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Tailpiece – Rasa Prišmontienė, *Trojos arklys*, etching

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King Stanisław August (left) enters St. John's Cathedral,
where deputies will swear to uphold the Constitution.

Detail of a painting by Jan Matejko, oil on canvas, 1891.

Twists in Lithuanian-Polish Relations after the Reestablishment of Independence: A Historian's Reflections

BRONIUS MAKAUSKAS

More than two decades have passed since Lithuania and Poland peacefully regained their independence. What can be said about their mutual relations now? What have we learned from past conflicts over Lithuanian cultural and national emancipation, as well as the conflict (rare in history!) over Lithuania's capital Vilnius? We will attempt to answer these questions by focusing on the causes of these conflicts or, perhaps more accurately put, these misunderstandings.

As always, it's easiest to ascribe misunderstandings to a history that in a special way encoded the self-consciousness of both nations. But the development of relations between two nations, no matter how complex, is a real and ongoing process, dependent on the cultural and, thereby, political potential present in both nations.

During the lengthy period of Soviet occupation, mutual relations between Lithuanians and Poles were suspended, and the conflict over the Vilnius Territory, which had been more intense prior to and during World War II, was put on ice for a long time. In 1990, the collapsing Soviet Union once again used

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the principle of divide and rule, or more accurately, divide and influence, to stir up animosities in nations that were freeing themselves either from Soviet domination (Poland) or outright occupation (Lithuania). The Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, aka the Stalin-Hitler pact, became an instrument of Russian foreign policy in its efforts to blackmail the Baltic States, especially Lithuania.

The heralds of independence – Solidarność in Poland and Sąjūdis in Lithuania – foresaw the possibility that the Lithuanian-Polish conflict might be resurrected; therefore they tried, through official and unofficial contacts, to prepare the ground for constructive relations. Moscow, on the other hand, promoted a project of territorial division, or "autonomization" in Lithuanian districts inhabited by Poles and Belarusians; it also hoped to inspire similar ambitions among the roughly ten thousand local Lithuanians who had long lived in present-day Poland near its current border with Lithuania. Moscow's plans were frustrated by parliaments and governments influenced by Solidarność and Sąjūdis. Nevertheless, there arose among right-wing political forces in Poland some who wanted to amass political capital in the name of "defending Polish interests." The Marshal of the Polish Senate, Andrzej Stelmachowski, supported the Polish "autonomists" in Lithuania, who acted under direct instructions from Moscow. One of their leaders received asylum in Poland, thereby evading the judgment of Lithuanian jurisprudence.

These aspects deserve to be mentioned because in Poland the attitude toward the Lithuanian struggle for independence was by no means unambiguous and was always accompanied by glances toward Moscow: how would it react? Still, all in all, it has to be said that, even though Poland was in no hurry to recognize Lithuanian independence, it did provide help to Lithuania as the latter went forward on its path of liberation. By the same token, Poland tried maximally to safeguard its own interests in the Vilnius Territory, a matter that raised strong emotions on both the Polish and the Lithuanian side. Finally, it was possible to contain Moscow's designs to provoke

ethnic conflict in the Vilnius region, not only through the efforts of democratically inclined forces in Poland, especially the supporters of the policy advocated by Jerzy Giedroyc (Jurgis Giedraitis) with respect to Poland's eastern borders, but also thanks to the restrained behavior of Lithuanian authorities and communities. A major part in this process of rapprochement was played by Pope John Paul II. A major contribution to the maintenance of peace was also provided by international democratic factors that helped contain a direct military attack by Moscow's forces on Vilnius and other Baltic locations with the intent to crush the process of reestablishing independence.

It is also worth emphasizing that the brightest representatives of this region's political émigrés attempted to defuse the antagonisms that had burdened Central European nations in the interwar period and to constructively model better relations. Problems of national conciliation in post-Soviet circumstances were discussed in the intellectual circles of the Lithuanian, Estonian, Latvian, Polish, Belarus, and Ukrainian emigration. Much influence in this area was wielded by the Paris-based Polish journals *Kultura* and *Zeszyty Historyczne*, produced by a group led by Giedroyc, who comes from a family rooted in the multiethnic territory of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Gathering together intellectuals of Central Eastern European ancestry, Giedroyc fostered the development of a political democratic elite that valued the traditions of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and was mindful of the dangers of resuscitating the ethnic and territorial conflicts of the prewar period.

Giedroyc's conception of coexistence without conflicts over borders and patrimony was what basically tempered Lithuanian-Polish relations once independence had been reestablished. Much uncertainty nevertheless remained, shown by the long negotiations between Lithuania and Poland over the Treaty on Friendly Relations and Good Neighborly Cooperation: these negotiations took almost four years and at times seemed to reach a dead end. Lithuanians, having lost Vilnius in 1920 due to a stronger neighbor's military campaign, felt

insecure now, too; they sought a treaty to ensure their state's territorial integrity and to integrate the Polish minority into that state's life. The Poles pretended not to understand Lithuania's fears, sought a nonstandard status for the Polish minority in Lithuania, and refused any discussions about their takeover of Vilnius in 1920. Such an attitude aroused Lithuanian concerns that the Polish minority factor was being granted undue priority over other factors important for mature interstate relations. Only when Vilnius made concessions in response to attitudes prevailing in European Community and NATO states did Lithuania and Poland reach a consensus in 1994 and sign a treaty on bilateral relations. But the lacunae and ambiguities that remained in it cloud mutual relations until the present day.

Why did two long-time partners responsible for creating an entity unique in Europe, a Commonwealth of Two Nations (in fact, a multinational one), not only fail the test of European modernization, but also, upon the fall of this construction at the end of the eighteenth century, so acrimoniously part ways at the beginning of the twentieth? This is a question the answer to which has long been and still is being sought. It has something to do with the cultural heritage of their centuries-long existence together, the contrasting evaluations the nations involved have put on the past, and the disparate interests of the Lithuanian and Polish nations together, with the possibilities of realizing them.

The main problem with Lithuanian-Polish coexistence has been programmed into their cultural heritage, which each side evaluates differently or does not want to analyze critically at all. The political elite of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, having adopted the Polish language, opened the gates for Polonization. Neither then nor later did anyone create levers for maintaining or promoting the Lithuanian language. As a result, the process of Lithuanian culture went forward through, and by means of, the Polish language, in which masterpieces of high culture were created in Lithuania. Suffice it to recall Adam Mickiewicz, Władysław Syrokomla, Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, and Stanisław Moniuszko, without whom Polish

culture would be inconceivable. Unfortunately for the Lithu-
anians, the romantic visions and images of Lithuania harbored
by Mickiewicz and Kraszewski not only encouraged the Lithu-
anian patriotic movement that led to so-called "Lithuanian sepa-
ratism," but also helped to solidify the Polish image of Lithuania
as a Polish area that can in no way be separated from, nor exist
independently of, Poland.

Understanding Lithuania and Lithuanians creates prob-
lems for Lithuanian and Polish historians as well as students
of culture. When the Poles laid claim to Vilnius, annexed it on
narrowly nationalist-cultural grounds, and Polonized the com-
mon cultural heritage, a dialogue between both nations be-
came practically impossible and has been resuscitated thanks
only to the great efforts of well-meaning individual politicians
and cultural activists. This dialogue is quite fragile, though, it
being no easy task to contain a much larger nation's egoism.
Nor is it simple to rationalize the threats felt by the smaller
nation. But to make the entire issue of Lithuanian and Polish
relations hostage to a strange way of understanding Polish in-
terests in Lithuania (a way fostered in some Warsaw circles) is
not a sound basis for future relations.

Still, what is heartening is the fact that, in the past, Lithua-
nian-Polish relations had, in effect, acquired major significance
and had an impact on geopolitical interactions in Europe. It
was then that Lithuania and Poland had many successes: they
not only jointly warded off external aggressions, but also en-
riched high European culture, especially in the legal and liter-
ary fields. Today, for well-understood reasons, Lithuania can
no longer offer such a strategic partnership and historical bul-
wark to Poland. Let us be glad as well that, in times of sharp
misunderstandings, there arose on both sides individuals who
thought and acted rationally and who impeded the spread of
discord even at the risk of loss of popularity and of censure.
One such personality was the Blessed Jurgis Matulaitis, who
became bishop of Vilnius during a time of great multinational
troubles but maintained his characteristic dignity and did his
best to soften the conflicts. His efforts were not welcomed by

Poland's political leaders at that time and he was forced to give up his duties as bishop of Vilnius. But his life's motto "Overcome evil with good" was recognized by John Paul II, who acknowledged the bishop's nobility and worked to contribute to settling the juridical status of the Vilnius Archdiocese and thus protected the local Lithuanian and Polish faithful from further politicization of this issue.

Looking at things from the Lithuanian point of view, one can see how much Lithuanian energy and demographic, territorial, and other kinds of resources were channeled to the Republic of Two Nations for the benefit of its state policy and its Polish-language culture. Present-day Poland, having absorbed this heritage and aspiring to be one of the great European nations, is not yet fully capable of properly evaluating this inheritance from historical Lithuania. Looking at the situation from the Polish point of view, it seems that Poland feels indebted only to "its own" Lithuanians who helped create Polish history, but it is unable morally to appreciate the aspirations of those Lithuanians who, at the end of the nineteenth century, undertook a philological, language-based reconstruction of the Lithuanian nation. Thus Poland, looking at what it takes to be a part of the Grand Duchy bedeviled by "linguistic complexes," feels comfortable and is unburdened by any historical debts or commitments to the present.

In short, contemporary Poland does not acknowledge or consciously appreciate the historical continuity of present-day Lithuania, and in its own historical consciousness, it has difficulties dealing with the fact of Lithuania's national revival. To be sure, there are a variety of attitudes in Poland itself, and the latter observation applies only to that part of Poland's "establishment" that is inclined to continue prewar political traditions. It might be noted that prewar motivations and attitudes (unresolved complexes, if you will) are alive in Lithuania as well. Becoming acquainted with one's own past and rationalizing it was impeded in Lithuania by the foreign occupations. Independence having been regained, these processes intensify.

Translated by Mykolas Drunga

The May Third Constitution and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania

LIUDAS GLEMŽA

Introduction

The Constitution of May 3, 1791 arouses the greatest passions in the field of Lithuanian history, dividing both historians and the reading public into two camps with differing evaluations of the document. If one had to specify the balance of forces, I would say that the more popular camp in Lithuania today consists of the Constitution's skeptics, for whom the May 3rd date is a memorable day, not so much in Lithuania's history as in Poland's. The first attempts to commemorate this day publicly were essentially not heard, while the efforts of Seimas deputy Emanuelis Zingeris in 2007 to declare the day of the passage of the Constitution a memorable day in the history of the Lithuanian state provoked heated discussions and disputes.[1] The disputes were triggered by uncompromising arguments on both sides, while the most difficult task of all was for one side to hear the other and look deeper at the position of the opposing camp. Responding to the events, historians of Vilnius

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[1] On May 2, 2007, in the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, a scholarly conference *Bendra praeitis, bendra ateitis: nuo pirmosios Konstitucijos Europoje iki bendros ateities Europoje* took place, which scholars from Lithuania, Belarus, Poland, and Germany attended.

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Pedagogical University (now Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences) prepared a public statement and later initiated a scholarly discussion entitled "Dar kartą apie Gegužės 3 d. konstituciją" (Once More About the May Third Constitution). During these discussions, historians reached a cautious general conclusion (more likely a compromise) and recognized the Constitution as a significant event in Lithuanian history. But the conclusion was not widely broadcast. The viewpoint of opponents was said to be "inaccurate" and was rarely heard, because questions of political importance (to commemorate the date or not) remained in the forefront. Mockery was expressed, making the discussion even more difficult, because in this way the very document of the Constitution and its era acquired negative connotations.[2]

At the international conference entitled Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštystė XVIII amžiuje: tarp tradicijų ir naujovių (The Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century: Between Tradition and Innovation), held in 2011 at the Institute of Lithuanian History, one more attempt was made to speak publicly about the meaning of the May Third Constitution. By joint agreement and without objection from either side, the conference reached the conclusion that the May Third Constitution was a significant document in Lithuanian history, not only in the history of Lithuania and Poland, but of the current Belarus and Ukrainian nations, at that time part of the Commonwealth of Two Nations, as well. It appears that this time both sides were better able to listen to each other.[3] The purpose of this article is not to raise the question of whether or not the May 3rd date

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[2]   The text of the April 29, 2007 statement by VPU historians is available online: (http://www.politika.lt/index.php?cid=9315&new_id=374500). For information about the VPU conference see Burbaitė, et al., "Dar kartą apie Gegužės 3-osios konstituciją," and Sirutavičius, "Lenkijos elitas nėra prorusiškas." The positions on the question of the May Third Constitution are presented more broadly in Lopata and Sirutavičius, Lenkiškasis istorijos.

[3]   The Conference at the Institute of Lithuanian History was held on November 24-25, 2011. Historians Robertas Jurgaitis, Eligijus Raila, Andrzej Stroynowski, Andrzej B. Zakrzewski, Zigmantas Kiaupa, Valdas Rakutis, Ramunė Šmigelskytė-Stukienė, Vaidotas Vaičaitis, and Liudas Glemža participated in the discussions.

should be commemorated, but rather to direct attention to the significance of the document in Lithuania's history and, at the same time, highlight the most important sensitive issues that remain unresolved and recur in the continuing discussions among scholars.

In its form and content, the document adopted on May 3, 1791 by the Sejm of the Commonwealth of Two Nations conforms to what we know as a constitution. Early on, its original name, An Act of Government (*Ustawa Rządowa*), fell into disuse and was replaced by a reference to the date of its adoption, hence the better-known name of the May Third Constitution.[4] Essentially, at that time, every law adopted by the Sejm was called a constitution, but the May Third Constitution differed from the others because it alone defined the rights and freedoms of the citizens and prescribed the forms of governance and organization of the state. In its purposes and content, the document is not unlike the first national constitutions in Europe and the world, those of the United States of America (1787) and France (1791).

Looking from a broader perspective of historical events, one recognizes that the May Third Constitution yields to those of France and the United States, because the latter two declared the equality of all citizens before the law and in this way dismantled discriminatory class structures. Lithuania and Poland had a different history, and thus their societies were not prepared for the kind of changes that occurred in revolutionary France. Nevertheless, the May Third Constitution opened up possibilities for city dwellers to participate in the governance of the state; it softened the autocratic domination of the boyars, established separate legislative, executive and judicial authorities, and declared the Commonwealth a constitutional monarchy

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[4] The text of the May Third Constitution was published in *Volumina legum*, Vol. 9, 215-225; a partial translation of the document into Lithuanian (without the April 18, 1791 City Law included in the Constitution) was prepared soon after its adoption (see Tumelis, "Gegužės trečiosios konstitucijos," 90-132); Eligijus Raila and V. Čepaitis published a scholarly Lithuanian translation of the Constitution's text in 2001 (*1791 m. gegužės 3 d. konstitucija ir Lietuva*).

based on class. A provision in the text of the Constitution specified that the new order would not change for twenty-five years. This long-term perspective did not bar the way for immediate major reforms, which continued intensively up until July 1792, despite considerable opposition. At that time, army troops of the Russian Empire invaded the Commonwealth, advancing deep into the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland. King Stanisław August, the last ruler of the Commonwealth, capitulated and joined the Targowica Confederation, which was ill-disposed toward reforms. Thus the course of reforms that were only beginning and could have continued was broken off, despite the safety valve of the twenty-five year clause. Nevertheless, viewed from a broader historical perspective, it is clear that the May Third Constitution laid the foundation for fundamental social and political changes in the territories of the Commonwealth.

The circumstances of the passage of the Constitution

Reforms nurtured by the Commonwealth since the middle of the eighteenth century had met with considerable opposition from neighboring states, especially Prussia and Russia. However, a change in geopolitical circumstances changed the climate in favor of reform. The most important incentives came with the start of the Russo-Turkish war in 1787, which introduced elements of uncertainty into the situation. Dissatisfaction among the great European states was rising because of Catherine II's ambitions in the Balkan Peninsula. A tripartite union against Russia was formed by England, Prussia, and the Netherlands; Sweden declared war in 1788, intending to free itself from Russia's political domination. England supported both Sweden and Turkey. As tensions along the Russian border grew and military actions broke out on two fronts, against Turkey and Sweden, the situation in the Commonwealth changed in favor of reform because Russia no longer could devote sufficient attention to its neighbor. The Sejm assembled in 1788 and decided to increase the state's military forces in order to

bring it out of international isolation. At the beginning of 1789, pressured by the Sejm, Russia withdrew its troops from the territories of Poland and Lithuania, which allowed the boyars of the two countries to resolve internal conflicts without outside interference. That same year the French revolution began. The great powers fixed their gaze on Sweden, France, and the Balkans. The Commonwealth formed a military alliance with Prussia, at that time hostile to Russia's imperial designs, even though two cities belonging to the Polish kingdom, Danzig (now Gdańsk) and Toruń, were the first targets of Prussia's expansionist plans. The alliance was not strong, but it gave hope to the reform-minded leaders in the Sejm. Tensions in Europe persisted until the end of the Russo-Turkish war early in 1792, which created an interval propitious for reform.[5] The Sejm continued to work for four years, thus acquiring the name of the Four-Year Sejm. Deputies elected to the Sejm in 1788 sat until the summer of 1792; their ranks were supplemented by new deputies, elected in 1790 (elections to the Sejm traditionally took place every two years).

The decision of the Sejm to increase the army of the Commonwealth to 100,000 soldiers meant significantly deeper administrative and social reforms, for without them the military plans could not have been implemented. It was clear that the boyars alone could not defend the state and that more potential defenders were needed. It was essential to modernize the state's governing apparatus to make it more efficient. Since the neighboring monarchies of Prussia, Russia, and Austria were considered to be the best examples of well-run states, efforts were made to centralize the government following their example, taking into account local traditions. King Stanisław August, Marshall of the Polish Confederation Stanisław Małachowski, Poland's Chancellor Hugo Kołłątaj, and Court Marshall of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL) Ignotas Potockis (Ignacy Potocki) led the effort. They formed the core of the so-called

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[5] See Šmigelskytė-Stukienė, *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės*, 43-47.

Patriot Party. The king and his closest accomplices succeeded in drawing other nobles to their side, including Lithuanians, among them GDL Confederation Marshall Kazimieras Nestoras Sapiega (Kazimierz Nestor Sapieha) and GDL Vice Chancellor Joachimas Liutauras Chreptavičius (Joachim Litawor Chreptowicz). They were invited to some of the secret meetings, but were not made aware of everything. Since the king and his closest advisors (Kołłątaj, Małachowski, and Potockis) were the authors of the May Third Constitution, its contents became known only in the hall of the Sejm and did not meet the expectations of either Chreptavičius or Sapiega.

To ensure the ratification of the Constitution, the king and his band of reformers resorted to ruses. The Constitution was presented for discussion to the Sejm early in the session because the opponents of reform, traditionally late, had not yet returned from vacation. But supporters of reform were secretly informed of the necessity to be present at the May session from the very beginning. The election of deputies to the Sejm in 1790 had strengthened their (the Patriot Party's) position, but they did not have a clear majority. For this reason, advocates of the Constitution sought the support of the city dwellers, whose delegates, invited to Warsaw from the whole Commonwealth, were expected to strengthen the hand of reformers by their presence. The city dwellers were not informed about the constitutional project or the forthcoming debates and had been ordered to send their delegates to Warsaw only to express gratitude for the April 18, 1791 City Act, which was expressly included in the draft of the May Third Constitution "without any changes."

In the Sejm hall, twenty-seven deputies, nobles and boyars, openly expressed their opposition to the Constitution. According to the calculations of historian Adolfas Šapoka, the majority of the deputies from Lithuania present in the Sejm chambers backed the reforms: thirty GDL deputies supported the Constitution, while more than twenty were against it.[6]

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[6] Šapoka, Lietuva reformų seimo metu, 33.

However, the Constitution did not receive the backing of the nobles. GDL Vice Chancellor Chreptavičius, even though he was present in the Sejm's chambers, remained aloof,[7] while Sapiega tried to protest publicly against the document, as the initiators of reform had not informed him of its possible adoption. Hearing the text of the Constitution in the Sejm chamber, he demanded a second reading and proposed that the document be approved only when all the deputies had assembled. Realizing that nothing would be changed, he addressed the Sejm:

> I see many provisions in this act which do not conform to my convictions and which I would like to change, but because the time for a final decision has come and seeing that the act is fervently supported by so many deputies and that the king has already sworn to it, by standing apart from them I can see only a divided nation and the doom of the homeland [...] The duties I hold in the Sejm could make my opposition harmful; it could be used as pretext, without malice intended, to tear down the work of the confederation that has lasted almost three years and is supported by the nation. Foreign forces could take advantage of the division [...] Fearing this terrible scene and realizing that in avoiding a small evil I could be bringing about a larger one, for the love of the homeland and its welfare I am, this one time, forced to sacrifice my convictions. I am not self-centered enough to believe that for the sake of the homeland my convictions should be to put into practice rather than those of the king, the honorable Marshall of Poland's Confederation [Stanisław Małachowski] and the distinguished members of the Sejm. Valuing their virtues, I support the oath given by the king in the Sejm.[8]

Sapiega's speech calmed down the inflamed passions. However, historians disagree as to how Sapiega himself should be evaluated. For some, he is an example of personal and political calculation; others argue that the May 3rd speech reflected his genuine sympathies for the reformers of the Patriot Party, which he is said to have concealed because of family ties (through his mother) to the Branickis family, open adversaries

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[7] Tracki, *Ostatni kanclerz litewski*, 152-153.
[8] Quoted in Šapoka, *Lietuva reformų seimo metu*, 412-413.

of reforms. Sapiega's subsequent life and adherence to princi-
ple on essential questions lend support to the second version.[9]
Perhaps it would be best to see his speech as an attempt to find
a compromise for the sake of the future and the common pur-
poses of the Commonwealth of Two Nations.

Innovations brought about by the May Third Constitution

The May Third Constitution abolished all deleterious
laws (and traditions) that raised turmoil in the state and of-
fered opportunities for foreign countries to interfere in its inter-
nal affairs. It declared for all times the abolishment of the right
of the *liberum veto* and banned all manner of confederations
that disrupted society and undermined its governance or acted
in a spirit "contradicting the spirit of the Constitution." A pro-
vision was introduced establishing a hereditary throne, based
on the arguments of "the misfortunes experienced during the
years without a king," the duty to protect the state's inhabitants
from disorder, the intent "to block the way for foreign influ-
ences for all time," the necessity of efforts to have authorities
"act together for the freedom of the nation, and finally, "in the
name of the Homeland." These reforms were directed against
the disregard for political authority that had taken root among
the noblemen of the Commonwealth. Furthermore, the small
boyars, whose only source of livelihood was all-out service
to the nobility, were kept from participating in the political
life of the country by taking away their right to vote in the

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[9] At the last meeting of the Guardian of the Laws, Sapiega argued
for the necessity to vigorously oppose the Russian army and urged
the king to refuse an oath of allegiance to the Targowica Confed-
eration. When the Sejm decided by majority vote to end military
activities and accept the demands of the opposition, Sapiega, hav-
ing expressed his protest, withdrew to the West and returned to
the GDL only after the start of the 1794 revolution. He fought in
the territory of the Brest voivodeship, distinguishing himself in de-
fending Vilnius from the Russian army, but he was not reinstated
as GDL artillery general and served in the rebel army as an artillery
officer. After the defeat of the uprising, he withdrew again to the
West, where he died in 1798. See: Kądziela, "Sapieha Kazimierz
Nestor," 65–67.

Sejmiks (local parliaments).[10] The votes of the small, landless boyars were especially important to the nobles who sought to advance their personal political interests. These restrictions were seen not only as a way to curb license, but excessive freedom as well.

Because of these provisions, the prerogatives of the boyars and the very conception of boyardom changed gradually, conditioned by political as well as mental processes. Some thirty years earlier, a Sejm law had tied the exceptional prerogatives of the boyar to his origin, stating that "in this nation, the boyar right of equality and origin, even of the most impoverished [boyar], is an honor."[11] But in the May Third Constitution, boyardom is said to derive not only from one's origin, but, in accordance with Enlightenment views, from one's wealth and responsibilities as well:

> We recognize all boyars to be mutually equal, not only in seeking office and serving the homeland, which brings honor, glory, and advantages, but also in access to privileges and prerogatives of the boyar class, first of all, the right to personal security and personal freedom as well as ownership of land and movable property.

In so defining the prerogatives of the land-owning boyars, the Constitution changed the older, archaic model, which limited boyar activities to defense and state government. It also affirmed the 1775 law that allowed the boyars to engage in commerce as well as legalized nobilization, thus opening the boyar class to non-noble persons of distinction. The first article (point eleven) of the City Law of the Constitution declared:

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[10] Section II of the May Third Constitution was oriented toward the landowning boyars; the May 28, 1791 law of the Sejmiks states these limitations more concretely. Only those landowners and boyars paying taxes to the state preserved the right to vote: *Volumina legum*, Vol. 9, 234. The Sejmik Law in the Constitution was named "the essential foundation of a citizen's freedom."

[11] "prawo równości i urodzenia szlacheckiego, chociażby w największym ubóstwie, jest w tym narodzie zaszczytem" from "Warunek prerogatyw," 167.

[...] for noble boyars and citizens of the city dweller class on whom later the honor of becoming boyars will be bestowed, from now on there will be no obstacles to accepting the city's citizenship, to be a citizen, to hold office, and engage in any kind of commerce or maintain any manufactories; this will not adversely affect the honor of the boyars or that of their heirs or the prerogatives tied to it.

The authors of the Constitution ensured for the boyars the exceptional right to property and personal security:

> We honor, conserve, and strengthen personal security and any kind of property held legally as a genuine connection in society; they are as precious for the citizens' freedom as the pupil of the eye; and we want that in the future they be honored, conserved, and inviolable.

But the City Law, part of the Constitution, also ensured the right to property and personal security for city dwellers, who previously did not have these rights. Section III of the Constitution states that the prerogatives granted by the City Law provide "a new and effective power to free boyars for the security of their freedom and the integrity of their common homeland." One can thus argue that the statement contained in the Constitution to the effect that "all citizens are defenders of the nation's integrity and freedoms" applies not only to the boyars, but the city dwellers as well. Jokūbas Sidorovičius, a scribe of the Vilnius Magistrate, wrote that the City Law and the May Third Constitution "raised the inhabitants of the city dweller class and merged them into the body of the Commonwealth of Two Nations." It granted them "a citizen's life, giving birth to us for the sake of the homeland in which until then we had in fact not lived."[12] This conception of civic life applied to city dwellers, not by virtue of a specific passage in the Constitution, but because their rights and liberties were seen as being equal in part to those of the boyars, and thus included the possibility of holding office at the lower levels of state administration. In other words, city dwellers acquired their rights by virtue of the

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[12] Sidorowicz, September 7, 1791. "Mowa przy przyjęciu," 187.

entirety of the City Law.[13] This change reflected not so much a revolution, but rather a cautious modification of the situation existing before the Four-Year Sejm. Cities and their inhabitants were becoming more open, more willing to look beyond their town, more conscious of events in the Commonwealth. The conception of the state and the citizen had begun to change,[14] to include not only the boyars, but also the city dwellers and the peasants. A passage in the Constitution about matters related to the defense of the state reflects this fact:

> all citizens are defenders of the nation, one and indivisible, and of its liberties. The army is nothing other than the concentrated power of defense arising from the power of the whole nation.

Interestingly, one also finds in the Constitution a formulation describing the peasant class as "[comprising] the greatest part of the nation's inhabitants and thus its strongest power."

The May Third Constitution did not complete its task of instituting social reforms; it only opened the way for them. Because the model of the state stipulated in the document was a constitutional monarchy based on class, free peasants were given a separate section. As for persons of Jewish origin, who constituted a separate social group, separate statutes defining their rights and liberties were also being prepared. Occasionally, there are reproaches that the May Third Constitution did not free peasants and did not abolish serfdom. However, one needs to keep in mind that such changes were not feasible because of the growing external threat and the fact that they would have provoked opposition to the reforms as a whole. Discussions about serfdom had appeared in the press, but neither the landowning boyars nor the peasants were prepared for such a change. The authors of the Constitution guaranteed the free peasants only state guardianship and protection under the law in cases of unsubstantiated actions or demands by the landowners.

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[13] Glemža, *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės*, 75-82.

[14] In parallel to the concept of the citizen there also existed the concept of the citizenship of the *powiat*, or city.

The May Third Constitution drew up plans for the modernization of the state; however, their implementation required additional laws, decrees, and statutes to regulate the function, structure, internal organization, and activities of existing institutions and of those yet to be created. The head of the central executive power, the actual government, known as the Guardian of the Laws, received the greatest attention in the text of the Constitution. It was forbidden to issue and interpret laws, which indicates that the activities of this institution were determined in a manner that attests to the strict separation of the legislative, executive, and legal authorities. Guidelines for the activities of the three authorities were briefly drawn up in a separate section of the Constitution; however, discussion, debates, preparation, and coordination of various related projects continued to preoccupy the Sejm. With the approval of separate judicial hierarchical structures for the cities, foundations were laid for the creation of separate administrative units, i.e., districts within the state. To assist the Guardian of the Laws, the authors of the Constitution drew up plans for shared commissions of Education, Police, War, and Treasury, even though this was not expressly stipulated in the Constitution. This blueprint for organizing the government was implemented only after the Sejm approved specific laws regulating the structure and activities of the commissions. But there were exceptions.[15] Seeking greater effectiveness for the Police Commission, a system of administrative suboffices went into effect toward the end of the Four-Year Sejm. However, on the whole, the formulations of the Constitution were of a more general nature, which left open the possibility of correcting or reinterpreting them as the situation changed. Thus, if the Constitution opened the way

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[15] The Treasury Commission of the GDL was to be fused with Poland's Treasury Commission into a single Treasury Commission of the Two Nations. In the May Third Constitution, as well as in the law establishing a joint Treasury Commission for Poland and Lithuania, a joint Treasury Commission for the whole state was foreseen. However, this instituton was not created. See Brusokas, et al., "Biurokratinių struktūrų raida."

and signaled the start of large-scale reforms, it did not have the time to implement them because of increasing tensions and direct threats from the Russian Empire. The Constitution was in force for only one year; the City Law, considered part of it, was briefly reinstated at the time of the uprising of 1794.

The Status of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the Commonwealth of Two Nations

The authors of the May Third Constitution tied the strengthening of the Commonwealth to the vision of a centralized and unified country; therefore, the question of the statehood of the GDL within the Commonwealth was not raised, or was circumvented. The nobles and the boyars of the GDL defended the principle of a separate and self-governing state; to them this was a matter of maintaining social prestige and of access to titles and functions that provided greater possibilities for political activities. Thus, it is no surprise that the text of the May Third Constitution was met with dissatisfaction by Lithuania's deputies. They separated into two groups. The first, led by Sapiega, was inclined to accept a compromise; he swore allegiance to the Constitution, but also strove to restore the rights of the GDL by urging adoption of an additional law to determine questions of the systemic relationship between the two states. The second group, one of whose leaders was Livonian Bishop Juozapas Kazimieras Kosakovskis, was not inclined to enter into any compromises with the reformers; it openly objected, not only to the violations of the rights of the GDL, but also to the restrictions placed on all boyar rights and liberties.[16] This group was the more vocal in the May Third Sejm. As Šapoka recognized, on May 3-5, 1791 the deputies of the GDL in the opposition must have noticed not so much "the unitary nature of the Constitution, but the limitation of boyar liberties and the strengthening of the king's authority." He stressed that "the arguments of the Lithuanian deputies who opposed the

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[16] Šmigelskytė-Stukienė, *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės*, 38-39; Raila, *1791 m. gegužės 3 d. konstitucija*, 74.

Constitution were identical to those of the Poles"[17] and that, therefore, on May 3rd, the question of Lithuania's self-government was not uppermost in the minds of the most ardent opponents of reforms. Jūratė Kiaupienė reiterates this idea:

> Thus, the fact that the GDL deputies in the Sejm agreed to approve the Constitution as a whole does not prove that they also agreed with the unitary model of the state discussed in it. The GDL deputies supported the Constitution because they understood that it was essential to reorganize the order of the state and address the dangers that had arisen for the sovereignty and even the existence of the state.[18]

Opposition to the centralization of the Commonwealth (circumventing GDL rights within a common state) was expressed in the Sejm immediately after the adoption of the Constitution in May.[19] Therefore, as early as October 20, 1791, the Sejm took up the discussion of a law on the Mutual Guarantee of the Two Nations[20] initiated by Sapiega and his supporters. The law was to restore GDL positions as stipulated in the statutes of the 1569 Union of Lublin. When Poland's nobles and boyars expressed dissatisfaction with the proposed law, Stanisław August, one of the proponents of state centralization and unification, calmed down the Polish deputies and sought a compromise. The compromise did not mean the return of full rights to the GDL; nevertheless, the law adopted included guarantees of equal representation in joint-state institutions (e.g., the War and the Treasury Commissions) for GDL nobles and boyars and for the Polish representatives. The Treasury of the GDL was to remain in Lithuania. However, such a compromise did not fully satisfy those Lithuanian deputies who were generally opposed to reforms.[21]

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[17] Šapoka, *Lietuva ir Lenkija*, 295-296.

[18] In Kiaupa et al., *Lietuvos istorija iki 1795 metų*, 398.

[19] Bardach, "Konstytucja 3 maja," 29.

[20] See *Volumina legum*, Vol. 9, 316-317; Raila, *1791 m. gegužės 3 d. konstitucija*, 55-58.

[21] Šmigelskytė-Stukienė, *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės*, 42-43.

It is perfectly clear that the Four-Year Sejm moved in the direction of centralizing the state and its laws, and that the initiators of reforms saw a different Lithuania and a different Poland. The most important common institutions of Poland and Lithuania preserved the appellation "Two Nations," which meant that the boyars of both countries were to participate in the governance of the joint state. The GDL maintained its status as a political, territorial, and legal subject; the Constitution "confirmed, ensured, and recognized as inviolable the laws, statutes, and privileges" of the land-ruling boyars. Clearly, the Third Statute of Lithuania was also maintained, as were the others, even though the Constitution provided that "persons [be] appointed by the Sejm to compose a new code of civil and criminal laws." One must also understand that the provisions of the Constitution did not all go into effect; new laws revised some of them.

Research by Ramunė Šmigelskytė-Stukienė has shown that the majority of GDL boyars supported the reforms of the Four-Year Sejm and remained faithful to its statutes until the moment when Stanisław August, believing that the Commonwealth would not be able to withstand threats and pressures from Russia, agreed to its demands and swore allegiance to the Targowica Confederation.[22] It is important to remember that reactions provoked by the Targowica Confederation (and later the GDL General Confederation, created at the time of the Russian intervention) offered an excellent excuse for Russia to invade the Commonwealth, and that the support of the anti-reformers in Lithuanian society was not the issue. Politicians of the Russian Empire were interested neither in the status of the GDL within the Commonwealth nor the preservation of "the golden liberties." These matters were no more than levers for undoing the unity of the boyars of Poland and Lithuania on the principal question of the state's existence. Politicians of the Russian Empire used them successfully to their advantage.

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[22] Ibid., 57-100; Šmigelskytė-Stukienė, "Kauno pavieto bajorija," 293-312; "1792 m. Kauno pavieto konfederacija," 247–263; "Už ar prieš reformas," 13–22.

The idea of the GDL was strong among supporters of reform and in no way limited to their opponents. On June 19, 1792, scores of Lithuania's boyars who had withdrawn to Grodno sent a signed proclamation to Warsaw as a sign of their fidelity to the reforms of the Four-Year Sejm. The proclamation began with the words *"We, citizens of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania"* and ends with an oath:

> In the eyes of God, Homeland, and the world [...] we declare that we will not withdraw or abandon the [ideas] of self-government of the Republic, the cause of public and private liberties, the May 3rd and the May 5th Government Law and the laws passed by virtue of that law.[23]

One of the signers of the proclamation bore the same name as the more famous Treasurer of the GDL Palace, Antanas Tyzenhauzas (Antoni Tyzenhauz), and was his distant relative. Family ties with an important official of the GDL helped Tyzenhauzas, the signatory, seek a career (from 1776 as a messenger to the Sejm, from 1778 as standard-bearer of Vilnius) and gain access to Stanisław August, who later on his own favored and supported Tyzenhauzas. The latter began his career as an officer in the Grodno battalion and later served in the regiment of the GDL Guard, earning the rank of colonel. His activities reached their high point at the time of the Four-Year Sejm and the 1794 revolt: in 1790, he was elected messenger to the Sejm by the Sejmik of the Vilnius voivodeship. The next year, he was the first to accept the rights of a city dweller and swear allegiance to the City Law. The king may have had great hopes for him from the beginning of the city reforms and intended to appoint him to a post in the government of the city of Vilnius. In any case, on April 14, 1792, Tyzenhauzas was unanimously elected senior official (president) of Vilnius. He withdrew to Grodno and the interior of the Commonwealth when the Russian army invaded the city, returning to Vilnius after the king took an oath to support the Targowica Confederation. He followed the

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[23] For the boyars' statement of June 19, 1792, see *Archivum główne akt dawnych*, Zbiór Popielow 87, l. 101 – 103a.

king's example, as did many other supporters of the Constitution. Tyzenhauzas was relieved of his duties as president of the city when the GDL General Confederation abolished reforms instituted by the Four-Year Sejm.

In 1793, Tyzenhauzas began participating in the activities of a secret group in Vilnius. He joined the Council of Lithuania's Supreme Government the following year, at the start of the 1794 uprising, regained his position of city president, and headed several commissions (including the Provision Deputation and the Secret Deputation for Order). He was one of the authors of the Vilnius Revolt Act, which proclaimed the start of the uprising in all of Lithuania. Tadas Kosciuška (Tadeusz Kościuszko) and Hugo Kołłątaj did not like the contents of the proclamation and appealed to Jokūbas Jasinskis, demanding that he, along with Tyzenhauzas, correct it to include that, with the Vilnius act, the "Province of Lithuania" was joining the revolt that had begun near Kraków.[24] The President of Warsaw City, Ignacy Zakrzewski, dissatisfied with the contents of the Vilnius Revolt Act, also sent Tyzenhauzas a letter, expressing his concern that Lithuanians were striving to establish a separate leadership from Poland. Tyzenhauzas replied that the goals of the Vilnius act did not essentially differ from the Kraków act except for the fact that the Kraków act was the first act of one voivodeship, which "the other voivodeships of [Poland's] kingdom had to follow, while the act of Lithuania's [revolt] had become a common act for all of Lithuania."[25] This means that Tyzenhauzas, even though he belonged to the king's political group, was one of the most active organizers and leaders of the revolt in Lithuania, guided by the GDL traditions of self-government and the continuity of the state. He clearly recognized the GDL as distinct from the Kingdom of Poland.

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[24] Bohusz, "Spominka o Antonim Tyzenhausie," 249; Brusokas, "Vilniaus savivaldos struktūra," 45-72; Mościcki, *General Jasiński*, 142-144; Zytkowicz, *Rządy Repnina na Litwie w latach*, 555-556.

[25] Szyndler, *Powstanie kościuszkowskie*, 136-137.

The manuscript of the May 3, 1791 Constitution.

The evolution of historians' evaluations

Two scholars of the eighteenth century, Ramunė Šmigels-kytė-Stukienė and Robertas Jurgaitis, represent different camps in evaluating the significance of the May Third Constitution, but they agree that the essential question concerns the following: to whom does the historical document belong, Poland alone, or both Poland and Lithuania? Is it only significant for Poland or for Lithuania as well?[26] The thesis that the name Lithuania does not exist in the document and that the joint state is referred to as Poland continues to carry weight. That is why the question of the self-government and the statehood of the GDL is the most important issue in current debates, frequently overwhelming other issues.

Some historians of Lithuania have claimed that in the text of the May Third Constitution the Commonwealth of Two Nations is called Poland; this has been perhaps the main argument for saying that the Constitution is alien to Lithuania. However, in the text of the Constitution, the joint state of Lithuania and Poland is named in various ways: "Poland," "lands of Poland," "Republic," "states of the Republic," and "common Homeland." It has also been claimed that the name of Lithuania does not appear in the text of the document at all, but in fact Lithuania is mentioned in several places. Some scholars remain apprehensive and say that the Constitution refers to the two political entities, the Poles and the Lithuanians, as one "nation," or simply "the Polish nation," but in fact, in some instances, the boyars of Lithuania identify themselves with the GDL and in others with the Commonwealth. These tendencies surface as early as the seventeenth century. There are painful reactions to the fact that the GDL is ever less frequently called a state and ever more often one meets the name of the GDL as province. The Polish historian Grzegorz Blaszczyk stressed that "Lithuania was a province of the Republic, of the joint state of Poland and Lithuania, but it was not a province of Poland."[27] It is also important

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[26] Jurgaitis and Šmigelskytė-Stukienė, "Ketverių metų seimo epocha," 36.

[27] Blaszczyk, "Współczesne spojrzenie na stosunki polsko," 84.

to direct one's attention to the fact that in the Commonwealth of Two Nations other provinces, for instance Greater or Lesser Poland, did not have the same political rights as the GDL. Moreover, unlike the GDL, they were not called states.

But how did such a negative perspective arise, leading to that one question to be debated? The first historian in whose writings the question of the GDL's self-governance (during the reforms of the second half of the eighteenth century) arose is Šapoka. Relying on his assertions, some historians treat the May Third Constitution as a law that tramples on, or abolishes entirely, the statehood of Lithuania. This view was especially popular in Lithuania in the second half of the twentieth century. The main arguments proposed were as follows: in the Constitution, the rights of the GDL and those of the Kingdom of Poland are made uniform; the name of Lithuania does not exist in the document; the document mentions only one nation (as it were eliminating the nation of Lithuanian boyars), with a common government and a common monarchy. These arguments seem to blind historians, and they fail to see the Constitution's positive tendencies in the sociopolitical area. For instance, Vanda Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė mentions the May Third Constitution in her *Lietuvos istorija* (History of Lithuania) only to say that, as she sees it, Lithuania was destined "to become a province of Poland. Such was the famous May Third Constitution. It's just that this ruinous plan for Lithuania was not implemented."[28]

But Šapoka's attitude toward the May Third Constitution evolved from a rather severe to a more moderate one.[29] In his 1936 *Lietuvos istorija*, Šapoka explains that, in order to strengthen the Commonwealth and increase its international importance, "not only the boyars, but also other segments of the joint state had to give up a great deal. Because of efforts to centralize everything, the self-governing mechanisms of the state of Lithuania were being dismantled. [...] In this way, the Four-Year Sejm tried to end the union and finally blend Lithuania with Poland

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[28] Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė, *Lietuvos istorija*, 210.

[29] See Jurgaitis, R. and Šmigelskytė-Stukienė, "Ketverių metų seimo epocha," 31-35.

into a single state."[30] In the 1938 *Lietuva ir Lenkija po 1569 metų unijos* (Lithuania and Poland After the 1569 Union) Šapoka stressed the fact that in the text of the Constitution the question of Lithuania's organization remained unclear, adding that all the obscurities:

> had to be resolved by separate laws in debates about them, the road for Lithuania to defend its rights remained open. She could still wrest at least as much separateness as she had at the time when the Permanent Council was in force. The Constitution did not block the path for self-governing mechanisms in Lithuania, her *expressis verbis* was not denied, but it was *silenced*, seemingly ignored. Of course, it was ignored consciously because the main idea of the authors of the Constitution was to create a firm and unified government for the whole Republic.[31]

Two years later, in the 1940 monograph *Gegužės 3 d. konstitucija ir Lietuva* (The May Third Constitution and Lithuania), Šapoka wrote:

> Dreaming about the abolishment of the separate state organization as well as the creation of a strong central authority, the authors of the Constitution tried not to write even a single word that could have been any kind of support for Lithuanians who defended the traditions of their separate life. However, apparently seeking to avoid arousing the Lithuanians, they also did not write a single word by which the state organization of Lithuania could be dismantled. Therefore, the path to demand later the preservation of the old relations was not blocked for the representatives of Lithuania.

That, according to the historian, led to the appearance of *Abiejų Tautų savitarpio garantijos įstatymo* (Law on the Mutual Guarantee of the Two Nations).[32] To restate Šapoka's positions, in 1936 he wrote that the "independent organization of the state of Lithuania was being dismantled" by the Four-Year Sejm; in 1938, he softened his position, explaining that "[The May Third] Constitution did not block the road for an independent organization of Lithuania"; and in 1940, he stated that the

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[30] Šapoka, *Lietuvos istorija*, 433.
[31] Šapoka, *Lietuva ir Lenkija po 1569 metų Liublino unijos*, 295.
[32] Šapoka, *1791 gegužės 3 d. konstitucija ir Lietuva*, 42.

Constitution contained not a single word "by which the state organization of Lithuania could be dismantled." Surely, these later theses were influenced by Šapoka's reading of the Law on the Mutual Guarantee of the Two Nations. However, the earlier judgments proposed by Lithuania's first professional historians remained the better known and heard.

Twenty years ago, articles by Juliusz Bardach and Leonas Mulevičius[33] resurrected discussions about the Law on Mutual Guarantee of the Two Nations adopted by the Sejm on October 20, 1791. Historians of Lithuania who came after Šapoka did not mention the law for about half a century. Bardach and Mulevičius agreed that the law legalized a two-member Republic and preserved the rights of Lithuania as a subject of the union. However, even after Bardach and Mulevičius, the May Third Constitution was often viewed primarily as a Polish conspiracy against Lithuania. Bronius Makauskas wrote in his *Lietuvos istorija* (A History of Lithuania):

> The purpose of the May Third Constitution was to consolidate the centralized authorities in Lithuania and Poland and merge them finally into one state. However, there was resistance on the part of the Lithuanians, and we have to say that an honorable and not so bad compromise was found [the Mutual Guarantee of the Two Nations] by the reform camp of the Four-Year Sejm.[34]

One can see clear changes in recent interpretations and evaluations. In 2001, Mečislovas Jučas explained that the Constitution remained silent on the question of Lithuania's status and the two states' union; that it undermined the notion of a joint state divided into a kingdom and a duchy; and that Lithuania's name had not remained in the Constitution. He also stated that the October 20, 1791 Law on the Mutual Guarantee of the Two Nations, adopted on the initiative of the Lithuanians, could not "change the main directions of the May Third Constitution," which lead to the unification of the state.[35] But ten years

[33] Bardach, "Konstytucja 3 maja," 23-32; Mulevičius, "Lietuvos savarankiškumas," 70-78.
[34] Makauskas, *Lietuvos istorija*, 182.
[35] Jučas, in Raila, *1791 m. gegužės 3 d. konstitucija*, 9-10.

later, in *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės istorijoja* (History of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania), Jučas was more careful, more inclined to emphasize the significance of the Mutual Guarantee of the Two Nations:

> In the Constitution the union was not mentioned, but it was not abolished [...] The main laws of the Four-Year Sejm relied on the act of the Lublin Union. The Constitution itself did not dismantle the union. Although its authors went in the direction of centralizing state authorities and nominated common commissions for the entire state, in the commissions themselves the set proportion of representatives left to Lithuania remained unchanged.[36]

Seeking alternatives for the May Third Constitution

Because the May Third Constitution was understood as a document that undermined Lithuania's self-government within the joint state with Poland, efforts were made to find significant (positive) alternatives. It was Šapoka who laid the foundation for this perspective, explaining as early as 1936 that the Targowica Confederation, although it opposed the reforms of the Four-Year Sejm and spoke in favor of the old order, "reinstated the old distinctness of the states of Lithuania and Poland."[37] The very first lines of the GDL General Confederation Act declare as follows:

> We, citizens and boyars of the Lithuanian nation, associated with the Crown of Poland, having the same prerogatives of privilege and rule, national duties, and jurisdictions in our own land represented by our own citizens, being a nation equal in might and significance to the Kingdom of Poland [...]."[38]

Valdas Rakutis disagreed with Šapoka, explaining that the historian was formulating a thesis out of touch with reality. He pointed out that the confederationists did not have

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[36] Jučas, *Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštystė*, 298-299.

[37] Šapoka, ed. *Lietuvos istorija*, 433. For a more extensive discussion, see: Jurgaitis and Šmigelskytė-Stukienė, "Ketverių metų seimo epocha," 35-36.

[38] Citation from Šmigelskytė-Stukienė, *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės*, 80.

their own army and relied on the military forces of the Russian Empire. He therefore proposed that they should be regarded as Russia's protégés and that, for that very same reason, the 1792 war was not a civil war: "some defended the homeland, others betrayed it."[39] But Vydas Dolinskas, who recognized the confederationists' efforts to maintain Lithuania's statehood, in essence backed Šapoka's line of argument, while at the same time disagreeing in part with his evaluation. He saw as unethical the many twists and turns in the career of the GDL Confederation leader Kosakovskis (such as taking advantage of the enemy's intervention, usurping the post of hetman, engaging in financial manipulations, appropriating state estates, persecuting political opponents) and held that whatever one's evaluation of Kosakovskis, Lithuanian historiography faced a dilemma, for as early as the Bar Confederation Kosakovskis and his group "defended the traditional state status granted the Grand Duchy of Lithuania within the legal and administrative systems of the Commonwealth of Two Nations."[40] Despite this evidence, the reaction of the most conservative boyars to the reforms of the Four-Year Sejm as well as their reliance on a foreign army to realize their political goals are for the most part evaluated unfavorably by Lithuanian historians or taken as "a symbol of the state's downfall."[41]

In public discussions, the resolutions of the 1793 Grodno Sejm are sometimes viewed as an alternative that, more so than the May Third Constitution, favored processes that advanced Lithuania's statehood. They are said to have provided a much firmer and better defined foundation for the GDL's status within the Commonwealth than was the case at the time of the Four-Year Sejm. The provisions of the Grodno Sejm strengthened the status of Vilnius, to which many of the most important state institutions were transferred; they created commissions of War, Treasury, and the Police for the GDL separately from those of

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[39] Rakutis, *LDK kariuomenė Ketverių metų seimo laikotarpiu*, 12.

[40] Dolinskas, *Simonas Kosakovskis*, 31; Dolinskas, "Paskutinis Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės," 206.

[41] Kiaupa, et al. *Lietuvos istorija iki 1795 metų*, 400.

the Kingdom of Poland. One must emphasize that, in the historiography of both Poland and Lithuania, the resolutions of the Grodno Sejm are often assessed incorrectly as having consolidated the situation that existed before the Four-Year Sejm. Historians give too much emphasis to a law that declared the Sejm laws of the Four-Year "revolutionary sejm" invalid and abolished.[42] However, if one looks at the totality of the decisions of the Grodno Sejm, one understands that it adopted most of the provisions of the Four-Year Sejm, with certain modifications. Additional research into the goals and activities of the Grodno Sejm is certainly needed.[43] Unfortunately, to date, this topic has not been popular among historians, perhaps because the Sejm legalized the Second Partition of the Commonwealth, decreasing the size of the armies of Poland and Lithuania. Its decisions held for only four months, until 1794, and were abolished when the rebels took over the government. Nevertheless, at the very end of its activities, the Grodno Sejm took decisions that in no way conformed to those of the Targowica and the General Confederation or constituted a continuation of reactions against reforms. It was a reform-minded Sejm, and it tried to win as many concessions as possible from the Russian side. Suffice it to mention that Catherine II became angry with one of her officials (Jacob Johann Sievers) who failed to block the decisions of the Grodno Sejm and recalled him from the Commonwealth.[44] One might add that, on the second-to-last day of its session, the Sejm adopted a law that allowed the wearing of military decorations earned in the Commonwealth's 1792 war with Russia, explaining that these decorations "demonstrated one's fighting spirit and encouraged such courage."[45] The wearing of the decorations had been forbidden by the confederationists.

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[42] "Uchylenie sejmu roku 1788 i wszystkich na nim ustanowionych praw," *Volumina legum*, Vol. X, 326.

[43] Mention must be made of current changes in stereotypical positions: see Jurgaitis, in Aleksandravičius, *Praeities pėdsakais*, 313-333.

[44] Šmigelskytė-Stukienė, "Geopolitinė situacija," 46.

[45] "1793 11 22 Zaszczyt wojskowy," *Volumina legum*, Vol. X, 82.

General Conclusions

The May Third Constitution is an extraordinarily significant document in Lithuania's history, not just because one can be proud of it as one of the first constitutions in Europe and the world, but also because it proved that the Commonwealth of Two Nations was not the backward and hopeless state it was portrayed to be after its liquidation. The state and its society made great efforts to institute reforms, move forward, and escape from political isolation. The last years of the Commonwealth's existence demonstrate that the course of reforms adopted by the Four-Year Sejm was carried forward by the Grodno Sejm in 1793 and the revolt of 1794. The May Third Constitution also gives evidence that the collapse of the state was determined, not by internal disorders, but rather the imperialistic aims of neighboring states. In evaluating the Constitution, one probably ought to take a broader look, instead of confining oneself to historical Lithuania or the situation in 1791.

I believe that one of the essential problems in the debate about the May Third Constitution remains the painful historical experience of the twentieth century. Scholars should try to free themselves from it, keeping in mind that the idea of modern Lithuania did not exist in 1791. There existed a different Lithuania at that time, and Poland was likewise different. The contrast of Poland with Lithuania was not the axis of the existence of the Commonwealth, even though it became fundamental in twentieth-century textbooks of Lithuanian history. To move forward in the discussion, one has to cast one's net widely and look at the political, social, and civic changes that mark the last years of the GDL. Answers will not be simple; no doubt they will be more complicated than we imagine them today.

In conclusion, I must stress that a different point of view than the one argued in this article is not necessarily defective. One can debate both perspectives. Today the fundamental disagreements stem from the way one understands the question: what do I consider mine and what foreign? One has to keep in mind that, in 1902, Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis was the first to cross the threshold into the Lublin Union, making the Commonwealth of Two Nations part of Lithuania's history. Even

though there were doubts for a long time about the signifi-
cance of the 1863-1864 revolt for Lithuania's history, [46] today
the matter is settled, and the upcoming year 2013 has been pro-
claimed as the year to remember the revolt of 1863-1864. But I
acknowledge that one of the most important issues in discus-
sions about the May Third Constitution is the difficult question
of the hierarchy of its meanings and symbols. For that very rea-
son it may not yet be time for political decisions: to commemo-
rate the May Third Constitution or not?

Translated by Saulius Girnius

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Three Productions by Rimas Tuminas: Transformation of Historical Memory in Lithuanian Theater 1990-2010

ŠARŪNĖ TRINKŪNAITĖ

Theater as historical memory is a tradition that began taking form in the earliest days of the Lithuanian stage. During the Soviet period, it became the most responsive arena of civil resistance in the theater, but after 1990, with independence regained, it seemed to suddenly lose its vital significance. The theater's traditional commitment to history as the source of moral strength and as a call to challenge the occupier's regimented reality no longer seemed to serve a purpose. In short, in a free society, theater as historical memory needed to find a new significance for itself.

The process of rethinking began concurrently with open reflections on the negative experiences of the Soviet period. Around the turn of the century, some of the more noteworthy efforts included Jonas Vaitkus's staging of Antanas Škėma's *Pabudimas* (1989), Adam Mickiewicz's *Vėlinės* (1990), and Joshua Sobol's *Ghetto* (1990). In their own way, these productions reiterated the traditional theme of existence in history as suffering and martyrdom, albeit with the purposeful addition of elements of extreme and "theatricalized fear, force, violence." At the same time, they visibly revised the theme by showing the irreversible damage that had been done to the human spirit during the Soviet period: they showed "the deformed, crippled,

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and moribund consciousness of a nation, a consciousness that was just beginning to awaken to freedom in every one of its members, just beginning to shake off its nightmares."[1]

In performances staged by Vaitkus, one could hear the suggestion that the reinvention of theater as historical memory should go hand in hand with an end to the hunt for the guilty and the beginning of accepting one's own guilt and responsibility. However, the attempt to rouse the courage needed for this kind of self-reflection did not gain much traction. In fact, Lithuanian theater chose a safer approach. It was willing to view the Soviet period as a memory encompassing the histories of one's own and one's people's guilt, but only with the mental reservation of an "innocent guilt." Perhaps this is why there was such readiness to model dramatic situations in terms of analogies with antiquity, which made their way not only into direct reminiscences of the Soviet past (Sigitas Parulskis's *P.S. Byla O.K.*, staged by Oskaras Koršunovas in 1997; Jonas Jurašas's *Antigonė Sibire*, 2010), but also into stage interpretations of the ancient tragedies (Oskaras Koršunovas's *Oedipus Rex*, 2001).

On the other hand, this search for analogies, parallels, and comparisons may have reflected a much expanded and liberated concept of memory. This was most clearly evident in the staging of *P.S. Byla O.K.*, hailed at the time as a new theatrical manifesto. The production spoke essentially about memory; but in it memory meant not so much the reinstatement of the nation's historical past as the resolve to stir up fragments of world cultural history, universally shared archetypes, and repressed personal traumas as well as everyday banalities. That is to say, in *P.S. Byla O.K.*, to remember meant to open oneself up voraciously to a chaotic world no longer censored, which beckoned with promises of creative freedom. In that world's murky streams of present time and past memories, explicit manifestos of national memory, indeed, even the most sacred national symbols, took shape only as ironically delivered mean-spirited lines about "yellow, green, and red snot"[2] dripping from one's nose.

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[1] Vasinauskaitė, *Laikinumo teatras*, 25-50.
[2] Parulskis, *P.S. Byla O.K.*, 125.

It may be that *P.S. Byla O.K.* provided the clearest evidence that Lithuanian theater had entered the 1990s, the first decade of Lithuania's second independence, by upending the logic upon which its self-identity had been founded in the 1920s, during the first decade of Lithuania's first independence. It had diffused the early interwar period's commitment to the memory of national history, together with its efforts to guard against any cross-drafts of the modern stage it saw as destructive of national character, despite the fact that discussions about commitment and nationhood continued to flare up for some time to come. Accepting no compromise, Lithuanian theater resolved to choose what was new, which demanded an unequivocal rejection of subject matter based on historical memory now deemed old-fashioned. Or stated differently, if the theater's "whims" to become modern were met with amazement during the interwar period, then, to the contrary, its attempts to look back toward the land of history as memory appeared amazing at the beginning of the second period of independence. At least that is how it seemed at first in the wake of Rimas Tuminas's production of Saulius Šaltenis's *Lituanica* (1996), which, as critics noted with irony, deserved to be honored simply for its courage "to be so emphatically local in these heady times of touring shows."[3]

However, this so-called local *Lituanica* initiated a reform of the theater of historical memory that proved its ability to enter not only the "local" but also the heady space of the "touring shows" beyond the local. More precisely, through his experiments centering on the relationship between theater and history, begun with *Lituanica* and successfully continued in Marius Ivaškevičius's *Madagaskaras* (2004) and *Mistras* (2010), Tuminas, who is perhaps more drawn by reflections on historical memory than other Lithuanian directors, opened up broad horizons for this kind of theater by making it relevant and contemporary. He suggested several variations of it, which, though different, are uniformly and emphatically "young," first of all in terms of the actors' ages. From the very beginning, starting with *Lituanica*, in what appears to be a first for Lithuanian theater,

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[3] Oginskaitė, "Scenoje – enciklopedija apie lietuvius," 3.

Tuminas conceived encounters with historical themes as an en-
counter with a troupe of young people, as if symbolizing in this
way the very necessity for the tradition of historical theater to
rejuvenate itself.

Lituanica — *a history of everyday experiences*

Apparently, Tuminas's *Lituanica* was the first attempt by
a Lithuanian director to interject issues related to simple, ordi-
nary, everyday people into the realm of historical memory. This
resulted from Tuminas's evident polemics with the historical
imagination represented in Lithuanian theater, which for an
entire century had been shaped by its fascination with extraor-
dinary individuals: indomitable dukes, kings majestic in their
sorrow, queens, and eminent figures of cultural history. How-
ever, in *Lituanica*, in the historical past of a German-occupied
Lithuanian province, which, as suggested by Šaltenis, mirrors
the experience of all occupations, Tuminas emphatically chose
to see the undistinguished and took his own concept of the "lit-
tle man" to another level. And while a similar approach elic-
ited delight in his first productions, in *Lituanica* it was viewed
with suspicion and criticized as evidence of underdeveloped
characters. The concept must have seemed unusual and unex-
pected, and in its own way a rebellious intrusion into the space
of onstage historical reflections.[4]

On the other hand, this change in traditional ways of
handling history, i.e., the rejection of the heroic figure, was
immediately recognized as offering a meaningful form of dia-
logue between contemporary society and history. For the "little
man," the Lithuanian who enters *Lituanica's* arena endures oc-
cupation, not in the spirit of majestic resistance, but with his
small joys and injuries, humor and drama, peevishness and
goodness, pettiness and beauty, courage as well as accommo-
dation. In this way, he acquires the peculiar status of the spec-
tator's alter ego, thus facilitating complicity between actors

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[4] The public's perplexity in the face of *Lituanica* is reflected in
the rhetorical question posed by Rūta Oginskaitė: "And why
are we so indistinct, so small [...] – as if a handful of pebbles?"
Oginskaitė, "Scenoje – enciklopedija apie lietuvius," 3.

and audience as well as opening up the prospect of discussions beyond the theater about what Lithuanians have endured in common: their experiences, their feelings, and their sense of being Lithuanian.[5] Perhaps one could put it this way: Tuminas changed the nature of the dialogue between society and the theater of historical memory by suggesting that in history's reminiscences one can seek not only spiritual solace and moral fortitude, so generously meted out on stage during the Soviet period, but also a two-sided dialogue among equals who recognize each other's value. This kind of dialogue can, under conditions of freedom, grow out of nothing more than an annoying "itch to scratch some nerve of the nation."[6]

In *Lituanica* this "itch" was the theatrical tradition of heroic-romantic historical memory and, in a more general sense, the heroic-romantic way of imagining history. *Lituanica* seemed to be running its fingers over it – over the entire heroically uplifted view of history, that thirsting for the past represented in the glorious reenactment of the flight of Darius and Girėnas, rehearsed by unknown actors in some godforsaken corner. In other words, Tuminas looked for new directions by beginning at the beginning and by exploring the very phenomenon of the theater of historical memory. If one understands *Lituanica* from this perspective, one also understands that the theater theme interjected itself into the play, not only in a direct way, but also in a symbolic sense, legitimizing historical narrative as a concept of stage illusion as well as a form of theatrical play, validating the representation of the Lithuanian as one who experiences history as well as a "Lithuanian playing (acting) history."[7]

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5   Apparently, this is why so many of those who wrote about *Lituanica* dared to weave motifs of personal memory and experience into the fabric of common reflections. This "generosity" on the director's part is best described by Audronė Girdzijauskaitė, who noted that in *Lituanica* Tuminas seems to be saying: "this theater is not only mine, it is all of ours, it is about everything and about all of us." Girdzijauskaitė, "Nuo absurdo operos iki teatro baladės," 10.

6   Šaltenis, *Lituanica*, 273.

7   Vasiliauskas, "Žaidžiantys (vaidinantys) lietuviai iki ir po 1990 metų," 35.

Within the spectrum of *Lituanica*'s strategies of play, irony no doubt occupies the most prominent place. It was aimed first and foremost at heroically exalted poses and the national mythologies that support them – that whole "fermented mythological dough."[8] Once that dough of the romantic, heroic, and mythological clichés of historical imagination was brought into proximity with the history of everyday experiences, once it was immersed into the nonheroic, nonromantic, nonmythic reality of occupied Lithuania, where stage curtains were ripped apart to make shirts, it stood merely as proof of the comical infantilism of heroic-romantic historical thinking.

On the other hand, the driving force behind the irony that Tuminas aimed at this kind of thinking was more than the impulse to de-romanticize. One might say, perhaps, that the euphoric memory of national heroism existed in *Lituanica* not so much the object of ironical negation as the object of a peculiar "negotiation" and of efforts to explain, to understand. More precisely, Tuminas suggested a new version of the origin of national heroic myths – a theory of the childlike naïveté of the Lithuanian spirit, which in *Lituanica* was articulated most clearly by the almost mute, but ever-present, infantile Birutė Lietuvaitė (Rasa Rapalytė, Birutė Marcinkevičiūtė),[9] the narrator's alter ego; visually expressed on stage by the naïvistic interpretation of Darius and Girėnas as crude sculptures with charcoal drawn eyebrows and rouged faces and lips.

Furthermore, it is perhaps due to *Lituanica* that the idea of a theater of historical memory as childhood memory began to take shape around the turn of the century. While it was most consistently developed in Tuminas's later productions, it forcefully pushed its way into the creative work of other directors as well, for instance Eimuntas Nekrošius's staging of *Pradžia, K. Donelaitis. Metai* (2003), where turning back to the time of the Lithuanian writer also meant returning to one's childhood and the childhood of the universally human, of shared culture, and of theater itself. Tuminas, of course, returned to it differently than did Nekrošius, differently than in *Metai*, where

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[8]   Šaltenis, *Lituanica*, 294.

[9]   Macaitis, "Tuoj išnirs *Lituanica*," 7.

the space of childhood's encounters and sensations seemed to fashion itself from some kind of primeval theatrical matter untouched by historical time that, on stage, unexpectedly gave rise to individualized speech. In Tuminas's *Lituanica*, history as childhood's memory seems to organize itself around a culturally coded intuitive center. Or put differently, *Metai* probed theater itself, while *Lituanica* made use of theater as an instrument to study national culture. One could say that the former was more theatrical, the latter more culturological. As such, it not only could diagnose, in an ironic fashion, the childishness of historical consciousness reflected in the theater of pompously heroic feats, but also give meaning to that very theater as one of the guarantors of the survival of a tortured, censored, and humiliated nation. Tuminas's quarrel with the tradition of heroic-romantic theater took place concurrently with his efforts to grasp and generalize the huge cultural mission that this kind of theater had achieved during the most dramatic moments of the nation's history, consciously offering the public the possibility of emigrating from a reality of deprivation, just as it did for those artists of *Lituanica* who seemed to survive only by rehearsing the play.

This ambivalence in *Lituanica*, its organic fusion of irony and exoneration, was most likely what constituted the energy field that generated the play's warmth, sensitivity, and comfort. Lithuanian theater tried to question this energy in its later attempts to survey the territory of the historical past, most radically perhaps in Algirdas Latėnas's production of Parulskis's *Barboros Radvilaitės testamentas* (2002). The latter, like *Lituanica*, came out of attempts to ironically rethink the heroic-romantic tradition, but it utilized a strategy based not on understanding, but on cynical parody and rejection. The most effective of these attempts were somehow or other related to the ability to synthesize irony and sensitivity. From this standpoint, Tuminas's *Madagaskaras* is a unique example. It was unanimously acclaimed, first and foremost for the subtlety of its humor and for its "not having any designs to unmask or uncrown anyone."[10]

On the other hand, in the context of Lithuanian theater of

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[10] Vasiliauskas, "Rimo Tumino geopolitinis pokštas," 27.

historical memory, *Madagaskaras* appeared as something radically different. It was not just by choosing the humorous rather than the dramatic moments of Lithuanian history for his "historical research" that Tuminas lent support to the very new and very unusual genre of historical actualization.[11] *Madagaskaras* appeared especially different because of what might be called its original "methodology," in other words, because of the innovative form of its relationship to history, which in a peculiar way brought Lithuanian theater closer to the contexts of new historicism.

Madagaskaras – *the discovery of new historicism*

Notions of new historicism began to enter the lexicon of Lithuanian theater in the 1970s and 1980s as a means of naming modern interpretations of historical drama seen in the theater of such directors as Jurašas and Vaitkus. However, with *Madagaskaras* these notions acquired a more precise, concrete, one could say Greenblattian meaning, and found a methodology of reading history that proposes encounters "with the singular, the specific, and the individual," which commits one "to pick up a tangential fact and watch its circulation," and which relies on the "sense of history's unpredictable galvanic appearances and disappearances," taking pleasure in "contingency, spontaneity, and improvisation."[12]

Stated differently, with *Madagaskaras*, history presented itself as that which results from the harmony of true (and truthfully held) facts and a creative imagination that innovatively manipulates them. To be sure, the possibility of viewing history this way

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[11] It seems that the historical comedy genre entered twenty-first century Lithuanian theater even as interwar themes became fashionable. Gytis Padegimas's production of the operetta *Kipras, Fiodoras ir kiti* (2003) and Viktoras Valašinas's staging of the interwar comedy *Palanga* (2003) are among the first theatrical examples of this style. They constitute evidence of attempts to liberate historical memory from recollections of sorrow, pain, and suffering. Continuing this effort, *Madagaskaras* tried to make laughter sound more subtle, but also tried to hear its clangor, i.e., its dramatic side.

[12] Gallagher and Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism*, 6, 4.

was first perceived within the space of literature. Ivaškevičius used materials found in canonical literature as well as forgotten archives of Lithuanian cultural history, mostly references to the poetess Salomėja Neris (Salė) and her fate and quotations from Kazimieras Pakštas's (Pokštas) geopolitical projects. He wove these documentary materials into a verbal canvas that purposely disregarded the difference between historical fact and fiction. But Tuminas did not only stage a play to illustrate this possibility of manipulating history; he set out to reinforce it. He made use of a particular acting technique in which a character creates himself or herself in some sort of fragile and difficult to grasp borderland of absolute empathy and playful improvisation. Thanks to this technique, stage heroes seemed to somehow absorb the harmoniously blended features of historical authenticity and its contemporary symbolization.

In this way, *Madagaskaras* achieved a nearly painful "recognizable, and yet just beyond one's reach, unexpectedly discoverable"[13] impression of Lithuanian cultural life of the interwar period, a past that now seemed illuminated. But the main brunt of the play's force lay not so much in the spurts of energy refreshing one's memory of a concrete historical period, but rather in its ability to make memory meaningful as a peculiar reflection of Lithuanian mentality outside of history. *Madagaskaras* wove fragments of actual Lithuanian histories into a history about the Lithuanian in general. No less importantly, this weaving together was achieved as an attempt to grasp and reveal aspects of Lithuanian character that had been overlooked or outright ignored previously.[14]

And indeed, in *Madagaskaras*, onto the stage stepped a Lithuanian absolutely free from and beyond the reach of the canonical epithets that define what it means to be Lithuanian.

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[13] Šabasevičienė, "Teatrinė kelionė į Madagaskarą," 37.

[14] The premiere of *Madagaskaras* took place on the eve of Lithuania's entrance into the European Union at a time of vigorous discussions about potential threats to Lithuanian nationalism and measures to prevent them. In a sense, *Madagaskaras* reacted to this anxiety and seemingly tried to allay it, by confirming the existence of a unique, indestructible national character resistant to all threats.

The memory of these epithets existed only as humorous references to the Lithuanian "character's phlegmatic nature" or the destructive "individual lack of action and initiative."[15] There is an occasional flash of the old epithets in Pokštas's (Ramūnas Cicėnas) invectives aimed at the nation, but they are readily erased whenever diametrically opposed "evidence" is presented in the form of undiminished bursts of resolute fantasy that serve to unite all the Lithuanians of *Madagaskaras*; they seem to take on significance as a peculiar Lithuanian constant. In Lithuanian cultural history Tuminas and his troupe discovered imagination in limitless abundance; they set it free as a means to (re)imagine and (re)experience Lithuanian identity, taking imagination's potential as the very basis of what it means to be Lithuanian. The troupe's method was simple and effective, a synthesis of irony and admiration, sympathy and gentle mockery, love and laughter. It may seem paradoxical, and yet the exotic, almost unbelievable flights of fancy of on-stage Lithuanians in *Madagaskaras* were given more reality, more credibility, and a stronger feel of national identity by this sort of synthesis than any factual accuracy could have done as regards all the "prophetic visions" of Pokštas about the necessity of "a Lithuania in reserve," the dreams dreamed by the poetess Salė about the only "Him, the defender from the Pole," or ambassador Oskaras's "tele-visions" about Lithuanian origins "in sunny Atlantis" and their strife-free future "in the broad borderlands with the neutral Moon," "hurtling itself at night onto Roosia."[16]

Most interestingly, *Madagaskaras* discovered these lodes of utopianism not just as material for constructing a new version of national character, but also as a universal dimension within that body of traits that one calls Lithuanian. Tuminas emphatically "Lithuanianized" his heroes by painting them with the hues of authentic Lithuanian language, clothing, mannerisms, and similar subtleties, but at the same time he understood them as participants in the universal drama of utopian projects whose logic is reflected in the flow of the play's meaning as it progressively

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[15] Ivaškevičius, *Madagaskaras*, 79, 80.
[16] Ibid., 50, 31, 53, 52.

brings evidence of the naïve Lithuanian thinking into a broader context, working up to an existential finale that generalizes experiences of defeat, unrealized hopes, pain, and despair. In this respect, *Madagaskaras* was radically different from, and yet a peculiar fit with, the European theater of historical memory, which received its most powerful surge from director Gintaras Varnas's production of Tankred Dorst's and Ursula Ehler's *Nusiaubta šalis* (Waste Land, 2004). Here, in the images of medieval Europe's utopian quests, one can decipher signs of the inescapable eternal drama of man's existence in history.

Nonetheless, Tuminas was more interested in history as an arena of play rather than as an arena of trauma. More importantly, to remember meant for him above all to find in history instances of peculiar tricks – curiosities, extravagances, unexpected twists – and to extract from them, from the play and the place of history, energy for theatrical intrigue. He admitted to this even more openly in *Mistras* than he had in *Madagaskaras*, when he undertook to make sense of the legacy of romanticism and the nineteenth century through the prism of the strange friendship of Adam Mickiewicz and his avatar Andrzej Towiański as it developed before the eyes of the artistic Parisian elite.

Mistras – *the deconceptualization of History*

In his production of Ivaškevičius's *Mistras*, Tuminas continued to explore the theatrical potential of new historicism and its methodology by playfully improvising with historical facts, pursuing their unexpected connections, and inventing unforeseen combinations. But unlike in *Madagaskaras*, the method used here was not to revise textbook moments in Lithuanian cultural history, but to master history's problematic, complex or uncomfortable episodes, such as the tense relationship between Lithuanian culture and Adam Mickiewicz, the connections between Lithuanian and European culture, or the differences between the Lithuanian and the European mentality.

But *Mistras* differed from *Madagaskaras* mostly in its refusal to bind separate historical fragments into its own version of history and in the choice to assimilate its every single

seed into the uncontrollable noise of history's voices, into that "boundless variegation of its meanings" that provokes only "humor heaped with irony," legitimizing only "the postmodern play of fullness and emptiness, unserious seriousness, meaningful meaninglessness."[17] Somewhat paradoxically, *Mistras* was clearly much richer than *Madagaskaras* from the standpoint of historical facts. Its material was much more abundant, accurate, and exotic. However, it was used not for the purpose of what new historicists call "a history of possibilities,"[18] but rather for what might be termed a history without possibilities. Even more paradoxical, but in a sense perhaps logical, the play's possibilities were not given any impetus either by the broad branching of its themes through politics, culture, creativity, social reality, and individual and private lives, or through the noticeable shifts in genre from romantic drama to adventure comedy to crude parody to the tragedy of an artist's fate.

It may be that *Mistras* played out its scenes in that dangerous borderland between theater that hesitates and capitulates before history and some kind of strange anxiety about history being slippery and ungraspable. Telling Mickiewicz (Jokūbas Bareikis) of the power of the false prophet, Towiański (Ramūnas Cicėnas), *Mistras* spoke also about history's power over theater, its power not to yield, to wound and to wreck the logic of a conceptualizing memory.

Such a *Mistras* was in its way a logical finale to Tuminas's theater of historical memory. It bore witness to the natural exhaustion of the playful energy that was discovered in *Lituanica* and was engaged in full force in *Madagaskaras*. From this standpoint, *Mistras* signaled the need to look for new approaches to the theater of historical memory in Lithuania.

Translated by Birutė Vaičjurgis Šležas

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[17] Vasinauskaitė, "Dvidešimtieji teatro metai," 3.
[18] Gallagher and Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism*, 16.

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The Bernardine Complex in Tytuvėnai: History, Architecture, Works of Art

DALIA KLAJUMIENĖ

The church and the conventual buildings at Tytuvėnai that once belonged to the Bernardines can be considered one of the most valuable ensembles of sacred architecture in Lithuania. Founded in 1614 by Andriejus Valavičius,[1] the monastery complex was closed by order of tsarist authorities in the middle of the nineteenth century, though many of its architecturally distinctive buildings remain to this day. Decorated with murals and other valuable works of art dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they bear witness to the Bernardines' spirituality.[2] The history and the artistic forms of this unique monastery complex have been analyzed by several generations of Lithuanian scholars.

[1] Standard-bearer of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and District Judge of Samogitia (1570?-1614).

[2] The Bernardines, or The Friars Minor, a reformed branch of the Franciscan order, attempted to return to the manner of monastic life led by St. Francis of Assisi, the founder of the order. In Lithuania and the adjacent Central European countries, the term Bernardines caught on in memory of the order's reformer, St. Bernard of Siena.

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Scholarly research of the complex[3]

The first comprehensive architectural and historical analysis of the Bernardine complex in Tytuvėnai was done during Soviet times, in 1961-1973. At that time, extensive restoration work was carried out. Vast amounts of information collected for this purpose were published in 1987 as a small, but important, book by Klemensas Čerbulėnas and Algirdas Baliulis. Relying on the Bernardine Chronicle of Tytuvėnai preserved at the Lithuanian State Historical Archives and other manuscript sources about the monastery, the authors gave an overview of the development of the complex, describing the nature and the extent of the restoration and naming the architects who participated in the project.[4]

At the turn of the twenty-first century, researchers at the Institute of Art Research and scholars working with the Institute, after examining the most recent scholarship, decided to continue and complement the work started by Čerbulėnas and Baliulis. They carefully reread the manuscript documents of the Bernardine friars of Tytuvėnai held in the Lithuanian archives and also analyzed the order's archives in Kraków. Much work was done on-site in Tytuvėnai, where scholars scrutinized library documents, trying to understand the secrets of the art and the architecture of the monastery. Their findings were compiled into a 2004 book, *The Bernardine Church and Monastery in Tytuvėnai*, which describes aspects of the spiritual and cultural activities of the monks in Tytuvėnai and the artistic and iconographic value of the works of art that remain there.[5] The book includes a discussion of a mural that adorned the complex's walls in the seventeenth through eighteenth centuries, though in 2004 its existence was hypothetical, there then being insufficient data for a definitive analysis. This gap

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[3] Due to the limits of the survey format, this article does not provide a comprehensive discussion of the historiography of Tytuvėnai; however, it is hoped that the results of the research presented here will help the reader to understand the development of the complex and its artistic features.

[4] Čerbulėnas and Baliulis, *Tytuvėnų*.

[5] *Tytuvėnų bernardinų bažnyčia ir vienuolynas.*

was filled by new information that emerged in 2010, when large-scale research and restoration began on the monastery's first-floor corridor and the monks' second-floor cells. Rūta Janonienė, a distinguished art historian specializing in Bernardine iconography, prepared a comprehensive report on the team's research into the art and iconography of Tytuvėnai.[6] The report was presented at the 2011 conference European Heritage Days, sponsored by the Council of Europe, and was subsequently published as an article entitled "Kristaus Prisikėlimo ikonografija Tytuvėnų bernardinų konvento sienų tapyboje" (The Iconography of Christ's Resurrection in the Frescoes at the Bernardine Monastery in Tytuvėnai).[7] The work accomplished to date offers enough valuable data to invite a better understanding of the spiritual, economic, and cultural activities of the Bernardine monks who lived in Tytuvėnai.

Establishment of the monastery complex

The earliest information about Tytuvėnai is found in sources dating back to the beginning of the sixteenth century, when Grand Duke Alexander donated land to Jadvyga, daughter of Alekna Sudimantaitis, the former voivode of Vilnius. Later, the Tytuvėnai estate was to change hands several times until it became the property of Andriejus Valavičius in 1609. The beginnings of the Tytuvėnai monastery are associated with his name.

On May 1, 1614, Valavičius signed an agreement stating his intention to found a Bernardine monastery in Tytuvėnai. He wanted a well-balanced, elegant but modest monastery accommodating twelve monks and a church, wherein he envisioned a mausoleum for his family. Unfortunately, Valavičius did not realize his intentions; he died on September 7, 1614, after an attack of gout, and was buried in Tytuvėnai. Shortly after his death, his wife, Kotryna Goslavska, remarried. She did not take on her first husband's commitments, though she did take interest in some of his affairs and funded the building of a tomb for him. Responsibility for Tytuvėnai, along with commencement of construction of the monastery, was taken on by

6   Janonienė, "Tytuvėnų bernardinų," 1-58.
7   Janonienė, "Kristaus prisikėlimo," 16-28.

Andriejus Valavičius's three brothers. Jeronimas Valavičius, an elder of Samogitia, showed the most initiative and visited the complex most frequently.

The first Bernardine monks arrived in Tytuvėnai in 1614. However, construction of the planned masonry complex was slow, and the monks were forced to live either at a temporary wooden monastery or, most likely, at the Valavičius estate in Tytuvėnai.

The Bernardine Chronicle provides a vivid description of how the site for the monastery was chosen. One night in 1618, the future construction manager, Tomas Kasparas, and his apprentice saw a light on a hill, which the raging wind that night was unable to extinguish. The monks agreed that it was a prophetic sign, a miraculous vision; the site on the hill was chosen. Shortly thereafter, the cornerstone of the church was laid and preparations begun for its construction. In 1619, the first guardian of the monastery, Bernardinas Švabas, and the construction supervisor, Kasparas, signed an agreement. Documents do not establish whether Kasparas was only a supervisor or if he was the designer of the complex as well. However, it is known that he was to be paid 8,000 *auksinas* for his work. It took seventeen years to build the church and the monastery, from the laying of the cornerstone to its dedication to the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Angels in 1635. During this time, the oldest part of the complex was built, which included a church with six altars (the altars have not survived) and a monastery adjacent to the south side of the church, thus forming a quadrangular closed cloister.

On the eastern side of the Bernardine property work began for a domestic sector. A two-story masonry barn and a one-story house for servants were built. Beyond the barn ran the vegetable gardens. Outside the complex's red brick walls was a fruit orchard started by Simonas Očko, a priest from Vilnius. In the northeastern section, livestock barns, horse stables, sheds, poultry houses, a brewery, and a wooden bathhouse were built. On the southern side, by a former pond, was a small windmill for the monks' needs.

Once completed, the Bernardine monastery complex became the compositional center of the settlement around it. The

monks' spiritual, cultural, and economic activities served as a focal point of spiritual attraction beyond the monastery walls, accelerating the growth of the town, also called Tytuvėnai.

Eighteenth century reconstructions and the Stations of the Cross

Around the middle of the eighteenth century, under the guardian Gabrielius Radvanskis, a reconstruction of the complex began that was to last until the end of the century. At this time, new buildings arose, but the appearance of the older ones changed only slightly. In 1735, two towers and a vestibule were added to the western facade of the church. In 1736, a novitiate was established; however, the masonry building that was to house it, attached to the northwestern corner of the monastery, was completed only in 1764-1770. A picture of the entire complex, including the novitiate, can only be seen in a nineteenth-century drawing by the architect Karolis Dambrovskis (Illustration 1). As for the novitiate, it was demolished in 1887 by order of the tsarist authorities. In the sixth and eighth decades of the eighteenth century, the interior of the monastery church was substantially renovated. An ensemble of nine ornate altars in Late Baroque style was erected and a new Baroque organ installed in 1789.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, a churchyard with a processional way, which survives to this day, was added opposite the church. In the center of the churchyard, following the example of the *Scala Sancta* in Rome, a small Chapel of Christ's Stairs (known also as the Chapel of Holy Steps) was built. The chapel, together with twenty-five painted and fourteen high-relief gypsum Stations of the Cross in the gallery, is the only such Bernardine ensemble extant in Lithuania (Illustration 2). It was the monk Antanas Burnickis, designated guardian of the Bernardine monastery in 1769, who proposed the idea of the Stations of the Cross. He had spent more than a year in Jerusalem and Bethlehem and returned home with some sacred soil from the Holy Land. He planned to erect the Stations of the Cross, but died a year later, leaving it to the monks to carry out his intention. Thus, on the fence enclosing the churchyard, thirty-nine compositions depicting the history of Christ's arrest, sentencing to death, and crucifixion were installed in

1771-1780. At the bottom of every composition, behind a glass enclosure, as well as in every one of the twenty-eight steps of the chapel, the sacred soil brought home by Burnickis was walled in. By means of symbols, the closed churchyard thus conveyed the image of celestial Jerusalem. Above the main gate leading to the gallery courtyard, an imaginary panorama of Jerusalem was painted, evidence that this space symbolized the Holy City.

At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, several new conventual and ancillary buildings were erected, and the final version of the monastery and its territory emerged. At that time, the two-story masonry house for servants, with a barn, was reconstructed, with the second floor of the house serving as a granary. A stone well was constructed in the yard of the novitiate. The new domestic buildings, infirmaries, and a rear household gate of the monastery have survived to this day.

Liquidation of the monastery

Unfortunately, the wave of post-uprising[8] repressions in the middle of the nineteenth century, which changed both the course of Catholic culture and the topography of church architecture in Lithuania, did not bypass Tytuvėnai. Russian authorities accused the monks of supporting the rebels. In 1864, the governor-general, Muravyev, ordered the closing of the church and the liquidation of the monastery. Andriejus Petravičius, the last Bernardine guardian in Tytuvėnai, was arrested and deported to Siberia. The zealous efforts of parishioners and Motiejus Valančius, bishop of Samogitia, succeeded in saving the church, but the monastery was closed. The tsarist authorities took their time deciding how to use the buildings of the complex. Ultimately, part of the monastery became a rectory for Catholic clergy, while the novitiate was set aside to accommodate orthodox clergymen. However, while the project was being formed, the orthodox priest had a house built in town. Thus, in 1887, the novitiate, the quarters intended for him, was

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[8] The reference here is to the Lithuanian uprising against Russian rule in 1863.

ordered demolished. Today, one can see no more than remnants of the north wall of the school on the first floor, which was walled over when the churchyard gallery was built. Window and niche openings, as well as fragments of the vault supports, survive in the churchyard's south wall as peculiar decorative adornments.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the consequences of the repressive tsarist policies became evident. Not only the novitiate, but the domestic buildings farther from the center of the complex were demolished as well – the watermill and the dam, the brewery, the carriage house, the shed and other buildings. When the pond dried out, so did the vegetable gardens and the orchard that surrounded the church, the monastery and the churchyard. The Bernardine complex of Tytuvėnai declined.

Soviet times

In Soviet times, the monastery housed various regional institutions: an agricultural technical school as well as a secondary boarding-school operated there. In the 1960s, the complex underwent major renovation: the foundation and vaulting were strengthened; the structures supporting the roof and the roof's exterior surface were changed; and the buildings were repainted, both inside and out. The most important ones were restored in accordance with plans prepared by architects Birutė Kugevičienė and Darija Zareckienė; the latter shared responsibility for the galleries and the interior of the church with Napoleon Kitkauskas, an engineer. The sculptor Aloyzas Toleikis restored the bas-relief coat of arms on the pediment of the Chapel of Christ's Stairs.

The complex since 1990

When Lithuania regained independence in 1990, concern grew about the condition of the monastery in Tytuvėnai. Initially, the lack of financial support allowed only the most urgent repairs. However, in 2007, extensive restoration began in conjunction with a project known as Blessed John Paul II Pilgrims' Way. The project included fourteen well-known sites of prayer, Tytuvėnai among them, chosen because of the famous

painting of the *Blessed Mother of God with Child*, the Stations of the Cross and the Chapel of Christ's Stairs. Plans for remodeling the complex to suit the needs of pilgrims and tourists were made, and a public agency named the Tytuvėnai Pilgrimage Center was established. From 2009 to 2011, a new roof for the churchyard gallery was laid and full-scale restoration of the wall paintings was completed. In 2011, the Ecclesiastical Heritage Museum of the diocese of Šiauliai opened its doors on the second floor of the monastery. The museum houses valuable artwork from Tytuvėnai as well as rare sacred artifacts and goldsmiths' work from several diocesan churches.

Unfortunately, on January 26, 2012 a fire of uncertain origin broke out in the museum's main hall on the second floor of the monastery. This part of the building suffered the most damage: the roof of the monastery burned down; the first and second floors with unique frescoes were badly flooded and many valuable artifacts in the museum destroyed. The fire also reached the roof of the church, destroying the greater part of its unique wooden structures. Luckily, the fire was put out. The interior of the church was damaged by water, but not by fire.

Architecture

Despite the January fire, the Bernardine monastery and the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Angels rank among the largest and most valuable seventeenth- to eighteenth-century complexes of sacred architecture in Lithuania. The complex consists of a church, a conventual building, churchyard arcades and the Chapel of Christ's Stairs, a two-story masonry building for the monks, and adjacent domestic buildings. Its architecture reflects a multilayered harmony of Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque styles. The seventeenth century phase of construction is reflected in the basically unchanged spatial volume of the church, reminiscent of a basilica. It has three naves and a long, spacious presbytery, ending in a three-sided apse. The presbytery with the choir has two floors, a design seldom found in churches in Lithuania. There are two entrances leading to the second floor: one from the second floor of the monastery and the other, a spiral staircase, from the presbytery's first

floor. On the second floor, the choir is also connected via stairs with the sacristy on the first floor. Its ribbed arches rise to create the illusion of a stellar vault.

The complex's construction began when Gothic shapes and materials were still being used in Lithuania. This is reflected in several features – the red brick exterior walls reinforced with fieldstones, the high-arched presbytery windows with tracery, a pointed arch of triumph separating the presbytery and the nave, the crisscross vaults surmounting the naves, vaults with slightly tapering lintels, the ornate stellar vaults of the presbytery and refectory, and the high roof of the church. Renaissance influence is visible in the lateral facades of the monastery and the church: the half-circle windows, the Doric pilasters on the exterior and interior walls, the plaster rims painted in white that impart ornamentation to the red brick walls, the traceries, door portals, the friezes and the cornices, and the niches of the monastery's exterior walls.

The conventual building is the least changed and is a good representation of Late Renaissance architecture in Lithuania. It is a two-story, three-winged building shaped like a horseshoe; two of its ends abut the south wall of the church, forming a small cloister. The opposite ends of the monastery, as well as the cloister, the presbytery, and sacristy on the first floor, were connected by an outside gallery with a glass-enclosed arcade set in the south wall of the church. An enclosed stairwell connected the cloister with the second floor. The monastery still preserves the old one-way corridor system, with large, bright windows overlooking the cozy cloister.

The first-floor rooms of the monastery are spacious, of various dimensions, and roofed in cross vaults. In the southwest corner, there used to be a large, bright refectory with a rib vault and six huge windows facing the north, west, and south. Next to the dining room, there was a kitchen with a stove and a Swedish furnace for baking bread; a small revolving window connected the kitchen and the dining room for the purpose of serving food. Beneath the kitchen, there were three cellars for storing vegetables and other food products. In all probability, a hypocaust with conduits to circulate warm air was installed

beneath the east or south wings of the monastery. Other Bernardine monasteries in Lithuania used a similar system.

Sculptural components and other works of art

A majestic Late Baroque ensemble consisting of nine altars, a pulpit and a baptismal font, erected in 1777-1780, adorns the interior of the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Angels (Illustration 3). The impressive main altar in the center of the presbytery rises almost up to the vault, separating the two-story choir and the nave. It is made up of a painting of the Mother of God, renowned for her mercies, and sculptures immortalizing the most prominent saints of the Franciscan Order. A statue of St. Dominic symbolizing the brotherhood of the two mendicant orders, the Franciscans and the Dominicans, stands close by. The altar, the pulpit, and the font were executed by at least three craftsmen. One of them has not been identified. The second, Jurgis Mažeika, a Late Baroque master of modeling, is mentioned in the Bernardine Chronicle. His works are easily recognized because of the expressive molding of the sculptures' faces. The third master is an eighteenth-century artist, Tomas Podgaiskis, a former Jesuit, assumed to be the creator of the two rearmost altars, depicting the Birth of Jesus and the Three Kings. A gradual transition from lush, Late Baroque forms to a more restrained classicism is characteristic of Podgaiskis's works. All three altars were once multicolored and gilded. Some of their polychromy remained until the restoration of the interior of the church in 1970-1973. At that time, the sculptural decorations were whitened.

The key component of the main altar is the seventeenth-century painting *The Blessed Mother of God with Child*, done by an anonymous Lithuanian artist. Adorned with a masterfully executed frame and decorated with expressive stylish ornamentation in vegetal motifs, it was restored in 2003. When the frame was removed, a gilded chalk background etched in relief was found surrounding the figure of the Mother of God, a technique characteristic of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Lithuanian religious art.

1. *The Bernardine monastery complex, seen from the southwest.*
In the foreground is the novitiate demolished in 1887.
Drawing by the architect Karolis Dambrovskis, 1883.

2. *The Tytuvėnai monastery church and, in the churchyard, the*
galleries with Stations of the Cross and the Chapel of Christ's Stairway.
Photograph by Vytautas Balčytis, 2011.

3. Interior of the church.
Photograph by Sigitas Varnas, 1997.

4. First-floor corridor of the monastery after restoration in 2011.
Photograph by Audronė Kaušinienė, 2011.
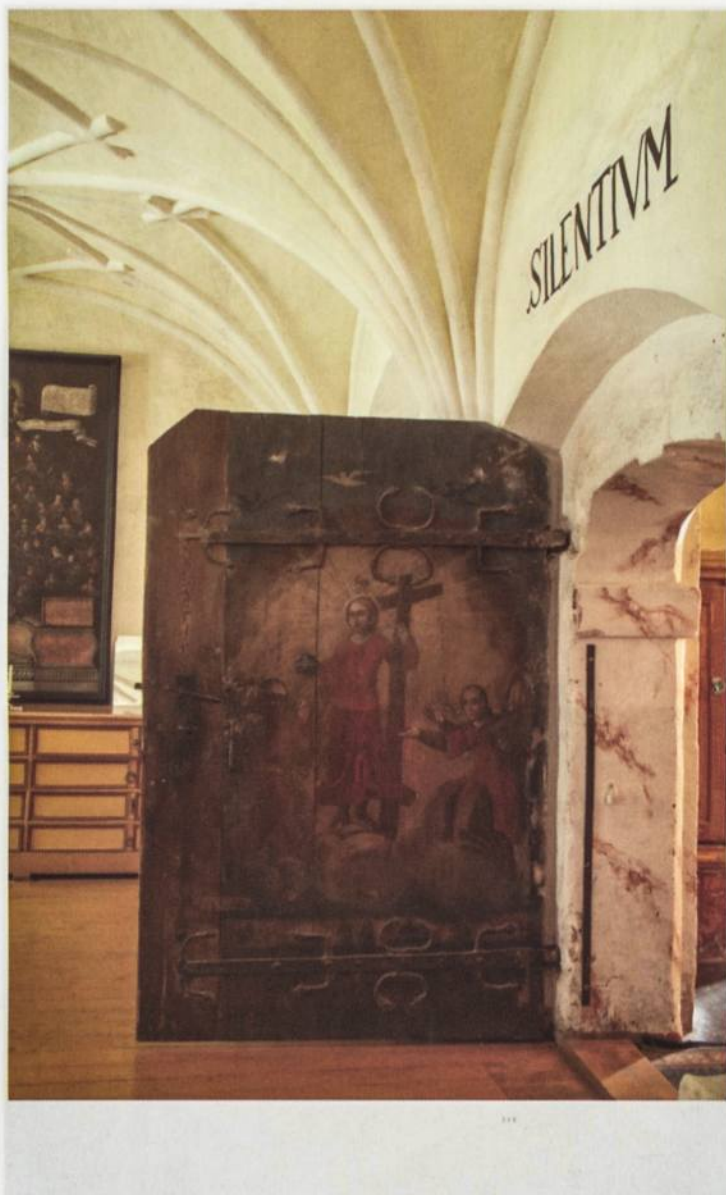
5. Part of the sacristy, with a painted door dating to 1735.
Photograph by Vytautas Balčytis, 2011.

*6. Fragment of frescoes in a second-floor cell after restoration.
Photograph by Audronė Kaušinienė, 2011.*
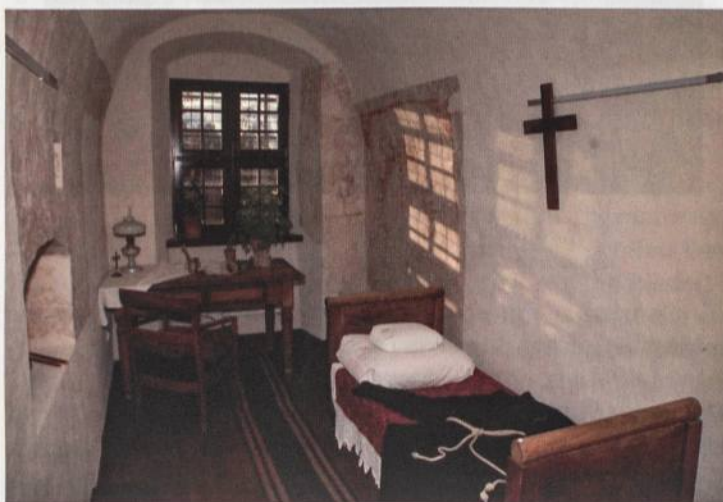
*7. A view of a restored Bernadine monk's cell.
Photograph by Audronė Kaušinienė, 2011.*

*8. The tomb of Andriejus Valavičius, founder of the
monastery complex in Tytuvėnai, inside the church.*

Among the most valuable works of art that convey the
spirituality of the Bernardines are the distinctive altar paint-
ings of *St. Anna, St. Anthony, The Ecstasy of St. Francis of Assisi,
The Blessed Virgin Mary of the Rosary, St. Claire, The Blessed Virgin
Mary of the Immaculate Conception,* and the seventeenth-century
Genealogical Tree of St. Francis of Assisi, which counts as one of
the most unusual. It may have been executed to commemorate
the establishment of the Lithuanian Bernardines' province in
1729 and the renewal of the monastery.

The walls of the church's central nave are adorned with a group of paintings portraying scenes from the life of Christ created by Petras Rozelinas in 1796-1801. The same artist painted the majestic *Apotheosis of St. Francis,* done on canvas and integrated high on the presbytery's wall. Visible from the central nave of the church through the main altar's second-stage tracery, it complements the iconography of the altar.

The church and the monastery both had galleries of portraits of the founders, benefactors, and church hierarchs. Most of the pictures have survived; one can see five portraits of popes who were important to the Franciscan Order; six portraits of benefactors out of the original twelve; two portraits each of Andriejus and Jeronimas Valavičius; and a pair of portraits of Simonas Goniprovskis and Nicolaus Tolvaišas Stackevičius, benefactors from the end of the eighteenth century.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, when the equipment was being renewed, a new organ was installed in the church. Jeronimas Fanickis, guardian of the monastery at the time, saw to it that resources donated by the benefactors were used to build an up-to-date organ of twenty-five voices. Disputes continue over the creator of this great instrument, although recent research done by a historian of organ instruments suggests that the organ should be attributed to Nicolaus Jantzon, a master organ maker from Vilnius.[9]

Embellishing walls with painted compositions was particularly important from the very beginning of the Bernardines' settlement in Tytuvėnai. In 2010, when research on the polychromy, led by Audronė Kaušinienė, was done in the monastery, several stages of painted decor were discovered. At that time, Rūta Janonienė was able to show that the cycle of the Passion of Christ, situated in the first-floor corridor, was painted in the seventeenth century in imitation of a book of meditations (*Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*) by the Spanish Jesuit Jeronimas Nadalis (1507-1580). By the end of 2011, specialists had uncovered and restored part of the cycle, which, unfortunately, sustained significant water damage in the fire of 2012 (Illustration 4). The Bernardine Chronicle tells us that numerous wall paint-

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9   Povilionis,"Vilnius vėlyvojo baroko," 135-148.

ings were done in 1735. That year, thinking that images would move people's hearts, the guardian ordered the vestibule of the church, the space from the great doors to the gate of the monastery, the corridors of the novitiate, and the monastery to be decorated with expressive murals. In the eighteenth century, paintings also adorned five of the complex's doors, though only one remains today, that of the sacristy (Illustration 5).

The decor of the cells on the monastery's second floor requires additional comment. It is a particularly valuable and, in the Lithuanian context, unique testament to the artistic culture of seventeenth- and eighteen-century monasteries. Only one direct comparison can be made with the recently discovered murals in the cells of a monastery in Leżajsk, Poland. It is likely that the Leżajsk and the Tytuvėnai murals attest to the existence of a long-standing tradition of decorating monks' cells. No evidentiary artifacts had existed before this discovery. A primitive, naïve artistic expression is characteristic of the Tytuvėnai murals, no doubt created by self-taught individuals, most likely monks. Abundant inscriptions in Latin and Polish show the level of their education as well as the significance of the word-image tradition in the monks' spiritual life (Illustration 6 & 7).

The history of the complex is also reflected in the tombs and their epitaphs, both those which have survived and those that are known only from burial ceremonies described in various documents. There were eleven mortuary halls beneath the church; plaques in the church mention some of the individuals buried there. Plaques have also been preserved on the churchyard fence and the façade of the Chapel of Christ's Stairs. All of them recall the owners of the Tytuvėnai estate, the Bernardines' benefactors.

Moved from its original place and somewhat damaged, the tomb of Andriejus Valavičius, built in the third decade of the seventeenth century, can be found adjacent to the south wall of the church. It is decorated with a sculptural image of the noble carved from sandstone and figurines depicting the patron saints of his wife, Kotryna. Because the upper part of the tomb and the epitaph plaque are missing, it is thought that the monument was not finished. Its artistic style suggests a

work completed in the shop of the famous Flemish sculptor Willem van den Blocke. Originally, the tomb was placed in the presbytery of the church, to the right of the altar, as a reminder of the benefactor for the monks who entered the presbytery from the opposite side (Illustration 8).

In addition to the immediately visible works of art, the monastery houses a variety of smaller, singular pieces that reflect various phases in the complex's decoration and outfitting. A collection of wooden sculptures from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries deserves some attention. The oldest ones are entitled *The Sorrowful Mother of God* and *St. John the Evangelist*. They may have once been part of a group portraying the Crucifixion arranged on a transverse in the old wooden church of St. John in Tytuvėnai, mentioned in the estate's inventory in 1555. Equally impressive, because of its size and the art of its carving, is the seventeenth-century sculpture *Christ Crucified* that adorns the vestibule, and the somewhat later sculpture of *The Sacred Heart* placed in a niche above the holy water font, illustrating a theme rarely found in eighteenth-century Lithuanian sacred art. The images that survive of St. Francis, the patriarch of Franciscan and Bernardine monks, immortalize the saint in poses of prayer receiving the signs of the Stigmata. Other, perhaps less important, statues depict saints popular in Lithuanian church art. Most of the sculptures preserved in Tytuvėnai were made by professional sculptors, although some of them illustrate techniques of folk art.

One of the most valuable artifacts in the Tytuvėnai church is a luxurious metal antependium embossed with ornaments and figures of saints, created in 1749, but no longer in use. It is made of five interconnecting brass panels, attached to a board, depicting four Bernardine saints and the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. These images were chosen in accordance with a thoroughly considered ideological program and thus correlate closely with the cult of Mary and the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

Many of the visual fine art works in Tytuvėnai have survived, but not the liturgical vessels or metal utensils mentioned in manuscript sources. Time slowly consumed them along with

the vestments. In the course of time, obsolete or broken dishes were melted down into new liturgical objects or were used to repair the old ones. Today, the monastery houses a collection of old stoles, representing only a small part of the vestments mentioned in sources from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. One of the oldest remaining metal artifacts is a reliquary dating back to the seventeenth century. Besides the liturgical vestments and vessels, such processional articles as small altars, portable paintings, crosses, canopies, drums, and torches are also preserved in Tytuvėnai, along with an extremely ornate *umbraculum* no longer used in church services. Its masterly carved openwork frame consists of grape vines intertwined with wheat ears forming a small cross at the top. A symbol of Christ the Redeemer, a lamb lying on a cross and a book sealed with seven seals, is embroidered with yellow woolen thread on a net cloth stretched over a frame.

The Tytuvėnai complex is an inexhaustible treasure trove of monuments to history, culture, art, and architecture. It helps us to understand the spiritual and artistic values characteristic of Bernardine creativity, and also to recognize and appreciate an important cultural and artistic heritage preserved in a contemporary landscape. Recently, a documentary film of the complex (with subtitles in English) was created by scholars of the Vilnius Academy of Art.

Translated by Daiva Litvinskaitė

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Experiences of Exile in New Lithuanian Prose

DALIA KUIZINIENĖ

The evolution of national stereotypes

After the political, societal, and social upheavals of 1990, the world became accessible, not only through contact with our closest neighboring countries and societies, but also with those further away and less known to us. "Global influence not only reawakened forgotten tensions, it also brought up new ones: a feeling of emotional instability and the need to reassess and find new meaning in myths that had become stereotypes or to simply create new ones."[1]

The issues of identity and nationality versus identity and globalization are perhaps the concepts discussed most often in the recent writings of philosophers, historians, sociologists, and literary scholars in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Their writings constantly revisit issues of cultural differences between the East and West, and of the expression of national, cultural, and generational characteristics in artistic creations. An author's position among several cultural traditions and languages takes on a multiplicity of treatments in literary texts; such creative people react very feelingly to the challenges of a globalized world, and they express these feelings in their creative output. The search for a new concept of "self"

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[1]   Samalavičius, "Svarstymai," 25.

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and of the means to express it are quite evident in the newest Lithuanian prose of recent years.

The forms and expressions of national identity have a particular style when they evolve under conditions of foreign domination; they are different when the nation regains statehood and independence; and they assume yet other forms when significant numbers of people from that society emigrate and try to maintain their individual or collective identity while living abroad. In literary texts, the forms of these identities are very clear, because they have received persuasive literary treatment. They often demolish the national stereotypes that have dominated Lithuanian literature, thereby encouraging us to rethink apparently entrenched phenomena and concepts. Over the twenty-one years of Lithuania's reestablished independence, Lithuanian culture has come closer to European and world cultural standards. Over the past decade, many texts have been written by Lithuanian authors who have lived abroad for a longer or shorter length of time. Along with authors whose names are already well-known (Valdas Papievis, Birutė Jonuškaitė, Zita Čepaitė, Marius Ivaškevičius), quite a few nonprofessional authors have begun writing abroad (Ina Pukelytė, Artūras Imbrasas, Linas Jegelavičius, Andrius Križanauskas). Many texts were inspired by the experience of living elsewhere and the search for one's identity. Living abroad makes many intellectuals think about their links with the past and makes them view themselves as individuals in the context of another culture; it also makes them express these conflicts in their creative work. What is it that stimulates so many intellectuals who have gone abroad to take up the pen and start writing novels? Is it the new experiences, a particularly clear feeling of one's own identity and the need to discuss it in an artistic way? Do they bring something new to Lithuanian prose? This article examines Lithuanian prose texts written abroad over about the past ten years. The latest tendencies of emigrant literature will be explained, as will the evolution of identity – ranging from the usual nostalgic memoirs right up to attempts to deny one's Lithuanian heritage and to replace it with some sort of transformed

identity. The latest books of Papievis, Aušra Marija Jurašienė, Čepaitė, and Gabija Grušaitė will be examined in somewhat more depth.

The writings chosen are diverse in their topics, genre, and literary value. The authors belong to different generations and different places of residence (as does their time abroad: shorter or longer, with some having returned to Lithuania). However, they are united in reflecting on their national identity, the experiences of exile, and their relationship with Lithuanian life.

Increasingly, it is only possible to discuss a hybrid, not a purely national, identity. The situation of people living in a diaspora is perhaps best summed up by the identity model of the culturologist Homi K. Bhabha in his book *Nation and Narration*, which deals with people at the junction of two or more cultures, languages, or historical experiences. It is quite clear that Lithuanian prose at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first reflects clear changes in identity and signals differences in the *Weltanschauung* of different generations, deconstructing the tradition of Lithuanian identity.

> The utopian exile consciousness has weakened considerably, if not completely disappeared, simply because of the radically changed communications situation. "Place" has become a rather relative concept now that political borders have loosened and modern communications technology has come on the scene. Airplanes, the Internet and smart phones have made El Dorado a homeland that you can carry in your pocket.[2]

The creative writers themselves declare in their texts that the traditional condition of being an emigrant (loss of home and connection with the world) has changed. Of her 2010 collection of short stories, *Ilgesio kojos* (Feet of Longing), author Aušra Matulevičiūtė says in an interview: "Yes, seventy years ago there was a different emigrant status, a different rate of adjusting to the foreign surroundings, and a different kind of endurance..."[3] The identity soul-searching of her book's main

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2 Satkauskytė, *Egzilinė (ne)tapatybė*, 121.
3 Matulevičiūtė, "Kūryba mesteli."

character, the exile Inesa, gets entangled with the crisis experienced by her Lebanese husband concerning his ethnic deracination.

Shift of values or post-Soviet traumas?

Fleeing from post-Soviet reality and the link with place are recounted most clearly in the novels of Valdas Papievis and Ina Pukelytė. Prose writer Papievis has lived in France since 1992. In his 2003 novel, *Vienos vasaros emigrantai* (One Summer's Emigrants), the dominant theme is inner action, the interplay of present and past, and the ongoing contrast between two places: Vilnius and Paris.

The author has clearly stated his physical and psychological state, his identity as a person who divides his time between two places:

> Paris operates on a different scale of time and place. To tell the truth, I never thought that I would be able to get so used to a foreign place. I go back and forth between Paris and Vilnius, between France and Lithuania. As soon as I get to Paris, I start missing Vilnius; and when I'm in Vilnius, I miss Paris.[4]

In Papievis's *Vienos vasaros emigrantai*, the narrator of the novel wanders around Paris and also the labyrinths of his inner reality. The author creates an image of life as a series of searches, wanderings, even vagrancy. In the novel there are almost no events, and the apparently meaningless things that take place are needed by the author only inasmuch as they provide an opportunity for the character of the novel to reflect and live through the event to the extent that it provokes some sort of feeling or reaction in him. It is a multilayered novel, in which the character seeks to identify with Paris, a city that is both his own and alien to him; it is also an attempt to find one's own relationship not only with a place, but also with the world and oneself, to make sense of oneself. Although the title of the novel implies a concrete reference (one summer's emigrants), the author quickly shatters that illusion of concreteness (emigrants for one summer or for life). For the protagonist of the novel, the

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[4] Papievis, "Sapnai dar lietuviški," 5.

temporal dimension is variable; it keeps fluctuating between the past and the present, between the borderlines of reality and imagination. For this purpose, the author makes use of the leitmotiv of travel or pilgrimage, which is well established in Lithuanian modernist literature. He gives it a double meaning: the external, often meaningless wandering around the city implies a much more complex and conflictive journey in his inner psychological labyrinths.

The character narrating this novel feels, in his travels around Paris, that he has

> ...run away not only from the confusing mix of toil, complexes, and habits that have become superstitions in his native land, but that he has also run away from the world in general. [....] I was free like never before: no home, no language, none of my accustomed personal possessions that would have been handy to help create the illusion of having my own little corner.[5]

The narrator realizes he has started a new stage in his life only when he has severed all imaginable links with the past and accepts that this is a completely new undertaking. The world of Papievis's narrator is considerably more complex and contradictory: he is perpetually at the interface, in a state between own/ alien, present/past, identifying/not identifying with himself, with others, with things, and with the city, which in this novel becomes a separate live character, constantly changing form.

The narrator's encounters with other characters are limited: the writing avoids going into specifics, concentrating instead on the meaning of inner links, commonality, and new experiences. The narrative focuses on certain lines of connection between the narrator (without hiding that his voice is the author's voice), a French vagrant named Natalie, and a dancer called Mélanie, a Swiss woman, who experiences similar journeys and a similar search for identity.

Under a bridge over the Seine, the vagrant woman he meets calls the narrator *l'Étranger* (the foreigner) and identifies him as such, later "refining" the term to *le Polonais* (the Pole):

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[5]   Papievis, *Vienos vasaros emigrantai*, 28.

Then it occurred to me that for her *polonais* was not a nationality; for her, *polonais* was like a species, a race, a name by which to call all the newcomers from the East, regardless of what you are: a Rumanian or Czech, a Ukrainian or a Russian ...[6]

The interface of cultures and the critical estimation of foreigners are a constant in this novel, propelling the characters into an ongoing search for their own identity: "You are running from something and cannot get away from it. It's as if you're an alien from another world or as if you had neither home nor homeland."[7]

The narrator of the novel experiences the same complexes and the same demolition of established myths as do the people he meets from other countries of Central and Eastern Europe. He interacts with these people, who, besides their individualism, have common experiences and complexes, sometimes alluded to by the narrator and at other times by the novel's protagonists. There are frequent references to the self as a wanderer, a dropout, a prodigal son, a loner, a vagabond, and an emigrant for one summer or the rest of one's life. The theme of aimless and meaningless wandering much loved by existentialists is clear in Papievis's novel; but this aimless and meaningless wandering, a pilgrimage, distills the existential loneliness and temporality. The desire to identify, to blend in, to belong, and through that to construct a new concept of self and the surroundings: these are constant states affecting the narrator, even as the narrator's voice changes in the novel – now narrating from the *I* position, now the *you*, now the *he*. In this novel, the motifs of journey, wandering, pilgrimage, and life as a road without a beginning or an end are constantly repeated.

Papievis's 2010 novel, *Eiti* (To Go), is a continuation of the earlier novel; however, it has significantly fewer signs of the external world or a particular place. In this work, an entirely new direction is developed, keeping its distance from the external world: the narrator's wanderings around Provence become the symbol of the inner journey of the newcomer (which is how the narrator Valdas refers to himself). The author continually

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[6] Ibid., 9.
[7] Ibid., 32.

develops the theme of the alienness of the place; he lives with a feeling of its impermanence. He goes "where no one is expecting him,"[8] his spiritual journey becoming his lifestyle, without the need to be tied to a specific place.

Theater critic Ina Pukelytė's 2000 book, *Prancūziškas romanas* (French Novel), was written during a stay in France. The character is matured by her year abroad and an unsuccessful love affair, and this helps to consolidate her own identity, which evolves from the tribulations of a young girl who has become entangled in the life of an older French couple. The novel centers on Giedrė's departure from her hometown and her return to it after a year of painful experiences.

The protagonist of Pukelytė's novel states her goals very clearly: her aim is to get to know the country and its people and to blend in with them. Her only links with her homeland are letters and occasional telephone calls. Her displacement from her accustomed life makes her change her view of her former life as she assesses it from a new perspective of time and space: "Life in Lithuania now took on another dimension. Giedrė now perceived in it a number of advantages that she had not noticed until then."[9]

In her dealings with students of various nationalities, the protagonist clearly understands that all of them, including herself, "represent their nation willy-nilly, and they are the relayers of its codes."[10] In her life in the university village, she is in constant contact and dealing with people of other nationalities. She spends her leisure time with them, and in this there is a spontaneous reaffirmation or rejection of experience and concepts established long ago.

The search for identity in history and language

One of the most important guarantees of the maintenance of ethnic identity in exile is giving the nation's history and national heritage traditions meaning through creative output. It is

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8   Papievis, *Eiti*, 56.
9   Pukelytė, *Prancūziškas romanas*, 89.
10 Ibid., 98.

no coincidence that during various periods in exile there have been many memoirs and historical texts produced. This tendency is spreading in new Lithuanian prose writing. Perhaps the clearest example of this is Kristina Sabaliauskaitė's historical novel *Silva rerum*. This novel does not reflect upon exile identity; it was, however, written while the author was living in London.

The 2005 novel, *Klajūnas* (The Wanderer), is the first novel of Artūras Imbrasas, an architect who has lived and worked in Israel for nine years. There is not much external action in the novel, since it is the account of a young person's journey through space and time, his own feelings, and his efforts to regain his lost values. The character created by Imbrasas does not wander around foreign countries and cities; his journey is through inner space. The novel is written in the form of confessions to a diary. In this novel, a person's identification with the historical roots of his ancestors is expressed in unexpected and ironic parallels, symbols, and metaphors. The goal of understanding oneself through one's links to the past stimulates the novel's principal protagonist to research deeper into history and to compare his values to those of previous generations:

> Later I became interested in ancestors: my own and those of other people. Their desires and aspirations. I became a historian. I imagined that in history I would find a respite: I would be concerned only with those who have already passed from this life, so I wouldn't feel much sentiment or indebtedness toward them. A cold-blooded researcher's curiosity. But it turned out that they, the specters of the past, were much stronger than I. Their desires, whether written down or not, coincide with mine, and that bewildered me.[11]

This book contains no accounts of life abroad. It is about the present and a journey into the past presented in an abstract space, without any specific outlines of a place; it is also the distant past of our ancestors as interpreted by the narrator. It is a book about a journey into the past, in which the search is not for historical facts or details; it is an examination of deep

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[11] Imbrasas, *Klajūnas*, 15.

values from the position of a contemporary person wandering about the world, a person who throws overboard many long-established norms, desanctifying them, but who eventually discovers some permanent values. Self-identity is sought in the past, through comparison and the reconstruction of individual experience through memory.

Reflections on the past are also vivid in the 2008 book, *Egziliantės užrašai* (Memoirs of an Exile), by the writer and journalist Aušra Marija Jurašienė. The author has called her texts essays, portrait sketches, memoirs, impressions. Indeed, the book is very uneven, consisting of texts written in Lithuania and in exile, in which the author of the book assembles, as if for a mosaic, portraits of people she has met, sketching their character traits and presenting her own emotional characteristics. She describes her life between two countries and her difficult-to-describe sense of identity as her own particular "*légèreté* (flightiness), as if crossing a swaying monkey bridge stretched out over the Atlantic."[12] This psychological to-and-fro between what is one's own and what is alien, then between one's own things that have become alien and one's alienated own things, becomes an integral part of the author's state of mind, which she refers to in the book in more than one passage:

> I am partly the eternal wandering Jew, partly a snob, partly homeless, always looking for a new home after a few years, if not in another country or state, then at least on another street. Wherever I go, I want to come back to New York (...) But when I am in Vilnius, where I also feel like a newcomer, I miss New York. When I am in New York, I miss Vilnius.[13]

This book's texts are marked by the theme of a relationship with a place and the search for one's own place and home, which give us an insight into the personal feelings and search for self-identification of, not only the author and her husband, the stage director Jonas Jurašas, but also generally of people who live a global life. No doubt these feelings were shared in the past and continue to be shared by artists and intellectuals

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[12] Jurašienė, *Egziliantės užrašai*, 8.
[13] Ibid., 36.

ripped up by the roots from their native space, failing to fully acclimatize elsewhere, not fitting in, and forever roaming. The Jurašas family did not get overly involved in American life, but also found the strictures of local emigrant society too narrow. It is no coincidence that when penning portraits of Elena Gaputytė and Marija Gimbutienė, the author reveals their independence of spirit and creativity and the Lithuanian roots of their *oeuvre*, but at the same time the universal dimension of their creative expression and its statement about existential meaning.

Lietumi prieš saulę (Rain Before the Sun), a book of essays and reflections by the philosopher and translator Dalia Staponkutė, who has lived for more than a decade in Cyprus, was most likely inspired by her experiences and her feelings of personal identity in the context of the interface of languages and cultures. Her individual style stimulates the author to write autobiographically and inventively:

> The language becomes God when you feel that you can rely on it, be friends with it, and paint your thoughts with it. The gift of writing visits us latest of all; furthermore, it is only when we try to write in another language that we start to clearly understand, as never before, what exactly we are. We are not given more than we are: the Greek language and the impossibility of attaining perfection in it helped me to define my own Lithuanianness. In this way, a translator was born within me: not a translator who translates books, but one that translates herself into another culture and becomes part of it.[14]

The native language, its changes in a foreign environment, the weakening of the link between mother and child due to bilingualism – these topics receive painful analysis in the essays of Staponkutė.

A guide for emigrants

One after another, the authors of books published in recent years have chosen nonfiction, travel, or the journal genre. A great deal has been written about Lithuanian life in exile. The

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[14] Staponkutė, *Lietumi prieš saulę*, 20.

books of journalist Andrius Užkalnis, who lived in the UK for fifteen years, include *Anglija: apie tuos žmones ir jų šalį*, (England: About Those People and Their Country), 2009, and *Prisijaukintoji Anglija*, (Getting Used to England), 2010, went through several printings. Čepaitė's 2011 book, *Emigrantės dienoraštis* (The Diary of an Emigrant Woman), continues the theme of emigrant life and finding the meaning of "being" in England. These books have become a sort of guide for those preparing to emigrate.

In her 2009 novel, *Baltų užtrauktukų tango* (The Tango of the White Zippers), Jonuškaitė combines elements of nonfiction, fiction, and journalism. Fragments of genuine emigrant letters are incorporated into the exile experiences of the principal protagonist of the novel, Laima; artistic reality gets intertwined with the specific and familiar reality of Lithuanian exile life. For example, the novel describes her acquaintance with Liūnė Sutema and visits to her house:

> The windows of the house are boarded over, the shrubs in the garden have gone wild; it's a long time since the grass has been mown, and it has children's toys kicking around in it. I pick up a faded grey baseball and put it in my pocket as a souvenir remnant of a past life. Maybe it was touched by Marius Katiliškis, who built this house.[15]

At the end of the book, there are interviews with people from the world of emigrant literature, culture, and the press. *Baltų užtrauktukų tango* is not a traditional novel; it is constructed on the principal of a collage, with the protagonists being a mixture of imaginary and real people.

> The author was not interested in successful people, because they could have been successful anywhere. She wanted to dedicate the book to the majority of emigrants, who run off following a dream of finding paradise, but who are not always successful in this endeavor.[16]

In her *Emigrantės dienoraštis*, Čepaitė uses a journalistic technique to describe the experiences of thousands of Lithuanians living in Great Britain. She particularly presents a lot

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[15] Jonuškaitė, *Baltų užtrauktukų tango*, 185.
[16] Tamošaitis, *Išėjusios laimės ieškoti*, 140.

of detail about the realities of life in London; e.g., the author sarcastically describes the difference between UK electrical outlets and Lithuanian ones, and advises on where the cheapest shopping is. The book is dominated by specific information about the emigrants' daily life and work as well as descriptions of their dealings with the British and other immigrants. At the end of the book, there is a little glossary that explains regular emigrant jargon such as: *babajus* (used as a generic term for people from India, Afghanistan, etc., from the Indian word baba, a familar form of address); *čikininė* (a fast-food chicken shop); *karbutseilas* (a car boot sale); *sitingas* (a sitting room). As the literary critic Elena Baliutytė wrote:

> Čepaitė's book, read in one hit, is like a detective novel, but somehow it is not easy to consider it literature in the traditional sense of this word. These texts contain no signal that the author might have literary intentions, that she might be concerned with matters of expression. She is just an intelligent woman writing in a literate way about her own history and the histories of other emigrants that are worth reading for various reasons. They are not challenging to comprehend; the text conveys topical information and satisfies human curiosity.[17]

In Lithuania, this book was presented at the 2012 Vilnius Book Fair, and its presentation was accompanied by several interviews with the author in the popular press; the book was reviewed several times and included in the Top Twelve list of the most creative books that is compiled annually by the Lithuanian Institute of Literature and Folklore. As well as describing the practical realities of everyday life abroad, the author writes about differences between the British and Lithuanian experience and particular aspects of dealing with each other; she also deromanticizes her compatriots' patriotism. It is not by chance that in the first chapter of her book the author recounts a colleague's dream:

> The woman dreamt that she had returned to Lithuania with her family for the holidays and found that the government had decided to close all the borders and not to let anyone leave Lithuania.[18]

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[17] Baliutytė, *Rašytojai ateina, rašytojai išeina*, 102.
[18] Čepaitė, *Emigrantės dienoraštis*, 8.

Describing the world of the emigrants and their links with the homeland, Čepaitė demolishes the stereotype perpetuated in Lithuanian literature of the emigrant suffering from nostalgia. She says that her countrymen:

> ...are not at all alienated from Lithuania, since they make use of permanently cheap airfares, illegal or quasi-legal highway passenger carriers, and the nonstop back and forth flow of merchandise. We don't need to establish a new Lithuania here, since we have already transplanted various parts of Šiauliai, Panevėžys, and Plungė to the outskirts of London.[19]

Young writers' prose: the unattractive side of emigration

The young generation of debuting writers presents a somewhat different exile experience. The emigrant life they portray in their writing is unattractive, and the characters are usually trying to break out of the "ghetto" of the Lithuanian community and, hidden behind a cosmopolitan mask, trying to forsake not only their traditions, but also their ethnic roots. In her 2008 novel, *Katinas Temzėje* (A Cat In the Thames), Aneta Anra depicts a young girl's effort to get away: "I so badly wanted to go somewhere, so that everything would change."[20] The protagonist places importance on understanding herself; the maturation of her sense of identity and her search take place in multicultural London. The young protagonist is prickly about her countrymen who eke out a living in London. She wants to get ahead in the intellectual sphere, with dreams of becoming the *protégée* of a wealthy British aristocrat. Alas, neither she nor her Polish friend succeed in achieving their creative ambitions. In the end, she returns home without having found herself. In Aleksandra Fomina's 2011 novel, *Mes vakar buvome saloje* (Yesterday We Were on the Island), the bohemian protagonists go to London to find work. The author portrays the life of homeless people in squats and their daily struggles to survive in an alien environment. However, the younger generation's view of the world is perhaps best expressed in Grušaitė's 2010 novel, *Neišsipildymas* (Lack of Fulfillment). Jūratė Čerškutė

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[19] Ibid., 41.
[20] Anra, *Katinas Temzėje*, 7.

calls this book the novel that was lacking and had to be written some day:

> It has been written by a young person about the young people that you see and meet every day. It is about young people who were defined by the products they use, whose identity was forged in the blast furnace of mass production and consumerism.[21]

The action of the novel revolves around the love story of Ugnė and Rugilė. One of the threads of the book is a reflection on national identity and the rejection of one's Lithuanianness. The author declares on the book's cover: "My story and Ugnė's too, were quite 'un-national', un-Lithuanian, unreal."[22] The action of the novel takes place in London, Paris, and Barcelona. Grušaitė's characters reject the symbols of their Lithuanian identity while seeking self-realization and indulging in youthful rebelliousness. They attempt to establish a cosmopolitan identity:

> I thought about it: maybe the languor that affects all three of us stems from our dark, rainy land, which has engendered so much endless grey. We were foreigners everywhere we went. We rarely talked about Lithuania, we did not buy Lithuanian-style bread, and we didn't miss our mothers' meat patties. We carried our background as a secret, because for us it wasn't so much a question of national identity or geography, but rather some sort of stamp of sadness on the forehead, like an invisible totem. Sometimes it seemed to us that we belonged to some sort of secret society, the members of which all had a built-in self-destruct mechanism.[23]

But not a single character succeeds in their constant attempts to hide their Lithuanianness, because no spiritual substitute is found: "We were foreigners both at home and abroad."[24]

In summary

For a creative artist living abroad, the question of national identity is important at any moment when one is called upon to specify one's link with tradition and Western culture.

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[21] Čerškutė, "Perviršio kartos neišsipildymų kronika."
[22] Grušaitė, *Neišsipildymas*, fourth edition.
[23] Ibid., 29.
[24] Ibid., 111.

In Lithuanian literature, the interface of foreign experiences, globalization, and current challenges is taking on clear forms of expression. In many literary texts they are becoming stereotypes comprehensible to all, simplified models of universal discourse.[25]

Since 1990, many Lithuanians have emigrated and have lived abroad for longer or shorter periods of time. This experience is evident in Lithuanian prose. Over the last ten years, many prose texts have appeared that reflect the experience of exile. This literature is varied in theme and genre, and it expresses the most important concerns faced by Lithuanians in the wide world: I and the other, the contrast of familiar and foreign, the land of one's dreams, marriage to a non-Lithuanian, children left behind in Lithuania, and other themes.

In the novels of Papievis and Pukelytė, the protagonists' escape from the post-Soviet reality that "imprisons" them in the labyrinths of my space/foreign space. Other authors are stimulated by the realities of life abroad into searching for the historical roots of their nation and their broader family and into stressing the importance of their native language. The diaries, essays, and descriptions of the travels of Lithuanian authors have become quite popular; written by journalists and writers, they have become practical guides for emigrants, summarizing the experience of life abroad.

Lithuanian prose written abroad over the past decade is demolishing the model of Lithuanian identity that dominated earlier. This is seen most clearly in the prose of the youngest writers, who portray the less attractive side of emigration, reject nostalgia for their native land, and explore cosmopolitan identities of citizenship in the world.

Translated by Gintautas Kaminskas

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[25] Baricco, *Next*, 35.

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BOOK REVIEW

Attempts to Restructure Baltic Higher Education Revisited

Gustav N. Kristensen. *Born into a Dream: EuroFaculty and the Council of Baltic Sea States*. Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2010, 516 pages. ISBN 978-3-8305-1769-6.

A lengthy, dense volume by the Danish scholar Gustav N. Kristensen, *Born into a Dream*, was issued in Berlin as part of the academic publication series The Baltic Sea Region: Northern Dimensions – European Perspectives. It is an interesting, well-documented, and, at times, extremely insightful personal narrative. It might also be described as a detailed summary of the history of the EuroFaculty, an innovative institution established in the three Baltic States – Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia – in the crucial years of social change shortly after the restoration of independence (as early as 1993). It ended with the countries' entrance into the economic and mental sphere of the European Union. The author of this book was the third (and last) director of the EuroFaculty, set up as an academic network by the Council of the Baltic Sea States under a proposal by Hans-Dietrich Genscher, then Germany's Minister of Foreign Affairs. It functioned in several Baltic universities from 2001 until 2005. The author provides a semiautobiographic account of the multifaceted development of this institution and its gradual integration into the Baltic academic milieu, which led to an increase in academic cooperation between Baltic, Nordic, and other European countries, and thus also the internationalization of educational programs and scholarship in the postcommunist societies of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Though this volume can hardly be labeled an academic treatise, it is a timely and useful overview of the changes in educational curricula, programs, and activities during those crucial years of complicated and somewhat painful reforms in the Baltic region.

Kristensen's account of the EuroFaculty is based on a variety of sources previously unavailable for research, not only

institutional documents, but also faculty and administrators' correspondence, notes, and *pro memoria*. His personal recollections of circumstances and events shed light on attempts to restructure higher education in the Baltic States at a time when European support and cooperation were of the utmost importance. In a sense, it is a story of East meets West – a mixture of excitement, initiative, joint or lonely efforts of varying degrees of success, as well as lost hopes and disappointments.

In a certain way, Kristensen's book is a micro-history of the transitional postcommunist period, even though it is an account of only one institution and can hardly be called fully "objective." It covers the history of the shaping of the Euro-Faculty and also the very interesting context in which political, social, and cultural changes took place. Kristensen starts with an account of the tensions that accompanied efforts of reform in states that faced serious economic crises after a short, but dramatic, upswing in national feelings in 1990: the three countries lacked know-how, experience, and adequate institutional structures to deal with the problems that surfaced as soon as they started exiting from their Soviet prison. Participants and witnesses of those exciting and turbulent years might well remember how quickly public enthusiasm for a "market economy" was replaced by feelings of helplessness, even despair, when building liberal market societies proved to be a much more complicated process than anyone had imagined. Lithuania and its two neighbors badly needed economic wisdom along with true operational expertise, given the completely unfamiliar social environment. The rise of new forms of ownership triggered criminalization. A deep polarization of society (its consequences have been surfacing in new ways in recent years) went hand in hand with sincere, ambitious, but often miscalculated attempts to (re)build new infrastructures for academic and public institutions.

The book documents Nordic connections – the involvement of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and other countries in efforts to reconstruct Baltic higher education. Kristensen recalls circumstances in which cooperation and miscommunication

took place at the same time: some actors were overexcited about reforms, while others reacted as if reforms constituted a personal threat. To a reader who has firsthand experience of reshaping academic institutions, many of Kristensen's remarks might seem too polite, too cautious. The fight for survival, the will to make the Soviet mental legacy disappear, and efforts to hang on to the past were often more dramatic than described in *Born into a Dream*. However, readers will find in Kristensen's narrative many insights into the often abortive attempts to re-form Baltic universities. A close scrutiny of the book opens up new horizons and a perspective on why close cooperation be-tween the three states, often exalted during the first years, was short-lived. Kristensen gives a thorough account of Baltic-Nor-dic cooperation and at the same time, by focusing on the speci-ficity of each one of the Baltic contexts, he shows how different mental habits and varying experiences narrowed the possible confluence that could have been beneficial to all parties. One can easily understand how misunderstandings between the partners and EU institutions, and among the Nordic countries themselves, the lack of coordination and willingness to view mental and material differences as challenges limited, at least partially, the scope of the EuroFaculty's activities (see chapters "The Danish Delay," "The Swedish Controversy," and "The Finnish Problem"). Kristensen provides numerous examples of how ambitious European policies failed because of a lack of coordination; inadequate reactions by the Balts were not the only cause.

Institutions are shaped and reshaped by politics and formal agreements as well as by personalities (especially by them). This is one of the points of *Born into a Dream*, especial-ly when the author discusses the activities of professor Toivo Miljan, a dedicated Estonian-Canadian scholar, who opposed EU bureaucracy in such a way that it could only deal with this experienced, hard-working director by ousting him. His suc-cessors, however, continued to implement academic reforms, albeit with diminished enthusiasm for opposition. Kristensen also documents aspects of the specific local academic climate in

each of the Baltic States during the term of his office and those of the previous directors. To students of academic reforms in higher education, Kristensen's narrative provides many occasions for interesting, close reading.

Understandably, the greatest part of *Born into a Dream* focuses on reshaping curricula in law and economics. These were the areas that needed the EuroFaculty's international assistance the most; few would dare to deny that the postcommunist academy was the least advanced in these fields, previously strongly supervised by Soviet ideology and policy making. No wonder that cooperation in both areas was resisted by some influential local academics who wished to maintain the status quo and were not interested in structural or curricular changes. A propos, my mentor, the late professor Wolfgang Iser, commissioner of humanities and social sciences at the time of the crucial restructuring of Humboldt University after German reunification, once pointed out to me how much unwillingness to face changes there had been among East German academics, some of whom, he remarked, "were so stupid that even the Stasi did not take an interest in them." Kristensen avoids putting his thoughts so bluntly; however, his account offers wise remarks of this kind as well.

What I find missing in this interesting and carefully written account is a deeper discussion of the changes in academic programs. Kristensen provides many details about the accomplishments and personal qualities of the lecturers, but little analysis of course content. What kind of books in law and economics were studied in EuroFaculty classes? Which economic theories were introduced by visiting professors? Who compiled the reading lists and what titles were included? One can hardly find answers to these questions in Kristensen's book, even though in other ways it is detailed and well documented. As we are well aware, there was too much fascination in Lithuania and other Eastern European countries with the ideas of economists of a neoliberal ilk, such as Milton Friedman, Ayn Rand, the Chicago School or their adepts. These ideas were hastily borrowed and incorporated into local financial policies,

especially during the first decade. It remains uncertain to what degree (if any) the EuroFaculty was instrumental in bringing these theories into the postcommunist realm. It would be interesting to know why alternative economics, say, the writings of E. F. Schumacher and other theorists of ecological economics, were so unpardonably slow to reach professional audiences in the Baltic States.

Of course, one cannot demand that the author provide all possible answers to all likely and unlikely questions, but at least a couple of chapters devoted to the academic syllabuses of EuroFaculty programs would have been instructive. On the other hand, the voices of even junior faculty members or teaching assistants mentioned in *Born into a Dream* can be currently heard in the Baltic discourse on law and economics, and this proves that programs initiated in 1993 successfully educated a large number of scholars who continue to maintain networks of European academic cooperation. Judging from this perspective, the book tells a story of success. It may be that, after all, Kristensen has provided his readers with a thoughtful, detailed, and well-balanced narrative that can be read by specialists and nonspecialists interested in the recent history of Baltic higher education and its relation to society, both in the West and in what used to be regarded as Europe's East.

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ABSTRACTS

The May Third Constitution and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania
Liudas Glemža

The document known as the May Third Constitution continues to provoke heated debate among historians as well as the general public. Opinions divide sharply into positive and negative evaluations of the document, as was evident in recent discussions that raised the question: should May 3rd be declared a day to commemorate? The article attempts to shed light on the origin of the controversy, but also argues that the May Third Constitution, one of the first written national constitutions worldwide, demonstrates that the Commonwealth of Two Nations (Lithuania and Poland) was not a backward, hopeless country as it has been portrayed. The state and the society tried to institute reforms, move ahead, and break out of its isolation. The last two years of the Commonwealth's existence saw major efforts to set the course of reforms. Even though the decisions of the Four-Year Sejm were annulled in 1793, they played an important part in the measures adopted by the Grodno Sejm of 1793 and the uprising of 1794. The Constitution shows that the collapse of the Commonwealth was caused by the imperial ambitions of neighboring states rather than its own internal weakness. The article also addresses the question of Lithuania's fate under the Constitution, a question which continues to preoccupy historians.

The Bernardine Complex in Tytuvėnai: History, Architecture, Works of Art
Dalia Klajumienė

The article surveys the history, art, and architectural development of the Bernardine complex in Tytuvėnai, taking into account research completed by historians, art historians, and cultural heritage specialists over the last four or five decades. It describes the most famous artifacts preserved in the complex, mentions artists who decorated the monastery's walls, and describes the more recent work of restoring these precious frescoes.

Founded by Andriejus Valavičius, the Bernardine ensemble dates to the early seventeenth century. Monks settled there around 1614 and continued to live in the monastery until its liquidation after the Lithuanian anti-Russian uprising of 1863. They built a magnificent church, a monastery with a cloister and a chapel; it is a richly decorated monastic complex that also served as the spiritual and compositional center of the nearby town. Today, the complex functions as a religious and cultural center.

Experiences of exile in new Lithuanian prose
Dalia Kuizinienė

This article presents Lithuanian prose texts written abroad over about the past ten years. It explains the latest tendencies of emigrant literature and the evolution of identity – ranging from nostalgic memoirs to attempts to deny one's Lithuanian heritage and replace it with some sort of transformed identity. The latest books of Papievis, Jurašienė, Čepaitė, and Grušaitė are examined at some length.

The writings chosen are diverse in their topics, genre, and literary value. The authors belong to different generations and their places of residence differ (as does their time abroad). However, they are united in their desire to express themselves in their reflections on their national identity, the experience of exile, and their relationship with Lithuanian life.

The characters in the novels of Papievis and Pukelytė are imprisoned in the labyrinths of my space/their space by their refugee condition. Other authors are stimulated by the realities of life abroad into searching for the historical roots of their nation and stressing the importance of their native language. The younger Lithuanian prose writers abroad are clearly dismantling the traditional model of Lithuanian identity.

Twists in Lithuanian-Polish Relations after the Reestablishment of Independence: A Historian's Reflections
Bronius Makauskas

What have we learned from the past, observing the contested heritage of the former Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth, the conflict engendered by Lithuania's cultural emancipation, and the conflict over Lithuania's capital? We seek to answer these questions by looking at the causes of what are in effect misunderstandings and at attempts to break out of what has become a vicious circle. These misunderstandings are rooted in history and have a strong emotional and political coloration. But some members of the Lithuanian and Polish elites have embraced a non-conflictual conception of Lithuanian-Polish relations on the model of the Paris-based Polish journals *Kultura* and *Zeszyty Historyczne*. A significant role was also played by the Polish Pope, John Paul II, who promoted a culture of understanding. Since old stereotypes are again being dragged out into the open to burden relations between the two states, the need is greater than ever for new outstanding moral voices to be heard, and for mutual studies of the common past.

Three Productions by Rimas Tuminas: Transformation of Historical Memory in Lithuanian Theater 1990-2010
### Šarūnė Trinkūnaitė

The article analyzes three stage productions by the director Rimas Tuminas. They represent bold examples of how the Lithuanian theater of historical memory was transformed during the two decades from 1990 to 2010. Each of the productions reflects a different phase in Tuminas's undertaking to give new life to post-Soviet theater in Lithuania. *Lituanica* expresses the director's resolve to de-romanticize and de-herocize the imagination, establish a self-deprecatory stance, and then try out a theater of historical memory grounded in everyday experiences. *Madagaskaras* opened up the possibility of a new methodology; it invoked new historicism and legitimized history as that which results from the harmony of actual facts and the creative imagination that manipulates them in an innovative manner. *Mistras* reflects efforts to deconceptualize history. It had at hand an abundance of interesting historical material, but refused to bind it into its own version of history, thus bearing witness to history's power to not yield, but to damage and wreck the logic of a conceptualizing memory.
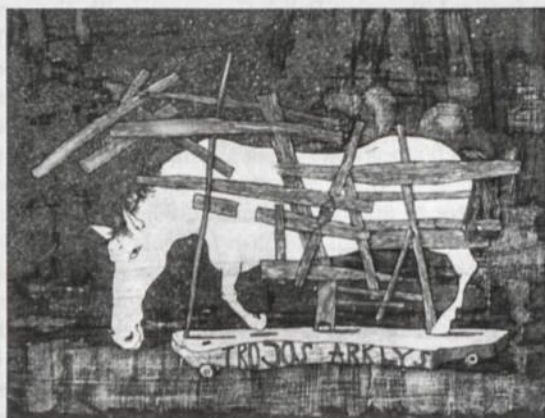
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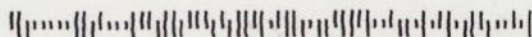
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