

## FOREWORD

The present collection of papers begins a series of *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, which was conceived as a continuing scholarly publication. The series has grown out of the annual conferences on the problems of that period, which have been held by the Lithuanian Institute of History and Vytautas Magnus University for more than ten years, and are distinguished by both an interdisciplinary approach to the eighteenth-century history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and a strong nucleus of international researchers consisting of historians, literary scholars, art critics and philosophers from Lithuania, Poland, Belarus and other countries. The results of the work of these conferences – the thematic issue of the magazine *Darbai ir dienos* [Days and Deeds] that came out in 2004 (vol. 37: *History of Lithuania: The Eighteenth Century*), and the published collections of scholarly papers, *The Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century: The Urban Space* (Kaunas: VDU publishing house, 2007) and *Public and Private Spaces in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 18th Century* (Vilnius: LII publishing house, 2008) – were acclaimed by colleagues, and alongside, increased our commitment to the consistent publishing of the results of the research into the eighteenth century.

Specialised continuing publications dedicated to the eighteenth century in national languages are published in a number of countries with long historiographical traditions: Great Britain – *The Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Germany – *Studien zum 18. Jahrhundert*, Switzerland – *Travaux sur la Suisse des Lumières*, France – *Revue Dix-huitième Siècle*, the Netherlands and Belgium – *De Achttiende Eeuw*, Poland – *Wiek Oświecenia*, and elsewhere. They are united by an interdisciplinary approach to the history of a given country of the period under discussion and the aim to analyse the cultural processes in a wide European context. By starting the publishing of the series of *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, we seek not only to expand the research of eighteenth-century Europe by adding the perspective of the history of Lithuania, but also to continue the tradition of publications dedicated to a concrete historical epoch, such as the series *Studies in the History of Lithuanian National Revival* devoted to the history of the 19th – early 20th century, which was initiated after the restoration of independence and continued for more than a decade in Lithuania.

The first volume of *Eighteenth-Century Studies* is focused on the problem of the relation between traditions and innovations in Lithuania in the 18th century. The period of the Four-Year Sejm and the Constitution of 3 May 1791 has been chosen as a point of reference to assess the intensity of changes and their scale. To summarise the approaches prevailing in historiography and the latest results

of research, the authors of the papers aim to answer the questions if the society of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the entire society of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was mature enough to accept the ideas of the modernisation of the state and society brought by the period of Enlightenment, and to what extent and in what fields it remained in the framework of traditional standards and forms of action. The book consists of scholarly papers covering the following thematic groups: 1) development of parliamentarianism, 2) modernisation of state administration, 3) problems of urban history, 4) cultural changes, and 5) historiography.

The first chapter titled “Before and After the Constitution of May 3<sup>rd</sup>: The Development of Parliamentarianism and Historical Memory” includes the papers by the historians Andrzej Stroykowski and Andrej Macuk analysing the development of the sejmiks in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the parliamentary culture of the nobility. The historian of law Andrzej B. Zakrzewski, who looked at the sejmiks through the prism of the relation between traditions and innovations, comes to the conclusion that the reforms of the Four-Year Sejm did not cause a “revolution” in the Lithuanian sejmiks: already at the beginning of the rule of Stanisław August, the laws of 1764–1768 that defined the activity of the sejmiks of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania established the principle of decision making by majority vote, which became a model for the law adopted on 24 March 1791. The problems of the Constitution of May 3<sup>rd</sup> are discussed in the paper by the researcher of memory and heritage politics, Rasa Čepaitienė, in quite a different aspect – through the change of assessments in Lithuanian political, academic and social discourse from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century until our days.

The inner reforms of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the face of geopolitical challenges are addressed in the second chapter consisting of the papers by Boris Nosov, Irina Kiturko, Ramunė Šmigelskytė-Stukienė, and Eduardas Brusokas. The papers by Yury Gordeyev, Domininkas Burba, and Irina Kiturko devoted to the issues of the history of Grodno, Vilnius and Minsk open the chapter of “The Contexts of Urban History” of the present volume.

In the largest chapter titled “Between Baroque and Enlightenment: Discoveries of Culture Research”, the changes that took place in the daily milieu of the middle nobility, prompted by various factors of the public, political and economic life in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, progressive ideas of Enlightenment, and increased education (Dalia Ramonienė) are discussed from the viewpoint of the relation between traditions and innovations. The changes in the aesthetics of occasional literature that occurred in the period of Enlightenment are discussed (Asta Vaškeliene), the spread of the Vilnius School of Baroque in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is analysed (Auksė Kaladžinskaitė), and the interpretation of the Vilnius Town Hall as a building with a public function in a wide context

of secular architecture of the period of Enlightenment is presented (Rasa Butvilaitė). In her paper Magdalena Ślusarska advances a thesis on a specific model of cultural life that functioned in the period of rule of Stanisław August in Vilnius, based on coexistence and mutual institutional dependence, ritualised forms of acquiring cultural competencies and participating in the cultural scene, informal institutions of culture and political life, such as the Chief Tribunal of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which, in addition to its chief functions, gradually became an important institution strengthening the cultural potential of the capital of Lithuania, and making a significant impact on concrete cultural practices. The chapter on cultural research ends with a paper dedicated to fireworks, which became an attribute of the most important public celebrations in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, revealing that unlike in the Western European countries, in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania the creators of fireworks followed the established canon of representing Baroque symbols while building their performance programmes (Lina Balaišytė).

In the chapter dedicated to historiography, the problem of applying the term of “the second edition of serfdom” in the history of Central Eastern Europe is analysed referring to the interpretations of the development of Lithuanian economy (Darius Žiemelis).

The present publication has been prepared on the basis of the papers delivered at the international scholarly conferences on the history of Lithuania of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that were held at the Lithuanian Institute of History on 24–25 November 2011, and at Vytautas Magnus University on 27–28 September 2012.

The second volume of *Eighteenth-Century Studies* that is presently under preparation will discuss state educational politics and the influence of the Educational Commission on cultural processes. Original scholarly and survey articles and the 18<sup>th</sup> century sources, as well as other material relevant for the research of this period will be published in the series. It will also include reviews and announcements of the already published papers, scholarly monographs and studies that came out in Lithuania and abroad.

We hope that *Eighteenth-Century Studies* prepared according to the problematic and thematic principles will not only allow presenting a wide range of viewpoints of scholars from different fields regarding a concrete problem, but also contribute to the promotion of the latest scholarly research both among the scholarly community and society at large.

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