

## The Issue of Paganism Enclaves in Samogitia Conversion: the Evidence from the 16th Century

### *Summary*

The article is based on H. Łowmiański's theoretical assumption that pagan enclaves are impossible provided the average parish radius is at least 10 km. He studied historical and geographic aspects of parish networks in the period from the late 16th century to the early 17th century and found network "holes". The largest wilderness areas without churches were discovered in the west and north of Samogitia where Wallach reform operators began to open churches only in the second half of the 16th century.

A link between Parish network "holes" and paganism enclaves is attested in available documents, i. e. parish foundations propagating paganism annihilation motivation. Tverai Church foundation of 1619 is currently considered to be the last of the kind. Facts of adult christening at the

beginning of the 17th century definitely prove the existence of pagan enclaves. The biggest of the known enclaves existed in 1622 near Kretinga.

The article refers to a unique source, i. e. to Klovainiai Church attendance regulations of 1622 that specify mandatory church attendance frequency depending on the distance between the place of residence and the church. According to the regulations, parish networks density influences Christian practice (children christening, Sunday Mass attendance). The above density is also a theoretic criterion demonstrating "social control of the external behaviour" and the end of wide conversion.

**Keywords:** Christianization, Samogitia, parish foundations, pagan enclaves.

Gauta 2015.01.12