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# HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REVIEW

## THE FACE BENEATH THE SNOW: THE BALTIC REGION IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

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ABSTRACT. *Since the breakdown of the Soviet Union and Swedish socialism the Baltic region has attracted more attention, although not perhaps as much as it might deserve, than since the 1930s. English-speaking readers have been presented with a magisterial survey of the northern world over a five hundred years' period. However, many of the old stereotypes of war, pestilence, and the rise of Sweden under Gustav Adolphus, the lion of the north, and of Russia under the delusively attractive despots, Peter I and Catherine II (both of whom were essentially Baltic animals), remain unchallenged. Over the past decade much new work has appeared in northern Europe to open a more intriguing and understandable vista – of Baroque vibrancy in art, literature, and architecture; remarkably resilient small towns and efficient manor economies; and powerful interacting religious and political mythologies that combine in a vision of 'Gotho-Sarmatian' unity.*

An urgent plea for financial assistance brought to London in 1730 by representatives of Scottish and English émigré merchants from Kėdainiai (in Lithuania) reads like the index of a modern textbook on Baltic life in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries:

> horrible disturbances of the … war with Sweden and of civil war, public confiscations of our goods, heavy and unpayable taxes, assessments for fire expenses, impositions by the Swede, the Muscovites and by local troops … intense levies of food supplies, unbreakable famine and cruel pestilence … invasions and looting by foreign barbarians, Tatars, Cossacks and Kalmucks, … hatred on account of religion and secret persecutions.[1]

This cliché is common to all national histories in the region and in its narrow sense it remains accurate. Nevertheless, we should strive, à la Pernoud, to look awry at answers to the question 'what did the Balts do in the seventeenth century?' which murmur 'those who did not die of plague were slaughtered by the Swedes or raped by the

[1] Anon., *The City of Kieydan, the metropolis of the Duchy of Samogitia* (London?, 1730?), preserved in Vilnius, Nacionalinė Martyno Mažvydo Biblioteka, F93-543, and cited in Sugiko Nishikawa, 'Across the continent: the Protestant network between the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge and Kedainiai', in Z. Kiaupa, ed., *Kultūrų sankirtos* (Vilnius, 2000), p. 297, and idem, 'English attitudes toward continental Protestants with particular reference to Church Briefs, c. 1680–1740' (Ph.D. dissertation, London, 1998).

Russians'. Destructive as they were, the Livonian Wars of the early seventeenth century when the Sarmatian defenders of one Austin friar, St Meinhard of Livonia, trounced the neo-Gothic followers of a more recent Saxon monk (Luther)[2] provoked new developments in the region that merit attention.

David Kirby in the first of his two-volume history of the northern world, *Northern Europe in the early modern period: the Baltic world, 1492–1772*, provides the general reader and specialist alike with a convenient skeleton of regional history which can be supplemented by more detailed local studies.[3] This is a valuable starting point for determining whether or not the Baltic world has a regional identity beyond the pleas of floundering socialist paradises which now badger the Brussels purse for donations. This book has no doubts about the region's identity. Kirby gives a very readable and accurate traditional account of the Baltic wars, and regional politics, with special reference to Scandinavia and Prussia and the ways in which the activities of these states impinged upon the southern Baltic powers (i.e. Poland–Lithuania) and Muscovy. His accounts of educational, religious, and cultural developments are somewhat more narrowly restricted and concern mostly Sweden, Denmark, and Prussia. This is to be expected, given the deliberately self-imposed limitations of Western academe. However, they provide a much-needed counterbalance to the military obsessions of seventeenth-century specialists. Those who look at the Baltic from the Lithuano–Polish Commonwealth can find useful points of contact with Kirby's northernmost version of the northern world. Such comparisons are aided by new work coming out of the Baltic region. This selective survey of recent publications is intended to provide supplementary flesh to the skeleton Kirby provides.[4]

[2] Laurentius Boier, *Carolomachia*, trans. into Lithuanian by B. Kazlauskas (Vilnius, 1992). Recent military studies include R. I. Frost, *After the Deluge: Poland–Lithuania and the Second Northern War, 1655–1660* (Cambridge, 1993) – a fresh look at an ancient Polish myth; Margus Laidre, *Schwedische Garnisonen in Est- und Livland 1654–1699* (Tallinn, 1990); L. V. Zaborovskii, *Velikoe kniazhestvo litovskoe i Rossia vo vremia pol'skogo potopa (1655–1656 gg.): Dokumenty i issledovania* (Moscow, 1994). Mikalojus Šemeta's account of the Žemaitijan submission to and swift secession from Swedish 'protection' (1657) has been published for the first time (the Polish original with a Lithuanian translation): *Mikolojaus Kazimiero Šemetos* '*Relacija*', ed. R. Jurgelėnaitė (Senoji Lietuvos literatūra II) (Vilnius, 1994). This is a value judgement typical of Polish scholarship: a Polish insurgent is a hero exerting his freedom (see Lubomirski's revolt, below), whilst a Lithuanian rebel (Janusz Radziwiłł/Jonušas Radvila) is simply a traitor. For an interesting new biography of the latter prince who is praised or denounced for having signed a union treaty with the Swedes in 1655 outside Kėdainiai, see H. Wisner, *Janusz Radziwiłł (1612–1655). W cieniu Kiejdan* (Warsaw, 2000), and its translation by T. Bairašauskaitė into Lithuanian: *Jonušas Radvila (1612–1655). Kėdainių šešėlyje* (Vilnius, 1999).

[3] (London and New York, 1990). A second volume continues the story up to 1993: *The Baltic world, 1772–1993: Europe's northern periphery in an age of change* (London and New York, 1995). While the cliché of the inevitable rise of Russia dominates the first volume, the second is devoted to "nationalism" and the Soviet Union.

[4] *Die schwedischen Ostprovinzen Estland und Livland im 16–18 Jahrhundert*, ed. A. Loit and H. Piirimäe (Stockholm, 1993); K. Zernack, *Nordosteuropa. Skizzen und Beiträge zu einer Geschichte der Ostseeländer* (Lüneburg, 1993); *Shaping identities: ships, guns and bibles in the North Sea and Baltic states, c.1350–c.1700*, ed. A. I. Macinnes, T. Riis, and F. Pedersen (East Linton, 2001). Ulf Pauli, '*Hetsigt gnägga svenskarnas hästar': Sveriges baltiska provinser 1561–1710* (Stockholm, 1995), covers the political and urban developments of the Swedish Baltic *Stormakt* which have become a cliché of Estonian and Latvian history as a golden age (see the more sober assessment of the period in M. Ladder's historiographical study (in M. and A. R. Mörner, *Towards a new history in the Baltic Republics: historical perspectives at the time of the recovery of independence* (Skrifter från Historiska

## I

Interconnections are not difficult to find. Gustav II Adolphus, who introduced conscription into the Swedish army in the 1620s, did not fail to learn the lessons of Duke Karl's defeat at Kircholm (1605) and imitated Polish cavalry tactics. The Swedes made innovations in field artillery; the Lithuanian boiar and commander of the royal Polish artillery Casimir Siemienowicz published his *Ars magna artilleriae* to wide acclaim in Amsterdam in 1650.[5]

Politically speaking, Baltic Europe developed a full range of political systems from relative anarchy in Poland–Lithuania (whose liberty proved to be made of fool's gold) to (untenable) absolutism in Denmark; the Livonian Landtag tried to defend its rights against central government.[6] In the 1690s, when Patkul led Livonian opposition to the *Reduktion* and the behaviour of the Swedish governor-general, Hastfer, one of the weaknesses in his case, based on local traditions, was his failure to produce the original text of the *Privilegium Sigismundi Augusti*. Western European historians tend to cite the *Privilegium* in Latin and en passant as though it is clear to everyone that this charter emanates from erstwhile Livonian dependence on the Jagiellonian Commonwealth. In other words, not every important aspect of Livonian history is either German or Swedish.

Intellectual developments in the region also provide a common link through academic institutes in Vilnius, Dorpat, and Königsberg, whose alumni produced skilled neo-Latin verse, often in praise of particular patrons or seats of learning (the academies of Riga, Tartu, Vilnius) and power (the towns of Riga, Reval, and Vilnius). Kirby's account of the universities in Sweden and Denmark can be supplemented by reference to the new university at Dorpat and the continuing regional influence of the academies of Vilnius and Königsberg. The spread of students around the region, regardless of confessional allegiance, is remarkable and can be appreciated from new editions of matriculation and graduation records.[7]

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institutionen i Göteborg. Göteborgs universitet ii) (Göteborg, 1993)). He concentrates on four major cities (Riga, Pernau, Tallinn, and Narva) and their architecture and discusses the image of the Great Northern War in Estonian consciousness – similar studies are available for Lithuania and Poland. Courland and Lithuania are well served by *Das Herzogtum Kurland 1561–1795: Verfassung, Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft*, ed. E. Oberländer and I. Misāns (Lüneburg, 1933), and by *Lietuvos valstybė XII–XVIII a.*, ed. Z. Kiaupa, A. Mickevičius, and J. Sarcevičienė (Vilnius, 1997).

[5] Kirby, *Northern Europe*, pp. 139–48; C. Siemienowicz, *Ars magna artilleriae* (Amsterdam, 1650).

[6] Researchers are in the debt of H. Lulewicz and A. Rachuba for their lists of state officers in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the province of Livonia: *Urzędnicy centralni i dignitarze Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, ed. H. Lulewicz and A. Rachuba (Kórnik, 1995); *Urzędnicy inflanccy XVI–XVIII w.*, ed. K. Mikulski and A. Rachuba (Kórnik, 1994). The basic political organization of the Grand Duchy remains unstudied since the pioneering work of Russian scholars working at the end of the nineteenth century, Lappo and Liubavsky.

[7] Kirby, *Northern Europe*, pp. 371–2. Cf. *Tartu ülikooli* (*Academia Gustaviana*) *Senati protokollid 1632–1656*, ed. A. Tering (Tartu, 1995); *Akademijos laurai: arba laipsnių teikimo ir daktaro, licenciato, magistro ir bakalauro laipsnių siekančiųjų Vilniaus Jėzaus Draugijos Akademijoje knyga, 1650*, ed. M. Svirskas and I. Balnienė (Vilnius, 1997); for the wide ethnic origin of Vilnius students and teachers, see *Vilniaus universiteto istorija 1579–1994* (Vilnius, 1994), pp. 62–70; for the influence of the Königsberg University on the region's life (not only where Lutheranism is concerned), see for example D. Żołądź-Strzelczyk, *Peregrinatio academica. Studia młodzieży polskiej z Korony i Litwy na*

The 'ancient Sarmatian' mythology concocted to provide a distinctive garment for the social and political freedoms of the Polish and Lithuanian gentry, without replacing a deeply ingrained local patriotism (a literary theme explored in detail by Darius Kuolys),[8] compares usefully with the Gothic nationalism of the Vasa regime in both Sweden and the Commonwealth. In terms of ideology we have the northern empires of the Goths and Sarmatians – propaganda spread in Western Europe by the Swedes (Johannes Magni) and by the Poles in Spain. In Sweden this connected with pleas for use of the Swedish language; in Finland the native population was declared to descend from the Wends. This reinvention of the middle ages and antiquity for political and confessional ends offers material for comparison with nineteenth-century nationalist mythologies in the region. It continues with the solidly ludicrous search for national origins in late classical and early medieval authors who mention the Baltic Sea.

A good example of antiquarian delight is provided in the massive work of Matthaeus Praetorius (c. 1635–1704/7), *Deliciae Prussicae*, which has begun to appear (300 years late) in handsome format under the editorial care of I. Lukšaitė. Publication of the manuscript of this work of eighteen books in seven volumes is based on original manuscripts which were believed lost during the Second World War but which, in fact, were saved from destruction (or looted, depending on one's sensibilities) by Lithuanian functionaries in the ruins of eastern Prussia in 1945–7. Praetorius himself is a good example of *homo balticus*: born in Memel of a family hailing a generation earlier from Brandenburg, he became a Lutheran pastor before fleeing to Pomerania and converting to Catholicism to serve as official historian to Jan Sobieski. During his time in Prussia he prepared texts in Lithuanian for the use of his parishioners and corresponded with Christoph Hartnoch and Simon Dach. In 1685 he published in Amsterdam a tract urging the union of the Roman and Protestant churches, thereby gaining himself a place on the Index. In Oliwa in 1689 he published *Orbis Gothici liber II*, an account of the Slavo–Gothic antiquities of Sarmatia. In this he follows the tradition of the Polish Vasas and creates a unifying past for the region.

His collection of Prussian curiosities (*Schaubuhne*) fits the fashion of seventeenth-century antiquarianism across Europe. He makes use not only of Prussian chronicles and the information of his correspondents but also exploits the work of the Polish historians, Długosz and Miechowita, the Swede, Olaus Magnus, and Neugebauer and Olearius. In this sense he propounds a 'regional' history of the Baltic world three centuries before Professor Kirby.

Lukšaitė's edition of the German text of the list of contents (*syllabus deliciarum Prussicarum*) and Book One (dealing with the origin of the toponym 'Prussia' and the amber trade in particular) is meticulous and she has provided the Lithuanian reader with a much-needed translation (penned together with V. Gerulaitienė) and commentary, although there seems to be no rational explanation as to why Praetorius and his family have been subjected to Lithuanization, while the no less German Hartnoch has merely been subject to grammatical acclimatization.

As far as religion is concerned, the Lutheran morality enforced strictly in Sweden is

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*akademiach i uniwersytetach niemieckich w XVI i pierwszej połowie XVII wieku* (Poznań, 1996); J. Serczyk, *Albertyna. Uniwersytet w Królewcu (1544–1945)* (Olsztyn, 1994).

[8] D. Kuolys, *Asmuo, tauta, valstybė Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės istorinėje literatūroje. Renesansas, Barokas* (Vilnius, 1992) – summaries in German and Polish.

no less advanced than the counter-Reformation strong in Poland and Lithuania, which came to dominate Žemaitija, despite the strong presence of Protestantism in this border region. Religious disputation recognizes no political boundaries: H. Cyrinus, *Antichristus Rigensis sive Hermannus Samsonius* (Vilnius, 1747). For a study of a minority community in the 'Catholic' Commonwealth, the reader may turn to Wojciech Kriegseisen's *Ewangelicy polscy i litewscy w epoce saskiej (1696–1763). Sytuacja prawna, organizacja i stosunki międzywyznaniowe* (Warsaw, 1996).

The first serious Lithuanian study of the Reformation in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (setting aside primitive Soviet attempts to use Christian dissidence and nonconformity as a stick to beat the Roman church) has been produced by Ingė Lukšaitė, *Reformacija Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje ir Mažojoje Lietuvoje XVI a. trečiasis dešimtmetis–XVII a. pirmas dešimtmetis* (Vilnius, 1999). This volume takes up the ideological struggle from the 1530s to the first decade of the seventeenth century, linking the Reformation with developments in Lithuanian political theory, poetry, and publishing and the use of the Lithuanian language.[9] Although one can be quite sure that such phenomena would have appeared without the presence of the disciples of Luther and Calvin, theological debate (not to mention ranting polemic) runs like a live current through Lithuanian cultural life. Religious disputation forms a link between various parts of the Lithuano–Polish state (including both Prussia and Livonia) and its component groups (we should not forget the engagement of Jewish (Karaite) scholars, such as Isaac ben Abraham of Trakai, in this confessional mêlée) in a way that the Catholic Church alone did not, until the advent of the Jesuits. The growth of Vilnius as a political, cultural, and publishing centre is explored well. The author notes how by the early seventeenth century the pace of the Protestant Reformation slowed down, depending on the individual initiative of boiar and burgher patrons such as Merkelis Petkevičius, Sofija Vnučkaitė, and Jokūbas Morkūnas. Lukšaitė has tracked down the connections of Lithuanian Protestant apologists such as Andreas Volanus,[10] whose reading matter included not only the classical authors but also Beza, Calvin, Scaliger, Lipsius, and Bodin. The Elizabethan atrocities, like their counterweight, the Spanish Armada, were not unknown in Vilnius and Riga. A further volume is heartily to be wished for, as indeed is a history of the Roman Church in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania which is also a neglected topic, despite the efforts of Ochmański and Błaszczyk.[11]

Sugiko Nishikawa explores the network of British Protestant charity which links London, Scotland, and Dublin with Transylvania, northern Italy, and Poland–Lithuania.[12] Her account of the SPCK's involvement with the émigré Scottish and English merchants deserves to provoke closer consideration of political, religious, commercial, and charitable links between eastern and western Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The pleas for help in distress should not cause the British historian to sit self-righteously in judgement – after all, it was persecution in

[9] For a regional and society – rather than doctrine – led history of the Lithuanian Reformation, see the 1994 Vilnius University doctoral dissertation (now in press) by V. Vaivada, 'Reformacija Žemaitijoje XVI a II-pusėje'.

[10] A. Volanas, *Rinktiniai raštai*, ed. I. Lukšaitė and M. Ročka (Vilnius, 1996), with texts in Latin complete with Lithuanian translation and commentary.

[11] J. Ochmański, *Powstanie i rozwój latyfundium biskupstwa wileńskiego 1387–1550* (Poznań, 1963); idem, *Biskupstwo wileńskie w średniowieczu. Ustrój i uposażenie* (Poznań, 1972); G. Błaszczyk, *Diecezja żmudzka od XV do początku XVII w. Uposażenie* (Poznań, 1992); idem, *Diecezja żmudzka od XV do początku XVII w. Ustrój* (Poznań, 1993).

[12] See above, n. 1.

England and Scotland which caused the Kėdainiai merchants' families to go to the Grand Duchy in the first place.

A subsection of 'religious' history which has general regional resonance is witchcraft, given the survival of 'pagan' practices (*aliter dictum*, folk culture). Sorcerers were still being sought out in the north, with significant gender differences – in Livonia, for example, a high proportion of witchcraft trials were brought against men accused of lycanthropy (1670s). An outbreak of witch trials afflicted Sweden around the same time; while hysteria raged in Denmark at Thisted in 1695. From the Grand Duchy we have seventeenth-century cases against women of various ranks, often connected with folk medicine (and herbs sold by wandering tinkers – often of Jewish or Tatar origin). In Livonia 'scholarly' tracts on the subject were printed – *Neun ausserlesen und wolgegruendete Hexen Predigt* (Riga, 1626), extracts from which E. Buceniece publishes in Latvian translation in her anthology of texts relevant to Livonian intellectual history. This volume serves as a convenient introduction even for those who cannot read Latvian – since the original texts were composed in German and Latin predominantly.[13]

The cliché of Baltic economic decline in the seventeenth century is particularly strong. This tends to appear to be special pleading on the part of individual states outside the context of more widespread economic depression in late seventeenth-century Europe as a whole. We see the decline of certain Baltic ports, especially Danzig (Gdańsk), in favour of smaller and more distant centres such as Pernau, Elbing, Riga. The development of the Elbe–Oder–Spree link led to the outshining of the established Vistula grain route. The Baltic hemp and flax trade changed its centre from Königsberg to Riga in the 1660s; Narva revived in the wake of increased Russian transit trade in the late seventeenth century. In the aftermath of war new ports were favoured or even built such as Narva and Sventoji. In these towns there was a significant English presence. In other centres with pretensions to becoming commercial towns there were Dutch, German, and Scottish immigrants. In Wirland by 1637, 20 per cent of the local peasantry were of Finnish immigrant origin. The small towns of Žemaitija provide an excellent case study of this phenomenon to fill out the traditional concentration on major towns (see below).

Agriculture in north-eastern Europe was technically backward and its functionality was maintained mainly by the availability of cheap compulsory labour – and here we have in mind not so much Poland–Lithuania as Denmark. In 1696–7 a great famine struck Sweden, while in Finland whole parishes were wiped out; in the 1680s, 5 per cent of Danish farms were derelict.

In the general context of national appropriation of the past, Kaliningrad provides the historian of social sentiment with an interesting case study, as a place whose history is being interpreted by an alien population. The barbaric outlook of Soviet Kaliningrad, created in the fellow-travelling late 1960s (when the royal castle was demolished) and sustained by ludicrous agitprop which denied the worth of anything in eastern Prussia before 1945 is now giving way to a more subtle (but on occasion equally farcical) appropriation of the district (centred on what is now held to be an *istinny russkii gorod* ('a genuinely Russian city' – sic)) and its past. However, this may bode well for the peaceful solution of the district's problems. The Soviet colonists have no choice except to develop a new identity in Prussia or pack up their empties and go back whence they came or

[13] *Ideju vēsture Latvijā. No pirmsākumiem līdz XIX gs. 90 gadiem. Antoloģija* (Riga, 1995).

were sent. The antiquarian reprint phase exemplified by the second, 1990, Kaliningrad, edition of E. Lavisse, *Ocherk po istorii Prussii*, tr. A. Timofeevaia (Moscow, 1915) has been surpassed in a particular sense by A. B. Gubin, V. N. Strokin, *Ocherki istorii Kenigsberga* (Kaliningrad, 1991), and a more professionally understandable interest in genuine Russian connections with Prussia in: G. V. Kretinin, *Pod Rossiiskoi Koronoi, ili Russkie v Kenigsberge 1758–1762* (Kaliningrad, 1996).

Research into the cultural history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is slowly maturing, especially as far as literature and art are concerned. The neo-Latin culture which dominated all countries in the region is discussed in *Mare balticum, mare nostrum: Latin in the countries of the Baltic Sea (1500–1800)*, ed. O. Merisalo and R. Sarasti-Wilenius (Helsinki, 1994), while texts are given from the Grand Duchy in *Dainos pasauliui, saulei ir sau. Lietuvos XVI–XVII amžiaus poezijos antologija*, ed. E. Ulčinaitė (Latin and Lithuanian) (Vilnius, 1993). It was not complete fancy on Cervantes's part which caused him to note 'como es uso de los setentrionales ser toda la gente principal versada en la lengua latina y en los antiguos poetas'.[14]

Book publication has become a subject for research in Lithuania at last, with Vilnius scholars catching up with the achievements of Polish work over the past century or so. Maria Ivanovič has produced a valuable catalogue of 818 Polish books printed in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania during the seventeenth century (1601–1700).[15] This list includes calendars (often used by boiars to record, *verso*, events in their own lives), sermons, grammars, and dictionaries (including Širvydas's trilingual, Lithuanian, Latin, and Polish dictionary),[16] celebratory verse, lives of saints, devotional treatises, and even tourist (pilgrimage) literature. French romance is represented by 'Unrequited love, strong as death or the history of the French Prince Angulf', published in Slutsk in 1688. Handbooks on estate management (*Ziemianin, albo Gospodarz infladski*), translated into Polish in 1671 from the German edition of 1622 or Domaniewski's *Byt ziemiański i miejski* (Lubecz, 1620), appear side by side with heraldic compendia such as *Herbarz szlachty litewskiej* and Władysław Giedroyć's *Skarbiec starozytnych kleynotów* (Vilnius, 1666). A translation of the Koran was published in Vilnius in 1616, the same year as an anti-Tatar tract saw the light of day: Piotr Czyźewski, *Alfurkan* (Vilnius, 1616, 1640, 1643). While such lists give a good impression of the type of books printed in Lithuania, it is difficult to gauge from them the extent and nature of Lithuanian readership – was the main audience the town, the manor, or a private patron? A similar list of Latin books is also useful and difficult to interpret: D. Narbutienė and S. Narbutas, *Index librorum latinorum Lituaniae saeculi septimi decimi/XVII a. Lietuvos lotyniškų knygų sąrašas* (Vilnius, 1998). This volume, which is set down in a particularly sloppy intellectual manner (attributing modern Lithuanian forms and citizenship to authors *not* from 'Lithuania' in the modern sense, but from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland, from Lithuanian Rus' and Polish Livonia), provides a list of 1,234 publications which include much more occasional celebratory verse than Ivanovič's list of Polish books. It is not clear how far such verse was actually read, although Bogucka shows how reading ranked alongside hunting and the company of friends as a fit pastime

[14] M. de Cervantes, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* (Madrid, 1980), p. 203: 'as is common among the northern nations, the upper classes are well-versed in the Latin language and the ancient poets'.

[15] M. Ivanovič, *XVII a. Lietuvos lenkiškos knygos. Kontrolinis sąrašas* (Vilnius, 1998).

[16] Constantinus Syrwid, *Dictionarium trium linguarum*, published as a photographic reprint of the first edition (c. 1620) as: *Senasis Konstantino Širvydo žodynas*, ed. K. Pakalka (Vilnius, 1997).

for Polish and Lithuanian noblemen.[17] How many more ephemera have not survived to the present day is also unknown. Research into the Lithuanian readership is almost impossible to conduct, except for magnates whose tastes are neither typical perhaps even of their own circle.

J. Liškevičienė has produced a handsomely illustrated study of developments in the use of heraldry as an art form in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century books. This is a particularly important aspect of public life in the 'gentry republic'. She notes manipulations of family and even the grand-ducal arms in literary texts.[18] Closely connected with this theme is emblematic poetry. E. Patiejūnienė presents an excellent literary and artistic study of published ephemera, *Brevitas ornata. Mažosios literatūros formos XVI–XVII Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės spaudiniuose* (Vilnius, 1998). This well-illustrated study of dedicatory verse, epigrams, and emblemata, published for the most part by the Jesuit university press in Vilnius, traces the development of heraldic and literary fashions from neo-Latin prints to works in Polish and even, by the end of the seventeenth century, in Lithuanian.

Literature was not the only forum for local developments of international fashions in Lithuanian culture. Art, both on canvas and in architecture, gives a good impression of the more vibrant side of a century condemned usually as violent and brutish. I. Vaišvilaitė, *Baroko pradžia Lietuvoje* (Vilnius, 1995), discusses artistic influences from Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands (summaries in English, Polish, and Italian). *Kultura artystyczna Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w epoce baroku*, ed. J. Kowalczyk (Warsaw, 1995), surveys Lithuanian Baroque culture at a broader level.

The collection *Lietuvos dailė europiniame kontekste*, ed. A. Butrimas et al. (Vilnius, 1995), includes I. Jedzinskaitė on tapestries in the Grand Duchy, and from sacral theatre, V. Radzevičiūtė on the semantics of the Triumphal Gate erected in honour of St Casimir in Vilnius in 1605; V. Cibulskas attempts to 'understand professional art in Lithuania at the end of the sixteenth century and beginning of the seventeenth century'. *Ženklas ir simbolis senojoje Lietuvos dailėje*, ed. A. Butrimas et al. (Vilnius, 1996), includes studies of emblemata published by the Vilnius Academy's press in the seventeenth century (J. Liškevičienė) and the decorative schemes of Vilnius conventual churches (belonging to the Discalced Carmelites, Franciscans, and Bernardines).

Jūratė Trilupaitienė has produced a study of Jesuit musical activity in Lithuania that bears evidence of connections between Braunsberg (royal Prussia), Vilnius, and Riga, noting compositions which survive now from Riga in Uppsala (*Jėzuitų muzikinė veikla Lietuvoje* (Vilnius, 1995)). From the other end of the religious spectrum, Dainora Pociūtė has studied the development of Lithuanian Protestant sacral music in its east Prussian context.

Now we can see that there is more to the seventeenth-century Baltic than war and famine, it is time to go back to the old textbook stereotypes and assess new trends in the old themes of the northern wars, demographic disasters, and declining trade links.

[17] M. Bogucka, *The lost world of the 'Sarmatians': custom as the regulator of Polish social life in early modern times* (Warsaw, 1996), pp. 142–3.

[18] J. Liškevičienė, *XVI–XVIII amžiaus knygų grafika: Herbai senuosiuose Lietuvos spaudiniuose* (Vilnius, 1998).

## II

A. S. Kamiński analyses differences in outlook between the two great neighbours of the eastern half of the European continent during diplomatic developments at the end of the seventeenth century to provide an assessment of the run-up to the Great Northern War of 1700–21 which differs from the traditional interpretation presented by Kirby.[19] Kamiński notes two critical moments in relations between the Commonwealth and Muscovy: the secession of the eastern Ukraine to Muscovy and the election of Friedrich August of Saxony as King–Grand Duke in 1697. Although historians trace this shift in the balance of power in eastern Europe from Warsaw to Moscow to the reign of Aleksei Mikhailovich, neither side appears to have noticed this at the time.[20] Kamiński argues convincingly that it was the earlier strengths of Muscovite diplomacy (the professionalism of the *Posol'skii Prikaz* and its command of historical precedent) which lead to Peter the Great's failure to get involved in the Polish–Lithuanian election in time. The revelation of Peter's deliberate refusal to consider Poland as a gateway to the West (the traditional policy of Muscovy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), best illustrated by his departure for western Europe at the height of the Election Sejm (termed by him 'minor Polish matters') is a refreshing challenge to the Russian-blinkered versions of scholarly cliché. Reforms of the Polish–Lithuanian system were hampered by the Saxony dynastic union which may have preserved an appearance of strength and delayed final collapse, but undermined attempts to introduce modernizing reforms. In contrast with her western neighbour, Russia was subject to the uncontested control of autocracy and bureaucracy which stifled any possible movement for reform 'from below'. In the seventeenth century both realms imported industrial goods and exported agricultural produce, both sought to colonize the Black Sea steppes, and both made use of Cossack armies. Muscovy endured the *Smuta* ('The time of troubles') (1604–13), Poland–Lithuania, the *Potop* ('The Deluge') (1654–60). Both countries needed to modernize their army, improve tax collection, intensify the exploitation of their resources, and tighten state administration. However, Poland–Lithuania and Russia differed markedly in government, social institutions, and political culture.

Kamiński's commentary on Peter the Great can be read as an allegory of Soviet relations with the West – Peter's insistence on foreign *form* undermined reception of necessary changes in Russia itself, which was used to the old Polish–Latin model and unreceptive to the new German–Dutch–Swedish–Protestant order. It goes without saying too that Peter himself had no intention of nurturing English parliamentarianism or the compromise–collegiality of Swedish cameralism.

The hamstringing of political order in Poland and Lithuania is revealed in fresh light by two recent monographs, M. Nagielski, *Rokosz Jerzego Lubomirskiego w 1665 roku* (Warsaw, 1994), and G. Sliesoriūnas, *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės didikų grupuocių kova 1690–1697 metais*.[21] These two studies re-evaluate clichés of magnate rebellion and

[19] A. S. Kaminski, *Republic versus autocracy: Poland–Lithuania and Russia, 1686–1697* (Cambridge, MA, 1994).

[20] Nevertheless, diplomatic documents do reflect this swing, as we see from E. Meilus's survey of foreign policy documents and treaties published in the nineteenth-century Russian imperial collection, *Sobranie zakonov*: E. Meilus, 'Abiejų Tautų Respublikos ir Rusijos santykiai 1649–1771 m. Imperijos Įstatymų rinkinio duomenimis', in *Lietuvos valstybė XII–XVIII a.*, ed. Z. Kiaupa et al. (Vilnius, 1997), pp. 339–62 (English summary).

[21] Doctoral dissertation, Lithuanian Institute of History, Vilnius and University of Kaunas, 1997 (published, Vilnius, 2000).

Lithuanian separatism which are taken as read (unlike the documentary record) by modern historians. Sliesoriūnas undermines the claim that the Sapieha rebellion of 1697–1700 is evidence of Lithuanian separatism by examining the social backing enjoyed by Kazimierz Jan Sapieha in the Grand Duchy in comparison with other leading magnates. He notes that the Grand Duchy's fifty-four offices were filled by sixty-eight persons from forty-one families in the period 1690–7, noting that as the old families faded from the scene the Sapiehas faced less competition. However, in the last years of Jan III Sobieski the king had as many supporters in Lithuania as opponents, whilst the Sapiehas, despite great wealth, had more opponents than supporters. Sliesoriūnas portrays the conflict in the Grand Duchy in the run up to the Saxon election and beyond as the fruit of quarrels between the Sapiehas and the Radziwiłłs, Sobieskis, Ogińskis, and Pociejs.

While rebellions in Lithuania tend to be portrayed as examples of yearning for national autonomy or even separation from the Kingdom of Poland, Polish treason is disguised as *Rokosz*, legitimate noble confederation. Nagielski examines the rebellion of Jerzy Lubomirski in 1665, weaving carefully between international politics to show that in 1664–5 the Polish court could not rely on either France or Sweden for support against the domestic enemies of Jan Kazimierz and his French-born queen and that the courts of Berlin and Vienna favoured Lubomirski. In Lithuania leading magnate families such as the Radziwiłłs (Radvilos), Sapiehas, and Hlebovičiuses either supported the king or did not dare oppose the court party, even if the eventual banishment of Lubomirski was not well received. Nagielski shows a good understanding of Lithuanian political reality (as further illustrated by Sliesoriūnas's work), noting that even when local dietines (*sejimiki*) stood against the court, they did not stand with Lubomirski. When the Poznań opposition party spoke of dangers facing the Union, the Lithuanians were more worried about the threat from Moscow than keen to take sides with the former Polish grand hetman. In their relations with Lubomirski, the Radziwiłłs, Pac, and Sapieha were opportunists, although in Poland this was interpreted as support for the king. The *Rokosz* resulted in a weakening of royal authority among the army and szlachta and gave vent to xenophobia in both the Kingdom and the Grand Duchy.

## III

Politics and war aside, a refreshing approach to seventeenth-century Poland in the English language is presented by Maria Bogucka's sketch of the Commonwealth's customs, mentalities, and public culture, *The lost world of the 'Sarmatians': custom as the regulator of Polish social life in early modern times*.[22] This monograph, based for the most part on a series of innovative studies published separately in article form, presents the reader with a much more engaging and historically accurate picture of life in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth during a period when we would expect everyone to be on the verge of unpleasant death. In so large a country (the 'Polish' social life of the title is not restricted to the boundaries of the Kingdom of Poland) and diverse in ethnicity, religion, and tradition, stretching west–east across the Orthodox–Catholic–Protestant divides and between the Ottoman south and east and Christian Europe, custom rather than written law dominated everyday life. 'Just because of this freedom the Polish state … was extremely weak and the Polish legal system inefficient. In such a situation, custom was the ruler, delimiting the boundaries between social groups, imposing

[22] (Warsaw, 1996).

patterns of behaviour for members of different social strata, for males and females, for young and old as well as posting warning signals against any trespassing' (p. 6).

Time in a society where 90 per cent of the population was involved in some way with agriculture was viewed largely in cyclical terms – of the day, months, seasons – although 'linear' time was not unknown, especially in the Horatian poetry of the Polish-born Jesuit in Vilnius, Maciej Sarbiewski.[23] The church and nobility used custom to define their position, curb individuals and entire social groups (and counter imitators). The nobility was jealous of its freedom and objected to royal attempts to create new aristocrats. The satirist Trepka, in his *Liber chamorum*, denounced peasants and burghers who aspired to noble status and exclaimed that 'the King may offer a village, but he cannot recreate, for he is not God' – a view of gentry status not restricted to Polish society, as Defoe's anecdote about Charles II makes clear.[24]

Only small ethnic and religious groups, such as the Jews or the Pomeranian burghers, resisted Sarmatian culture. With the church's support the nobility appear to have unified customs via imitation. A good, but not explicitly stated example of this is provided by Bogucka's citation of Lithuanian magnates and noblemen as exemplars of 'Polish' tradition.

Above all Polish society emerges from Bogucka's pages as one definable not so much by custom as by display: dress and architecture are exploited as means of expressing one's social status. In such cases this provokes reaction in unenforceable sumptuary laws and the denunciation of peasants, Jews, and merchants who imitate the dress and jewelry of the szlachta peacocks – Kirby reveals similar tendencies in Livonia, where dress was taken to be a sign of Germanness and social superiority (p. 377). Jewish legislation also attempts to restrict the decoration of women's hats with gold and diamonds and forbids the wearing of satin or damask zupan (a long shirt fashionable among the Sarmatian gentry) by a man who does not have an income of at least 4,000 zl.[25] Social status is also definable by language and gesture. The mass of Jesuit schoolboy dramas produced in Vilnius and elsewhere are examples both of moral and patriotic instruction and of training for future appearances on the stage of public life – performing the correct gesture, weeping on cue, and so forth.

Messianic ideas seem to have been spread via religious drama (p. 48). This movement, common enough in western Europe as obsession with the apocalypse, may have been intensified by the effects of repeated war, epidemic, and famine. It was not restricted to Christians. Messianic movements among Polish and Lithuanian Jewry are notable if not notorious.

The great theatre of death housed in castra doloris and flysheeted with funerary odes and printed sermons provides another stage to illustrate the variety of cultures and custom in the Commonwealth – lavish funeral feasts contrast with equally extravagant displays of humility. One suspects that Sapieha's 'simple' funeral in the Bernardine

[23] Ibid., p. 14; Sarbiewski reprinted with Lithuanian translation: M. Sarbievijus (sic), *Lemties žaidimai: Poezijos rinkinė – Ludi Fortunae: lyrica selecta*, ed. E. Ulčinaitė (Vilnius, 1995); *Motiejus Kazimieras Sarbievijus Lietuvos, Lenkijos, Europos kultūroje – Mathias Casimirus Sarbievius in cultura Lithuaniae, Poloniae, Europae* (Vilnius, 1998): conference proceedings in Lithuanian, English, Polish, and French.

[24] Charles: 'Madam, I could make [your son] a duke, but God Almighty himself could not make him a gentleman.'

[25] S. A. A. Cygielmann, *Jewish autonomy in Poland and Lithuania until 1648 (5408)* (Jerusalem, 1997), pp. 95–6.

convent in Vilnius was hardly cheaper than the requiem of Marcin Matuszewicz's father in eastern Poland. It may even be connected with a religious fraternity – organizations which flourished in the Commonwealth among all classes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a survival of late medieval piety.[26]

From her trawl of a great variety of sources (diaries, *silvae rerum*, sermons, didactic literature, handbooks, satires, woodcuts, paintings) Bogucka brings to life a world which has been closed to foreign readers for too long. For specialists, this is not surprising – Bogucka was in the forefront of 'the history of gesture' – but it brings a vast new region into the view of English, French, and American 'mentality' researchers.

## IV

The history of individual towns and of Polish or eastern European towns in general has been particularly strong in Poland, where almost all large towns have a multi-volume general history of their own and urban processes have been examined well – especially by Henryk Samsonowicz and Maria Bogucka.[27] F. W. Carter has produced a solid historical–geographical study of Cracow from its beginnings until the final dismemberment of the Commonwealth in 1795.[28] It is argued that Cracow's trading success depended upon, or reacted against, the general economic and political complexion of eastern and central Europe. Indeed, straddling the trade routes between central Europe and Red Russia, and acting as the capital of Poland from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, this could hardly be different. Carter notes the importance of control over the Vistula route from Hungary to the Baltic and sees the later success of the Vilnius–Warsaw link as contributing to the town's decline into regional/national importance rather than a continuing centre of international commerce. The approach is not traditionally historical and much is left to be explained by the numerous graphs and tables compiled from primary printed and manuscript sources. The book is divided into three sections, with twenty pages on developments before 1257 (the date of the town's Magdeburg charter) and most emphasis separately on political and European trade developments 1257–1500, 1500–1795. A political historian might not have chosen so arbitrary a scheme (ignoring the impact of the 1386 marriage between Grand Duke Jogaila and Queen Jadwiga and the subsequent Lithuano–Polish state, formalized in a document for the first time at Horodło in 1413, and the move of the capital to Warsaw in the early seventeenth century), but Carter uses his own periodization to facilitate comprehension of a huge amount of economic detail which fuses the work of various Polish scholars, especially Pelc, and illumines links from London in the west to Moscow in the east. Attention is also paid to developments from abroad which weakened Cracow's potential as middleman – in the seventeenth century American imports threatened fur, skin, and leather imports from Russia, while American silver and Swedish copper deflated Cracow's metal markets. The rise in artisan wages is presented as evidence of a rising inflation after 1610.

[26] Bogucka, *Lost world*, pp. 86–7; fraternities: ibid., pp. 156–7, and S. Litak, 'Bractwa religijne w Polsce przedbiorowej XIII–XVIII wiek. Rozwój i problematyka', *Przegląd Historyczny*, 88 (1997), pp. 499–523.

[27] M. Bogucka and H. Samsonowicz, *Dzieje miast i mieszczaństwa w Polsce przedrozbiorowej* (Wroclaw, 1986), is a convenient starting point for further reading.

[28] F. W. Carter, *Trade and urban development in Poland: an economic geography of Cracow, from its origins to 1795* (Cambridge Studies in Historical Geography xx) (Cambridge, 1994).

The north-eastern Baltic has been reasonably well served by German studies of Livonian towns and the records of Reval have been published in handsome editions and studies of the city's seventeenth-century history presented to the specialist reader.[29] H. von zur Muhlen, *Die Revaler Munster-Rolle Anno 1688. Ein Verzeichnis die Bürger und Einwohner* (Lüneburg, 1992), gives a picture of the urban population in 1688 revealing a remarkable recovery from the typhus outbreak of 1657, especially in the suburbs. The population fell markedly only after the wars and epidemics of the early eighteenth century. In other words the tales of woe we find in textbook accounts belie the vitality of the local population and its new immigration to rebuild stricken communities.

The Estonian economic historian R. Pullat in his *Die Städtbevolkerung Estlands im 18. Jahrhundert* (Mainz, 1997), provides us with a more detailed and at the same time more general study of urban development in the region, exploring the growth in Estonian town populations from 150,000 in 1710 to almost three times that number, 400,000, in 1790 despite the ravages of pestilence and war and the effect of poor hygiene and low education. In 1710 Reval had 9,810 inhabitants, a figure which fell to 2,000 after the plague of 1710 and reaches 10,650 only in 1782. In Dorpat the population was still further mismanaged by human hand. In 1707–8 Peter the Great exiled most of the town's population to Russia, allowing half to return in 1714. This exile to Vologda and other resorts of the eastern Slav interior goes some way to explaining the town's later ties with such, at first glance, strange bedfellows as Ustyug and Olonec.[30] By 1809 Dorpat had a more Germanized population of 5,000. The population of Narva was affected not only by war but also by competition from St Petersburg. Other towns had Polish and Russian populations – Wesenburg, Pernau, and Arensburg.

Pullat attempts to correlate figures for births and deaths with developments in the price of rye and grain in rixdollars and roubles (pp. 62–74). The seasonality in death statistics is detected from the church records of the Holy Ghost and St Nicholas parishes. Low death rates from the pox are attributed to the absence of Estonian servants from the town when the disease struck (pp. 92–6).

Migration is a key theme in this and other urban Baltic studies.[31] Pullat finds an average of 16.3 new burghers per annum in Reval during the period 1700–93, most of whom hailed from Estonia (49 per cent) and Germany (34 per cent), with smaller

[29] *Tagebuch des Superintendenten in Reval Justus Blanckenhagen 1657–1713*, ed. J .K. von Schroeder (Wedermark and Elze, 1995) (= Beitrage zur Baltischen Geschichte xiv); H. von zur Muhlen, *Reval vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert. Gestalten und Generationen eines Ratsgeschlechts* (Quellen und Studien zur Baltischen Geschichte vi) (Cologne and Vienna, 1985); E. Gierlich, *Reval 1621 bis 1645. Von der Eroberung Livlands durch Gustav Adolf bis zum Frieden von Brömsebro* (*Historische Forschungen*) (Bonn, 1991); and Arno Weinmann, *Reval 1646 bis 1672. Vom Frieden von Brömsebro bis zum Beginn der selbständigen Regierung Karls XI* (*Historische Forschungen*) (Bonn, 1991).

[30] Kirby, *Northern Europe*, pp. 352–3; Pullat, *Stadtbevölkerung Estlands*, p. 35.

[31] Otto Wank, 'Bevolkerungsfluktuation zwischen Ostpreussen und den Nachbarländern vom 16. bis 18. Jahrhundert. Ein Beitrag zur Siedlungs- und Bevolkerungsgeschichte mit zugehorigen Namenlisten', *Altpreussische Geschlechterkunde*, N.F. 24 (1994), pp. 125–218; *Eestimaa 1725–1726a. adramaarevisjon: allik publikatioon K.d. 1.2: Harjumaa, 3: Virumaa, 4: Javvamaa, 5: Laanemaa* (*Estlandische Hakenrevision von 1725 bis 1726: Quellenpublikation Bd. 1.2. Harrien, 3: Wierland, 4: Jerwen. 5: Wieck*) (Tallinn, 1988–90). H. Palli, 'Estonian population of the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries', *Estonian–Swedish seminar of demography* (Viljandi, 1991), pp. 23–36; A. Plakans, 'Family dynamics in the eastern Baltic littoral, 1500–1800', *Les modèles familiaux en Europe aux XVIe–XVIIIe siècles* (Białystok, 1992), pp. 81–94; Ilja Voldemar, *Vennastekogudne* (*Herrnhutluse*) *ajalugu Eestimäal* (*Pohja–Eesti*) *1730–1743* [*Die Geschichte der Brudergemeinde* (*Herrnhutertum*) *in Estland* (*Nord–Estland*) *1730–1743*] (Helsinki, 1995).

figures for Swedish (2.6 per cent) and Finnish provenance (2.7 per cent). Unmarried Finns migrated to Estonia in significant numbers in the eighteenth century. At the end of the century Russian migration (299) to Narva increased. Certain classes were dominated by Germans (from Thuringia and Saxony for the most part) – rich merchants, aldermen, and Ratherren in Reval, Narva, Pernau, and Dorpat, literary men (divines, doctors, lawyers, and teachers).

The control of lower orders through guilds is well illustrated. The Tailors' guild at Reval met once a month. Annual membership cost 5 kopecks (2.5 for apprentices) and 2 kopecks was payable as a fine for being late. A fine of ten times that amount was payable for refusal to take part in the guild's drinking ritual. Guildsmen were expected to be at work by 5 a.m. and in bed in their master's house by 9 p.m. Sick members were provided with a nurse and the dead were buried at the guild's expense. The medieval fraternity traditions continued in Estonia as they did in Poland and Lithuania.

In the eighteenth century Estonia was not highly urbanized and mortality was too high for natural reproduction to have a significant effect on urban growth. Capitalist industry, modern economics, and improved conditions of hygiene led to higher growth in the second half of the nineteenth century. Immigration had a greater impact on the size of Estonian towns. Migrants came from Germany, the Gulf of Bothnia, and Russia. The lower ranks of townsfolk were swelled by migration from the Estonian countryside. Polish and Swedish immigration was of little significance and unlike the southern Baltic, there were almost no Huguenot or Jewish settlers.

Pullat has produced a book of considerable use for regional history which provides a basis on which more detailed studies can be built. He owes his German editors a considerable debt for taking some of the excess baggage typical of a Soviet dissertation out of the printed text.

Lithuanian historians are only beginning to take urban history seriously in other than an antiquarian manner. Small towns are being subjected to individual studies, but there has been scant attention paid to the details of urban social structure. Until recently the only detailed histories of Vilnius were those written in the nineteenth century or by Maria Łowmiańska in interwar Wilno.[32] The light of modern scholarship has begun to shine through the dissertation, soon to be published, and the articles of A. Ragauskas, which are based on extensive use of Vilnius magistrates' records and avoid the repetition of inaccurate but unchallenged axioms which dominate general accounts of life in early modern Vilnius.[33] Ragauskas's work is devoted to only 1 per cent of the population of Vilnius – 103 magistrates, court clerks, councillors, burgomasters, council clerks, and voigts from the period 1662–1702. However, these people have not been discussed competently before.

Of the Vilnius urban elite in this period most were of burgher origin (seventy-seven), almost a quarter (twenty-five) boiars, and one was a peasant. As for their geographical origin, they hailed from Italy, Germany, and Spain as well as from the Grand Duchy and Poland. After 1666 only Catholics and Uniates were eligible to city office. All magistrates' clerks and senior magistrates were Catholic as were almost all voigts. Most were averagely wealthy (with an income of a few thousand zloties) and tended to marry into the elites of other towns in the Grand Duchy (Polotsk, Mogilev, Minsk, Kaunas),

[32] M. Łowmiańska, *Wilno przed najazdem moskiewskim 1655 roku* (Vilnius, 1929).

[33] A. Ragauskas, 'Vilniaus miestiečių valdantysis elitas XVII a. antrojoje pusėje (1662–1702)' (Doctoral dissertation, Lithuanian Institute of History and University of Kaunas, 1999).

Prussia (Königsberg), and Poland (Lwów). The vast majority were merchants – sixty-five – or lawyers – twenty-four – with only four doctors and one 'scholar'. As regards their education seventeen had university degrees, fifty-five had studied in schools or universities, and thirty-four received primary or professional education.

The social mobility and confessional fortunes of an immigrant elite family is illustrated by Ragauskas in 'Iš XVII a. Vilniaus miestiečių valdančiojo elito istorijos: Motiejus Vorbekas-Lettowas (1593–1663) ir jo "atminties lobynas"', in *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis 1996*, pp. 5–42, discusses the social rise of an Elbing-born Protestant doctor in Vilnius burgher society through his family chronicle. Members of the third generation of the family adopted Catholicism and established themselves as gentry.

In his article 'The urbanisation of the periphery. Landowners and small towns in early modern Norway and Northern Europe', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 70 (1994), pp. 49–74, Finn-Einar Eliassen scans the development of small towns in northern Europe (Norway, the British Isles, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Denmark), concluding sensibly that 'we have to study both the local and national roots as well as the international context and preconditions of small towns, "lesser towns" and landlord towns in the early modern period, in order fully to understand their emergence and growth'. Such an approach is vital for our understanding of the growth of Baltic centres in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries where the gloom and doom stereotypes of plague in darkest Denmark or Prussia belie the vitality of 'peripheral' urbanization.

One aspect of urban culture in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is presented in a magisterial 765 page survey of seals from towns across the whole of the state by E. Rimša. This large format and lavishly illustrated analytical catalogue surpasses the pioneering work done between the world wars by M. Gumowski. Rimša explains the legal aspects of seal usage, the practical technology of making and affixing a seal and how they were used by urban institutions throughout the Grand Duchy from Alytus to Žirovičiai. Each entry contains illustrative material – line drawings, photographs – a potted history of the town in question with notes on where the original is preserved and where it has been published. A substantial summary in both Polish and German should make the work available to a wider range of readers. The book deals with the Grand Duchy as a whole and thus it is no surprise to encounter Vitebsk after Vilnius. However, a rather idiosyncratic scholarly aberration (or political correctness) must account for the appearance after Kiev of Klaipėda, a town which is indeed the oldest chartered town on the territory of the Lithuanian Republic (founded by the Livonian bishop in 1252), although it was never part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.[34]

Some progress has been made on this front in Lithuania with the publication of a whole series of Magdeburg charters from the seventeenth and eighteenth century.[35] However, the best study hitherto of small town life – its tradesmen, their family contacts and ethnic origin – is E. Meilus, *Žemaitijos kunigaikštystės miesteliai XVII amžiaus II pusėje-XVIII amžiuje* (*Raida*, *gyventojai*, *amatai*, *prekyba*) (Vilnius, 1997).[36] The author notes how,

[34] E. Rimša, *Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės miestų antspaudai* (Vilnius, 1999).

[35] *Lietuvos magdeburginių miestų privilegijos ir aktai: Jurbarkas, Joniškis*, ed. A. Tyla (Vilnius, 1991); other Magdeburg charters for Lithuanian towns have been published in the following volume of the series: *Lietuvos magdeburginių miestų privilegijos ir aktai*, II: *Kretinga*, *Skuodas*, *Šiauliai*, *Šventoji*, *Varniai*, *Veliuona*, *Viekšniai*, *Virbalis*, *Vladislovovas*, ed. A. Tyla and D. Žygelis (Vilnius, 1997).

[36] A English translation of sections of this book and complementary articles is published as E. Meilus, 'The small towns of Žemaitija in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', *Mare Nostrum*, 1 (1999), pp. 25–51.

as a result of war and epidemic disease, the ethnic composition of the Grand Duchy, especially that of Žemaitija (north-western Lithuania), began to change from the second half of the seventeenth century. The region enjoyed favourable geographic conditions: to the west, sea, to both south and north, realms blessed with large ports (Königsberg, Memel, Libau, and Riga) which lay reasonably close to the Lithuanian border. The proximity of major trading ports enabled local peasants to transport their own goods to export points. Direct export of agricultural raw materials was one of the main factors which hampered the growth of towns in Žemaitija, and this in turn deterred the immigration of other ethnic groups. Nevertheless, migrants from Germany, Livonia, and even Scotland came to the region. Jews came to settle not in three but in thirty-six of Žemaitija's 104 small towns, forming 7.5 per cent of the population by 1795 (when only 10 per cent of the total was of non-local origin).

A survey of the documentary record of one small Žemaitijan town, Salantai, reveals the great variety of (more than forty) craftsmen who worked and dwelt there and the products they made. Although this work was most often ordered by and carried out for the estate, the estate was not the only beneficiary of this work. Judging by the record, local production was directed at local need and it is difficult to speak of 'export', although undoubtedly Salantai goods were distributed at the markets and fairs of other towns and townships. The work of certain craftsmen (brick makers, carpenters) was well organized and because such work was seasonal in nature, many such artisans had other occupations which often were completely removed from their main profession. References to spices, tea, coffee, sugar, wines, and citrus fruit in shop inventories remind one of the luxury goods imported into Cracow in the same century and make the Soviet reader's mouth water and mind collapse in disbelief.[37]

In short, a wide range of relatively sparse and hitherto unexploited sources reveals how the disasters which struck the Commonwealth in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries provoked dynamic social and economic change in the Duchy of Žemaitija involving new settlement and regional intercourse notable for their ethnic and linguistic complexity.[38]

Links between various parts of the Baltic region and between northern Europe and other parts of the continent are examined in terms of ideology, trade, and culture. Until recently the most basic of all communication links, the postal system, has been ignored by researchers. Those who doubt that a Žemaitijan merchant could travel to or correspond with London or Dublin several times a year may allay their suspicions by consulting the work of Pētersone and Westermann who have produced studies of the Swedish postal system in Livonia and its connections with Prussia, the Empire, and Venice.[39] The network established by Jacob Becker in Livonia in the 1630s was repaired by the Russians in the early eighteenth century to form the basis of the Russian Empire's

[37] Carter, *Trade*, pp. 196–202, 337.

[38] For Livonia a similar study of the impact of military and political developments on a small merchant town is provided by Kerstin Kohl's thesis, defended in 1997 in Mainz under the direction of E. Oberländer, 'Der Handelsplatz Windau bis zum Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts'. An abstract is published as K. Kohl, 'Der Handelsplatz Windau im 17. Jahrhundert', *Mare Nostrum*, 1 (1999), pp. 71–83.

[39] G. Westermann, *Kruege und Poststationen in Estland und Nordlivland vom 17. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert* (Lüneburg, 1994); P. Pētersone, 'Jakobs Bekers un zirgu pasta sākumi Vidzemē 17. Gadsimtā', *Latvijās arhivs*, 2 (1997), pp. 62–71, is supplemented by additional material and translated into English as idem, 'Jacob Becker and the beginning of the horse post in Livonia in the seventeenth century', *Mare Nostrum*, 1 (1999), pp. 51–69.

postal connection with Prussia. His career provides an excellent example of social advancement in seventeenth-century Livonia.

The effects of war on Baltic commerce and competition between ports in the region is well known.[40] When the Commonwealth lost Riga during its wars with Sweden and the secession of the Duchy of Prussia from the Polish crown in 1657 resulted in the relative alienation of Königsberg and Memel from Poland–Lithuania, plans were made to build a Lithuanian port to the north of Palanga at Šventoji (Heiligen Aa). Berths for twenty or fifty vessels were planned and consideration was paid to linking the Šventoji river via the Jūra river with the Nemunas in order to bypass Prussian tolls. In 1679 English merchants applied to Jan III Sobieski for a charter to build the new port and in 1680 imports of salt, wine, iron, and tobacco were made. The English side was interested in timber and hemp exports from the Lithuanian heartland. In 1685 a charter was granted to build the town and port of Janmarienburg with a market on Thursdays and a fair to be held twice a year. As the Swedes and Prussians sought to destroy the new port in order to defend Memel's and Riga's interests, some of the Šventoji merchants moved to Memel. In 1705 the Treaty of Warsaw guaranteed the closure of Šventoji, which ceased to be a port until the twentieth century.[41]

Professor Andrzej Groth of Gdańsk has devoted many years to the study of small ports in the Baltic, from Braunsberg, Elbing, Frauenburg, Memel, and Pillau. His 1996 study of the shipping and maritime trade of Klaipėda, *Żegluga i handel morski Klajpedy w latach 1664–1722* (Gdańsk, 1996), notes the growth in the port's activities in the second half of the seventeenth century as a result of the ravages of war in the western parts of the region. Exports from Klaipėda were mainly agricultural products whilst luxury and consumption goods (most prominently salt) dominated imports.[42]

Lithuanian Jewry provides a convenient microcosm of the prosperity and disasters which afflicted the Commonwealth in the seventeenth century. The legal status of the community has been illumined by charters published by Jacob Goldberg and essays in various publications devoted to the 'Jews of Poland'.[43] The social organization of the community is best revealed by Leszczyński's history of the Jewish Sejm and Cygielman's

[40] M. North, *From the North Sea to the Baltic: essays in commercial, monetary and agrarian history, 1500–1800* (Aldershot, 1996), contains reprints of nineteen articles in English and German published over the past two decades. Attention should be paid too to another collection of essays (reprinted from 1956 to 1982): P. Jeannin, *Marchands du Nord. Espaces et trafics a l'époque moderne*, ed. P. Braunstein and J. Hoock (Paris, 1996). These deal with Gdańsk, Riga, Reval, and Narva. A general but unoriginal and largely Soviet account is provided by J. Kahk and E. Tarvel, *An economic history of the Baltic countries* (Acta universitatis Stockholmiensis, Studia baltica Stockholmiensia xx) (Stockholm, 1997). The continental connections between the Grand Duchy's Russian territories and Königsberg are covered by Z. Guldon (*Zapiski Historyczne*, 60 (1995), pp. 39–47).

[41] Z. Kiaupa, 'Šventosios uostas Palangos seniūnijoje', *Palangos istorija*, ed. V. Žulkus (Klaipėda, 1999), pp. 147–65 (summaries in English and German). Compare the situation of English merchants in Narva: Enn Kung, 'Trading conditions of the English in Narva in the second half of the seventeenth century', *Kleio*, *Estonian History Journal* (1994) (special issue in English), pp. 18–22.

[42] Thomas Brück, *Korporation der Schiffer und Bootsleute. Untersuchungen zu ihrer Entwicklung in Sestadten an der Nord- und Ostseeküste vom Ende des 15. bis zum Ende des 17 Jahrhunderts* (Abhandlungen zur Handels-und Sozialgeschichte xxix) (Weimar, 1994), on Stralsund, Hamburg, Lübeck, Bremen, Wismar, Rostock, Emden and Flensburg.

[43] J. Goldberg, ed., *Jewish privileges in the Polish Commonwealth* (Jerusalem, 1985); *The Jews in old Poland, 1000–1795*, ed. A. Polonsky, J. Basista, and A. Link-Lenczowski (London and New York, 1993).

study of Jewish autonomy in Poland and Lithuania.[44] The commercial activities of Lithuanian Jewry have already been noted by Meilus.

Documents from the Lithuanian and Polish *kahal* and *waad* records not only provide elements suitable for a Bashevi-Singer novel (tales of forsaken wives, of Jews found dead on the trade roads beneath the winter snow by their bereaved spouse, or killed by soldiers, rights to education), but also reflections of gentile preoccupations. Gifts are collected for the king's coronation and lobbyists (*shtadlanim*) are sent by the five lands to Warsaw to keep an eye on the activities of the Commonwealth Sejm lest any measure be passed to the discomfort of the Jewish population. No one was to attend the Warsaw Sejm, however, without the fiat of the Jewish courts. The figures for district taxes reflect the general sate of the Grand Duchy – with the city of Brest richer than Žemaitija or Trakai. We should not be surprised that the Jewish *Waad* split along general political lines with a separate sejm for the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from 1621. Like Lithuanian gentiles, Lithuanian Jews blocked the path of their Polish brethren to occupy posts in the Grand Duchy. No Polish Jew was to take up an *arenda* in Lithuania – as one poor soul found out to his cost when he tried to set up business in Minsk. Permission was required for residence in Lithuanian cities.[45]

The sumptuary laws imposed on Christians have their counterpart in Jewish circles where the sejm attempts to forbid women from pinning diamonds and precious stones (even rubies!) on to their fur hat (*szlyk*). Gold and silver ribbons were prohibited and only a man with an income of 4,000 zl. was to wear a satin or damask *żupan*.[46]

According to Leszczyński, two phases can be traced in Jewish autonomous activity between 1623 and 1764, the first ending some time after 1648 and typified by full freedom of social and economic activity, the second beginning around mid-century and remarkable for increased taxation (in the wake of frequent war) and the gradual decline of the authority of community's leaders. In 1764 there were 823 kahals in Poland with the greatest populations in the eastern and southern palatinates. Leszczyński traces the rise and fall of the Jewish commission of the crown and Lithuania from its first appearance in the record in 1633, noting the size of contributions to joint efforts – for example, Lithuanian Jews were to pay 14.5 per cent of the costs of interventions in the Warsaw Sejm to prevent the passing of injurious legislation. The Jewish communities had protectors in both Christian and Jewish society: the Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans, a few churches (such as Poznań cathedral), royal and provincial administrators (Ossoliński, Potocki), the nobility (Princess Lubomirska), town magistrates, 'Jewish citizens', and Jeshivot (such as the school at Brest Litovsk).

In short, modern Baltic research, one of the professional historians' undeservedly neglected or laughably misrepresented topics, is beginning to reveal more of the region's living body beneath the snow of textbook cliché. There is a regional identity which comprises much more than shared horrors, which for the sake of historical titillation can be found as well in France, Scotland, or Italy as in the savannah stalking grounds of the lion of the north and his ursine mate.

[44] A. Leszczyński, *Sejm Żydów Korony 1623–1764* (Warsaw, 1994).

[45] Cygielman, *Jewish autonomy*, pp. 308, 310, 313, 316–17, 320–2, 329.

[46] Ibid., pp. 95–6; cf. Bogucka, *Lost world*, pp. 90–110, and Kirby, *Northern Europe*, p. 377 (clothing as a sign of Germanness).