Edvardas Gudavičius. *Mindaugas*
Vilnius: Žara, 1998. Pp. 359. ISBN 9986-34-020-9

Professor Edvardas Gudavičius, one of the best known specialists of Lithuanian medieval history, has written a book about Mindaugas (Mendog, Mindovg, Mindowe), the founder of the Lithuanian state, the first and only king of Lithuania, who ruled in the first half of the thirteenth century and was assassinated in 1263. The book ends with the king's renunciation of Christianity and subsequent death. However, the activity of Mindaugas' entire life is analyzed as a logical and successful outcome of the development of the Lithuanian tribes in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The story of Mindaugas' life is the history of the beginning of the Lithuanian state.

The book consists of a foreword, eight chapters, three appendices, a summary in English and indices of personal- and place-names. The first chapter *Žinomas ir nežinomas Mindaugas* (The known and unknown Mindaugas) (p. 9-28) is devoted to the survey of relevant literature, making use of the work of Vladimir Pashuta, Lithuanian authors and Gudavičius' own studies, in which the sources are reviewed critically. The analysis begins with fifteenth-century chronicles and ends with the most recent works, in one way or another related to the history of Lithuania. Over 500 books, articles and reviews of German, Polish, Lithuanian, Russian, Ukrainian, English, Latvian and Hungarian authors have been used in the preparation of this book. In the second chapter *Valstybės susidarymo klausimas* (The issue of state formation) (p. 87-122) Gudavičius associates the rise of the state with the process of feudalization in Lithuanian tribes. This phenomenon is interpreted against economical, social, political and legal backgrounds. This outlook is rather close to pure Marxism (not of the Soviet-type), and the author himself does not disguise this. The means of production and the origin of Lithuanian feudalism in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were individual land holdings, i.e., *allodia*. The private family farm existed at the birth of the Lithuanian state, although the community still preserved broad property rights over the land. The formation direction of the Baltic (Lithuanian) *allodium* was from the top downwards: the (great) noble *allodium* was the first to appear. In Lithuania side by side with the great *allodium* the small *allodium* also started to develop. However, the latter did not reach the level of the 'pure' Frankish *allodium*. This process was accompanied by exploitation of serf labour, in particular in

the manors belonging to the individual nobles. In political life the role of the retinues increased, since they consolidated the social and political existence of Lithuanian dukes. The retinues became the earliest state organization. Simultaneously a system of 'feudal' services developed. At the same time Gudavičius expertly criticizes the attempts 'to look for' the Lithuanian state before Mindaugas' time. The third chapter is entitled *Lietuvos valstybės vaidmuo* (The role of the Lithuanian state) (p. 123-136). It deals with the relations of the Lithuanians with other Balts, German settlers in Prussia and Livonia and other Christian neighbours. The Lithuanians extended their influence in other Baltic areas and they were destined to become the nucleus of a multi-tribal state. In the fourth chapter *Lietuvos politinis žemėlapis* (The political map of Lithuania) (p. 137-176) the extent (map) of the early-thirteenth-century of the country is reconstructed. It contains the definition of *žemė* (land) as the Lithuanian territorial administrative unit, ruled by one or more dukes, which were bound by confederate kinship ties. The most important of these lands was Lithuania. It stretched along the middle Nemunas and along the rivers Neris, Žeimenas, Šventoji and Nevėžis. The problem of the first capital - the main residence of Mindaugas is also touched upon. In the fifth chapter *Lietuvos suvienijimas* (The unification of Lithuania) (p. 177-210) the author discusses the political history of Lithuanian lands prior to Mindaugas' rule and his first years in power. Great attention is paid to the problem of the Battle of Saule (Šiauliai) (1236) and the encounters or wars with the Tartars. In the sixth chapter *Nuo vyriausiojo kunigaikščio iki karaliaus* (From the senior duke to the king) (p. 211-240) Gudavičius investigates the way and the time Mindaugas became king of Lithuania and the country entered the political life of Europe, becoming a political agent rather than a subjugated territory. The baptism and some obscure circumstances of Mindaugas' coronation are examined. The seventh chapter *Krikščioniškas karalius* (The Christian king) (p. 241-282) focuses on the 1250s - Mindaugas' reign and the problems and events of that period such as relations with Russia, the Livonian Order, the Pope, the consequences of the 1259 Tartar incursion into Lithuania, the Teutonic Knights conquering Samogitia, left to the mercy of fate, the victory in the Battle of Durbė in 1260, etc. The eighth chapter (p. 283-307) *Baltai ir Europa* (The Balts and Europe) deals with Samogitia, which, by successfully fighting against the Teutonic and Livonian Orders, made King Mindaugas abandon his Christian allies and start a war with the Teutonic

Order. The circumstances of the king's apostasy and the political context behind his assassination are examined in great detail. The author asserts that the Lithuanian kingdom rather than the state itself ended with Mindaugas' death.

In the first appendix (p. 309-330) Gudavičius supports the doubts of the Russian scholar Aleksandr Zimin concerning the authenticity of *The Lay of Igor's Host*. The textological analysis of the *Lay* shows that it was written on the basis of the *Ipat'evskaia Chronicle* and in particular on *Zadonshchina*. The second and third appendices (p. 330-331) are a supplement to the monograph, relating to a book, issued in Basel about 1549, containing information about the war between the Lithuanians and the Teutonic Knights and about Mindaugas' grave in Agluona (Lattigallia).

A summary in English (p. 333-339) is comprehensive, informative and reflects the main ideas of the monograph.

In the opinion of this reviewer some minor criticisms could be made of the book: the fourth chapter could have a map of the thirteenth-century Lithuania; the index of personal names could be more helpful if not only the surname, but also the first name in full (instead of the initials) were given.

In this book Professor Edvardas Gudavičius fully achieved his stated aim and makes an excellent contribution to scholarship on Lithuania in Mindaugas' times. The monograph was published by the Lithuanian Institute of History. As the first edition of 1,500 copies was quickly sold out, a revised edition was issued in September 1998.

Artūras Dubonis

М.Е.Бычкова *Русское государство и Великое княжество Литовское с конца XV в. до 1569 г. Опыт сравнительно-исторического изучения политического строя*. Москва: Институт российской истории РАН, 1996. 175 с. ISBN 5-201-00638-8

[M. E. Bychkova. *The Russian State and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the End of the Fifteenth Century to 1569: An Essay in the Comparative History of Political Systems*. Moscow: Institute for Russian History, 1996. Pp. 175.]

Dr. Bychkova is well-known for her numerous works on genealogy and the social history of early modern Muscovy