

LITUANUS

THE LITHUANIAN QUARTERLY

VOLUME 63:2 (2017)



Grazina Budrys

**LETTER TO THE EDITORS:
THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION
OF CAUSES OF DEATH**

Ričardas Žičkus

**PUBLIC BUS TRANSPORTATION
IN POLISH-OCCUPIED VILNIUS**

Almantas Samalavičius

VILNIUS VERSAILLES: SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI

Grazina Pranauskas

TWO SHORT STORIES

Liutauras Degėsys

TWO ESSAYS

LITUANUS

THE LITHUANIAN QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

VOLUME 63:2, Summer 2017



Editor: ALMANTAS SAMALAVIČIUS, Vilnius University
Assistant Editor: DAIVA LITVINSKAITĖ, University of Illinois at Chicago
Copy Editor: KERRY SHAWN KEYS
Art Editor: RIMAS VISGIRDA
Technical Editor: SAULIUS JUOZAPAITIS
Managing Editor: VAIDA ARMANAVIČIŪTĖ

Advisory Board: BIRUTĖ CIPLIAUSKAITĖ, University of Wisconsin-Madison
PATRICK CHURA, University of Akron
KĘSTUTIS GIRNIUS, Vilnius University
VIOLETA KELERTAS, University of Washington
DAIVA MARKELIS, Eastern Illinois University
ALGIS MICKŪNAS, Ohio University
GIEDRIUS SUBAČIUS, University of Illinois at Chicago
SAULIUS SUŽIEDĖLIS, Millersville University
TOMAS VENCLOVA, Yale University
KĘSTUTIS PAUL ŽYGAS, Arizona State University

Lituanus: The Lithuanian Quarterly (published since 1954) is a multi-disciplinary academic journal presenting and examining various aspects of Lithuanian culture and history. Authors are invited to submit scholarly articles, *belles lettres*, and art work. Manuscripts will be reviewed. Books are accepted for review purposes.

Opinions expressed in signed articles represent the views of their authors and do not necessarily reflect agreement on the part of the editors or the publisher.

For submission guidelines and editorial matters please contact the editors. For subscriptions, donations and other business matters contact the administration.

Editorial Office: editor@lituanus.org
Administration: admin@lituanus.org
Publisher: Lituanus Foundation, Inc., Giedrius Subačius, President
Address: 47 West Polk Street, Suite 100–300, Chicago, IL 60605–2000
Phone/Fax 312/945-0697

Articles are archived and accessible at **www.lituanus.org** and in microform from University Microfilms (www.proquest.com/brand/umi.shtml). They are indexed in: MLA International Bibliography; PAIS International; International Political Science Abstracts; Historical Abstracts (EBSCO); Linguistic Bibliography (Netherlands); Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts; RILM Abstracts of Music Literature; Bibliography of the History of Art; OCLC Article First.

Worldwide circulation per issue – 1,550 copies.

Individual subscriptions \$30.00. Seniors/students \$20.00.

Institutional print subscriptions \$40.00. Electronic copy only \$20.00.

Copyright © 2016 LITUANUS Foundation, Inc. ISSN 0024–5089.

Printed by Kingery Printing Company, Henry Division, Henry, IL

Cover Design by Vincas Lukas.

Periodical non-profit postage paid at Chicago, IL and other locations.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to LITUANUS, 47 West Polk Street, Suite 100-300, Chicago, IL 60605-2000

Contents

GRAZINA BUDRYS	5	<i>Letter to the Editors: The Social Construction of Causes of Death</i>
RIČARDAS ŽIČKUS	13	<i>Public Bus Transportation in Polish-occupied Vilnius</i>
ALMANTAS SAMALAVIČIUS	39	<i>Vilnius Versailles: Sic Transit Gloria Mundi</i>
GRAZINA PRANAUSKAS	63	<i>Two Short Stories</i>
LIUTAURAS DEGĖSYS	79	<i>Two essays</i>

BOOK REVIEWS

88

ABSTRACTS

92

LIST OF DONORS

94



Sluszeko Palace. Photo by Jonas Griekienis. See article on page 39.

Letter to the Editors

GRAZINA BUDRYS

The Social Construction of Causes of Death

The following discussion focuses on what people in Lithuania are dying from. I realize that this topic is far from the kind of thing this journal aims to address. I enter into this discussion to draw attention to the fact that the mortality profile of the Lithuanians living in Lithuania is exceptional and decidedly disturbing. People in most countries are typically aware of the illnesses and reasons behind deaths of friends and relatives. This is undoubtedly the case in Lithuania. Similarly, people in most countries have some sense of how common, particular causes of death are across the country. And, they may be troubled by those rates. However, members of the general population generally do not go on to compare the causes of death of people in their country to those of people in other countries. That is the crucial next step. Little is likely to be done in any country about causes of death that may be prevented, at minimum reduced, unless there is awareness and recognition of a problem.

It is not my intent to argue for a solution. Instead I propose to outline evolving understandings among international health policy experts and organizations regarding the approaches that are most effective in reducing death rates from particular causes.

Let me explain how I came upon what I consider to be stunning information about causes of death in Lithuania. My work revolves around the health status of Americans and the American health system. In order to put this information in context, I use data on countries to which the U.S. compares itself. The comparison reveals that the U.S. spends far more on health care,

about twice as much as the average spent by other economically advanced countries, yet has a considerably lower life expectancy. Volumes of literature discussing the reasons for this have been and continue to be generated by U.S. health policy experts. The dismal state of health care and life expectancy in poor countries is reported by organizations that collect international data. Countries in between economically advanced countries and poor countries generally receive little attention from such organizations. Lithuania falls into that in-between category.

I must admit that I ran across what I consider to be astonishing information without intending to do so. As a Lithuanian American, I do look at health related data concerning Lithuania when I come across it. But I generally do not search it out because I have all along simply accepted the idea that Lithuanian health statistics fall somewhere in the international middle. Closer examination reveals that this is far from true.

Let's start with life expectancy. The 2015 CIA report on 224 countries indicates that Japan has the highest life expectancy in the world among economically advanced countries (only Monaco is higher) at about 85 years. At the bottom of the list of 224 countries is Chad at just under 50 years. The U.S. life expectancy is nearly 80 years. Lithuanians live to about 75 years. One might interpret this to mean that Lithuanian life expectancy while lower than that of Japan is not significantly lower than that of the U.S. Of course, it is worth remembering that the numbers are based on the entire population in the country. What appear to be relatively small differences in rates actually represent large numbers of persons.

Death rate statistics are more troubling. Death rate is calculated per 100,000 persons. The CIA collects statistics addressing a range of topics on 225 countries. These figures are updated annually and reported in the CIA Factbook. The 2015 mortality statistics reveal that Lesotho had the highest death rate at about 15 per 1,000 and Qatar had the lowest rate out of 225 countries at 1.5 per 1,000. The explanation for the variation includes many variables, age of the population, military engagement, availabil-

ity of food, quality of medical care plus some other factors that are only beginning to be identified. What is striking is finding that the Latvian death rate at 14.31 per 1,000 is the 5th highest in the world; the Lithuanian rate, 14.27, is the 7th highest; the Estonian rate is 24th at 12.40. (I will cite statistics on the three Baltic countries because they exhibit similarly high death rates for the causes I address.) The U.S. rate is about 8 per 1,000, number 93 on the list. That brings us to the question of what people are dying from, that is, the leading causes of death.

European Union (EU) data, which leaves out the U.S. and Japan, countries that are generally referenced in making international comparisons, reports what I consider to be an especially alarming fact.

The 2013 Lithuanian male rate of death from ischemic heart disease, i.e., death from a heart attack, was the highest, in fact far higher, than in any other European Union country at something like 780 deaths per 100,000.

Latvia came in second at about 630 per 100,000; Estonia at just under 400 per 100,000. By comparison the French male rate of death from heart disease, which is one of the lowest, was around 90 per 100,000. One might speculate that this is explained by access to more advanced medical care. The funds going to medical care is a topic that receives a great deal of attention in most countries because it has long been thought to be one of the most important, and possibly the most important, factors in explaining the rate of death from heart disease. In line with this perspective, articles authored by Lithuanian researchers focusing on funds allocated to health care in Lithuania have appeared in widely read journals.

Funds allocated to health care are typically calculated as percentage of GDP. Funding and how the funds are allocated are important considerations. However, it is also true that the correlation between GDP spent on health and health status in economically advanced countries is relatively weak. The evidence

for this observation is based on what health researchers, in the U.S. and elsewhere, consider to be the most sensitive measure of health, infant mortality. Consider the connection between the percentage of the country's GDP going to health and infant mortality rates using World Bank data for 2015. The following list includes selected countries which have some of the lowest and highest infant mortality rates.

	% of GDP	infant mortality rate per 1,000 births
U. S.	17.1	6
Switzerland	11.7	3
Japan	10.2	2
Marshall Is.	17.1	30
Micronesia	13.7	29
Sierra Leone	11.1	87
Lithuania	5.4	3

The expectation that devoting a greater proportion of GDP to health care would make a difference in the health status of Lithuanians is questionable given the fact that the death rate from eight other leading causes of death, such as cancer and respiratory diseases, is similar to rates in economically advanced countries. In other words, the Lithuanian death rate from natural causes, i.e. disease, is not unique with the exception of the vastly higher rate of death from heart disease. (There has been some indication that the Lithuanian and Latvian rate of ovarian cancer is far higher than it is in other European countries but this has yet to be confirmed.)

What else could account for the fact that the Lithuanian death rate for all causes puts it 7th on the list of 223 countries on the CIA list? Are there similar reasons to explain why Latvia is 5th and Estonia is 24th on that list? The rate of external or non-disease-related causes of death, which the health care literature treats as “preventable,” provides a big part of the answer.

Lithuania leads the world in number of suicides at 51 per 100,000 deaths.

That figure is based on 2008 CIA statistics. The 2008 Latvian suicide rate was 31 per 100,000 and the Estonian rate was 25 per 100,000. The U.S. rate according to the CIA was 19. European Union statistics paint an even more disturbing picture. EU statistics differentiate between male and female rates. In 2013 the Lithuanian rate of male suicides exceeded that of any other European Union country at around 67 per 100,000; the Latvian rate was around 37 and the Estonian rate was about 34. By comparison the lowest rate among EU members, found in Greece, was about 8 per 100,000. Another major non-disease-related cause of death is homicide.

The Lithuanian homicide rate at 8.61 homicides per 100,000 persons is highest among European nations.

This figure is based on 2008 CIA data as well. The Estonian rate was 6.26 per 100,000 and the Latvian rate was 4.38 per 100,000. The homicide rate in the three Baltic countries is far higher than it is in any of the other economically advanced countries in the world. By comparison, the rate in the two countries that enjoy the longest life expectancy in the world was 0.72 per 100,000 in Switzerland and 0.45 per 100,000 in Japan that year.

The U.S. rate of homicide was 5.78 in 2007 according to the CIA. A considerable amount of effort has gone into researching and explaining the reasons behind the high U.S. rate. The consensus is that it is linked to a high level of socioeconomic inequality, racial and other forms of discrimination, plus the abundance of guns. This set of variables in combination does not seem to provide a good fit for explaining the high rate of homicide in Lithuania. On the other hand, to the best of my knowledge the reasons behind the exceptionally high rates of death from heart disease, suicide and homicide have not attracted the attention of health researchers or health policy makers.

Lacking a complete explanation, I propose to offer some assessments of reasons for higher death rates from the three causes. Since far more research has been carried out on death rate trends in the U.S. than in many other countries, I will refer to analyses offered by U.S. researchers. Starting with heart disease, it was the leading cause of death in the U.S. throughout the twentieth century, far outdistancing all other causes early in the century. However, the rate declined dramatically over that time and is now the second leading cause after cancer in some parts of the country. The rate of cancer has not changed very much over the same period of time.

The fact is that the rate of heart disease did not decline. The rate of death declined. Drugs developed to address heart disease allow people to live long enough to die from other causes. Once this was established, attention turned to analysis of why some people within the United States are far more likely to die from heart disease than other people given that drugs to reduce the rate of death from heart disease are readily available. The variation is huge by sex and race/ethnicity. Because all females regardless of race/ethnicity die at a lower rate, the explanation is easy – it is genetic. The variation by race/ethnicity is not genetic since there is more genetic variation within racial/ethnic groups than between them. Thus, the explanation must be environmental. The fact that geneticists subscribe to this perspective adds considerable weight to this observation. However, that makes identifying factors much more complicated. Defining what is meant by “environmental” factors is at the heart of the search for causes of variation at present.

While there may be a genetic component involved in suicide, genetic differences do not explain the large variation in rates across population groups in the U.S. There is certainly no genetic component related to homicide. Researchers have concluded that the explanation is environmental in all three cases.

Thus the high rate of mortality from heart disease, suicide, and homicide in Lithuania must be due to environmental factors as well. While this may not be entirely surprising given the sense

of political threat the country is experiencing, there has been little attention devoted to identifying other, more specific, factors. Such an inquiry would produce information of interest to academicians everywhere who are involved in the study of factors related to variation in mortality rates. But that is not primary reason these death rates deserve attention. Research to examine variation in death rates within the country could be of value to analysts in Lithuania to the extent that some of the factors involved have the potential to be addressed.

As I stated at the start, I am not prepared to offer a solution for addressing the exceptionally high rate of mortality in Lithuania for the causes I mention. I can, however, point to the solutions being advocated by analysts associated with organizations such as the World Health Association (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Organization for Economic and Community Development (OECD), and public health organizations across economically developed countries. They discuss interventions under what have become known as the “Social Determinants” of health. The WHO includes a wide range of factors that affect peoples’ daily lives under this label – education, housing, community solidarity, safety of the physical environment to name a few factors.

It is interesting to note that factors that have traditionally been understood to cause variation in health status, namely medical care and health behaviors, are not included in this list. Yes, access to health care matters, but it is not the leading cause of variation in mortality rates. To the extent that behaviors such as smoking, diet, excess consumption of alcohol are considered, they are invariably linked to social inequality which stands at the heart of the social determinants of health proposition.

Data collected on all residents of the U.S. by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), indicates that the single most significant variable associated with variation in death rates is level of education. While all the factors that fall under the social determinants of the health label are of vital importance, addressing any one of them poses an overwhelming challenge.

Accordingly, concentrating on the one factor that seems to make the biggest difference, education, increasing access to education is the intervention being advanced by leading health policy experts in the U.S.

Spurring on the discussion about the significance of education as it relates to health in the U.S. is evidence that the low level of education and residence outside of major metropolitan areas, where unemployment is high, account for the recent rise in substance abuse and suicide of white, working class Americans. I mention this because the analysis of data and conclusions reached by researchers in the U.S. may offer some insight into variation in death rates that may apply in other countries, namely Lithuania.

If this sounds like a lecture, an unwelcome one at that, I apologize. My motivation in presenting this information comes from the need to share my distress in the hope that many more people will become aware of the seriousness of the problem Lithuanians face in looking at the country's death rates. My hope is that it might create support for studying and addressing this catastrophe.

Public Bus Transportation in Polish-occupied Vilnius

RIČARDAS ŽIČKUS

The first mention of buses in Vilnius during the interwar period occurred in 1922: the newspaper “Vilnietis”, in its April 9, 1922 issue, No. 79 (131), published an announcement that

in the middle of May a bus will begin running in Vilnius from Cathedral Square to Pospieška Street. The fare will be about 200 marks. The fare to building No. 36–40 (in the Antakalnis neighborhood) will be about 125 marks.

In August of 1923, the city council authorized the municipality to sign a contract with a Mr. Kazimierski¹ for bus lines in Vilnius. A representative of the Polish government in Vilnius later ratified this contract. Mr. Kazimierski planned two bus lines: from the Train Station to Kalvarijos Market and from the Žvėrynas Bridge to Antakalnis Hospital. Eight buses were to

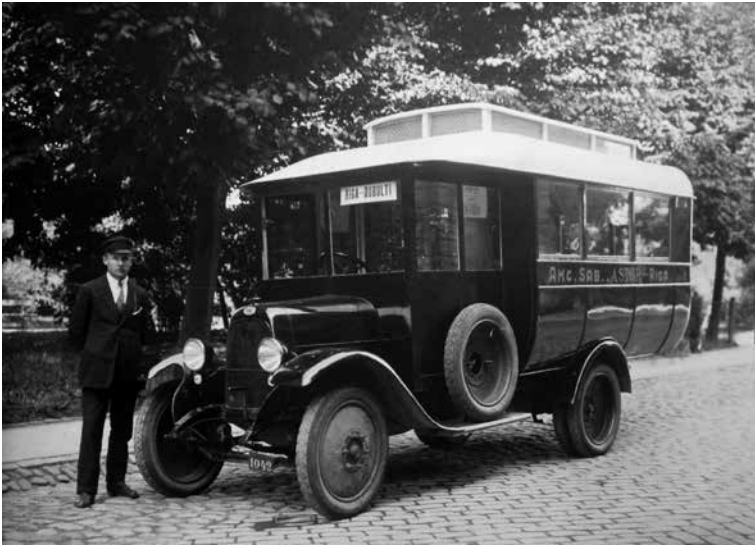
¹ In documents and periodicals of that time a person's first name most often was not specified or only the first letter of the first name was noted. Often the individual's profession or duties were printed instead of the name. For this reason, the author of this article has not been able to identify the full names of all the individuals mentioned. In such instances I have provided either the surname of the individual or the surname and the first initial of the first name.

RIČARDAS ŽIČKUS (born 1961) completed his university studies in Vilnius. He specialized in history. As of 2008, he is a curator for transport exhibitions at the Museum of Energy and Technology in Vilnius. In 2016, his book *Vilniaus viešojo transporto istorija iki 1941 metų* (The History of Public Transportation in Vilnius until 1941) was published.

run on each route. The routes were divided into two parts by a station at the intersection of Gediminas Avenue and Vilnius Street. The fare was not to exceed 30 cents. It is unknown whether buses actually began transporting passengers in 1922 and 1923. However, the transportation section of the "Northern Fair and Farm Technology Exhibition", which took place in Vilnius in 1928, noted that there were four buses registered in the province of Vilnius in 1923.

The first steps toward solving the problem of bus transportation were taken in the second half of 1924. A meeting of the Public Roads Section of the Public Works Directorate for the province of Vilnius took place on August 16, 1924. The question of a concession for bus transportation of passengers in Vilnius was discussed. In an effort to make it easier for residents living on the outskirts of the city to reach the center of the city, it was decided that buses should run to the farthest outskirts, and that they should run as often as possible and keep stops at stations as short as possible. It was decided that government workers and workers in municipal institutions should ride for free if they were on official business; students and soldiers were given a fare reduction. It was also decided that companies which offered more favorable terms would be given priority in getting a concession. The meeting set rules for analyzing concession requests and considered the request submitted by businessmen Pavlo Tojbin and Solomon Rozansky on August 22, 1924, for a concession to transport passengers by bus in the city of Vilnius. The commission, after noting a few objections, decided that the Tojbin and Rozansky Company had to submit a certificate from the municipality showing that it had paid its city taxes and that the municipality has no objection to the concession being granted.

A few days earlier, Henryk Steinberg, the head of the "Astur" Company of Riga, had submitted a request to the Vilnius City Council for permission to transport passengers by bus. On September 3, 1924, the Tax Department of the municipality's Finance Section informed Mr. Steinberg that he could start transporting bus passengers. As the procedure for considering requests had



The first interwar period buses of Vilnius (Fiat 505 F) – still in Riga. 1924.

already been established, on September 4 Henryk Steinberg asked the representative of the Polish government for the Vilnius region for a concession. On September 12 this government representative received the same request from “Autoruch”, a limited-liability company. Archival records show that the founders and shareholders of “Autoruch” were the aforementioned businessmen – Henryk Steinberg, Pinkus Tojbin, Shlomo Rozansky, together with Marcin Zitman and Isaac-Meyer Lachover. They were all independent businessmen and were the first to try to start a passenger transportation business in Vilnius; they had joined together and had even attracted additional capital. The legally authorized capital of the company was 44,000 zlotys. The price of one share was 1,000 zlotys. The shareholders divided the shares between themselves as follows: Zitman – 21 shares, Steinberg – 1 share, Tojbin – 6 shares, Rozansky – 8 shares, and Lachover – 8 shares. It is interesting that Henryk Steinberg, the most active founding member of the company, only had one share. The greatest part of the capital was secured by automo-

biles, whose worth was 36,000 zlotys. The remaining 8,000 zlotys came from cash contributions. Steinberg and Tojbin were appointed directors of the company. According to the law for stock corporations in effect at the time, two directors could be appointed. Legal documents became legally binding only when both directors signed them.

What did the “Autoruch” Company promise city dwellers? The plan was to start transporting passengers on four routes:

- 1) from the Train Station to Kalvarijų Street
- 2) from the Train Station to Žvėrynas
- 3) from Antakalnis to Savanorių Avenue
- 4) from the Warehouse Station to Belmontas.

Buses would start driving on the first route no later than one month from the signing of the concession contract, and for the other routes – from 1.5 to 2 months afterwards. Buses were to run every 10 to 15 minutes from 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. For the first two kilometers, the fare was not to exceed 20 cents; 10 cents would be added for every additional kilometer. Students and soldiers were to get a 30 percent discount. Three buses would run on each route. The buses were to be “Fiat”-brand buses which could hold 15 passengers. The model number was 505 F 9/20 AG. They had a 4 cylinder gasoline engine with a displacement of 2.31. It was agreed that 5 percent of the ticket price would be paid to the municipality, except for tickets sold at a discount.

On September 30, three buses from Riga arrived in Vilnius. While they were being registered and mechanically inspected, curious city-dwellers could get a look at them. On October 1, 1924, the concession contract (No. 3061/D) was signed for one year. On Sunday, October 2, the buses began to run from the Train Station to the Žvėrynas neighborhood by way of Sodų, Bazilijonų, Arklių and Etmonų Streets and along Main (Didžioji) Street, past Cathedral Square and then proceeding along Gediminas Avenue and Vytautas Street to the terminal on Lenktoji Street.

The fare was as promised – 20 cents for two kilometers, 14 cents for soldiers and students. Bus stop locations were set up

and marked with signs. The stops were the following: the Train Station, the Halė Market, the corner of Etmonų Street and Main (Didžioji) Street, the corner of Main Street and Savičius Street, the Post Office, Cathedral Square, the Bank of Poland, the corner of Gediminas Avenue and Vilnius Street, the Courts, the Žvėrynas Bridge, the corner of Adam Mickiewicz Street and Vytautas Street, the corner of Pušų Street and Vytautas Street, and the terminal at Lenktoji Street.

Based on these facts, one can say that public bus transportation in Vilnius began on October 2, 1924, when the first buses started running. All prior attempts by businessmen to begin regular public bus service were unsuccessful.

Towards the end of 1924 the “Autoruch” Company hurried to open a second route – from the Train Station to Kalvarijų Street – most likely after learning of the plans of a budding competitor – the “Autopol” Company. The ride from the Train Station to the intersection of Kalvarijų Street and Verkių Street cost 40 cents. On December 3, “Autoruch” asked the representative of the automobile section of the Polish government for the Vilnius region to allow 14-passenger “Ford” buses to use the Train Station-Kalvarijų Street line instead of the “Fiat”-brand buses. The company argued that it took five to six months for “Fiat”-brand buses to be manufactured and shipped. The first “Ford”-brand buses were shipped to Vilnius on December 9.

In January of 1925 the “Autoruch” company supplied three more “Ford”-brand buses, intended for the Antakalnis-Savanorių Avenue line. On January 31 the Road Section of the Public Works Directorate issued a ruling (No. 380) to “Autoruch”. The ruling stated:

The Automobile Commission, in its decision of January 23 of this year, has found that “Ford” buses nos. 10084232, 9230262, 9230974 (registration nos. 14017, 14018, 14019) do not meet the requirements of the concession granted on October 1, 1924, as to technical condition and the number of passenger seats. For this reason, permission to replace the “Fiat” buses, which had been granted the concession, cannot be given.



A photograph of a "Berliet" bus was added to the application made by the Autopol Company, seeking permission to transport passengers in Vilnius by bus. 1924.

On January 26, 1925, the municipality's Technology Commission agreed to change the Antakalnis-Savanorių Avenue route and to let buses use Jonas Basinavičius Street rather than Kostas Kalinauskas Street, but it did not change the technical requirements for the buses. Earlier, on January 22, the "Autoruch" company had written to the representative of the Polish government about hardships the company was experiencing, about unforeseen expenses incurred in operating the buses, and about the company's desire to meet the requirements of the concession and its efforts to meet them. On February 14 the company again made a written request to operate four more "Ford"-brand buses, which the municipality found to be undesirable. It is clear that "Autoruch" did not anticipate the operational costs of the buses and failed to appreciate how quickly the pavements of Vilnius streets damage every kind of vehicle. The company, most importantly, expected a quick profit. After it failed in this, the company simply was unable to afford the expensive buses made by European

manufacturers, and while still hoping to recover its investments, tried to “push through” very cheap “Ford”-brand buses, which the city considered outdated and unsafe. Now, it is hard to say why “Ford”-brand buses won out and gradually came to dominate the city’s streets. It was probably due to the fact that “Berliet” or “Fiat”-brand buses cost about 19,000 to 20,000 zlotys at that time, while the “Ford TT” truck chassis, which was adapted for buses, only cost 4,000 zlotys. By building wooden bodies for the buses in Vilnius for a few more thousand zlotys, the cost could be reduced by 10,000 zlotys.

On January 8, 1925, the first two French “Berliet”-brand buses, belonging to the “Autopol” Company recently established in Vilnius, began to run on the Train Station–Žvėrynas line.

The buses are big and designed like streetcars, the passengers sit on seats facing the front on both sides of the bus. The larger bus will run on the Train Station–Žvėrynas route, while the smaller one – on the Train Station–Kalvarijų Street route. The “Autopol” firm awaits the arrival of two more buses from France in a few days, and expects four more buses later.

The Public Works Directorate enacted new bus timetables to take effect on January 15, 1925. According to these timetables, buses had to run every 10 minutes from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. However, the Directorate did not specify any penalties for drivers who violated the timetables, nor was any enforcement office established. At that time four main bus lines for the city were specified and approved:

- 1) The Train Station–Kalvarijų Street route. Three “Autoruch” Company “Ford”-brand buses ran on this route.
- 2) The Train Station–Žvėrynas route. Seven buses ran on this route: three “Autoruch” Company “Fiat” buses and four “Autopol” Company “Berliet” buses.
- 3) The Antakalnis (Šilo Street)–Savanorių Avenue route.
- 4) The Warehouse Station–Belmontas route.

At that time there were no buses running on the last two routes.

At the request of residents of the Antakalnis neighborhood, towards the end of January, three "Autoruch" buses began to run on another new line: the Cathedral Square–Antakalnis route.

At that time, mailboxes were installed on the bodies of buses using the Train Station–Žvėrynas line and the Train Station–Kalvarijų Street line. This was done at the request of the directors of the Vilnius Post and Telegraph Office so that mail could be collected in the city. Postal workers would remove letters from the mailboxes of each bus which arrived at the Train Station stop and would deliver them to the post office in the station. In this way letters could reach the railroad cars used to transport mail more quickly. Buses delivered between 150 to 300 letters per day. The bus drivers provided this service free of charge.

The beginning of public bus transportation in Vilnius was successful, but by March of 1925 the two companies in operation began to fall behind in paying their taxes. They asked the Public Works Department for permission to increase fares, since it became clear that the public transportation business was unprofitable. The February accounting report which the "Autopol" Company provided the municipality showed a loss of 5,345.87 zlotys. The Public Works Department allowed a fare increase. It took into account that from October of 1924 to March of 1925 the price of gasoline had increased 30 percent, the price of tires had increased on average 10 percent, and salaries for drivers had increased about 20 percent. The fares were set as follows: 25 cents for the first two kilometers, 10 cents for each additional kilometer. Reduced fares were respectively 15 cents, and 10 cents extra for every additional kilometer. The new fares took effect on April 15, 1925.

As the business of transporting passengers grew and the number of buses increased, more drivers were needed. Consequently, the provincial Automobile Commission held drivers' examinations every week on Tuesdays or Fridays. By June 4, 1925, 126 individuals had passed these examinations. On June 5th, eight persons took the examination, but only two passed.

That year the situation changed very quickly. There appeared more companies taking up the business of transporting passengers, and the number of buses increased also. In October of 1925 there were 35 buses in Vilnius belonging to nine firms. The buses ran on five routes: 1) Train Station–Žvėrynas (12 buses every 5 minutes); 2) Train Station–Kalvarijų Street (7 buses every 8 minutes); 3) J. Basanavičius Street–Antakalnis (8 buses every 9 minutes); 4) V. Kudirka Square–Užupis (4 buses every 9 minutes); 5) Halė Market–Warehouse Station (2 buses every 15 minutes). The city government approved these bus lines and their timetables, and they came into effect on October 20, 1925. There were many buses and many firms, but there was no order in municipal public transportation. Drivers did not keep to the timetables and changed bus routes on their own. They would stop wherever they wished. They would take as many passengers as would fit. The buses were in poor mechanical condition. Sometimes strange problems would arise. At one of its meetings the Technical Commission of the municipality discussed the question of bus stops. The Commission decided to build new poles for bus stops to replace the ones that had been knocked down by bus opponents.

The bus companies united and together asked the city government to allow a fare increase of 30 percent, since the price of gasoline had increased from 57 to 76 cents a kilometer, and in addition, drivers were demanding a salary increase. The condition of the streets was very bad, and for this reason bus operating costs were very high. The Office of the Representative of the Polish Government in Vilnius considered this request and allowed the carriers to increase the price of a ticket to 30 cents and to decrease the city tax from 5 percent to 2.5 percent. This decision was no doubt influenced by the bus drivers' strike, which began in the first days of November. The strike arose because the bus companies violated their contracts by firing some of their employees, by decreasing employee salaries and by requiring a work day of more than eight hours. Bus traffic in the city came to a halt. Only two of the nine operating firms found strike breakers: "Ruch Samochodowy" and "Połączenie Samochodowe". The

buses ran with a police escort because the strikers threatened to take action against strike breakers. The strike lasted several weeks.

The newspaper "Dziennik Wileński", in its February 4, 1925 edition (No. 28), published a very interesting and important fact, which showed that bus bodies were being manufactured in Vilnius:

A few days ago construction of bus bodies made by the "Połączenia Samochodowe w Wilnie" firm according to the plans drafted by engineer St. Shostakovsky was completed in the workshop of Countess H. Tiškevičienė. The buses will run on the Train Station–Žvėrynas route. Construction of bodies for the other buses will be completed in two to three weeks.

Another example confirms this fact. In 1925 the "Ruch Samochodowy" company obtained two "Ford"-brand truck chassis, which were delivered to Vilnius from Gdansk in the last days of September. On October 12 the Public Works Department received an application for a bus registration. Thus, in a matter of two weeks in Vilnius a bus body had been mounted on a "Ford" brand truck chassis.

The year 1925 was also significant in that in October the "Oleum" Company from Warsaw built the first stationary gas station in Vilnius:

Due to an increase in automobile traffic in our city, a Warsaw firm has received a government-issued license to build a gasoline reservoir with a pump and a meter. The first such reservoir has already been built in Cathedral Square on the University Street side and has an aesthetically pleasing appearance.

A little later the "Nobel" Company built a gas station in Kudirka Square. In 1925 the city municipality signed four contracts for the building and operation of gas stations: with the aforementioned "Oleum" and "Nobel" companies and with the "Mazut" and "Karpaty" joint stock companies from Lvov. Gas stations were constructed along city bus routes, since buses were the principal consumers of gasoline.



The body of a Ford TT bus of the Ruch Samochodowy Corporation, believed to have been manufactured in Vilnius. 1925.

In 1926, expansion of public transportation slowed down due to the difficult economic and political situation in all of Poland. Buses ran irregularly, not keeping to schedule as before, and they stopped running earlier in the evenings. Old problems continued, and new problems arose. When buses left the terminals, where departures were set according to schedule, they began to race each other as soon as they had gotten a few hundred meters away in an effort to pass each other so as to pick up more passengers. This happened on all routes and out in the open. The situation became dangerous. Such behavior by drivers led to accidents.

In the winter of 1925–1926 the number of buses in operation decreased, and the buses of some firms stopped running altogether. The “Autoruch” and “Ruch Samochodowy” companies went bankrupt, as did most others. In its November 28, 1925 edition (No. 115 (120)), the newspaper “Vilniaus aidas” (The Echo of Vilnius) wrote:

“Autoruch” failed. The “Autoruch” bus company had problems from the start. Last winter one of its owners killed himself.

Matters kept going badly. The strike which arose made matters worse. A few days ago there was litigation over large debts.

One of the major members of the company, who had invested a large amount of capital in the firm, decided to return to Riga, his city of origin. However, not only was he not able to bring back his capital, but he even had to finance his trip with outside funds.

Obviously, nothing can take root in Vilnius.

Compared to 1925, the situation essentially changed: almost no companies were left, the number of buses decreased, each bus belonged to a different owner. It was almost impossible to control such a multitude of drivers.

The city government still tried to bring order to public bus transportation. Each year the Public Works Department of the Vilnius District conducted registration and mechanical inspection of existing and new automobiles. In July of 1927, the Commission checked 32 automobiles which been refused registration in May, and five of them were again refused registration. That is how four buses of the "Omnibus" Company ended up being unregistered. As a result, the contract for this company, which had provided service on the Cathedral Square–Antakalnis line, was not renewed, and 30 workers lost their jobs.

The bus owners who were operating individually and competing with each other realized that it would be easier to solve problems if they worked together. Therefore they formed an association. The first step was taken on February 25, 1928: concession owners K. Klimowicz, J. Jagodzinsky, V. Manturowicz, K. Jankowski, and J. Krysz signed a co-operation agreement. On March 14, a conference organized by the city government was held to discuss the question of public bus transportation in Vilnius. Representatives from every important institution of city government as well as 21 bus owners attended. The conference decided to establish an association of Vilnius bus owners, which would have the right to interact with city institutions on behalf of all bus owners. Such an association was supposed to make it easier to solve problems such as problems relating

to unrestricted competition, the condition of buses, the accounting of bus tickets sales and many others. Soon thereafter uniform bus tickets marked "SWAW" (Spółdzielnia Właściciel Autobusow w Wilnie) began to be used on all lines. It was a small but significant step towards bringing order to public transportation in the city.

On August 17, 1928, right before the opening of the first "Northern Fair and Exhibition of the Agricultural Industry", a bus line from Užupis to the Train Station began to operate in Vilnius. The route went from St. Ann and Barbora Radvilaitė Streets to Cathedral Square, to Gediminas Avenue, and then on Vilnius, Klaipėda, Pylimo, Jonas Basanavičius, and Mindaugas Streets to the Train Station. The usual problems arose on the new route: stops were not designated, so that even the drivers did not know where to stop, and too much time was allowed for the route – 40 minutes. The new route was designated route No. 4.

Despite all the problems, the number of buses in the city increased. In August there were 22 buses running on the Train Station–Žvėrynas line, 16 buses on the Train Station–Kalvarijų Street line, and as many as 34 buses on the Antakalnis–Train Station. This was not the end of change for public city bus transportation: in November the Vilnius Department of Railroads announced that "all narrow-track trains operating in the city of Vilnius will be recalled as of December 1st and will no longer run". That is why the municipality changed the route for line No. 4. Now it was to run on Maironis, B. Radvilaitė, Main (Didžioji), Vokiečių, Trakų, J. Basanavičius, Mindaugas, Kaunas, Švitrigaila, and Panerių Streets to Vilkpėdė.

In 1929 eight lines were in operation: 1) the Train Station–Žvėrynas line; 2) the Train Station–Kalvarijų Street line; 3) the Antakalnis–Railway Worker Hospital line; 4) the Train Station–Antakalnis line; 5) the line from Antakalnis to the intersection of Savanorių Avenue and Žemaitė Street; 6) the line from the Train Station to the intersection of Savanorių Avenue and Žemaitė Street; 7) the Train Station–Railway Worker Hospital (in Vilkpėdė) line; 8) the line from Railway Worker Hospital to the

intersection of Savanorių Avenue and Žemaitė Street. The first route was numbered No. 1, the second was numbered No. 2, but all six remaining routes were numbered No. 3. The fare ranged from 30 cents to one zloty, depending on the number of stations traveled. Transfer tickets were available, i.e. a ticket purchased for one line could be used as far as the end of a different line if the transfer was made at the point where the two lines intersected. 110 buses ran on these lines. (In 1927 there were 57 buses registered in Vilnius.) On December 15 the bus drivers went on strike, and taxi drivers joined them. The strike was called off after the bus owners agreed to a salary increase to 300 zlotys for bus drivers and 171 zlotys for conductors. During the strike, some strikers had knocked out the windows of several buses which strike breakers were driving.

In 1925–1926 the European automobile industry began manufacturing better, more comfortable buses, which had specially designed lower chassis. However, these buses could not be used in Vilnius nor in most of Poland because they were too heavy. City streets and suburban roads in particular were very bad, and only light or medium-weight buses or trucks could drive on them. In 1930 there were 130 “Chevrolet”-brand, 47 “Ford”, 14 “Brockway”, 8 “Morris” buses and 10 buses of other brands in the city and surrounding district of Vilnius. The era of the legendary “Ford”-brand buses was coming to an end because beginning in 1928 “Chevrolet”-brand chassis for trucks and buses began to be assembled in Warsaw. That is why it is not surprising that most of the buses in Vilnius were “Chevrolet” buses. In addition, a bus whose chassis was assembled in Poland and whose body was manufactured by local craftsmen was less expensive than an imported bus.

Fundamental changes in public bus transportation in Vilnius began in 1931. One of the most important was the arrival in Vilnius of the “Arbon” Company (the general representative of the Swiss automaker “Saurer” in Poland). In the beginning of the year the “Arbon” Company petitioned the municipality to assign public bus transportation in Vilnius to it by granting a 20 year concession. The petition included the following:

... the “Arbon” trade and industry company retains the right and assumes at its own expense and risk the responsibility of organizing bus transportation in Vilnius and transporting passengers. During the pendency of the contract neither the city council nor the municipality shall allow any other individuals – physical or juridical – to organize bus, streetcar or trolley transportation in the city. The Company agrees to pay the city the following for this concession: 150,000 zlotys each year for the first three years, and for subsequent three-year periods a sum which is to increase in proportion to the increase of the company’s income during those three years and so forth. The city agrees to set aside a plot of 10,000 square meters no more than 3 kilometers from Cathedral Square so that a garage equipped with communication capabilities and other buildings could be built on it. According to the Company’s calculations, the cost for 35 buses and everything else would be almost 2.5 million Swiss francs, which is 4.23 million zlotys. Monthly expenses would be 466,000 zlotys, of which 108,000 zlotys would be for personnel (80 drivers, 80 conductors, 5 controllers, and office and garage workers – in total 182 persons).

The municipality began to consider the proposal. This caused great dissatisfaction among drivers, conductors, and members of the Vilnius bus owners’ association. The minutes of one SWAW meeting contained the following:

...Granting such a concession would be the equivalent of throwing 500 people out into the street and taking away the source of income from their families, from about 2,000 people...

The meeting also called attention to the fact that

the association has always tried to cooperate with the city administration and government in improving bus transportation, but now it has been squeezed out and discarded like a lemon.

That is why in February the Vilnius bus owners’ association, in an effort to protect its business, also made a proposal to the municipality. The technical, financial and legal commissions of the municipality began considering both proposals at the end of

February. Several meetings, which often lasted until late hours of the evening, were held every week, but no decision was reached about who should get the concession. On March 5 R. Mykucki, the head of the commercial division of the National Engineering Manufacturing Firm "PZInż", came to Vilnius and called a news conference, at which he presented the advantages of "Saurer"-brand buses which had diesel motors. In the middle of April both "Arbon" and the bus owners' association presented supplementary petitions to the municipality, and each paid a security deposit of 10,000 zlotys. In the first days of May, the "Arbon" Company organized two publicity trips to Trakai in "Saurer"-brand "Ursus"-model buses. Buses with a 50 seat capacity carried invited journalists and municipality officials on the first trip. Buses with a 30 seat capacity made the second trip. The journalists gave positive reviews to the trip in the new buses, but noted one defect – the diesel motors were very noisy. At the end of May, the city council met and after a long debate which lasted until 2 o'clock in the morning decided to award the "Arbon" Company the right to organize bus transportation for 10 years: 20 members voted in favor, 7 against. It was not by chance that this company was chosen. The conclusion of the municipality's commission report about the proposals of the Vilnius bus owners' association and "Arbon" states:

The "Arbon" joint-stock company proposes to create a uniform and flexible transportation system in the Vilnius region with the high-quality automobiles of a single type it has obtained. The company foresees an investment of about four million zlotys. Ownership of modern garages and factories would be handed over to the city. About 26 kilometers of streets would be asphalted. In the future ownership of this entire system, which is expected to grow and to be administered according to modern requirements, will be transferred to the city quite inexpensively. The buses proposed by "Arbon" are manufactured by a famous European firm and are licensed by the National Engineering Manufacturing Firm "PZInż" of Poland, which is something that is important for the country and the army.

The municipality and the "Arbon" Company signed the contract on July 14, 1931 after all the clauses of the contract were finally agreed upon. Mayor Józef Folejewski and Vice-mayor Witold Czyż signed on behalf of the municipality, and Józef Lipski and engineer Henryk Kuncewicz signed on behalf of "Arbon". The company had to take over administration of bus transportation in Vilnius within three months of signing the contract.

Clause 19 of the contract prohibited the contracting company from assigning the responsibilities of the contract to third parties without the written consent of the municipality, with the exception of a firm created by the "Arbon" Company itself, namely "Towarzystwo Miejskich i Międzymiastowych Komunikacyj Autobusowych" (TOMMAK for short), whose by-laws were approved on October 26, 1931, by the Minister of Commerce and Industry for the Republic of Poland.

Supplement No. 2 to the contract contained many specific requirements for the new buses: passenger seats had to be attached parallel to the axles of the bus, the distance between seats was to be no less than 75 cm, there had to be four lights in the ceiling of the passenger compartment, the floor had to have a linoleum covering, the path between the passenger seats had to be made of rubber, the window panes had to have rubber borders, each side of the bus had to have two windows which could be lowered, all the windows had to have automatic roller blinds, the walls were to have artificial leather upholstery, the seats were to contain springs and were to be upholstered in leather. The buses were required to have turn signals, electric windshield wipers and rear-view mirrors. The buses were to be painted metallic blue on the bottom and yellow on the top. A few months later the city government decided to make the color scheme more specific: the bottom was to be sky-blue, the top – bright yellow, and a narrow red stripe was to run through the middle. Both sides of each bus had to have the inscription "Komunikacja Miejska" and the seal of the city of Vilnius over the red stripe.

At the end of July, the municipality allocated a 10,000 square meter plot of land on Savanorių Avenue where a garage for the

buses and administration buildings could be built. At the end of the same month the "Arbon" Company provided the municipality with plans for the construction of the garage. Work on the garage began on September 18th. The corner stone was ceremoniously laid on October 3.

In 1931, 44 bus chassis piled one on top of another began a journey of almost 2,000 kilometers from Arbon, Switzerland, to Vilnius. The body frames of the new buses were manufactured in Poland, some at the "E. Plage i T. Laśkiewicz" factory in Lublin, some at the "PZInż" factory. The first "Saurer"-brand bus reached Vilnius in the middle of December, and in the early morning of December 15 the first trial runs took place. Future drivers were trained on this bus by the engineer in charge. Garages, which could also be used as repair shops, were constructed in December. At the end of the month, J. Tarlo, the head of the Vilnius branch of "Arbon", held a press conference and conducted a trial run of the buses. At the press conference it was announced that the bus fare would be 20 cents for the first 1,250 meters and 10 cents for each supplementary 1,250 meters. In the winter, drivers would wear black uniforms, but in the summer they would wear dark blue uniforms.

On January 1, 1932, 21 new modern diesel "Saurer"-brand buses began running in Vilnius. The newspaper "Kurjer Wileński" published this announcement in its January 1, 1932 (No. 1) issue:

On January 1st of this year the Vilnius branch of the joint stock company "T-wo Miejskich i Międzydzielstowych Komunikacyj Autobusowych" (TOMMAK), located at No. 8 Jogaila Street, apartment 15, begins bus transportation on the following lines: 1) No. 1 Train Station–Žvėrynas (Lokių Street), buses will run every 7–8 min. 2) No. 2 Train Station–Kalvarijų Street, every 8–9 min. 3) No. 3 Train Station–Antakalnis (Tramvajų Street), every 7–8 min. 4) No. 4 The Railway Worker Hospital–Linkmenų Street, every 30 min. 5) No. 5 Cathedral Square–Olandų Street and No. 6 The Orthodox Church (on J. Basanavičius Street).

By January 5 there were 32 buses running, but only on the first four routes and considerably less frequently than announced.



The consecration of new Vilnius Saurer buses in Cathedral Square. January 24, 1932.

The interiors of some of the buses were not fully furnished, some small details were missing.

On January 24 the new, modern garage was solemnly opened, and there was a consecration ceremony for the new buses in Cathedral Square. In attendance were provincial, city, army and police officials, Mr. Ivanovski, the president of the "Arbon" Company, and company directors from Warsaw, representatives from "PZInż", and reporters from the local and the central (Warsaw) press. At 12:30 p.m. 12 festively decorated "Saurer"-brand buses lined up in Cathedral Square. Father Adomas Savickis consecrated them. Later, all of the participants in the celebration went to Savanorių Avenue for the consecration of the new garage and for a celebratory dinner. President Ivanovski of "Arbon" and editor Gielzhynski from Warsaw, the president of the journalists' syndicate, gave speeches.

In the first month of operation, 28 buses carried 452,000 passengers and traveled 170,000 kilometers, using on average 18 liters of diesel fuel per 100 kilometers.

In February of 1932 the "Arbon" Company informed the City Council that it had transferred all authorizations connected with public bus transportation in Vilnius to "Towarzystwo Miejskich i Międzydzielcowych Komunikacji Autobusowych" (as had been envisioned in the contract). The headquarters of that company was in Warsaw, but it had a branch in Vilnius. J. Tarlo was appointed the first head of the Vilnius branch.

The reorganization of public bus service in the city appeared to be successful only in the beginning. Newspaper reports about the company's contractual violations became more frequent. The buses ran much less often than required. Drivers worked eight-hour shifts without breaks, and this endangered traffic safety. At a session of the City Council in February, there was much discussion about the problems of public bus transportation, and a special committee was formed.

The board of directors and the shareholders of TOMMAK must have also been unsatisfied with the performance of the Vilnius branch. In August they removed director J. Tarlo and replaced him with Mr. K. Masalski, who had earlier worked as the director of "Poznańska Kolej Elektryczna". In addition, TOMMAK tried to curry favor with the municipality by actively offering to help it obtain a loan from a Swiss bank for road surface repairs, but the municipality did not hurry to take advantage of this offer.

On August 15, 1932, a new, smaller fare was introduced – from 15 to 50 cents. There was a plan to introduce monthly and frequent traveler tickets. At the same time, routes 4, 5, and 6 were eliminated and made branches of routes 2 and 3 instead. The route 3 buses began to run on Domininkonų Street instead of on Didžioji (Main) Street and Vokiečių (German) Street. Bus routes in the Old Town section of Vilnius changed again when on August 22 traffic on Castle Street was closed so that the street could be paved with clinker bricks. In general, bus routes changed very often, especially at the outskirts of the city: that is how attempts to find optimal routes took place.

At the end of 1932, K. Masalski, the head of the Vilnius branch and the representative of TOMMAK, began to talk about drawing

up a new contract, which would grant the company the exclusive right to determine fares and routes and which would require it to pay the city not 150,000 zlotys per year, but 5 percent of its annual return (which in 1932 was 1.5 million zlotys, and so 5 percent would be 75,000 zlotys). The municipality did not agree to such changes to the contract. The conflict between TOMMAK and the city government continued. At the end of January, 1933, there was talk about TOMMAK going into bankruptcy because the company was operating at a loss: it had suffered a loss of 30,000 zlotys each month, and by the end of 1934 it had a deficit of 1.3 million zlotys. The "Saurer" Company indirectly owned part of the shares of the TOMMAK Company (having invested 3 million zlotys into buses and garages), but it had not earned a single zloty from its investment. It therefore wanted to take over administration of the TOMMAK Company and administration of public bus service in the city of Vilnius, in the hope of saving its investment. In February, the City Council adopted a resolution which transferred a security deposit of 100,000 zlotys from "Arbon" to the city. The initial 1931 agreement with "Arbon" was revoked because of the disagreements which had arisen. The bus garage along with its workshops became the property of the city. A debt of 50,000 zlotys for the year 1933 remained, and the city demanded payment. Negotiations between TOMMAK shareholders and municipal officials from Vilnius began. On February 17, 1933, the appointment of K. Masalski was terminated, but he was allowed to continue working as the technical head of the Vilnius branch of TOMMAK. H. Drechsle was appointed to replace him. In 1933–1934 there was a change in the company's shareholders, and a new board of directors was approved. A. Kraisas and S. Jankowski were appointed the new representatives. After these changes, the Swiss officially became the owners of TOMMAK.

In January of 1934, due to financial hardships, the TOMMAK Company fired 10 drivers, 10 conductors, three garage workers, and one controller. In April, seven drivers and seven conductors were fired.



Saurer bus at the gates of Bernardinai Garden

It was only in July that “Saurer” succeeded in reaching an oral agreement with the city managers on the conditions for a new agreement: the city was to get 40,000 zlotys from the transportation company each year. At first the contract was to be for one year. In the summer of 1934 a new city government was elected, and so the final revisions and signing of the contract were scheduled for autumn, when the new city council would begin its term of office. In August TOMMAK presented the city managers with a proposed contract, whose consideration extended to the spring of 1935. On April 19, 1935, the city managers signed a new two-year contract with TOMMAK. The company succeeded in obtaining a decrease in the yearly fee to 30,000 zlotys, but it still owed a debt of 30,000 zlotys. It was agreed that the company would pay the entire 60,000 zlotys in 1935 in equal monthly installments. Thus, after two years of disagreements and bargaining, all of the disputed issues were resolved. The new contract specified that TOMMAK was required to have no less than 26 buses. The fourth paragraph of the contract stated:

TOMMAK agrees to pay particular attention to the technical condition of the motors, so that harmful exhaust fumes do not cause an unduly great amount of air pollution. In addition, TOMMAK will provide appropriate instruction to its drivers, so that they do not cause too great a discharge of fumes when operating the motors.

So we see that even in those days there was concern about air pollution in cities. As in the earlier contract, the city was obligated to maintain and repair the streets on the routes used by the buses. The contract provided that the fares were to remain the same as earlier, but if TOMMAK wanted to raise them, it had to get approval from the City Council. In addition TOMMAK agreed to give hiring priority to residents of Vilnius and to hire no more than three specialists from outside the city if needed.

The bus routes became settled and practically did not change until 1940. In September of 1935 the signposts for bus stops, showing the routes and timetables for the buses, began to be changed.

In July of 1936, the municipal government, in an effort to improve the quality of passenger commutes and orderliness in buses, issued a decree, which specified that buses could transport no more than 24 passengers each, that is 20 seated and four standing passengers, because up to that point during rush hour buses would be crammed with passengers like sardines in a can. New problems arose because of the new rules: workers and office employees, who used buses to get to work, started to get to work late because they had to wait a half-hour or sometimes even an hour for a half-empty bus. Arguments between conductors and passengers arose often. This problem was especially severe on route 3 because during the summer many office employees lived in summer homes in Valakampiai. This "improvement" of order in public transportation lasted several weeks, until the TOMMAK Company, at the request of municipal officials, agreed to assign more buses to run on route 3 during rush hour.

The contract between the city and the TOMMAK Company expired on December 31, 1936. Some City Council members had



Christmas card of "Autowil" company

already demanded changes in the new contract: there had to be more buses running on the routes, and it was essential that the harm caused by exhaust fumes be decreased. No serious rivals for bus transportation of passengers in Vilnius appeared, and so at the end of the year a new concession agreement was signed with the TOMMAK Company for another two years. In essence it did not differ from the earlier ones, but now the company had to pay the city 5,000 zlotys for use of the garage on Savanorių Avenue. Thus, the gross yearly payment was 35,000 zlotys. The ninth clause of the contract specified that only Polish citizens and residents of Vilnius could work for the company, and drivers had to have a bus driver's license. The holder of the concession had to have 32 buses, of which 28 would run on bus routes every day, and also had to have one tour bus.

During the next two years there were no major changes in public city bus transportation. The same "Saurer" buses ran on the same routes. Sometimes the routes would change slightly due to public works projects which were constantly taking place in the city. In 1937 the workers of the TOMMAK Company went

on strike, and the strike lasted from June 20 to July 16. It caused a significant financial loss to the company. During the strike, city residents got used to walking, and when the strike ended they were not in a rush to use bus services again.

The years 1938 and 1939 were relatively quiet and stable as far as public bus transportation in Vilnius was concerned. However, political life in Europe was reaching a boiling point. The expectation of approaching war hung in the air. In August of 1939 the digging of underground shelters in Vilnius began. On August 31 a defense proclamation was issued, according to which the requisition of horses, bicycles and mechanical means of transportation began. A state of emergency was declared on September 2.

Translated by RIMAS ČERNIUS



Panorama with Antakalniis' Hills

The Versailles of Vilnius: *Sic transit gloria mundi*

ALMANTAS SAMALAVIČIUS

The Versailles of Antakalnis

Vilnius is frequently and not without some reason called a baroque city, even though many of the architectural structures of this epoch and style have decayed over the years and given up their spots to less impressive structures of later time periods. Antakalnis, one of the oldest suburbs of the capital, has long since become part of the city, so observing suburban characteristics in the contemporary urban fabric of this part of the city would be difficult even with the help of a flexible imagination. The territory of today's Antakalnis is completely urbanized, covered mostly in not particularly attractive buildings constructed in various twentieth-century periods, and apartment buildings that sprang up after the war. True, eclectic-style villas that had appeared somewhat earlier line the banks of the Neris; however, in recent times they are more and more frequently visually pushed aside and overwhelmed by the glass facades of post-soviet period architectural structures. Fragments of the spirit of the former suburb are at least expressed in the mass of the luxuriantly forested hills, the winding narrow streets and the tangle of variously-sized buildings. Because of the unfavorable historical development of Antakalnis, the glory of the conglomeration of fashionable suburban residences that were constructed in the second half of the seventeenth century was quickly lost. On the other hand, even with the changes in this part of the city's visual character, a certain spirit of the place was preserved by several particularly impressive structures. Among them one can



The Neris riverside with a view of Sluzko Palace. Nineteenth century lithograph by unknown author.

include the churches of St. Peter and Paul and Christ the Redeemer, and the Sluzsko and Sapieha palaces, as well as the baroque park bordering them, which, hopefully, will finally be recreated with the restoration of Sapieha Palace.

The architectural secrets of Antakalnis can be found gradually, one after another, particularly since they are all surrounded by an inexpressive and unmemorable context of modernist or simply eclectic structures. For example, walking or driving from the heart of Vilnius in the direction of the famous St. Peter and Paul Church (for some time now requiring visitors to get past the emergency situation of Gediminas Hill), a Palladian-style structure briefly flashes by. For several centuries it is known under the name of Sluzsko Palace. Even if crumbling, with an appearance that has been altered many times and lost its earlier representative look, it clearly stands out in the bland architectural surroundings – past the Vilnelė's confluence and the square next to it is a succession of grim, unappealing brick and stone

buildings darkened by dust and dirt. On the other side, across from the intersection and the street leading down to the Neris, looms the so-called Slušky apartments – a nearly perfect example of cheap but shiny and effective post-Soviet “new construction” of glass and reinforced concrete.

From Kosciuška Street, the palaces aren’t easily seen, particularly since only a small portion is seen through a break in the wall of the architecturally insignificant former barracks buildings from the time of the czarist empire. The coarsely shaped new concrete stairs leading to the edge of the Neris River are a gloomy contrast to the unforgivably neglected palaces, painted in various colors, newly plastered in spots, worn by sun, rain and wind, but still to some extent preserving their former elegance. The eclectic accumulation of buildings lined up on the bank, condemned by some art critics as early as the period between the wars, now looks even more chaotic and visually aggressive. It is the regretful result created by the alliance between current architectural vision and careless post-Soviet construction process.

Researchers of the architecture of Lithuania’s capital, almost without exception, emphasize the uniqueness of Antakalnis’s landscape and what a remarkably harmonious relationship there once was between nature and architecture. The traces of this extremely subtle interaction are still clearly visible, particularly at the time of year when the trees of the surrounding hills have not yet thrown off their thick and colorful leaves. The well-known art historian Vladas Drėma, usually a particularly dry, sober, and laconic scholar (truly the opposite of his older colleagues the art historian Mikalojus Vorobjovas or Jurgis Baltrušaitis Jr.), without hiding his enchantment, wrote in his magnum opus *Dingęs Vilnius*:

The largest and most beautiful suburb of Vilnius is Antakalnis, which was completely developed as early as the fifteenth century. It is arranged on the wide terrace of the Neris River, parallel to its left bank, on its other side abutting a large range of hills overgrown in woods. A road from Vilnius to Nemenčinė

and on to the north goes through Antakalnis, which continues about five hundred meters from the confluence of the Vilnelė to the Grand Duke's residence in Viršupė <...> Antakalnis is ruled by four jurisdictions, but it does not belong to Vilnius's magistrate. The clear waters of the Neris and the resin scent of the Sapieginė Forest determine Antakalnis's natural beauty, pleasantness, and peacefulness, providing all of the conditions for rest and carefree living. The fact that this suburb is so close to the city prompted nobles, solid and middling gentry, distinguished church officials, and city patriarchs to build palaces in Antakalnis, their summer homes, villas ("lukiškės") and to spend their days of leisure there.¹

In a book analyzing the architecture and art of Vilnius's St. Peter and Paul's Church, one of the scholars of Vilnius's history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Stasys Samalavičius, together with the author of the present article, pointed out the uniqueness of the surrounding area's urban character:

"The Versailles of Antakalnis" arises in a distinctive natural landscape. On one side, the Neris River with high riverside hills overgrown with trees and shrubbery bounds Antakalnis's space (just where the Sluszeko palace arises); from the other side, from Gediminas Hill the ancient road leads upward, buttressed by the stone walls of St. Peter and Paul's Church, which are extended by the building of the Canon Regular of the Lateran monastery. Farther to the northeast, on the top of the hill, is the grouping of the Sapieha Palace, while the Trinitarian Church, built at almost the same time with funds provided by the Sapiehas, adjoins it. The suburban residence and the sacred structures make up Antakalnis's integrated urban landscape, even though it was formed spontaneously as well.²

The charm of this particular location, even though significantly dimmed in the period of the czarist Russian colonization (when the city stopped being a capital) and not changed much during

¹ Drėma, *Dingęs Vilnius*, 341.

² Samalavičius and Samalavičius, *Vilniaus šv. Petro ir Povilo bažnyčia*, 56.



Sluszek Palace. Photo by Jonas Grikenis.

the years of the Polish occupation, awakened other architectural historians' imagination, too. Vorobjovas, who once provided difficult-to-better insights on the *genius loci* of Lithuania's immortal capital, has also emphasized the extraordinariness of the natural and architectural structure of Antakalnis. During the Second World War, Vorobjovas elatedly wrote:

Following Moscow's attack, at the end of the seventeenth century the building of aristocratic palaces flourished in Vilnius. Lithuania's nobility attempted to rebuild what had been destroyed during the war years, and at the same time sought to embody

the emphasis toward noble grandeur and plans that suited a matured baroque spirit. A particularly characteristic monument to those aims was St. Peter and Paul's Church in Antakalnis. Incidentally, Antakalnis was mostly associated with this new period in the history of aristocratic palaces. Michael Pac raised St. Peter and Paul's Church there, as if his own grandiose mausoleum, at the same time building a luxurious palace in the center of town, next to Town Hall Square, while two other magnates, Sapieha and Sluszeko, created their suburban residences in Antakalnis. They used this remarkably beautiful location not just as scenery to incorporate around their buildings: Antakalnis's nature was understood as a moldable material from which artists were to forge new architectonic imagery.³

However, the art historian was by no means a nostalgic romantic, and his sincere enchantment with the location's past did not overcome a sober assessment of historic realities. Vorobjovas emphasized that the complex and turbulent history of Lithuania's Grand Dukes would not allow all the ambitions of the nobility of that time to be embodied, and the grandeur of the architectural Versailles to be repeated in Vilnius (even if to attempt extraordinary canonical monuments was characteristic of the baroque epoch); it was not the lack of enthusiasm among Lithuania's aristocrats, but the inauspicious historical conditions. Many magnates' dreams were left abandoned, and much of what was created at the end of the seventeenth century was mercilessly wiped from the surface of the earth by nineteenth and twentieth century "barbarians" – foreign colonizers. This is how tasteless suburban villas, grim standardized apartment buildings in the style of Soviet modernist architecture, and most recently particularly cheap construction – apparitions of the new architecture – appeared in this neighborhood of the Neris. With more than seven decades gone by, one can only repeat Vorobjovas's words written during World War II, that Vilnius has fallen into strangers' hands; Antakalnis, according to the art historian, is, in a topographical respect, a distinctive and remarkable location that "cries out to our urban

³ Vorobjovas, *Antakalnis Versalis*, 2.

planners to clean its lovely hills and banks of all of that grandiose chaos and create a new architectural ensemble that suits our capital.”⁴ This cry of a Vilnius-loving soul, unfortunately, has apparently remained unheard to this day, and sounds more like a reproach to Vilnius’s post-Soviet urban planners. The urbanists’ lack of far-sighted insights also had the result that after the restoration of independence, suitable attention was not paid to this unique part of Vilnius’s urban structure. An impoverished architectural vision and weakened ambitions for urban design determined that today’s Sluszeko Palace with all of its eclectic and chaotic urban surroundings continues to reflect two apparently different but peculiarly similar effects of the czarist imperial and the Soviet/post-Soviet epochs on the thinking of urban design and their astonishingly similar paradigm of action. Both of them ignored the centuries-old uniqueness and distinctiveness of Antakalnis.

The Historical Drama of the Sluszeko Palace

As researchers of this location have shown, there was a different noble family of the Lithuanian Grand Duchy in this spot earlier. The original palace, built by the Kiszkas, had several owners: at first it was given to the Grand Duke Vladislav Waza, and he passed it on to the disposition of the Pac family (somewhat earlier a wooden representative mansion belonging to the Pac family stood next to it). Finally, in 1690 they sold their mansion to Dominik Michael Sluszeko. The new owner tore down the old building. In the last decade of the seventeenth century, it was replaced by a massive, large-scale square structure with corner towers built upon a specially constructed peninsula. The Polish art historian Euzebiusz Łopaciński, writing about this impressive baroque structure before the Second World War, considered it among the most impressive mansions in all of Vilnius.⁵

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Łopaciński, “Palac Sluszkow,” 13.

One of the researchers of the palace's history, the Catholic priest Tadeusz Rogala-Zawadzki, wrote:

This noble structure, according to the taste dominating at the time, should have been surrounded by water and a moat, and given the palace an impression of being isolated from its surroundings. After all, the palace had been built on the channel of the Neris, which had earlier washed the building itself, and it's possible a canal with water separated it earlier from the shore. One must not forget that it was the era of Louis XIV in France, which had an extremely strong effect on all Europe.⁶

According to this historian's information, the Sluszeko Palace was conceived as a majestic structure consistent with the scope of a baroque spirit and perfectly arranged in Antakalnis's landscape. Rogala-Zawadzki proposed the hypothesis that "According to that time-period's architectural taste, the river bank should have been covered in cut stone, and the building should have been bordered with a balustrade of hewn rock."⁷ Analogies with suburban baroque villas in Western Europe show that the building's surroundings could have been formed with the help of springs, as the nobility of Italy and France had decorated their suburban residences with a particular high culture of water aesthetics. Beyond the Sluszeko Palace, on the other side of today's Kosciuška Street stretched a decorative "Italian style" park – as it is referred to in historical sources – with lagoons and canals. Like in Italian suburban villas of that period, the basic compositional component of the ensemble of architecture and nature was the palace, accompanied by various auxiliary buildings, offices, and other objects. According to this architectural historian, although both the Sluszeko and Sapieha mansions were built in the epoch of Louis XIV following the example of Versailles, the planning for the Antakalnis parks did not seek "an infinite perspective." They were considerably more ordinary, simpler, more

⁶ Rogala-Zawadzki.

⁷ Ibid.



Sluszeko Palace. The main façade. Photo by Jonas Grikenis.

natural, and harmonized more with the natural texture of this suburb's landscape. This aspect of the Sluszeko Palace's landscaping was accented by authors who wrote about this during the Soviet years, the architect Antanas Pilypaitis and the historian Adolfas Raulinaitis, who said:

A large complex orchard-park was arranged around the palace, including the hill beyond today's Kosciuska Street, which was not there at the time. Its arrangement required a considerable amount of work digging the earth because the location had a complex terrain <...> The water mirrors – canals and ponds – had an important role in the composition of the park. According to the green construction principles of the time, the park's composition should be subordinate to the ensemble's center – the palace standing next to the Neris River.⁸

Clearly the palace's owners did not lack in baroque ambition. The Latin inscription that once greeted visitors attests to this. In Latin, it read as follows:

⁸ Pilypaitis and Raulinaitis, "Slušų rūmai Vilniuje," 12.



Current view of Sluszeko Palace. All photos except those attributed to Jonas Griekienis are author's.

*Montes Depuli, Aquas Viliae Edomui, Aera Absg: Suggestu Collium Superavi, Victrix Elementorum, Facta Sum Domus, Quietis, Socia Antecolensis Heroum Augustalis Hic Sub Luna Amica Quietis, Dea Pacis, Togam, Sub Armis Ostoja Bellona Sagum, Ad Tranquillitatem Componito.*⁹

Many authors who had written about Vilnius's so-called Antakalnis Versailles mentioned that the relatively very short time period of the Sluszeko Palace's prosperity was determined by a curse. One of the nobles whom the magnate Dominik Sluszeko had wronged, having lost his wealth and been condemned to poverty, wrote on the palace's gates: "*Haec excelsa domus, pluri-*

⁹ Kłos, Wilno. *Przewodnik Krajoznawcy*, 263.



Sluszeko Palace. Detail of the façade. Photo by Jonas Griekienis.

mus extracta rapinis corrnat, aut alter raptor babebit eam" (Let this excellent building, built with an abundance of plunder, fall down or go to another usurer). Although this kind of archaic metaphysics could bring a smile to a contemporary atheist, it must be observed that fate really was unkind to the palace of the noble Sluszeko family. From the beginning of the eighteenth century, its owners changed constantly and the palace continually declined, losing its aesthetic expression. After the death of Dominik Sluszeko it was sold to his creditors. For some time it stood without being looked after and lost its former beauty and charm, although in 1705, after the partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Russian czar Peter I stayed there along with his staff, which testifies that its condition was still sufficiently good. Later, Kristupas Puzinas acquired the palace in the third decade of the eighteenth century, after which the Potocki nobles purchased it. From them, the palace passed to Vilnius's Piarist monastery, and in 1766 they sold it to the Polish duke and composer Michael Casimir Oginski, who quickly concerned himself with needed renovation of the neglected, nearly ruined pal-



Façade of *Sluszek Palace*. Photo by Jonas Grikenis.

ace. According to the historian Rogala-Zawadzki, “From the 1756 inventory’s description, we know that at the time the building’s ceilings and roof were caved in, the stoves dissembled and looted, the walls rotting, the foundations sagging, and all of the cottages were nothing but ruins.”¹⁰ All the same, the historian interpreted the palace’s history with a considerable dose of mysticism, connecting the unfortunate events with the curse of the noble mentioned above: when the Lithuania Grand Duke and Polish king Jan III Sobieski stayed at the palace, a heavy block of stucco that fell from the bedroom ceiling only missed hitting the ruler by a miracle. In addition, while climbing the palace stairs, the czar Peter I fell and injured himself. According to Rogala-Zawadzki, the uninhabited palace turned into “a terrifying estate, where the living visited and the ghosts made their home.”¹¹

¹⁰ Rogala-Zawadzki.

¹¹ Ibid.



Current view of Sluszeko Palace.

Finally, after a person named Zaikowski had equipped a brewery there in 1800, a boiler exploded and a number of workers were injured, and following this event the business went bankrupt. Yet another event that, given enough imagination, can be ascribed to the fulfillment of the famous prophecy...

In 1794, revolutionary headquarters were established in the Sluszeko Palace, and bullets were cast there. In retribution for this anti-colonial activity, the czarist government confiscated the palace and rented it out to a local merchant. For a while a lumber mill, a distillery, and a brewery worked there. In the 1830s, a czarist artillery regiment settled in Sluszeko Palace; later it was turned into a warehouse. Afterwards a hospital and then a jail took over. Understandably, all of these changes in function did not improve the state of the palace and most likely contributed to its decline.

Contrary to assertions by some of the location's architectural researchers, in the second half of the nineteenth century the palace had three stories. This is demonstrated by the Russian engi-

neer Prokofjev's plans of the structure at that time, which the historian Feliksas Sliesoriūnas came across in the Lithuanian Central Archive.¹² However, it's obvious that the palace continued to decline at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1903, the czarist government ordered the northern driveway, including a particularly decorative gate, destroyed, and the entire palace surrounded by a military fence, which unfortunately still mars the palace's silhouette today. The remodeling and reconstruction campaign continued during the Soviet years; at the end of the 1950s, the Sluszeko Palace was handed over to a machine-operator school. It was only relatively recently that the cultural function of the palace was remembered and several Lithuanian music and theater academies' subdivisions were housed in this considerably worn and neglected palace. The government allotted two million litas to the palace's renovation, but such a small sum was not enough to significantly improve the state of the building.

When the palace will be finally appropriately restored is only a matter of guesswork. On the other hand, it is questionable whether it's at all possible to recreate even a somewhat authentic image of a baroque villa. Let us not forget that thanks to the reconstruction, the palace has grown by a floor, i.e., at this time there are four floors; its former interiors are irretrievably destroyed; the building is imprisoned in a simply horrifyingly unsuccessful architectural surrounding; and it is even difficult to see while walking by on Kosciuszka Street. Nevertheless, ignoring these adverse circumstances, reestablishing at least a part of the Sluszeko Palace's former majesty is not just possible but imperative. With a properly restored palace and the external decor recreated, both the palace's silhouette and the contour of the peninsula once created there would be revealed. Although Vorobjovas's hope that the low-value structures evoking barracks located next to the palace would be razed, it is questionable whether this could take place in the near future, given the status of the surrounding real estate's ownership. However, all is not yet lost. If the state gov-

¹² Sliesoriūnas, "Sluško rūmai," 25–26.

ernment would have sufficient resolution to rebuild the palace, that is, to allot the means to suitably restore the palace, the structure, even in today's urban surroundings, could "sound" like a distant but audible echo of the cherished majestic aesthetic ideals from the baroque epoch. To Vilnius residents it would recall the former suburb's short but impressive period of baroque glory.

The Sapieha Palace's Rise, Fall, and Resurrection

Beyond St. Peter and Paul's Church and next to the Canon Regular of the Lateran monastery stretches the grounds of another noble family of the Lithuanian Grand Duchy – the Sapieha family – with an impressive palace and the Trinitarian Church built with their funds. A wooden palace stood here as early as the first half of the seventeenth century. In 1691, the palace built by Jan Casimir Sapieha rose in its place, distinguished by a particularly sumptuous interior decoration. Vorobjovas wrote:

From other sources it is known that the painted decorations were done by the Italian Del Bene. His frescos have survived, incidentally, in the St. Casimir Chapel (in the Vilnius Cathedral – A.S.) as well as in the Pažaislis monastery; his huge composition in the Sapieha Palace, *The Feast of the Gods*, is particularly well-known. Other decorations are mentioned in that dining hall, as well as in a bedroom, including stucco ornaments (some of them gilded) and overdoors with paintings in molded frames. Further, the inventory mentions large stoves with colored tiles (mostly green) and chimneys as well as figures and architectonic decorations. In some places there were parquet floors of ash, and marble floors in one room. The walls of one room were covered in majolica tiles, and the stove built in a pale blue tile with the coat of arms.¹³

Although the newest information shows that the fresco's author's name was not Del Bene,¹⁴ the majority of Vorobjovas's eval-

¹³ Vorobjovas, *Antakalnių Versalis*, 2.

¹⁴ Janonienė and Purlys, *Sapiegų rūmai Antakalnyje*.

uation was based on information from archival sources that are still considered valid. He was, incidentally, one of very few Lithuanian authors who investigated the history of Antakalnis's structure in the first half of the twentieth century. Today its history is better known, although some aspects have not yet been thoroughly researched, so more surprises are undoubtedly to come.

The Sapieha Palace, for various reasons including the Northern war that began soon after, flourished for a very short time. The architect-restorer Evaldas Purlys and the Polish art historian Piotr Jamski described the convolutions of the palace's history and the compositional arrangement of the majestic and imposing building with its baroque-spirit park in their articles published in *Kultūros barai*, even though at that time the possibility of its recreation was unclear.¹⁵ The latter associated the settling of the Sapieha family in Antakalnis with the twists and turns in the political career of Jan Casimir Pawel Sapieha, particularly since, with the entire Sapiega family being close to the Polish king and Grand Duke of Lithuania Jan III Sobieski, they managed to quickly establish themselves in the highest government and economic posts in the Grand Duchy.

A well-founded question could be asked – why, with more than a quarter-century gone by since Lithuania shook off the Soviet regime, does the restoration of buildings of significance in the state's history and identity continued to be delayed? Frequently, there are attempts to justify the sluggishness by appealing to the state's economic situation, demonstrating that apparently economic shortages interfere with the restoration of palaces and parks and so must wait for "better" times. There is only the question if, while eternally waiting, anything will be left to restore at all. However, it can finally now be added that in recent years things are looking considerably better for Antakalnis. Although the condition of the Sluszeko Palace, which is used by Lithuania's

¹⁵ See Purlys, "Kas darytina, kad neprarastume Sapiegų rūmų" and Jamski, "Sapiegų rūmų byla dar nepralaimėta."



Current view of Sapiieha Palace.



The detail of the main façade of Sapiieha Palace.



Sapieha Palace.



Gates from the park to the palace.

Music and Theater Academy, still leaves an oppressive impression, restoration has begun on the Sapieha Palace. The results of no small amount of already completed restoration work, are now visible. On the other hand, recent years have conferred new information about the history of the Sapieha Palace in Antakalnis. According to the newest researchers of this architectural object, the art historian Rūta Janonienė and the architect Evaldas Purlys,

The Sapieha jurisdiction in Antakalnis occupied a large plot, from the Neris, through the Antakalnis hills to Rokantiškės, and beyond to the Vilnia River. On the south, the Sapieha's land bordered with the territory of the noble Pac family of Lithuania's Grand Duchy (the ensemble of the Canon Regular of the Lateran monastery and St. Peter and Paul's Church stand in the Pac territory). Before 1671, the land where the Sapieha Palace was to stand belonged for some time to the hetman of the Lithuanian Grand Duchy and governor of Vilnius, Michael Casimir Pac. Sapieha began to settle in the territory of his palace at the end of the seventeenth century, during his period of greatest power and activity. The Sapieha jurisdiction was formed from at least two owners' lands purchased by the Lithuanian Grand Duchy Great Hetman and Vilnius's governor Jan Casimir Sapieha.¹⁶

Jan Casimir Sapieha purchased the territory belonging to the Manvydas family, along with some land close by that belonged to the Jesuit novitiate. In 1691 the construction of the new palace on the purchased lots began. The palace's researchers added that the piece of land belonging to the latter Sapieha was noted on Johann Georg Maximilian von Fusterhoff's plan of 1737.¹⁷ Jamski has pointed out the influence of the French context of that time on the Sapieha Palace's park. According to him,

In the Antakalnis ensemble, its designer based his work on the newest French examples from Le Notre's work. A parterre flower bed was arranged across from the palace's territory; further on

¹⁶ Janonienė and Purlys, *Sapiegų rūmai Antakalnyje*, 25.

¹⁷ Ibid.



The complex of Sapieha Palace with gates.

were water reservoirs and in the distance, hedges of trees. This conformed to the principles of the highest degree of comparison of garden vegetation. The whole, with the main avenue and side avenues, illustrated a recognizable type of multiple center lines and multiple perspectives from the surroundings of Louis XIV.¹⁸

Two foreigners whose names left marks in Lithuanian culture – the Italian architect Giambattista Frediani and the sculptor Pietro Pertti – are tied to the construction and decorative work of the Sapieha Palace. The first was known as a military engineer who, besides other projects, worked on the bridge over the Neris River that was destroyed by the 1672 flood – no small engineering novelty in the territory of the Grand Duchy in those times.¹⁹ He also worked on the church of the Pažaislis Comaldese monastery, funded by Christopher Sigmunt Pac, as well

¹⁸ Jamski, "Sapiegų rūmų byla," 17.

¹⁹ Samalavičius, *Vilniaus miesto kultūra*, 315.



Trinitarian Church in Antakalnis.

as for some time overseeing the construction work of the St. Peter and Paul's Church, funded by another noble of the Grand Duchy, Michael Casimir Pac.²⁰ The Polish art historian Anna Czyż asserts that he had also taken part in some of the work in the

²⁰ Samalavičius and Samalavičius, *Vilniaus šv. Petro ir Povilo bažnyčia*, 24.



Vilnius St. Peter and Paul's Church.

beginning phases of the Trinitarian Church, built by Sapieha.²¹ Incidentally, an interesting study on this Italian architect's activities in Lithuania has recently appeared that illuminates many little-known facts of his creative biography.²² The sculptor-designer Pietro Pertti, who came from the Lake Como area in the duchy of Milan, famous for its ornamental arts traditions (particularly the mastery of stucco decoration), decorated Vilnius's St. Peter and Paul's Church,²³ in addition to the Vilnius Cathedral's St. Casimir chapel and the Sluszkowski Palace, as well as being

²¹ Czyż, *Kościół świętych Piotra i Pawła na Antokolu w Wilnie*, 79.

²² Janonienė, "Sapiegų rūmų Antakalnyje architektas Giovanni Battista Frediani."

²³ Samalavičius and Samalavičius, "The Realm of Lithuanian Baroque."

associated with the decorative work at the Sapieha Palace. It is also known that he carried out the sculptural work in the Jesuit church in the city of Grodno, which was financed by the Sapieha family. So it can be justifiably claimed that the Italian sculptor Pietro Pertti, who over time became a Vilniutian, left particularly valuable traces in Lithuania's baroque culture.

Conclusion

The famous inscription that once adorned the Sapieha Palace and announced itself as "Antakalnis, the resting spot of the ancient heroes, now rises from the ruins like a giant home", today could be interpreted only as a nostalgic reference to the short period of this location's flourishing. On the other hand, this doesn't mean that reasoning about Antakalnis or the Versailles of Vilnius was only a fiction of romantically-inclined writers. Based on the information made available by today's historical research, it can be asserted that in the second half of the seventeenth century, a unique architectural and natural complex, connected with several families of the Lithuanian Grand Duchy, formed alongside Vilnius in the suburb of Antakalnis. The layout of this complex was made from several independent components that were formed individually, but relied upon and used examples of analogues in Western Europe, so the concept of the Versailles of Vilnius or Antakalnis is neither pure invention nor the product of a romantic imagination. In creating their suburban residences, the magnates of the Lithuanian Grand Duchy really did follow the most famous European examples of the baroque epoch in striving for their own political and cultural aims. The brief time period of the flourishing of this suburb's impressive accumulation of residences was determined by reasons unrelated to their creators' or financial supporters' ambitions.

Sic transit gloria mundi.

Works Cited

- DRĖMA, VLADAS. *Dingęs Vilnius*. Vilnius: Vaga, 1991.
- CZYŻ, ANNA S. *Kościół świętych Piotra i Pawła na Antokolu w Wilnie*. Wrocław, 2008.
- JAMSKI, PIOTR. "Sapiegų rūmų byla dar nepraraimėta," *Kultūros barai*, 2007, No. 2.
- JANONIENTĖ, RŪTA and E. PURLYS. *Sapiegų rūmai Antakalnyje*. Vilnius: Nacionalinis muziejus, 2012.
- JANONIENTĖ, RŪTA. "Sapiegų rūmų Antakalnyje architektas Giovanni Battista Frediani: biografijos bruožai," *Acta Academia Artium Vilnensis*, 77–78, 2015.
- KŁOS, JULJUSZ. *Wilno. Przewodnik Krajoznawcy*. Wilno, 1937.
- ŁOPACIŃSKI, EUZEBIUSZ. "Palac Sluszkow," In: *Wilno. Zarząd miejski w Wilnie*. Wilno, 1939.
- PILYPAITIS, ANTANAS and A. RAULINAITIS. "Sluškų rūmai Vilniuje," *Kultūros barai*, 1967, No. 3.
- PURLYS, EVALDAS. "Kas darytina, kad neprarastume Sapiegų rūmų?" *Kultūros barai*, 2006, No. 11, No. 12.
- ROGALA-ZAWADZKI, TADEUSZ, Unpublished manuscript. Author's personal archives.
- SAMALAVIČIUS, STASYS and A. SAMALAVIČIUS. *Vilniaus šv. Petro ir Povilo bažnyčia*. Vilnius: Pilių tyrimo centras, 1998.
- SAMALAVIČIUS, ALMANTAS and S. SAMALAVIČIUS. "The Realm of Lithuanian Baroque: SS. Peter and Paul, Vilnius," *Apollo: The International Art Magazine*, July, 1990.
- SAMALAVIČIUS, STASYS. "Vilniaus miesto kultūra ir kasdienybė XVII–XVIII amžiuose," *Vilnius: Edukologija*, 2011.
- SLIESORIŪNAS, FELIKSAS. "Sluškų rūmai," *Statyba ir architektūra*, 1967, No. 6.
- VOROBJOVAS, MIKALOJUS. "Antakalnio Versalis," *Naujoji Lietuva*, 1943, No. 170.

Translated by
ELIZABETH NOVICKAS

Two Short Stories

GRAZINA PRANAUSKAS

Love-grass rings

Loreta spent her evenings near the sea. She walked bare foot, carrying her shoes in her hand, sinking her toes into the rough sand. The shivering sensation from the freezing waves splashing above her ankles made her alert. She took a deep breath anticipating the waves as they rolled towards her carrying broken shells, shiny pebbles and smooth pieces of glass onto the yellowish shore.

As May's sun hung on the horizon, the colors of light pink, burgundy and purple tinted the clear sky. With her feet exposed by the moving sand, she stretched her hands into the distance, took a deep breath and brushed the salt residue from her cracked lips. She smiled, showing her straight teeth to a bow-legged man with evenly-shaped eyebrows and short ash-blond hair as he walked by. She laughed as she shook her head and considered how she'd observed how most men are taken aback by her strong, curious gazes. She ran her fingers through her straight brown bob, and stood still for a while watching the man, struggling to walk against the wind. He didn't turn. She was not sure if she should follow him.

She had a crush on a boy in 11th grade, but not openly and she was convinced that Romas didn't realize it. She kept his photo in a small wooden box in her bedroom. He was slim and

GRAZINA PRANAUSKAS received her Ph.D. in Creative Writing from the Victoria University, Melbourne in 2015, where her academic supervisors were Dr. Enza Gandolfo and Dr. Karina Smith. Arriving from Soviet Lithuania in 1989, she lives in Australia.

tall, and when he spoke, he held his head to one side, leaning towards the person he spoke to, listening intensely. Maybe he did it because he wanted to be at eye level, but his warmth and affection paid off – girls loved him for his kind personality. Her girlfriends felt disappointed he didn't single out any of them, paying equal attention to all of them. She kept her love for him deep in her heart. He followed her home once and gave her a bouquet of field flowers. She dried them upside down on a cord string in her wardrobe and touched or kissed them each time she was there, looking for clothes.

After finishing high school, Loreta went on to study to become a nurse. She learned that Romas underwent his vocational seamanship training at the Maritime School.



They bumped into each other on a busy street in Klaipėda one day. He suggested they find seats at the near-by café. Dressed in his white and blue sailor's uniform, he stood-out from the others. He chatted away about his experiences of living and studying at the Klaipėda Maritime School and apologized for wearing his uniform. He said it was compulsory to dress in the uniform inside and beyond the school grounds, but he was a qualified sailor now. He knew how to navigate a ship, how to read the weather forecast, how to sail, undertake mechanical repairs and maintenance jobs, and how to handle the dangerous cargo.

"Seamanship to me is security at sea and maritime safety," he said. His confidence impressed her, while she listened to his deep pleasant voice. She pinched herself under the table to make sure she wasn't dreaming. She thought she should discard her dried flowers still hanging in her wardrobe – he was in front of her in person! She learned that he was about to sail to Morocco, and would take three months catching, processing and preserving fish for canning on the ship.

Loreta noticed how straight and broad his shoulders were. His freckles, covering his nose and arms, looked like tiny dots, resembling her light-brown dotted dress. She had never noticed

before that he had a rather oval face, and mentioned that he looked much thinner when they were in high school. He laughed at this observation explaining how he had put on some weight because he needed to be strong while tossing rats overboard. She cringed at the thought of a rat biting his lip or a part of his ear in his sleep... She looked into his greenish-blue eyes and, in reply, he touched the tips of her cold fingers. They kissed after emptying their champagne glasses. He suggested they go to his place, but she said she'd prefer to go to her home. She sensed that he liked her answer as he smirked with approval. Why would she go to his flat? What if he only wanted to sleep with her and nothing else? She had heard that men, like whales, would rather go deep into the ocean for krill, even if it meant risking their lives. Apparently, they don't bother with passing-by fray. Why hurry things along, spoiling their special evening?

They strolled around the town until midnight and he kissed her on her lips at the door of her flat.

"Sorry, I cannot make any promises. I'll be sailing on rough seas, winds and storms, and it's no good making any plans. I don't want to have a girl onshore, waiting for me, missing out on her own life. Can you imagine how after stepping on land with my "sea legs", I sway to and fro for a few months, unable to adjust to even surfaces? How long could anyone wait for me? It would be selfish on my behalf to let that happen."

"Don't talk like that," she said casually, but wanting to scream "but I want to wait for you!"

Ignorant to her thoughts, he added, "the seaman's life is adrift."

"I don't know how you can you do it then? How can you risk your own life?"

"Well. I need to think of the future, to save some money, and this job pays well. I know that you'd like some perfume, jewelry and designer clothing... All women do. It's one of many expectations this sailor must consider."

She held her breath, listening to his words, and imagined being his girlfriend...waiting on shore for his return, passers-by eyeing her clothes Soviet Lithuanian women only dreamed of, following her around with envy.



Loreta looked into the mirror to admire her shoulder-length hair, set in big curls. Her tight dress showed her curvy body and her stilettos made her look taller. She raised her eyebrows, pinched her cheeks with her soft fingertips, sighing with satisfaction. She put her burgundy lipstick on and glanced at her watch loosely hanging around her wrist. Finally, friends began to arrive for her 25th birthday celebration. She saw Romas with one of her girlfriends but had no time to contemplate about this. After all, she hadn't seen him for a year, even though at their last date he gave her a bottle of Christian Dior perfume in a pink box. Each time he went to sea, she heard him saying "no letters", but upon his return he would find her, and she would enjoy his company once again. She loved his endless stories about sea lions and sharks trying to hop onto the deck, and about the freezing temperatures in preservation containers that made fish stiff and slippery. She enjoyed the make-up, pure wool scarf, a quartz watch, and other gifts he brought from Spain and Africa. They would go out to the best concerts and theaters, have meals, listen to popular entertainment and dance, never forgetting to raise their glasses "to those at sea". He added once that he may not go back, but he was tipsy, and she wasn't sure if he was serious or not.

Out of the blue he wrote a letter to her about rats trying to get into his bed and bite his nose in the middle of the night. Maybe he was joking but it was enough to frighten her as she tried to remind herself he gave "no promises while at sea". Even though she was worried – his writing appeared shaky, sentences incoherent and words hard to work out, she didn't reply to his letter. Maybe he thought that was it? Maybe he was serious about his new relationship with Daiva, and she has been left out? For now, she closed her eyes, enjoying "Happy birthday" singing and the popping of the champagne corks. Before leaving the party, Romas approached her and kissed her on her cheek. He quietly told her that he truly missed her. But all she could think was his words told hundreds of times – "no promises". Daiva found them chatting in the hallway, holding hands.



At 26, Loreta began regular walks along the beach front, filling her evenings after her day job at the hospital. When she caught-up with the man now well ahead of her, walking against the wind, he hesitated, but slowed down and eventually stopped. She knew it was Romas from his slightly bent legs. But he looked different – his full body, expressionless face and squinty eyes were something she had never seen before. His embarrassment and momentary silence startled her. His cold appearance made her shiver.

“It’s all about expectations, isn’t it?” he said, spitting on the sand. “My friend Rimgaudas had a heart attack at sea after learning that his wife left him. Life is not what it’s supposed to be!”

While she tried to find the right words, he spat again, turning his face towards the sea and purposely walking away. She saw him swaying to and fro. She stood speechless for some time thinking about these last nine years she was in love with a man who had all these dreams to fulfil, who wanted to be an ideal sailor in the endless waters of the world... Instead, he told her, he was catching, gutting and stuffing the fish into tins. Now he had lost his friend... To her he was a young moon that showed his face in cycles, reappearing like a sunray before vanishing into a void, his heavy words echoing behind: “no promises while at sea”. Why should she value his gifts he gave her each time they met? Was he sincere or did he just pretend to be? Was he still a whale wanting to dive deep for krill?



Three months later a bouquet of field flowers was delivered to her at work without a note. She thought, how typical of Romas. Returning home that night, she found him sitting on the staircase in front of the door of her flat. She sat next to him for a while, but they didn’t talk. She inhaled his pleasant, cinnamon-scented aftershave, listening to the uneven beat of his heart. He was so close and yet, so distant: with constant absences at sea and a few in-between dates, she hardly knew him anymore. Once she in-

vited him for a cup of coffee, he opened up about his expectations and the expectations of others. He said that the sea was too much to handle, that he was a failure. She shook her head, and kept repeating “no, no, you are not, you are not. You are just a human being, why should expectations matter?”

He sipped his coffee and told her how after seeing her at the beach front made him realize that he was sliding backwards: he put on more weight, got depressed and drank what captains and sailors drank – rum and wine. They had to keep their spirits up as group drinking helped them to bond and prevented them from self-harm. He apologized for misbehaving at the beach and walking away explaining he wasn’t himself.

“I always loved you but didn’t want to admit it,” he said. “When I was at sea, loneliness saturated my body and pierced through my bones, making me cold and hopeless. During such moments, my only wish was to have you, to live with you on shore, and to regain my sense of permanency. There is no permanency at sea. The presence of gushing water, splashing and spraying all over is frightful. I thought I was going mad, especially when I saw Rimgaudas’ body buried at sea. I imagined sharks hanging around below the deck, waiting for him...”



They sat on the bench near the sea, holding hands and swinging their feet. They tuned into the sounds of the screeching seagulls.

“Do you recall a song about a young woman waiting for her boyfriend’s return from his work at sea?” Romas asked.

“Yes, I do,” said Loreta.

“I think it goes something like this: while she patiently stood at the edge of the water, the seagull sang her a song of love,” he said.

“Then continues like that: but once she got sick of waiting, she left the pier and found another sailor, changing the words of the seagull song to the following: ‘Listen, sailor, you stayed at sea too long, and I forgot about you. So, I found someone else

instead,” she said. “But for me it was different. I loved you since school,” she added.

They looked at each other and smiled. He moved closer to her and she put her head on his shoulder. They watched the transparent waves turn into amber and aqua shades, playing on the surface of the rising water. They followed the slow disappearance of the fire-like oval into the distance where the boats entered the ocean. They ran into the dunes and made love-grass rings fitting each other’s fingers.

11/8/2016

Acting animals

At the end of 1988, Renata was invited to provide New Year’s Eve entertainment for a gathering of 250 people in the small village of Vėžaičiai, 25 kilometers away from the port of Klaipėda. Since completing her theatre studies, she had been organizing cultural events for seven years. She was tall and slim, had a good stage voice, and was appreciated for her theatrical roles such as a sister in Chekhov’s “Three Sisters”, Professor’s daughter in “Uncle Vanya”, and the wife in Žemaitė’s “Marti”. Being offered the roll of host for the New Year’s Eve celebration, she worried whether she’d be able to engage her audience without the benefit of alcohol. Michail Gorbachev’s policy of de-alcoholization, still in place from 1985 in Soviet Lithuania, forbade drinking in public places and at work. The so-called “dry law” resulted in long queues at the bottle shops. Since the homebrewed vodka became a more attractive option, people experienced a great sugar shortage.

Keeping all of this in mind, Renata secured a band with a soprano saxophone player, a guitarist, and a drummer to help her along. While the saxophonist led a popular Bizet’s “Pearl Fishers” tune, she jumped in and then slowly danced her way out of a huge Santa’s bag. First came her fingers, hands, arms,

followed by her seemingly boneless body. She wore a crown, a long-sleeve silver top and a short skirt that blended well with the silver threads woven into her black net stockings. After the haunting music stopped, she greeted her audience with some fun remarks. She said that imitating the Chinese Zodiac, she materialized as a snake, a symbol of wisdom and prosperity. Those gathered for the evening, applauded without enthusiasm.

During the dinner, Renata was mentally preparing for her next entry. She already regretted her commitment to the evening, but 40 roubles for one night's entertainment amounted to a quarter of her monthly wage. After the main course, she told a few jokes and an anecdote of how poorly people cope without alcohol. She saw some smiles and the applause sounded a touch louder...maybe just to her? Afterwards, the band started drowning out the noise of the cutlery. Doing invigorating snake movements, Renata encouraged people to step onto the dance floor, but her audience was unmoved. Watching them from behind her snake mask, she saw sober faces, giving off coldness and criticism while she used her acting tricks to engage them in her game. It was in vain. Worrying that the evening was becoming a flop, she cheered up seeing a slim man in his thirties with wavy dark hair and straight long legs approaching. He introduced himself as Vitas, an agricultural scientist, specializing in soil fertility. He was nervous shaking her thin hand as if afraid to touch it. His fingers were short and his hand sweaty. After their dance solo, he suggested she accompany him to see his office. On their way to the third floor, he talked about his village. Vėžaičiai, with some 1,500 citizens, was famous for scientific testing. It was also a home to 15 scientists and 30 lab technicians and agronomists who worked and lived there as part of the Lithuanian Agricultural Research Institute Branch. He added that local tractor drivers were hired for required support.

Chatting away, they reached his office where they found a young man on a sofa as they entered. Rimas worked as Vitas' assistant. While shaking her hand, he appeared unsure of himself, making Renata wonder why she was having such a strange effect

on men that night. The coffee table was set with some slices of cold meat and pieces of chicken, potatoes, cabbage, carrots, her-ring salads, sweets, fruit and alcohol. Pointing to the bottle of vodka, she remarked that they weren't supposed to drink at work. The men laughed and she did too. She wished Soviet Lithuanian citizens could openly sip alcohol on New Year's Eve. Vitas popped a bottle of champagne and dropped a strawberry into her tall flute. She loved it. The men shared some vodka. A loud record drowned out their conversation but she didn't care much for it anyway. The words they used were too technical for her. Then they danced around the table, clinking their glasses and wishing each other happiness and prosperity.

A bulky, average-height man in his twenties entered the office, looking for Renata. As the theatre producer of a local Cultural Centre, Zenonas was wondering where she had disappeared. His hand shake was strong and his small green eyes lingered on her. She liked his friendly smile and his pleasant face. He accepted a glass of vodka from Vitas who, taking a seat at his desk, began explaining how the Vėžaičiai Branch operated an experimental farm that involved fertilization, and a mineralization program used in discovering the effect of different chemicals on soil. For their research they tested a variety of crops such as oats, maize, clover, barley, winter rye and potatoes. Vitas named some articles he and his colleagues had submitted for the national magazine of agriculture on agrochemistry and soil science, crop production, grassland husbandry and microbiology. Lifting a glass of vodka to his tight narrow lips, he told them about presenting papers at the relevant conferences. Renata, slightly intoxicated after her third flute of champagne, looked at his round face with deep respect. His brown eyes were following her every move, and she giggled with appreciation. He was a scientist and she was an actress. What could be more intriguing – listening to but not comprehending each other's words? While musing on something, she beat a strong-weak-weak, strong-weak-weak rhythm with her gloved hand on a corner of his table. The record was playing "Vienna Waltz". Zenonas brushed his fine fair hair

from his high forehead, and then bowed down, summoning her to dance. He took her into his chubby arms, and spun her around the office. She kept catching his tender look. He was a great dancer, not once stepping on her toes.



Renata suddenly woke to the voices and music coming from the hall downstairs. She lifted her head from the sofa and threw up on the floor. Walking a bit unsteady, she found a switch near the door and turned on the light. Finding the female toilet at the end of the corridor, she took off her black ballet flats, she pulled up and straightened her stockings. Neatening her scrunched skirt with her hands, she observed herself in a mirror, wiping away smudges of her red lipstick from her perfectly shaped lips. She smoothed the cheek padding, invisible under her face mask, with her long fingers. The cotton wool padding made her nose look more proportionate. Her long, slightly bent nose provided an appropriate profile to play a witch, a swan or an ugly sister, but she favored masks, completely covering her imperfection. She checked her eye make-up for stuck-together eyelashes—all was fine. The only problem was she could hardly keep her diamond shaped blue eyes open. Puzzled, she tried to remember how she ended up asleep on the sofa. She didn't have any pain in her body, sighing with relief that the men didn't touch her. Her head pulsed a $\frac{3}{4}$ time rhythm. Involuntarily closing her eyes, she saw Zenonas lightly lifting her up in the air and sending her a kiss.

Renata never drank during rehearsals, functions, or performances. Tonight was different. She believed as an actress she had failed to move the crowd, and was thankful to Vitas and his companions for trying to cheer her up. She recalled all three of them kneeling in front of her, telling her how talented she was, and Vitas apologizing for what he'd done to her. She couldn't ask what as they were all gone. Only the scratchy noise of the needle on the record player was real.

When she walked downstairs, her head was slightly spinning. An elderly couple, sitting outside the hall entry door, were sell-

ing homebrewed vodka – distilled *samagon*. People were willing to pay 12 roubles for a half a liter bottle of unclear liquid, secured with a newspaper cork. Inside the venue, Renata observed previously stony faces bursting with joy – some singing along with the band, others drinking in small groups, those, already intoxicated, jumping on the dance floor. She spotted Vitas dancing with a young woman wearing a short blue dress, her ginger hair gathered in a ponytail, huge earrings swaying to and fro. Their bodies touched. His hands clasped her bottom. He waved to Renata, and soon joined her on stage. Spotting his black eye, she jokingly asked whether his lady punched him for leaving her alone on the dance floor. He didn't reply. Renata carefully scanned the audience under her mask, very much disappointed in not seeing Zenonas anywhere. She hoped to wish him happy New Year and to kiss his full lips.

Renata studied her program but Vitas told her not to worry about further entertainment. He said they should count till 12 as the snake year was rolling in already. Only now she realized she had slept three hours and it was nearly midnight. She took a microphone into her hand and counted the seconds. Midnight arrived and Vitas was the first to kiss her hand. Her New Year's Eve entertainment was finished. She sighed with relief. Vitas insisted they should meet at the café "Pupelė" between 4 to 6pm on Saturdays. She thought a bean was a good name for a café and easy to remember.



The following summer, 1989, Renata found a suitable dress for a hunting weekend. More than 100 hunters, mostly men, gathered in a forest near Telšiai, in the Samogitian Region. Renata dressed as a squirrel and was part of the live entertainment. She walked through the open fields, holding the corner of her white ankle-length dress with one hand, and carrying her light brown fluffy tail with another. She wore a squirrel face mask. Her slender figure and rich contra alto voice attracted a lot of attention. Some men, instead of going hunting, were following

Renata around. She received at least three invitations for a date. She never thought she was beautiful. On the contrary, her nose was a worry, but these men couldn't see beneath her mask. She dismissed the middle-aged Hunting Club Director's marriage proposal, suspecting most of these hunters were married. All good-looking and good-hearted, usually married young, and that's why she thought there was a great shortage of available men in Lithuania.

During her boring evenings spent in her rented one bedroom flat, she thought about Zenonas and his mysterious disappearance. It was always the case – good men were usually already taken, in jail, or alcoholics. But which one was he? Her thoughts drifted to Vitas sitting at his desk and analyzing the effects of manure spread on the oats or winter rye, flies buzzing around. She imagined him walking in his rubber boots around the muddy fields with his measuring tape in his hand, measuring, calculating, writing down his findings, finally taking samples of soil to his lab for scientific research. She shook herself out of such boring images. The incident on the sofa in Vitas' office never left her, but no matter how hard she tried to recollect that night, she couldn't find an explanation for falling asleep. She wasn't planning to return to Vėžaičiai to seek her answers. She hoped to meet Vitas in Klaipėda where she lived. Occasionally she went to café "Pupelė" but never saw him.



The following winter Renata decided to go to a disco with her friends. Her fox collar, wrapped around her neck, was secured with two shiny buttons imitating animal's eyes. The tail hung down loosely. She met Vitas near the entry to the dance hall and they stared at each other, momentarily surprised. In the –25 °C temperature people hurriedly passed them, pushing them aside, trying to get inside to the warm venue. Vitas' nose was red, and hers covered with a scarf across her face. As they strolled through the city center all she could think of was her nose, pulling her scarf over it, making sure it wouldn't protrude too much.

They reached the bridge and paused in the middle of it, watching the partially frozen river Dangė. Two white swans graciously swam close to shore. Oh, how she wanted to have a faithful boyfriend. Vitas pulled his coat collar up to protect his ears from the increasing wind. Renata's fox tail flew off. She started to run after it but Vitas stopped her, taking her gloved hand into his.

"Let it fly. Your fox looks alright without the tail."

"Oh. It was a present from my grandmother. Now I've lost it."

"Don't worry. I'll get you another one."

"That would be nice," she said, contemplating what to tell her grandmother.

"My uncle is a member of a hunting club. I can get a new fox for you anytime."

"That's very generous of you. You hardly know me!"

"Seems you are loving acting like animals. You are even becoming one," he teased as they continued their brisk walk through the Old Town.

"One wearing a fox fur does not become an animal," she replied.

"Maybe it's time to stop acting and settle down?"

"Why?" she looked into his round eyes, curious.

"I've been thinking of you. I've been coming to Klaipėda every third Saturday but never met you in 'Pupelė' as agreed."

"But I visit my grandmother every third Saturday of the month!"

"No wonder we couldn't meet. If not for your fox collar, I could've missed you tonight!" Vitas said, squeezing her gloved fingertips.

"I don't blame you. So much time has passed since we last met. You most probably forgot how I look."

"No, not that. When I saw the fox tail hanging from a woman's neck, I didn't look at her. I watched the tail moving in the wind, thinking of the boneless body of a snake I once met in my village."

She giggled.

"Do you always cover your face?" he asked, putting his hand around her waist. He drew her closer, gently moving her scarf

from her face, kissing her on the lips. When she opened her eyes, she heard him say he found her nose interfering with kissing. He admitted being taken aback with such an unusual nose. "I wish I was blind and didn't see it. Imagine our children walking around with Pinocchio noses?" he continued as tears slowly filled her eyes. Seeing her crying, he apologized for his inappropriate remark. She changed the subject, wanting to know what actually happened to her on the sofa in his office. Avoiding their eye-contact, he said how ironic it was that the alcohol restriction policy expired soon after she entertained the sober crowd in his village. She agreed, persisting with her question. He confessed dissolving a quarter of a sleeping pill in her drink before giving it to her. Her body stiffened, the expression on her face hardened, and she took a step back from him. He came closer, explaining how the plan was made to remove her from the venue. He assured her it was not her fault, but, invited to entertain the villagers without alcohol, she became an obstacle. Once the Head of the Local Communist Party Branch left the venue, he lured her into his office.

Listening to Vitas' unpleasant ramblings, Renata contemplated how to escape his company. They were passing a bus stop with the last passenger getting on, and she jumped in just before the door closed. She watched him running after the bus, shouting "I am sorry. I am so sorry." As he was left behind, she observed the pedestrians hurriedly walking the streets, steam coming from their mouths, some drifting-up to their eyes. She thought everybody had somewhere to go, except her. Her mother died during her birth. Renata often studied her photo, sitting on a coffee table. She was petite, had short black curly hair parted in the middle, round dark eyes, and a proportionate nose. Renata never knew her father. She was convinced he had a long nose. As she got off at the next stop, she lifted her grey scarf from her face. "One day someone special will find me and fall in love with me. He'll love me for who I am," she said quietly, walking home in the opposite direction.



Five years later, Renata was invited to Klaipėda's Cultural Centre to entertain children. She was dressed as a big rat. She brought along her four-year old son Rolandas and a three-year old daughter Laura. Rolandas wore a fox outfit and Laura was a snake. Inside their masks, cotton wool paddings were evenly spread around their cheeks. Everyone loved Renata's fairytale about a rat and her helpers who had stolen a piece of cheese from an old woman. After eating the cheese they felt guilty and decided to buy her a warm scarf. They left it under her pillow with a note "Sorry", and everybody lived happily ever after. Renata's husband, dressed as Santa, gave out presents. She spotted Vitas in the audience. A little girl with thick eye glasses was sitting on his knees. She noticed his intense gaze and was pleased that she was hidden behind her rat mask. Vitas approached, greeting her with an embrace. Learning of his casual relationship with a blind woman whom he was forced to marry due to her unexpected pregnancy, she said to him she didn't want to know him. "There is a wise saying 'be careful what you wish for.' I remember you wanted to be blind so as not to see any ugliness."

"I was so stupid mocking you about your nose. You are so much fun to be with," he whispered, trying to grab her hand which she quickly hid behind her back.

"It's too late. I've married Santa!" she pointed to the center of the hall.

"Is he a good man?" Vitas asked, turning his head towards the Christmas tree.

"He is one hundred percent better than you. By the way, you know him."

Squinting his eyes, he stared at a white-bearded Santa.

"The actor from my village?"

"Yes. Zenonas. He told me the full story of the sofa incident!"

"But I explained what happened."

"You forgot to mention how Zenonas, discovering you had mixed a sleeping tablet in my champagne, gave you a black eye!"

She watched Vitas' blushing face and laughed when he threw his hands in the air and walked away.

After the delightful afternoon came to an end, Renata saw Vitas helping his young wife stand up from her chair. Tightly holding her cane in one hand, she rested her other hand on Vitas' shoulder. Her look-alike daughter, in a white tutu dress was jumping in front of them. Renata stretched her long rat's tail and reclined on the stage, her children running around her. Santa joined them. He took a green army truck from his red bag, and Rolandas started playing with his new toy. Laura, holding her new doll to her chest, crawled into the Santa's bag. Still in her snake costume, she started wiggling her flexible body out of it.

22/12/2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS. The author wishes to thank Janina Adelhardt and Nimity James for valuable comments, advice, and moral support.

Two Essays

LIUTAUROS DEGĖSYS

The Point's Bliss

To make a choice is quite easy. It's a bit harder when, in choosing some things, you need to give up others. It's unpleasant when in life it's constantly necessary to make choices: to be silent or to act. To curse or to sing. Nations, countries and people have to make choices: to be antagonistic or to be friendly. With whom to join hands. It's a pity that it's not possible to join hands with everyone. There are not enough hands to go around. When you are interlocked with someone, you can't embrace the others. If only you could choose one and the other: money and honor; travel and comfort; freedom and responsibility. Of course, there are times when it turns out not too badly: you can choose pancakes with bacon bits and with sour cream and with butter; cognac and champagne; whiskey and beer. Catholicism and yoga. The Feasts of *Žolinės* and the Assumption. The posts of minister and deputy.

It is even easier to be constantly choosing and yet not making a choice. Some people go around choosing all their lives but not deciding, and are forever in the process of choosing. Oh, that can be fun. It seems that everything is still ahead of you. For instance, a person just can't decide – to give up drinking or not,

LIUTAUROS DEGĖSYS (born 1953) is a Doctor of Philosophy, a poet and an essayist. He is an author of eight books of poetry for children and adults, and has also published several collections of essays as well as text books on citizenship for Lithuania's schools of higher education. He teaches philosophy at the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences.

and while dealing with this dilemma, he continues drinking his entire life. Some people just don't have the strength needed to make a choice: is it worth emigrating to England – and so constantly go driving in the wrong direction, in the left lane, where they meet those who had made the decision to live in Lithuania going in the right lane. Some people choose and can't decide what is more important – freedom or equality. Others don't know what to do with their freedom and while they are undecided, they are taking away freedom from others. Others love their women so madly, that they are often educating them with a fist. Helping them choose. For their own good. Because women don't know what they want.

But easiest of all is – to make no choice at all. When you choose not to choose, you can do as you please. And to remember that you chose not to choose, you have to constantly repeat that same little mantra made up of three sentences: "I am not responsible for anything", "there is no choice", and "see, what they have done to me."

About half a year ago you frightened yourself in the bathroom. So you told yourself: "I am fat, and out of shape. I do not like this body. I need to do something." And then you remembered that you have no free time either today or tomorrow and so decided: "Well, maybe that belly does not look all that bad. Maybe I won't do much of anything just yet. I'll wait a half year and see what develops." Then after half a year when you again examine yourself in the bathroom, you immediately notice what you have done to your body when you chose not to do anything: when you did not go into training, did not exercise, did not concern yourself. You become discouraged, disgusted, horrified at your figure. You want to find excuses, explain yourself, and comfort yourself. You want to shout "This is not my doing. See, what they have done to me?" You look around – there is no one else in the bathroom. No one did anything to you. You created this body yourself, when you chose not to do anything. You became covered in lard and fat.

Simplicity is always desirable. Maybe even recommended for simple uncomplicated people and spouses. Oh, those simple people. They know how to simplify things beautifully for themselves. The complicated ones appear to be unnecessarily complicated – they could be so much simpler. But for some reason they are unwilling or maybe unable. Complicated people see multiple possibilities, hundreds of variations of reality and worst of all, they realize that in choosing one variant, they have to renounce all other alternative choices. On the other hand, the simple people seem to be almost praying: don't complicate my life, don't see into something any more than there is or appears to be. Don't search for unseen possibilities. Live more simply. Don't desire more. They know that those who have fewer visions of reality, have fewer chances to be disappointed when they renounce those dreams. But what is most important is that the fewer possibilities that a person sees, the easier it is for him to agree on everything with another of similar inclination – one who sees things in the same way. When they both choose, they have fewer alternative choices to discard, because those alternatives almost don't exist, and therefore there is nothing to regret. It is even easier for those people, if in their opinion, there is only one true understanding of reality. The right opinion. Conviction. Point of view. Some simple, clear, and easily understood "philosophy of life", which allows them to understand things simply. One that helps to simplify things such as – life, morality, and love. So that it would be clearer and easier to make a choice.

That world, of course, is simplified only in the minds of those people. But it is easy for such people to find others who understand things in the same fashion. How beautifully, how closely and how tightly they are united by their same, boring, even grey lives. The same common experiences. Easily understood thoughts and banal ideas. And many people are even more strongly united by similar idiocies. Two idiots understand each other from a mere glance, from a few words. As, if you have had a similar idiotic experiences in childhood – such as torturing a frog with

a friend, or burning down the grass with all the bugs and birds. If you went through the machismo training in the army, and later inflicted similar lessons on the younger recruits – you will always have something to remember and to exchange with others' similar unfading experiences and fond memories. If from the start you had hated something without any reason, or if you had a very firm opinion about nothing. If you understood that "in this modern art there is nothing to understand." If you went through a protracted and ugly divorce with your wife, or learned how to drive from a crazy low-life instructor who cursed and yelled and slapped your hands. If, say, after you went fishing and still had not taken out your fishing rods and, say, after three days were still floating around drunk in a canoe, and can't recall any of it. Those type of experiences are priceless – they connect and equalize people for life.

O that sweet feeling of having made the correct choice. When that single vision (no matter how stupid or simple) coincides with the other person's only truth, they both experience the power of the moment, the closeness of hearts, the unity of souls. The bliss of that singular truth. They hear what they want to hear. They know that they know. They understand things in the same way immediately, at the same time. They can almost fall in love with each other. He who has only one correct point of view can meld with the other thinker's only point of view. More complicated points, let's say composed of several points, could not be compacted and meld with the other point on all possible points. But on their one and only point they can blend into each other so much as to lose themselves in each other. Let's wish them good fortune and a long and correct way of life.

Oh, that bliss of the only true and correct point of view. Oh those trials of the straight path. Oh those problems of winding paths....

Let's do some nagging

I don't know, I truly don't know, I'm just trying to imagine what would appear in my brain if the media downloaded everything that it could into my lovely head. Lovely – say, if I would have been an attractive young woman. I wonder if then I would be infatuated with all that tabloid gossip about evening parties; with all that emphasis on the body and the cult of eternal youth, with all those unavoidable advertisements about health, all those cosmetics ads and advice regarding erotica. Would I walk around on the street waiting to be invited to some talk show, or would I harbor delusions that I will be invited soon to take part in a beauty contest. Would I dream of becoming a model? Would I drag myself around to nightclubs waiting to be asked to dance, and then straight to the altar – by a foreigner, and necessarily a millionaire. Would I be really pleased if someone praised my bottom, my hair, legs, fingernails, or even some more intimate body parts. Would I feel triumphant if I were judged to be first-rate, a healthy piece of meat with no problems. A young woman, a woman, a lucky find. And maybe that young man of my dreams would certainly be a lucky find for me as well.

To become infatuated and to infatuate is fun and also a necessity. To each his own – but personally, it would be pleasant if someone in the bedroom, with just the two of us there alone – would embrace me and would praise my long legs, my posture, my hands. That she would say that I smell good. Let's be honest: we are attracted to those who are attracted to us. How lovely are those two in the street gazing at each other with those intoxicated eyes and adoring glances. Those that are in love lack nothing and that makes them perfect. I can even imagine a young man, snuggled up against another and whispering to him: "I like the hair in your nose. You are so tall, and when I look up at you from below – that is so sexy." I can imagine it, and would pay no attention if that were to happen in the Acropolis toilets, in the cubicle next to mine – whatever. But if someone shouted loudly in the street, "Hey you, I like your nose hairs, the way

they curl today” – immediately I would punch him, maybe not directly in the nose. And not because of some special orientation. Just purely for harassment. A lout has neither a special orientation nor sexual identity.

For some reason it seems to me that a public discussion of a woman’s body is not an act of admiration, but of derision or simply harassment. I am not talking about a simple vulgar person that you can generally meet in places like a store’s entryway where he will follow you with a demeaning look and with an ugly smile and will spew out something to the effect: “Hey, you four-eyes, why did you leave your boobs at home. Why don’t you wear them every day.”

But even all types of public praises of women’s bodies seem to me to be of that type. Maybe it’s just my imagination, but even those praises sometime sound to me like derisions. Just listen attentively if someone is praising your figure, hair, hairstyle, your legs, fingers and thighs. He says: Your lips are sensitive. You have a lovely athletic figure. You have lost weight. You look unwell. That dress really reveals your curves. Don’t you sometime feel like you have ended up in some butcher’s shop who is about to sell his wares: “Sir, if you please, a lovely morsel, a tasty bite. A bone, some muscle, with a bit of fat. Where did you ever see, sir, that spareribs would be without any fat. Take it – you won’t regret it.”

It is not only diamond photographers and masters that photoshop wedding pictures that exist in this world. I have seen how a meat photographer – a professional who is preparing pictures of meat for the supermarket ads works: how the meat is colored, varnished, sprayed so it will shine and glow, that it will look tasty and pleasing to the eye. Maybe that is why the contests for the prettiest Miss often appear to me to be similar to a contest for the prettiest hams, shoulders or thighs. In a crowd of the barely clad – all prepared, decked out, sexual appetite arousing meat pavilion.

I don’t know how the contestants for the crown feel about this: maybe simply totally natural and fine – when the judges

are salivating, and undressing them in their minds. When they examine them on film or in their imaginations. When they erase everything in them that is human, unique or nonstandard. Even what is feminine. Because what is important here is not the person, and certainly not even the woman. What is important is to reduce that creature to its functions and make her look comfortable, not irritating to oneself or others – to make her a doll that would not complicate their lives. With three pleasure slots, as indicated in the very special ads.

For some reason it is not often that one hears that some young man (opposite to a woman) is irritating rather than inarticulate. That he is hysterical, rather than energetic. That he is a trouble-maker, a liar, a loser, without any taste or imagination. You will never hear that he is a drunkard, rather that he loves wine. That he has no concept about what he is doing (even though he really doesn't). I keep hearing how he's not a bad sort, and when you listen closely, it sounds more like he is a good sort. It's always possible to hear all sorts of explanations, excuses, embellishments and sad stories about why he did what he did: that he did not have the time, that he watched basketball on TV. Even his bad health is attributed to much more serious reasons, rather than to menstruation. For instance, probably caused by bad beer... On the other hand, when someone on some rare occasion may praise a woman's brains, they always seem somewhat surprised: "Just imagine, she really thought this out logically. Seemed like a real dunce, but just look, unexpectedly, unconsciously and totally accidentally – she was inspired by a good idea. Well, a woman's brain – well." Or, also, if they should give praise, then it's for some function: she can take care of her duties, she is efficient, conscientious, or simply, routinely, she is boringly hard-working. However, about their male superiors, who had not shown up for work in over a week, you can hear a forgiving, understanding explanation: "had a few drinks". That so respectfully and with compassion and love the coworkers would respond regarding a female bookkeeper that drank for two days, I have not had the opportunity to hear.

It is strange, but as it never happened, so the habit is not there – of admiring the legs of passing guys or their hairstyles and to appreciatively whistle at them. Or to accost old people – also not very interesting. They have been made fun of so often, that a few more insults won't make any difference. This country long ago has made them accustomed to being old: to have nothing and to want nothing. Everyone who is able makes fun of them. For instance, in a hospital they say: "What is it that you want, grandfather. You are old and unwell. We won't be able to help you. We only take care of the healthy and the young." There is no joy in making fun of the old man. But to make fun of a woman – well, that is fun. To make fun – while praising her. While commenting on her accessories, clothes, hair, legs, her sexiness. "You look stunning today." Taking her apart bone by bone. Dressing and undressing her in your mind. Checking over her body, apart from her humanity. Those are the traditions – she is a woman. And a woman, as everyone knows, is composed of make-up, nails, bust, legs and hair. Yikes, I forgot – also her butt. All these details may be presented, studied, and evaluated separately. We can stress subtly, that not everything is always okay in all places. Keeping quiet about the ears. Well, there are the earrings for comment. About the lips one can say – great lipstick. A few words about the dress – which appears too revealing. Also praise for the necklace, as you can't hide the neck.

And so, those young women have only two options: either they belong to someone – to that muscular guy who says "she is mine – and you will not discuss her here," or poor things – they don't belong to anyone. That they are their own, that never enters anyone's mind. And if she is nobody's, she immediately becomes the object for checking out and evaluation, an auction item, meat. She is now booty. She can be judged, talked about, harassed, gazed at, and mentally undressed. Ordinarily maybe for you she is unnecessary: there are plenty of women at home. But with those girls – it's like with mushrooms; at home there are plenty of marinated ones sitting on the shelf for three years, but if you find one on the trail – how can you pass it by without

picking it. You can't just leave it. And the girl is like a mushroom: she is nobody's, just standing there in the street, free, and appears that she wants to be evaluated. And how is one not to whistle at her, or to invite her to a talk show, or to a Miss contest. Well, and how not to undress her – if only in the imagination. How not to smack your greasy lips. Moreover, you know: if you praise her hair and her cute haircut – she will definitely not smack your ears. If, while passing by, you should grab her with your wet greasy hands – it's guaranteed she will not call a policeman. She will be disgusted, but she will not make a scene. In a tight trolleybus, you will press against her and get a hard-on. And then no one will prevent you from giving her a compliment, it does not matter what kind – about her eyes or her ears. And she – she might even like it. She will think – aha, he likes me, so maybe someone else may like me too. You don't need her, maybe you don't even like her. But she – she is the weak link. She – she is not her own. She – she is nobody's – and therefore can be maybe yours...

For an ending, I will attach here an anecdote. I borrowed it from Facebook. It is not the anecdote that is important here, but the fact that no one finds it amusing. There are jokes that are funny for women about men, and those for men about women. The ones about blondes are funny for everyone, even for blondes. But, as a social experiment, I have told this joke to various groups of men – and none of my friends liked it. It is strange but, even my friends' women friends did not like it. So, here goes:

In the evening, a couple is sitting by a television or a computer – a guy and a girl. The guy says: let's watch something funny this evening. The girl happily agrees: sure – we can watch you do sit-ups. So there. For some reason even I don't find it amusing.

BOOK REVIEWS

In The Captivity of the Matrix: Soviet Lithuanian Historiography, 1944–1985. Written by Dr. Aurimas Švedas. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014. 280 pages. ISBN: 978-90-420-3911-7.

A nation's history is vital to its sense of self. It is the lens through which a society views its place in the world. But what if that history had to be written within the sociopolitical boundaries set by Joseph Stalin's Soviet Union, where "ideological mistakes" carried the harshest of consequences? Dr. Aurimas Švedas provides a comprehensive analysis of how Lithuanian historians walked that tightrope in the English translation of his book *In the Captivity of the Matrix: Soviet Lithuanian Historiography, 1944–1985*. The title refers to the 1999 movie "The Matrix", in which the main characters, seeking to expose the lies imposed on their society, rebel against a false perception of reality imposed by totalitarian overlords.

Švedas begins by reminding readers that the writing of Lithuania's history has always been a political act. The growth of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the emotionally and politically complicated union with Poland, and certainly Lithuania's incorporation into the Russian Empire ensured that politics entered any attempt to untangle the narrative of Lithuania's history. But Švedas argues that Lithuanian history as it was written from 1918 to 1940 was especially important in crystalizing the historical idea of Lithuania as it is known today. Works released during this period gave Lithuanians a sense of national identity after

decades in which their history had been written by Russians, Poles, and others. This sense of national identity was precisely what the Soviet occupation of Lithuania sought to stamp out, with mixed results. It persisted among Lithuanian communities outside the USSR and smoldered underground within Lithuania itself, where it reignited in the late 1980s.

Disseminating Soviet ideology was the foremost priority for Soviet historians, especially early in the USSR's history. Communist leaders charged these so called "warrior historians" with discovering historical justifications for the Communist Party's contemporary policies. The First Secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party (LCP) explicitly stated in 1957 that "We need to extract what is necessary for the socialist state from our cultural heritage." This mandate to ensure ideological purity forced the authors of academic historical works to navigate many layers of review and censorship ahead of publication, including occasionally by the LCP itself. The KGB maintained files on many of the leading historians and took note not just of "ideological mistakes," but also of any lack of enthusiasm in advancing Marxism-Leninism. Neither could historians simply avoid hot-button topics, though many deliberately chose to specialize in such fields as medieval history to try to minimize the politicization of their work. An oversight committee explicitly stated in 1946 that "research science cannot be apolitical," meaning that all research had to stem from Communist thought. Some of the most common "sins" researchers were accused of were: objectivism (focusing on the facts while passing up opportunities to apply Marxist theories), pandering to the West, and idealizing the (pre-Soviet) past. Any hint of nationalism in a historian's work was considered a serious infraction.

In addition, all social scientists, including historians, had to meet "production" quotas, much as factory workers or coal miners did. Švedas tells the story of an anthropology researcher who felt compelled to stand up during a staff meeting and proclaim in somber tones that he would not only meet this year's quota of collected oral folklore but exceed it.

Švedas notes that most Lithuanian historians viewed the socialist paradigm as a tool that had been imposed on them, rather than as a new and useful theory they could use to analyze historical events. Therefore, they generally did not apply Communist theories to their fullest potential, even in cases where the ideas of class struggle may have contributed to a greater understanding of Lithuanian history. Fully exploring the limits of socialist theories also carried the risk of inadvertently straying from the party line. Inserting a few token quotes from Lenin into every academic paper was a safer option.

Paradoxically, the Soviet academic system provided a measure of academic freedom. Soviet censors would not approve fawning works that amounted to caricature, though some academics did try to curry favor by writing glowing manuscripts extolling the virtues of the current system. Officials responsible for approving the publication of historians' writings insisted on academic rigor and did allow some room for debate among Soviet historians. Soviet education administrators sought to demonstrate that academic work in the USSR was at least equal to that being produced in the West. They knew that blatant propaganda posing as a journal article would be met with scorn by the outside world.

The conditions under which Lithuanian historians worked changed little throughout the Soviet period. Stalin's death in 1953 did not usher in any noticeable openness in the writing of Lithuanian history, nor did the rules under which historians operated change until the national political revival of the mid and late 1980's. Švedas concludes with a brief description of the state of Lithuanian historiography after the nation regained its independence in 1990. He notes that independence has allowed Lithuanian historians to begin to examine the Soviet period, but that much more work remains to be done. Independence has also brought a renewed focus on the country's relationship with Europe throughout history. Some academics have advanced the idea that Lithuanian history is the story of the nation's thousand year struggle to adapt to Western Europe despite its geographic distance and while encountering pressure from Russia in the east.

Švedas has written a comprehensive, extensively researched book. His impressive list of sources includes internal Communist Party memos, the personal diaries of several Soviet-era Lithuanian historians, the minutes of meetings of Vilnius University's Faculty of History, and KGB files on their activities. His background in collecting oral histories is evident in the many probing interviews with former Soviet-era academics, which add color to the narrative. They will be of value to anyone with an interest in daily life in the former USSR. This is an academic book intended for an academic audience. But anyone wishing to conduct further research on Soviet Lithuanian historiography, the Soviet education system, or the tension between ideology and scientific research in authoritarian societies will also find a treasure trove of useful material here.

JONAS VAICIKONIS

The views and opinions expressed herein by the reviewer do not represent the policies or position of the U.S. Department of Defense and are the sole responsibility of the author.

ABSTRACTS

RIČARDAS ŽIČKUS

Public Bus Transportation in Polish-occupied Vilnius

The history of public bus transportation began in Germany in 1895. In Lithuania the first buses began to run in 1907, on the route from Druskininkai to the Porečė Train Station (now in Belarus), and in 1908, on the route from Jelgava (Latvia) to Šiauliai. The first automobile in Vilnius appeared in 1903, and the first bus began running from the Cathedral to Verkiai in 1909. There were several attempts to begin passenger transportation in the city before the First World War, but they were not very successful. After the First World War, life in the city began to stabilize, and the need for public transportation increased. The municipal government of Vilnius decided to address this need by granting concessions for bus transportation. The history of public transportation in Vilnius during the interwar years can be divided into three stages. The article examines the first two stages: from 1924 to 1932 and from 1932 to 1939. The third stage was very short but complicated. Its examination exceeds the bounds of this article.

ALMANTAS SAMALAVIČIUS

The Versailles of Vilnius: *Sic transit gloria mundi*

The article discusses how an impressive seventeenth century baroque urban complex, ambitiously called the Antakalnis Versailles by art historians, came into being alongside Vilnius. Reviewing the historical particulars of the suburb's architecture and

its baroque legacy, the author shows that its nickname is neither the creation of a nostalgic imagination nor an empty and provincial ambition. The unique ensemble of suburban residences really was built by magnates of the Lithuanian Grand Duchy in emulation of the traditions of the European baroque period. Although it experienced only a short period of glory, this impressive and artistically valuable architectural ensemble is an unequivocally meaningful expression of baroque culture's urbanization and artistic processes in Vilnius.

LIST OF DONORS

JANUARY 1, 2016 TO DECEMBER 31, 2016

\$2,000

Lithuanian Foundation, Inc.

\$1,000

Donatas Januta

\$550

M. & A. Vygantas

\$200 to \$499

Jonas Dovydenas, M. & E. Gedgaudas, Peter & Terri Mikuzis, Teodoras Skirgaila, Robert Stansky, Audronė & Arvydas Tamulis, Kazys Varnelis

\$100 to \$199

John Bačanskas, Berenika A. Cipkus, John R. Dainauskas, Gintaras Dargis, Vytautas & Eglė Dudėnas, Algimantas & Lucia Garsys, Goddard Graves, Julius Jusinskas Jr., Lilia Kiaušas-Sollish, V. Victor Lapatinskas, Bert Laurence, Albinas Markevičius, Nijole Martinaityte-Nelson, Marija A. Meškauskas, Jerome J. Norton, Alphonse J. Palaima, Arvydas Paulikas, K. & J. Petrauskas, Vidmantas Raišys, Irena Raulinaitis, Rimantas Rukštelė, Dalia Tal-lat-Kelpša, Audronė Užgiris, Elona & Juozas Vaišnys, Joseph Vizgirda, Paul Yakaitis, James R. Yankaskas, Carol Yaster, Al Zolynas

\$50 to \$99

Dalia N. Armonas, Stanley Balzekas, Irena Blekys, Reda & Petras Blekys, G. & S. Damašius, John & Agatha Dancy, Joseph A. Daubėnas, Mary Daugėla, Albert M. Drukteinis, Zita Halka, John &

Marija Hauser, Dalia Jakas, Palmira A. Janušonis, Danute Janu-
ta, Jonas Karaška, Dalia Kern, Stephen J. Klemawesch, Birutė
Kliore, Asta Kraskouskas, Aldona Kudirka, Gita & Aidas Kup-
cinskas, Arvydas Mackevičius, Regina & Julius Matonis, John
Michuta, Richard A. Mikaliūnas, Paul C. Mileris, Marija New-
som, Elizabeth Novickas, Sophie Oželis-Blumenfeld, Judy Pel-
lett, A. & D. Polikaitis, Pijus Stoncius, Ada E. Sutkus, Vytautas
Šliūpas, Vytas Švalbonas, Birutė & Kęstutis Tautvydas, Dalia &
Martynas Trakis, Vytas Vaitkus, Laima P. Vanderstoep, Dalius
Vasys, Aldona Venk-Venkūnas

\$25 to \$49

Algis F. Alantas, Rima Aukštikalnis-Cibas, Regina Bacanskas,
Aldona & Stasys Bačkaitis, Rimvyda Baipšys, Nick Baltis, A. Balt-
rušaitis, I. Bertulytė-Bray, Danguole Bielskus, Susan & Paul Bin-
kis Jr., R. & D. Bitėnas-Kavaliūnas, Nijolė Bražėnas-Paronetto,
John V. Cernius, Rimas Cernius, Rūta Daugėla, Ona Daugirdas,
Gerald L. Edson, Melvin Fitting, Ray Gayauskas, Genovaitė &
Vytautas Gedminas, Aleksandras Gedmintas, Robert Harrison,
T.E. Janeliūnas, Alfred Kachergis, A. Stephen Kalinsky, Douglas
Komer, Gražina & Romualdas Kriaučiūnas, Ramune Kubiliunas,
John W. Kuncas, Theresa & Algimantas Landsbergis, David La-
pinski, Michael P. Lukas, Dr. & Mrs A. Marchertas, Gediminas
Margaitis, Robert G. Mazeika, Evelina Mickevičius, Algis Mic-
kūnas, Daiva Miller, Rita Durickas Moore, Robert C. Novak,
Gerald L.M. Pechukitis-Parks, Rose Galinis Reeder, Aldona Re-
kašius, Paul Rizauckas, Richard Saudis, Viktorija Skrupskelytė,
Liudas K. Slenys, Ruta Staniulis, Algis Strimaitis, Antanas Su-
žiedėlis, Nijolė Šmulkstys, Jurgis Štuopis, Peter S. Titas, A. &
V. Valavičius, Roman Vanagunas, Henrieta Vepštas, V. L. Virbic-
kas, Robert Wayne Wallace, Edmundas Zeikus, Jonas Zubinas

\$24 and under

Marius Ambrose, Andrejs Baidins, Laima Baltrenas, John P. Bal-
trus, Arvydas Barzdukas, Ramunė Bernotas-Shubert, Ramunas
Bigelis, Erika D. Brooks, Aldona Buntinas, Albert J. Contons,

Ruth Daukus, E.D. Davidenas, Rimas & Pranute Domanskis, Birutė Fleck, Rūta Hoffa, Saulius Jameikis, Rita Juskaitis, Joseph Kalvaitis, L. Eve Karnitis, Aleksandra Kasuba, Rūta Kazakaitis, Kestutis A. Keblys, Zivile Khoury, Ramūnas Kondratas, James Kunigenas & Donna Jeker, Alec Kuzmeskas, James & Irena Lalak, Šarūnas Landys, Julius Lapkus, Henrikas Laucius, Richard W. Leigh, Birute Lintakas, Victoria Matranga, John D. McManus, Kestutis Nakas, Regina Narusis, Aldona M. Olson, Maria Paskevicius, Francis Petrauskas, S. & I. Petravicius, John Rejeris, Theodore & Ritonė Rudaitis, Dalia Saulys, V. Sernas, Regina D. Setikas, Algis Sirvaitis, Birute Skurdenis, Juliann Skurdenis, Thomas Sodaitis, Tomas Sperauskas, Aldona Stark, Thomas Stemmy, Gintarė Šileika-Everett, Al Totilas, Ann Marie & Joseph Ugianskis, Richard A. Uronis, Kestutis Valaitis, Delija Valiukėnas, Algirdas Valius, Bronius Vaškelis, Maria K. Vygantas, Raymond Winkus, Genevieve A. Yeager, Regina & Eugene Ziurys, Roman Zorska, Antanina R. Žmuidzinas

LITUANUS

47 West Polk Street, Suite 100-300

Chicago, IL 60605-2000

www.lituanus.org



Dubuque Bridge. An art project by Lithuanian-American-Finnish artist Christian Narkiewicz-Laine

MOVING?

We need your old as well as your new address, to correct our records.

FRONT COVER: Gediminas' Hill and the Roof of the Rulers' Palace in Vilnius

Photo by Almantas Samalavičius