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FROM ETHNOCENTRIC TO CIVIC HISTORY: CHANGES IN CONTEMPORARY LITHUANIAN HISTORICAL STUDIES

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One could analyze the changes that have taken place in Lithuanian historical writing over the past fifteen years in various ways. There is an institutional aspect to this question, namely how the creation of new, or the transformation of existing institutions, has affected developments in writing history.[1] Another aspect of the issue concerns methodology; changes in the range of topics covered by historians, or in other words, the filling in of so-called "blank spaces"; and the relationship between mass historical consciousness and historiography. It is not feasible to deal with all these issues in a single article. Here we wish to draw attention to a well-known phenomenon whereby changes in historical paradigms are connected with changes in collective identity, be it national[2] or European identity.[3] Here we will concentrate on how attitudes to the object of Lithuanian historical study and Lithuanicity have changed over the past fifteen years in Lithuanian historical writing. If we wish to understand recent changes we must of course begin with a short review of earlier Lithuanian historical studies.

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[1] In the case of Lithuania it would be interesting to look at the effect of a particular kind of decentralization: practically speaking fifteen years ago historical research was carried out only in Vilnius, but now we have strong academic centres in the universities of Kaunas and Klaipėda and work has begun in Šiauliai University. When looking at Holocaust studies we should investigate to what extent they have been influenced by Lithuania's Presidential Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupations.

[2] Erik Lönnroth, Karl Molin, Ragnar Björk, eds., *Conceptions of National History (Proceedings of Nobel Symposium 78)* (Berlin, New York, 1994).

[3] S. Puntscher Riekmann, "The Myth of European Unity," Geoffrey Hosking, George Schöpflin, eds., *Myths and Nationhood* (London, 1997), pp. 60-71.

The Rise and Fall of National Narrative
in Lithuanian Historiography

The Lithuanian historical narrative came into being in the nineteenth century as a component part of a newly-forming Lithuanian national discourse. The most important and most difficult task facing the construction of modern Lithuanian identity was the building of barriers between Lithuanian and Polish identities and also Russian-ness, although the Russian identity was less dangerous than Polish during the "purification" of Lithuanian national (ethnic) identity.[4] Thus it is no surprise that the Lithuanian interpretation of history was construed as an alternative to Polish and to a lesser extent, Russian conceptions. Most nineteenth-century Polish political movements, including schools of history, acknowledged no independent political future for Lithuanians and, thus, when regarding Lithuania's past, they were inclined to emphasize, first and foremost, the benefits of Polish culture and civilization. Therefore, when Lithuanians came to construe their own historical narrative, they had no other choice but to set up their own authentic folk culture as a counterweight to Polish civilization. Lithuanians constructed their concept of history in relation to their understanding of Lithuanicity as primarily ethnocultural values. The history of Lithuania was understood to be the history of ethnic Lithuanians.

This revealed itself most clearly in interpretations of the past of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The earlier history of the Grand Duchy before the time of Vytautas (reg. 1392-1430) or the Union of Lublin (1569) was treated by Lithuanians as "their own" because it was created and controlled by Lithuanians. Episodes from the later history of the Grand Duchy were also admitted to the Lithuanian historical canon, but usually only when there was discussion of the use of the Lithuanian language or the social conditions of the peasantry and so forth, that is, in cases that formed a sort of prehistory for the nineteenth-century reborn nation. Meanwhile, nineteenth-century history was already dominated clearly by topics connected with "national rebirth." In this case we come up against the same concept of history as we find among other Central and

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[4] Here we will not deal with alternative options for the construction of Lithuanicity.

East European nations. According to this concept, once upon a time there was a strong and mighty nation that later suffered greatly as a result of external conditions and its national consciousness "fell asleep." Given favourable conditions, however, the nation was reborn or "awakened." Here particular stress is laid on the role played by the "fathers of the national revival." Such a concept, of course, implies an unchanging understanding of national identity, which usually has a clear ethnocultural accent.[5]

Admittedly a political dimension accompanied the ethnolinguistic component of Lithuanian national identity. Here we might apply the observation of Anthony D. Smith that national identity has dual internal and external functions.[6] To rephrase Smith's observation, we can say that the first function is connected with the nationalization of individuals. It was easiest to turn the peasants into "Lithuanians" by applying ethnolinguistic criteria. The "internal" functions of collective identity are particularly important during the early stage of nationalism, although they may also be important at other points of development.[7] Relatively separate "external" functions are connected with socio-economic, political and territorial aspects of collective identity. From the very outset Lithuanian nationalism had to seek not only the transformation of the masses into a nation but also to justify its rights as a "historical nation," that is, to prove that the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was a Lithuanian state and that Vilnius was a Lithuanian city; that the Lithuanian gentry (or at least, part of it) was Lithuanian, and not Polish, and so forth. Modern Lithuania was connected with the Grand Duchy via political tradition. In

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[5] On Lithuanian historical narrative in the nineteenth century, see Darius Staliūnas, "Die Teilung des Kulturerbes des Großfürstentums Litauen und der Schutz der historischen Denkmäler vom Ende des 19. bis zum Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts," *Nordost-Archiv. Zeitschrift für Regionalgeschichte,* Bd.VI/1997, H. 1: Das Denkmal im nördlichen Ostmitteleuropa im 20. Jahrhunderts. Politischer Kontext und nationale Funktion, S. 147-166; idem, "Die litauische Nationalidentität und die polnischsprachige Literatur," Y. Varpio, M. Zadencka, eds., *Literatur und nationale Identität II. Themen des literarischen Nationalismus und der nationalen Literatur im Ostseeraum* (Tampere, 1999), pp. 201-216; idem, "Alternatywa początku XX wieku: Historia etnosu czy państwa," *Lituano-Slavica Posnaniensia, Studia Historica* 8 (2001), pp. 81-95.

[6] Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London, 1991), p. 16.

[7] In the case of Lithuanians the inter-war conflict with Poland and the subsequent imposition of Soviet Marxism and Russian culture created a constant real or apparent danger that national identity might be lost.

other words, the political dimension of nationality was stressed to some extent, but it was conceived of as a supplement to the ethnolinguistic dimension, rather than as an alternative.

In the inter-war period the traditions of historical narrative that had formed earlier were continued. For example, most work was devoted to the so-called "age of the grand dukes," the period between the creation of the state (which was deliberately dated as early as possible in order to deny possible external influences) and the death of Grand Duke Vytautas in 1430. The basic credo of historians was probably the slogan coined by Adolfas Šapoka, namely that Lithuanian historians should "look for Lithuanians in Lithuanian history."[8] At the same time, however, romanticism was replaced by positivism, that is, priority was given to more detailed research into source material. The most serious changes here took place in interpretations related to the history of the Grand Duchy between the Union of Lublin and the final partition of Poland-Lithuania (1569-1795). The Russian-born historian Ivan Lappo and the Lithuanian Adolfas Šapoka wrote that the Union of Lublin did not mean at all the incorporation of Lithuania into Poland. Historians claimed that Poland benefited more through that union and that, after the union was proclaimed, Lithuania retained several features of statehood and considerable autonomy. For example, the Third Lithuanian Statute (1588) contradicted, in many provisions, the treaty of union proclaimed at Lublin.

During the Soviet period (1940 – 1990), especially during the first two decades after World War II social class replaced the nation and state as the most important historical agents. The concept of Lithuanian history as reworked according to the canons of Russian Marxism had the task of proving the theory that Russia and the Russians were the Lithuanians' natural allies. Thus, for example, it became compulsory to assess the incorporation of part of the Commonwealth of the Two Nations into the Russian Empire at the end of the eighteenth century in a positive light. Historians who tried to hold back from the vulgar Marxism imposed upon them began to give priority to empirical description. On the other hand, Marxism with Russian elements was

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[8] Adolfas Šapoka, "Raskime lietuvius Lietuvos istorijoje," *Naujoji Romuva*, No. 21 (73) (1932), pp. 481-482.

countered by an interest in Lithuanian ethnic culture, the national movement. The topic that provoked most interest in the factographic sense was the prohibition of publications in the Lithuanian language in the Latin alphabet and the resistance to this prohibition along with ideologically-based subjects, such as the formation of the working class, the creation of the Marxist parties, and the establishment of Soviet power. In other words, alongside the sociologized Marxist concept of history a paradigm of ethnic history also thrived in Soviet Lithuanian historical writing. In certain cases these two paradigms had clear points of conjuncture: the borders of the Soviet socialist republics conditioned geographic projections into the past. The history of the LSSR began from primitive social communities and these borders had to be maintained in the analysis of all historical periods. According to the ethnolinguistic concept, an ethnic territory was regarded as belonging to a particular group. Thus, as representatives of the "exploiter" class and as the greatest "de-nationalizers" of the Lithuanians, Poles and Polishness were not worthy of attention.

The political changes that began in Lithuania in 1988 helped to reinterpret the historical past. After 1988, as I understand it, greater significance has been attributed to "political Lithuanicity," but this does not mean, of course, that ethnolinguistic understandings of nationality are disappearing. There are several reasons for these changes. First of all, Lithuanian intellectuals realized that after liberation from the Soviet Union there were no real threats to Lithuanian folk culture (the processes of globalization and Europeanization were not at first seen as posing a serious danger). At the same time, it was clear that the ethnocentric interpretation of history provided no possibilities for ethnic minorities to find their place in Lithuania's history and thereby feel themselves to be fully-fledged Lithuanian citizens.

Secondly, opportunities to learn Western historical methodologies and, in the end, the application of the simplest principle of historicism forced Lithuanian historians to rethink the objectives of Lithuanian history and Lithuanicity in the past. Great influence on the reinterpretation of certain issues, primarily the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the nineteenth century, has come from Polish academics (Juliusz Bardach, Jan Jurkiewicz), who emerged from the narrow confines of ethnolinguistic nationalism earlier.

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Thirdly, we cannot rule out the influence of recent political changes.[9] Lithuania's joining NATO and the European Union has changed concepts of what is politically correct, including concepts of the past. Increasing attention is being paid to the history of ethnic minorities, primarily the Jews, and this has been influenced by political convenience as well as the phenomena mentioned above. Directly or indirectly Lithuanians have been told that only democratic states, that is those which are able to speak openly and objectively about their past, especially about the Holocaust, can be admitted to the European Union or NATO.

In order to illustrate these changes in Lithuanian historical writing we have selected three topics from different periods: the "Lithuanicity" of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; the nineteenth-century concept of Lithuanian history and the formation of the modern Lithuanian nation; and research into Jewish history, especially the Holocaust.

PROBLEMS WITH THE HERITAGE OF THE GRAND DUCHY OF LITHUANIA

There should not be any problem in defining the object of research in the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, because the Grand Duchy did exist as a state with clearly defined borders. Looking at the place of the Grand Duchy in contemporary ethnic Lithuanian historiography, we can detect increased attention to nation-formation and the question of its development. Although even today there are still authors who claim that the Lithuanian nation formed before the mediaeval state, we come across increasing numbers of assertions in Lithuanian scholarship to the effect that the transformation from tribal to national consciousness takes place only after a state had been created as ties formed with a ruling dynasty and a certain social group, the nobility, came into existence as the "carrier" of that consciousness.[10]

[9] We should also note the influence that historical thought has had on political practice.
[10] Alvydas Nikžentaitis, *Nuo Daumanto iki Gedimino. Ikikrikščioniškos Lietuvos visuomenės bruožai* (Klaipėda, 1996), pp. 74-83.

As before, in Lithuanian historiography emphasis is laid on the claim that the nation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was in the political sense Lithuanian. Sharing out the heritage of the Grand Duchy has not only not weakened during the past fifteen years but has even grown more intense. We bear in mind here in particular the "late" development of the Belarusian nation, which sometimes leads historians to claim uncompromisingly that the Grand Duchy was a purely Belarusian state.[11] Thus Belarusian statements of the numerical eastern Slavic domination within that state are "countered" by claims in line with the principles of historicism that the life of the state was determined by the nobility who, despite their varied ethnic origins and the written and spoken language they used, regarded themselves as the Lithuanian political nation. That political nation was dominated by nobles from ethnic Lithuanian lands and the centre and capital of the state, Vilnius, was in ethnically Lithuanian land.[12] Stress is also laid on the fact that not only Ruthenians but also certain ethnic Poles began to identify themselves with the Lithuanian political nation, *gente polonus, natione lituanus* [Polish by birth, Lithuanian by nationality], as one seventeenth-century bishop of Žemaitija was described.[13]

Analysing the history of the Grand Duchy after the union of Lublin (1569-1795), Lithuanian scholars acknowledge that changes took place in the nobility's (the political nation's) identity. Some authors claim that in the political sense the nobility remained Lithuanian, that is, it identified with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and distinguished between its interests and those of the kingdom of Poland, but in the cultural sense it became Polish.[14] Others write about the formation of a dual political consciousness whereby from the end of the sixteenth century the nobility regarded itself increasingly not only as Lithuanian but also as Polish, that is, citizens of the Commonwealth of the Two

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[11] Jakub Zejmis, "Belarusian National Historiography and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a Belarusian State," *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 48 (1999), H. 3, pp. 383-396.

[12] Zigmantas Kiaupa, Jūratė Kiaupienė, Albinas Kuncevičius, *The History of Lithuania Before 1795* (Vilnius, 2000), pp. 167-169.

[13] Alfredas Bumblauskas, "Kaip galimos LDK paveldo dalybos?," *Naujasis židinys-Aidai*, nr. 6 (2003), p. 325.

[14] Kiaupa et al., *The History of Lithuania*, pp. 298-299, 363.

Nations, which came to be called with increasing frequency simply Poland. Thus the term "Poland" gained two meanings: the crown of Poland and also the joint body including both Poland and Lithuania. This body is referred to as a macro-nation.[15]

Some historians regard the Polonization process itself as the unavoidable price of Europeanization.[16] It is noticeable that Poland played a large role in making Lithuania European. Polish influence can be detected in law, the development of estate structure, the economy, art, and other areas.[17]

Thus when analysing political processes many Lithuanian historians stress the political Lithuanicity of the nobility and discuss events and processes that happened throughout the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. A similar situation has developed in discussions of cultural processes, especially literature. The processes and events connected directly with ethnic Lithuania are always studied in greater detail. This situation is determined often by the fact that Vilnius was an undoubted cultural centre and ethnic Lithuanian historians are more familiar with these kinds of sources. Many researchers including literary historians analyze written texts from throughout the Grand Duchy.[18] This involves material written in Lithuanian, Latin, Polish, and East Slavonic. For example, cultural-linguistic models of social development discussed in Lithuanian society include the Lithuanian, Latin, Slavonic and Sarmatian (Polish).[19] The literary historian, Sigitas Narbutas, has formulated his stance briefly and succinctly: "not only the history of our old literature

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[15] Edvardas Gudavičius, *Lietuvos europėjimo kelias. Istorinės studijos* (Vilnius, 2002), p. 187.

[16] It should be stressed that discussions of Lithuania's place in Europe have multiplied and ethnocentricity has declined. Meanwhile, at least some authors have not taken to the opposite extreme and there is no rush to assert unconditionally that Lithuanians have always been Europeans. It is clearly understood that Europeanness was always construed like any other collective identity such as, for example, nationality. See Darius Staliūnas, ed., *Europos idėja Lietuvoje: istorija ir dabartis* (Vilnius, 2002).

[17] Gudavičius, *Lietuvos europėjimo kelias*, pp. 211-226.

[18] The term literature is understood in a broad sense, including not only *belles letters* but also state documents.

[19] Darius Kuolys, "Visuomenės raidos projekcijos XVI amžiaus Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės raštijoje," *Šešioliktojo amžiaus raštija* (Senoji lietuvių literatūra, kn. 5) (Vilnius, 2000), pp. 9-23.

but also analyses of all cultural processes within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania should be based on state, that is civil links with Lithuania rather than thematic or any other authorial connection with Lithuania."[20]

However, this position is not the only one available when we discuss cultural processes throughout the Grand Duchy. It is open to criticism for a certain lack of consistency; for Narbutas himself, like many Lithuanian literary historians, regards literature created in Lithuanian in Lithuania Minor, a part of Prussia and never a part of the Grand Duchy, as being Lithuanian. While no great problems arise with Reformation authors, who had left the Grand Duchy and wrote in part for a readership within the Grand Duchy; it becomes much more difficult when we follow the "civil" affiliation criterion and place the eighteenth-century writer Kristijonas Donelaitis, who lived in Lithuania Minor, within the category of "Lithuanian" literature.[21] It should be stressed that we do not criticize the affiliation of Donelaitis to Lithuanian literary history per se, but rather the making of the civil criterion into an absolute.

At the same time, the earlier view that regards only the processes that took place in the territory of the modern Lithuania as being "Lithuanian" (or in the fashionable jargon, "ours" rather than "theirs," whoever "they" might be) has survived.[22] According to this view, among Latin publications published in the territories of the GDL only those published in the territory of the present Lithuania, or whose authors are ethnic Lithuanians or people originating from (ethnic) Lithuania, as well as those written for the use of the GDL or financed by Lithuanians, and, finally, those published outside the present Lithuanian territory

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[20] Sigitas Narbutas, *Tradicija ir originalumas Jono Radvano "Radviliadoje"* (Vilnius, 1998), p. 220.

[21] Brigita Speičytė, "LDK literatūros istorijos modelis," *Literatūra* 38:1 (2000), pp. 131–137.

[22] "In dealing with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania we will study what the relationship of this movement was with the state, how it affected its social structure and institutions, [and] what was the power and scale of its effect on society as a whole. These problems are studied by analysing processes that had an effect throughout the state. When dealing with the significance of the reformation for ethnic cultures, most attention will be paid to the history of Lithuanian culture … in this work we seek to complement research into the cultural history of Lithuanians within the context of the cultural development of other peoples," quoted from Ingė Lukšaitė, *Reformacija Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje ir Mažojoje Lietuvoje. XVI a. trečias dešimtmetis-XVII a. pirmas dešimtmetis* (Vilnius, 1999), pp. 46-47.

but "connected in some way or other with Lithuania" can be regarded as "ours."[23] Thus, the books published in Latin but outside the present Lithuanian territory, for example, in Minsk by the native gentry and distributed within the ethnically Belarusian land should not be an object of Lithuanian historical and literature studies.

It is very interesting that these authors describe political processes that affected the whole of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania but deal only with those literary processes that affected "ethnic Lithuania"; they see no lack of consistency in their stance. This is most likely the result of a balancing act between two poles of Lithuanian historical consciousness, the political and the ethnolinguistic. Ethnolinguistic Lithuanicity lies closer to the hearts of these authors and is more natural; hence, they concentrate on cultural processes connected solely with ethnic Lithuania. Since these criteria would not provide "proof" that the Grand Duchy in the period 1569-1795 was an ethnic Lithuanian state, the stress is laid on the Lithuanian political consciousness of the nobility and gentry. At the same time, the cultural Polonization of the gentry is regarded in a negative light. Sometimes we even encounter a reproach to the gentry: "the GDL nobility never realized that the rights of the Lithuanian language and culture had to be legitimized in the official state."[24] Thus some historians wonder why the mediaeval and early-modern gentry did not understand what is completely obvious to a modern nationalist.

Despite this thriving, basically ethnocentric tradition, we can state that today Lithuanian historiography is dominated by the view that the whole of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is "ours" in a cultural as well as a political sense. In other words, historians have passed through several stages since the beginning of the formation of the Lithuanian historical narrative: first of all, it was guided by the ethnolinguistic view which regarded only works written in Lithuanian as being Lithuanian; later all cultural processes affecting ethnic Lithuania were appropriated, including literature created in other languages (primarily Latin); now the dominant view is that the development of culture throughout the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania should be studied.

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[23] Eugenija Ulčinaitė, *Lietuvos Renesanso ir Baroko literatūra* (Vilnius, 2001), pp. 9-10.
[24] Kiaupa et al., *The History of Lithuania*, p. 300. We should, however, note that the authors of this remark discuss cultural processes in the Grand Duchy throughout the state.

FORMATION OF A MODERN NATION:
BETWEEN PRIMORDIALISM AND CONSTRUCTIVISM

Over the past fifteen years, the history of the nineteenth century has received more attention than throughout the earlier period of professional Lithuanian historical writing. After 1988 the traditional understanding of "national rebirth" or, in academic speak, "the primordialist view of the nation" did not disappear from Lithuanian historiography. Not only the older generation but many of the middle generation of Lithuanian historians treat the nation as a quantity that never changes its parameters (or to put it more simply, for them the Lithuanian language was always and continues to be the criterion for judging Lithuanian identity). The nation-building process is defined as an "awakening," that is, if we may put it this way, a "reminder" to the peasants who formed the basis of the Lithuanian people of their national identity which exists "objectively." Thus the "national rebirth" in this case is treated as an inevitable, natural process, which could take on only those forms that it has taken on. As a result, it is hardly surprising that these historians regard the history of nineteenth-century Lithuania essentially as the history of ethnic Lithuanians.

However, since 1988 we have seen another tendency. A new view of nineteenth-century Lithuanian history and the nation-building process is represented by a group of historians, who formed around the *Lietuvių atgimimo istorijos studijos* [Studies in the History of the Lithuanian Rebirth] series of publications.

What is new here? First of all, these researchers realized that they could not transpose ethnocultural or ethnolinguistic concepts of Lithuania back to the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries while maintaining the principle of historicism. Therefore, when dealing with this period in Lithuanian history, Lithuania was defined in the territorial sense interpreted by the society at that time and the Russian authorities, namely as the territory of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Later, the concept or rather concepts of Lithuania *tout court* became relevant, for at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there was no dominant theory of what Lithuania meant in public discourse. For the first time since the Third Partition of the

Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, during this period there already appeared a clear concept of ethnographic Lithuania (and indeed of Belarus). Attention to the role of other non-dominant ethnic groups in the history of nineteenth century Lithuania was connected with these changes.[25]

Lithuanian nationalism has come to be analyzed just like any other historical phenomenon. Quite quickly references appeared in the texts of Lithuanian historians to western theories of nationalism (citing the work of Ernest Gellner, Anthony D. Smith and Benedict Anderson), albeit using fragmental comments from these authors rather than their sociologized historical schemes, the application of which is usually regarded somewhat skeptically.[26] Thus, while the primordialist treatment of national problems was rejected (in this sense the title "Studies in the History of the Lithuanian Rebirth" is misleading), historians from Lithuania have not become radical constructivists. Of the aforementioned theorists of nationalism Smith is probably closest to most researchers, in that he acknowledges the continuity between ethnic groups and modern nations.

Lithuanian nationalism is treated as an inevitable process dating from about 1820, while it is stressed that the form it took (here we have in mind its ethnolinguistic nature with a very marked anti-Polish element) was not inevitable. Attention has been drawn in Lithuanian historical writings to the fact that the cultural Polonization of the gentry did not necessarily mean political identification with the forming modern Polish nation, and furthermore, a large section of the Žemaitijan gentry was affected only slightly by cultural or linguistic Polonization. Extensive research has shown too that in the mid-nineteenth century a separate programme for studying Lithuanian historical sources had been developed with the clear aim of proving the distinction between "our" history and that of Poland.[27] Thus it has

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[25] Tamara Bairašauskaitė, *Lietuvos totoriai XIX amžiuje* (Vilnius, 1996); Remigijus Civinskas, "Kauno žydų integracija į miestiečių luomą," *Darbai ir dienos*, nr. 28 (2001), pp. 51-66.

[26] An example is the frequent references to Gellner's stress on the role of industrialization for the formation of nationalism, which does not work for the economically quite backward Lithuanian case.

[27] Reda Griškaitė, *Simono Daukanto raštai, Laiškai Teodorui Narbutui: epistolinis dialogas* (Vilnius, 1996), pp. 11-170.

become quite popular to speak of the dual ethno-political consciousness of the Lithuanian gentry, which identified as much with a greater body, the macro-nation that included the whole of the Polish-speaking gentry of the former Commonwealth of the Two Nations, as with the historically-formed Lithuanian nation that was subordinate to that same macro-nation.

In recent times, Polish scholars have stated that the process of transformation from the gentry political nation to the ethnolinguistic modern nation has not yet been fully researched and that connections with the land were a very important, perhaps the essential factor in collective identity on the territory of the former Commonwealth in the mid-nineteenth century.[28] The idea that the Lithuanicity of the gentry in the 1850s could be regarded as a regional identity has been raised in Lithuanian scholarship. It is important to stress that in this case Lithuania is conceived as a separate historical-cultural region: that is, the term 'regional identity' does not mean that Lithuania is treated as a component part of Poland.[29] Mostly on the basis of descriptions by the famous Vilnius cultural figure Adam Kirkor, Antanas Kulakauskas even draws the conclusion that "we may assert that on the eve of the 1863-64 Uprising conditions had formed in Lithuania for a Lithuanian national culture to form (that is a modern national culture typical of modern times) and the basis for this was a synthesis of peasant sub-culture with the values of the gentry culture of the Grand Duchy. The tendency for a united trilingual community to form became clear. This tendency could have spread if the 1863 Uprising had been a success."[30] This interpretation does not explain why all the nationalisms that formed in East-Central Europe were more ethnolinguistic than civil in form (although it is hardly likely that these two ideal types existed in reality).

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[28] Roman Wapiński, *Polska i małe ojczyzny Polaków. Z dziejów kształtowania się świadomości narodowej w XIX-XX wieku po wybuch II wojny światowej* (Wrocław, Warsaw, Kraków, 1994), p. 60.

[29] Darius Staliūnas, "Lietuviškojo patriotizmo pėdsakai XIX a. viduryje," *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis 2000* (Vilnius, 2001), pp. 310-325.

[30] Antanas Kulakauskas, "'Šaka atskilusi nuo tautos...' Lietuvos bajorijos ir LDK bajoriškosios kultūros vaidmuo lietuvių tautiniame atgimime," *Sietynas* 3 (1988), pp. 91-92.

Thus the nineteenth-century Lithuanian gentry became "our own" although most of them spoke Polish. This situation has been depicted graphically by one of the editors of the "Studies in the History of the Lithuanian Rebirth" series: "a historian of the older generation is sad that Narbutt, Syrokomla or Mickiewicz[31] wrote in Polish and he rejects them on the basis of this ethnolinguistic criterion, but for us this is a fact that does not actually alter the nature of the question being researched." [32]

The form that Lithuanian nationalism took is linked by Lithuanian scholars with the failed Uprising of 1863-64 or, more accurately, with the repressive policies implemented after it by the Russian authorities primarily against the "Poles." In Lithuanian scholarship it is stated that the new leaders of Lithuanian nationalism came from the Suwałki Gubernia and many of them studied in Russian universities with special state scholarships; later, in seeking rights for Lithuanians they were happier communicating with the Russian authorities than with Poles. Other authors say that the leaders of modern Lithuanian nationalism in the second half of the nineteenth century adopted the pan-Slavic concept of the "ethnographic nation," which on the one hand allowed them to distance themselves ethnoculturally from the Poles, but, on the other hand, they felt "shoved" into the Russian geopolitical sphere of influence. [33]

At the same time, other historians stated that the post-Uprising repressions destroyed cultural centres in former Grand Duchy territories, primarily Vilnius, and the local gentry became "consumers of the cultural production" created in ethnic Polish lands; in other words, they began to see the Grand Duchy as just another Polish province. Clearly,

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[31] Teodor Narbutt was a historian, while Władysław Syrokomla-Kondratowicz and Adam Mickiewicz were poets.

[32] "Tautos istorinio tapatumo beieškant," *Kultūros barai*, nr. 2 (1995), p. 5.

[33] Česlovas Laurinavičius, Netradicinė recenzija Leono Sabaliūno monografijai "Lietuviška Socialdemokratija iš perspektyvos, 1893-1914 m.," *Lietuvių atgimimo istorijos studijos*, t. 4: *Liaudis virsta tauta* (Vilnius, 1993), pp. 437-448. Č. Laurinavičius thinks that the pan-Slavic concept of the "ethnographic nation," adopted by the Lithuanian national movement, allowed them to distance themselves from the Poles, since the concept was a counterargument against the concept of the "[Polish] political nation" to unify all national groups in this territory. Moreover, the concept was very useful for Russian geopolitical purposes to split the lands of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

these are more comments or hypotheses than conclusions based on in-depth research.

Attempts have been made recently to link Lithuanian nationalism with the specific formation of an intelligentsia in Central and Eastern Europe, one which was conditioned by the nature of the modernization of this region, namely its backwardness and underdevelopment. The theory is more or less as follows: the modernization initiated in the Russian Empire by the bureaucratic apparatus went hand in hand with unifying tendencies that led to the cultural assimilation of other ethnic groups; at the same time, the modernization process created conditions for a new social class, the intelligentsia, who experienced difficulties in finding their place in the imperial structures that were still for the most part traditional. Therefore, the intelligentsia created or joined opposition movements. It looked for support among the peasantry and so had no option but to stress the importance of ethnocultural values. The significance given to these values should also be connected with the intelligentsia's clear aim to distance itself from the traditional elite.[34] This interpretation, as we see, concerns the ethnocultural type of Lithuanian nationalism as essentially "inevitable," that is, conditioned by the "backwardness" of the empires of Eastern and Central Europe. Although, of course, this interpretation should not be equated with the "inevitability" of the primordialist view.

The move from ethno-centric to civil concepts of history is illustrated well by the great and perhaps even excessive interest that has developed in the *Krajowcy*[35] movement. The leaders of this movement, who were descended from GDL gentry and mostly identified with Polish culture, put forward a model for social development at the beginning of the twentieth century, which was intended to neutralize ethnic nationalism by forming a civil society on the territory of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania rather than an ethnocultural one. Thus, those who proposed an alternative development for Lithuanian society at the beginning of the twentieth century are now receiving almost as much

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[34] Vladas Sirutavičius, Vincas Kudirka's programme for modernizing society and the problems of forming a national intelligentsia, *Lithuanian historical studies* 5 (2000), pp. 99-112.
[35] From the Polish word *kraj*, which means land or territory.

attention as the leaders of the "victorious" nationalism.[36] We may say with confidence that at the present time the *krajowcy* have become a component part of the history of Lithuanian political thought. Of course, this does not mean at all that they cannot belong at the same time to the Polish or Belarusian political traditions.

These developments in the "mental map" have a bearing on another, different view of the nationalities policy of the Russian Empire. The view is becoming ever stronger in Lithuanian historical writing that this policy should be researched with regard to all non-dominant ethnic groups and should not be linked solely with the growth of Russian nationalism, but should also be seen within the context of the Empire's modernization needs and financial resources. All this leads us toward the conclusion that fewer and fewer historians stand by the view that the authorities sought to assimilate other ethnic groups from the very moment Lithuania was incorporated into the Russian Empire.

Coming to Terms with an Awkward Past: Lithuanian Jewry

Probably the most difficult issue facing contemporary Lithuanian historiography and especially mass historical consciousness is the history of Lithuanian Jewry. First of all, in the ethnocultural and confessional sense the Jews are considerably more alien to Lithuanians than the Poles.

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[36] Rimantas Miknys, "Stosunki polsko-litewskie w wizji politycznej krajowców," *Zeszyty Historyczne* 104 (Paris, 1993), pp. 123–129; D. Staliūnas, "Grazhdanin Velikogo Kniazhestva Litovskogo," *Vil'nius* (март-апрель 1995), pp. 122-143; *Lietuvių Atgimimo istorijos studijos,* t. 13: *Mykolas Römeris* (Vilnius, 1996); *Mykolo Römerio mokslas apie valstybę* (Vilnius, 1997); Jan Jurkiewicza, ed., *Krajowość – tradycje zgody narodów w dobie nacjonalizmu. Materiały z międzynarodowej konferencji naukowej w Instytucie Historii UAM w Poznaniu (11-12 maja 1998)* (Poznań, 1999); Jan Sawicki, *Mykolas Römeris ir buvusios Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės žemių tautinės problemos* (*Lietuvių atgimimo istorijos studijos*, t. 15) (Vilnius, 1999); R. Miknys, "Problem kształtowania się nowoczesnego narodu Polaków litewskich w pierwszej połowie XX wieku," *Biuletyn historii pogranicza*, nr. 1 (Białystok, 2000), pp. 21-31; Idem, "Wileńscy autonomiści i ich projekty autonomii politycznej Litwy w latach 1904-1905," *Lituano-Slavica Posnaniensia, Studia Historica* 8 (2001), pp. 97-114.

Thus it is no surprise that historians in the inter-war period, with a few exceptions, such as the leftist Augustinas Janulaitis, showed almost no interest in the history of Lithuania's Jews. Moreover, the active part played by some Lithuanians in the Holocaust undermines the myth embedded in Lithuanian consciousness that they and they alone are a martyred people.[37]

In addition to what we might call "domestic reasons," there were other circumstances in Soviet Lithuania that prevented open discussion of the history of the Jews in Lithuania, especially concerning the Holocaust. After 1945, when Lithuanian historiography was under the influence of Russian Marxism, the major historical agents were held to be the social classes; if Jews were mentioned at all, it was only as part of the working class, Marxist activists, and so forth. Even during investigations of crimes committed during the World War II mention was made only of "Soviet citizen victims." The Holocaust was not a subject for separate discussion.

Lithuanian Emigrants were dominated by the ethno-centric understanding of history that they took with them from inter-war Lithuania; discussions of the Holocaust were influenced, to a large extent, by those who had taken an active part in war-time events and who placed all the blame for what happened in Lithuania on the German Nazis. True, there was a variety of opinion among émigrés, and their liberal press, such as *Akiračiai,* did begin before 1988 to discuss the problem of Lithuanian involvement in the Holocaust.

Since the arrival of pluralism in Lithuanian historical writing after 1988, more favourable conditions have formed for open discussions of the Holocaust. At that time, Soviet propaganda "recalled" Lithuanian participation in the murder of Jews (according to the historical literature this card was also played during the Cold War to attack Lithuanian émigrés). In other words, there were attempts to frighten the world with the

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[37] As is well known, Lithuania is one of those European countries where the largest proportion of Jews was murdered during the World War II. Various figures are given in the literature but the most usual is 95 percent destruction. Pogroms began in Lithuania in the first days of the war and later certain Lithuanian self-defence brigades under German command participated in mass murders of Jews. The Lithuanian Provisional Government (not recognized by the Germans) even managed to pass anti-Jewish laws during its brief existence.

"dangerous Lithuanians," who were seeking independence from Moscow. This has caused further psychological problems for discussion of this painful subject.[38]

During the past fifteen years great changes have taken place in this area.[39] Lithuanian historians now describe the stages in the mass murder of Lithuanian Jewry like their colleagues in the West and Israel and, I would say, there are no longer any serious arguments over the number of those killed or other such matters.[40] Nevertheless, there are disagreements over certain basic matters. Some historians from other countries, primarily Israel, stress the initiative shown by Lithuanians in the murder of Jews in summer 1941 and later (we should draw attention to the fact that in these works the memoirs of Jewish survivors are a very important source), while most Lithuanian historians, although they do not deny the anti-Semitic mood of certain Lithuanian groups, stress that without the German occupation and the Nazis' deliberate attempts to draw local inhabitants into the murders, crimes on such a scale would not have been conceivable. Lithuanian historians base their work on the documents issued by the occupation regime, criminal evidence collected during the Soviet period and the memoirs of Lithuanians.

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[38] Vytautas Berenis, "Holokaustas ir lietuvių istorinė sąmonė," *Politologija* 3 (2000), p. 15.

[39] *Lietuvos žydų žudynių byla. Dokumentų ir straipsnių rinkinys*, compiled by Alfonsas Eidintas (Vilnius, 2001); A. Eidintas, *Žydai, lietuviai ir holokaustas* (Vilnius, 2002); see the chapters by A. Eidintas, "Das Stereotyp des 'jüdischen Kommunisten' in Litauen 1940-41," Valentinas Brandišauskas, "Neue Dokumente aus der Zeit der Provisorischen Regierung Litauens," Arūnas Bubnys, "Die litauische Hilfspolizeibataillone und der Holokaust," and Liudas Truska, "Litauische Historiographie über den Holocaust in Litauen," in Vincas Bartusevičius, Joachim Tauber, Wolfram Wette, eds., *Holocaust in Litauen. Krieg, Judenmorde und Kollaboration im Jahre 1941* (Köln, Wien, 2003), pp. 13-25, 51-62, 117-131, and 262-276; Alvydas Nikžentaitis, Stefan Schreiner, Darius Staliūnas, eds., *The Vanished World of Lithuanian Jews* (Amsterdam, New York, 2004); V. Berenis, "The Holocaust and Lithuanian Historical Consciousness" (http://www.artium.lt/4/berenis.html); also see many articles written for Lithuania's Presidential Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupations: http://db.komisija.lt/default.eng.asp

[40] There are not many historians who are still trying to lessen the scale of Lithuanian participation in these murders or excuse those involved. Their comments are marginal within the general historiographical context. This situation has been dealt with briefly by Liudas Truska in his "Litauische Historiographie über den Holocaust in Litauen," Bartusevičius et al., eds, *Holocaust in Litauen*, pp. 268-269.

Although on occasion Lithuanian historians stress that the roots of the participation of Lithuanians in the Holocaust should not be traced back to the anti-Semitism typical of nascent nineteenth-century Lithuanian nationalism, most agree that in the 1930s ethno-nationalist elements did become stronger in the outlook of part of Lithuanian society, especially young right-wingers. A "healthy" state, according to the ethno-nationalist canon is one that is ethnically monolithic. Nevertheless, Lithuanian historians are more inclined to stress the influence of specific circumstances at that time, such as the political crisis within the state. Thus, in 1938 Lithuania was forced to open diplomatic relations with Poland as a result of an ultimatum. The Klaipėda District [Memelland] was forcibly returned to Germany in 1939. In that same year Soviet military bases were forced on Lithuania and in 1940 the Soviet occupation began. Another specific reason, to which Lithuanian historians often refer, is the Lithuanians' assertion that Jews lent all manner of support to the Soviet occupation, although research has in fact shown that during the Soviet occupation of 1940-41 Jews suffered no less than Lithuanians and in percentage terms just as many of them as Lithuanians were exiled by the Soviet regime. Although proportionately there were more Jews in Communist party structures than might be expected from the proportion of Jews in society at large, they certainly did not dominate the Communist party. In addition, material benefit is often put forward as a motive for Lithuanians to take part in anti-Semitic actions.

If we recall how long it took West German society to begin to speak openly about the murder of Jews organized by the Nazis[41] and that in Ukraine, for example, historians still avoid speaking about the participation of local inhabitants in the Holocaust,[42] we can say that a considerable amount has already been achieved in Lithuania.

Further research into the events of World War II will, of course, help to form a more critical relationship with the past, but, in my view, if we wish to answer one of the most important questions here, that is, why Lithuanians took such an active part in the mass murder of Jews,

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[41] J. Tauber, "Coming to Terms with a Difficult Past," Schreiner et al., eds., *The Vanished World*, pp. 297-305.

[42] Yaroslav Hrytsak, "Ukrainskaia istoriografiia: 1991-2001. Desiatiletie peremen," *Ab Imperio*, No. 2 (2003), p. 442.

we need to research in greater depth not only the stereotypes held on both sides but also the dynamics of earlier Jewish-Gentile relations in Lithuania. There is a dominant view in the historical consciousness of Lithuanians and in part too in academic literature, which holds that, with the exception of the period 1941-1944, there was no great amount of violence in Lithuano-Jewish relations during the period these two groups dwelt in the same land. However, preliminary research has already shown that there were anti-Jewish acts of violence in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Lithuania (and we might call these "pogroms"). It is also obvious that conflicts, violence, and attacks here did not take on the scale they reached in Ukraine or Poland. Therefore, we must investigate which factors increased tension between the two ethnic groups. Secondly, we should establish which factors conditioned an increase in such attacks and turned them into direct collective physical violence. Thirdly, we should explore which factors contributed to the relatively low intensity of tension and collective violence; for example, what role was played here by the authorities, the power of the law or similar factors?[43]

Although we should agree with those historians who claim that there remain many other problems to be researched in connection with the Holocaust in Lithuania (and moral as well as academic imperatives oblige Lithuanian historians to deal with these), concentration on just this aspect of the question may be dangerous in my view. Here we face the danger of looking at the whole of the history of Lithuanian Jewry solely through the prism of the Holocaust and treating it solely as *Shoah* prehistory. In a similar way nineteenth-century Polish historiography most often viewed the whole Polish-Lithuanian past solely through the prism of the partitions of the state at the end of the eighteenth century. Thus Lithuanian historians' interest not only in Lithuanian views of the Jews and state policy towards this ethnoconfessional group but also in the development of Jewish society itself is a step to be welcomed. Of course, it will take time for such tendencies to begin to develop – for example Yiddish and Hebrew must be learned.

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[43] This problem was the subject of a conference "When Xenophobia Becomes Violence: the Dynamics of Lithuanian and Jewish Relations in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century," held at the Lithuanian Institute of History on December 23, 2003.

CONCLUSIONS

This brief survey of developments in Lithuanian historical thought over the past fifteen years shows that the popularity of ethno-centric Lithuanian history has declined and more and more historians are writing civic history, in others words, about how Lithuanian society has always been multi-cultural. No longer just politically but also culturally, the whole history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania has come to be regarded as "Lithuanian." When the history of nineteenth-century Lithuanian nationalism is analyzed, alternative developments are discussed. Gradually, other ethnocultural groups, including the Jews, are becoming a part of Lithuanian history. Historians are beginning to acknowledge that various concepts of the cultural history of the Grand Duchy are feasible: Lithuanian, Belarusian, and so on.[44] However, these changes mainly affect professional historians and, to a certain degree, textbooks, which are often written by them. These views still do not predominate in mass historical consciousness.

Lithuanians are very keen on appropriating famous Lithuanian figures who wrote and spoke Polish, such as Ignacy Domeyko (Ignotas Domeika) and Tadeusz Wróblewski (Tadas Vrublevskis), but there are no Polish inscriptions on memorial tablets to these men. In other words, Lithuanians are still unwilling in their mass consciousness to share the historical heritage with other nations. Events from the past belong either to "us" or to "them." Considerable differences have arisen between professional historiography and mass historical consciousness, for example, in discussions of the Holocaust and Jewish life in Lithuania in general. In non-academic texts the "two genocides theory" still thrives and the participation of a certain sector of Lithuanian society in the Holocaust is apparently justifiable on the basis of "criminal" Jewish behaviour during the first Soviet occupation of 1940-1941.

Whether or not the changes that have taken place in historical science will affect mass historical consciousness remains an open question.

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[44] Brigita Speičytė, "LDK literatūros istorijos modelis," *Literatūra* 38:1 (2000), pp. 131–137.