

Summary

NATALIA BURSIEWICZ/ Francisco Eiximenis's theory of ideal city

Francisco Eiximenis, a Catalan Franciscan monk, had a great impact on public and religious life of the Crown of Aragon at the turn of the 14th century and deserved full appreciation there. He had a royal protection. He performed a function of the government of Valencia councillor, a theologian at the court of Martin I the Human and a spiritual advisor of his wife, queen Maria de Luna. Among his readers were also Peter IV Aragonese, John I the Hunter and the pope Benedict XIII.

Eiximenis believed in a capability of creation of an ideal city – self-sufficient, visually attractive and safe. In his book *Lo Crestia*, edited in 1379, he included an analysis of the factors which effected the rise of communities and in consequence city centres. Moreover, he explained what a city is and gave instructions to be followed when rising a city. The 12th book of *Lo Crestia* was a harbinger of urbanistic theories of the Late Quattrocento and Cinquecento – these of Alberti, Filarete and Leonardo da Vinci's. If we consider the date and geographical area in which Eiximenis's texts were created, we should speak about formal and topic novelty. This proposed by him theoretical city design assumed combination of Christian and humanistic concepts with consideration to Greek-and-Roman tradition. His main aim was to build or rebuild a city as a centre of secular and ecclesial power. As a distinct novelty of high importance came for the Franciscan aesthetics i.e. visual aspect of a city. Its beauty was about to be revealed in harmonious space composition, its surroundings and the dwellers themselves. Paying attention to a man is yet another distinctive element. Squares as spaces of lively social interaction are designed for people. A city becomes a *sine qua non* condition of a man's development. It is the only place that meets both his material and spiritual needs. Most of all, a city provides people with "real pleasure and joy".