Lietuvių atgimimo studijos. T. 17: Nacionalizmas ir emocijos: (Lietuva ir Lenkija XIX–XX a.) [Lithuanian National Revival Studies. Vol. 17: Nationalism and Emotion: Lithuania and Poland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries], ed. Egidijus Motieka et al., Vilnius: Lithuanian Institute of History, 2001. Articles in Lith., Pol., Ger.; summaries in Lith., Pol., Ger. Pp. 204.
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Upon opening the seventeenth volume of *Lithuanian National Revival Studies* (LAS), we find articles prepared on the basis of the reports read at a conference on ‘Nationalism and Emotion. Lithuania and Poland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries’ which was organized by the Centre for West Lithuanian and Prussian History (University of Klaipėda) and the Central Eastern European Institute on 11–14 September 1998. In the broad field of problems discussed (from an article by Wolfgang Kaszuba debating the relevance of historical connections between nationality and emotion in Europe after 1989 to an article by Darius Staliūnas analysing the development of the cult of fallen soldiers in interwar Lithuania), the authors trace how a national movement or national state instils a cultural (national) affinity in potential members of the nation as well as forming and retaining the loyalty of individuals towards the national community with the help of celebrations of nationhood and rituals, national heroes and antiheroes, and national myths.

According to the assertion of the LAS editorial board, not only the formal point of view that a comparative aspect enriches any scientific discussion or research but also the objective of viewing more narrowly the task, which involved both the Lithuanian and the Polish national movements, i.e. the division of the common cultural inheritance of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, stimulated the determination to discuss the topic of the ‘national emotion’ of both Lithuania and Poland. In these ‘divisions’, the same historical person or event unavoidably became sacred for one nation and an object worthy of scorn for the other. In this way were born the cults of national heroes, to which are devoted articles by Magdalena Micińska (‘Tado Kosciuskos kultas ir jo vaidmuo palaikant lenkų tautinę savimonę XIX–XX a.’) [The Cult of Tadeusz Kościuszko and its role in maintaining Polish national self-identity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries], Giedrius Viliūnas (‘Vytauto Didžiojo kultas tarpukario Lietuvoje’) [The Cult of Vytautas the Great in Interwar Lithuania], Heidi Hein (‘Pastabos dėl Pilsudskio kulto Antrojoje Lenkijos Respublikoje’) [Remarks on the Pilsudski Cult in the Second Polish Republic], and antiheroes such as Jogaila (Jagiello) (Alvydas Nikžentaitis, ‘Jogailos įvaizdis lietuvių visuomenėje’) [The Image

of Jogaila in Lithuanian Society]), national traditions were discovered, and national myths created (Vladas Sirutavičius, 'Šventės nacionalizavimas. „Tautos šventės" atsiradimas Lietuvos Respublikoje XX amžiaus 4-ajame dešimtmetyje' [The Nationalization of a celebration. The rise of the 'Celebration of the Nation' in the Republic of Lithuania in the 1930s] and Robert Traba ('Tautinio mito konstravimas ir dekonstracija. Pasvarstymai remiantis Žalgirio mūšio metinių minėjimų Lenkijoje semantinė analizė') [The construction and deconstruction of a national myth. Debates based on a semantic analysis of the annual celebrations of the Battle of Grunwald (Tannenberg) in Poland]. This research, as noted by the compilers, showed that in spite of differences in Polish and Lithuanian nationalism, similar, almost identical measures for the 'nationalization of the masses' were employed. However, the question of why one and the same historical figure became a hero for some and a traitor for others remains open, although it is hardly possible to answer this question unambiguously. If it was hoped that this research would reveal how the divisions of the cultural inheritance of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth occurred, then I think that it has been only partially successful. In pursuing this latter aim, comparative studies, where the same historical figure or event should be seen 'from both sides,' should become indispensable in reality, i.e. research on the image of Vytautas or Jogaila in Polish society or the picture of the Battle of Grunwald that existed in Lithuanian historical consciousness in the twentieth century would be no less interesting. And it is not difficult to guess the motives of why an anti-German partisan brigade, which was organized in April 1943 by a resolution of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party and the Staff Operations Group of the Lithuanian Partisan Movement, and which operated in Švenčionys County and Belarus, was named 'Žalgiris' or why the Lithuanian Trade Unions Sports Society, created in Moscow on 16 March 1944, received the same name; it would, I think, be harder to answer the questions as to why a machinery factory founded in Vilnius in 1947 or a mountain peak in the Tien Shan mountain range, which Lithuanian mountain climbers were the first to reach in 1969, were called by the same name. Incidentally, in these comparative studies it would be improper to forget the third participant in the divisions, Belarus, which would enrich with half-tones the picture of the division drawn in black and white symbols.

Research on national emotions is meaningful not only because in this way it is possible to reveal how a common national feeling is instilled with the help of celebrations of the nation and rituals, national heroes, and national myths but also because the embodiment of these national emotions in material symbolism can unconsciously betray the real attitudes of a political regime, which sometimes lie behind the wall of official political rhetoric or betray the stereotypical images predominating in society. Symbols, sometimes fairly more openly than political rhetoric, can reflect the real attitudes of the government and society and reveal the mental level. This is confirmed by Staliūnas' assertion (p. 124) that it is possible to call the appearance of the

Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the Lithuanian provisional capital, Kaunas, 'without waiting' for the recovery of Vilnius as a loss of hope that Vilnius would be recovered quickly. In reality, the government did not expect the quick recovery of Vilnius but, at that time, they were unprepared to show that they were resigning themselves to the loss of Vilnius since it was handy for the authoritarian regime, which was mobilizing the nation, to have an enemy beyond the gates. In addition, it would not have been that easy to change public opinion, in which the question of Vilnius, in the words of Augustas Voldemaras, had become, 'a mystical question of the Lithuanian nation, where feeling and premonition determine everything,' and all 'other arguments bounce off of that'.¹ The government did not boast about its resignation to the loss of Vilnius and continued using anti-Polish rhetoric but this symbol, which emerged with its blessing in 1934, betrayed its actual thoughts. I think that resignation to the loss of Vilnius began with the help of symbols a while before this and gained momentum through the significance of the creation of symbols during the campaign of the Vytautas the Great jubilee year. The cult of a powerful ruler, Vytautas the Great, which was created during this campaign, had to serve the authoritarian regime of A. Smetona in pursuing two main goals: the example of the personality of Vytautas the Great had to justify the advantage of the 'firm hand' policy and legitimize the authoritarian regime as well as help consolidate the nation through a spirit of respect for the 'head of the nation.' Therefore, I would rather disagree with the assertion of Giedrius Viliūnas (p. 89) that it was the question of Vilnius that was the only relevant point of the political programme actually permeating the cult of Vytautas and beginning to compete in popularity with Vytautas himself. Although Viliūnas also recognizes that the chief concepts of the jubilee year, i.e. State and Nation, directly point to the ideological core of the cult of Vytautas, he confirms that, in comparison to the question of Vilnius, the other components of the relevant political programme of the cult of Vytautas are not so evident (pp. 87, 89). I think this is debatable. First of all this is because, in a symbolic sense, the symbolic figure of the Grand Duke Gediminas, founder of Vilnius, would be more fitting for liberating Vilnius but his 'services' were rejected. At the beginning of independence, in continuing the traditions of national rebirth, more than one Lithuanian grand duke became a 'great source of strength.' In truth, Gediminas and Vytautas, who sort of competed to see which of them was greater, were more frequently drawn from. Although Gediminas usually won these competitions by a small preponderance of points: the first Lithuanian Army Infantry Regiment was called by his name and an order in his name was founded. However as 1930 approached, Vytautas pretty much pushed Gediminas to one side and became the clearly dominating figure of the

¹ A. Voldemaras' speech at the general congress of the representatives of the Lithuanian Nationalist Union in Kaunas on 30 June 1928, LCVA, f. 554, ap. 1, b. 37, fo. 150.

political symbolism. I think that the idea of national unity predominated in the cult of Vytautas. An article by V. Sirutavičius, which investigated the circumstances of the emergence of a 'celebration of the nation' in Lithuania, also confirms this idea. This celebration was solemnly celebrated in Lithuania for the first time exactly during the campaign of the jubilee year of Vytautas the Great and became the stateliest event of this jubilee year. As Sirutavičius has noted, the celebration of the Nation was 'discovered' in the competitive struggle of the political elite, in which struggle the question of who would have greater influence on society was decided. Therefore, with the help of the celebration, the ruling elite hoped to mobilize society and ensure its support while national solidarity was considered the most important value of this celebration (p. 56–67). The main celebration of the Vytautas the Great jubilee in Kaunas and throughout Lithuania took place on 7–8 September while 8 September became the celebration of the Nation. Vytautas the Great jubilee year ended while a celebration of the Nation, which had become a political legacy, survived until the very loss of Independence. If the centre of attention of the celebration of the Nation in 1930 was Vytautas with Antanas Smetona already pushing his way to his side, then later the figure of Smetona pushed Vytautas to one side; in 1934 the jubilee of Smetona was even moved and celebrated during the celebration of the Nation.

In order to move from Gediminas, the founder of Vilnius, to Vytautas, the unifier of the nation, the symbolic justification of the 'renouncement' of Vilnius through the appearance of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in 1934 in the temporary capital and the jubilee of A. Smetona, which was extraordinarily solemnly celebrated that year, marked the movement from troubles with 'external' affairs to troubles with 'domestic' affairs. Thus the cry of national unity pushed the liberation of Vilnius to one side but not to the edge. And that is normal, i.e. any authoritarian regime chiefly worries about the strengthening of its power while the 'liberation' of something is necessary only to justify authoritarian methods of governing. It would be possible to mention one other eloquent symbol, which appeared in the garden of the War Museum in Kaunas in 1930, i.e. the Black Monument, which marked the ten-year anniversary of the loss of Vilnius. Here it is possible to rhetorically ask, 'Were the monuments erected for those who were waiting to return?'

Investigating national emotions is not the historian's most appreciative occupation. This is first of all because the research subject itself is ephemeral, hovering in the air of society, and even the most thorough research always lacks precision while any attempt to summarize it will be conditional. Therefore in reading the article about Jogaila's image in Lithuanian society, without thinking, I recall the words said in 1935 by the historian Zenonas Ivinskis that two visions of Lithuania's history exist simultaneously in Lithuania: one of them is in schools, society, the press, and the army with legendary heroes like Prutenis and Vaidevutis, hierarchical orders of seers (*kriviai*), sanctuaries like Romuva, and the dream of the creation of Vilnius

while the other vision is ‘an attempt already being made to teach more critically at university on the basis of more critically processed and reliable sources.’² Thus perhaps in reality two images of Jogaila also exist beside the two visions of Lithuania’s history, i.e. one among the more intellectual public and the other in general society. This would help to explain the birth of Jogaila’s portrait presented in the drama *Milžino paunksmėje* [In the Giant’s Shadow], written in 1932 by Balys Sruoga, in which Jogaila is in no way a treacherous person. He (one has to agree with the opinion of the literary critic, Vytautas Kubilius) was a Lithuanian who loved his homeland and Vytautas and endorsed the latter’s independent politics but who was at the same time also a weak tool of the Polish nobles and was forced to stand against the interests of his homeland.³ It would be difficult to call Jogaila a traitor; he is rather an old man already longing for his homeland who is being pressured by sly Poles.

The study of ‘emotions’ stimulates thinking about the relationship of the images, symbols, and cults, which exist in society, to the public mentality. The assertion of Benedict Anderson that ‘there is no more attractive symbol of the nationalism of contemporary culture than cenotaphs and monuments to an unknown soldier, ‘sounds attractive but are cenotaphs and monuments to an unknown soldier just the property of nationalism?’⁴ This assertion raises doubts when the cult of the Unknown Soldier instilled in the Soviet Union is recalled. Although it is dangerous to look for direct ties between the ideologized symbols and cults thrust upon society on the one hand and the public mentality on the other, the depth of the inveteracy of the symbols, images, and cults in society depends on how society is prepared to accept them. Therefore, I think that not only the ideology of nationalism but also the shift in the attitude towards graves after the beginning of the First World War helped entrench the cult of the unknown soldier in interwar Lithuania. The acknowledgement made by Mykolas Biržiška at the end of 1917 that if anyone had suggested he write about graves several years earlier, he would have ‘been pretty amazed by it and probably would have answered only by shrugging his shoulders,’ testifies to this shift and only after the convulsion of the world war did a connection with the ‘silence of the grave’ arise.⁵ This acknowledgement by M. Biržiška marks the beginning of ever increasing attention to and concern with graves in interwar Lithuania and this also testifies to a shift in mentality.

It is possible to endorse the opinion of the LAS editorial board that the passage of several years has not reduced the relevancy of these articles and the hope remains that the book will interest not only historians but also a

² A. Nikžentaitis, ‘Jogailos įvaizdis lietuvių visuomenėje’, pp. 56–67; Z. Ivinskis, ‘Lietuvos istorijos problemos’, *Naujoji Romuva*, 12–13 (1935), p. 291.

³ *Kūrybos studijos ir interpretacijos: Balys Sruoga* (Vilnius, 2001), p. 88.

⁴ B. Anderson, *Įsivaizduojamos bendruomenės* (Vilnius, 1999), p. 24.

⁵ M. Biržiška, ‘Kapai’, *Liuksoji valanda*, 11 Dec. 1917.

wider public, provoke discussion, and become an impulse to new studies. If the task of a review is understood as assisting the reader, who, having picked up the book, pauses: should I browse through the book and put it back on the shelf or should I read again and again, then there remains only the suggestion that one should not put this book down very quickly.

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Translated by Artūras Bakanauskas