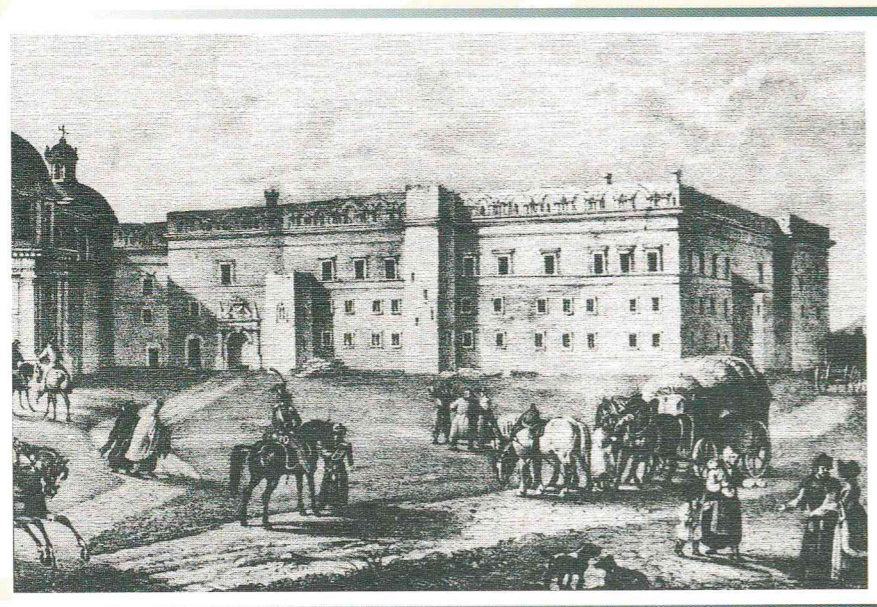
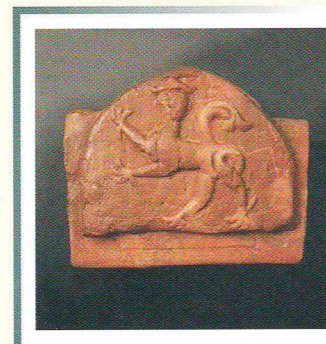
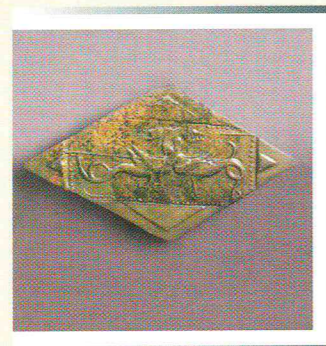


● **GRAND DUKE'S PALACE OF VILNIUS LOWER CASTLE**  
Vytautas Urbanavičius

The Palace was situated on the elongate hillock between Gediminas Mountain and Vilnius Cathedral. On three sides the hillock was surrounded by a marshy valley of the Vilnelė River. Until the mid-17th century the Palace was the political, administrative and cultural centre of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The Palace was partially destroyed during the war with Muscovy and was no longer suitable for the rulers to reside in. After Vilnius became part of the Russian empire following the Third Partition of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania at the turn of the 18th century, the ruins of the Palace were demolished, the place was levelled to the ground and planted with trees. According to written sources and iconography, the Palace was built in the Renaissance style in the 16th century, with the use made of the remnants of the Gothic palace of the 15th century.

Since 1987, investigations have been conducted of the Palace's remnants. The investigations that were of applied character at first, have been comprehensive since 1988. The investigation team of the Lithuanian History Institute that later on became the Centre of the Castle Investigation, was given the task of investigating the entire complex of the Palace and accumulating data necessary for its restoration.

Three of the four buildings of the Palace have been investigated over the decade. It was established that, whilst building the Gothic Palace, a number of older masonry buildings were demolished that had been built in the 13th-14th c.c. Furthermore, traces of a settlement dating back to the second half of the 1st millennium were discovered in the court-yard. These comprise remnants of wooden buildings, fireplaces and stoves, tools, weapons and household items. In the course of the investigations of the Palace remnants, numerous architectural details were discovered, as well as bricks, roof, floor and wall tiles of various shapes, Dutch tiles, window and door sheathings, locks and padlocks of a variety of designs and sizes, builders' tools, weapons, ornaments, chess pieces, etc. dating back to different ages. The pottery collection is especially numerous. It consists of vessels serving all



kinds of purposes, plates and dishes, frying-pans and items used as wall finish. Dutch tiles stand out from all the pottery due to their abundance and variety of shapes and ornaments. Dutch tile stoves constitute one of the most important elements of the Palace interior.

All these artefacts ought to help in reconstructing the original image of the Palace. The remnants of the Palace dating back to different epochs and the abundance of the finds unearthed pose the problem of reconstructing the image without damaging its authenticity.

● **VILNIUS CATHEDRAL (BASILICA)**  
Napoleonas Kitkauskas

Archaeological and architectural investigations of Vilnius Cathedral were commenced before World War II. The Neris River overflowed its banks in the spring of 1931, inundating the cellars of the Cathedral, after which numerous cracks appeared in its walls and vaults. The Committee for Salvaging the Cathedral had trenches excavated with a view to establishing the condition of the foundations of the building. Later on, when piles were concreted to reinforce the foundations, old masonry was taken apart and excavation reached cultural layers. Over 20 cellars were revealed in the course of investigations that had been hidden until then.

New investigations were begun in 1968, after cracks reappeared in the walls and vault of the north-western corner of the Cathedral that was used as a picture gallery at the time. The investigations were carried out by specialists from the Monument Conservation Institute. In 1968-76 they excavated nearly 40 trenches and sounded the masonry of the building. As a result of the investigations, the outlines of the original Cathedral were revealed. The central part of the building had been of square shape (22.4 x 22.7 m), with 4 pillars dividing it into three naves. A solid tower had stood in the western part of the Cathedral and pilasters had leaned against the inner surfaces of the western and eastern walls. Outside the eastern wall, there had been a presbytery with a semicircular apse, the configuration of the latter being similar to that of apses in Romanesque churches of other countries.

The mortar used for the construction of the original Cathedral of Vilnius was brown in colour and contained hydraulic and organic additives. In the course of the investigations, it was discovered that the Cathedral had been rebuilt at least twice and that the first stage of the construction had been carried out in the mid-13th century and had been probably associated with the christianisation of Lithuania that had started in 1251.

Additional investigations of the Cathedral were conducted in 1984-85, when ducts of the air conditioning system were being installed under the flooring of the Cathedral. The following areas were investigated at the time: the area between pillars 1 and 6 in the northern and southern naves, and the area between pillars 1 and 5 in the central nave. In addition to that, 4 trenches were excavated outside the eastern wall of the Cathedral. In the course of the investigations, remnants of the foundations of two chapels were discovered near the northern wall of the presbytery of the original Cathedral, as well as fragments of two stonework staircases in the centre of the northern nave. It was revealed that the original Cathedral had been damaged by a fire and that the staircases in the northern nave had been constructed after the fire. The staircases seem to have been used after

the death of King Mindaugas in 1263, when the old, pre-Christian religion returned and the walls of the burnt original Cathedral served as a pagan temple. It was also revealed that the original Cathedral had been damaged by a fire and then was christianised a second time. The temple was demolished and a new Gothic church was built on its foundations which was conferred the status of cathedral in 1388. The reconstructions of the original Cathedral described above are reflected in the records of the archaeological and architectural investigations of 1984-85.

The investigations revealed that the original Cathedral of Vilnius had been constructed on a slight elevation extending westward from Gediminas Hill. During the 13th-15th centuries, the elevation protruded as much as 3.0-4.5 m above the surrounding terrain. A cultural layer containing burnt matter and rusticated pottery, as well as individual fragments of brushed ceramics, was also discovered at the top of the elevation.

Furthermore, as many as four fragments of baked clay pavements and, nearby, remnants of altars, were discovered at the centre of the middle nave of the present-day Cathedral. These elements are also believed to have been part of a worship place of the pre-Christian period which apparently existed in the area of Vilnius castle prior to 1251, i.e. the first christianisation of Lithuania.

