in the western settlement of Žardė were conducted by J. Genys with breaks, from 1990 to 2000 (1990, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1999, 2000). Since the pottery assemblage from Žardė is much smaller, this does not allow for a quantitative and comparative study. The amount of pottery finds datable to the period under discussion (the 13th and early 14th century) is even more limited. Nevertheless, pottery types were selected as reflecting local pottery-making traditions, and others which present techniques employed by people who inhabited the Order's castle and the town.

The archaeological data clearly suggests dominant pottery types both in Klaipėda and Žardė (Fig. 5). An analysis of vessels and fragments of them revealed pottery types that are typically found in such contexts. For instance, local communities usually used handmade and wheel-turned pots for their daily activities. However, the inhabitants of the town and the castle in Klaipėda used wheel-thrown grey ware pottery and vessels imported from various production centres across Western Europe. Until 2016, there were relatively few fragments of local pottery found in Klaipėda, but the situation changed after the discovery of a well-preserved cultural layer dated to the 13th and 14th centuries (Fig. 6). A significant number of fragments of pottery were wheel-turned: this type makes up 19% of all pot finds. This figure is surprising, because it is known that other types of tableware, such as stoneware or Medieval glazed earthenware, were usually preferred. Hence, it is unclear what the purpose of the local pottery types was. It may be that they were used as vessels for transporting goods and food supplies for the community of the Order in Klaipėda. If these assumptions are correct, they would suggest that the Order intended not only to expand but also to develop social networks. This could have been done by the conversion of the local people to Christianity, which would engage them in the processes of building new socio-cultural structures. These considerations may be supported by further historical evidence, whereby it is known that there were attempts to build a church in Klaipėda for residents of the district, presumably locals. Furthermore, at the beginning of the 14th century, there was an attack during which Lithuanian troops invaded settlements belonging to recently baptised people. With these points in mind, it could be considered that the unclear purpose of the

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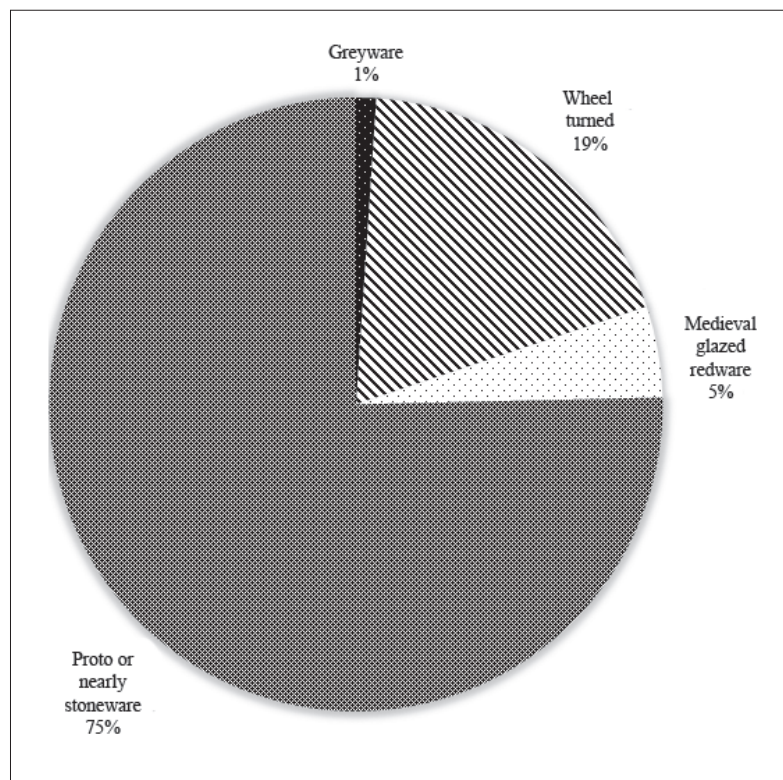


Fig. 6. The distribution of pottery by weight in Klaipėda in the second half of the 13th and early 14th centuries.

local pottery types in the area of the Order could be explained by the presence of local people who possibly lived in the outer bailey of the castle. Locals from the area are known to have lived in the castles of the Livonian Order as hostages or prisoners (Kaljusaar 2016). It should be acknowledged that members of the Order were newcomers to the area, and as such had to adapt to the environment and local realities. This assumption is supported by archaeological evidence from castle contexts, where pottery and jewellery of local origin were found. Thus, the Order had to communicate with the local population, and there are various reasons for this: firstly, arrival in a new territory meant little or no infrastructure for primary needs (domestic and agricultural). Therefore, they had to cooperate with locals for materials. In this case, ceramic vessels could have served as containers. Furthermore, written evidence reveals that during military campaigns into Lower Lithuania, local guides accompanied members of the Order: they guided them, helped them to find routes and places to camp, and provided them with general knowledge about the local landscape (Baronas 2010). It is also known that local warriors quite often joined the troops of the Teutonic Order. These facts show that information was one of the things required by the newcomers, and which could have been provided by the local community. Thus, it can be seen that the two

communities communicated in different ways and for a variety of different reasons.

In the case of Žardė, the most common types of ceramics used in households were handmade and wheel-turned pottery. For this study, however, another type is most relevant: it is referred to in the historiographical record as Teutonic Order ceramics, or German grey ware, and is defined as wheel-thrown pottery made of grey paste and fired in a reduced atmosphere (Fig. 3: 1-3, 10). Most of the grey ware finds were recovered from surface layers disturbed by later agricultural activities. They were dated approximately by the project manager and other authors to the period between the tenth and the 14th century. Unfortunately, more accurate dating is unavailable due to unreliable C14 dates, which showed the 13th to the 17th century (Genys 2000, pp. 15-16). The error is probably a result of contaminated samples or other subjective factors. Fragments of grey ware pottery should be associated with the Order's arrival in the region, because no pot finds of this particular type were retrieved from earlier layers. Furthermore, pottery studies from neighbouring regions suggest that wheel-thrown pots only started being produced by local communities at some time in the 15th and 16th centuries. In addition, a penannular brooch with expanding terminals was found during archaeological investigations; it is considered to support

the earlier dating, as analogous artefacts have also been retrieved during excavations at the site of the castle in Klaipėda. In addition, earlier archaeological layers contained no wheel-thrown grey ware. Thus, their appearance is thought to be associated with the community of Žardė and its settlement (and possibly with other adjacent settlements) during the second half of the 13th and the early 14th century. Grey ware pots make up 18% of the assemblage (according to the sherd count) (Fig. 6). It should be noted, however, that the total count could be smaller, as some fragments could not be checked, and were assigned to this group from descriptions in reports only. Therefore, the question arises: how did grey ware pots appear in the settlement at Žardė? It is well known that the Crusaders attempted to settle in areas which were already populated. Unfortunately, there is not enough evidence to support this assumption in the case of Žardė, since no usual pot finds, such as proto-stoneware or glazed Medieval ware (Fig. 3: 8-9), have been found there; whereas there is an abundance of these particular pottery types in Klaipėda and other towns of the Order. In addition, the dominant types of pottery finds remain handmade and wheel-turned pottery (Fig. 3: 4-7). Thus, considering the wider context, it can be assumed that these types should be associated with the local community, who probably used them in the past. There is no doubt that these types were not produced locally, because a suitable space and craftsmen with technical knowledge required had not yet emerged. Therefore, we suggest that local communities must have acquired them through trade and exchange, or other similar means. An interesting point to mention is the find context of grey ware pottery: most was discovered in undisturbed layers, near to or inside fireplaces. This might suggest their function as cooking pots, since they also have the capacity to withstand high temperatures. Food preparation and storage were also the main function for grey ware pots in households of community of Teutonic Order. Another explanation might be that the placement of artefacts in a new cultural environment changed their function. However, this explanation cannot be supported by evidence. In terms of pottery-making techniques, the potter's wheel only started being used in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania after the baptism of the state and the growth of cities such as Kaunas and Vilnius; more specifically in the 15th and 16th centuries, after the formation of a professional pottery-making craft. A clue for contacts developed in a later period might be a pot fragment which was found in the context of Medieval Klaipėda: it was produced by employing local techniques; however, there are also signs of wheel-throwing on the inside of it. Unfortunately, the find context does not allow for accurate dating. Analogous artefacts and the consider-

ation of marks left by the production process suggest later, 15th and 16th-century, dates and contacts.

An important point to mention is that even though members of the local community could easily have acquired colonists' tableware, such as stoneware, they did not. As a result, no pottery finds of these types were discovered at Žardė. This suggests a lack of interest, or no real need to adopt the new and unfamiliar dining culture of Western Europe. The case of Žardė is no exception in archaeological studies, as similar situations are found in places such as Novgorod, Finland and Tallinn (Gaimster 2006; Immonen 2007; Naum 2014). Some types of pottery typical of the Order, such as grey ware, did find their way into local households, which shows that local communities did adapt to some degree to the changing situation in the region. However, a continuation of local customs can be seen, as communities are seen to reject elements of the new culture, and in this way preserve their tradition.

## Conclusions

The current collection of archaeological material cannot reflect completely the social and political processes that took place across the micro-region of the former border zone between the Teutonic Order and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (the present western Lithuania). Nevertheless, synthesising the available data reveals details from the past about settlement patterns and the nature of interaction between the two different groups of people. In addition, changes in everyday life due to the shifting geopolitical situation can be observed.

In this study, it was determined that certain settlements and hill-forts were populated during the 13th and 14th centuries and later. This is confirmed by written records, and specific finds recovered during archaeological excavations.

Three main areas were identified as spaces of interaction on the basis of archaeological data. These were defined as follows:

1. the Livonian Order's sphere of influence in the area around Klaipėda
2. contact area in Lower Lithuania (Žemaitija) in the former lands of Medininkai
3. the Teutonic Order's sphere of influence along the River Nemunas.

The nature and circumstances of contacts varied across all three areas because of the different times and conditions. It appears that the Teutonic Order was successful to a certain extent at involving the local community in Klaipėda in establishing new socio-cultural structures.

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This assumption is supported by the attack of 1323, when a number of castles belonging to recently baptised locals were burnt down by the Lithuanians. In the case of Lower Lithuania, the interaction processes are illustrated by a number of archaeological finds and records from written documents. However, more detailed information is not available due to the absence of more comprehensive descriptions. There were no archaeological finds from the Teutonic Order's sphere of influence that could suggest contacts between members of the Order and the local communities. This could be explained by the Order's intention to control the water route along the River Nemunas, which was attempted by building castles on its banks. Thus, these castles never functioned as administrative centres. However, one case stands out: it is the site at Šereitlaukis, which provided evidence for contact and collaboration between the Order and the local communities.

The case studies of Žardė and Klaipėda were presented as definite evidence of interaction between the two different communities. Building up contacts and establishing neighbouring settlements began in the 13th and early 14th century; it seems that during these processes, communication was predetermined to some extent by the differing status of the local inhabitants and the newcomers (mostly Germans). Consequently, the local communities had to adapt to the new realities after the arrival of the colonists. This is revealed by the appearance of technologically new vessels, which were acquired through various contacts with the Teutonic Order. On the other hand, members of the Order also had to adapt to the new environment and its inhabitants, because local knowledge was necessary for building settlements and establishing the socio-cultural systems of the new state.

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## KULTŪRINĖS SĄVEIKOS TARP VOKIEČIŲ ORDINO IR VIETINIŲ GYVENTOJŲ ARCHEOLOGIJOS DUOMENIMIS: PROBLEMAS IR PERSPEKTYVOS

### EDVINAS UBIS

#### Santrauka

Dabartinės Lietuvos teritorija yra tam tikra kelių praeities valstybinių organizacijų veiklos erdvė. Tokia situacija buvo susiklosčiusi ir dabartinės Lietuvos vakarinėje dalyje, kur dar viduramžiais stiprią veiklą vykdė Vokiečių ordinas (prūsiškoji ir livoniškoji šakos). Šioje dalyje Ordinas siekė plėsti savo įtaką, tad vietinės bendruomenės vienu ar kitu atveju susidurdavo su šios organizacijos vykdoma veikla ir privalėjo taikytis prie kintančių sąlygų.

Šiame straipsnyje nagrinėjami archeologinių tyrimų duomenys, o tiksliau – tyrimų metu aptikti keraminiai indai ar jų fragmentai. Šių archeologinių duomenų pagrindu buvo išskirtos trys sąlyginės erdvės, kurios įvardytos taip: a) Livonijos ordino įtakos zona; b) Žemaitijos sąveikavimo erdvė; c) Vokiečių ordino įtakos zona. Nepaisant kryžiaus žygių epochos karinio atspalvio, straipsnyje bandoma analizuoti galimus kontaktus tarp vietinių ir Ordino bendruomenių skirtingose erdvėse bei skirtingu laiku. Čia laikomasi nuomonės, kad galimus kontaktus rodo vakarietiškos gamybos tradicijos keraminių indų fragmentai vietinių bendruomenių

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gyvenvietėse ir vietinių bendruomenių indų radiniai Klaipėdoje. Išsamiau nagrinėti sąveikos atvejai tarp Žardės gyvenvietės ir viduramžių Klaipėdos.

Keraminių indų analizė atskleidė, kad Ordinas ir vietinės bendruomenės sąveikaudavo, ir tai leidžia gerokai plačiau aptarti bendradarbiavimo formas ir šios sąveikos interpretaciją. Nors archeologinių tyrimų metu surinkta medžiaga nebuvo sistemiskai fiksuojama ir kaupiama, siekiant atsakyti į šiame straipsnyje keltą klausimą, vis dėlto čia analizuoti duomenys leidžia geriau suprasti XIII a. antrojoje pusėje – XIV a. vykusius procesus ir sąveikas tarp dviejų skirtingų bendruomenių.