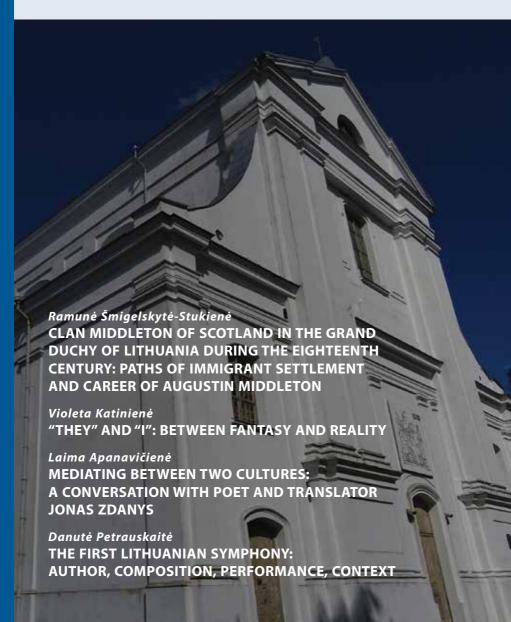
# LITUANUS

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## LITUANUS

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#### Clan Middleton of Scotland in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania During the Eighteenth Century: Paths of Immigrant Settlement and Career of Augustin Middleton

RAMUNĖ ŠMIGELSKYTĖ-STUKIENĖ

#### Introduction

Immigrants from Scotland and their descendants who chose the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as their new homeland and settled here gradually in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century were known as good traders, bankers, and soldiers. The majority of the large Scottish community in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (hereinafter the Commonwealth), whose number of members was about 5,000–7,000 or even 30,000 in the second half of the seventeenth century, were traders. In the Kingdom of Poland, the community of Scottish merchants in

In the view of Bajer, as well as Ayre, who is citing him, the Scottish population in Poland and Lithuania was about 5,000–7,000. See Bajer, Scots in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 147; Ayre, The Scottish Community in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, 12. According to the data of Kowalski and Žirgulis, the number is much larger and could be about 30,000 or even 50,000. See Kowalski, "The Placement of Urbanised Scots in the Polish Crown during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," 56; Žirgulis, "The Scottish community in Kėdainiai ca. 1630–1750," 225–245.

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Gdansk was particularly prominent; meanwhile, in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, until the early eighteenth century, Scottish traders thrived in Kėdainiai, occupying dominant positions in the city and holding memberships in the city administration.<sup>2</sup> Among the Scottish bankers prominent in the entire Commonwealth was Peter Ferguson-Tepper (1732–1794), who became not only a large-scale businessman and founder of manufactories but also a land-owner.<sup>3</sup>

After moving to Poland or Lithuania, descendants of Scottish nobility traditionally chose the path of a military career, which was typical for their caste. The works of Peter Paul Bajer, a researcher of the Scots' migration, revealed that the vast majority of Scots who received the affirmation of nobility (*indygenat*) or nobilitation in the Commonwealth were soldiers. Military career allowed them to not only retain the status of nobility but also earn money, acquire land, marry a bride of the appropriate social status, and also strengthen one's prestige and positions in the estate-based society.<sup>4</sup>

Another frequently chosen career path of foreigners in the Commonwealth was service in a manor of influential magnates. In the seventeenth century, most Scottish immigrants in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were primarily working in the lands of the Radvila (Radziwiłł) dukes, who supported the Reformation. However, while the largest number of nobilitations in the seventeenth century were awarded to Protestants arriving from Scotland, Scottish Roman Catholics started dominating from as early as the start of the eighteenth century. Naturally, as Catholics were improving their positions in the political sphere of Poland and Lithuania, the numbers of Scottish immigrants who had converted to Catholicism were growing as well. Simultane-

Žirgulis, "The Scottish community in Kėdainiai ca. 1630–1750," 236.

Bajer, Scots in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 318.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ibid., 325.

Žirgulis, "The Scottish community in Kėdainiai ca. 1630–1750", 225–245; Murdoch, "Scotland: The Making and Unmaking of the Nation c. 1100–1707," 126–144.

ously, the marriages to local Catholic women became more frequent and the process of the Scots' assimilation was accelerating.<sup>6</sup>

After settling down in Poland or Lithuania, with support from their patrons – influential noblemen – the Scottish-origin nobles, who were gradually beginning to assimilate with the local nobility, became actively involved in the local political life, both receiving the titular duties and occupying actual positions in the nobility's municipal and judicial institutions. A great testament to this process is the consistent settlement of the Scottish noblemen Middletons (written in the sources as Midleton, Middelton, Mittelton, Mittelton, Mittelton, Medaleton, Metelton), who came to Lithuania in the early 1710s, in the voivodeships of Trakai and, partially, Vilnius. After becoming the clients of the Radvila dukes, Middletons and their first-generation descendants consistently climbed the career ladder, both receiving the titular duties as well as occupying actual positions in the local political elite.

In the last decades of the eighteenth century, especially favourable career opportunities for both the local noblemen as well as the immigrants were created by the state governance reform initiated by the King Stanisław August and by the establishment of new institutions. Even though the relations between the patron and the client were still binding in the society, and patronages and sponsorships played an important role, the acquired education, command of foreign languages, receptivity to new ideas, and consistent pursuit of the established goals became some of the guarantees of a successful nobleman career. The king's court faction formed by Stanisław August, which gathered loyal supporters in all voivodeships and powiats, became the starting point for many representatives of the medium and even small nobility. One such example was the career of the Kaunas Court

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Bajer, "Scotsmen and the Polish nobility from the sixteenth to eighteenth century," 329–354.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Urzędnicy Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego. Spisy, t. II: Województwo trockie, 619; Urzędnicy Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego. Spisy, t. I: Województwo wileńskie, 688; Šmigelskytė-Stukienė, "Politinės ir geopolitinės Augustino Middletono refleksijos," 269, etc.

subprefect, deputy to the Supreme Tribunal of Lithuania Augustin Middleton, which extended far beyond the borders of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania at the end of the eighteenth century.

The story of the Middleton family's settlement in Poland and Lithuania, like the activities of Augustin Middleton, has still not been analysed in-depth, though in certain aspects this individual has been mentioned in the works dedicated to the history of the Commonwealth's diplomacy. Diplomacy historian Stefan Meller discussed the activities of Augustin Middleton, the secretary and, later, resident of the Commonwealth's diplomatic representation in The Hague, during the final years of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's existence. Scholars of the history of the press Hanna Krauze and Jerzy Łojek highlighted Middleton's contribution to the propaganda of the Four-Year Sejm's (1788–1792) reforms in the newspapers of Harlem and Leiden, while the author of this article analysed Middleton's ideological views based on the surviving correspondence.

Taking into account the extent of research on the issue, this article will review the involvement of the Middleton family in the activities of state institutions in Lithuania during the mid-eighteenth century and its second half, with special focus on the career of Augustin Middleton as a civil servant. The third aspect of the study is the problem of the Scottish-origin nobleman's self-identification, which we will strive to expose using the analysis of Augustin Middleton's letters.

The sources of the research are the documents that reveal the origin, wealth and activities of the Middleton family in Lithuania during the second half of the eighteenth century: records in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Michalski, "Dyplomacja Polska w latach 1764–1795," 677, 687–688.

Meller, Les relations politiques entre la Pologne et les Pays-Bas, 75–131; Meller, "Middleton Augustyn (zm. 1797)," 721–722.

Krauze, "Polska inspiracja prasowa w Holandii w latach 1791–1794," 49–69; Łojek, Polska inspiracja prasowa w Holandii i Niemczech w czasach Stanisława Augusta, 267.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Šmigelskytė-Stukienė, "Politinės ir geopolitinės Augustino Middletono refleksijos," 269–293.

Church's parish register books, acts on the acquisition or transfer of real estate, notes on debt, bills of exchange, testaments and other documents. The most important resource in the surviving correspondence are the manuscripts that reveal the years of Middleton's diplomatic service: the reports sent to Stanisław August and the Sejm's Deputation of Foreign Affairs (later the Department of Foreign Affairs), instructions addressed to Middleton by the King and the Deputation (Department) of Foreign Affairs, and letters by other persons. The analysis also used the documents of the representation in The Hague and Middletons' letters to the Radvila dukes

### Middletons in the Local Elite of Lithuania: Connections, Contacts, Careers

The currently available data of the sources does not make it possible to provide a consistent history of the Scottish immigrant family known as the Middletons. It is established that one of the first Middletons to appear in the Commonwealth was the Lieutenant-General John Middleton (ca. 1608–1674), the emissary of the King Charles II of England, Scotland, and Ireland who was sent on a mission to the Kingdom of Poland in 1656.12 The Scottish-origin protestants who had received the Commonwealth's indygenat and were mentioned in the historiography include Patrick (Patrycjusz) Middleton, an infantry officer and Presbyterian who became a full-fledged noble of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1768, and his two sons, Bogusław and Aleksander.<sup>13</sup> In the historiography, Patrick Middleton is hypothetically associated with the Kaunas Powiat's nobleman Middleton by claims that the former could have been Augustin's father or uncle.14

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Biegańska, "The Learned Scots in Poland," 10–27.

Bajer, Scots in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 315, 326, 482, 506.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Meller, "Middleton Augustyn (zm. 1797)," 720.

Direct ties between Patrick and Augustin Middleton are called into question by the data provided by Michael Broun on five members of the Middleton family who were already a part of the Evangelical Reformed Church community in Kėdainiai during the first decades of the eighteenth century: Marian, who arrived in Kėdainiai in 1711; Augustin, who visited Kėdainiai in the same year and, according to records, in 1721–1722; Pawel and Andrzej Middleton, who were involved in the Kėdainiai Reformed Church community during 1724–1726, and Anna Middleton, who was recorded in the Church's books in 1730.<sup>15</sup>

A close inspection of the Register of the Holy Communion at the Kėdainiai Evangelical Reformed Church made it possible to correct the year of the first record of Middletons in Kėdainiai: in December of 1710, Augustin Middleton participated in the Christmas service together with other members of the community. Nevertheless, we currently cannot answer the question regarding the family ties between Augustin Middleton who was referenced in Kėdainiai in 1710 (and was born in the late seventeenth century) and his namesake who worked at a diplomatic office and died in 1797; we also cannot pinpoint the exact date when Middletons converted to Catholicism. We can only presume that, sometime in the 1730s, in order to join the political life in the Commonwealth, members of the Middleton family who were settled in Lithuania selected the Catholic faith as one which provided such opportunities.

The surviving correspondence in the archive of Radvila dukes indicates that the Scottish Middleton family were clients of this magnate family in the first half of the eighteenth century and gradually became involved in the public life of the local nobility. Piotr Pawel Middleton, vicegerent of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's Carver (*krajczy* in Polish) Martynas Mikalojus Radvila (Marcin Mikołaj Radziwiłł) in Biržai, tended to not just the economic affairs of the domain but also to the organisation of sejmiks

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Ayre, The Scottish Community in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, 329.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Act of Holy Communion, 1710, LVIA, f. 606, ap.1, b. 145, l. 200 v.

in the Ukmergė Powiat.<sup>17</sup> Evidently, the protection provided by Radvila family allowed the Middletons to strive for stronger status in the powiat's hierarchy of duties: from 1738 until 1762, Piotr Pawel occupied the position of the Ukmergė Powiat's guard (*strażnik* in Polish),<sup>18</sup> and in 1766 he was nominated by the King to assume the duty of food carver in the Upytė Powiat.<sup>19</sup>

The economic status of an immigrant was improved by successful marriage: in ca. 1750, Piotr Pawel Middleton married a local noblewoman - wealthy widow Teklė Boratinskaitė Bortkevičienė (Tekla z Borotynskich Bortkiewiczowa Middletonowa).<sup>20</sup> With the bride's agreement, the couple signed over all of their real estate to one another. Thus, Piotr Pawel Middleton significantly increased the number of owned properties, and the patrimonial Kurkliai Manor in the Ukmergė Powiat was supplemented by his wife's holdings: the manors of Kapliai (Šilingiškės) and Normainiai as well as a land holding near Kaunas along with all goods belonging to those holdings; however, he also became involved in long legal disputes with Kotryna, his wife's daughter from her first marriage, and her husband Dominykas Bogušas (Dominink Bohusz).<sup>21</sup> After a marriage of just three years (Teklė Middleton died in 1753), Piotr Pawel married Mariana Kordineraitė (Marianna Kordynerówna) in 1759.22 After burying his second wife in 1777, he got married for a third time. Middle-

Letter by P.P. Middleton to M.M. Radziwill, Ustukiai, 1742-03-09, AGAD, AR, dz. V, 9604, 1–1 v; Letter by P.P. Middleton to M.M. Radziwill, Biržai, 1746-03-23, Biržai, AGAD, AR, dz. V, 9604, l. 59–60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Urzędnicy, I, 504.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Urzędnicy, II, 470.

Decree by the Supreme Tribunal of Lithuania in the case regarding Kapliai Manor, 7 September 1753, Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, Manuscript Department (hereinafter LNMMB), Juozas Daugirdas' collection of historical acts. II, b. 1151, l. 1–12.

Document of mutual agreement between Piotr Pawel and Teklė Boratinskaitė-Bortkevičienė Middleton, 28 May 1751, LNMMB, Juozas Daugirdas' collection of historical acts; II: locations of powiats of Kaunas, Ukmergė, Upytė and others, No. 1148; Middletons' writ to daughter Kotryna Bortkevičiūtė (Katarzyna Bortkiewiczowna) and Dominykas Bogušas (Bohusz), 28 July 1752, Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> *Urzędnicy*, I, 504.

ton's new spouse was Joana Medekšaitė (Johanna z Mekekszów Middletonowa), a representative of the Medekša (Medeksza) family, which was influential in the Upytė Powiat. She gave birth to Middleton's sole descendant and heir: son Adam Middleton.<sup>23</sup>

The established social status among the local nobility and the support from the local political elite are evidenced by the fact that, in a sejmik in 1765, Piotr Pawel Middleton was elected a deputy of Upytė Powiat to the Supreme Tribunal of Lithuania - the highest judicial institution of Lithuania.<sup>24</sup> The close relationship he established with the Court of King Stanisław August is demonstrated by his will, which called for Benediktas Karpis (Benedykt Karp), the standard-bearer and influential leader of the king's faction in the Upytė Powiat, to be appointed the guardian of his wife and underage son. Relations with the powiat's elite are implied by the appointment of the powiat's land court's judges Juozapas Staševskis (Józef Staszewski) and Mykolas Daukša (Michał Dowksza) as the executors of the will.<sup>25</sup> Piotr Pawel met the sunset of his life at the Pajuodžiai Manor, where he was taken care of by his third wife. He wished to be buried in the Old Panevėžys Parish Church, without any funereal pomp, only after a Holy Mass; he allocated 50 Polish złoty to the priests who were to conduct the mass. In his will, Piotr Pawel left 200 złoty to the Old Panevėžys Parish Church and 50 złoty to the Pumpėnai Church.<sup>26</sup>

Meanwhile, Piotr Pawel' brother Andrzej had a career in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania which followed the military service path: the typical one for Scottish immigrants. He climbed the career ladder in the military from the rank of a captain of his royal grace<sup>27</sup> to the adjutant general of the Grand Mace regiment

The will of Piotr Pawel Middleton, 12 March 1779, Book of Acts of Upytė Castle, LVIA, f. SA, b. 15223, l. 1067–1068v.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Deputaci Trybunału, 284.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> The will of Piotr Pawel Middleton, 1067–1068v.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Ibid.

On 7 February 1763, Andrzej Middleton signed the protest against illegal election in the Kaunas Powiat's sejmik as captain of H.R.G., Akta sejmiku kowieńskiego z lat 1733–1795, 151.

in the army of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. After receiving his share for the patrimonial Kurkliai manor as money from his brother, Andrzej's Middleton gradually joined the ranks of the clients of the Prozor, an influential family in the Kaunas Powiat. He married a noblewoman of local origin: Elena Sarniščiūtė (Helena z Sarniszców Miteltonowa); however, the dowry brought by the bride did not improve his wealth. With permission from King August III, Mayor of the Military of Lithuania Józef Prozor transferred Kižiai, also known as Kiev and located in Kaunas Powiat, to Captain Andrzej Mitelton (this is how his surname is written in the document) and his wife Elena on 13 November 1754. Thus, in the mid-eighteenth century, Middletons became nobles of Kaunas Powiat – managers of Kižiai Eldership.

It is likely that the main hero of this research, Augustin Middleton, was Andrzej' son. He also started his career in the military of Grand Duchy of Lithuania: from May of 1774 until March of 1781, he was a lieutenant of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regimen of the Military of Lithuania but did not perform any actual military duties.<sup>31</sup> Broader horizons of activity opened up for Augustin in the legal institutions: in May of 1779, he was nominated by the King as a scribe of the Kaunas Powiat Castle Court and worked in this position for five years.<sup>32</sup> In 1783, with support from both the King and the Vilnius Voivode Karolis Stanislovas Radvila (Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł), he sought to become the treasurer of the Spiritual Tribunal of Lithuania. In the same year, actively supported by the local elder Mykolas Pacas (Michał Pac) in the

Instructions of Kaunas Powiat's sejmik for delegates to the Convocation Sejm dated 6 February 1764, *Akta sejmiku kowieńskiego z lat 1733–1795*, 160; 1764-05-04 Act of Accession to the Confederation. Ibid., 513.

Document of mutual agreement between Piotr Pawel Middleton and Teklė Boratinskaitė Bortkevičienė Middleton, 28 May 1751.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> AGAD, f. Zbiór z Muzeum Narodowego, 1/391/0/-/0551.

Machynia, Rakutis, Srzednicki, Oficerowie wojska Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego, 390.

<sup>32</sup> Urzędnicy, II, 392.

Kaunas Powiat's sejmik, Augustin Middleton was elected as a deputy to the Supreme Tribunal of Lithuania.<sup>33</sup> Augustin was re-elected to this highest judicial institution of Lithuania once again in February of 1787. This time he represented the emigrants of the Smolensk Voivodeship.<sup>34</sup>

Middleton earned the reputation of a wise and competent court official; he was hired by influential persons as a lawyer and attorney in various court cases. For instance, in the autumn of 1782, he was authorised to represent the interests of Jokūbas Nagurskis (Jakub Nagurski), the colonel general and chamberlain of the Samogitia Duchy, during litigation against the Kiewnarsky nobles in the Land Court of Raseiniai of the Samogitia Duchy.<sup>35</sup> The Scottish-origin nobleman met the expectations of the political elite: in 1786–1790, he was already in the position of the Subprefect (*podstarosta* in Polish) of Kaunas Powiat.

Both of Augustin' brothers, Ignaty and Nikodem, also sought careers in the legal field. Ignaty Middleton, guard of the Kaunas Powiat, worked in the Office of the Supreme Tribunal of Lithuania from 1773 until death in 1783, where he occupied the position of regent. Nikodem Middleton, the Rittmeister of Smolensk Voivodeship's *exsulants* (exile nobles) and, later, of Kaunas Powiat, was elected as deputy of Starodub *exsulants* to the Supreme Tribunal of Lithuania in February of 1785. In 1790, he became a scribe at the Kaunas Powiat Castle Court, thus continuing his brother Augustin' activities in this judicial institution. During the Four-Year Sejm, Nikodem got actively involved in the creation of new local administrative institutions and became civil military

Jusupović, Prowincjonalna elita litewska, 302. See also: the authorization of Augustin Middleton and Antanas Blinstrubas (Antoni Blinstrub) as deputies on 6 February 1783, LVIA, f. SA, b. 13718, l. 85–88.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Deputaci Trybunału, 359, 376.

Report by Middleton about the defendants missing an appearance in a scheduled hearing, 10 October 1782, collections of Šiauliai "Aušra" Museum, documents of Manors' Archive, f. GEK 79738, 348.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Stankevič, Lietuvos Vyriausiojo Tribunolo veikla XVIII amžiaus antroje pusėje, 187.

<sup>37</sup> Deputaci Trybunału, 368.

commissioner of Prienai Powiat.<sup>38</sup> In the uprising of 1794, he fought bravely as mayor general for the country's independence.<sup>39</sup>

Of the three brothers, the highest career position was reached by Augustin: in March of 1790, after Sejm's ruling regarding re-establishment of diplomatic legation in the Netherlands, he was appointed as the secretary of legation in The Hague. In 1791, Middleton was granted the office of the legation's *chargé d'affaires*, and in August 1791 he was nominated as resident of the representation in The Hague. Augustin Middleton ended his diplomatic career on 9 February 1795, when, after the third partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the diplomatic representation in The Hague was removed as well.<sup>40</sup>

The career jump from local level to international waters was impacted not just by the relations with the Prozor faction, which was close to King Stanisław August, but also the personal qualities and qualifications of Augustin himself. Even though we do not have precise knowledge of Middleton's early years and education, we can conclude from the surviving manuscripts that Middleton not only had a good command of the law and the practices of the court, but also spoke and wrote fluent French, was well read, informed about the political writings of the time, and acquainted with the works of Jean Jacques Rousseau, Mirabeau and other authors of the Enlightenment, as he not only cited them but also debated their assessments. In his youth, Augustin Middleton borrowed books for self-education from the Prozor Library.<sup>41</sup> The career success was also helped by the fact that Middleton was an active freemason - we found his name in the list of pupils of Vilnius Masonic Lodge in 1781.42

Middleton had close connections not just with the Prozor family, but also with other supporters of Stanisław August within the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Akta sejmiku kowieńskiego z lat 1733–1795, 502.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Šmigelskytė-Stukienė, "Politinės ir geopolitinės Augustino Middletono refleksijos," 272, 274.

Meller, Les relations politiques entre la Pologne et les Pays-Bas, 126.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Meller, "Middleton Augustyn (zm. 1797)," 720.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Małachowski-Łempicki, 13.

Grand Duchy of Lithuania: Antanas Tyzenhauzas (Antoni Tyzenhauz), Mykolas Pacas, and Pranciškus Jelskis (Franciszek Jelski). In the words of Bishop Juozapas Kazimieras Kosakovskis (Józef Kazimierz Kossakowski), there even was a faction of "conspirators" in Kaunas Powiat, which included Tomas Vavžeckis (Wawrzecki), Mykolas Pacas, Petras Zaviša (Zawisza), Karolis Mejeris (Mejer) and Augustin Middleton. When seeking support for his goals, Middleton tried to exploit all opportunities, sometimes even circumventing his influential patrons: for instance, in 1782, hoping to become Kaunas Powiat's delegate to the Sejm, he wrote to Stanisław August personally, but did not receive a response at that time. Still, he did manage to gain the king's trust and support. This is confirmed by Stanisław August's letters to Middleton that were written during the final years of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as well as after its dissolution.

#### **Difficulties in Improving Economic Status**

In 1775, the Sejm granted Augustin Middleton a 50-year emphyteutic right to the Kižiai Elderate of the Kaunas Powiat, thus consolidating the Middletons' economic status in the powiat. This is how Stanisław August expressed his gratitude to the Middletons for their support of the king's faction during the organization of sejmiks in 1773 and 1774.46 The management of Kižiai Elderate was taken over by Ignaty Middleton, who added the title of Kižiai Elder to the documents under his name.47 Augustin Middleton's own personal property included the Vilūnai folwark (grange) acquired by the right of inherited property from Kaunas Elder Mykolas Pacas for 9,000 Polish złoty along with Sobuva village in Kaunas Powiat, as well as all of their appur-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Pamiętniki Józefa Kossakowskiego biskupa inflanckiego, 176.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Jusupović, Prowincjonalna elita litewska, 301.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Meller, Les relations politiques entre la Pologne et les Pays-Bas, 121–131.

 $<sup>^{46}</sup>$  Meller, "Middleton Augustyn (zm. 1797)," 722.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Akta sejmiku kowieńskiego z lat 1733–1795, 281 and others.

tenance: the manor's residential and utility buildings, brewery, arable lands, meadows, forests, a group of forests, some rivers and lakes (Rivulet Viekšnia, Vilūnai Lake, and Bebrynė Lakelet), and serfs. Augustin was ushered in to these lands on 30 August 1788. However, along with land property, the Kaunas Subprefect also acquired some new problems: in 1787, Pacas had mortgaged the Vilūnai folwark to Ignotas and Viktorija Vaicekauskas (Wojciechowscy). This mortgage had not been redeemed, so the Vaicekauskas' inheritors started laying claims. In February of 1790, Augustin gave away half of his folwark and village to his brother Nikodem, the addition of the brother to the manor's management did not solve his problems.

The brothers' financial situation was not good: they were ridden by debt and rising interest on taken loans. Augustin Middleton's bills of exchange surviving in the archive attest to the shortage of cash and constant borrowing. For example, in July of 1778, Augustin Middleton borrowed 84 ducats from Lida treasurer Valentas Goreckis (Walenty Gorecki).<sup>52</sup> A few years later, he borrowed 172 Polish złoty from the Vilijampolė rabbi Mozė Isakovičius Soloveičikas (Mosze Isakowicz Soloweyczyk), pledging to return them "as soon as possible"<sup>53</sup>; however, he still had not returned the debt by 1782, even though he borrowed an additional 80 ducats from the same rabbi, promising to return

Extract from Vilūnai folwark sale contract in the Book of Smolensk Voivodeship Land Acts, 24 June 1788, LMAVB RS, f. 198-436.

Document of Middleton's ushering into Vilūnai folwark, 30 August 1788, LMABV RS, F198-421, 3-4; Register of Documents of Vilūnai Folwark in Kaunas Powiat, LMABV RS, F198-447, 5.

Description of the process and outcomes of the case of Kaunas Castle Court judge Sopocka vs Kaunas subprefect Augustin Middleton, LMABV RS, F198-453, l. 1.

 $<sup>^{51}\,</sup>$  The act of the transfer of Vilūnai folwark and Sobuva village to Nikodem Middleton, 20 February 1790, LMAVB RS, f. 122-77, 1.

Middleton's bill of exchange to Treasurer of Lida Walenty Gorecki, 9 July 1778, LMAVB RS, f. 198-421, 1.

Middleton's note of debt to Vilijampolė rabbi, 30 May 1780, LMAVB RS, f. 198-422, 1.

the debt before 1 August the same year.<sup>54</sup> In 1786–1787, he borrowed a total of 96 ducats from Norbert Podolecki over two occasions, while his debt to the Jew Mejer Moyzeszowicz by that time amounted to 1,252 Polish złoty. Augustin Middleton owed 18 ducats to the Prienai Parish Priest Narbutas (Narbutt) and 97 ducats to Vilnius merchants Karol Schwartz and Ambrozy Lindner (for unpaid purchases in 1788).<sup>55</sup> He also borrowed a total of 96 ducats from Liudvikas (Ludwik) Sopocka over two occasions,<sup>56</sup> etc.

Augustin Middleton's debt to the former patron Karol Prozor amounted to 4,304 Polish złoty (in 1789, the debt was 3,931 złoty; the interest was 453). Because of this debt, Prozor went to court and won the case. However, none of the debt was paid.<sup>57</sup> In early December of 1794, Nikodem took over Augustin's commitments to pay the debt on his part related to the Vilūnai folwark,<sup>58</sup> but this failed to solve the financial issues. The rising debt in Lithuania was also accompanied by Augustin Middleton's debt to merchants and bankers of the Netherlands during his career as a diplomatic service officer.

#### Challenges of Diplomatic Career

Middleton was appointed to diplomatic service at the legation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the United Provinces of the Netherlands by the initiative of King Stanisław August,

Middleton's note of debt to Vilijampolė rabbi, 26 March 1782, Ibid., 1.

Complaint by Vilnius merchant Karol Szwarc and his companion Ambrozy Lintner regarding the unreturned debt by Kaunas subprefect Augustin Middleton, 20 September 1794, LMAVB RS, f. 198-174, 1-2; Description of the process and outcomes of the case of Kaunas Castle Court judge Sopocka vs Kaunas subprefect Middleton, LMAVB RS, F198-453, 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Podolecki's obligation to Sopocka, 27 October 1797, LMAVB RS, F198-436, 24.

Description of the process and outcomes of the case of Kaunas Castle Court judge Sopocka vs Kaunas subprefect Middleton, LMABV RS, F198-453, 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Register of Documents of Vilūnai Folwark, LMABV RS, F198-447, 5.

as his agent. The goals set for the diplomatic service officer included promotion of the Four-Year Sejm's reforms in the foreign press, forming a positive view in the Western European society about the changes in Poland and Lithuania, in addition to informing the King's Cabinet about the activities of the envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary Mykolas Kleopas Oginskis (Michal Kleofas Oginski). Thanks to favourable circumstances, Augustin Middleton reached the rank of the legation's resident, but the horizons of his diplomatic activity were limited by financial capabilities.

The Commonwealth's diplomatic legation in The Hague started working on 18 July 1790; however, in December of the same year, Oginskis departed to Great Britain to continue negotiations regarding a trading contract. In the summer of 1791, due to complications in his personal situation related to the oath to Russia, Oginskis resigned from his position as a diplomat and did not return to The Hague. All affairs at the diplomatic representation were taken over by Middleton. Until July of 1791, he worked in the position of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's *chargé d'affaires*; in the August of the same year, he was nominated as The Hague legation's resident.<sup>59</sup>

After taking the reins of the legation, Middleton had to also achieve the goals that were set for Oginskis: i.e. to acquire a financial loan for the Commonwealth and the King and to develop the country's trade. <sup>60</sup> Thus, alongside explanations of the laws passed by the Sejm in the foreign press, French translations of the Sejm's rulings and comments by the Sejm's members, as well as preparations of reports to newspapers in The Hague, Amsterdam, and Leiden, Middleton also received tasks related to obtaining credit for the Commonwealth. <sup>61</sup> Starting from late 1790, he alone managed the entire documentation sent by the Treasury

Meller, Les relations politiques entre la Pologne et les Pays-Bas, 49; Meller, "Middleton Augustyn (zm. 1797)," 721.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Šmigelskytė-Stukienė, "Politinės ir geopolitinės Augustino Middletono refleksijos," 269–293.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Jerzy Michalski, Dyplomacja Polska w latach 1764–1795, 677.

Commission of the Kingdom of Poland regarding obtainment of new loans. <sup>62</sup> By maintaining continuous contact with bankers in Amsterdam, Middleton delved into the issues of crediting and analysed the functioning of the loan and interest system. <sup>63</sup>

Working as the legation's secretary and resident, the Kaunas Powiat's nobleman took an active interest in the work of foreign diplomatic representations as well as the official and private comments made by foreign diplomats and other servants of the embassies. However, since his social status restricted the range of his contacts, he often had to fall back on information received from third parties. Middleton was most concerned about the threat from Russia. For instance, on 27 December 1791 he reported that, in a conversation with a foreign emissary, a Russian diplomat supposedly emphasised that "for Poland, 20,000 Moskals would be enough to conquer all of it," while the foreign emissary replied that foreign countries cannot agree with the current Constitution because "a Republic is disappearing, which is turning into a Monarchy."64 Middleton hoped that, after receiving a new credit of six million from the Hopes' bank, Russia would spend that money on wars far away from Poland's territories. And if the other two countries (i.e. Prussia and Austria author's note) do not support Russia's intentions to occupy France, Catherine II's plans will not come to fruition.65

Middleton was shocked by the news about Russia's military intervention in the Commonwealth and the creation of the confederation, which reached Amsterdam and The Hague in the early summer of 1792. After the confederates settled in the country and Stanisław August swore allegiance to Targowica,

Middleton's letter to secretary of the king's cabinet Pius Kiciński, The Hague, 17 December 1790, AGAD, f. Zbiór Popielów, 22, 5.

Middleton's report to Stanisław August, The Hague, 17 December 1791, Ibid., 111–111v; Hanna Krauze, op. cit., p. 64–65.

Middleton's letter to Kiciński, The Hague, 27 December 1791, Ibid., 116; Hanna Krauze, op. cit., p. 65.

Middleton's letter to Kiciński, The Hague, 27 December 1791, AGAD, f. Zbiór Popielów, 22, 116.

in a letter to the king written on 21 September 1792, a resident of the diplomatic legation complained that it was hard for him to fulfil the duties of the defender of the Commonwealth's interests entrusted to him, because "it has now become clear to everyone that Your Royal Majesty's joining of the confederation has fundamentally changed the previously existing system and interior set-up".66

The work in the embassy was hampered by health issues. In March of 1791, while apologizing for the infrequency of sent letters, a servant of the diplomatic representation griped that he is alone and saddled with work, while a hand twisted by rheumatism makes it "hard [for him] to take care of the embassy, write, copy, and cipher".<sup>67</sup> Six months later he requested an assistant because he was suffering from a chronic bout of rheumatism which handicapped the fulfilment of the assigned duties.<sup>68</sup>

As a member of the caste of nobles who had little land, Middleton basically subsisted only on the salary he received; as a result, he sought for this state "service" to be paid, as it was determined by law. The requests sent to Warsaw bore fruit: in early 1791, the Sejm's Deputation of Foreign Affairs increased Middleton's salary from 10,800 Polish złoty to 1,200 ducats (21,600 Polish złoty). However, these funds were far from sufficient. He had to move out from the residence rented out by Oginskis and find a smaller home. The Commonwealth's legation in The Hague was transferred to a little house with "two rooms and a small office, also, with a stable for two horses". <sup>69</sup> In September of 1792, even though the money had been allocated, Middleton still complained that he had not received any remittance with the salary allocated to him, and he had run out of all cash long ago. <sup>70</sup>

Middleton's letter to Stanisław August, The Hague, 21 September 1792, Ibid., 211–212.

Middleton's letter to Kiciński, The Hague, 19 March 1791, Ibid., 10–11.

Middleton's report to Stanisław August, The Hague, 20 September 1791, Ibid., 80v.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Middleton's letter to Kiciński, The Hague, 2 September 1791, Ibid., 53–54.

Middleton's letter to Kiciński, The Hague, 9 September 1791, Ibid., 66–67.

#### The Issue of Homeland and Identity

The analysis of the correspondence during The Hague period makes it possible to identify Middleton's worldview, which reveals the identity of an officer of a diplomatic embassy as well as his orientation of values. Based on the sources, we can claim that Middleton considered his homeland to be the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which he usually called "Poland" in his letters, though he considered himself to be a Lithuanian (Litwin in Polish).<sup>71</sup> In reports and letters, he always remembered to note that he was "working diligently for the good of the homeland". None of the letters mention his familial roots, which extend far beyond the borders of Poland and Lithuania. Presumably, this behaviour was related not just to the important position entrusted to him, but also to his personal identification with a country in which his parents settled. The satisfaction in the "improving situation of our homeland" expressed in the letters was sincere. For instance, in June of 1791, while sending French newspapers to Warsaw, Middleton pointed out that one of them even "drew parallels between our revolution and France's, and [those parallels] were not unfavourable to us"72. Moreover, Middleton was angered by the emerging criticisms of reforms in Poland and articles in the foreign press which distorted the true situation.

Middleton's political views reflected the goals declared by Stanisław August's court faction: to build a strong, thriving monarchy, in the hopes that the state will manage "to recapture its honourable past". The Kaunas Subprefect supported constitutional monarchy, inherited throne, regulation of Sejm's and sejmiks' activities, granting of political rights to city residents, and economic development. Agreeing with H.G. Riqueti de Mirabeau's ideas regarding constitutional monarchy, he hoped to see

Middleton's letter to Stanisław August, The Hague, 3 November 1791, Ibid., 105.

Middleton's letter to Kiciński, The Hague, 21 June 1791, Ibid., 18.

Middleton's letter to Kiciński, The Hague, 17 December 1790, Ibid., 4v–5.

this kind of system, which granted stability of governance, introduced in his own country.<sup>74</sup>

Taking pride in the Constitution adopted in the Sejm on 3 May 1791, Middleton was delighted that the changes in his country were widely recognised in all of Europe.<sup>75</sup> However, while supporting the idea of state consolidation, he disagreed with the restricting of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's rights within the united country. Middleton was particularly pleased about the news of "Lithuania's union with the crown", i.e. the Mutual Pledge of the Two Nations of 20 October 1791, which entrenched equal representation of Lithuania in the central state institutions.<sup>76</sup>

It is evident from correspondence that Middleton was most well-informed about the political realities of Lithuania, the connections and relationships between factions of the nobility. Middleton was delighted when news reached the Netherlands about successful implementation of the Law on Governance (the Constitution of 3 May) and the rather quiet sejmiks in Poland and Lithuania during February 1792. He was proud of the results in the powiats of Kaunas and Prienai, where his own "brothers, relatives and friends" participated in the sejmiks. He congratulated his associates for the civil spirit they demonstrated while swearing in for the Constitution of May 3<sup>rd</sup>.<sup>77</sup>

Middleton thought of himself as a cosmopolite,<sup>78</sup> and an important part of his worldview was the issue of religious tolerance. For him, the right to freely practice one's faith and not be restricted because of it was a fundamental one. These views were likely related to personal experience, because the issue of tolerance is discussed very heatedly in his letters. The Kaunas Sub-

Middleton's letter to Kiciński, The Hague, 27 May 1791, Ibid., 14v-15.

Middleton's letter to Kiciński, The Hague, 29 October 1791, Ibid., 103–103v; Hanna Krauze, op. cit., 63.

Middleton's letter to Stanisław August, The Hague, 3 November 1791, AGAD, f. Zbiór Popielów, 22, 105.

Middleton's letter to Kiciński, The Hague, 10 March 1792, AGAD, f. Zbiór Popielów, 22, 181–182.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Middleton's letter to Kiciński, The Hague, 21 June 1791, Ibid., 18.

prefect was angered by the accusations levelled at Poland for persecution of adherents of other faiths and for a supposedly prevalent intolerance towards Orthodox and Protestant Christians in the country. In response to yet another attack in the press regarding persecution of dissidents, the nobleman of Kaunas Powiat explained:

When foreign countries are presented as examples of tolerance, I must share my personal experience. May our dissidents not sin against God, nowhere is tolerance as commendable as it is in Poland. I request those who cite this [i.e. those who accuse Poland of intolerance – author's note] to come to the Netherlands, where not only is the Catholic service restricted and marriages have to take place in the town hall, but also a Catholic cannot even work as a night watchman or a butler. [...] That's tolerance for you [...].<sup>79</sup>

Middleton performed the duties of emissary-resident until the last days of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's existence. After the diplomatic legation was closed, he remained in The Hague. He could not depart because of debt to the creditors, which amounted to 5,000 ducats of the Netherlands. Only in March of 1796, with surety given by Denmark's emissary Herman Schubart, Middleton was granted the right to depart. In the spring of 1796, he moved to Hamburg; from there, he went to Denmark-ruled Altona. Here he received an acknowledgement of his efforts: the Order of Saint Stanislaus granted to him by Stanisław August and dated 1794 as well as financial support from the former monarch: 200 ducats. Supported by Denmark's diplomat Schubart, Middleton spent the summer of 1796 in Copenhagen. He planned to return to Lithuania, though Stanisław August had recommended and insisted for him to work in Denmark instead.<sup>80</sup> The deliberations about the future were cut short by his death. The nobleman of the Kaunas Powiat and a diplomat of a destroyed country died on 8 January 1797 in Altona. He was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Middleton's letter to Kiciński, The Hague, 19 March 1791, Ibid., 10–10v.

Meller, Les relations politiques entre la Pologne et les Pays-Bas, 130.

unmarried. He did not leave any descendants. Funeral expenses were covered by Stanisław August.<sup>81</sup>

The payment of Augustin Middleton's debts, which amounted to the total of 530 ducats and 11,774.17 Polish złoty, was taken care of by his brother Nikodem, who was already the Chairman of the Kaunas Powiat Court at the time.<sup>82</sup> After inheriting Augustin' sole possessions – the Sobuva village, serfs, and half of Vilūnai folwark – Nikodem sold these properties for 25,000 Polish złoty to Vincentas Dobžanskis (Wincenty Dobrzanski), the treasury officer of Lithuania. The buyer assumed the obligations to cover all of Middleton's debts related to these holdings.<sup>83</sup>

#### **Conclusions**

The history of the Scottish-origin nobles Middletons in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania during the eighteenth century reflected the typical path of immigrant identification and assimilation with the local nobility. One of two paths was taken when settling in the new homeland: by serving in the administration of influential nobles' manors, performing their various assignments and eventually earning the patronage for duties in the local elite, or by joining the military. When new state institutions were being established during the last decades of the eighteenth century, the gentry gained more career opportunities in civil service. One of the guarantees of a successful career in the eighteenth century was the conversion to Catholic faith.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, members of the Middleton family gradually put down roots in the powiats of

<sup>81</sup> Meller, "Middleton (Middleton) Augustyn," 722.

Description of the process of the case of Kaunas Castle Court judge Sopocka vs Kaunas subprefect Middleton, 1797, LMAVB RS, f.198-453, l. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> Documents of the sale of Vilūnai folwark and Sobuva village, 4 August 1797, LMAVB RS, F198-436, 22–23.

Ukmergė, Upytė, and Kaunas. Middletons were the most actively involved in the life of the Kaunas Powiat's nobility, by joining the activities of King Stanisław August's faction. Three members of this family worked in judicial institutions for many years, and only one Middleton – the Kaunas Subprefect Augustin – had a career outside the boundaries of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. After becoming a servant in the diplomatic corps of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Augustin Middleton contributed to the improvement of its image in the foreign press as well as to the procurement of funds for the Commonwealth from the banks of Amsterdam; however, the possibilities of his diplomatic activity were restricted by his social status and financial situation.

The salary received for a career in state institutions was not sufficient to achieve economic prosperity. Augustin Middleton's example demonstrates the complexity of the civil servants' situation and life on credit in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the late eighteenth century.

The descendants of the second-generation Scottish immigrants Middletons, who were born in their fathers' marriages with the noblewomen of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and gained their education in Lithuania, assimilated with the local nobility and became a part of this society, while simultaneously taking over the goals fundamental for this society, namely the aim of the preservation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's rights within the united Commonwealth.

Augustin Middleton's proclaimed ideas of religious tolerance, cosmopolitan perspective towards cooperation between countries and nations, and active interest in the political and social reformations taking place in Europe, all reflected in anonymous polemical articles about the revolution published in the foreign press, have elevated the Kaunas Powiat's noble Augustin Middleton to the circle of undiscovered people who lived in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania during the Enlightenment era.

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Translated by MARTYNAS GEDVILA

#### "They" and "I": Between Fantasy and Reality

#### VIOLETA KATINIENĖ

The writers Ričardas Gavelis (1950–2002) and Wolfgang Hilbig (1941–2007) share in common the mutual experience of a totalitarian system. While Gavelis wrote "for the drawer" and Hilbig's works were severely censored by the GDR, yet their works are among the clearest examples of critical attitudes regarding the communist regime. This article attempts to reveal the intertwining and overlapping in the two famous novels of the two authors (Ričardas Gavelis' *Vilniaus Pokeris* (1989) and Wolfgang Hilbig's "*Ich*" (1993)) which reflect Lithuania's and East Germany's past in both thematic and metaphoric planes.

Gavelis can be considered as one of the most original, critical, and conceptual of Lithuanian prose writers of the late Soviet and post-Soviet periods. In the book *Naujausioji lietuvių literatūra* (Newest Lithuanian Literature) (2003), it is emphasized that the prose writer, dramatist and publicist Gavelis is the strongest critic of totalitarianism in Lithuanian literature. Jūratė Čerškutė has made similar comments about this author, calling him the most consistent writer on this theme among Lithuanian writers.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Cf. Bukelienė et al., "1950-ųjų kartos prozininkai," 147.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Cf. Čerškutė, "Apie Juos," 422.

The novels by this author Jauno žmogaus memuarai (Young Person's Memoirs, 1989), the trilogy Vilniaus pokeris (Vilnius Poker, 1989), Vilniaus džiazas (Vilnius Jazz, 1993), Paskutinioji žemės žmonių karta (Earth's Last Human Generation, 1995), and others are noted, according to Violeta Kelertienė, for their harsh criticism of the Soviet era and clear portrayal of the consequences of communism during the postcolonial decade that followed.3 Almantas Samalavičius notes that Gavelis is "perhaps the first who attempted to make sense conceptually of the Soviet experience"4 and calls him "one of the most perceptive analysts of Lithuanian society." Albertas Zalatorius cites the author's creative legacy due to its original structures as "constructs born out of mind and erudition."6 In Gavelis' analytical observation, the socialist utopia becomes a dangerous, grotesque, but a recognizable world. This author's experimentation with conceptual prose and the themes in his works (the imagery of the Soviet period, the shadow of the KGB) open the possibility for comparison with the works of Hilbig who wrote on like themes.

"To read Wolfgang Hilbig," writes Jens Loescher in the monograph *Mythos, Macht und Kellersprache*<sup>7</sup> "means to enter into a new world. On the one hand, few of the writers of the now historic GDR make the same impression with the exceptional language possibilities – the combination of poetical beauty and baroque descriptiveness, while on the other hand, there are few authors of that covered epoch who would so sharply and with such vehemence carry out last judgment on that once very pretentious project called the GDR." In the words of Wal-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Cf. Kelertienė, *Kita vertus...*, 239.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Samalavičius, Kaita ir tęstinumas, 51.

 $<sup>^{5}~</sup>$  Samalavičius, "Postkolonijinė literatūra," 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Zalatorius, Literatūra ir laisvė, 101.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Loescher, Myths, Power and Basement Language, 2003.

Bid., 11: "Wolfgang Hilbig lesen, bedeutet Neuland betreten. Kaum ein Autor der nunmehr historischen DDR beeindruckt so durch Kombination von poetischer Schönheit, barocker Bildlichkeit, fulminantem Sprachvermögen auf der einen Seite; rar sind die Autoren dieser zunächst überschaubaren

ter Schmitz, this author in his texts "provides an unmasking mirror" to societies both in the East and the West. Kurt Dravert, Ingo Schulze and others talk about the masterful ability of the author to depict the atmosphere of the late GDR period. Though he was unable to publish his works for a long time, the author's biographer, Karen Lohse, compares him to Franz Kafka and E.T.A. Hoffman because of the entangled fantasy and reality found in the novel and the chills which both entice and frighten. Therefore, that which is real in his creations obtain fantastic, frightening characteristics, while the imaginary appears realistic — thus internal experiences overlap with the external world and allow us a view into the most secret corners of the self.

The comparative method chosen to examine the novels reveals an interlingual, cross cultural dialogue, and allows one to view these novels as "interferential works" in which international, intellectual, and historical aspects interweave:<sup>13</sup>

First of all, from a transcultural perspective, literary texts and creations are not taken only as representative of a certain linguistic and/or national culture and as such representatives compared with each other, but they are seen as individual interferential works formed in their aesthetic coding media, as examples and organisms of interstitial space, which occurs since cultures

Epoche, die andererseits mit einer solchen Schärfe und Wut ein jüngstes Gericht über das einstmals mit hohen Ansprüchen gestartete Projekt namens DDR abhalten."

- 9 Schmitz, "Gottesabwesenheit?" 13: "[...] hält [...] einen entlarvenden "Spiegel" vor."
- <sup>10</sup> Cf. Drawert, "Der Gefangene"; Schulze, "Der Ort".
- None of the East Germany publishing houses published his works while he lived in GDR. In 1979, in the West Germany the first publication by Hilbig appeared a compilation of poems *abwesenheit.gedichte* (absence.poems). Searching for his readers, the author emigrated to the FRG in 1985.
- 12 Cf. Lohse, Wolfgang Hilbig, 7; Schulze, "Der Ort," 78. Also, Walter Schmitz and other researches notice intertextual references to Franz Kafka in Hilbig's works. (Cf. Schmitz, "Gottesabwesenheit?")
- <sup>13</sup> Cf. Noll, "Interkulturelle Lektüren," 142–43; Leskovec, Einführung, 12.

cannot be holistically considered as entities, but can be interpreted as places where various experiences, ways of being and codes intercept.<sup>14</sup>

The interstitial space to which Werner Noll refers in the above citation is not to be understood as a space which exists among cultures. It is that space in which cultures meet and communicate and in which they are established. This interstitial space does not separate cultures, it cannot exist of itself – it is that sort of space that binds cultures, and in the words of the poet Schirin Nowrousian, it can be both "laughter" and "sorrow". <sup>15</sup> And this article will attempt to bring attention to these culture binding moments, found in the novels chosen for this study.

Gavelis's novel, *Vilnius Poker* which appeared in 1989, is one of the first works fundamentally critical of the Soviet time period and its consequences for Lithuania. It is a polyphonic narrative (histories of four characters – Vytautas Vargalis, Martynas Poška, Stefanija Monkevičiūtė, and Gediminas Riauba) revolving around two main novel's centers Vilnius and Lolita. An important character (or characters) in the novel is "*They*" – the shadow of the Soviet system, embodied in the "kanuks" or life's energy sucking forces, "the dirty city pigeons," cockroaches, and other unpleasant creatures. <sup>16</sup> By bringing into the Lithuanian language the term *homo lithuanicus*, Gavelis reveals in the *Vilnius Poker* the problematics of the Soviet system's affected identities.

Noll, "Interkulturelle Lektüren," 142–43: "Zunächst werden in einer interkulturellen Perspektive literarische Texte bzw. Werke nicht mehr lediglich als Repräsentanten einer bestimmten Sprach- und/oder Nationalkultur aufgefasst und als diese Repräsentanten zueinander in Vergleich gesetzt, sondern sie erscheinen als individuell im Medium ästhetischer Codierungen gestaltete Werke der Interferenz, als Beispiele und Organismen eines Zwischenraums, der sich gerade daraus ergibt, dass Kulturen nicht als holistisch zu denkende Entitäten aufgefasst, sondern als Schnittmengen unterschiedlichster Erfahrungsräume, Handlungsmuster und Codes [...], interpretiert werden können."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Nowrousian, "Was es," 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Cf. Gavelis, Vilniaus pokeris, 54–55.

In the year 1993 Hilbig ensured his place in the history of German literature with his novel "*Ich*" (I).<sup>17</sup> It is, as the author noted in one of his interviews, his least autobiographical novel.<sup>18</sup> The fact that this novel is pure fiction Hilbig also asserts at the end of the novel: "Resemblance to real persons are accidental and not intentional from the start."<sup>19</sup> The protagonist called by various names W., M.W. Cambert (or C.), is the *Stasi* (GDR security) informant who, while collecting compromising material using the unofficial Berlin literary scene, is also trying to establish himself as a writer. In reality, the GDR secret police did attempt, though unsuccessfully, to draft Wolfgang Hilbig, therefore the author did not have such personal experience when writing the novel.

Still, Hilbig's "Ich" cannot be considered a political novel about the GDR secret police, but rather a novel about the relationship between the spirit and authority, literature and government security institutions. Several of the protagonist's names and even the name of the novel "Ich" written in quotation marks point to the individual's lack of solidity. Just as Gavelis's novel, Hilbig's novel "Ich" is likewise marked by "the narrator's character's multi-facedness, impurity, lability, uncircumscribability."<sup>20</sup> The artist and informant are called byvarious names, and even the worker wandering around in Berlin's underground is never sure of what is reality or its boundary with what society considers reality, and what is his own fantasy. All this raises the question whether the writer and the informant are doing the same, that is, creating a fictional world.

Gavelis's *Vilnius Poke*r and Hilbig's "*Ich*" are first of all linked by the theme of the consequences of the totalitarian system and by its portrayal in a satirical style. Both novels reveal the past realities of countries which were enmeshed in communist structures, the absurdities of the previous system. The satiric reflection

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Cf. Lohse, Wolfgang Hilbig, 77.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Saab, "Die DDR-Literatur," 178.

Hilbig, "Ich", 379: "Ähnlichkeiten mit lebenden Personen sind zufällig und nicht beabsichtigt."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Čerškutė, "Ričardo Gavelio," 51.

on the artist and art situation in East Germany in Hilbig's novel, develops into the grotesquely illustrated world of Soviet Lithuania in Gavelis's *Vilnius Poker*.

In both novels, action takes place in the centers of the nations' capitals (Vilnius and Berlin), in which the most important totalitarian government institutions also reside. The protagonists in both novels are forced to confront the constraints of the aggressive structures surrounding them and penetrating into the most intimate human relationships. Cambert (C., W., M.W.) reflects on his life as an informer and feels a deep disgust with himself as well as with the entire Stasi operation. This forces him to search for another dwelling place in which he could hide from the ever-seeing eye of the national security. When even that doesn't provide him with enough privacy, he disappears under the capital into the labyrinth connecting homes with cellars and catacombs and anxiously wanders around in this parallel apparently endless world, although in reality one that is bordered by the Berlin Wall. This distant escape through romantic fantasies into such metaphoric space depicted in the novel, in which the writer and the artist are forced to hide, could be considered as a parody of the freedom of speech and creativity:

On the whole (in the cellars –V.K.) everything was as always, the air humid and cool, with a certain kind of sharp spice emanating from the eternally lasting concrete wall... yes, like the air in this entire country saturated with the sharp ever fresh smell of the eternally new concrete wall... even his wood box not touched by the wall, [...] fear untouched, here underneath having been watched for a long time.<sup>21</sup>

Walter Schmitz notes that the labyrinth in this novel seems "like an unstable space in which such qualities as interior and

Hilbig, "Ich," 297: "Sonst war [im Keller – V.K.] alles wie immer, die Luft feucht-kühl, mit jenem etwas beißenden Geschmack, den die Atmosphäre von der ewig neu bleibenden Betonmauer aufnahm... so, wie die Luft des ganzen Lands einen scharfen Geruch aus dem Beton einer ewig neu bleibenden Mauer bezog ... unversehrt seine Holzkiste an der Wand, [...] unversehrt die Angst, hier unten lange schon frequentiert zu sein."

surface merge, because the 'labyrinth' should be read not only as a sign of exterior space, but also as a projected figure of inner dimension whose semantics arise from the attributes consisting of limitation, opposition, repeated selfhood, search for identity, and finally of fear."<sup>22</sup>

The labyrinth motif also repeats itself in the novel of Gavelis. The medieval Vilnius streets through which Vytautas Vargalys wanders with time mutate more and more into a frightening labyrinth:

Vilnius turned into an empty meaningless labyrinth in which one can wander about until death not understanding that here there are no exits, that this is an *absolute* labyrinth. In such, you will never end up by a dead end – it is so gigantic. But you will also never emerge into freedom.<sup>23</sup>

The wanderings of Vytautas Vargalis lead not only into confusing areas of Vilnius, but at the same time it is a journey into one's interior space, towards most secret desires and unrealized unconscious depths. The Library in which the protagonist performs his secret research and is searching for the "Way"<sup>24</sup> with its massive, convoluted corridors, and "Minotaurs lurking by the ceilings"<sup>25</sup> is also reminiscent of the labyrinth system. Here, as in the novel of Wolfgang Hilbig, the question of (creative) freedom under the conditions of a dictatorship is again raised:

I keep thinking to myself that I got here consciously, I still naively believe in my own free will. But only *They* could have admitted me here. Maybe it is more convenient for *Them* to mon-

Schmitz, "Gottesabwesenheit?" 121: "[...] als äußerst instabiler Raum, verwischen sich [...] die Raumqualitäten des Innen und des Außen: denn das "Labyrinth' will nicht nur als Zeichen für äußere Räume gelesen werde, sondern auch als Projektionsdimension für das "Innere' einer Figur, deren Semantik sich aus den Attributen Begrenztheit, Widersprüchlichkeit, Daseinswiederholung, aus Identitätssuche und schließlich Angst konstituiert."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Gavelis, Vilniaus pokeris, 58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Cf. Ibid., 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Ibid., 84.

itor here what I read? Or maybe all books contain only lies, maybe to *Their* delight my reading only leads me further away from the Way?<sup>26</sup>

With respect to *homo lithuanicus*, the protagonist formulates a critical point of view by asking "why did all the people end up in the [...] library?"<sup>27</sup> and forces the reader to reconsider the influences of the Soviet ideology on the nation's consciousness. Gavelis has made similar observations several times during interviews.<sup>28</sup> His subject matter concerning the lack of spiritual freedom, impersonations, and problems of mystifying myths become diverse metaphors for the labyrinth – spaces for a society traumatized by the Soviet system. And the entire novel draws the reader as though into a labyrinth, as Violeta Kelertas correctly notes,

[...], writing for Gavelis is not life or reality, it is not a sermon or the ten golden rules, but a consciously constructed object, or [...] it's a 'labyrinth', an 'ornament' or 'kaleidoscope', which while changing constantly reveals new features, indicating that that's how it was..."<sup>29</sup>

Using satire, Hilbig in his novel lays bare not only the structures of the GDR security apparatus, but also East Germany's literary scene of that time. It is essential at this point to remember the context in which this novel was written. When, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and reunification of Germany, records of *Stasi* acts became available to the public, some facts became clear that quite a few unofficial representatives of the East Germany's literary scene (such as Rainer Schedlinski, Sacha Anderson and others) were security informants themselves. The question whether the entire literary discourse of that time was only a simulation is raised in the center of the novel "*Ich*," and the entire discourse of this work revolves around it: *Stasi* constructs reality, because the content of the observation protocols about which Cambert writes is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> "Be užuolankų" and others.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Kelertienė, *Kita vertus...*, 241.

predetermined, the reports repeat each other and are written and rewritten. The writer who is being observed by the protagonist appears to be himself a Security informant, following Cambert who if observing him and relaying his observation in a literary form. All the figures in the novel are in some sense following and observing each other, writing about each other and in this way the entire East Germany's reality becomes a "simulated system":

Nonetheless, what a simulation was this reality! How long have I not observed its connections: how long have my things kept disappearing about which I was *not obliged* to report.<sup>30</sup>

Both the writer and the *Stasi* informant are depicted as removed from reality in the empirical sense and creating a fictitious reality according to their own imaginations.

Though somewhat differently, but the theme of the situation of a literary person, a writer, under socialist dictatorship conditions is likewise problematized in Gavelis's *Vilnius Poker*. The author uses irony to explain "the ironclad alibi used by Lithuanian writers: there is no freedom" used to justify "failure" to write – in the words of Martynas Poška:

They (the Lithuanian writers – V. K.) are sighing because they are being strangled by the bonds of censorship. They sigh in an apartment with a special kitchen, special bath and toilet provided by those who imposed the restrictions. It is very important for a Lithuanian writer to have a special toilet. He spends most of his time sitting on the special toilet and writes nothing. Because his creative freedom is being restricted. If he had the freedom, WOW would he write! In really, he can't really imagine what that WOW might be, but that is a secondary thing. You can't require too much from the imagination of the Lithuanian writer.<sup>32</sup>

Hilbig, "Ich," 57: "Welch eine Simulation war doch diese Wirklichkeit! Wie lange schon waren mir ihre Zusammenhänge verloren: wie lange schon waren mir gerade die Dinge verlorengegangen, über die ich nicht mehr berichtet hatte."

<sup>31</sup> Gavelis, Vilniaus pokeris, 84.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 83.

As mentioned earlier, the *Stasi* records in Hilbig's novel are being compared with literary texts which create a fictitious reality. In *Vilnius Poker* we meet a more domestic, but not less critical aspiration, raising "Shakespearean passions" amid "soviet writers" which in those times were to obtain a government apartment and a comparison to literary works:

– Boy, that is true creativity! Requests to obtain an apartment – great pearls of poetry! There you find true pain, true suffering. True passion. I will sacrifice the rest of my life to produce a collection of writers' requests for apartments. Otherwise history will not forgive me.<sup>33</sup>

Gavelis, by ironically reversing art ideals, again presents himself as a ruthless critic of the system, bravely and without adornment revealing its aspects or that which may be considered uncomfortable to many — the "unavoidable compromises of living in captivity."<sup>34</sup> The artist and creative freedom, as also evident in Hilbig's novel, are the losers here – in a society controlled by security forces, everything belongs to *Them*.

An important point connecting the two novels, which had been alluded to before, is the connection between dreams and reality found in them. Wandering through the labyrinths, the protagonists feel that they are hovering between dreams and reality: "Vilnius – that is a ghost city, a hallucinated city. It is impossible to dream it or to imagine it – it in itself is a dream or an imaginary creation."<sup>35</sup>

The dream in Gavelis's novel, as in Hilbig's "*Ich*" becomes reality, and reality a dream – the boundaries between them are erased "you are forced to dream against your volition [...]. Everything, entirely everything here is a dream [...]."<sup>36</sup> Or in the words of the "*Ich*" protagonist:

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>34</sup> Samalavičius, "Postkolonijinė literatūra," 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Gavelis, Vilniaus pokeris, 112.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Ibid., 101-112.

I live in an imaginary world... It always could have happened that reality would appear to me fantasy-like, doubtful [...].<sup>37</sup>

In his "fiction," his own, I often used to be so strongly lost in the fantasy areas – in distant times or imaginary locations — that he, if he did not wish to lose himself completely, had to force himself from time to time to return back into boring reality!<sup>38</sup>

The condition of the characters such as in these novels could be considered borderline, limited, as if sleeping with one's eyes open. Reality, fantasy and dream state intermingle and the boundaries among them become permeable. It becomes difficult to define the location in which the protagonists find themselves, and this becomes unsettling, disturbing.<sup>39</sup>

Attempts to escape reality, loss of identity, erasure of boundaries between dream state and reality— which are some of the primary motifs found in romantic creative works – are not only characteristic of both novels (it should be noted that both authors "play" with these motifs with the help of irony and satire), but they are also among the main problems which the protagonists in their searches and wanderings face. A dream state, from which one never completely awakens throughout the entire novel, starts out *Vilnius Poker*:

A revelation of painfully clear images starts my every day, which cannot be anticipated or chosen in advance. It is chosen by someone other, it rings out through the silence, pierces the brain while still not awake, and vanishes again.<sup>40</sup>

The citation by the German romantic writer Ludwig Tiek at the beginning of Hilbig's novel "Ich": "How I lost my life in a

Hilbig, "Ich", 44: "Ich lebte in einer Welt der Vorstellung ... Immer wieder konnte es geschehen, daß mir die Wirklichkeit phantastisch wurde, irrägullär [...]."

Hilbig, "Ich", 86: "In seinen 'Fiktionen' war ihm sein ich oftmals so weit in phantastische Bereiche entwichen – in entlegene Zeiten oder ausgedachte Landschaften – ' daß er es mit den Einschüben aus seiner langweiligen Wirklichkeit zurückholen mußte: um es nicht gänzlich zu verlieren!"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Cf. Waldenfels, Sozialität und Alterität., 222–223.

<sup>40</sup> Gavelis, Vilniaus pokeris, 7.

dream! / he said to himself [...]"<sup>41</sup> could be considered as this work's motto, while the history of Cambert, who is C., and W., and M.W. can be interpreted as losing oneself in a country that exists only in simulated reality. The monolithic "I" in Gavelis's novel also breaks down the multifaceted, undefined narrative,<sup>42</sup> without leaving the impression that everything is "as if". One myth of objective reality in previous East Germany and in Lithuania based on socialist ideology is shattered in both novels not only by the use of a metaphor of dreamed reality, but also, as mentioned previously, by presenting the narrative through the lips of a discontinuous narrator.

The comparison of these two novels allowed for the disclosure of the connecting themes and motif complexes: the labyrinth as the repression of (creative) freedom motif and the connection in the novels between spirit and government, literature and state, reality and dream-state. Both novels contain the theme of the Soviet past, revealing the pains caused by the socialist order. By using parody, irony, satire and grotesqueness, raising difficult to solve questions, reflecting critically on national myths, the authors masterfully interpret romantic traditions. In these works, the actual cities Vilnius and Berlin become metaphysical surreal spaces through which the novels' protagonists wander about. Even though the borders between reality and dreams, fact and fantasy become erased, nonetheless, in these works under the phantasmagorical dreams, true pain and true despair reside.

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<sup>41</sup> Hilbig, "Ich," 5: "Wie habe ich mein Leben in einem Traum verloren! / sagte er zu sich selbst [...]."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Cf. Čerškutė, "Ričardo Gavelio," 51.

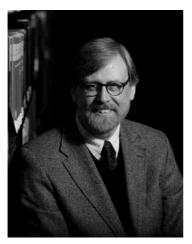
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# Mediating Between Two Cultures: A Conversation with Poet and Translator Jonas Zdanys

## LAIMA APANAVIČIENĖ



JONAS ZDANYS was born in New Britain, Connecticut, a few months after his parents arrived in the United States from a United Nations camp for Lithuanian refugees. He received his B.A. in English from Yale University and his M.A. and Ph.D. in English from the State University of New York.

A bilingual poet and translator, he is the author of fifty-one books. Forty-seven of those vol-

umes are collections of his original poetry, written in English or in Lithuanian, and of his translations of Lithuanian poetry and fiction into English. He has received a number of prizes, book awards, writing and travel grants, and public recognitions for his poetry and for his translations.

He has taught at the State University of New York and at Yale University, where he held a number of administrative positions and was a Scholar-in-Residence in the Yale Center for Russian and East European Studies. As part of his international activities, he was appointed a consultant for the reorganization of higher education by the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and the Lithuanian Parliament. He served for more than a decade as the state of Connecticut's Chief Academic Officer and is currently Professor of English and Poet in Residence at Sacred Heart University.

You were born and raised in the United States AND you studied English literature. What internal or external influences or circumstances guided you to a literary career?

It is, at least in part, an inherited predilection. My mother was an avid reader, and she also wrote – after she died, we published her autobiography. And I just like books, as objects and as sources of inspiration and delight. Beginning when I was six years old, I went on my own each week to the town library, selected books to bring home, and read them with great joy. I got used to books, found in them worlds that I liked, people I recognized, and eventually I began to write as well. I remember, when I was quite young, my mother would tell me to go outside and play. I preferred to stay inside and read. That early habit has stayed with me.

You said in an earlier note that you have been translating Lithuanian literature since 1971. What encouraged you to take up translation?

I began translating and publishing my translations when I was a twenty-year-old student at Yale, in 1971. I was in a poetry seminar and mentioned to the professor that I could perhaps translate a poem from Lithuanian for the class to consider. He agreed and I translated "Vaikai kaip žolė" ("Children Are Like Grass") by Marcelijus Martinaitis. The translation was well-received and it later appeared in a University literary magazine. So that's when I began to publish translations, at a time when no one else of my generation was doing so and, in fact, when Lithuania itself did not exist on world maps. I believed then, as I do now, that poetry cannot be contained in schemes that separate the world with "iron curtains" or any other artificial divisions. It can let out shoots through every crack in political concrete and do so triumphantly. That was the beginning and the foundation of my work as a translator.

I also wanted to show the world what that place called Lithuania is, what our poetry is. For some, when I began, Lithuania was a kind of curiosity, an old fashioned unimportant and mostly forgotten small country. For others, those translations provided a new look, a new step, into another culture and its literary traditions. Most of my translations received a good reception, particularly from American poets. That was what was most important to me. I set out to create new poems in English as I was making those translations, poems that were not transliterations but new and self-sustaining poetic texts meant for readers of English and not for those who were set to "compare" two texts written in two different languages. I've written about that process and its results in several essays published over the years.

You mostly translate poetry (though you have also translated works of fiction). Why have you chosen to focus on translating poetry?

I translate poetry principally because I write poetry. Both are equal halves of literary creation. I translate because, while translating, I can say something new, explain something in a new way, discover new voices (that I filter through my own voice) in poetry and its metaphors. When I write poetry and when I translate poetry, I feel, I see, the crosscurrents of the world, I understand more deeply and more profoundly the person-poet and all the elements of the world that surround her or him. Through translation I can create a kind of a dialogue, with myself and with other writers. And that provides a window into the creative world and into the moral world that enhances my own understanding of what it is to be human and alive. That's why I translate modern literature: for me, it's where that world most clearly reveals itself in the most resonant ways.

How do you select which authors to translate?

I translate contemporary/modern Lithuanian literature, written since the end of the Second World War in Lithuania and in the diaspora. I have translated poetry and a number of works of fiction, among them the historical novel *Agonija* (Agony) by Jurgis Gliauda; the poems of *Rudens giesmės* (Songs of Autumn) by Sigitas Geda; works by 27 Lithuanian and Lithuanian émigré poets

in Selected Post-war Lithuanian Poetry; the novel Lygiosios trunka akimirką (which I titled Stalemate) by the Lithuanian-Israeli novelist Icchokas Meras; individual collections by Leonardas Andriekus, Henrikas Radauskas, Alfonsas Nyka-Niliūnas, Kornelijus Platelis, Vytautas P. Bložė, Nijolė Miliauskaitė, Antanas A. Jonynas, and Agnė Žagrakalytė. I have also published an anthology of my translations titled Four Poets of Lithuania (Vytautas P. Bložė, Sigitas Geda, Kornelijus Platelis, and Nijolė Miliauskaitė), and an anthology of my translations titled Five Lithuanian Women Poets (Judita Vaičiūnaitė, Danutė Paulauskaitė, Onė Baliukonė, Nijolė Miliauskaitė, and Tautvyda Marcinkevičiūtė). All of these authors – and still many others writing in Lithuanian – are interesting, accomplished, important makers of literary texts. I chose them because I find in their works the potentials and possibilities of metaphor, the engaging power of language as it shapes their lines, connections to the authority of folk traditions and songs that form an essential foundation of Lithuanian cultural expression.

In your opinion, is Lithuanian poetry of any interest to the English-speaking reader?

Our literature is good, some of it is world class. That small nation has actually made quite an important contribution to world literature. It was a pleasure, a responsibility, to help present our country, our literature, to a wider audience when I began and as I have continued that work. I wanted, when I began, and I want now, to attract the world's attention to Lithuania's aesthetic culture and its language. Of course, now everyone can find out whatever they want about Lithuania. When I began translating poetry, novels, writing scholarly articles, reviews, Lithuania was politically oppressed, the doors of information were only narrowly open. Poetry was where truth could be presented and found. I was one of the few who took on the task of trying to open those doors more widely during 1975–1990. Times have certainly now changed. Now it seems it's more necessary to advertise what benefits and advantages the country might provide.

What is it about translation that interests you?

I like the translation process itself. It provides me with opportunities to interact not only with each individual word and the pauses between words of the original text but also with the nuances of language and aesthetic expression, particularly as I work between languages that are structurally quite different. When I was teaching translation theory and practice at Yale, I published several scholarly articles about that process, among them "Poezijos vertimas: pastabos ir komentarai," "Some Thoughts About Translating Poetry," "Teaching Translation," and others. Those essays might provide some additional explanations about why the creative act of translation is aesthetically and culturally valuable.

You are not only a translator but you also write poetry. How and why did you decide to begin writing poems? How is a poem born?

These are certainly engaging and complex questions. Poetry is important to me and has been for most of my life. It seems that most everything I want to say (if only to myself), that I want to explain, finds its strongest expression through metaphor. I believe that poets, and all writers, write "for themselves," that they open creative windows to a deeply egocentric but also deeply and self-reflectively moral world. Poetry, for me, is a dialogue with the self, and I write it and speak it as if I am speaking to another person even though that person is, in fact, me. Writing poetry was the best way I could create and sustain such a dialogue. It provides insight and assurance and entries into the world that I believe I could not have found without it.

Most of your collections of poetry are written in English and only a few are in Lithuanian. I understand that for you, having been brought up and educated in America, the opportunities for expression in English are wider. But I'm delighted to see that you also write in Lithuanian. What does it mean to you to write in Lithuanian as well?

I'm truly fortunate because I have the opportunity to knit together such different and interesting dialogues with myself, in both English and in Lithuanian. That enables me to understand part of myself – and, in fact, the world – more clearly. That may be so because English and Lithuanian are structurally quite different, as I mentioned. If we agree that the structure of language frames the structure of thought, then writing in both languages provides wider avenues, clearer angles of reflection, firmer perspectives of what the world, in fact, might be. My readers, particularly those who know both languages, can also understand me more fully by reading my poems in both linguistic frames. I write texts in both languages. I don't translate poems that I have written in one language into the other. Rather, I construct parallel texts, understanding that structurally different languages require different modes of thinking, differing expressions. And that they provide unique modes and models of understanding the world as I see it through those linguistic frames.

What is your literary baggage?

I have published books of my own poems in both English and Lithuanian.

Five volumes of my Lithuanian poems have been published in Lithuania: *Ikaro prisikėlimas* (The Resurrection of Icarus – Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla, 2014); *Tarpdury* (In the Doorway – Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla, 2008); *Dūmų stulpai* (Pillars of Smoke – Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla, 2002); *Dotnuvos stoty* (In the Train Station at Dotnuva – Vaga 1999); and *Aušros daina* (Aurora's Song – Santara 1993).

Nineteen collections of my poems in English have also been published: *The Angled Road: Collected Poems* 1970–2020 (Lamar University Press, 2020), which gathers together my poems published during the past fifty years; *Early Poems* 1966–1969 (Black Spruce Press, 2020); *Notebook Sketches* (Virtual Artists Collective/ Strawberry Hedgehog, 2019); *Three White Horses* (Lamar University Press, 2017); *St. Brigid's Well* (Purple Flag Press, 2017); *Red Stones* (Lamar University Press, 2016); *Cormorants* (Timberline

Press, 2013); The Kingfisher's Reign (Virtual Artists Collective, 2012); The Thin Light of Winter (Virtual Artists Collective, 2009); Salt (Virtual Artists Collective, 2007); The Woman on the Bridge (Virtual Artists Collective, 2005); The White City (Branford College Press, 2004); White (The White Birch Press, 2004); Lithuanian Crossing (The White Birch Press, 1999); Water Light, (Vaga, 1997); The White Bend of the River (Patrick Schreiber, 1994); The Metaphysics of Wolves (The White Birch Press, 1994); Maine Aubade (Appletree Books, 1990); and Voice on an Anthill, (Manyland Books, 1982).

I have also published two bilingual collections: *Preliudai po lietaus / Preludes After Rain*, which was published in China and Australia by Flying Island Books and Cerberus Press in 2017, and *Two Voices / Du balsai* (Purple Flag Press 2017), which I wrote together with Kornelijus Platelis.

*Which of these spheres – poetry or translation – is closer to your heart?* 

I have two daughters and two granddaughters. Is it possible to choose one daughter or one granddaughter? Which is closer to my heart?

In the cycle "Woman on the Bridge" you write: "I am hollow:/ unthinking, inarticulate, without imagination." Are you often embraced by such a sensibility?

There are, for all of us, all sorts of days. I won't say that I'm wholly inclined toward such a tragic worldview. Perhaps I can simply say that life is not always happy, and at the same time it's not always sad. In poetry's metaphors we can reconnoiter, examine, try out all of the conditions and sensibilities of life. In poetry we can create narrators (who do not necessarily speak in the poet's own voice) who can recognize and present the world with lyric inspiration, with a certain removed sensitivity and sensibility, and can explore the upsides and the downsides. But sometimes such a sense of personal and existential hollowness does present itself. Perhaps in my poems there is more of that and less of a sense of fullness and completion. When we were growing

up, we understood that my generation is also an "émigré" generation, an exiled generation – the first generation born on these shores – so perhaps that's why a sense of loss, feelings of dislocation, a certain nagging incompleteness appear in my work.

For your book of poems Dūmų stulpai and for your translations of Lithuanian poetry into English you received the Jotvingių Prize. What does that prize mean to you as a Lithuanian-American?

It means that my colleagues in Lithuania want to encourage my literary work on this side of the Atlantic, that they recognize that we are literary collaborators working together, that I contribute to their creative and poetic aspirations. I am truly grateful.

What is your sense of contemporary Lithuanian émigré poetry?

It is good, strong, interesting, engaging. It is of the same artistic merit as poetry being written now in Lithuania proper.

What do you think about émigré poets maintaining connections with Lithuania's poets? Are they necessary? Is it important to develop and foster such ties?

We maintain our connections to Lithuania because we are Lithuanians. Perhaps it would be best not to divide us into different sides, separate halves. Those of us who write, speak, and live as "Lithuanians" are all part of a single cultural family, no matter where we happen to be residing.

## From The Theology of Dreams

### BY LEONARDAS GUTAUSKAS

### First Dream: The White Reindeer

He came in through the snow-covered door of the dugout without making a sound. His fur was so white; whiter than snow glittering in the sun. He stopped between the plank beds. The reflections of the stove's coals glittered in his large bulging eye. Between his softer-than-silk antlers he had brought a blooming lilac bush, with huge clusters of dew-drenched flowers.

In my sleep, I knew this could not be; this vision was from the terrible fever raging inside me, from the fire burning my chest and lungs and drying out my lips.

But the White Reindeer spoke in a human voice:

"Augustė, little orphan, get up, you've slept enough; hurry, the days on the tundra are short and the road is long, get up, my dear."

Unexpected, immensely sincere words; a gentle voice, in its tones reminding me of my mother and with an air of miraculous fairytales.

LEONARDAS GUTAUSKAS is a well-known Lithuanian illustrator, painter, poet, and author. Before Lithuania regained its independence, he wrote exclusively poetry and children's books; after independence, he began to write prose as well, producing five novels since 1990. He has won numerous awards for both his art and his writing, including the Lithuanian National Prize in 2001.

This extract is from his novel *Sapnų teologija* (The Theology of Dreams), a series of twelve dreams of an orphaned teenager exiled to the frozen Siberian wastelands by the Soviet regime. Its gentleness and loving heartache for a lost homeland set the tone for the novel.

In my sleep I understood I had to get up, I just doubted my frozen legs would hold me up; I feared falling and burning my palms on the red-hot iron of the stove, or maybe my face, too. So I said:

"White Reindeer, I am afraid I'll fall, perhaps you don't know, I've frozen my toes, I only returned from the hospital the day before yesterday; I'm afraid."

The White Reindeer came closer and blew his warm furry breath onto my face and hands, told me to stick my frozen toes out from under the rags, blew again, and I sensed my feet warming up; the warmth rose slowly through my shins and thighs towards my chest and I felt my health slowly returning. I thought: what a shame that Jarvis is out setting traps for foxes out on the tundra with that villain Nagaikinas; my sweetheart would be so happy to see me getting better.

In the meantime, the reindeer (it could have been a female, since even female reindeer have antlers, and the voice was like my mother's) took my wrist in its velvety snout and slowly, slowly lifted it. I sat on the wooden plank fearing to stand, but the reindeer encouraged me:

"Stand up, little orphan Augustė, don't be afraid, time doesn't wait and a snowstorm is coming soon, it won't be easy for me to carry you to Lithuania, but don't be afraid, I'll make sure you don't fall down; set your feet on the boards; courage, my girl."

In my sleep I see my bluish toes, watch them touch the icy floorboards, and even though I'm barefoot, I don't feel the cold. I stretch out my hand and caress the White Reindeer's neck, its forehead and antlers; I lean forward and bury my face in the lilacs and smell and smell the intoxicating scent of those blossoms brimming with memories. I'd like to ask the reindeer where he dug up that scented bush, because after all, around us, as far as the eye can see, there is tundra, snow, drifts, and ice mountains in the great river, neither a bush nor the smallest tree; under the snow there's just mosses, lichens, and ground frozen into rock, but the reindeer says in a human voice:

"I know, little orphan Augustė, what you want to ask, but there's no time now, time doesn't wait, the snowstorm will blow in soon, and it will be difficult for my sharp eyes to find your homeland at the end of the earth, so grab on to my horns, I'll throw you onto my back, don't be afraid, you won't fall, my soft fur will cover you up, hurry, there's no time to waste."

In my sleep I look about; I see Petras and his wife Marytė moaning on their plank beds. They're old and barely move anymore, perhaps only holding on by prayer. I want to say goodbye to them and to the other poor souls, to ask them to tell Jarvis I've left for Lithuania, but I won't be long, I'll just visit my home town and look around; maybe I'll hurriedly take some warmer clothes from Mama's chest; maybe I'll take down the picture of the Virgin of Aušros Gate in the corner of the room and hide it under my clothes so the overseer won't come across it; maybe I'll get a drink of clear water from the well too, or maybe I'll be able to milk Gražutė, even just a bit, I've missed milk so, I feel weak just thinking about it-but it would be a good thing if I didn't run into the mean neighbor, because a person like that could complain to the town authorities that the exile Augustina is gadding about town, she should be arrested and sent back to the polar bears. I'd like to wish everyone here good health; when I return, maybe I'll succeed in bringing a little corner of bacon fat; people do say that when sucking on even a thin slice of bacon fat the fluids of life revive, the blood starts running faster in the veins, lost health returns, and then no blizzards, snowstorms, or blows from the guards are unbearable. I'd like to, but I can't say a single word—a painful longing holds my throat clenched shut and tears fall down my cheeks like pearls, drop into the reindeer's fur, and vanish.

In the meantime, the White Reindeer bends his head and stretches out the branches of his soft, fur-covered antlers—you'd think they were cherry branches from my childhood—so that I can climb on and sit down on his soft, warm back.

Suddenly the dugout's walls disappear; the reindeer kicks himself off from the icy snow and rises. We are flying. Rising up ever higher. I look around the tundra, perhaps I'll spot Jarvis setting traps for the white foxes, but there's a snowstorm approaching from the sea of ice and I see its threatening whirlwinds; it resembles the genie of fairytales, released into freedom by the fur-covered overseers with warm felt on their feet; in my sleep I realize they've seen me escaping to freedom, and they urgently want to either force me to reconsider and return to that dugout, frozen into ice inside, or to kill me, so it would be a lesson to the other exiles to not even try to overcome Jakuta's invisible walls of hell.

But the White Reindeer with the voice of a human reassures me: "Don't be afraid, little orphan Auguste, the guards caught on too late, we've fairly high off the ground and the snowstorm most often catches people and kills them on the ground, it's always sniffing along the ground, searching for the runaway's traces with blind eye sockets of death, but the White Reindeer leaves no footprints."

From on high, in my sleep, I spot my Finn. Lord, how small he is; smaller than Onute, the rag doll of my childhood. I recognize him by the beams that spread from the narrow slits of his eyes—even the icy flame of the sun isn't terrible with eyes like that. I wave, and it seems to me that he sees us; he raises an arm and waves, wishing me a good trip, his heart whispers to him that Auguste will return, she won't leave him all alone—because by himself, without love, he would perish, he'd be terribly disappointed, and everything would lose its meaning, after all, life's meaning would vanish for me, too, if I didn't know that the White Reindeer will carry me back to the dugout and, lifting me from his back, will lay me on the plank bed and blow warm air toward my hands, my face and my heart, so I won't feel the cold for a long time.

We rise still higher. Suddenly a pure green color opens before my eyes, like an ocean, but I realize it's not water—it's the green of fields and forests, the soft silk of barely opened leaves; people are working in the fields and the sky is full of winged creatures, they fly and chirp, and that chirping reminds me of our orchard,

where the shrikes, and the starlings, and the robins, and the wagtails, and other nameless birds used to raise their young, as if they lived with us like members of our family, our own, dear to us and anxiously awaited each spring.

In my sleep I understand that all of that heart-soothing green is not on earth, but in the heights above the clouds—that's how high we are flying. The White Reindeer doesn't slow its bounds, and, oh miracle! The two of us fly through that green as if it were a green fog, and the fields, and the forests, and the orchards are just a green mist; my outstretched palm cannot grasp the slightest greenery, twig, or bird feather. Everything flies by, and I realize I'm only allowed to gaze at the landscapes of my home, just to convince myself that even in heaven it's alive, it's just the way Mama and I left it that June of 1941, no one has turned it to ashes or char, even though numerous farmsteads, rye fields, and groves burned in those days.

I lean over by the reindeer's ear and shout; I must shout because the winds up high stifle my voice, it catches at the letters and syllables, so I shout in the high voice of the orphan Augustė:

"White Reindeer, this is my home, this is where I was born, this is where I happily spent my first twelve years, this is where I lived with my mother and father until that night when a huge truck roared and rumbled up, and the soldiers that jumped out of it broke down the door of the house, knocked everything down, breaking things, slapped my mother in the face, pulled her by her beautiful hair, kicked her, demanding she say where Father was hiding, but Mama was as silent as if she had suddenly turned dumb; then I heard a shot, just one, but it was so bloodily flat that it silenced even the swearing of the arrivals, and bitter tears flowed from my mother's eyes and mine, because we understood we had lost our provider and that we wouldn't even know where he was buried."

And then I see two giant tears flood the reindeer's eyes, break away from his long eyelashes and fall, fall, towards the ground, carrying with them the loose flower petals from the lilac bush that have finished blooming, they pour down, growing smaller as they fall, turning into snowflakes...

Suddenly everything changes. The green vanishes, the groves of trees turn into ice jams in the mouth of the Lena River, two long-tailed snowstorms with huge nets catch at the sun glimmering above the horizon. I feel the White Reindeer has tired, it goes at a walk, struggling in the deep snow, the ice-coated twigs of the lilac bush stick up through his antlers.

At last the White Reindeer stops and says:

"Augustė, little orphan, I cannot get closer to the dugout because the guards already know about your return and are aiming to shoot me, and I intend to carry you to your homeland many times yet, so climb off, my dear, and go on, don't be afraid, they won't shoot at you; it's time for me to run to the land of White Reindeers, where we live on a glass mountain; it's always summer there and the grass is always juicy, there I'll throw off my antlers so I can grow new ones, strong and branched. And you, little girl, go on, your dugout with Jarvis waiting is over there, beyond that snowdrift, go on, don't be afraid, you're invisible now and the frost won't sting your bare feet. Stay healthy, little orphan Augustė, don't tell a soul about what happened today, you can only reveal the secret of our trip to Jarvis—his love won't let him breathe a word of it."

After taking a few steps towards my sad home of exile, I turned back to see if my reindeer had already flown far away, but I didn't see anything; the White Reindeer had vanished, only a thin whirl of snowflakes wandered over the tundra.

I was walking barefoot, wearing just a nightgown, but I felt no cold, as if I had been wrapped in invisible reindeer fur and was wearing the same fur on my feet. I went past the guard without being seen, pressed up against the dugout's little window, looked inside and saw the Finn sitting next to the iron stove with a book of Lithuanian fairytales on his knees. It was the only book I had brought from Lithuania, and with it I was teaching my Jarvis our language and writing. Above my dear one's head I saw myself lying on the dark plank bed. I was sleeping wrapped

into a ball, afraid to stick even a little finger out—that's how cold and frightening it was in the dugout—and the lice, reddened in the glow of the coals, crawled over my closed eyelids.

So I stood there glued to the window of ice, while the soft light of greenery whirled and shimmered in my thoughts, and it was so pleasant, and I heard my mother's words:

"Augustė, my little daughter, be careful, don't fall into the stove's coals, watch out for yourself and stay close to the Finn—his love is true and not selfish, it will bear everything, forgive everything, it won't be envious, it won't be full of pride or put on airs, won't look to its own advantage, won't give in to anger; it will forget what was bad, it will change everything, it will be patient and pleasant; don't forget my words, as I never forgot them."

After these words of my mother's I dared to knock at the window of ice. Jarvis lifted his eyes from the book and looked at me, but I don't know if he saw my tearful eyes beyond the ice glass; he just stood up, turned towards my bed, straightened out the rags that had slid off, and gently hid my little finger, whose blue nail was already covered in glittering sparks of frost.

Translated by Elizabeth NOVICKAS

ELIZABETH NOVICKAS has translated six novels from the Lithuanian, including books published by Open Letter, CEU Press, and Dalkey Archives. Her work has been honored by an award from the Lithuanian Translators' Society, as well as grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Lithuanian Institute for Culture, which graciously supported this work.

# The First Lithuanian Symphony: Author, Composition, Performance, Context\*

DANUTĖ PETRAUSKAITĖ

## Introduction

The origin of Lithuanian professional music goes back to the late nineteenth-early twentieth century. Compared to other countries, its formation was a rather belated process which was conditioned by political circumstances. In the seventeenth century, Lithuania was famous for its opera theater based in the Lower Castle of the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania in Vilnius, plentiful instrumental capellas and church choirs; whereas, after the third partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the late eighteenth century when most of Lithuania appeared within the tsarist Russian Empire, the name of Lithuania was less and less mentioned in Europe. Lithuania's relations with Western states began to weaken, and after suppressing the Uprising of 1863-1864 and banning the Lithuanian press for 40 years, intensive processes of russification and of the spread of Russian culture took place. Lithuania was renamed North Western territory, trying to wipe it from the world map. However, a national movement which encouraged the hope of freedom from oppression emerged in the

DANUTĖ PETRAUSKAITĖ is a musicologist. In 1978, she graduated from the Lithuanian State Conservatoire (now the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theater) and defended a thesis at Vilnius University in 1993. In 1980–2018, she worked in higher schools in Klaipėda; as of 2018, she is a chief researcher and professor at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theater

<sup>\*</sup> This article was written while executing a project "Juozas Žilevičius and his Epoch". The project is funded by the Research Council of Lithuania (Nr. S-LIP-20-21).

late nineteenth century. The following methods of resistance were used: Lithuanian periodicals and books were issued in the territory of East Prussia which were secretly carried by book smugglers across the border, illegal schools for children were founded where they were taught to read, write, and sing in Lithuanian; their moral values and historical memory were developed, and the necessity to create their own culture was accentuated.

The greatest impact on the national consciousness came from the activities of doctors (Jonas Basanavičius, Vincas Kudirka), priests (Antanas Baranauskas, Maironis, Teodoras Brazys, Adolfas Sabaliauskas, Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas), and organists (Juozas Naujalis, Česlovas Sasnauskas, Aleksandras Kačanauskas, Stasys Šimkus). Some of them collected folklore, others wrote verse or music. At that time, it was prohibited to come together into secular choirs, yet church choirs were allowed to exist. Taking advantage of such freedom, organists began to create Lithuanian songs and organize secret evenings where those songs could be heard, thus becoming the first Lithuanian composers.

In tsarist Lithuania, there existed only a Russian music school in Vilnius, private music courses in larger cities, and manor orchestras in the provinces. In those institutions, one could learn to play some instrument a little; however, to master it and to receive higher musical education, gifted youths had to study in the neighboring countries such as Poland, Germany, Russia, or Latvia. There, they could learn all the theoretical disciplines necessary for a professional musician and, led by competent teachers, acquire practical skills of composing music. This is why Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis created the first Lithuanian Piano Sonata (1898) and the first Lithuanian Symphonic Poem "In the Forest" (1901) while studying in Warsaw, and his first String Quartet (1902) while studying in Leipzig. Mikas Petrauskas wrote his first Lithuanian operettas "The Chimney Sweep and the Miller" (1903) and "Adam and Eve" (1905) in Saint Petersburg. The first Lithuanian symphony saw daylight in the capital of Russia too (1919). Its author, Juozas Žilevičius (1891–1985) is little known in Lithuania today. He is more known to the Lithuanian Americans; he is even referred to as the diaspora's patriarch of music as he, being the organist of the Lithuanians' Saints Peter and Paul Church in Elisabeth, NJ, in 1929–1960, led choirs, wrote articles, and issued books. In 1961, he took up residence with the Jesuit father in Chicago, where he opened to the public the Lithuanian Musicology Archive he had accumulated (later combined with the library of Juozas Kreivėnas¹), which has been part of the library-based Lithuanian Research and Studies Center to this day.

## Occupation: Church Organist

Žilevičius was the offspring of an old family of landlords of the manor. He was born in Samogitia, went to a primary school in Tverai, finished the progymnasium in Palanga, and made Plungė his home. At the end of the nineteenth-beginning of the twentieth century, Plungė was a fairly big commercial and cultural center. After lifting the Lithuanian press ban, cultural, music, and drama societies were founded in Plungė. However, the music school based in the manor of Duke Mykolas Oginskis in 1873–1902 and its orchestra contributed to the fame of this town the most.

When Žilevičius arrived in Plungė, there was neither the Duke nor his orchestra there anymore, but Oginskis' widow, Marija Skuzewska-Oginskienė tried hard to retain the musical ambience of the manor. Around 1903, she invited Napoleonas Sasnauskas – a graduate of the Warsaw Institute of Music, who was an excellent organ and piano player, to come to Plungė. She assigned him the revival of a church choir. The new employee lived up to the Duchess' expectations. The choir led by him shortly became known across Samogitia; not surprisingly, the sensitive soul, Žilevičius, who had studied music a little before, expressed a desire to continue his studies with namely this organist.

Juozas Kreivėnas (1912–1987) was an organist, teacher, choir conductor, bibliophile. In 1944, he retreated from Lithuania to Germany to live in Cicero (IL) from 1950.



Juozas Žilevičius

Sasnauskas gave a lot of time to his student since the latter was particularly hard-working. He taught his student to play the organ, to improvise, and introduced him to the basics of harmony. However, the possibility to play music himself was the most precious lesson for Žilevičius. Such a chance came his way following the establishment of an ensemble of the nobles in Plungė. The ensemble consisted of two violins, a cello, and a grand piano. Sasnauskas, who played the latter instrument, offered his student the chance to get involved in this group work. Initially, Žilevičius was invited to just turn over the leaves of scores, yet it was an excellent chance to hear a lot of lovely music. After rehearsals which were treated as lessons, the teacher would ask his student how he understood this or that composition, and would explain their stylistic peculiarities. Shortly afterwards, Žilevičius was offered the position of the pianist. Although he was afraid of holding this position, he agreed, and played for two years in this ensemble. During that time, the young pianist became familiar with musical literature from different epochs, and felt like creating himself: based on the motifs of Lithuanian songs, he wrote a piece for two violins, the cello

and the grand piano. Apparently, the ensemble performed this musical composition as its author received praise from its members.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the score was lost during WWI, leaving no trace of the creative attempts of the novice composer.

After Napoleonas Sasnauskas left, the deanery of Rietavas offered Žilevičius to take up the vacant position in the Church of St. John the Baptist in Plungė. The 17-year-old youth could hardly believe that in 1908 he would become the choir leader and organist of one of the largest parishes in Samogitia. Joy mingled with the feeling of a huge responsibility because performing music in church was always followed by those well-versed in it. First of all, Žilevičius had to renew the choir's repertoire with not only religious but also secular pieces. The latter were performed during public concerts thus participating in the cultural life of the town's community. Unfortunately, the Plungė choir was unable to perform often. It lacked permanent choristers with fine voices; moreover, the choir leader was engaged in other activities as well: he recorded folk songs, collected archaeological antiquities, and from 1909 joined the company of the Flying Theater directed by Juozas Vaičkus. The company began to give performances in Mažeikiai with actors and singers accompanied by Žilevičius on the piano. In addition, he was engaged in pedagogical activities since many students wanted to take music lessons with him.

In addition to all those occupations, Žilevičius kept dreaming of studying in a high or higher school of music. He was particularly attracted to the Warsaw Institute of Music, also referred to as Conservatoire, which Napoleonas Sasnauskas, his former teacher and Juozas Kalvaitis, the author of the first Lithuanian Mass, and the composer Čiurlionis had graduated from. Having reached out in advance for two teachers – a teacher of theoretical disciplines, V. Lipowski, and an organist Mieczyslaw Surzynski, in the summer of 1911 he went to Warsaw: it had been agreed that after taking the entire course at the Institute, he would be

Juozas Žilevičius. A concise biography, 1935. The Juozas Žilėnas-Juozas Kreivėnas Lithuanian Musicology Archive (hereinafter ŽKLMA).

awarded a diploma. The student from Plungė would also go to Poland in the summers of 1912 and 1913. M. Surzynski had even enrolled him in his organ class, but Žilevičius did not feel at ease - he could live and study in Warsaw for just a month. The only way out for him was to work hard. He would bring home Polish composers' pieces for the organ, would analyze them, and even perform some of them in the church; he also read a lot, did his homework assiduously, thus expecting to take the whole of the study program on his own. The outbreak of WWI ruined all of his plans. Žilevičius was halfway through with his studies, yet he could not complete them; moreover, in mid-April 1915 he was obliged to urgently retreat from Lithuania. Rescuing himself from the nearing German Army was only possible by retreating in the direction of the East. The war refugee chose Saint Petersburg as his aunt - his mother's sister lived there, as well as the well-known Lithuanian composer Česlovas Sasnauskas, who urged the young organist of Plungė to continue his studies in the oldest Conservatoire of Russia.

## Life and Studies in Petrograd

After the outbreak of the war, Russia's capital was renamed Petrograd. Quite a few Lithuanians had over time resided in this city. Some of them had settled there in the nineteenth century, others arrived later in search for a job and a safer asylum. Around 1915, the number of Lithuanians in this city and its environs expanded to 150 thousand.<sup>3</sup> Lithuanians had joined together into the Lithuanian community on confessional, ethnic, professional, and cultural grounds. Different Lithuanian societies, as well as the Church of Saint Catherine, consecrated as early as the eighteenth century, were active in Petrograd. During the war, the Church became the information center for the refugees. Žilevičius needed no help. Quite soon, he found himself

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> "Sankt Peterburgas," 75.

a pianist's position in a cinema theater, and later worked as a teacher in the gymnasium which was active under the Church of Saint Catherine. His largest ambition was to enter the Petrograd Conservatoire. Advised by Česlovas Sasnauskas, he took a few additional lectures and succeeded in passing the entry examinations.

Initially, Žilevičius wanted specifically to study theory; however, his financial situation determined his choice of the organ. The fee for the study of this subject was much lower; in addition, the organists could attend the specialty theory course together with future composers. Therefore, having studied with the Swiss professor Jacque Handschin<sup>4</sup> for three years, in the last year, he shifted to the composition class led by Alexander Zhitomirsky.<sup>5</sup> The teachers who worked in the Conservatoire at that time were well-versed in their specific fields and were known across the country and abroad. Thus, Žilevičius, using the opportunity, attended all mandatory and selected subjects: music literature, aesthetics and music history, specific harmony, counterpoint and fugue, orchestration for wind-instrument and symphonic orchestras, music forms, score reading, transposition, and the grand piano. Out of all the professors, Handschin made the most profound impact on him. In his class, Žilevičius constantly played compositions of Johann Sebastian Bach, which helped him, as a future composer, to develop a polyphonic writing style. This teacher also opened the door for him to the little known world of musicology - introducing manuscripts of the old composers

Jacques Handschin (1886–1955) – a Russian-Swiss organist and musicologist, the father of the studies of medieval music in Russia. He studied the art of the organ in Munich with Max Reger, in Leipzig – with Karl Straube, in Paris – with Charles-Marie Widor. From 1909, he led the organ class at the Saint Petersburg Conservatoire. In 1920, he emigrated to Switzerland, and from 1930 to death taught music theory at Basel University.

Alexander Zhitomirsky (1881–1937) – a Russian composer and teacher. In 1910, he finished the composition class at the Saint Petersburg Conservatoire. At this Conservatoire, from 1914 to death, he taught the disciplines of music theory. He is considered the follower of N. Rimsky-Korsakov's traditions by Russian music critics.

stored in the Petrograd public library to him. The manuscript depository was not easily accessible to everyone, yet Handschin would bring the student who took an interest in music history into it unhindered. This encouraged Žilevičius to frequent antique stores, secondhand booksellers, and look for literature on ancient Lithuania, at the same time to begin accumulating his personal library – the future musicology archive.

Any student, to obtain a diploma, was to have a certificate of secondary education. Since Žilevičius had not received such an education in Lithuania, he had to do this in Russia, combining work, studies at the Conservatoire, and attending private general education courses with A. A. Vedenski. Having successfully passed his examinations in 1918, he received a certificate of secondary education, but was not confined to it. Following the example of Č. Sasnauskas and willing to receive a more general artistic education, Žilevičius additionally attended lectures at the Institute of Archaeology and the Institute of Arts founded by Valentin Zubov; unfortunately, he was unable to finish his studies at these institutions due to the circumstances of the time.

While in his last year at the Conservatoire, Žilevičius devoted huge attention to his diploma work - Symphony F minor. It was a complicated period for the Russian nation, especially for the residents of Petrograd. They feared the nearing German army and the repercussions of the outbreak of the Great October Revolution in 1917 - violence, famine, terror. Nighttime shooting would not allow people to sleep quietly, and when they would wake up in the morning, they would see corpses of officers floating in the canals and in the Moika River. In wintertime, it was common meeting horse-driven carts with coffins, which brought the corpses of people who had died from various diseases, shortage of food or cold. Meetings and demonstrations took place on a daily basis, and food prices soared every day. Residents faced a permanent shortage of basic food products. Public transport operated but rarely, owing to failures in electricity and fuel provision; hence one had to go to work or to lectures on foot. Lec-

tures did not always take place, especially in wintertime when the Conservatoire was not heated. Winters in Petrograd were renowned for their harshness. Some of the teachers, failing to endure such conditions, would receive their students in their homes; these would suffer in particular. Some of the students quit their studies, others were obliged to fight in the ranks of the Red Army (Žilevičius was released from mobilization). Only those who were the most steadfast remained, yet they, too, lived under permanent stress since Bolsheviks could break in at any time of the day; they often searched the flats of intelligentsia, including students. Žilevičius did not escape a search either. Unexpected "guests" visited his place and found a resolute song created by him, "Pabuskim iš miego" (Let us wake up from sleep). They thought the composition was created against them, although it was meant to encourage the citizens of Vilnius, weary of the occupation authorities. As the author later explained, "There was a wish to go to war for Lithuania, and so the song was written in this mood." 6 Only thanks to Lithuanian revolutionaries who had a more conscious national attitude than the Russian Bolsheviks had, did the composer manage to avoid unfavorable consequences.

Created in such a grave environment, the Symphony naturally was not without a flaw. First of all, it did not meet the requirements for a four-movement classical cycle. Žilevičius had time to write only three movements; moreover, he was short of time to orchestrate his grand piano version, except for the first movement, and not completely. Nevertheless, the examination commission took into consideration the difficulties of the time and favorably evaluated this piece of music. The Art Council of the Petrograd Conservatoire at its May 27, 1919 meeting announced the list of graduates of year 54 from its program of studies, which included the author of the first Lithuanian symphony. This solemn act in the Conservatoire took place on June 7th. While handing out a graduation certificate to Žilevičius, the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Žilevičius, Suglausta autobiografija.

Rector Alexander Glazunov<sup>7</sup> said, "Sadly, in Russia, Petrograd's largest conservatoire, only one person has finished the Composition Department's degree program; moreover, a foreigner of Lithuanian origin."8 The document read that the graduate was being awarded the diploma of a free artist9 and that as soon as he receives it, he will have to return the certificate awarded to him to the Conservatoire.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, Žilevičius did not receive the diploma because the Conservatoire administration was unable to use its old, imperial template, and the new template had not been approved yet. Then, the fact did not cloud the graduate's joy, but nine years later, he had to write a letter to Glazunov asking him to confirm his graduation from the Petrograd Conservatoire, the course of music theory, and that he had reasonably earned his diploma and the title of a free artist.11 However, at the time when Žilevičius sent his letter to Leningrad, 12 Glazunov had already emigrated to the West. Luckily, Žilevičius' request did not appear in a rubbish bin – it was satisfied by the study pro-rector Alexander Ossovsky. 13

While in Petrograd, Žilevičius kept thinking of Lithuania. It feels in his Symphony, which is based on Lithuanian intonations. Although at that time in Russia, composers began creating more modern music built on the stylistics of late romanticism, impressionism or even expressionism, the young Lithuanian composer was not keen on the new trends. Apparently, he had listened to the instrumental creations of Alexander Scriabin, Sergey Proko-

Alexander Glazunov (1865–1936) – a Russian composer, conductor, professor, N. Rimsky-Korsakov's alumnus. Headed the Saint Petersburg (Petrograd) Conservatoire in 1905–1928. Later, he emigrated to France to live there until his death.

 $<sup>^{8}~</sup>$  Žilevičius. "Jo autobiografinis pasisakymas," 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> The diploma of a free artist was especially valued in Russia. Only students who had taken the course in all subjects of music theory would be awarded it.

Certificate issued to Juozas Žilevičius upon graduation of the Petrograd Conservatoire.

Juozas Žilevičius' letter to Alexander Glazunov.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> On January 26, 1924, Petrograd was renamed Leningrad.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Certificate signed by A. Ossovsky.

fiev, and had also heard about experimenting with quarter tone music; yet in his creative work, Žilevičius placed the highest priority on the genres and forms of the classicism period and on the worldview of early romanticism. He was not against modernism, he even approved of the searchers for new music harmonies, as it later turned out from his work with his students; but he never undertook any initiative in this field himself. This could be due to his constant communication with his fellow-countrymen in Russia's capital, the knowledge of their artistic taste, frequenting Lithuanian evenings where Lithuanian folk songs would rather be heard, and his less close contact with the creators of Russian contemporary music. It may well be that having just familiarized himself with classical music, Žilevičius was not psychologically prepared to shift to another stylistic epoch; furthermore, his teachers urged him to follow the guidelines drawn up by the composer Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov.<sup>14</sup> The spirit of national identity, epic dramatic composition of music, melodic thematicism, and imitational polyphony were especially close to the heart of this Russian classic. He drew inspiration from the melodies of folk songs as well.

The raging civil war and unbearable living conditions in Petrograd made many residents leave the city. Žilevičius was not short of job offers, especially in more remote locations of Russia, but he did not want to be far off from Lithuania. Žilevičius found the offer by Nikolai Malko, 15 who at that time worked in Vitebsk (Belarus) and was founding a conservatoire and a symphony orchestra there, as the most acceptable. This Russian conductor needed assistants and thus Žilevičius went to him in the fall of

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908) was a composer, establisher of traditions of the Russian national composer school, conductor, teacher. In 1871–1908, he taught composition and instrumentation at the Saint Petersburg Conservatoire.

Nikolai Malko (1883–1961) was a Russian-American conductor, teacher. In 1909, he graduated from the Saint Petersburg Conservatoire, worked in the Mariinsky Theater, in 1918–1921 in Vitebsk. From 1928 he lived in Western European countries and worked as a conductor. In 1938 he emigrated to the USA.

1919. However, his expectations for a calmer and safer life there were not realized; therefore, in April 1920, having secretly crossed the border, he found himself in Lithuania.

### Activities of a Freelance Artist in Lithuania

The beginning of Žilevičius' creative activity upon his return from Russia coincided with the reinstatement of the Lithuanian State and its development when governance structures were being formed, and theaters, schools, and different organizations were being founded. Taking up residence in Kaunas, the then capital of Lithuania,16 he immediately engaged in the activities of the Music Section of the Lithuanian Art Creators Society founded in 1920. Its membership included prominent Lithuanian musicians: Juozas Naujalis, Juozas Tallat-Kelpša, Julius Štarka and others. The members allocated responsibilities, and Žilevičius was assigned to people's general education through music.17 This sphere also encompassed founding of an Opera Theater, preparation of music programs for general education schools, initiation of the Song Festival, work in the Kaunas and Klaipėda music schools as a teacher, publication of music periodicals, and also organization of chamber and symphonic music concerts. Hence, the years 1920-1928 that he spent in Lithuania were highly intensive in terms of his social activities.

In Kaunas, Žilevičius did not attempt to create the last movement of his Symphony, contenting himself with the three movements. He did not find time to finish the piece's orchestration, asking his colleague Emerikas Gailevičius<sup>18</sup> to do that instead.

Upon the seizure of Vilnius by the Poles in 1920, the Lithuanian capital was shifted to Kaunas.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Redakcija, "Muzika," 12.

Emerikas Gailevičius (1874–1949) – a composer, conductor, teacher of the double bass and clarinet. Studied in the Warsaw Institute of Music, played in the orchestras of Riga, Moscow and Kaunas. In 1944 emigrated to the West.

When the score was ready, he started contemplating the Symphony's performance in public. Such a chance came his way soon. In the spring of 1922, General Vladas Nagevičius thought of inviting Kaunas residents to the War Museum on Sunday afternoons to listen to free chamber music concerts, assigning the task of their preparation to Žilevičius. He was to find performers and select a repertoire for them. The ensemble led by Michael Hofmekler<sup>19</sup> mostly played in the Museum. It consisted of Hofmekler's family members, friends, and opera orchestra players. With a lack of Lithuanian music, Žilevičius included movement II of his Symphony – *Andante* and an octet, "Ilgesys" (Yearning), into the concert program. The feedback on them was favorable: "The composer, in a truly masterful manner, uses the achievements of music technique and surrounds his thought with simple harmony, applying one of folk melodies."<sup>20</sup>

In the summer of 1923, Žilevičius, with memories of the music life in Petrograd still lingering in his mind, decided to undertake a new initiative – to organize a cycle of symphonic concerts in the City Garden. It was a risky idea in financial terms. The organizer resolved to take out a loan from the Kaunas Municipality in order to hire a 46 persons' orchestra led by Isaac Wildam-Zaidman<sup>21</sup> as well as to rent the City Garden since the concerts were to take place in the open air. Furthermore, the concert cycle was to comprise 32 events and to last from late May to early September, offering to the public two music evenings every

Michael Hofmekler (1898–1965) – a cellist, conductor. Studied in the Saint Petersburg Conservatoire, played in restaurants in Kaunas and in the State Opera Orchestra. During WWII was imprisoned in the Kaunas ghetto and the Dachau concentration camp. In 1949–1955 lived in in Israel, later in Munich.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Кельберг, "Симфонический концерт."

Isaac Wildman-Zaidman (1885–1941) – a cellist, conductor, teacher. In 1908, he graduated from the Saint Petersburg Conservatoire. Until 1914, he played for a number of Russian orchestras, in 1914–1919 was a teacher in the Vilnius Music School, from 1919 worked in Kaunas and founded an orchestra there. Was killed by the Nazis during WWII in Vilnius.

week. Žilevičius did attain his aim except for failing, for a number of reasons, to invite famous conductors from abroad with whom he had made arrangements in advance. Consequently, the main work load was borne by Wildman-Zaidman. He was experienced in this field having arranged the first symphonic concert in the provisional capital on March 16, 1920, and performing the symphonic poem "Miške" (In the Forest) by M. K. Čiurlionis on May 14, 1921, for the first time in Independent Lithuania. The City Garden concerts' program included pieces of world classical music. As symphonic music in Kaunas was stagnating, Žilevičius tried to introduce a very different music to the audience. He was especially worried about a concert of Lithuanian music: Would he manage to find proper pieces for it? Will they not seem greatly inferior to compositions of the grand masters? He did his best for Lithuanian pieces of music to be well received by the public and music critics.

## **Evaluation of the Symphony**

The first concert of Lithuanian symphonic music was given on July 27, 1923, and Žilevičius considered that date as one of the most important dates in the history of Lithuanian music. The concert started with his Symphony No. 1 (all the three movements), then followed Čiurlionis' symphonic poem "In the Forest", Česlovas Sasnauskas' hymn "Jau slavai sukilo" (The Slavs have already revolted) performed by a men's choir accompanied by a symphony orchestra, and two compositions by Juozas Naujalis – "Minuet" and "Nocturne", both also orchestrated by Gailevičius. Everyone worried – both the performers and Žilevičius with Naujalis, for whom it was the first chance to hear their pieces under the conductor Widman-Zaidman. The audience was listening closely, especially the music critics who shortly voiced their opinion in the periodic press. The feedback from music amateurs was mainly based on the emotions aroused by a particular

piece. One of those music amateurs to express his opinion was Arkady Press,<sup>22</sup> who wrote after the concert:

The first symphonic concert dedicated to musical works of Lithuanian composers took place in the City Garden in Kaunas. Pieces by Žilevičius, Čiurlionis and others have been performed in Vilnius, Warsaw, Petrograd. But never and nowhere has there been given a concert of pieces of music of solely Lithuanian musicians. Therefore, referring to this today, we must say that this is not just about music. This phenomenon is of particular importance not only in terms of the creation of the Lithuanian nation, but of its history and culture as well. Juozas Žilevičius' symphony - three movements - is a youthful creation of a young composer. It is the first symphony composed by a Lithuanian musician. After a soft melody, the mysterious beauty of which resembles Grieg, it is suddenly flooded by a whole flow of sounds, like a waterfall breaking through a rock - it foams, boils, turns stones, sprinkles water dust in the air. Then the main theme sings again, drowned by the storming flow again, etc. A fresh, weird feeling fills up the young soul, pushes through the edges, and the artist has no strength to hold it. Even in the second, "slow" movement of the Symphony, passionate breakthroughs cut their way out to the surface, whereas in the third - scherzo movement, the trick turns into a winners' march to break suddenly in C major. In short, this is a symphony of youth. There is no movement four, and this is only natural - one should not feel excited for too long. But Mr. Žilevičius' power is not in the feelings and themes themselves, not even in the acceleration of sound but in the exquisite development of themes, in the mastery of form. The development of instrumental parts, in the first movement in particular, is proper at all times, the counterpoint is very good, and strict form can be felt everywhere. From this perspective, Mr. Žilevičius' Symphony is a totally mature piece of music. It was orchestrated by Mr. Gailevičius. He did his complex job well, but at powerful places when the whole orchestra is playing, it

Arkady Press (1870–1952) – a lawyer, graduate of Saint Petersburg University. Worked as a publicist and literary worker with different Russian periodicals, wrote short stories and tales. From 1923 lived in Lithuania, in 1925 relocated to Finland.

is almost impossible to avoid a stifling of sounds [...]. At the end of the first movement, violins were suppressed by trumpets. Mr. Zaidman, the conductor, barely managed to hold the sounds gushing from all sides. It looked like he was fighting with his orchestra. Generally speaking, Mr. Gailevičius' orchestration provided the orchestra with huge power and expressiveness.<sup>23</sup>

The review by the musician Viktoras Žadeika<sup>24</sup> was much more comprehensive. It enabled one to better understand the themes chosen by the composer and their character:

The first concert of symphonic music by solely Lithuanian composers took place on July 27. It is a significant event; it can be considered a historical one as it provides a foundation for the development of our symphonic music. It was not performed in a philharmonic society but in a simple garden, on an open stage, due to which, of course, it was less impressive; however, given the current circumstances, this can be justified. The largest composition in this concert was Symphony No.1 by J. Žilevičius, although it, that Symphony, is not yet complete (it lacks one more movement, in terms of its classical form); however, its present movements suggest it to be the only such capacious piece in Lithuanian symphonic music. Having listened or seen its score just once, it is hard to analyze it in greater detail. The first movement, Allegro moderato, is based on the folk song motif "Vai liūdnas liūdnas" (Sad oh sad). The theme is beautiful in itself, just the processing of the technique with respect to the leitmotifs has not been used to the full. This movement also suffers from weak orchestration – the insufficient harmony between separate groups of instruments; the conductor's lack of sufficient absorption in the movement left the audience with a less favorable impression. The second movement, Andante, is built on the motif "Vaikščiojau vaikščiojau po žalią girelę" (I was Walking and Walking in a Green Forest) which is fully compatible with the quiet character of this movement and has been used precisely by the author.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Пресс, "Театр и искусство. Музыкальная Литва."

Viktoras Žadeika (1892–1972) – a choir leader, teacher, musicologist, graduate of the Warsaw Institute of Music. In 1919–1940, he lived in Lithuania, from 1941 in Germany, from 1944 to his death in Poland.

The performance of this theme is excellent and shows the author's independence. This movement can undoubtedly be attributed to the best of its kind. The orchestra, too, has performed it carefully. The last movement is *Allegretto*. Its theme is "Du broliukai kunigai" (My Two Brothers Priests). The theme itself barely corresponds to the vivid character of this movement, although the author manages pretty well to create certain places original and characteristic. Generally speaking, Žilevičius' first steps in the creation of the largest form in music as a composer are very satisfying and we just need to wish him more energy for that great cultural work, and with this Symphony, he joins the first ranks of Lithuanian composers.<sup>25</sup>

Žilevičius did not content himself with this event. He was concerned with a broader distribution of Lithuanian music and of his Symphony as well. Therefore, he decided to organize more concerts of Lithuanian music in the Kaunas City Garden. They were given on August 14 and September 4. The latter concert concluded the whole cycle of 32 evenings of symphonic music. Žilevičius' Symphony was never performed in Lithuania again. There have been rumors that it was once performed by Juozas Karosas<sup>26</sup> on the Riga Radiophone, but this information has not yet been verified.

In the summer of 1924, Žilevičius relocated to Klaipėda, taking employment in the music school founded by Stasys Šimkus. He took the score of the Symphony with him and stored it in the school's library. In January 1929, he went to the USA with his wife and daughter to collect material for his archive, planning to return after three years; he thus took with him just his major documents, leaving his Symphony in Klaipėda. However, due to family circumstances, he had to postpone his trip back. The outbreak of WWII and the following Soviet occupation barred all ways for returning to the homeland.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Žadeika, "Simfoninė lietuvių muzika," 5.

Juozas Karosas (1890–1981) – an organist, composer, conductor, teacher. In 1921–1927, he studied in the Riga Conservatoire, put on concerts with Lithuanian and Latvian choirs. From 1930 lived in Lithuania.

# The Pain of Loss and the Joy of Discovery

Žilevičius deeply regretted having not taken the score of his Symphony with him. He tried to look for it yet without a success. It may have burnt during the war in Šiauliai where the Klaipėda Music School had relocated as early as 1939 with all its assets. The composer asked for help from people who were going to the Soviet Union, but they showed no particular interest in the lost score. Žilevičius had to put up with the loss and forget about his symphony for good. However, this was not the end of the story of the first Lithuanian symphony.

While collecting material for my research papers in the Juozas Žilevičius-Juozas Kreivėnas archive of Lithuanian music in Chicago, I unexpectedly came upon a manuscript of the musical composition in question – an entire fragment of the 190 bars score of the first movement. I was overfilled with joy as the exposition and development discovered meant the possibility to reconstruct the recapitulation and thus to reproduce the entire movement of the composition. Upon returning home, I told the news to some musicians, yet their reaction was pretty reserved. I was neither in the mood of reconstructing the piece nor had financial possibilities at the time. Consequently, there was nothing I could do but put the fragment of the score brought over on a shelf and lose the hope that the piece might ever be performed again.

However, many years later, I shared the information about my past experience with my friends on Facebook. The news brought a prompt response from Rūta Prusevičienė, Director of the Lithuanian State Philharmonic Society. She asked me to send her the fragment of the score. As a musicologist with a huge experience of a manager and organizer of music events, she instantly realized how important it was to preserve this Lithuanian cultural heritage. We just needed to find financial resources. I applied to the Lithuanian Composer's Union, and the latter – to the Lithuanian Council for Culture. And the request was satisfied. Prusevičienė passed the manuscript of the score to the compos-

er Arvydas Malcys,<sup>27</sup> a cellist for the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra, asking him to prepare the piece for concert performance. The Philharmonic Society Director's choice was not accidental. Malcys had been playing with the Orchestra as of 1979, he was well aware of its specifics, created symphonic music himself, and orchestrated more than one musical composition by Čiurlionis for this Orchestra. Reconstructing Žilevičius' symphony was not too difficult for him: he just had to, based on the exposition, reconstruct the reprise and highlight the sound of individual instrumental groups, set the most appropriate tempos, put a hand on the metro-rhythmic patterns, and put the necessary accents and dynamic marks. The job took a lot of precious time, but Malcys came up with an excellent result, reconstructing 110 bars and preparing a digital score.

After almost 95 years since the first performance of Žilevičius' Symphony, the first movement of this piece was performed again on March 9 in Kaunas and March 10, 2018 in Vilnius. The audience found particularly memorable its main lyrical theme – the Nordic restrained melody performed with wooden wind instruments. It is not opposed to the second theme, it just acquires, when being developed, some dramatic features and becomes the main engine of the musical thought. There was no lack of culminating points here either, like torrents of the waterfall described by Press, which Malcys did not suppress but probably strengthened even more. In the subsequent "tides", one could hear intonations characteristic of Čiurlionis that suggest to us the musical thinking of the Lithuanians in the early twentieth century. The Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra was conducted by Modestas Barkauskas,<sup>28</sup> who suggestively highlighted

Arvydas Malcys (\*1957) – a composer, cellist. In 1980 finished cello studies, in 1989 – composition studies in the Lithuanian State Conservatoire (now the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theater).

Modestas Barkauskas (\*1982) – a choir and orchestra conductor. In 2013, completed Master Studies in the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theater, the symphony orchestra conductor class. In 2016, recognized as the best young artist and awarded with the Golden Stage Cross Award. In 2017, he won 3rd prize in the 10<sup>th</sup> International Competition for Conductors in Katowice (Poland).

the line of the composer's musical thought and conveyed the artistic entirety of the piece in general terms. The piece has been recorded and the record can be heard on the radio today.

Many may wonder why Žilevičius did not try to complete his first symphony or compose another one. We can only guess that composing large-form cyclical compositions was not easy for him; that is why he mainly composed songs. He did not consider himself a composer and confessed to that to his friend Konradas Kaveckas:

I only compose what is necessary today. I am not eager to compose for tomorrow – I don't feel the calling for that. I only want to work in my favorite field, Lithuanian music history.<sup>29</sup>

Having realized his main mission as a musicologist, Žilevičius has produced mostly in the fields of music history and ethnology. The Symphony remained for him just a recollection of his impetuous youth.

### **Conclusions**

The multiple activities of Žilevičius laid the foundations for Lithuanian music culture. His only symphony, on the one hand, can be called a composition of misery as it was composed in the Bolshevik revolution-devastated Petrograd and was lost during WWII in Lithuania without a trace. On the other hand, it is a composition marked with joy. It sounded thrice in prewar Kaunas and, like a phoenix which rose from the ashes, – one more time in the early twenty-first century. It is a perfect example of folk romanticism illustrating the thought of the young Lithuanian composer: thematic exposition and development of music, the change in the initial idea and its revision, harmonization of dramatic conflict and lyrical epic character, and links with the sung folklore. This piece of music fills the large gap in Lithuanian

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Kaveckas, "Juozas Žilevičius," 69.

music history and reveals the beginnings of symphonic music within the context of the development of the national composer school. It is solely a matter of Lithuanian musicians themselves whether it will become established in the repertoire of different orchestras, represent Lithuanian music abroad, and supplement the study programs of conservatoires and higher schools.

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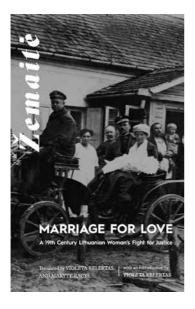
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Translated by KERRY SHAWN KEYS and DALIA ŠATIENĖ

# Žemaitė Revealed in English



Žemaitė Marriage for Love: A 19th Century Lithuanian Woman's Fight for Justice

translated by Violeta Kelertas and Maryte Racys (with an introduction by Violeta Kelertas)

Los Angeles: Birchwood Press, 2020, 313 pp.

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For the English-speaking reader to grasp the phenomenon of Žemaitė (real name Julija Beniuševičiūtė-Žymantienė, 1845–1921), who initiated literary prose fiction in the Lithuanian language, it may help to consider an analogous figure in Western culture. Professor Dalia Leinarte compares Žemaitė—a penniless nineteenth-century farm woman whose works became classics of Lithuanian literature and who distinguished herself as a feminist activist against patriarchy and all kinds of injustice—to Virginia Woolf. Žemaitė, Prof. Leinarte observes in her back cover en-

dorsement, "created her own self, becoming a pillar of the national literature and a source of inspiration for generations of women." Woolf's legacy in England is comparable to that of Žemaitė, and Jane Austen and Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell may likewise qualify.

Marriage for Love: A 19th Century Lithuanian Woman's Fight for Justice, published this year in the United States, compiles selected works of Žemaitė. The translators of the book, Violeta Kelertas and Maryte Racys, included Žemaitė's Autobiography, which she began writing in her old age and did not finish. The text, unique for its time, testifies to the power of her literary talent, which shone through despite the unfortunate and hostile circumstances in which knowledge-thirsty young Julija was denied a proper education and later, when she married an alcoholic husband, a comfortable life. Literary critic Brigita Speičytė argues that Žemaite's unsuitable (and in all sense of that matter, unequal) marriage to a former serf, Laurynas Žymantas, nevertheless enabled Žemaitė to experience Lithuanian peasant culture first-hand and to later write about it, from both the inside and the outside. In her later years, Žemaitė, by then a well-known writer and activist, wore in public the headscarf typical of rural women of the time, demonstrating her unfaltering empathy for the lower classes.

The *Autobiography* vividly pictures the times in which Žemaitė lived, including some historical events of the nineteenth century. Her life's story inhabitants are Polish-speaking nobility, Lithuanian-speaking gentry, villagers, and peasants. Žemaitė writes from first-hand experience about the 1863 uprising against tsarist Russia, during which she supplied and supported the rebels and which had a huge impact on the nobility of that time. In the *Autobiography*, Žemaitė remembers the uprising as a fulfilling and inspiring time that strongly marked her and her generation. Later, in one of her letters, Žemaitė wrote that perhaps it was during the uprising when she began dreaming of becoming a writer. According to literary critic Viktorija Daujotytė, the transformation from a Lithuanian farm woman, Julija Žymantienė, into writer Žemaitė shows itself in the final paragraphs of her *Autobiography*. Žemaitė

writes about her first encounter with the Lithuanian newspaper *Aušra* [Dawn]. She remembers how she tore from her neighbor Povilas Višinskis's hands a publication and, looking it over, could not contain her astonishment: "The newspaper Aušra in book form, the whole year's copies, sewn together." (p. 176) "Žemaitiškai," she shouted in surprise, leafing through it, reading it, and not believing her own eyes. Žemaitė's hands were shaking.

About a third of the Žemaitė's *Autobiography* is devoted to her husband Laurynas and his life. The writer made the unusual choice to retell her husband's life in his and not her own voice. Kelertas notes in notes of the introduction that with very few Russian-era serf narratives available, Žemaitė's account constitutes "a valuable historical document that is rich in detailed description, easily flowing and full of narrated events and actions." (p. 9)

It is unfortunate that the conclusion of the *Autobiography* is both somewhat rushed and unfinished. What is omitted, Kelertas observes, are the years after her husband's death, which would have covered the writer's activism in feminist and political affairs, her relations with other female writers, the writing and editing of her works and her journey to the United States during World War I. According to Kelertas, Žemaitė started writing her *Autobiography* while in America, where she traveled extensively from 1916 to 1921, giving speeches and advocating for relief from the famine and suffering in war-torn Lithuania. While in the US, the writer joined with and was very active in the progressive movement of the Lithuanian-American women—"Lietuvių moterų progresyvus susivienijimas Amerikoje"—and wrote for the magazine "Moters balsas" [Woman's Voice].

Ten photos included in the book show Žemaitė in Lithuania and the United States. From the latter locale are photos of the writer with her son Antanas Žymantas in Chicago ca. 1918, and of Žemaitė with her friends and patrons, Dr. Andrius Bulota and his wife Aleksandra, also in Chicago ca. 1916. All photos, with the exception of the photo on the cover of *Marriage for Love*, were drawn from the archives of the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, in Vilnius.

In the book cover endorsement, Professor Daiva Markelis characterizes Žemaitė as a revolutionary thinker and activist who "unflinchingly depicted the plight of women and other members of the underclass through her short stories and speeches." Having experienced the misery and poverty of a peasant life with an alcoholic husband, seven children and no money, Žemaitė used every opportunity to depict the hardships that a woman must endure. Two of her speeches, "The Injustices Done to Village Girls" and "The Second Day's Speech," which Žemaitė delivered at the first Women's Congress in Kaunas in 1907, are included in the collection. The speeches were delivered on consecutive days in a packed hall, and aimed to point to the injustice of the tradition of arranged marriage and to expose the drinking problem of young and old, and men and women. As a speaker, Žemaitė was known for her eloquence and persuasiveness both of which can be appreciated in the English translations. The speeches included in the collection also portray the situation of women in the early 20th-century Lithuania.

From the very rich corpus of Žemaitė's 354 short stories, the translators chose two stories that are well-known among the Lithuanian readers and most appreciated by literary critics. The first "Petras Kurmelis," opens with a scene of dawn breaking slowly on a Lithuanian farm. The first paragraph captures the beauty of nature and at the same time creates an atmosphere setting the stage for what is about to happen. "For Žemaitė," Kelertas notes, "nature is certainly as important as the human characters in her created world." (p. 7). In "Petras Kurmelis," the author deploys onomatopoeia as a poetic device, imitating the calls of birds in the forest.

The main and eponymous character of the story, Petras Kurmelis, a hard-working man, follows his authoritarian mother's advice and marries for a dowry. But marriage does not bring happiness. Petras marries the neighbor's daughter Marcė, who comes from a family of thieves and swindlers, and is lazy besides. Kurmelis starts drowning his unhappiness in vodka, constantly reproaching his dead mother for advising him to seek money

and not a loving wife. Kelertas observes that if at first the writer's attention is focused only on Petras—his money, work, and liquor—later in the story, she introduces meaningful conflicts of values. The reader begins to see Petras' wife Marcè in a different light, as a woman in love with another man but sold by her parents to the highest bidder, Petras.

A woman is at the center of almost all Žemaitė's works, as in the second short story in the collection, "The Daughter-In-Law." The story also revolves around the traditional practices of match-making and arranged marriage in Lithuania, but this time Žemaitė focuses entirely on Kotrė, a refined woman, who marries into a family of crass and filthy people, who lack the slightest empathy. Although, Kelertas notes, the depictions of Kotrė's inlaws, the Vingises, are somewhat hyperbolized and dramatized, and sometimes abut caricature, the writer successfully conveys what a cruel and antiquated tradition that disregards the feeling of a woman does to a young girl and her entire life. Daujotytė argues that Kotrė is the first female character in Lithuanian literature, who rose against the confines and the darkness of patriarchy.

The story "The Daughter-In-Law" also exemplifies yet another Žemaitė's literary device: dialogues. The first four pages of the story, which contain nothing but an exchange between the Vingises, were skillfully translated by Kelertas and Racys. Daujotytė observes that the plots and the problems depicted in Žemaitė's works are not original; most of them came from the Polish female writers. For Daujotytė, Žemaitė's language and powerful and spontaneous energy are felt in every word, every sentence, and every dialogue and constitute the main features of Žemaitė's prose fiction. The critic further extols Žemaitė's language as fresh, natural, and free.

Žemaitė grew up in a Polish-speaking household and knew Polish literary language but chose to write in Lithuanian, in the Lowland dialect (Lith. *žemaitiškai*). Kelertas notes that the Lithuanian language was not standardized until after Žemaitė's death in the 1920s, and therefore initially the writer wrote as she spoke, "continuously feeling her way, insecure as to spelling, narrative

technique, and literary discourse requirements." (p. 4) One more interesting and potentially confounding detail: Žemaitė's works have gone through multiple rounds of censorship and editing and have appeared in various mutilated versions. The translators of this collection have kept faith with the original manuscripts as much as possible and have reinstated censored fragments omitted from other editions.

Translating Žemaitė is a daunting task. The translators of *Marriage for Love* had to make many difficult choices and experiment a lot. Maryte Racys remembers that "work on the dialect included experimentation with a southern Ontario tobacco migrant workers' language to imitate the oral qualities of her writing for the coarse flavor in "The Daughter-In-Law." (p. 304) The translators ultimately decided that the choice of a southern Ontario tobacco migrant workers' language did not do justice to Žemaitė's short story, because thus translated, the Vingises sounded like people of a much lower social status that they are in the original text. In the end, the translators adhered to the original text as much as possible.

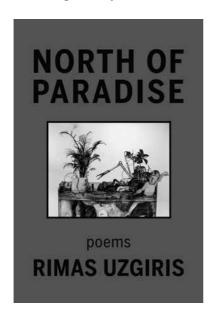
A few words must be said about the translators of this book. The book expresses Violeta Kelertas' and Maryte Racys' admiration and respect for Žemaitė and her legacy. Kelertas, currently an Affiliated Professor at the University of Washington in Seattle, has long been interested in Žemaitė. She jokes that the path leading her to Žemaitė was set before her in early childhood when she read the short story "Petras Kurmelis." She remembers reading about Marcė, whom other characters called lazy, and thinking to herself: "My mom calls me lazy, too. I really do not want to become a lazy person. How do I avoid it?" Kelertas began researching Žemaitė's works when she was pursuing her Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In her thesis, Kelertas posed Žemaitė's works as an example of the Lithuanian oral language. Her dissertation research included translating one of Žemaitė's short stories, "Sučiuptas velnias" [The Devil Captured]. In 1978, Kelertas went to Lithuania to do research for three months. While in Lithuania, she read Žemaitė's manuscripts and discussed her works with Lithuanian linguists researching Žemaitė. In her later job as the PLB Endowed Chair of Lithuanian Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Kelertas professional interest in Žemaitė gave way to teaching and other academic tasks. In 2008, Kelertas' return to Žemaitė was supported by the Bernice Kellogg Translation Fellowship at UW. Bernice Kellogg of San Mateo, California, greatly admired Žemaitė and wished to see a book of Žemaitė available for English readers.

The fact that Maryte Racys, a librarian at the Seattle Public Library, is Žemaitė's great-granddaughter tells a lot but not everything. Her mother, Rožė Jarytė-Račienė, had never spoken to her about her famous grandmother. The first time a teenager Racys heard about Žemaitė was in Ontario, where one day Žemaitė's collected works landed anonymously at the doorstep of a tobacco farm where she lived. When Racys visited the homeland of her parents, a desire to translate her great-grandmother's works rose into her mind. Many years later, she met Professor Kelertas, and a Žemaitė translation partnership was born.

Even given the importance of Žemaitė's literary and feminist legacy to a broad group of readers beyond Lithuanian-Americans, three American academic publishing houses refused to publish the book. The LA-based publishing house "Birchwood Press," founded by Birutė Putrius, published the collection at the outset of 2020. *Marriage for Love: A 19th Century Lithuanian Woman's Fight for Justice* is available in three formats: hard cover, paperback and eBook.

DALIA CIDZIKAITĖ

### **Dancing Poetry**



Rimas Uzgiris
North of Paradise

American Fork, Utah: Kelsay Books, 2019

While the older generation of displaced persons were nostalgically singing, "Leiskit į tėvynę" (Let us return home) and expecting to return soon, their children were growing up, some rejecting their ethnicity and disappearing into the American melting pot, others questioning their Lithuanian roots, but accepting them, especially by learning the Lithuanian language, however imperfectly, as well as imbibing various aspects of their background at home and at Saturday schools, at summer camps and higher level seminars. The poet, philosopher, translator, professor at Vilnius University, Rimas Uzgiris can be considered one of the quintessential examples of not only having been connected to the community of Lithuanians in the USA for most of his 50 years, but has now been settled in Vilnius for the last seven vears. There are not that many of his generation who have done this. Most of the returnees have been retired seniors who contribute less to the rebuilding of the country than do those who are younger and of working age.

Playing a major part in translating his fellow poets' work from Lithuanian into English, he has published five books and two chapbooks of his translated work as well as contributing significantly to two anthologies. Admirably he has found publishers for these books in mostly British venues. Uzgiris writes his own poetry in his native English. His recent book, *North of Paradise*, is a moving, and at the same time a sophisticated poetry collection which brings much to the bevy of new Baltic books of fiction and, more rarely, of poetry in English. Thus thanks to his prolific work on several fronts he makes various kinds of Lithuanian thematics increasingly available to readers scattered across several continents.

What I find very appealing about his book, *North of Paradise*, is its genre that has no name, probably because of its rarity, but that I would call *Bildungspoetry*, rather than the common *Bildungsroman*, because the collection traces the trajectory of a poet, born in the United States, who received all his schooling (Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, MFA in creative writing at Rutgers-Newark University) in the United States, yet now, having reversed his parents' journey across the Atlantic ocean, teaches and lives in Vilnius with his wife, a noted Lithuanian artist, Monika Furmana.

In a way, Uzgiris embodies the experience of many of us children of second-wave parents who came to North America around 1948–51, born and raised in Lithuanian families in exile, who have often felt rejected by the local Americans and Canadians for our unpronounceable names, our "strange" food and habits, our until recently non-existent country, or our immigrant status. Thus I read about his sincerely shared journey in poetic form not only with interest, and ended up being totally charmed by many aspects of the book and came to consider him a great poet, much removed from many predecessors who wrote about exile and about the suffering they left behind, conveying the reality of a Lithuania under Soviet occupation, like our famed Tomas Venclova often does with dispassionate, elegant lines, of

course, but in a more unemotional, classical manner. In contrast, Uzgiris comes across as light-hearted, aware of the heritage of injustice and trauma, but definitely a child of an age without war, without apparent psychic injury, though as he avers in the epigraphs even in his American high school he was called "that poor foreign boy" by a teacher, even though he was born here. He is able to laugh it off and gives the impression that he is not traumatized by his American life. In fact, there is something about his versification that is lilting and musical, as if he is dancing and only incidentally doing so in words, retaining the movement and rhythm of dance forms like the tango, especially pertinent to the poem, "Mind the Gap." All the devices of poetic language are there, internal and external rhyme used liberally, though sometimes free verse prevails, however, his graceful style of writing is something new in poetry by someone who self-identifies as a semi-exile, certainly proud of his Lithuanian descent, but definitely a member of a new generation. He says, "I live / in between the lines / Maps cannot contain me. / Son of refugees. English is my house."

In the first part of the book, "Past Imperfective," we get to know the American Uzgiris, growing up in New York State, among family and relatives, searching for an identity and a future, sharing his experiences, the effects of his surroundings, his education, some of his loves, revealing much about himself which leads to a feeling of intimacy, a sense that the reader knows him well. I appreciate this lyrical, warm self-revelation: this poetry of a life lived is not obtuse, but contemplative, discovering the world and himself in it, and communicating it to us. It may be intellectual at times, but it is unaffected and heartfelt. Many of the poems are dedicated to persons important in his life, one of them his maternal grandfather, Valteris Lendraitis (1908–2001), whose life is also biographized in a rather novel manner. In this longest and most ambitious poem, "Shards of One World," the poet is able to depict his forebear's complicated existence through wars and occupations, through DP camps and migration to the United States,

ingeniously punctuated by quotes from the "Internationale" (in several translations, including that by Billy Bragg, the British songwriter and activist), from the Lithuanian national anthem, the German anthem, and our "Star Spangled Banner" and "America the Beautiful" that not only orient the reader chronologically, but also comment ironically on the times the grandfather had to live through. It is a beautiful tribute and achievement, and it mirrors that generation's tortuous path in life that many of us can relate to with respect to our elders and reach a better understanding of their battles and deep and often dangerous experiences. This section of the book then ends with a confessional poem, "Exile Still Becoming," that reflects Uzgiris's own much less difficult road travelled. "I was raised in a vague suburb ... a rootless tree ... tucked tightly under my arm / my one piece of luggage / the distant memory of a song / sung in a different language / from the one in which / I write to become who I am."

The second section of the book, entitled "Present Continuous," turns to impressions of Lithuania, the people and the poet's life there as an exile, a stranger about to become an immigrant. His realizations and insights are many; some are realistic, others contain deeper meanings, all are interesting. Especially ambiguous is the villanelle, "A Potato on a Mine," covering Lithuania's history from an unusual angle, employing our proclivity for potatoes, and briefly summarizing ancient times to render our geopolitical position, so tempting to our neighbors over the centuries, enclosed in the inescapably insecure place, "sitting on a [land] mine" that we find ourselves in, regardless of historical time.

...It may suit some to see their country as a shrine, but whatever song, slogan or lore they may contrive, Lithuania is a potato sitting on a mine.

Is it any wonder that Lithuania turned to rhyme in order for their ancient language to survive, when ravens wrangled (cutting, burning) countless times? Still we eat our potatoes while sitting on a mine. (p. 74)

There are many golden nuggets in Rimas Uzgiris's poetry to enchant one. He can be playful, soulful, insightful, never doleful, and his work will be attractive to all generations of Lithuanian readers, but his poetry can serve equally well for English speakers as an introduction to our exile life after the war as well as to the Lithuania of today. Good poetry is universally appealing. It is exciting to discover a new, engaging voice in our midst and to wait for more from someone who I have no doubt will come to be regarded as one of our major poets.

VIOLETA KELERTAS University of Washington

### RAMUNĖ ŠMIGELSKYTĖ-STUKIENĖ

# Clan Middleton of Scotland in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania During the Eighteenth Century: Paths of Immigrant Settlement and Career of Augustin Middleton

The article is an analysis of how the Scottish Middleton family made their way into the gentry of Lithuanian Grand Duchy. Focusing on the career of Peter and Andrew Middleton, the author concludes that they chose two regular ways: serving in the estates of powerful noblemen and/or joining the military forces. A guarantee of success was leaving the ranks of evangelical Lutherans and becoming Catholics.

#### VIOLETA KATINIENĖ

## "They" and "I": Between Fantasy and Reality

This article explores the novels written by two notable critics of totalitarianism: *Vilniaus Pokeris* (1989) by Ričardas Gavelis, and "*Ich*" (1993) by Wolfgang Hilbig. The comparison of these two works opens up an interlingual and intercultural dialogue, allows us to see in them international, intellectual and historical intertwining. Both novels depict in a satirical way the actualities of late Soviet-era society while raising complicated existential questions.

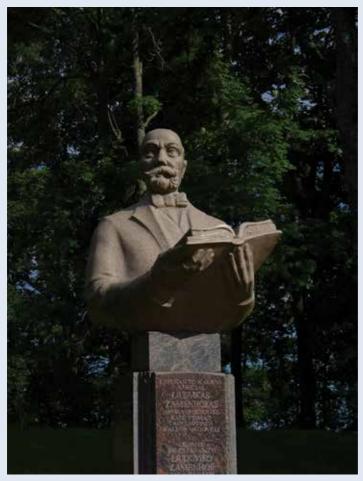
## DANUTĖ PETRAUSKAITĖ

## The First Lithuanian Symphony: Author, Composition, Performance, Context

The article analyzes the context in which the first Lithuanian symphony originated. The author discusses its cultural importance as well as flaws while overviewing the career of its composer.

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Monument to Ludwik L. Zamenhof, the founder of Esperanto in Veisiejai

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FRONT COVER: St. George Catholic Church in Veisiejai. Photo by Almantas Samalavičius