Edmundas Gimžauskas. **Baltarusių veiksnys formuojantis Lietuvos valstybei 1915–1923 m.** [The Belarusian Factor in the Formation of the Lithuanian State during 1915–1923]. Vilnius: LII leidykla, 2003. Pp. 191 + map. ISBN 9986-780-51-9

The idea of Lithuanian independence and the genesis of statehood during the years of the Great War and immediately after it has been analysed more than once by Lithuanian and foreign historians. The political, social, cultural, economic, and geopolitical effect on this genesis by the neighbours surrounding Lithuania, i.e. Russia, Poland, Germany, and Latvia has also been more or less studied.¹ The factor of some more distant states and partners, which do not share a border with Lithuania, on the formation of the Lithuanian state has even been discussed.² Meanwhile separate studies about the influence of Lithuania's closest neighbour to the east, Belarus, on the modern genesis of Lithuanian statehood in the first quarter of the twentieth century had to wait a fairly long time due to various objective and subjective reasons. Thus, it should not be doubted that the monograph by the young historian, Dr Edmundas Gimžauskas, *Baltarusių veiksnys formuojantis Lietuvos valstybei 1915–1923 m.*, which has been published in an aesthetically flawless manner this year by the Lithuanian Institute of History, fills this historiographical gap in the international context of the modern genesis of Lithuanian statehood.

The book is structurally organised fairly logically and flawlessly. Besides the introduction, in which the principle aim of the work is shown, i.e. 'to study the role of the Belarusians in forming the territory of the state of Lithuania in the context of the effect of external forces' (p. 16),

¹ R. Lopata, 'Lietuvos valstybingumo raida 1914–1918 metais', *Lietuvių Atgimimo istorijos studijos* (Vilnius, 1996); A. E. Senn, *Lietuvos valstybės atkūrimas 1918–1920* (Vilnius, 1992); Č. Laurinavičius, *Lietuvos – Sovietų Rusijos taikos sutartis* (Vilnius, 1992); Z. Butkus, *Lietuvos ir Latvijos santykiai 1919–1929 metais* (Vilnius, 1993); J. Hiden, *The Baltic States and Weimar Ostpolitik* (Cambridge-London-New York-New Rochelle-Melbourne-Sydney, 1987); P. Łossowski, *Konflikt polsko-litewski 1918–1920* (Warsaw, 1996).

² S. W. Page, *The Formation of the Baltic States. A Study of the Effects of Great Power Politics upon Emergence of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia* (Cambridge, 1959); G. von Rauch, *Geschichte der baltischen Staaten* (München, 1977); M. L. Hinkkanen-Lievonen, *British Trade and Enterprise in the Baltic States 1919–1925* (Helsinki, 1984); J. Skirius, *Lietuvos užatlantės diplomatija 1918–1929 metais* (Vilnius, 1995); A. Gaigalaitė, *Lietuva Paryžiuje 1919 metais* (Kaunas, 1999); V. Mažeika, *Danijos santykiai su Lietuva 1918–1940 m.* (Vilnius, 2002).

the abundant historiography and sources, which are fairly professionally discussed, and some conclusions, the study consists of four principal chapters, which are divided into subchapters and the latter into even smaller paragraphs. The comprehensive list of primary and secondary sources and the professionally prepared indices found at the end of the book will no doubt greatly facilitate the work for the reader. The book even claims a certain luxury since it even has two summaries in foreign languages: German and Russian. This is an infrequent phenomenon in contemporary Lithuanian historiography. Actually it is not very clear why the second summary is presented in Russian. One does not wish to believe that this is an endorsement of the 'conception' that Belarusian is imperfect, which is fairly popular in certain classes of society in the huge neighbour to the east. Probably this occurred inadvertently after simply selecting the 'more practical' and easier path of organising the translations. But is such 'practicality' always justified? Finally, if certain difficulties had arisen, then perhaps only a summary in German would have been sufficient?

In addition the summaries intended for foreigners could be somewhat more comprehensive and broader. It is excellent that even about 30% of the text in them is devoted to presenting contemporary Lithuanian historiography through the topic being investigated. It is even better that they also mention the author of this review. Although these are definite advantages, nevertheless a broader annotation for foreigners of the book's contents (mentioning the latest facts, their interpretation, and the most significant changes in Lithuanian-Belarusian relations) would not hurt anything at all. One thing that is striking is that the names of the summaries intended for foreigners do not coincide with the official names shown on the book's front cover, half-title page, and title page. The expanded version of the study's title which is presented to foreigners is even twice as long as what is displayed on the book's cover. It is only possible to guess that this occurred because the expanded name of the work on the book's first cover, which, among other things, must definitely perform the function in contemporary commercial society of advertising the book as a commodity, is obviously too long. But why did the expanded name of the study, presented in the summaries for foreigners, not find a place on the book's third and back covers? The practice of writing such long names has existed apparently long successfully.³ All these observations are, of course, not essential. Almost all of them could have been avoided if the book's editor had been more careful.

Besides the fact that E. Gimžauskas' work visually confirms the historiographical truth about the complicated formation of the Lithuanian

³ For example: *The Origins of the Second World War Reconsidered: The A. J. P. Taylor Debate after Twenty-five Years*, ed. by G. Martel (Boston-London-Sydney, 1987).

state (p. 5), it is important and valuable in at least several other ways: 1) the widely used Lithuanian, Belarusian, and Polish historiography through the topic investigated not only visibly enriches the conception of the genesis of the modern Lithuanian statehood during 1915–1923 but also presupposes favourable premises for future historiographical dialogues; 2) the fairly broad use of new original historical sources allows the author to not only enrich Lithuanian historiography with new facts and their interpretation but also to substantiate the assertion that ‘the Belarusian factor was not some accidental fellow-traveller during a certain segment of the formation of the Lithuanian state but rather a constant companion on the long road of its formation’ (p. 6). In other words, the mosaic that existed until now of the genesis of Lithuanian modern statehood was missing not only significant details (historical facts) but also an entire image, the awareness of which should eventually have a positive effect not only on contemporary Lithuanian historiography but also geopolitical self-identification. More specifically, it should hasten the comprehension that Lithuania’s eastern neighbour is not Russia or at least no longer just Russia. In this aspect, E. Gimžauskas’ monograph apparently appeared at the right time since it reminds Lithuania’s political elite, during the rapid process of Lithuania’s becoming part of an integrated Europe, about its potential foreign policy objectives and, in the context of Belarus’ political union with Russia, perhaps strengthens at least somewhat the feeling of the original socio-cultural identity, the ambitions of economic independence, and the backbone of political independence; 3) it is also valuable in that the author, in studying the political-diplomatic interaction of the Lithuanians and Belarusians, pays comparatively quite a bit of attention to the revelation and analysis of the social structures of Belarusian society. This attempted ‘nugget’ of a political-diplomatic analysis in connection with the social processes occurring in a nation, is, unfortunately, not common in the Lithuanian historiography, which investigates twentieth century political history. Bearing in mind that E. Gimžauskas’ study was prepared as a doctoral dissertation, it is apparently possible to surmise that the merit of not only the doctoral candidate but also his mentor should be congratulated; 4) it is difficult not to notice that in fairly sequentially studying the effect the Belarusians had on the genesis of the Lithuanian state during 1915–1923, E. Gimžauskas characteristically attempted to immerse it in a fairly broad geopolitical context, i.e. the political aspirations of the Poles, Russians (Soviets), and Germans in this region, and attempted to investigate its contact configuration. All of this tears the reader away from the ordinary circumstances of observation and definitely opens a wider panorama of the changes in Lithuanian political history; and 5) as a definite, perhaps even essential advantage of the book, I would also draw attention to the presentation of the issues as problems. It is a good thing that this principle of writing the history also persists in the conclusions, where the author

also does not endeavour to present finished answers or 'final' truths. Thus the last sentence of the conclusions, closely correlated apparently with the authentic name of the study as well as with the principle aim and objectives, is formulated as follows: 'Thus the Belarusian factor did not play the most important role in the formation of Lithuania's eastern border' (p.158).

Among the book's advantages should be included the appendix, a colour map of the 'Lithuanian-Belarusian region during 1915–1923', which the author prepared on the basis of the work of German historian Hans Erich Volkmann. Actually, the map could be somewhat more informative. It shows not just the already fairly well-known truths, which are of interest for everyone, i.e. the Russian-German front line established at the end of the 1917, the border of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty, and the borders of the new independent states after the conclusion of the Riga Peace Treaty but also draws the northern borders of the Belarusian territorial revendications in the west and vice versa: Lithuanian territorial objectives in the southeast. And it marks the most distinct concentrations of advocates of Belarusian political independence and perhaps, in the author's words, the characteristic divide of Eastern and Western civilisations on Belarusian land. Although the book has many advantages, all of which we have perhaps been unable to mention here, we think there are things in it worth discussing as in every study set out in the form of problems. In the introduction, E. Gimžauskas stresses that 'our entire mass of formulated problems can be divided into three aspects: ethnopolitical, political, and geopolitical' and here he also specifies that 'We should describe the concept of "political aspect" as the diplomatic relationship between the factions representing Belarusian political thought and the Lithuanian state political structures that were being formed' (p. 8). We think that the author's wish to reduce the so-called political aspect to a diplomatic relationship is somewhat dangerous and hardly justified. After rejecting so-called 'popular diplomacy', it probably has little in common during the period of Lithuanian-Belarusian relations under study with the content of diplomacy and diplomatic relations as is traditionally understood in the classical sense and defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* and *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.⁴ Lithuanian-Belarusian diplomatic relations become even more lacklustre as the author essentially pays very little attention to the actions of the Belarusian Embassy to the Republic of Lithuania in Kaunas. E. Gimžauskas almost fails to analyse the circumstances, nature, aims, priorities, and forms of the activities of this institution in Lithuania.

It remains unclear why the author did not like the policy or, in his words, the political aspect of the relations of the two neighbouring nations and why he constricts it into diplomacy by substantially simplifying the

⁴ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 7 (Chicago-London-Toronto, 1959), p. 404.

content of the former and forcefully attempting to expand the subject of the latter. The discrepancy between the declared political aspect, which is specifically defined by the author as a diplomatic relationship, and the book's content is especially visible in the first two principal chapters of the study where he essentially does not speak about diplomacy or the diplomatic relations between the Lithuanians and Belarusians and these concepts are used only fragmentally when talking about the diplomatic activities of the representatives of the Russians, Germans, or other nations. The concept, 'People's Republic of Belarus (PRB) diplomatic' activities is apparently used for the first time only part way through the study in talking about the wishes of the Belarusians in the spring of 1918 in negotiating with the Ukrainians and Soviets in connection with their own southeastern borders (p. 63). And this is completely understandable since if we understand diplomacy in the aforementioned sense, then it is in principle possible to speak about Belarusian diplomacy as well as their diplomatic relationship with the Lithuanians only after 25 March 1918 when the establishment of the PRB was declared since only public authorities and persons authorised by them usually carry out diplomatic activities. Of course, that is if we are not speaking about the so-called 'people's diplomacy' mentioned above.

Certain misunderstandings or ambiguities arise when using certain concepts and terms. Thus E. Gimžauskas identifies the conception of a nation not only decidedly and without reservation, which was formulated by the British philosopher-sociologist Ernst Gellner to essentially characterise the situation of the first half of the nineteenth century, with the term, 'modern nation', of the first half of the twentieth century (p. 18) but also attempts to even connect it with the concept, 'Eastern and Western civilisations' (p. 36), wishing in this way 'to compensate for the ambiguities or omissions arising for us in interpreting the formation of the modern Belarusian state' (p. 36). But such an attempt is hardly able to explain anything. On the one hand, as the author himself acknowledges, 'The problem of such thinking is that we do not take into consideration the fact that the Belarusian region being described is not the centre of a civilisation or close to one but on the very periphery, or to be more precise, the space inhabited by the Belarusians is divided between both civilisations' (p. 36). On the other hand, the problem apparently lies not only in that E. Gimžauskas fails to take into consideration where one needs to look for the Belarusian region but also in that he fails to take into consideration another, no less significant matter, i.e. the multifaceted nature of the content of the concept, 'civilisation'. The fragmented thrust of the concept of civilisation in the text, after the author has failed to at least minimally expand upon his historiosophic position and explain what content he gives this concept, i.e. that of Max Weber, Oswald Spengler, Norbert Elias, or

Vytautas Kavolis⁵, is hardly able to explain anything or let alone compensate the reader for any ambiguities that arise.

The relationship between the concepts of ethnographic nation and ethnocentric nation that are used by the historian is unclear (p. 157). If we understand ethnography as a science, then the author's assertions in the conclusions that in 1917 'the Germans allowed the Lithuanians to create an ethnographic Lithuanian state,' presupposes the concept of an *ethnographic Lithuanian state*, which was apparently also not especially successful. In recalling the Vilnius region and Krajowcy movement as well as Lithuania Minor, one is also forced to doubt the other summarising assertions, presented by the author in the conclusions, that already in 1915, i.e. while the Great War was in full swing, the Lithuanians 'had already essentially formed themselves as a monocultural' nation (p. 157). All the more that here also, i.e. in the third point of the conclusions, he asserts that 'at the end of the 1918 the government of A. Voldemaras, which had begun the actual creation of the Lithuanian state, concluded an agreement with the Belarusians, according to which the Belarusians could again expect subcultural rights' in East Lithuania. If we make the assumption that the author's latter assertion is more correct, then to speak about a 'monocultural' Lithuanian nation in 1915 is somewhat too early. Raimundas Lopata, in analysing the reasons for the coup in 1926, drew the conclusion that Lithuanian culture was not homogenous even in the mid-1920s.⁶

In addition, in my opinion, two far from identical things are too strictly defined and too directly compared in the book's text and especially its conclusions: the October 1920 Polish and Soviet agreement reached in Riga and the decision of the 15 March 1923 Conference of Ambassadors. In speaking in the study's last chapter about the autumn 1920 Polish and Soviet agreement in Riga, E. Gimžauskas is certain that 'a conspiracy in respect to Lithuanian and Belarusian statehood was an inseparable component of this agreement' (p. 155). In the conclusions the author goes further and summarises: 'the imperialistic Polish and Soviet agreement in the autumn of 1920 on the division of the former territory of the GDL and the later decision of the 1923 Conference of Ambassadors, which confirmed the fact of this division, practically destroyed the natural transformation of the GDL and the evolution of the Lithuanians and Belarusians towards the creation of national states'

⁵ N. Elias, 'Kultūra ir civilizacija', *Baltos lankos*, 6 (Vilnius, 1995), p. 5–17; L. Donskis, 'Lyginamųjų civilizacinių studijų klasikai', *ibid.*, p. 18–61; V. Kavolis, 'Civilizaciniai procesai ir Lietuva', *Kultūros barai*, Nr. 7 (1997), p. 2–8; V. Kavolis, *Civilizacijų analizė* (Vilnius, 1998).

⁶ R. Lopata, 'Die Entstehung des autoritären Regimes in Litauen 1926. Voraussetzungen, Legitimierung, Konzeption', *Autoritäre Regime in Ostmitteleuropa 1919–1944*, edit. by E. Oberländer, (Paderborn-Munich-Vienna-Zürich, 2001), S. 100.

(p. 158). We think that a comparison of this nature is conceptually especially tenacious since it presupposes the idea already heard elsewhere about Western imperialists and the great conspiracy against Lithuania. More precisely, such a comparison, like it or not, impels the reader to return to the well-known concept of national-Soviet historiography about 'imperialistic Poland' and the even greater 'imperialists' standing on her shoulders' ... In this case the only difference is that the Soviets are also included in the imperialists' camp. Looking at it conceptually, however, this is only a detail in the general geopolitical configuration, which does not essentially change the general structural image: little Lithuania and somewhat bigger Belarus, ominously surrounded on all sides by gigantic imperialists and their even more powerful supporters, were cringing hopelessly in fear... No doubt the author was not looking for quite that effect. The circumstances and content of the decision of the 15 March 1923 Conference of Ambassadors concerning the establishment of Poland's eastern border hardly allows it to be unambiguously compared to a Polish and Soviet 'imperialistic conspiracy' in Riga. We think that there are essential differences between these two facts and in this case, it seems to me, a comparison of this nature probably occurred because the author failed to delve into the circumstances, content, and wording of the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors. His assertion that after the decision of the 15 March 1923 Conference of Ambassadors 'An opinion was formed that the Western countries "retaliated" through this decision against Lithuania for their wounded pride during the Klaipėda episode,' does not tell the whole story. The talk was apparently about more than just the wounded 'pride' of the Western countries and their 'revenge' against Lithuania.

A study by Sorbonne University historian Julien Gueslin, broadly supported by French historical sources, shows that the 15 March 1923 decision was made in an effort to maintain a certain political 'legal' parity. After the French political and military experts established the nature of the Klaipėda 'uprising', easily ascertaining that this was essentially only a Lithuanian variety of the 'food' of General Lucjan Żeligowski, and proved this truth to their British colleagues, the Vilnius question was decided. According to French historian J. Gueslin, it was the French envoy in Warsaw, André Hector de Panafieu, who, in order to quiet the Poles and prevent their protests concerning the concessions made to the Lithuanians in Klaipėda, first offered at the *Quai d'Orsay* 'to recognise the border established in Riga by the Russian and Polish peace treaty and the annexation of Vilnius'.⁷ Pressured by the Poles, A. H. de Panafieu boldly reminded French Premier Raymond Poincaré that the solution of the Vilnius region question in Poland's favour had been in a

⁷ 'J. Gueslin, Prancūzija ir Lietuvos klausimas (1920–1923 m.): tarp iliuzijų ir realios politikos', *Lietuvos aukštųjų mokyklų mokslo darbai. Istorija*, 51 (2002), p. 35.

sense essentially blocked for two years due to Warsaw's supporting anyone or anything connected with Żeligowski but now, after a similar march into Klaipėda by the Lithuanians, this argument lost its moral value. In other words, one injustice opened the door for another injustice and the scales with L. Żeligowski's 'food' in Vilnius on the one side and the Lithuanian 'uprising' in Klaipėda on the other were precariously balanced against Lithuania and R. Poincaré finally agreed to 'compensate' Poland in the Vilnius question and to decide the dispute, the continuity of which posed a danger'.⁸ After affairs went in this direction, the British, traditional patrons of Lithuanian statehood, also no longer made an effort to find counterarguments to such a suggestion. On the basis of British Foreign Office archives and essentially also due to the circumstances of the decision of the 15 March 1923 Ambassadors' Conference, British historian Merja Liisa Hinkkanen-Lievonen also accented this, saying that the Lithuanians occupied Klaipėda 'by the book', taking a page from the Vilnius 'food' manual edited by Józef Piłsudski.⁹ Therefore the Allies, i.e. the British and French, began at the start of 1923 to treat the nature of both problems as similar in a certain (legal?) sense¹⁰ and such a conclusion, of course, also presupposed a corresponding 'legal' solution, for which they no longer heeded one of the main principles of substantive law: *ex injuria jus non oritur*. Apparently feeling precisely this gap, the Ambassadors' Conference deliberately formulated its 15 March 1923 resolution concerning Poland's eastern border so that they would retain the least responsibility for this decision. It is possible to essentially interpret the wording of the resolution so that the border was established by taking into consideration the good will (sic!) agreements possessed by Poland and the joint responsibility of the parties. Therefore, would it not be better to endorse the opinion of the Swiss scholar Gerhard P. Pink, an expert on the affairs of the Ambassadors Conference, that a thorough evaluation of the 15 March 1923 decision is connected with the fundamental problem of the analysis of the hegemony of the big states?¹¹

That the 15 March 1923 decision of the Ambassadors was a form of peculiar political 'compensation' to Poland, which additionally complicated Lithuania's rights to Vilnius, is also confirmed by other experts on this problem: British historian John Hiden and Lithuanian historian Česlovas Laurinavičius.¹² Thus if we endorse the 'compensation'

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Hinkkanen-Lievonen, *British Trade and Enterprise in the Baltic States 1919–1925*, p. 106.

¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 106–107.

¹¹ G. P. Pink, 'The Conference of Ambassadors (Paris 1920–1931)', *Geneva Studies*, vol. XII, 4–5 (1942), p. 106.

¹² J. Hiden, *The Baltic States and Weimar Ostpolitik*, p. 127; Č. Laurinavičius, Lietuvos istorijos XX a. apžvalga, *Politika ir diplomatija. Lietuvių tautinės valstybės tapimo ir raidos fragmentai. Studijų šaltiniai*, 5 (Kaunas, 1997), p. 260.

concept, it emerges that the Lithuanian ‘uprising’ in Klaipėda, which was blessed by Ernestas Galvanauskas, fairly directly influenced or even hindered the political development of the exiled People’s Republic of Belarus. And in this case, due to the ‘division of the former territory of the GDL’, the ‘practically destroyed natural transformation of the GDL’, and the failed evolution of the Lithuanians and Belarusians towards the creation of national states, responsibility should fall not just to the autumn 1920–spring 1921 ‘imperialistic’ Polish-Soviet Agreement and the spring 1923 Ambassadors’ Conference that ‘confirmed’ it but also to other entities of international relations, which acted in some direction in the international arena since one of the main principles of both classical and contemporary law, i.e. the principle of the equality of the sovereignty of states,¹³ essentially means that all entities of international law, which have state sovereignty, regardless of the nature and size of their rights, their military capability, or political sophistication, are equal before it.

On the other hand, although in the introduction the author also discusses the geopolitical aspect of the study of the problem (p. 8), in the conclusions we essentially fail to find the results of this study. For example, no attempt is made here to debate about what geopolitical or strategic significance the creation of the PRB could have eventually had on Lithuanian statehood according to some territorial ‘scenario’ or how the downfall of this intention affected Lithuanian statehood. Incidentally, we think the role of Poland in the conclusions is also described too briefly and unambiguously compared to the content of the book.

It is also possible to find other partially-substantiated statements in the study. In speaking about the juncture of Lithuanian–German–Ukrainian–Belarusian relations in 1918 and Belarusian territorial aspirations, E. Gimžauskas asserts that after the Belarusians reached a political agreement with the Ukrainians and Germans, ‘the western border of the PRB would have probably been the same western border of the historical GDL that dominated the Belarusians’ (p. 69). In other words, the PRB would have extended to the very border of East Prussia. This assertion is unconvincing since the Belarusian territorial aspirations and the possible ‘scenarios’ of their realisation described by the author in the same place do not provide such grounds. The Belarusian territorial appetite in the West amounted to only ‘the Grodno region, the Pripiet river basin, and Vilnius’, which they considered ‘the centre of Belarus’s intellectual activity, where the idea of the independence of a Belarusian state was perceived the most vividly’ and therefore treated as ‘our capital’ (p. 68). Incidentally, E. Gimžauskas fails to broadly analyse how Lithuanians reflected this latter desire of the Belarusians during the dawn of the creation of their own statehood.

¹³ V. Vadapalas, *Tarptautinė teisė* (Vilnius, 1998), pp. 22, 42, 171–172.

In the book, one encounters incompletely-substantiated interpretations of the facts or logical contradictions between different assertions. After apparently failing to take a close interest in historiography, the author asserts at least a couple of times in the book that at the end of the 1920 the Soviets opposed the plans for a plebiscite in Southeast Lithuania (p. 137, 150). Meanwhile it is already well-known that Lithuanian diplomacy positively thrashed the aforementioned Soviet 'resistance' from Moscow and exacted a price.¹⁴ Of course, after thus changing the accent, the logical model of history or, more precisely, of a segment of history, a model carefully constructed by the author, loses its meaning. In discussing the results of the 12 October 1920 preliminary Soviet Russian-Polish peace treaty, E. Gimžauskas asserts that 'according to it, all the interested parties could feel like winners. The Soviets that the Poles failed to force them to renounce the treaty of 12 July; in other words, the possibility of manipulating both peace treaties as necessary was preserved' (p. 120). Thus on the one hand the historian appears not to doubt the political or even legal parity and effectiveness of both treaties. But on the other hand, he already thinks differently and asserts that, 'after the Treaty of Riga there remained only Lithuania's subjective attitude to maintain the decision as still in force' (p. 135). In this way, a natural question arises: did the Poles thanks to *savoir vivre* nevertheless achieve what they wanted and force the Soviets to renounce the 12 July 1920 agreement with Lithuania, with it thus losing its legal-political meaning and in fact leaving 'only Lithuania's subjective attitude to maintain' the agreement as still effective or did the Poles fail to realise their objective? But then the appeal of the Lithuanian government to the aforementioned agreement becomes more than just its subjective attitude.

Incidentally, we are not certain that some assertions of a dubious nature are not simply problems in editing the text, especially since they show a certain peculiarity. Here are just a few characteristic examples: 'First of all Western Christianity was not the predominant faith in [Russian society]' (p. 36). Until now apparently it has been thought not that the West has two branches of Christianity but vice versa that Christianity itself since the eleventh century has split into two 'branches': Western and Eastern Churches or Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox.¹⁵ Incidentally, the wording of this assertion forces one on the whole to ask whether Russia was Christian at all.

¹⁴ Z. Butkus, 'Pirmasis sovietų pasiuntinys Lietuvoje A. Akselrodas: diplomatinės veiklos pusmetis (1920 m. rugsėjis – 1921 m. kovas)', *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis*. 1996 (Vilnius, 1997), p. 128; A. Kasparavičius, 'Don Kichotas prieš Prometėją. Tarpukario lietuvių–lenkų iracionalioji diplomatija', *Darbai ir dienos* 30 (2002), p. 52–53.

¹⁵ *Krikščionybės istorija. Du tūkstantmečiai krikščionių pastangų paskleisti žemėje Dievo karalystę* (Vilnius, 2000), p. 253–265.

Or: 'a huge territory was occupied by Germany. However as much Belarusian-Lithuanian land as Russian imperial land was occupied after the German war machine was invited in and the initiative given to it' (p. 39). It is interesting who, if not Germany, was that secret entity, who invited the German war machine in and gave them the initiative to occupy the aforementioned land? Or: 'although the effect of the Belarusians could have had political and even geopolitical and ethnopolitical manifestations in the formation of the Lithuanian state under certain circumstances' (p. 157). If the concept, 'could have under certain circumstances' is used, then it apparently did not have but could have in some situation [The problem is that a false friend, 'eventualiai', which has the above meaning, was used in the Lithuanian. – translator] In addition, it is somewhat unusual for some foreign names or surnames to be transcribed into Lithuanian. Thus the German Premier Prince Maximilian von Baden, who liked luxury and sympathised with the liberals, became almost pure Italian, i.e. Maxo Badeni (p. 80). It is possible to find more of these minor slips or similar ones.

But this is not the most important thing. All our subjective comments in no way belittle the original scientific value of Edmundas Gimžauskas' monograph. The author realised a set goal to reconstruct the Belarusian factor in the genesis of the Lithuanian state and has definitely earned huge reader attention. We believe that his book will not languish long on bookshop shelves. On the other hand, bearing in mind that in the introduction to this study the author promised readers that he would 'present <...> a separate scientific monograph about Lithuanian and Belarusian political relations in the first half of the twentieth century' (p. 5), nothing remains but to await from further thorough investigations from our colleague on this topic and his new book about the change in Lithuanian and Belarusian relations after 1923, i.e. in the second quarter of the twentieth century.

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