

THE GRAND DUCHY OF LITHUANIA
AND THE HISTORICAL REGION:
THE SEARCH FOR NEW COORDINATES IN
POST-SOVIET LITHUANIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

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SUMMARY. This article focuses on the work of the researchers of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania who were among the first to join the regional discussions and attempt to find a place for the historical Lithuania between the East and the West. The questions discussed are related to the national interests of the researchers: to define the position of Lithuania in a specific historical region basing their judgements on the openly declared public, political and cultural motives. In order to model the region and the place of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the work applies the strategies of historical analysis such as interpretative models, argumentation, and theoretical grounding.

KEYWORDS: East Central Europe, Central Europe, regional modelling, post-Soviet Lithuanian historiography.

The collapse of the Soviet system, the processes of the European integration and the related political and societal expectations have led the researchers to reassess the historical position of their countries by refusing the established division of Eastern and Western Europe¹. National history narratives renewed the discussions of the first half of the 20th century about the existence of an “intermediate region” between the East and the West, most often referred to as Central or East Central Europe. The possibilities of free cooperation in the post-Soviet space have lead to the establishment of the network of East Central European institutes. Due to the organizational efforts of a Polish scholar Jerzy Kloczowski², the Lithuanian researchers have also joined the discussions of the historians of the region.

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² On the beginning of the process: Kloczowski, Europa środkowo-wschodnia i jej historia, *Z dziejów Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej: księga pamiątkowa ofiarowana prof. dr. hab. Władysławowi A. Serczykowi w 60 rocznicę urodzin*, Białystok: Dział Wydaw. Filii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1995, s. 112.

Differently from the Lithuanian historians, the researchers of Poland, Hungary, Czechia or other countries of “the intermediary region” ground their discussions of regional models on the tradition of national historiography. The Lithuanian historians were not involved in the debates over the concept of the region during the fourth and the fifth decades of the 20th century as the professional academic Lithuanian historiography was only developing at that time. Thus it was not possible to engage in the debates which required a deeper theoretical substantiation. Cooperation of researchers was stopped by the Polish-Lithuanian conflict over the Vilnius region. Further opportunities to join the discussion were eliminated by the imposed control and restrictions of the Soviet regime. The Lithuania’s position as a part of Eastern Europe became unquestionable. New possibilities to contribute to the debates of regional modelling and present the position of the national historiography in international events appeared only at the end of the 20th century.

Researchers of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were among the first to raise a question of historical-spatial identity. Their analyses of the different political, social and cultural processes of the old Lithuania revealed the existence of different interpretations of the same issues. Typical schemes in the traditional historiography which divide Europe into the East and the West were not applicable to the multi-cultural and multiconfessional reality of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Therefore, the need for a different interpretational state model which could not be identified neither with the East nor with the West appeared. The object of this work is the research of the historians of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania who attempt to find a place for the historical Lithuania between the East and the West. The first question to be discussed relates to the national interests of the researchers: to position Lithuania in a specific historical region, drawing on public, political and cultural evidence. Secondly, the strategies of historical analysis such as interpretative models, argumentation, and theoretical grounding applied in order to model the region and place of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania are overviewed.

At the beginning of the discussed period, a significant amount of research passively followed the traditional division of Eastern and Western Europe. According to this model, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was identified with the Eastern Europe. At first, there was no clear consensus about the new regional coordinates of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Some researchers perceived the country as the Eastern part of the Central Europe; others chose a modified direction of the East Central Europe. There were also models which included an ambiguous conception of Central and Eastern Europe, the model of the North Eastern Europe which set new geopolitical orientation of the country, or cases of positioning historical

Lithuania according to the schemas of civilizational development. An especially original conception of historical-spatial identity was developed by Edvardas Gudavičius. According to the conception, the historical development of Lithuania is seen in the context of the neighbouring countries', European or world history at large. By presenting a peculiar approach to the development of the world history, Gudavičius sees Europe as a civilizational region, based on the Latin West and the Byzantine East civilizational foundations. Continental territories influenced by the two civilizations are treated as peripheral civilizational zones. Central Europe together with the Christian Lithuania and the Scandinavian countries are treated as peripheral to the Latin West civilization and referred to as an infra-civilizational region or New Europe³.

Spatial changes of the historical state can be best revealed by analysing the work of the Lithuanian researchers throughout several decades. On the other hand, the varying foci of the research on this problem significantly complicate the task. A great number of historians writing on the issues of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania passively use the terms of historical regions without giving a concrete substantiation for a choice of a specific term. The placing of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in one or another region is seen as self-evident. A clearer picture of the conception of spatial identity is provided only in the works which choose the model of historical region as the spatial orientation of the research. As an example, a study by Rita Regina Trimonienė *The Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Central Europe During the Late 15th and Early 16th Centuries (Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštystė ir Vidurio Europa XV–XVI a. sandūroje)* can be discussed. In this publication, the issues of Lithuanian political development are viewed through the relations of the Jagiellonian dynasty and related with the historical contexts of Poland, Czechia and Hungary, that is the countries identified with the Central Europe⁴. Rimvydas Petrauskas' works on the development the social structures of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania are also representative of the discussed direction

³ Gudavičius, E., *Lietuvos europėjimo kelias*, Eds. Bumblauskas A., Petrauskas, R., Vilnius: Aidai, 2002, p. 17–59; Gudavičius E., Lithuania's Road to Europe, *Lithuanian Historical Studies*, Vilnius: LII, 1997, vol. 2, p. 15–27; Manusadžianas, P., E. Gudavičiaus pasaulio istorijos civilizacinė koncepcija, *Tarp istorijos ir būtovės. Studijos prof. Edvardo Gudavičiaus 70-mečiui*. Eds. A. Bumblauskas, R. Petrauskas, Vilnius: Aidai, 1999, p. 433–458.

⁴ Trimonienė R. R., *Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštystė ir Vidurio Europa XV–XVI a. sandūroje*, Šiauliai: Šiaulių pedagoginis institutas, 1996. For the regional modelling, the author chose a traditional conception of Jagiellonian Europe developed by the Polish historiography in the first half of the 20th century. According to the model, the regional space is constructed on the basis of the relations of the Jagiellonian dynasty who ruled Poland, Lithuania, Hungary and Czechia at the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries. However, the model does not suit for the analysis of the political development of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania after 1524, when the Jagiellonian dynasty lost their thrones in Czechia and Hungary and the so called Jagiellonian Europe diminished. In this way, the research was limited only to the analysis of the Lithuanian relations with the Kingdom of Poland.

of research. To show a broader context of the discussed socio-political processes, Petrauskas often provides examples of analogous events from other countries of East Central Europe⁵. The overviewed works alongside other publications of a similar kind witness the aspiration of the Lithuanian historians to identify the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with a specific historical region. However, the motives of choosing a specific regional model are often not grounded. As a rule, researchers tend to use the established regional models in historiography without questioning their validity. Due to the lack of the theoretical and methodological background, only few Lithuanian historians undertake an in-depth analysis of the problem of regional modelling. Apart from Edvardas Gudavičius, whose work on the civilizational conception of European space has not received sufficient attention from other researchers, several other historians focusing on the issues of national and spatial identity can be singled out. Specifically, Alfredas Bumblauskas and Jūratė Kiaupienė, who represent different schools of historiography, have been developing their perspectives of regional modelling in a number of publications for several decades.

Out of a number of other researchers who write about the position of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the region, the mentioned historians can be primarily distinguished as linking the search of the historical-spatial identity with the public processes, and political and cultural needs of the people of those times. Often, these processes and needs are identified as the central motives of the discussions. In one of the articles, which can be called a historiographic manifesto (*The Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the East Central Europe: Problems of Region Modelling*), Kiaupienė identifies the problems of state image, the geopolitical location of Lithuania and its role in Europe as the key motives in the search of the historical and spatial identity. In the opinion of the researcher, for the solution of these political problems, the conception of the historical image of Lithuania should be used. Moreover, the conception should not be associated only with the history of the Lithuanian Republic of the first half of the 20th century. As Kiaupienė claims, the historical image of Lithuania becomes particularly important among the European states, which cherish their historical continuity and politicians, who think in the categories of historical geopolitics⁶. The idea of the historical image as a representational tool of statehood prevails in the later

⁵ Petrauskas R., LDK bajoriško seimo susiformavimas Vidurio Rytų Europos luominių susirinkimų raidos kontekste, *Parlamentarizmo genezė Europoje ir Lietuvos atvejis: tarptautinės mokslinės konferencijos medžiaga*. Eds. A. Lukošaitis, M. Urbonaitė, R. Budnikaitė. Vilnius, 2008, p. 5–15. In this and other publications of the researcher, the social and political events in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania are often discussed by comparing them to the parallel processes in East Central European countries.

⁶ Kiaupienė J., Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštystė Vidurio Rytų Europoje: diskusinės regiono modeliavimo problemos, *Lituanistika pasaulyje šiandien: darbai ir problemos*, Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 1998, p. 9, 11.

works of the researcher. In the article, *East Central Europe and the Lost Grand Duchy of Lithuania*, it is emphasized that Lithuania has always strived for being recognized, understood and accepted by Europe. Therefore, when discussing the problem of regional dependence, the historiographic and political interests become closely intertwined⁷.

The problem of the “lost” or “invisible” country as a key motive is also seen in Bumblauskas’ research on the regional coordinates of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In the introduction of the article *Lithuania – the Geographical Center of Europe*, the researcher draws attention to the astonishment of the old Europe when facing a different country than was expected after 1990: a Catholic country rather than Orthodox, people talking in their own rather than the Slavic languages, etc. Bumblauskas asserts that Lithuania not only lacks clear geographical coordinates, but also rarely receives adequate positions in the mental historical maps of Europe. For the historiography of the West, Lithuania remains “tabula rasa”⁸. In the conference report published several years ago, *Actual and Historical Regions of Europe*, Bumblauskas further develops the societal-political argumentation by relating the problem of regional positioning to the full range of current Lithuanian foreign policy issues. The researcher criticizes the regions constructed by the Lithuanian politicians by claiming that there is no clear understanding of Lithuania’s place in the regional space. The positions of politicians do not meet with the opinions of the historians who see Lithuania as a part of the East Central Europe. In the political rhetoric, the region often becomes the Central and Eastern Europe. Bumblauskas also observes a problem of an ambiguous geopolitical orientation of Lithuania, i.e., the flouncing between the region of the countries of the Baltic Sea and the region of the East Central Europe. The politicians offer to refuse any identification with the East Central Europe in the conception of the image of Lithuania and choose the direction of the Baltic and the Nordic countries. However, at the same time, the Eastern neighbourhood policy is realized which clearly contradicts the mentioned claims. Bumblauskas maintains that due to the historical dependence to the East Central Europe, Lithuania is culturally and historically closer to Poland, Czechia and Hungary rather than to Latvia, Estonia or Sweden⁹. Moreover, the problem of Lithuania’s regional dependency is seen as especially topical, having in

⁷ Kiaupienė J., *Europa Środkowowschodnia i „zagubione” Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie, Pozostawione historii. Litwini o Polsce i Polakach*, Kraków: Znak, 1999, s. 16.

⁸ Bumblauskas A., *Lithuania and Europe’s Historical Regions*, Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review. 2000, nr. 5. Internet access: <<http://www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/2000-5/Bumblauskas.pdf>>.

⁹ Bumblauskas A., *Aktualieji ir istoriniai Europos regionai: Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštija, ULB, Vidurio Rytų Europa, Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštijos tradicija ir tautiniai naratyvai*, Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2009, p.18, 22.

mind the contemporary geopolitical aspirations of Russia. In the discussion of the historical peripeteia between the countries in the 20th century, Bumblauskas draws attention to the official statements of Moscow's geopoliticians: Lithuania is seen as the main Russia's obstacle which hampers the implementation of the Eurasian strategy in the post-Soviet space and the revival of the Moscow-Berlin axis. Bumblauskas presupposes that in order to realize these aims, Russia may pursue a specific historical politics, for example, the escalation of the Lithuanian-Polish relations¹⁰. The relations of Poland, Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine are also discussed in this context. According to the scholar, strong partnership between the countries and counterbalance to the Russian position can be achieved only if historical pretensions are rejected. Thus the development of relations between the mentioned countries is inseparable from the considerations of the problems of common cultural and historical heritage¹¹.

The overviewed historiographical manifestations of the two historians witness the aspiration to ground the search for historical-spatial identity on the topical societal-political issues. These ideas are visible in the chosen regional modelling principles or reasoning used to position Lithuania in the regional area. Moreover, the problems of Lithuania's "disappearance" in history and the relations with the neighbouring countries are highlighted.

Due to the lack of research in the national historiography, the Lithuanian historians start the search for the historical-spatial identity from the criticism of the prevailing historiographic conceptions. This strategy was especially prompted by the images of the Lithuanian past prevalent in the neighbouring countries which confront with the positions of the contemporary national historiography. Bumblauskas was one of the first in the Lithuanian historiography to discuss the position of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in Europe. A question was raised whether the Grand Duchy should be seen as an independent civilizational unit or as a part of such supra-civilizations as Byzantia and Rus before the Christening, and the Latin West civilization after the Christening of the country. In the discussion of the conceptions of the historical development of Lithuania dominant in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, Bumblauskas distinguished three directions of interpretations: the Russian, the Polish and the Baltophylic. All three directions constructed the historical development of Lithuania in the context of the battle between the Russian and Polish civilizations. In the Lithuanian history

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 20-21.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 22-23.

of the 13th-14th centuries, the role of the Russian civilization was emphasized. Such attitude reflected the interests of the imperial and Slavofilic historiography of those times. The Polish historiography mostly focused on the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania after the acceptance of Christianity, stressing the importance of Poland in bringing the Western culture to Lithuania. The image of the Lithuanian history was built around the idea of Poland as a “missionary of civilization” in the context of Polish history¹². The scholar observes that only in rare cases, especially in the Baltophylic or, later, the Lituanistic research, Lithuania was viewed *not as an object of fight of civilizations, but as a subject creating civilization*¹³. From this perspective, the country is seen as balancing between the mentioned civilizations with greater Russian influence in the pre-Christian and Polish in the post-Christian periods. Bumblauskas identified similar interpretations of the Lithuanian past in the works of the Polish historians of the first half of the 20th century, for example, Feliks Konieczny and Oskar Halecki, among others. Despite the facts that the idea of Poland as cultural missionary was no longer emphasized and the peculiarities of historical development and the statehood traditions of the GDL were observed, the image of the Lithuanian history was still constructed in the context of the Polish history¹⁴. In the discussions of regional positioning, the concept of civilization as seen by Bumblauskas relates to a certain extent to the conception of the regions of civilizational Europe developed by Gudavičius. On the other hand, apart from the use of similar conceptual constructions and continuation of some ideas, Bumblauskas does not follow the interpretational model of the European history proposed by Gudavičius.

In a similar way, Kiaupienė aims her critical remarks at the historiographical images of the East Central Europe of the 20th century. The conception of the core states of the region – Poland, Czechia and Hungary and their peripheral zones is especially disapproved. According to this vision, Lithuania is in the periphery of the region; the history of the country is interpreted through the prism of Poland as a core state. Lithuania is first mentioned only after the dynastic union with the Kingdom of Poland; its position is constructed only through the union relations with the neighbouring country. Finally, at the end of the Early Modern Times, Lithuania again disappears in the Polish history. Contrary to this position, another variant of regional modelling is proposed: the history of the GDL is seen as inseparable from the history of the region and discussed in parallel with the

¹² Bumblauskas A., *Dėl Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės civilizacijos pobūdžio, Lietuvos istorijos studijos*, t. 3, 1996, p. 10–14.

¹³ Original quote: “*ne kaip į civilizacijų kovos objektą, o kaip į civilizaciją kuriantį subjektą*”.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 14–17.

Polish history; the exceptionality of the Lithuanian history and the distinction of past events are emphasized. However, Kiaupienė claims that the presented position, favourable to the historical portrayal of Lithuania, is overshadowed by different modifications of the Lithuanian historical image which follow the conception of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania “fused” together with the Kingdom of Poland established in the Polish historiography of the first half of the 20th century. The interpretations of the Lithuanian past by the Polish historians Halecky and Koneczny and their followers are especially criticised. This perspective proclaims the idea of the cultural missionary of Poland and ignores the position of the Lithuanian historiography¹⁵. In the historiographic criticism, Kiaupienė sees similar problems to the ones posed by Bumblauskas. It is emphasized that in the national narratives of other countries, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is not given an independent historical role, whereas its past is viewed as a peripheral part of the Polish history.

In bringing the problem of the “vanishing” of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the historiography of the neighbouring countries, the mentioned Lithuanian historians draw new regional coordinates of the country in opposition to the Russian and Polish historiography. By rejecting the idea that the GDL is “found” in Europe only after the Christianization and the dynastic union with Poland, both researchers look for the evidence of the European influence in the earlier stages of the Lithuanian statehood. Discussing the issue of the place of the pre-Christian Lithuania in Europe, Bumblauskas rejects the historiographic claim about the crucial Russian cultural influence on the Pagan Lithuania. The researcher claims that the Slavic lands were in the periphery of the state life, whereas the pagan core of the Lithuanian state was influenced not only by the Russian civilization¹⁶. As a support, the first signs of the West orientation are given: the Catholic Christianization of the country in 1387 after an unsuccessful first attempt in 1251. Although the influence of the Slavic civilization such as the spread of Orthodoxy and Slavic writing system on the former Pagan Lithuania cannot be ignored, the overall cultural imprint is seen as marginal. It is noted that although at the state level the Pagan religion prevailed, it was gradually replaced by Catholicism which enhanced the spread of the Western culture in Lithuania¹⁷. This fact stands as a basis of the declaration “Lithuania – not East Europe”. The declaration opposes the Russian position which presents the historical development of the Grand Duchy

¹⁵ Kiaupienė J., Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštystė Vidurio Rytų Europoje., p. 11–17; Kiaupienė J., The Grand Duchy of Lithuania in East Central Europe or once again a bout the Lithuanian-Polish Union, *Lithuanian Historical Studies*, Vilnius: LII, 1997, vol. 2, p. 57–64.

¹⁶ Bumblauskas A., Dėl Lietuvos Didžiosios., p. 21.

¹⁷ Bumblauskas A., Aktualieji ir istoriniai., p. 33.

of Lithuania in the light of the political structures, social hierarchy, ownership regulations and cultural issues of the Eastern Europe. First, the argument, "Russia is an Eastern Christian land", whereas Lithuania chose the Catholic baptism, shows that Bumblauskas follows the traditional European regional division i.e. the continent is divided into the Latin and the Byzantine Europe according to the religion. Secondly, it is claimed that the acceptance of the Catholicism lead to the spread of such cultural styles as Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque and Enlightenment in Lithuania, whereas Russia joined the common cultural processes of Europe only in the 18th century. The development of political structures also supports the idea of Lithuania's distancing from Russia (and the East). During the 15th-16th centuries, Lithuania became a monarchy with its own parliamentary system, whereas in Russia, the Eastern despotism prevailed. On the basis of the given arguments, new coordinates of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania are proposed: as Lithuania cannot be related neither to the East nor to the West, it should be viewed as a part of Central Europe¹⁸.

Kiaupienė identifies the pre-Christian Lithuania with the East Central region of Europe. The justification for this claim is evident in the early tradition of the statehood before the dynastic union with Poland which had a blend of traditions of the Baltic tribes, Kievan Rus and the European West. Moreover, Kiaupienė sees the West orientation of the country in the accepted Christianity and the rejected Orthodox alternative¹⁹. Dismissing the over-evaluated role of Poland in bringing Lithuania to Europe, Kiaupienė reminds that Lithuania acquired international prestige and became an influential force in the region far before the dynastic union or Christening. A more thorough analysis of the Pagan Lithuania and its society is necessary in order to understand the mechanisms which allowed the Pagan country to survive in the Christian East Central Europe for over 100 years without accepting Christianity; determined its territorial spread into the East; enhanced the integration of Orthodox Christians into Lithuania, and their separation from the North-East Slavs²⁰.

As is seen, both researchers locate the Pagan Lithuania between the Eastern and Western regions of Europe, grounding their argumentation on the geopolitical orientations of the ruling dynasty. On the other hand, the pre-Christian period is

¹⁸ Bumblauskas A., Lithuania and Europe's Historical Regions, *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*. 2000, nr. 5. Internet access: <<http://www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/2000-5/Bumblauskas.pdf>>; A.Bumblauskas, Aktualieji ir istoriniai..., p. 34.

¹⁹ Kiaupienė J., Europa Środkowowschodnia..., p. 23–24.

²⁰ Kiaupienė J., Historyk Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego na marginesie Historii Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej – kilka uwag dyskusyjnych, *Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, rok 8(2010), zeszyt 1: Europa – pytania o przyszłości, Lublin: IEŚW, 2010, s. 139.

too distinctive to dare to draw specific marks of regional identity. Therefore, a more objective representation of regional identity is searched for in the period of state and society transformation in the 15th-16th centuries.

According to Bumblauskas, the localization of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in Central Europe is not an easy task as the majority of the historical processes took place later than in Czechia, Hungary and Poland. However, due to a rapid process of Europeanization which started in the 15th century, Lithuania undoubtedly became an equivalent part of the region in the 16th century. The arguments supporting this proposition are the features of regional identity: the feudal law which formed in property regulations; the serfdom and feudal relations; the nobility and monarchy at the political and social structures; town guilds; the processes of Reformation and Counterreformation in ideology; educational system with cathedral schools and the trivium, colleges and university in education²¹. These facts, according to the researcher, evidence that Lithuania chose a similar path of development to other countries of the Central European region.

When discussing the coordinates between the East and the West, Bumblauskas identifies several terms used to refer to the same historical space: Central Europe, East Central Europe, and Central and Eastern Europe, arguing that they all define the same historical space which includes Hungary, Czechia, Poland and Lithuania²². It might be assumed that such controversial position is used to solve the terminological confusion which appeared due to the different generations of historians and varying regional and spatial definitions by distinct schools of historiography. On the other hand, an oversimplification of terminological variation should not be justified: the terminological differences are not only nominal. Quite often, these specific terms differentiate distinct regional models with unique coordinates.

Meanwhile, Kiaupienė consistently keeps to the chosen definition of the region, East Central Europe, and does not identify it with other definitions of the space between Eastern and Western Europe. The scholar claims that the westernization of the country is evidenced by its further historical development. As a major proof for the processes of Europeanization are the state reforms implemented by the grand duke of Lithuania Vytautas the Great. The reforms not only strengthened the tendencies of western development in Lithuanian ethnic

²¹ Original quote: “nuosavybės santykiuose susiformavusi leno teisė, ūkyje – feodas ir baudžiava, politinėje socialinėje struktūroje – bajorų luomas ir luominė monarchija, miestų ūkyje – cechai, ideologijoje – reformacija ir kontrreformacija, edukacijoje – švietimo sistema su katedrinėmis mokyklomis bei jų triviumu, kolegijomis ir universitetu”. In Bumblauskas A., *Aktualieji ir istoriniai*., p. 35.

²² Bumblauskas A., Lithuania and Europe's historical regions, *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*. 2000, nr. 5. Internet access: <<http://www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/2000-5/Bumblauskas.pdf>>.

lands, but also in the Slavic territories of the GDL and separated them from the Russian lands which were under the influence of the Moscow State²³. The scholar sees common regional tendencies of the historical development and the specificity of the Lithuanian history in different cultural and sociopolitical phenomena. A particular attention is devoted to the questions of the political nation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Kiaupienė sees the formation of the political nation of the GDL as a socio-political phenomenon, which should be compared to the similar processes in the East Central European space. The region is given a status of space *which did not follow Western or Eastern dictate of political regimes and which avoided the formation of absolute monarchy*²⁴. The specificities of the region, as Kiaupienė claims, are best evidenced in the peculiarities of the political nation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania²⁵. Further on, the scholar aims to identify and distinguish on regional scale these specific peculiarities by relating them to development of the national consciousness of the GDL. In contrast to the claims of the Polish historians about the existence of a single political nation structured around a mythological “Sarmatian” genealogy, Kiaupienė proposes a variant of the legendary Roman genealogy developed in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Slogans “We are Lithuania” or “We are a Lithuanian nation” found in the historical sources witness the identification of the political elite of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with the nation and stand as a strong argument that the political nation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was an independent sociopolitical phenomenon²⁶.

At first sight, Kiaupienė’s position on the GDL place in the region may seem to be based on contradictory arguments. On the one hand, the scholar emphasizes the exceptionality and peculiarity of the Lithuanian history. On the other hand, the importance of common European and regional phenomena for the historical development of Lithuania are stressed. However, the interrelation of the universal and culture specific issues manifests the main purpose of Kiaupienė’s argumentation: to reject the role of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a historical satellite of Poland and to ground the position of Lithuania as an individual historical formation in the East Central European region.

In the latest research, Kiaupienė relates the question of historical-spatial identification with the issue of the European identity, which in its own turn can

²³ Kiaupienė J., *Europa Środkowoschodnia.*, p. 24.

²⁴ Original quotes: “*nei Vakarų nei Rytų politinių – valstybinių santvarkų diktatui*”, “*kurioje neįsigalėjo absoliutizmas ar net stipri monarcho valdžia*”.

²⁵ Kiaupienė J., Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštijos politinė tauta. Lietuviškoji perspektyva, *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštijos tradicija ir tautiniai naratyvai*, Vilnius, 2009, p. 50–52.

²⁶ Kiaupienė J., *Historyk Wielkiego Księstwa.*, p. 142.

be encompassed into a broader discussion of the concept of Europe. The idea of Europe began to be related with the system of specific European values at the interface of the Medieval and the Early Modern times when the European identity transformation process began²⁷. Kiaupienė sees the first traces of the European identity in the nobility of the GDL who finished their studies in West Europe. Studies in foreign universities intensified *the mental integration processes of the political and social elite of the country with the European and Latin culture*²⁸. Reformation also significantly influenced the cultural maturity of the dukes and the nobility of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania²⁹. Evidence of the European identity can also be found in the old writings of the GDL and in the acceptance of the antique heritage. The specific way of literary and cultural communication and the encoded meanings could be understood only by people who shared common humanistic European culture. As Kiaupienė claims, a variety of the old writings of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania show the orientation of the Lithuanian elite to the Latin tradition of the European culture³⁰. Finally, Kiaupienė relates the acceptance of the European culture in the 16th century with the formation of the European identity in Lithuania.

Analysis of the European identity in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania based on the search for the common cultural processes also testifies the independent development of Lithuania. The parallels with the common European processes serve as a counter argument against the localization of the GDL in the Eastern Europe or in the periphery of the Polish history. The collected evidence shows that the country had an independent historical role in the East Central European space. However, Kiaupienė notes that the problem of geo-cultural orientation of the GDL is especially complex because of the variety of the nations, languages and confessions of the country. It is questioned whether the Europeanization which came from the “Latin” Europe was understood and accepted by the inhabitants of the Slavic lands and the Orthodox Christians. Kiaupienė speculates that the European

²⁷ Kiaupienė J., Lukšaitė I., *Veržli Naujųjų laikų pradžia Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštystė 1529–1588 metais*, Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2013, p. 51.

²⁸ Original quote: “*mentalinės integracijos procesas, stiprėjo sąveika su lotyniškųjų tradicijų Europos kultūra*”.

²⁹ Kiaupienė J., Ar galima rasti europietiško identiteto pėdsakų XVI a. Lietuvoje?, *Europos idėja Lietuvoje: istorija ir dabartis*, sud. D. Staliūnas, Vilnius, 2002, p. 52–54. Similari deas can be found in the early works of Bumblauskas about the processes of Europeanization. According to these researchers, the majority of the acquired new cultural, political and social processes were the key European cultural values. Therefore, it can be concluded that in the 16th century, the society of the GDL becomes European and integrates into the Western civilization, – Bumblauskas A., *Dėl Lietuvos Didžiosios..*, p. 22. However, differently from Kiaupienė, Bumblauskas did not further develop the idea of Europeanization based on the core cultural values and did not elaborate it into the interpretational strategy used for the analysis of complex geocultural orientations.

³⁰ Kiaupienė J., Ar galima rasti..., p. 54–58.

identity was not foreign to the Orthodox nobility of Lithuania who were related to Europe through their national dependency to the GDL. At the same time, the historian doubts whether all inhabitants of the GDL who depended to different cultures and confessions or lived at the borders of the country equally felt being Europeans³¹. At present, historiography does not provide a solution to the posed questions. Research on the political-national loyalty of the Slavic lands of the GDL or on the issues of religion also does not offer any specific interpretations. Most often, the works are limited in their context and predominantly discuss the factor of Moscow neighbourhood, whereas other possible directions of research are not considered. As is seen, the questions about the exact geographical coordinates of Central or East Central Europe or where the Eastern border of the region can be drawn remain especially topical.

Summing up the discussion devoted to the regional positioning of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania which represents the position of the Lithuanian historians, it can be claimed that in the post-Soviet historiography, the search of historical-spatial identity is closely intertwined with the region identified as Central or East Central Europe. Although there is no unanimous opinion about the regional localization of the GDL, the Central or East Central European region dominates in the national historical narratives. From the Lithuanian perspective, the region is identified with a narrower space in comparison to the majority of contemporary conceptions and encompasses Poland, Hungary, Czechia and Lithuania of the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times. The Alpine-Carpathian and Balkan regions are not relevant for the Lithuanian historians. The tendency can be explained by the fact that it is easier to identify similar or identical political, social, and cultural processes in the history of the above mentioned countries which allows the researchers to draw the regional coordinates of the GDL. The popular perspective about the exceptionality and peculiarity of the historical development of the GDL did not serve as a motive for a distinct regional model and was rather used as an argument for distancing from the historical context of the East Europe or Poland and the declaration about the independent historical role of the country in relation to other countries of the region. The discussion of the new topics of the European identity and the geo-cultural localization of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania symbolizes a new stage in the research of the historical-spatial identity.

³¹ Kiaupienė J., Lukšaitė I., *Veržli Naujujų laikų pradžia Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštystė...*, p. 52–53.

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LIETUVOS DIDŽIOJI KUNIGAİKŠTYSTĖ IR ISTORINIS REGIONAS: NAUJŲ KOORDINAČIŲ PAIEŠKA POSOVIETINĖS LIETUVOS ISTORIOGRAFIJOJE

SANTRAUKA. Sovietinės sistemos griūtis Lietuvos istorikus paskatino iš naujo permąstyti savo valstybės istorinę vietą Europoje. Vieni iš pirmųjų istorinės erdvinės tapatybės problemą pradėjo svarstyti Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės tyrinėtojai. Jų darbai, kuriose ieškoma istorinės Lietuvos tarp Rytų ir Vakarų, tapo šio straipsnio objektu. Svarbiausi aptariamai klausimai, iš vienos pusės, susiję su nacionaliniais tyrinėtojų interesais – atvirai deklaruojamais visuomeniniais, politiniais ar kultūriniais motyvais apibrėžti Lietuvos vietą konkrečiame istoriniame regione. Iš kitos pusės, su istorinės analizės strategijomis – interpretaciniais modeliais, argumentacija, teorinėmis nuostatomis, kuriomis remiantis modeliuojamas regionas ir LDK vieta jame.

RAKTAŽODŽIAI: Vidurio Rytų Europa, Vidurio Europa, regiono modeliavimas, posovietinė Lietuvos istoriografija.