

III. THE EUROPEAN UNION, THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

THE CULTURAL-HISTORICAL MEMORY OF THE GRAND DUCHY OF LITHUANIA AS AN EXPRESSION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND AS A CULTURAL CAPITAL FACILITATING INTEGRATION INTO THE EUROPEAN UNION

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The object of the article is the duality of the cultural-historical memory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania between the worlds of the Latin West and the Byzantine Slavic East, strongly affected the historical memory and mentality of the Lithuanian nation and shaped many of the forms of cultural and national self-identification, forms which are historically changing and characteristic for a border culture. After concisely discussing various aspects of the cultural history of the GDL, that have strongly affected Lithuanian historical memory, it is possible to state that homogeneity was alien for Lithuanian culture, which had insinuated itself between the Latin West and the Byzantine East and which, from the first century of the appearance of the state, was distinguished by a heterogeneous cultural orientation with diverse directions.

Keywords: cultural capital, cultural-historical memory, Europeanization, Grand Duchy of Lithuania, memory, national identity.

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I would like to begin with the thesis that the historical and multicultural experience of the GDL, even though people still do not realise it, has strongly affected the historical memory of Lithuanians, their mentality, and the processes of their cultural and political development. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL) appears in Lithuanian historical memory in many different guises, which definitely include continuity, but *what are the principal civilizational structures originating from the first centuries of statehood that have shaped the face of modern Lithuania, the historical memory of its people, and their mentality?* It is not very easy to answer this and other questions, which are far from rhetorical and hugely significant, e.g. how the cultural heritage of the GDL, which achieved the apogee of its civilizational expansion in the fifteenth century, and the related historical memory are connected with modern Lithuania, since the path it has taken and the historical twists have markedly affected not only Lithuania's territorial configuration and ethnic composition but also the historical memory, mentality, main character traits, and values of its inhabitants.

The objective of better understanding the role of the historical memory in Lithuanian cultural history forces one to look back at the sources of the nation's statehood and to analyse the GDL that developed from pagan Lithuania. We lack systematic critical view of the cultural relations of the GDL not only with Christian Western Europe but also with broader, historically changing civilizational context that surrounded the country. Many discussions about the Lithuanian historical memory remain incomplete so long as no avail is made to the other civilizational contexts of Western Europe, Poland, Russia, the Golden Horde, and Byzantium that affected the culture of the GDL.

This article was prompted by the work from the last decade, work which was devoted to the problems of civilizational comparativistics and which pushed for a broader comparative look at the effect of the reinterpretations of the cultural history of the GDL on Lithuanian historical memory. The article examines various aspects of the history of the formation of Lithuania's statehood and main cultural orientations and formulates a field of complex problematic questions: what shaped the main features of the Lithuanian nation's historical memory and mentality? How was pagan Lithuania affected by the surrounding civilizational context and the Europeanization processes? How are Lithuanians similar to and how do they differ from the nations existing beside them? How did the unique historical experience of the GDL and its relations with nations near and far affect Lithuanian historical memory and the specific features of their mentality? In looking for answers to these and other no less important questions deriving from them, the study develops and delves into the dimension of the relationship between the Lithuanian and European natures through the introduction of civilizational, culturological, and historical cross-sections of their analysis and through the use of a controversial and ambitious concept of "Lithuanian civilization". It explains the GDL through its civilizational, multiethnic, and multicultural formations. To supply satisfactory answers to these questions is to take the first step to understanding the Lithuanian historical memory and national mentality, to comprehend how those innumerable tendencies, which have led Lithuanian culture to its current state, formed and spread in the cultural history of the GDL.

On the basis of the principles and methodological approaches of modern civilizational comparativistics, the article analyses how Western and Eastern cultural effects, which, during the first centuries of the existence of the state created by Lithuanians, in a way programmed the scenario for the spread of its civilizational genotype, the natural laws of its later development, the extensive development, the crises, the decline, and other specific features of the spread of the Lithuanian historical memory, mentality, and national identity, intersected in the course of the history of Lithuania (Andrijauskas 2006; Brague 1992; Braudel 1986; Chaunu 1984; Coussat 1989; Delanty 2002; Le Goff 1988; Le Roy Ladurie 1978).

Compared to Latvians, Estonians, and Belarusians, specific features of the Lithuanian mentality have primarily been determined by the dimension of the historical memory and the multiple directions of the cultural orientation it has caused. The conscious and subconscious comprehension of the trail of its history as a major power essentially separates Lithuanian mentality from those of the neighbouring nations although up until now Lithuanians have poorly comprehended the true multicultural and multireligious nature

of the state of the GDL or the polyphony and diversity of its cultural energy. Looking back at the cultural history of the GDL and understanding its exceptional values and uniqueness will definitely strengthen after the restoration of statehood and shape a different deeper comprehension of the continuity of its history in Lithuanian consciousness. The mentioned dimension of its history as a major power, a dimension usually perceived in a simplified manner in Lithuania, explains why the Latvians and Estonians are today more rapidly changing the vectors of their cultural orientation and more easily integrating into the space of European civilization, why the Belarusians, who are the closest to Lithuanians due to the cultural past of the GDL, can in no way escape from Russian influence. A natural question arises: why have Lithuanians remained more conservative than Latvians and Estonians in respect to Eurointegration? Lithuanians, even at a subconscious level, are probably pulled along in the wake of their historical memory together with the multitude of contradictory characteristics of the development of Lithuania's statehood.

The duality of the civilizational orientation of the pagan state, which was created by Lithuanian ethnos and occupied a transitional place between the worlds of the Latin West and the Byzantine Slavic East, strongly affected the historical memory and mentality of the Lithuanian nation and shaped many of the forms of cultural and national self-identification, forms which are historically changing and characteristic for a border culture. From a civilizational perspective the culture of the GDL evolved on the eastern edge of Western Christian civilization. The Europeanization processes, i.e. integration into the space of Western Christian civilization, spread ambiguously here because for several centuries Western civilization was a mortal enemy *par excellence* of the pagan Lithuanian civilization, which had a different culture, religious values, and symbols, an enemy, which threatened the existence of the Lithuanian ethnos and later even that of the nation.

In the Middle Ages we can ascribe not only the GDL but also the nation states of Central Europe, which were much more advanced in the development of the civilizational processes, to Western civilization only with certain reservations because they lacked the organic *nucleus* of Western civilization and had instead only its historical *attributes*. Even in comparing the economic, social, and cultural development of the other Western and Central European nations, the backwardness of the latter is obvious. This is much more distinct when speaking about contemporary *pagan Lithuania*, which burgeoned beyond the peripheral limits of Western Christian civilization and, with unrestrained youthful elemental power, clashed with the brutal military pressure of the far better armed Western Christian civilization.

The unification of the pagan Lithuanian state by Mindaugas c. 1240 was a late civilizational response to the predatory militaristic evangelisation of the Teutonic Order and Western Christian civilization. Mindaugas was able to perform an incredibly complex historical mission; *he opened the door to Europe, developed contacts with the Pope, personally associated with the Master of Livonia, out of necessity was baptised, and was even a crowned king, turning Lithuania into not only a European kingdom but also a separate ecclesiastical province with a bishop subordinate to the Pope*. But Mindaugas failed to create a dynasty of powerful rulers and his victories were temporary because Lithuania's cultural swing towards Western civilizational space was only briefly

strengthened. *The coronation of Mindaugas was an important episode in the development of Lithuanian civilization, which testifies to the entry of the Lithuanian state into the history of contemporary Europe, the orbit of its state structures, and the recognition of the young state as an important historical entity. But this symbolic act and the multitude of possibilities for the development of Lithuanian civilization that arose from it failed to be used and therefore the processes of the country's Europeanization were turned back (Mindaugo knyga 2005).*

Despite Lithuania's powerful expansion and annexing of huge Slavic territories into a *pax Lithuanica* zone, the Lithuanians failed to liberate the Slavic duchies from tribute to the Tartars. So long as the Lithuanian expansion to the east and southeast posed no threat to the Golden Horde's hegemony in the Russian lands under their control, Lithuanian relations with the Tartars were often peaceful. But as soon as Lithuanian imperial ambitions sprouted during the reign of Algirdas to the Tartar controlled steppes near the Black Sea, the interests of these two powers clashed.

In a 1371 letter to the patriarch of Constantinople, Algirdas *treated himself as the 'Lithuanian emperor' standing at a higher hierarchical level of power than the ruler of Moscow*. The fact that Lithuania still paid tribute to the Golden Horde during the reign of Gediminas and Algirdas for the right to rule its southern lands testifies to the failure of this imperial design to be based on real power. This tradition lapsed only during the reign of Vytautas when these lands, by treaty, were treated as jointly ruled territories.

The turning from the pagan traditions, which had reigned for centuries, to the recognition of the priority of European cultural values became clear beginning with Jogaila and Vytautas in the Gediminid dynasty. These rulers of the Gediminid dynasty had already rejected the pagan rites that reigned in the royal palace and had reconciled themselves to the Christianity spreading from the neighbouring lands. With the strengthening of the Order's military pressure, preconditions were created for Lithuania to ally itself with neighbouring Poland, an alliance which was established in 1385 by the Act of Krėva.

During the spread of the height of the Lithuanian civilization during the reign of Vytautas, *when the influence of Lithuanian civilization expanded to huge regions of Eastern and southeast Europe and its vassals and henchmen ruled many nearby lands, the ruling structures of the GDL were very similar to traditional imperial structures.*

During ethnic Lithuania's rapid Europeanization in the fifteenth century as well as after it had become an integral part of the Christian world, opposition to Christianity still survived for a long time in the strata of ethnic Lithuania's conservative peasant culture, in which the vestiges of paganism were especially strong. But a far stronger opponent lay in the eastern part of the GDL state organism that was under the religious influence of Orthodox Christianity. The earlier line where the Latin and Byzantine branches of the Christian Church clashed had not always been clearly determined. *After Lithuania had accepted Christianity the line moved to Lithuanian territory and, during the entire period of the history of the GDL there was a latent factor destabilising the country's political life, and the power of this factor became highlighted during the crisis stages.* Lithuania's rulers, in an effort to consolidate the state's forces and to preserve the balance necessary for stability between the Catholic and Orthodox parts

of society, was forced to fight against the universal ambitions of Moscow, which one-sidedly stressed that the pagan and later Catholic cultural and religious orientation of the GDL was alien to Orthodox believers.

In examining deep reasons for the geopolitical decline of the GDL it is necessary to acknowledge that the elite ruling the state *lacked a universal idea of identity, a uniting ideology, and a vision of totalising unity, which were constantly overshadowed by regional interests, and thus they failed to overcome the fragmentation right until the end.* Therefore any universal idea in the cultural history of the GDL unavoidably conflicted with the fragmentation characteristic of lord – vassal relationships and regional interests as well as with the uniqueness of the religious attitudes, political objectives, and cultural forms predominant in a concrete region.

Even the centre, which was located in the capital of the GDL and was supported by the power hierarchy, could not always effectively influence the cultural processes occurring on the periphery because the conquests made by the poorly civilized, martial Lithuanians *were not accompanied by equally powerful impulses for cultural and linguistic homo-genisation but rather the opposite, the reverse process of the spread of cultural influences from the conquered territories was stronger in the culture.* On the other hand, the parts of the GDL state organism *were not strongly bound by the natural ties of ethnic, religious, and cultural unity that are especially important for homogenisation but only by the less effective ties of hierarchical dependence regulated by various power levers.* This *conditionally autonomous, multiethnic, multireligious cultural zone*, which had already appeared in the early stage of the development of the cultural history of the GDL, *which had lost touch with the central influence, and which caused the fragmentation of the state and its division into different regional dependencies, survived practically throughout the entire history of the existence of the GDL and was one of the most important factors in the instability of this complex sociocultural organism.* In the Western part of the GDL, especially in the territory of the Black and White Ruthenians, these homogenisation processes were evident but they had a much weaker effect in the eastern and southeastern territories of the GDL. Therefore the Slavic duchies, which existed on the state's eastern border and belonged to another civilizational space in respect to many of their fundamental cultural features, frequently contributed military resources at critical stages of the history of the GDL to the side of the GDL's main rival, the Grand Duchy of Moscow, which sought a hegemony in the Slavic lands. This was one of the main reasons for the instability of the state's eastern borders and border areas, reasons which attest not only to the vulnerability of the periphery but also of the state's interior territories. In other words, the cultural power, which existed in the capital of the GDL and was universalising Lithuanian ethnoses, as well as the impulses emanating from it were too weak to be able to unify such a huge state that was ethnically and religiously complex.

After the death of Casmir the GDL had to accept the challenge dictated by Russian pressure to defend its political interests in the conquered Slavic lands. *In the words of A. Toynbee, the Lithuanian state was, speaking in the full sense of this word, the barrier of Western civilization, even a sort of bastion defending the approaches of Western*

civilization from the growing power of the Russian and Turkish satellites which had taken over the Byzantine traditions. When the Turkish Ottoman army took Constantinople in 1453 and finally defeated the Byzantine civilization, the traditions of this civilization were taken over by Grand Duke Ivan III of Moscow, a direct descendent of Vytautas. After the fall of Constantinople, Moscow became the universally recognised centre of the Orthodox Church while Lithuanian-controlled Kiev remained the main residence of the Uniate metropolitan (Gudavičius 1999; Rowell 2000; Bumblauskas 2005).

At that time Russia, with its capital in Moscow, was already *de facto* the only influential Orthodox state able to resist the military pressure of the Western and Islamic civilizations. When Russia, ruled by the tsars of Moscow, took over the heritage of the Byzantine civilization, it also took over the form of government characteristic to this civilization as well as its big goals and traditional hostility to Western civilization. The idea thus formed of a ‘Third Rome’, i.e. a world centre, and the Russian messianic ideology connected with it, the essence of which is the conviction that Russia is the main bastion of the only true Orthodox faith and has a mission to spread this religion in the world. Russia’s successful war with Sweden and the united Polish – Lithuanian state over the lands of the western Slavs strengthened the faith in this ideology and turned it into an essential part of Russian universalism and expansionism.

The internal homogenisation of the GDL state organism began to appear in the second half of the fifteenth century but with the strengthening of the power of Poland and Moscow ever less time remained for ideas of a specific GDL multiethnic and multireligious identity to become established since powerful external forces, which were destroying Lithuania’s statehood, were already affecting the country. Since the GDL had failed to form a united ideology supporting its statehood, it existed as an *amorphous, transitional, agrarian, multiethnic border zone between the two different civilizational worlds of the Latin West and Orthodox East.* Through its territory *one of the main ideological and religious opposition lines of the Eurasian subcontinent ran, i.e. the one between the Latin and Orthodox Christian faiths, while in the south, in the area of the steppes, the border of another line with nomads, who had converted to Islam, was never clearly determined and changed according to the relationship of the forces existing on the border. This boundary line later moved south towards the Crimea and occupied by the Turkish Balkans. But the main division between the western Catholic and eastern Orthodox areas was not overcome during the entire existence of the GDL.* In other words, the territory of the GDL, which stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea, was sort of a transitional buffer zone dividing the Western Latin and Eastern Byzantine civilizational worlds. The later disappearance of this state from the map of the world only brought out the reality of the demarcation line, which ran through the territory of the GDL, between these two different civilizational worlds.

The constant devastating wars, Moscow’s strengthening military pressure, the demographic crises caused by upheavals and epidemics, the remoteness from the world’s main economic centres and trade routes, and the ever more evident metamorphosis into a Polish satellite mired the GDL in an ordinary economic crisis. Exhausted by wars waged on various fronts the Lithuanian nation lost its vital creative energy, melted in

the sea of Slavic ethnos surrounding it, adopted the cultural forms of the nations that existed near it, and ever more sought refuge in its narrowing ethnic lands, while already struggling for its survival.

On the other hand, from an ethnic and religious perspective the GDL was a variegated, heterogeneous state. The ethnic and religious macro identities that traditionally existed in it, as different regions or groups of inhabitants belonged to different ethnic groups or the specific religions of paganism, Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity, Islam, or Judaism, naturally stopped the state's homogenisation processes that were very important for its further successful existence. These factors, whose resistance forced homogenisation, not only created the essence of the multiethnic and multireligious *decentrality* of the GDL but also constantly threatened it with instability.

The question arises of whether a multicultural GDL society, which had survived the statehood crisis and been mauled by the various fields of tension that existed on the periphery, would have been able to create the *universal collective identity* that was necessary for further stability and the harmonious existence of the state but without basing it on Lithuanian ethnoculturalism, which lacked civilizational potential. Which of the civilizational development models that are known to us from human history would be the closest subsequent scenario of the political and cultural development of the GDL after it had progressed into a statehood crisis? That of such complex state organisms as, for example, the prosperous Iranian empire, the Arab caliphate, or the Western Europe that has emerged since the fifteenth century? This is a very complex question that requires a thorough comparative analysis of the basic structural segments of the contemporary state organism of the GDL and the structural organisation of the aforementioned civilizations as well as the cultural development scenarios and their driving forces.

The cultural identity of the western territories of the GDL, having lost their traditional paganism, were ever more affected by the Latin Christianity being spread through Poland and the Order while that of the eastern territories as more affected by the Greek Orthodox Church, which was affected by the cultural and governmental forms prevailing in the Mongol – Tartar civilization. *Gradually those ethnic Slavic inhabitants of the GDL, who converted to the Catholic faith, and those, who converted to the Orthodox faith, ended up on different sides of the demarcation line that ran through the GDL.* The religious heterogeneity was also accompanied by linguistic heterogeneity, which strengthened the division between the two fragile sides comprising the state organism, Polish, by expanding the sphere of its influence, won ruling positions in the western Catholic half while Ruthenian did the same in the east, where the Orthodox half predominated.

Due to Lithuania's baptism and alliance with Poland, the ethnic Lithuanian and western Belarusian inhabitants were absorbed into the Christian Western world, i.e. European culture, values, and symbols. But despite the conversion to Christianity and the inclusion in Christian civilizational space, *objectively speaking, after the death of Vytautas Lithuania gradually became a province of the hegemonic Kingdom of Poland, a province in which provincialisation processes spread at various levels* while Lithuania's

dukes and nobles, who had been of such service to the elevation of the Kingdom of Poland, were pushed into secondary positions in the governance of the state.

In other words, *the political alliance of Lithuania and Poland helped to spread the more abundant Polish cultural influence in the territory of the GDL*. It is worthwhile here to recall an important fact of demographic development that, for example, in the fifteenth century the GDL was a state occupying a huge territory of about a million square kilometres. *It had about 3–3.5 million inhabitants, representatives of very different ethnic and religious groups. The nucleus of this state, ethnic Lithuania, due to its more densely populated territory consisted of at least half a million ethnic inhabitants.*

According to J. Jakubowski, a recognised researcher of the demographic processes of the GDL, prior to the signing of the Union of Lublin in the sixteenth century the territory inhabited by ethnic Lithuanians comprised a sixth of the state's entire area while Lithuanians comprised almost half of the country's inhabitants (Jakubowski 1912: 6). But, the most important thing is that the rudiments of an integrated western-style estate society had already appeared in this ethnically variegated world by the late fifteenth century, increasing the consolidation of the various national groups and the highest Lithuanian and Belarusian elite as well as strengthening their attitude to defend the interests of Lithuanian statehood.

Beginning with Lithuania's fourteenth – sixteenth century eastward expansion, socie-ties that were hybrid from a civilizational, cultural and religious perspective co-existed for a long time in various areas of civilizational junctions and cultural borders while the boundaries of the territories inhabited by ethnic Lithuanians shrank due to the Lithuanian language being pushed out of the state administrative apparatus. The inhabitants of these marginal, unstable, culturally mixed territories on the edges of civilizations generally absorbed and assimilated the cultural elements of the neighbouring nations, which had more inhabitants and older traditions of a written culture. The Germanisation of the Lithuanians and the closely related Prussians occurred in the west, their Polonisation in the south and southwest, and the establishment of the Ruthenian language in the east.

Although the rudiments of a civil state began to appear after the lords and perhaps the most numerous nobility in Europe became involved in the governance of the state, nevertheless in reality they defended the so-called 'popular' affairs of a fairly narrow stratum of the society, i.e. those of the only estate of the nobility having civil rights in the GDL. The process of forming a civil consciousness affected the magnates of the GDL differently, among whom, alongside the majority who were nationally oriented, there existed a pro-Polish group, who ever more identified with the objectives of the Kingdom of Poland, and another who ever more identified with the ideology of the unification of the Ruthenian lands with the Kingdom of Moscow.

A dangerous cultural and political disintegration appeared in the country, which did not have a strong idea that was *unifying* the state, because the idea of the statehood of the GDL was unable to metamorphose into a cultural identity directly connected to the Lithuanian ethnos. The GDL was an amorphous, multiethnic, multireligious, liberally governed state organism with a huge territory rather than a strongly centralised state

governing structure, therefore it was ever more difficult for the elite of the GDL who opposed the estate of the king of Poland to consolidate those strata of the country's nobility with different ethnic origins, interests, and political, religious, and linguistic orientations.

On the other hand, compared to the powerful dynastic monarchies of contemporary Western Europe, which had nurtured their national state models and national consciousness, Lithuania had not so much *a monolithic nature as vaguely defined connections that predominated between the state, ethnic, and cultural traditions*. Therefore the Lithuanian elite at the national level, on the basis of the equal partnership relations of the two states that had been established during the rule of Vytautas and Jogaila, sought through various legends, the most popular of which concerned the Roman origin of the Lithuanian nobility, to animate the processes of the Lithuanian national consciousness.

The sixteenth century provided one more promise for the establishment of the sovereignty of the GDL and liberation from Polish political and cultural influence but its potential possibilities remained unused. In the 1530s the Reformation, in the form of Calvinism, began to spread rapidly in Lithuania, which primarily involved the nobility who saw a possibility in this religion to consolidate the country's elite, defend the nation's cultural positions, and resist the spread of Polish influence. The ideas of the Reformation inundated Lithuania like an epidemic and became an important factor in the strengthening of the country's political life and separatist tendencies. The alliance of the powerful *Go tautas* and *Radvila* families even further strengthened the separatist tendencies of the GDL.

During several decades nearly all of Lithuania's political elite converted to Protestantism. At the Lublin Seimas Lithuania was represented almost exclusively by Protestant senators, who saw in this religion a factor uniting the nation, which showed the difference, based on the principle of religion, in the state interests of the GDL. But after the death of Mikalojus *Radvila Juodasis* (the Black) and the conversion of his son Mikalojus *Kristupas Radvila Našlaitėlis* (the Orphan) to Catholicism, the Protestant movement began to subside in Lithuania. On the other hand, after the Great Northern War when Protestants were accused of anti-state ties with the Swedes, various discriminating bans and restrictions of Protestant rights appeared.

This was a new effective blow to Lithuanian separatism that was elaborately prepared by the Polish political elite. A discriminating decree adopted in 1673, which restricted the possibilities of non-Catholics to become nobles, became yet another factor hastening the Polishisation of the GDL. In other words, the movement for the strengthening of the Reformation, a movement which awoke many of the tendencies of the awakening national consciousness and identity, stalled; this brief flaring of separatism, which gave its advocates many hopes of sovereignty, was unable to stop the country's Polishisation which had picked up speed. Consequently the exhortation given by Mikalojus *Dauk* in his *Postile* speech to elevate the national culture and language and to make the latter the official written language of Lithuania's elite also remained unheard.

A new blow to the foundation of the statehood of the GDL and to the defence of national interests was the Union of Lublin, which was signed on 3 July 1569 due to difficult political circumstances and the Livonian War as well as Moscow's growing. This

Union legitimised the annexation of the GDL to the Kingdom of Poland but was still unable to actually destroy its separateness. With Moscow's increasing military pressure and the events unsuccessfully unfolding in Livonia, military support in Poland while the Polish elite sought to take advantage of the situation that had developed and thus the incorporative union was the price paid for Polish promises of military assistance. The Union of Lublin was adopted after practically the entire Lithuanian delegation walked out in protest. Another act for the "Return of Podlasie (Lat. Podlachia) and Volynia (Lodomeria)" to Poland, which was especially painful for Lithuania at the national level and legalised the loss of Podlasie, Volynia, Kiev, and Podolia, was also adopted by the Seimas. The territory of the GDL, compared to the apogee of the expansion of its civilization, shrank threefold and amounted to an area of 297 000 km².

For the development of Lithuanian statehood, this was one of the most dramatic turning points directly connected with the twilight of the Gediminid – Jogiellian dynasty. The compromise union signed with the approval of Sigismund August established a common ruler, who had to be elected in Poland and crowned in Krakow, and a common Seimas uniting both states but such attributes of independence such as treasuries, armies, state seals, and the separate borders of the state territories remained. According to the accurate observation of H. Łowmiański, an expert on this stage of history, Lithuania never created a united state with Poland because an administrative dualism remained even after the Union of Lublin (Łowmiański 1999: 56). The strengthening, although never completely realised, Polish objective to incorporate the GDL into the organism of a united kingdom and to destroy the traditions of Lithuanian statehood unavoidably prompted a strengthening of the national consciousness in the ethnic Lithuanian lands and a struggle to preserve the traditions of sovereignty. This was like a time bomb, which *destroyed the foundations of the union state from the inside and gradually, due to the strengthening internal resistance, made it an ever less viable civilizational organism.*

The partitions of the Commonwealth of the Two Nations, Napoleon's Russian campaign and the subsequent retreat of the remains of his army, the campaigns of the Russian army, and many other historical cataclysms were yet another blow to Lithuanian statehood that was in distress. The strip of buffer states and other sociocultural formations, which German historians call *Zwischeneuropa*, i.e. Europe's periphery or "intermediate lands", which divided the Latin Christian civilization of Western Europe and the powerful new Eurasian Russian Empire, which had taken over the traditions of the Byzantine culture, disappeared after the partitions of Eastern Europe. The new demarcation line between the huge empires, which was drawn through the partitioned territory of the Polish – Lithuanian state, was one of the most painful crisis moments in the history of the existence of the Lithuanian ethnos. Thus *the scenario of the unrealised project of a Lithuanian civilization ended dramatically because the Lithuanians, despite many partial and often very significant victories, were nevertheless unable to establish their hegemony in the huge transitional intercivilizational territories, were forcibly suppressed and divided up by the powerful empires that formed beside them while the Lithuanian ethnos encountered very difficult survival conditions.*

Conclusions

After concisely discussing various aspects of the cultural history of the GDL that have strongly affected Lithuanian historical memory, it is possible to state that homogeneity was alien for Lithuanian culture, which had insinuated itself between the Latin West and the Byzantine East and which, from the first century of the state's appearance, was distinguished by a heterogeneous cultural orientation with diverse directions. This was caused by many complex factors; the first being the historically changing forces, which affected the formation of the Lithuanian mentality and cultural identity and which were highlighted in the historical process of the geopolitical region of Central and Eastern Europe. The pagan Lithuanian state, which had just been founded, experienced the military expansion of the Christian civilization of Western Europe. Europe, by forcing Lithuania through its challenges to look for a new survival and cultural development scenario, through the centuries caused Lithuania's Europeanization and spurred its expansion into Slavic lands in search of defensive resources. After finding itself in the orbit of the values and symbols of Western civilization, beginning in the fifteenth century, the country's elite, like a sculptor from clay, shaped Lithuania's culture along the lines of European models and created the European country's new physiognomy, therefore traces of Europeanization are visible in various layers of Lithuanian culture: in writing, the architectural silhouettes of the cities, and the structures of the mentality, in all of which, incidentally, are found traces of other non-European cultural traditions.

On the other hand, the long and close life in one civilizational organism with various Eastern nations and eastern Slavs could not fail to leave its traces on the mentality of the Lithuanian nation, which is headed down the road to Europeanization, a mentality that has an affection for specific cultural traditions, values, priorities, and behavioural stereotypes, which have developed over the centuries. Therefore during crisis stages on the road to Lithuania's Europeanization, which has long been unavoidable, relapses of the historical memory, which are caused by the path taken in the development of Lithuanian civilization, will occur in various forms and a cultural orientation and values, which are different than those in Old Europe, will operate. The genetic, geopolitical, sociocultural, and other dualities of Lithuania's civilizational development will cause an opposite cultural orientation, which will be periodically reborn during stages dominated by any cultural orientation, as a unique "augmentation" in a latent or tangible form and as a possibility for a cultural alternative.

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LDK KULTŪRINĖ ISTORINĖ ATMINTIS KAIP TAUTINIO TAPATUMO IŠRAIŠKA IR KULTŪRINIS KAPITALAS, INTEGRUOJANTIS Į EUROPOS SĄJUNGĄ

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje analizuojama Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės kultūrinė istorinė atmintis kaip ypač svarbus veiksnys, veikiantis lietuvių mentalitetą ir tautinio tapatumo sampratą, integruojantis į Europos Sąjungą. Straipsnio autorius parodo, kad įvairių geopolitinių galios centrų poveikis Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės valstybingumui paliko pėdsakus lietuvių tautos mentaliteto formavimuisi istorinėje atmintyje. Ne visada aiškiai fiksuojama ankstesnė lotyniškosios Vakarų ir stačiatikiškosios Rusios civilizacijų nesantaikos linija, Lietuvos valdovams priėmus krikščionybę, persikėlė į jos teritoriją, kuri reiškėsi kaip latentine forma gyvuojantis šalies politinį gyvenimą ir gyventojų mentalitetą, jų kultūrinės orientacijas destabilizuojantis veiksnys. Šis skilimas per visą LDK gyvavimo laiką taip ir nebuvo įveiktas ir išliko lietuvių mentalitete, veikdamas net dabartines jų kultūrinės orientacijas.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: kultūrinis kapitalas, kultūrinė istorinė atmintis, europietizacija, Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštystė, atmintis, tautinis tapatumas.

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