LITHUANIA'S ROAD to EUROPE

Edvardas GUDAVIČIUS
Lithuanian Institute of History

Europe is the only continent of the world which is actually devoid of typical continent features: it is merely a peninsula of Eurasia, hardly exceeding the Indian sub-continent or Arabia in size. It was the history and certain geopolitical factors rather than geographical ones that made Europe a continent. Therefore when dealing with the historical Europe one must always bear in mind its state in a particular space and at a particular time.

Lithuania's historical path led to the political area, referred to as Faustian by Oswald Spengler, as Western by A. J. Toynbee, as the civilization of the European West by Jacques Le Goff. The formation of that area as a civilization was complete by ca. 1000 AD.¹ It was extending eastwards and northwards, and eventually Lithuania joined it.² The border of Lithuania eastern coincided approximately with that of the civilization of the European West; and Lithuania itself became a part of Western Europe, an area dependant on that civilization.³

The historical development of Central Europe was belated; Henryk Samsonowicz even characterised it as the 'Wild West' of Europe.⁴ As for Lithuania, it was particularly overdue in that process: it underwent analogous developments as had already taken place a thousand years earlier in Western Europe and five hundred years before in Central Europe.⁵ Although one could argue about the number of years or the differences of estimation, the repetition of the same pattern is well worth noting. That was asserted by Henryk Łowmiański in discussing social relations, and that comparison of his is of great importance: in this context Lithuania is placed on the same plane with other European countries, located to the west of it. This is a remarkable statement, because social relations are crucial in the characteristics of any civilization.

¹ J. Le Goff. *Kultura średniowiecznej Europy*. Warszawa, 1995, 68.

² Ibid. 78, 159.

³ A. Bumblauskas. Litauen und Mitteleuropa oder Über die Verwendung des Begriffes „Mitteleuropa“ in der gegenwärtigen litauischen Geschichtswissenschaft. *Der Ginghobaum. Germanistisches Jahrbuch für Nordeuropa*. Vierzehnte Folge, 1996, 57-65.

⁴ H. Samsonowicz. *Dziedzictwo średniowiecza. Mity i rzeczywistość*. Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków, 1991, 34.

⁵ H. Łowmiański. *Studja nad początkami społeczeństwa i państwa litewskiego*. Wilno, t. 1, 1931, viii.

From this point of view, Lithuania, although not yet belonging to Western European civilization, was nevertheless part of it, differing only by the level of its development. Medieval Europe evolved on the universally accepted basis of private property (*allodium*), with land being in the absolute possession of the immediate producer - that was a unique phenomenon (with the exception of Japan⁶) in the history of mankind in terms of place and time.⁷ In Western Europe society and state originated as a result of the synthesis of the destroyed ancient Classical and Germanic tribal relations.⁸ In Central Europe states of that type were established as so-called „tribal duchies”⁹ in the ninth and tenth centuries.¹⁰ In Lithuania that variant was realized in the 13th century.¹¹

Lithuania was the last country to adhere to Central Europe, and correspondingly to the Western civilization of Europe. Central Europe evolved in the ninth-tenth centuries, the formation of its states and their conversion to Christianity (the latter sanctioning their integration into the European political system) were actually simultaneous processes. They took place at the end of the early Middle Ages, in Le Goff's words, before the very emergence of 'the Christian world', assigned by him to the period between the 9th and 13th centuries.¹² Lithuania was baptized in the late Middle Ages, characterized by Le Goff as a crisis of Christian Europe,¹³ and by Johan Huizinga as the autumn of the Middle Ages (14th-15th cent.).¹⁴ Thus, the case of Lithuania is a phenomenon of belated history.¹⁵ It must also be borne in mind that throughout the whole of Central Europe the process of integration did not proceed smoothly and was often interrupted by reversals.¹⁶ Nevertheless, it was the elimination of those reversals rather than the reversals proper that distinguished the historical development of the-

⁶ Kh.Goro. *Istoriia iaponskogo naroda*. Moskva, 1957, 36-46. Bloch, Marc. *Společnost feudalne*. Warszawa, 1981, 341, 564, 647, 654.

⁷E. Gudavičius. *Lietuvos kelias į pasaulio istoriją. Lietuvos istorijos studijos*. T. 2, Vilnius, 1994, 94-95.

⁸A. I. Neusykhin. *Vozniknovenie zavisimogo krest'anstva kak klassa rannefeodal'nogo obshchestva v Zapadnoi Evrope VI-VIII vv.* Moskva, 1956.

⁹V. Proházka. La tribu, la principauté primitive de l'état féodal chez les slaves d'entre l'Elbe et la Baltique. *L'Europe aux IXe-XIe siècles. Aux origines des Etats nationaux*. Varsovie, 1968, 371-389; K. Modzelewski. *Le système des villages de „ministeriales” dans l'organisation économique de l'état polonais aux X-e - XVII-e siècles*. Warszawa, 1977, 27.

¹⁰A. Bartha. *Barbarian and early feudal societies on the fringes of Europe*. Budapest, 1970.

¹¹H. Łowmiański. *Studja...*, t. 1; t. 2, 1932.

¹²Le Goff. *Kultura...*, 73-117.

¹³*Ibid.*, 119-123.

¹⁴J. Huizinga. *Viduramžių ruduo*. Vilnius, 1996.

¹⁵Kultūrinė situacija. Vakarai ir Lietuva. II (L. Donskis). *Metmenys*, no. 65, 1993, 116.

¹⁶F. Dvornik. *The making of Central and Eastern Europe*. London, 1949, 101, 114, 233; Biciński, Janusz. *Państwo Mieclawa*. Warszawa, 1963.

se countries. The history of the most peripheral Lithuania was different, though certain facts lead to the revision of the evaluative stereotypes, going back to the end of the early Middle Ages.

At the beginning of the eleventh century two high-ranking missionaries - St Adalbert (Wojciech) and Bruno - perished in the Baltic lands. St Adalbert was killed in Prussia. His mission is considered to have been organized by Bolesław Chrobry as an attempt to conquer the Prussians, who had not yet reached their statehood and were powerless in the struggle for independent self-determined baptism.¹⁷ Even Stanisław Mielczarski, not rejecting that assumption, indicates the interests of Poland, the disunity among the Prussians and the 'union with the Polish state'.¹⁸ While accepting such points of view, we must note, nevertheless, that they are also significant in adopting an analogous attitude towards St Bruno's mission. The most important point is that Quedlinburg chronicles are not duly taken into account in indicating Prussia or Sudovia as the place where the saint perished.¹⁹ St Bruno lost his life in Lithuania - it is essential that he found here a strong rule of a tribal chieftain, whom he baptized.²⁰ These events change the hitherto prevalent interpretation of the relationship of Lithuania with Western Europe before the thirteenth century. At that time the political structure and a rather great distance to Germany and Poland created a certain alternative of Lithuania as a political subject. The act of baptism attests to the presence of such an alternative; the murder of St Bruno indicates its feebleness. The negative aftermath of those efforts isolated Lithuania from Western Europe for two more centuries. Nevertheless it is possible to speak about the first act of Lithuanian baptism, chronologically coinciding with similar acts of other Central European countries at the end of the early Middle Ages. In Lithuania, however, there was no state power at that time, and a step was taken backwards, while in all other countries that deviation was overcome.

In the pagan countries St Bruno was the only archbishop with such special authority after St Boniface.²¹ The baptism of the tribal chieftain Netimeras took place still under the ideological conditions of the reformation of the Roman Empire of Otto III, when the rights

¹⁷J. Powierski. Św. Wojciech w Polsce i w Prusach. *Komunikaty mazursko-warmińskie*. Nr 4, 1966, 559-584; —. Krytyka koncepcji o decydującym znaczeniu ekspansji z zewnątrz dla opóźnienia rozwoju politycznego prusów. *Acta baltico-slavica*. T. 11, 1977, 277-307; —. *Stosunki polsko-pruskie do 1230 r. ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem roli Pomorza Gdańskiego*. Toruń, 1968.

¹⁸S. Mielczarski. *Misja pruska świętego Wojciecha*. Gdańsk, 1967, 52, 59.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 136; F. Dvornik. The making..., 134, 212-213.

²⁰E. Gudavičius. Šv. Brunono misija. *Darbai ir dienos*, vol. 3(12), 1996, p. 115-128.

²¹F. Blanke. Die Preussenmission vor der Ankunft des Deutschen Ordens. *Deutsche Staatenbildung und deutsche Kultur im Preussenlande*. Königsberg, 1931, p. 45.

of the new political subjects were recognized.²² St Bruno, in accordance with the viewpoint of the contemporary society, also considered that conversion to Christianity had to be effected under any conditions, even under duress; however that did not preclude the option of the pagan rulers from being baptized.²³ According to the conception of the renewal of the Empire, baptism of that kind was actually the main course of action of spreading the Christian faith. The Crusades, however, excluded that possibility. The Lithuanian state appeared at the time when the baptism of pagan countries was conceived only as their conquest.²⁴ Namely in that way the European civilization understood itself and its relations with the peoples outside the jurisdiction of its authority as an ideologically justified struggle for faith.²⁵

Nevertheless, under such circumstances the baptism (1251) and coronation (1253) of Mindaugas did take place. The newly established Lithuanian state turned into a recognized Christian country. That became feasible due to the policy of the possibilities, widened by Innocent IV after his victory over the emperor.²⁶ The new policy was based on personal considerations of the Livonian Master, Andreas of Stirland, who viewed of Mindaugas as a suitable partner.²⁷ All that was happening when German colonization was in full swing. The collision between the early Lithuanian military monarchy, and the military orders, politically oriented towards German colonization, was too violent that events, characteristic of those of Hungary, Bohemia or Poland in the 10th century, could take place in the 13th century Lithuania. Mindaugas' death (1263) finally led to an over-a-century-long war between Lithuania and the Teutonic Order, the latter camouflaging its activities as Christian missions.²⁸

The Teutonic Order isolated Lithuania from Europe, thus arresting its influence. Eventually Lithuania, annexing the fragmented Russian lands, developed into a super-power, politically consolidating its position next to Central Europe in the 14th century.²⁹ That period was also the beginning of the influence of Byzantine culture on Lit-

²²E. Gudavičius. Šv. Brunono ..., p. 115-118.

²³H.-D. Kahl. Compellere intrare. Die Wendenpolitik Bruns von Querfurt im Lichte hochmittelalterlichen Missions- und Völkerrechts. *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* (hereafter ZO). Jg. 4, H. 1, 1955, p. 360-401.

²⁴Cf. J. Stakauskas. *Lietuva ir Vakarų Europa XIII amžiuje*. Kaunas, 1934; Brundage, James A. The Thirteenth-Century Livonian Crusade. *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*. Bd. 20, H. 1, p. 1-9.

²⁵Cf. St. Runciman. *Dzieje wypraw krzyżowych*. Warszawa, t. 1, 1987, p. 85-93.

²⁶E. Gudavičius. Polityczny problem królestwa litewskiego w połowie XIII w. *Ekspansja niemieckich zakonów rycerskich w strefie Bałtyku od XIII do połowy XVI wieku*. Toruń, 1990, p. 68-69.

²⁷Ibid., p. 66-68.

²⁸*Lietuvių karas su kryžiuočiais*. Vilnius, 1964, p. 154-231.

²⁹S. C. Rowell. *Lithuania Ascending. A pagan empire within east-central Europe, 1295-1345*. Cambridge, 1994.

huania. The Lithuanians were the governing people, the peak of its ruling dynasty remained heathen, and only the representatives of the elite had accepted the Orthodox faith. The confrontation with the Catholic Europe being tense, the country came under growing Byzantine influence, when the Russians numerically became the dominating nationality among the population of the Lithuanian state. In the course of the 14th century there were negotiations concerning baptism, however, all of them were unsuccessful.³⁰ Up to the end of the 14th century Lithuania remained a non-aligned country.

The influence of Byzantine civilization lacked any political support. Active, rapidly developing Catholic Europe, on the other hand, managed to influence Lithuania even under the circumstances of intense confrontation. There was an increase in the Lithuanian trade with German towns,³¹ and to regulate this treaties had to be concluded already in the times of Gediminas (1316-1341).³² Lithuania became an important exporter of furs and wax, and the conversion value of the Lithuanian silver bars in relation to the Bohemian grosz was established.³³ Lithuania started to mint its own coins in the late 14th century.³⁴

The data about the German population in the city of Vilnius are scarce,³⁵ however, St Nicholas' Church - a typical *ecclesia mercatorum*³⁶ - attests to the presence of the German community in the capital of Lithuania. The town charter granted to Kaunas in 1408, bears obvious marks of the German community, too.³⁷ These are indications that German merchants and artisans lived in the newly founded Lithuanian cities, where they were accorded certain rights.³⁸ Those processes were similar to the ones taking place in the countries of Central Europe. Gediminas' letters show that the grand dukes of Lithuania encouraged the formation of German communities,³⁹ as was common practice in the policy of other European rulers.

³⁰A. Nikžentaitis. *Gediminas*. Vilnius, 1989, p. 28-37; Z. Ivinskis. *Lietuvos istorija. Iki Vytauto Didžiojo mirties*. Vilnius, 1991, p. 258-260.

³¹Z. Ivinskis. Die Handelsbeziehungen Litauens mit Riga im 14. Jahrhundert. Conventus primus historicorum Balticorum, Riga 16-20 August 1937 (Pirma Baltijas vēsturisku konference). Acta et relata (Runas un referati). Riga, 1938, p. 276-285.

³²E. Gudavičius. Gedimino miestų politika jo laiškų fone. *Senoji Lietuvos literatūra*. Vilnius, 1996. Knyga 4. Metraščiai ir kunigaikščių laiškai, p. 41-46.

³³E. Gudavičius. *Miestų atsiradimas Lietuvoje* (hereafter *Miestų atsiradimas...*). Vilnius, 1991, p. 85-86.

³⁴S. Sajauskas, D. Kaubrys. *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės numizmatika*. Vilnius, 1993, p. 38-47.

³⁵W. Semkowicz. Hanul, namiestnik wilenski i ego ród. *Ateneum Wileńskie*. T. 7, 1930, p. 1-20.

³⁶P. Reklaitis. Die St. Nicolaikirche in Wilna und ihre stadtgeschichtliche Bedeutung. *ZO*, Jg. 8, H. 4, 1959, p. 500-522.

³⁷Z. Kiaupa. 1408 metų Vytauto privilegija Kauno miestui. *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis* (hereafter *LIM*). 1979. Vilnius, 1981, p. 5-19.

³⁸Cf. E. Gudavičius. Ryges recht ir ius civile Rigensis civitatis Gedimino aktuose. *LIM*. 1986. Vilnius, 1987, p. 79-85.

³⁹*Gedimino laiškai* (hereafter *GL*). Vilnius, 1966, p. 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 45

During the wars with the Teutonic Order, Lithuania astonishingly improved its warfare.⁴⁰ Especially significant was the building of stone castles, familiar to the Lithuanians already in the first half of the fourteenth century,⁴¹ which in its turn influenced even the castle building of the Crusaders themselves.⁴² The Lithuanian light shield became popular in Poland and Bohemia.⁴³ Thus, warfare, its technical basis, became that sphere of material culture, in which Lithuania did not lag behind Western Europe.

One more area of the same type was political culture. The letters and statements of Gediminas unmistakably reveal his conception of statehood: like other kings, the Lithuanian ruler governed his country by the grace of God; Lithuania did not fight against the Christian Church, it only defended itself from the Teutonic Order, which threatened on its independence.⁴⁴ The way of life at the royal courts of Vilnius and Trakai and the political potential of the country made Lithuanian princesses sought-after brides in Central Europe.⁴⁵ However, it must also be noted that not a single Catholic princess married into Lithuania. Nevertheless changes in the apprehension of the situation were taking place, too. In the poem *Der Litauer*, written by Schoendoch in the second half of the 14th century, the conversion of a Lithuanian noble causes the joy of German knights for his becoming one of them.⁴⁶

Despite the hindrance of the Teutonic Order the royal courts of Lithuanian rulers, though irregularly, managed to communicate with the courts of their counterparts in Central Europe. Although the circumstances were different and the scale was not the same (it was smaller), the general situation resembled that of the formation of Europe in the 10th century. Besides, all those events were taking place belatedly - Lithuania came into contact with the periphery of Western European civilization not in the 10th, but in the 14th century. Poland, providing a bridge between the two areas, could easily exploit the situation for the expansion of its hegemony. The relationship between Poland and Lithuania, determined by the Union of Krėva in the late Middle Ages, was a repetition of the events, which Poland itself had

⁴⁰W. Urban. *The Samogitian Crusade*. Chicago, 1989, p. 159.

⁴¹*Lietuvos pilys*. Vilnius, 1971, p. 20, 104-111, 122, 153-162, 182.

⁴²A. Nikžentaitis. XIII-XV a. lietuvių kariuomenės bruožai (organizacija, taktika, papročiai). *Karo archyvas*. T. 13, 1992, p. 88.

⁴³V. Denkstein. Elementy wschodnie i zachodnie w czeskim uzbrojeniu XV wieku. *Kwartalnik historii kultury materialnej* (hereafter *KHKM*), Nr 2, 1973, p. 285-286; A. Nowakowski. Przyczynki do poznania tak zwanej zbroji mazowieckiej. *KHKM*, Nr 2, 1973, p. 290-297.

⁴⁴*GL*, p. 23, 25, 27, 37.

⁴⁵S.C. Rowell. Pious Princesses or the Daughters of Belial. Pagan Lithuanian Dynastic Diplomacy 1279-1423. *Medieval Prosopography*, vol. 15-1, 1994.

⁴⁶S.C. Rowell. *Lithuania ...*, p. 39.

experienced at the end of the early and in the High Middle Ages. Lithuania came under a powerful political and cultural influence of Poland. At the same time, it meant a very vigorous adherence to civilization. Poland had already created a national model of Roman culture with its writing and literature in the vernacular, a centrally organized Catholic Church, a network of schools, teaching liberal arts, a rising estate structure, outlined in the Polish version of fief law, and merchant and artisan guilds in the towns. Nothing of that kind could be found in Lithuania at that time. If civilization was to be understood as a society, which had created a system of values, then only separate elements of such a structure could have been found in the contemporary Lithuanian society.

The most significant of those elements was the Lithuanian state organization. The struggle for self-preservation developed into a stormy process of the formation of political and legal institutions. Its initial period (1385-1447) was marked by a compromise: Lithuania did not accept the Polish supremacy, specified by the Union of Krėva, and Poland did not give up its claims; nevertheless a dynastic union was established. *De jure* Lithuania retained its sovereignty, *de facto* its position was between an ally and a satellite of Poland. In the second period (prior to 1569) Lithuania and Poland coexisted under the circumstances of an established compromise. The first period witnessed the formation of a representative institution of the nobility - the Council of Lords.⁴⁷ In the second period the Sejm, a representative organ of the nobility as an estate, started its activities (as an institution it was established in 1507).⁴⁸ The formation of the representative bodies marked the appearance of estate structures, peculiar to Central Europe. The boyars developed as an estate at the turn of the 16th century,⁴⁹ and its peak - the lords - already in the 15th century.⁵⁰ In Lithuania, as well as in other Central European countries, that process went hand in hand with the enserfment of peasantry.⁵¹ However, in Lithuania those processes proceeded most hurriedly and perfunctorily. Lithuania surpassed other countries by the number of adopted acts of *ius feudale* - nearly each grand duke issued new estate privileges to the boyars, and Sigismundus II extended their rights even by three decrees.⁵² In 1528 (and afterwards in 1565 and 1567) the Lithuanian Muster

⁴⁷I. Malinovskii. *Rada Velikogo Kniazhestva Litovskogo v sviazi s boyarskoi dumoi drevnei Rusi*. P. 2, no. 2, Tomsk, 1904.

⁴⁸M. Liubavskii. *Litovsko-russkii seim*. Moskva, 1900.

⁴⁹E. Gudavičius. Šliktų atsiskyrimas nuo bajorų luomo Lietuvoje XVI a. (1. Bajorų luomo susidarymas XV a. *Lietuvos TSR Mokslų Akademijos darbai*. Serija A (hereafter MADA), vol. 2, 1975, p. 97-106.

⁵⁰E. Banionis. Lietuvos bajorai 1413 m. Horodlėje. *Žalgirio laikų Lietuva ir jos kaimynai*. Vilnius, 1993, p. 189-206.

⁵¹J. Jurginis. *Baudžiavos įsigalėjimas Lietuvoje*. Vilnius, 1962.

⁵²M. Sjasinskii. *Ustavnye gramoty Litovsko-russkogo gosudarstva*. Kiev, 1889; Vansevičius, Stasys. *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės žemės privilegijos*. Vilnius, 1962.

List⁵³ of the nobility and the boyars was drawn, and in 1529 the First Lithuanian Statute was implemented.⁵⁴ The Statute excelled many Central European law codices by its amount and its systematic presentation of the material. The law of German towns (mostly that of Magdeburg) was also actively adopted (the capital of the country Vilnius acquired its first charter in 1387).⁵⁵ The first guild (of goldsmiths) was set up in 1495, and in the first half of the 16th century their number was over 20.⁵⁶ The burghers, nevertheless, did not enjoy any political rights.

Lithuanian estate society developed very rapidly, because it was based on allodial social relations. The introduction of feudal law proceeded smoothly due to some groundwork in that sphere. Without a doubt, by its legislature Lithuania reached the standard of Central Europe in the early 16th century. Of course, there were certain negative aspects of those achievements: the majority of the boyars were very poor and could hardly provide military service and could not make use of their rights. Wealth, rights and privileges were concentrated in the hands of the nobility. All the senior appointments, both central and peripheral (including the lawcourts) were limited to noble candidates; cases, affecting the nobility, were tried only by the grand duke and the Council of Lords. The practice of electing estate courts of the boyars and provincial dietines was adopted only after the administrative reform of 1564-1566.⁵⁷ In Lithuania, as well as in other Central European countries, feudal relations developed hurriedly and superficially, and governors, appointed by the sovereign, did not become the administrators of the lands; instead those high state posts were occupied by wealthy landowners. In Lithuania that oligarchical model was most clearly expressed.

In the 15th and 16th centuries the Lithuanian social structure, supported by a backward agriculture of the two-field and irregular three-field rotation of crops, rapidly acquired European features. In the period between the late 14th and the early 16th centuries the Lithuanian

⁵³H. Łowmiański. *Popisy wojska Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w. XVI jako źródło do dziejów zaludnienia. Mediaevalia. W 50 rocznicę pracy naukowej Jana Dąbrowskiego.* Warszawa, 1960, p. 425-435.

⁵⁴S. Lazutka. *Litovskii statut - feodal'nyi kodeks Velikogo Kniazhestva Litovskogo.* Vilnius, 1973.

⁵⁵J. Jurginis, V. Merkys, A. Tautavičius. *Vilniaus miesto istorija nuo seniausią laikų iki Spalio revoliucijos.* Vilnius, 1968, p. 50-51.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 91-92.

⁵⁷Z. Kiaupa, J. Kiaupienė, A. Kuncevičius. *Lietuvos istorija iki 1795.* Vilnius, 1995, p. 261-262.

⁵⁸E. Gudavičius. *Miestų atsiradimas...* P. 85-89.

⁵⁹W. Conze. *Agrarverfassung und Bevölkerung in Litauen und Weißrußland.* Bd. 1, Leipzig, 1940. *Valakas* (German *Hufe*, Polish *tan*), a unit of measure equal to ca. 20 ha, given to a peasant family for working estate land.

⁶⁰*Lietuvos istorija.* Kaunas, 1936, p. 244.

system of measures was formed; area squaring, however, was not yet practiced.⁵⁸ The so-called *valakas* reform, effected in the mid-16th century, introduced a regular three-field system and the measuring of the land.⁵⁹ That change was feasible due to individual peasant farms. The reform was realized after the appearance of the folwarks, depending on peasant labour. In the middle of the 16th century grain had already become an important export commodity.⁶⁰ Forests were declared a monopoly of the state and were no more rented to foreign entrepreneurs.⁶¹ Lithuania remained a backward agrarian region of Western Europe, however it was not satisfied with the role of timber exporter. The merchants of Kaunas, defending their limited trade, in the 1530s forced the closure of the local Hanseatic office, and the river traffic of the Nemunas was taken over by the Lithuanian fleet.⁶² In the region of Central Europe Lithuania remained the poorest country, but in the 16th century it already reached the level of the economy of the region.

The system of the compulsory services of the late 14th century made it possible to provide the Catholic Church with land, and that, in its turn, led to the establishment not only of the dioceses, but also of the parishes.⁶³ The network of parishes and monasteries was not dense not only in Lithuania, but also in Poland before the 13th century.⁶⁴ At the turn of the 16th century the Diocese of Vilnius already consisted of about 100 parishes.⁶⁵ The nobility and the burghers were Christianized quickly, the peasantry, however, preserved many of its pagan traditions for much longer. The introduction of Christianity also meant the establishment of schools. In the Diocese of Vilnius two types of schools appeared almost simultaneously: the Cathedral School in the capital, mentioned in historical records in 1397, and the first parish school (in Trakai) in 1409.⁶⁶ However, even in the early 16th century, the curriculum of the Cathedral School included only the trivium subjects.⁶⁷

The success of the activity of the churches and the schools depended on the access to liturgical literature and school text-books. Their number increased when the first incunabula reached Lithuania in the late 15th century. Some of them did not differ from those used in the schools of Central Europe.⁶⁸ Young people prepared in Lithua-

⁵⁸Z. Ivinskis. *Lietuvos prekyba su prūsais*. P. 1, Kaunas, 1934, p. 187.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 75-77, 121.

⁶⁰J. Fijałek. Kościół rzymsko-katolicki na Litwie. Uchrześcijanienie Litwy przez Polskę i zachowanie w niej języka ludu po konie Rzeczypospolitej. *Polska i Litwa w dziejowym stosunku*. Warszawa, Lublin, Łódź, Kraków, 1914, p. 55-70.

⁶¹J. Kłoczowski. Bracia mnijszy w Polsce średniowiecznej. *Franciszkanie w Polsce średniowiecznej*. T. 1, Lublin, 1983, p. 28.

⁶²J. Ochmański. *Biskupstwo wileńskie w średniowieczu. Ustrój i uposażenie*. Poznań, 1972, p. 55-67.

⁶³*Lietuvos mokyklos ir pedagoginės minties istorijos bruožai*. Vilnius, 1983, p. 17.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁶⁵E. Gudavičius. Lietuvos pritaipimo prie Europos istorinė perspektyva (The historical perspective of Lithuania's adjustment to Europe). *Lietuvos mokslas*. Vol. 3, book 6, p.10.

nia for their studies at the University of Kraków already at the beginning of the 15th century, and in the course of the century about 200 Lithuanians were enrolled at the University.⁶⁹ In the late fifteenth century Lithuanian students reached the Italian universities, too.⁷⁰

The Church and the school developed in Lithuania in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries much more rapidly than they did in the Christian countries of Central Europe between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. True, the requirements of the times were different as well. Lithuanian society entered into contact with far more advanced countries and the necessity to overcome its backwardness was great. At the turn of the 16th century the illiterate country had to speedily master the art of writing. Vytautas the Great solved that problem by organizing a very efficient grand-ducal chancery⁷¹, thus making all the administrators have their own scribes without delay. The state could not wait for the schools to turn out their learned clerics. The personnel of the chanceries was recruited from the ranks of foreigners (Poles and Germans) and local Ruthenian scribes. In the late 15th century the gentry and the burghers could not any more do without writing - legal acts were in current use and record books were kept in the lawcourts. The sovereign's record office also kept a book of records, the so-called *metrika* in order to register the issuance and preservation of diplomatic and legal documents.⁷² A Latin scribe had to be specially trained at school, while a Ruthenian one, already speaking that language, could be taught writing much more cheaply at the same chancery. Therefore the majority of the documents, in particular those of lesser importance, were written in Ruthenian. Prestigious documents were written in Latin - the language of the Catholic Church and of all the major proceedings of the state. Besides, the knowledge of Latin was indispensable in order to read printed books - the recent invention of the times. Lithuania acquired literacy in an astonishingly short period - in less than a 150 years it became a cultured country according to the standard of Central Europe in the late Middle Ages. No doubt, Lithuania had to pay for it dearly. It took 600 years for the Germans to learn to write in their native tongue (from fragmented religious eighth-century records to the fourteenth-century German writings, which ousted the Latin language); 300 years passed from the Polish 13th-century sermons of the Holy Cross until the appearance of secular literature in the 16th century. Lithuania was not given so much

⁶⁹M. Ročka. Lietuvių studentai Krokuvoje ir humanizmo pradžia Lietuvoje (XV a. - XVI a. pradžia). *Lietuvos TSR aukštųjų mokyklų mokslo darbai. Literatūra*. Vol. 9, 1966, p. 61, 63.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p. 68-69.

⁷¹M. Kosman. Kancelaria wielkiego księcia Witolda. *Studia źródłoznawcze*. T. 14, 1969, p. 101-117.

⁷²E. Banionis. Lietuvos metrika. *Voruta*, no. 27 (68), 28 (69), 29-30 (70-71), 31-32 (72-73), 1992.

time. In the chancery it was easier to learn Ruthenian, heard in everyday life (and Ruthenians themselves did not even have to learn it), than to develop the literary Lithuanian language, its writing and create the necessary terminology. Lithuanian religious texts were produced somewhere, however, their number was not great, the more so that Lithuanian priests were rare, too. The founders of the parishes (the Grand Duke and the nobility) insisted on the sermons being delivered in churches in Lithuanian.⁷³ Among the incunabula found in Lithuania, homilies and their models (*exempla*) were quite numerous.⁷⁴ In practice, that request was complied with by engaging parish curates, speaking Lithuanian. Of course, that did not make Lithuanian a literary language or the language of instruction as it was further being ousted from public life. Casimir (r. 1440-1492) was the last grand duke, who spoke Lithuanian. That language was driven out not only from the court of the grand duke, but also from the mansions of the nobility. Already in the early 16th century the Lithuanian elite began to speak Ruthenian and Polish, and shortly afterwards Polish ousted Ruthenian.

Those processes were accompanied by demographical changes. The old countries of Central Europe encountered the German colonization (it was also unsuccessfully encouraged by Gediminas). When Lithuania became Christian, the Germans appeared in the towns of the country; their number, however, was not great. The Poles came in greater numbers. Podlasia was occupied by Mazovian boyars, and in the 16th century the majority of the priests were Polish. In general, the total Polish population was not large, but they occupied prestigious places and enjoyed cultural supremacy. Between the 12th and 13th centuries the Germans were known for their cultural superiority.⁷⁵ In the 15th and 16th centuries a similar role was played by the Poles in Lithuania.

In 1499 *Agenda* of one Martinus was published in Gdańsk - it was the first book, prepared in Lithuania.⁷⁶ Its appearance can be taken as an indication of the trend to further cultivate the study and knowledge of foreign languages (among them - Latin) rather than one's own tongue. The beginnings of creative writing in Lithuania go back to the early 15th century, when the first chronicle of contemporary events was written.⁷⁷ It was produced at the court of the grand duke. The composition of chronicles was interrupted in the middle of the 15th century, when the sovereign of the Polish-Lithuanian Common-

⁷³Stanislovas Rapolionis. Vilnius, 1986, p. 12.

⁷⁴Vilniaus universiteto istorija. 1579-1994. 1994, p. 19.

⁷⁵N. F. Kolesnitskii. Ob etnicheskom i gosudarstvennom razvitii srednevekovoi Germanii. *Srednie veka*. No. 23, 1963, p. 193.

⁷⁶M. Ročka. Pirmoji Lietuvos knyga. *Mokslas ir gyvenimas*, no. 5, 1973, p. 10-12.

⁷⁷M. Jučas. *Lietuvos metraščiai*. Vilnius, 1968, p. 21-48.

wealth moved to Poland, and they were renewed again half a century later in the courts of the nobility. In those circumstances a national chronicle was created that covered all Lithuanian history and contained the Roman version of the origin of the Lithuanians with their imaginary ancient leaders.⁷⁸ Thus, the formation of the boyar estate coincided with the conception of their heroic past and the elaboration of the corresponding literature. Another creative sphere was political polemics, gradually acquiring the features of treatises. *Rationes* by Albertas Goštautas was a defence of the self-containment of Lithuanian law.⁷⁹ In 1550 Michalo Lituanus prepared a whole project of social restructuring.⁸⁰ Lithuanian political culture, based on age-long traditions and the acquisition of European values, conditioned the development of that creative activity. Its climax is to be considered *Confessio fidei* (1543) by the humanist Abraomas Kulvietis.⁸¹ Written in the form of a concise open letter to the Grand Duchess Bona Sforza, it was an expression of the cultural problem of the Lithuanian nation. In it the author regretted the absence of a national European-type school (with Lithuanian as the language of instruction) and the discrimination of Lithuanian intelligentsia in the most significant and crucial spheres of activity.

Kulvietis' work demonstrates a remarkable degree of national consciousness, which could be the envy of any contemporary developed European nation. From the author's viewpoint, the native tongue was an indispensable part of one's national identity. Regrettably, the Lithuanian nobility, despite its clearly expressed political awareness, failed to understand that. In the 16th century Lithuania had developed a national model of European culture, in which the native tongue was not taken into account. The Lithuanians still were users rather than creators of values. That was particularly visible in the development of Gothic architecture in the country. It came to Lithuania as a fashion and technical habits and did not evolve into a conception of art life. The 15th century produced church structures of skilfully organized space, and only several masterpieces were created in the following century.⁸² Few separate sculptural works that were produced were not organically associated with the buildings for the decoration of which they were intended.⁸³ The earliest extant paintings were produced at the beginning of the 16th century.⁸⁴ Therefore, one can

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 49-134.

⁷⁹*Acta Tomiciana*. Posnania, Vol. 11, 1901, p. 164-165.

⁸⁰M. Lictuvis. *Apie totorių, lietuvių ir maskvėnų papročius*. Vilnius, 1966.

⁸¹J. Jurginis. *Istorija ir poezija*. Vilnius, 1969, p. 58-70.

⁸²*Lietuvos architektūros istorija. Nuo seniausių laikų iki XVIIa. vidurio* (hereafter *LAI*). Vol. 1, Vilnius, 1987, p. 90-94, 103-158.

⁸³Cf. T. Adomonis, K. Čerbulėnas. *Lietuvos TSR dailės ir architektūros istorija*. Vol. 1, Vilnius, 1987, p. 75-77, 132-139, 141-142.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 77-81.

only speak about the Gothic style in Lithuania, and not about a Lithuanian Gothic style. In the 16th century it merged with the Renaissance⁸⁵ and was not completely ousted.

Lithuania's involvement in the Reformation⁸⁶ was eloquent proof of its being a European country. The Reformation brought religious literature in the Lithuanian language,⁸⁷ no matter how belated that process was. Those texts remained isolated from the mainstream of Lithuanian literature. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation brought about the establishment of the College (1570) and the University (1579) of Vilnius, thus completing the formation of all the levels of European schools in the country. Lithuania was prepared for that stage of development, and the University of Vilnius continued its activity without any interruption as was the case in Hungary and Poland in the 14th century. In his book, *Cenzura*, published in 1598, Prakas Baltramiejavičius expressed his indignation that Lithuanians were continually referred to as neophytes.⁸⁸ The Lithuanians perceived themselves as old Christians, or using the present-day terminology, as Europeans. Thus, taken all in all, it could adequately be maintained that the changes in Lithuania's path to Europe were irreversible.

⁸⁵ *LAI*, p. 203.

⁸⁶ J. Puryckis. *Die Glaubenspaltung in Litauen im XVI. Jahrhundert bis zur Ankunft der Jesuiten im Jahre 1569*. Freiburg (Schweiz), 1919.

⁸⁷ Mažvydas. *Seniausieji lietuvių kalbos paminklai iki 1570 metų*. Kaunas, 1922.

⁸⁸ J. Fijałk. *Kościół...*, p. 229.