

## **DESCRIPTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC:**

### **The urbanization of the frontier. The comparative study of the development of towns and urban landscape in Prussia, Livonia and Ireland in 12-14th centuries.**

In 1171 King of England Henry II granted “his people from Bristol” a new “civitas”, Dublin; in 1192 the Lord of Ireland, Prince John, confirmed this document and gave multiple rights and freedoms to the citizens. In 1225 the papal legate, William of Modena, decided to give the privilege to the German inhabitants of Riga, according to which in their communal matters they could follow the provisions of the town of Wisby. Furthermore, in 1233 those eager to settle in the first Prussian towns, Chelmno and Toruń, received the Kulm law modelled on the Magdeburg law. In brief – at the turn of 12th and 13th c. the two ends of Europe became destinations for new settlers, new authorities and the places where the brand new ways of social organization were brought – towns with urban rights, towns with charters.

These are not the only premises that provoke us to conduct a comparison of urbanisation processes in Ireland, Prussia and Livonia. First of all, apart from the absence of indigenous urban culture typical for the “heartland” of Europe, with the phenomenon of the chartered town, neither of these regions was invaded by Roman troops in the antiquity. Until the new authorities and people did not appear in these regions, also the Holy Roman Church was hardly influential there. These common features allow us to describe the three regions as medieval frontiers. In 1985 in the volume edited by Howard B. Clarke and A. Simms, *The Comparative History of urban origins in non-Roman Europe: Ireland, Wales, Denmark, Germany, Poland and Russia from the 9th to the 13th century*, there was expressed a postulate of making a comparison of the development of towns and urban landscape in the Middle Ages on this kind of territories. As this research postulate has not been tackled so far, it will be taken up in this project.

The main task of the project is to study the urbanization and early development of towns in Prussia, Livonia and Ireland during conquest and colonisation – and then juxtapose the results with the thesis that the phenomena of the establishment and functioning of chartered towns in three regions can be considered on not only local scale, but also universally. To meet this end, it is necessary to study all manifestations of the phenomenon of the chartered town: the legal, social, cultural and spatial aspects, the functioning of the town within settlement pattern, its relation with country (“hinterland”), and fulfilling of the position of the power, cultural and economic centre for the region.

In older publications chartered towns were treated as instruments of conquest and territorialisation. The research in the area of Prussian, Livonian and Irish towns was dominated by the perspective of “conquerors”: the Baltic region was considered from the perspective of *Deutsche Ostsiedlung* and *Drang nach Osten*, while the Irish – as a field of action of English lords and their more “civilisationally advanced” solutions. Whereas, this project calls for a withdrawal from this type of one-sided analysis; a retreat from the conviction that the unchanged model was simply installed in new areas. The project aims at enhancing the possibility of transforming this model under existing conditions. Thus, the project would become a contribution to the study of condition of the model of chartered town in medieval Europe. It also refers to the latest research on medieval frontier regions. It is, therefore, aiming at the presentation of the phenomenon of the frontier chartered town.

The research will be conducted with the use of normative written sources and cartographic sources, employing the comparative and structural approach, as well as methodology of M.P. Conzen’s “town-plan analysis”. The project shall be ended with a PhD thesis, whose main aim is to present the comparative study of the beginning and development of towns in three frontier regions on all abovementioned levels of their functioning.