

gained prominence as an educator and political prisoner. Iosif Vulcan established himself as a leading Romanian activist and journalist in Oradea, who at the same time used his strong bonds to Hungarian culture to serve as translator and intermediary. Rabbi Ármin Schnitzer moved from the northeastern Jewish center of Huncovec to western Komárom, where he tried to integrate his small congregation into civic life without surrendering its Jewish roots. Vilmos Daróczi made a name for himself as a major propagator of tobacco, both as a grower and as editor of Hungary's central publication on the subject, the *Magyar Dohány Újság*, or Hungarian Tobacco News. Margit Kaffka, finally, the daughter of a provincial nobleman from what is today Carei in Romania, evolved into one of the leading female writers of modern Hungarian literature.

Together, these biographies provide fascinating glimpses of nineteenth-century Hungary. Composed in a lively and often humorous tone, the book successfully carries the reader off to a different time and place. Indeed, the study's special strength lies in its ability to make history come to life. The author uses a wide variety of sources to develop an engaging picture of provincial Hungary. This diversity of historical evidence represents both a strength and a weakness, since not much space is devoted to discussing the unique challenges posed by different types of sources. In particular, the role of fictional literature in historical analysis would have deserved theoretical reflection.

Nemes defines his approach as a collective biography, which tells the story of the Hungarian provinces through the lives of loosely linked individuals. As a biographic key to the history of the Hungarian northeast, however, these vignettes face questions about their representativeness. Neither socially, nor culturally, nor religiously do the protagonists form a representative cross-section of the local populace. Most notable is the absence of peasants, who still dominated the area demographically at the time. A number of protagonists also left their provincial home towns in favor of the very metropolis that serves as the study's conceptual counterpoint. In some respects, therefore, the book is a study of middle to upper class Hungarians who left their home districts in the northeast more than a study of provincial society itself.

Another Hungary is a skillful expression of new cultural history. It boldly utilizes diverse sources to develop an alternative historical narrative, which provides profound insights into the social, religious and national transformations of the period. Even if the biographies may not be coherent or representative enough to fully embody *Another Hungary*, the reader will not regret discovering numerous other Hungaries instead.

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Vilnius Between Nations, 1795–2000. By Theodore R. Weeks. De Kalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2015, xiv, 308 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. \$45.00, paper.

Lithuanian Nationalism and the Vilnius Question, 1883–1940. By Dangiras Mačiulis and Darius Staliūnas. Marburg: Verlag Herder Institut, 2015, vi, 236 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. €45.00, paper.

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The capital of Lithuania, Vilnius, a “city without a name,” as it figures in the title of a famous poem by Czesław Miłosz, or a “city of many names,” as it is frequently called, has experienced a fate extraordinary even by east European standards. It became

an axis of several (Lithuanian, Polish, Jewish, Belarusian . . .) national mythologies. It changed hands dozens of times, often in a violent manner. Now, Vilnius has the status it held at the moment of its foundation seven hundred years ago: the center of a young country which is eager to become an inseparable part of Europe. Many recent studies in different languages (Polish, Lithuanian, English) attempt to deal with the city's unusual past. Both books under review belong to that category, albeit the first one pertains to a relatively long period and the second concentrates on part of it (consequently, they describe the events in varying degree of detail).

The monograph by Theodore R. Weeks is an engaging and enlightening survey of the city's history. The first chapter briefly explains the historical background of the city (from its foundation by Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas, through union with Poland, to the misfortunes of the eighteenth century). Some post-2000 events are mentioned in the book as well, but the bulk of the study relates to interactions between varied ethnic and/or religious groups in the city during the last two centuries. Everyday relations of these groups could be friendly, marked by indifference and skepticism, or amounting to ethnic cleansing and genocide. The book also describes, frequently in amusing detail, nationalist efforts to appropriate urban space (including monuments, travel guides, and names of the streets). Among its topics are also shifting patterns of national self-identification.

Weeks correctly states that the end of the nineteenth and the entire twentieth centuries witnessed "the hypertrophy of nationality as a source of identity and political legitimacy" (238). This hypertrophy often had dubious consequences. Weeks maintains an enviably objective stance, affirming: "The aim of this book is not to accuse or denounce, but simply (though in real life this is very far from simple) to understand" (10). He follows this principle throughout the entire book.

In the years of the Russian rule (1795–1915), Polish speakers formed the culturally dominant group of the city's population, Jews were the largest group, and Lithuanian speakers were uncommon, even if they became visible towards the end of the period. Incidentally, the meaning of the terms "Lithuanian" and "Pole" underwent a considerable change between the Romantic era and our own times. Weeks does not use the names *Starolitwini* (*senlietuviai*, Old Lithuanians) and *Młodolitwini* (*naujalietuviai*, Young Lithuanians), which now gain currency in the literature on the topic, though these terms could elucidate his discussion. Old Lithuanians considered themselves to be the descendants of the Grand Duchy and spoke mainly (though not exclusively) Polish, while Young Lithuanians were modern nationalists, for whom the use of Lithuanian was the main constituent trait of national identity. After World War I, the first group prevailed in the city and its region. Since it perceived the Grand Duchy as part of Greater Poland, Vilnius (in Polish, Wilno) was forcibly annexed to the Polish state. That was never recognized by the *Młodolitwini* (establishing the Lithuanian Republic with a temporary capital in Kaunas), whose propaganda depicted it as a grave offence, virtually a crime. After the collapse of Poland in 1939, Stalin presented Vilnius to Lithuania as a "gift" from the USSR—a solution which was perceived by many as temporal but proved to be a lasting one. The Nazi occupation and its aftermath changed the demographic makeup of Vilnius fundamentally. The Jews were exterminated, and the Poles in 1944–47 had to leave for Poland (their "repatriation," for all practical reasons, amounted to expulsion). The vacuum was filled by ethnic Lithuanians from the interwar republic, and also by Russians. Weeks describes all these twists of the city's fate competently, never yielding to popular myths (such as the myth of ruthless Russification promoted by many Lithuanian politicians). He notes that the percentage of Lithuanians in Vilnius increased steadily from 1949 on, guaranteeing them a confident majority in the final account. During the independence movement, the nationalist card was played "not in a chauvinist

or vicious way” (211). Still, the author is well aware of the fact that preserving the vestiges of cultural diversity is a daunting task in modern states that tend “to value uniformity and monocultural hegemony far more than variety” (240).

These changes in the ethnic make-up of the city may be easily compared to the changes in Lviv, Wrocław, or Kaliningrad, although in Vilnius they were probably the most complicated. Weeks’ study is an adequate introduction to the topic for English-reading scholars and the general public. It takes advantage of many archival and non-archival sources, presents exhaustive analysis of intricate problems, and is written in an exemplary clear way. Among its scant weak points, one may note the lack of attention to the Belarusian component in Vilnius’s ethnic fabric. There are also some factual errors: for instance, Marian Morelowski never was a priest (126), and the lane in Vilnius running past the KGB building, *Aukų gatvė* (Victim’s street) was not renamed in honor of “the Institution’s victims” (227)—it just came back to its prewar name.

The book by Dangiras Mačiulis and Darius Staliūnas provides a complementary text to *Vilnius between Nations*. One should note that it lags behind Weeks’s book in its rather mediocre English and its considerable number of misprints. An advantage is a great number of interesting illustrations. Mačiulis and Staliūnas use for their research the ethno-symbolic approach of Anthony D. Smith; for them, the term “nationalism” bears no negative connotations (4), and political history serves only as a context for the history of Lithuanian mental attitudes concerning their capital. A very unusual story unfolds before the eyes of a reader. Around 1883, when the first Lithuanian periodical *Aušra* appeared, the presence of Lithuanian speakers in Vilnius was next to negligible. Kaunas was perceived as a more promising center for the national movement: “Only a miracle could Lithuanize Vilnius. I do not believe in that miracle,” wrote well-known Lithuanian Catholic activist Adomas Jakštas (18). Still, the miracle happened. The Lithuanian national project, as developed by Antanas Smetona and others, included the symbolic appropriation of Vilnius and “reminding” its citizens of their purported ethnic origin. Much activity in that direction took place in the beginning of the 20th century, when more ethnic Lithuanians started to settle in Vilnius and their movement became more politicized. Yet, they remained a small and not-too-influential minority in the city. No Polish political current (except the so-called *krajowcy*) accepted the idea of Lithuania’s autonomy, to say nothing of independence. After the annexation of Vilnius/Wilno by Poland in 1922, the “Vilnius question” became a central cultural and political issue for Lithuania, and the city itself became, for Lithuanians, a sort of lost Jerusalem, the most sacred part of the country. The “liberation of Vilnius” was presented internationally as a major priority for the Lithuanian state. A consistent propaganda campaign, described by Mačiulis and Staliūnas in detail, succeeded in introducing the views of Lithuanian intellectuals to the masses. According to one of the *krajowcy*, Mykolas Römeris, the idea that Lithuanians were the legitimate masters of the city, became “a much firmer dogma than that of the virgin birth, an infallible Pope, and other dogmas of the Catholic Church” (122). Perhaps it even influenced Stalin in 1939–40 (202). The retrieval of the capital became, for Lithuanians, a major triumph, and for Poles, a relatively mild occupation. One may add that during the Soviet era (1944–1990), in line with the old nationalist dream (though not necessarily by conscious accommodation of the communist government to it), Vilnius became a Lithuanian city for all practical purposes.

To sum up, both books on Vilnius are valuable not only as studies of a peculiar east European case. They may benefit any student of nationalist myths and their influence on actual history.

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