

THE FLASH OF A METEOR LIGHTING UP THE SILHOUETTE OF THE PAST, OR...

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Three years of purposeful scientific efforts have brought tangible results. A group of five young researchers (Jolanta Skurdauskienė, Marius Ščavinskas, Darius Barasa, Dainius Elertas and Egidijus Miltakis), under the guidance of two experienced scholars (S.C. Rowell and Vacys Vaivada), have completed the three-year project 'Value Transformations in the Eastern Baltic Coastlands during the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period' at the Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology of Klaipėda University. The group of researchers was funded by the European Social Fund. This overview of their project's activities will introduce us to its achievements and prospects.

215

The project was based on the scientific presumption that, from the 11th to the 18th centuries, value transformations on the southwest Baltic coast established developmental trends for Christian West European civilisation in the local communities. The state structures of a different character that formed have not been sufficiently investigated from a civilisational point of view, with respect to the paradigmatic provisions of Christianisation-confessionalisation processes. Therefore, the project pursued two main goals: 1) to start consistent studies of social transformations in new geopolitical structures (the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Kingdom of Poland, Livonia, the Teutonic Order, and the state of Prussia) from the point of view of the paradigmatic provisions of Christianisation-confessionalisation processes; and 2) to develop and establish a new direction in scientific research in the Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology at Klaipėda University.

Comprehensive investigations of the past are impossible without primary sources and their analysis, and the development of a trend in scientific research is impossible without these two components. Therefore, to achieve the first and second goals, information about sources necessary for the research was collected nationally and internationally where historical sources are stored. In the period 2012 to 2014, the researchers in the group worked in Polish historical archives in Gdańsk, Gniezno, Kraków, Siedlce, Toruń and Warsaw, in the Secret State Archives of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation in Berlin, and in the National Historical Archives in Minsk. Each member of the group who worked in these archives drew up lists of historical sources necessary to implement the project. In 2013, we received computer equipment, a scanner suitable for digitising large-format documents, portable external drives, and photographic equipment which enabled us to work at home. The ability to make digital copies of fragile documents helped us to establish contacts with institutions concerned with their preservation, and to accumulate the necessary copies of sources in Klaipėda. This expanded the opportunities for the formation of a research

source base in the Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology. Copies of 15th to 18th-century documents were ordered and acquired on the basis of the lists of sources drawn up by the group of researchers, and by independent researchers whose research interests are close to the research theme. Interested researchers can access them at a restricted-access website (e-fontes.ku.lt). By expanding the circle of researchers and access to information, a reference book was developed which contained data on the rural district of Klaipėda and Samogitia-related sources from the 15th to the 18th century stored in Germany.¹ Moreover, some primary sources from the 14th to the 17th centuries were published, either in appendices to scientific papers by the researchers, or separately.² It is obvious that the search for primary sources, the acquisition and accumulation of quality copies, and the exchange of information about old documents is an ongoing task, for which the foundations were laid during the implementation of the project.

216

Without the exchange of thoughts, ideas, hypotheses, knowledge and questions in a wider circle of researchers, it is easy to get lost and to retreat into a shell. For the presentation and evaluation of the intermediate findings of the group, and for getting acquainted with the ideas and activities of other researchers working in the same field, scientific conferences were held in collaboration with other interested national and international institutions. The research group implementing the project organised two international conferences in Klaipėda: 'Social, Spiritual and Economic Mobility in the Late-Medieval and Early-Modern South-Eastern Baltic' on 24–25 April 2014, and 'Culture-Economy-Society: Interaction and Changes in Medieval and Early-Modern Times on the Eastern Baltic Coast' on 5–6 March 2015, with papers from Great Britain, Poland, Germany and Lithuania. The findings of the research group were also presented at other conferences. Particu-

¹ *Vertybių transformacijos Baltijos regiono rytinėje pakrantėje brandžiaisiais viduriniais – ankstyvaisiais naujaisiais amžiais*: projekto šaltinių žinynas [Value Transformations in the Eastern Baltic Coastlands during the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period: a project source reference book]. Sud. V. VAIVADA. Klaipėda, 2015.

² ROWELL, S.C. Martin III, Bishop of Medininkai, Archdeacon and Canon of Vilnius: The Lawyer Bishop. In *Krikščioniškosios tradicijos raiška viduramžių – naujaisių laikų kasdienybės kultūroje: europietiški ir lietuviški puslapiai* [The Development of Christian Tradition in Every-day Culture in the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period: Lithuanian and other European Examples] (Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis, t. XXVII). Sud. V. VAIVADA. Klaipėda, 2013, p. 36–60; ROWELL, S.C. Parapijos dangaus ir žemės globėjų vaidmuo formuojantis bendruomenės identitetui – Polonkos pavyzdys 1437–1529 m. [The Role of Heavenly and Earthly Patrons in the Formation of a Parish Community: Polonka 1437–1529]. In *Kultūra – ekonomika – visuomenė: sąveika ir pokyčiai viduramžiais ir ankstyvaisiais naujaisiais laikais Baltijos rytinėje pakrantėje* [Culture – Society – Economy: Interaction and Changes in Medieval and Early Modern Times on the Eastern Baltic Coast]. Sud. M. ŠČAVINSKAS. Klaipėda, 2015, p. 275–288; BARASA, D. Smulkios žinios iš XVII a. Klaipėdos valsčiaus kriminalinių bylų [Minor News from the Criminal Cases in the Rural District of Klaipėda in the 17th Century]. In *Krikščioniškosios tradicijos raiška...*, p. 160–170; ELERTAS, D. Juodoji mirtis ir komunikacija: Klaipėda, 1350 metai [Black Death and Communication: Memel, 1350]. In *Klaipėda Europos istorijos kontekstuose* [Klaipėda in the Contexts of European History]. Sud. V. SAFRONOVAS. Klaipėda, 2013, p. 34–54; ELERTAS, D. XVI a. dokumentai susiję su bažnyčių vizitacijomis Ragainės ir Tilžės amtuose [Church-Visitation Related 16th Century Documents in the Amts of Ragainė and Tilšit]. In *Krikščioniškosios tradicijos raiška...*, p. 171–184; ELERTAS, D. 1678 metai viešosios informacijos rate: kelios naujienlaiškių žinutės apie Klaipėdą [1678 Years in Public Information: Several Newspaper Messages on Klaipėda]. In *Mobility in the Eastern Baltics (15th–17th Centuries) = Mobilumas Rytų Baltijos regione (XV–XVII amžiai)* (Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis, t. XXIX). Ed. by D. ELERTAS in cooperation with V. SAFRONOVAS and V. VAIVADA. Klaipėda, 2014, pp. 189–214.

larly strong links were established with Polish researchers. On 3–5 September 2015, the project researchers took part and gave presentations at an international conference in Pruszcz Gdański. That made it possible to verify the original research insights, and formed the bases of research publications (nearly 30 over a period of three years). The papers by peer researchers from Lithuania and abroad enriched the thematic collections of articles produced by the research group during the project.³ All the research activities of the project culminated with the final collective monograph 'Value Transformations: The Eastern Coast of the Baltic Region in the 13th to the 18th Centuries'.⁴ In it, the outcomes of the group work were summarised by the participants' personal research sections. Naturally, through the above-mentioned research activities, the first project goal was attained, and the prerequisites for the pursuit of the second were created.

A glance at the contribution of each researcher in the group will help to identify what research field was addressed during the project, what sections were used to reveal the processes that took place, and in which directions further development is possible. In the process of the research, the main trends in the following six sections were established: 1) the developmental characteristics of societies between the rivers Pregel and Daugava in the late Middle Ages; 2) a comparison of Latinisation trends in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the civilisational context of the impact of Christianisation; 3) transformations in the State of the Teutonic Order/the Duchy of Prussia at the beginning of the Reformation; 4) the impact of civilisational processes in the State of the Teutonic Order/the Duchy of Prussia and the western part of the GDL: the transformation of indigenous societies from knight to landlord in early modern times; 5) spiritual changes in Prussian society recorded in late chronicles of the State of the Teutonic Order/the Duchy of Prussia from the 16th century; and 6) the development of processes of confessionalisation in the rural district of Klaipėda in the 17th and early 18th centuries.

The geographical space chosen indicates the intention to follow how value transformation processes developed on the peripheries of civilisational-cultural centres which witnessed a clash of different traditions, lifestyles and mentalities. The periphery allowed for the identification of the beginning of changes and the depth of their impact far away from the sites of primary impulses that formed those changes. The characteristics of the changes caused in the west Baltic and the western part of east Baltic societies by the development of Christian Latin civilisation were analysed by M. Ščavinskas.⁵

³ *Krikščioniškosios tradicijos raiška...; Mobility in the Eastern Baltics...; Krikščionių visuomenės raidos atodangos LDK vakarinėje dalyje ir Prūsijoje: nuo užuomazgos iki brandos: mokslinių straipsnių rinkinys; skiriama prof. Stephen C. Rowell 50-mečiui* [Revelations of the Development of Christian Society in the Western Part of the GDL: from Roots to Maturity: a collection of scientific articles dedicated to prof. Stephen C. Rowell's 50th birth anniversary]. Sud. M. ŠČAVINSKAS. Klaipėda, 2015; *Kultūra – ekonomika – visuomenė...*

⁴ *Vertybių transformacijos: Baltijos regiono rytinė pakrantė XIII–XVIII amžiais* [Value Transformations in the Eastern Baltic Region, 13–18 Centuries]. Sud. S.C. ROWELL. Klaipėda, 2015 (the authors: M. Ščavinskas, S.C. Rowell, V. Vaivada, E. Miltakis, D. Barasa, D. Elertas, J. Skurdauskienė).

⁵ ŠČAVINSKAS, M. Some Notes on the Issue of the Development of Balt Society in the Ninth to the 13th Centuries in the Context of the Socio-Political Structures of the Baltic Region. In *Societies of the Past: Approaches to Landscape*,

S.C. Rowell focused on the Diocese of Lutsck in the eastern part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, bordering on the Kingdom of Poland. The revelations of the spiritual and everyday social life in that culturally diverse region brought out the development of the Latin-Christian model and the rapid adoption of new ideas.⁶ In studies of the chronicler tradition, E. Miltakis outlined the specificity of the western border of Royal Prussia (Warmia and Pomerania) and the State of the Teutonic Order/the Duchy of Prussia. The changes in images, stereotypes and clichés recorded in 16th-century chronicles contribute to an understanding of the intentions of the chroniclers and their clients to construct a story adapted to specific political circumstances.⁷ The impact of the Reformation and confessionalisation processes on the spiritual, legal, social and economic life in the north of Prussia in the 16th and 17th centuries was studied by two researchers. D. Barasa disclosed the presence of close interaction between the ecclesiastical and secular authorities in Prussia, and the mechanism used for the formation of public opinion.⁸ When dealing with the changes in land tenure, D. Elertas followed the impact on society of the transformation from the State of the Teutonic Order to the Duchy of Prussia.⁹ The depth of Christianisation in Samogitia, bordering on Prussia

Burial Customs and Grave Goods (Archaeologia Baltica, Vol. 19). Klaipėda, 2013, pp. 82–101; ŠČAVINSKAS, M. Pirmųjų baltų krikščionių sociopsichologinis paveikslas: problemos ir modeliavimo galimybės [A Socio-Psychological Picture of the First Baltic Converts: Problems and Possibilities of Modelling]. In *Krikščionių visuomenės raidos atodangos...*, p. 37–61; ŠČAVINSKAS, M. Kai kurios vakarų baltų karinės aristokratijos formavimosi problemos XIII a. pirmoje pusėje Baltijos regiono christianizacijos kontekste [Some Aristocracy Formation Problems of Western Baltic Tribes in the Context of Christianization in the First Half of the 13th Century]. In *Kultūra – ekonomika – visuomenė...*, p. 37–56; ŠČAVINSKAS, M. Kai kurie krikščionių ir pagonių santykių aspektai kanonų teisės kontekste XII/XIII – XIV a. pradžioje [Some Aspects of the Christian and Pagan Relations in the Context of the Canon Law in the 12th/13th to the early 14th Century]. In *Kultūra – ekonomika – visuomenė...*, p. 90–111.

⁶ ROWELL, S.C. Martin III, Bishop of Medininkai..., p. 36–60; ROWELL, S.C. Church Court Records as Evidence for the Christianisation of Lithuanian Society in the Late-15th and Early-16th Century. In *Mobility in the Eastern Baltics...*, pp. 33–52; ROWELL, S.C. Some Comments on the Role of the Gentry from the Sees of Vilnius and Lutsck in the Latinisation of the Ruthenian Lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In *Kultūra – ekonomika – visuomenė...*, p. 263–274.

⁷ MILTAKIS, E. Rikojotas S. Grunau kronikos duomenimis: lyginamasis aspektas [Rikojot in the Chronicle by S. Grunau: a Comparative Aspect]. In *Rytai–Vakarai: komparatyvistinės studijos XIII = East–West: comparative studies XIII* (Kultūrologija, t. 19). Sud. A. ANDRIJAUSKAS. Vilnius, 2015, p. 569–596; MILTAKIS, E. Antiluteroniška propaganda Simono Grunau kronikoje [Anti-Lutheran Propaganda in Simon Grunau's Chronicle]. In *Krikščioniškosios tradicijos raiška...*, p. 61–86; MILTAKIS, E. Simono Grunau kronikos įtaka XVI–XVIII a. Prūsijos istoriografijai [The Impact of Simon Grunau's Chronicle on the Prussian Historiography of the 16th to the 18th Centuries]. In *Krikščionių visuomenės raidos atodangos...*, p. 95–121; MILTAKIS, E. Prūsijos istoriografijos raida XVI a. Christophas Falkas ir *Memlisch Cronica* [The Development of the Prussian Historiography in the 16th Century. Christoph Falk and *Memlisch Cronica*]. In *Kultūra – ekonomika – visuomenė...*, p. 67–78.

⁸ BARASA, D. Rykštėmis ir kalaviju: pasaulietinės valdžios kova dėl pavaldinių sielų Prūsijoje XVI–XVIII amžiais [By Rod and Sword: the Fight of Secular Authorities for the Souls of Their Subjects in Prussia in the 16th to the 18th Centuries]. In *Krikščionių visuomenės raidos atodangos...*, p. 122–164; BARASA, D. Samdiny ar gerasis ganytojas? Prūsijos dvasininko mobilumo galimybės. XVII–XVIII a. Klaipėdos valsčiaus atvejis [Journeyman or Good Shepherd? Opportunities for Clerical Mobility in Prussia according to the Klaipėda (Memel) District Case, 16–18 Cent.]. In *Kultūra – ekonomika – visuomenė...*, p. 275–288; BARASA, D. Rusnės parapija 1774–1794 m. bažnytinių vizitacijų duomenimis [The Parish of Rusnė (Russ) according to 1774–1794 Visitation Data]. In *Kultūra – ekonomika – visuomenė...*, p. 310–321.

⁹ ELERTAS, D. Prūsijos evangelikų liuteronų dvasininko aprūpinimas XVI a. 5–7-uju dešimtmečiais: Martyno Mažvydo atvejis [The Maintenance of a Prussian Evangelical Lutheran Pastor in the 40s to

in the west and Livonia in the north, was characterised by V. Vaivada.¹⁰ The research findings confirmed the possibility of transferring the turning point of the process from the 16th or the 17th to the 15th century. J. Skurdauskienė was interested in models of Samogitian landowners' adaptation to newly forming market trends.¹¹ The results of the group work highlighted the basic trends, and opened up opportunities for further research. Therefore, we can state that the first goal of the project was achieved.

However, what about the second aim of the project: to establish and develop a new direction of scientific research at the Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology at Klaipėda University? During the implementation of the project, equipment for scanning, taking photographs and data accumulation was acquired, and a collection of copies of primary sources was built up. The research group established professional relations with their peers in Lithuanian and foreign institutions, and acquired experience in publishing, organisational, administrative and research methodology. New approaches were worked out for solving individual research problems. All this indicates that it would be reasonable to deepen and continue the work. Or is the three-year episode destined to become no more than the flash of a meteor, lighting up a silhouette of the past in the night of historical oblivion? We will know soon enough. Regrettably, there are not special grounds for optimism...

60s of the 16th C.: the case of Martynas Mažvydas]. In *Krikščioniškosios tradicijos raiška...*, p. 87–117; ELERTAS, D. Kaip miestelis virto miestu: karčemų plėtra Tilžėje 1514–1552 metais [A Settlement Growing into a Town: The Expansion of Inns in Tilsit from 1514 to 1552]. In *Mobility in the Eastern Baltics...*, pp. 98–150; ELERTAS, D. XVI a. visuomenės siluetas šiaurinėje Kuršių nerijos dalyje [The Silhouette of the 16th Century Society in the Northern Part of the Curonian Spit]. *Res Humanitariae*, 2014, t. XV, p. 17–67; ELERTAS, D. 1538 m. Klaipėdos miesto antspaudu signuojama bendruomenė [The Community of 1538 Signed by the Klaipėda City Stamp]. In *Krikščionių visuomenės raidos atodangos...*, p. 194–222.

¹⁰ VAIVADA, V. Dėl Telšių parapijos teritorijos formavimosi XVI amžiuje [On the Formation of Telšiai Parish in the 16th Century]. In *Krikščionių visuomenės raidos atodangos...*, p. 83–94; VAIVADA, V. Christianizacijos plėtra Žemaitijoje XV a. pabaigoje – XVI a. pirmoje pusėje remiantis asmenvardžių duomenimis: Karšuvos valsčiaus pavyzdys [The Spread of Christianisation in Žemaitija at the End of the Fifteenth Century and during the First Half of the Sixteenth Century on the Basis of Personal Names: Karšuva District]. In *Kultūra – ekonomika – visuomenė...*, p. 205–219; VAIVADA, V. Christianizacijos plėtra Žemaitijoje XV a. pabaigoje – XVI a. pirmoje pusėje remiantis asmenvardžių duomenimis: Kražių valsčiaus pavyzdys [The Spread of Christianisation in Žemaitija at the End of the Fifteenth Century and during the First Half of the Sixteenth Century on the Basis of Personal Names: Kražiai District]. In *Kultūra – ekonomika – visuomenė...*, p. 220–244; VAIVADA, V. Christianizacijos plėtra Žemaitijoje XV a. pabaigoje – XVI a. pirmoje pusėje remiantis asmenvardžių duomenimis: Telšių valsčiaus pavyzdys [The Spread of Christianisation in Žemaitija at the End of the Fifteenth Century and during the First Half of the Sixteenth Century on the Basis of Personal Names: Telšiai District]. In *Kultūra – ekonomika – visuomenė...*, p. 245–263.

¹¹ SKURDAUSKIENĖ, J. Privatūs valdų kompleksai ir susisiekimas. Dar vienas atvykusių bajorų evangelikų, bažnyčių fundatorių, žemėvaldos formavimosi aspektas Žemaitijoje XVI a. antroje pusėje – XVII a. pradžioje [Private Holding Complexes and Communications. Another Aspect of Land-Ownership Formation by Newcomer Noblemen-Evangelicals, Church Funders, in Samogitia in the Late 16th – Early 17th Centuries]. In *Krikščioniškosios tradicijos raiška...*, p. 118–139; SKURDAUSKIENĖ, J. Žemaičių vyskupijos parapiinių valdų socialinė organizacija XVI a. antrosios pusės Katalikų bažnyčios krizės metu [Social Organisation of the Parishes of the Samogitian Diocese during the Catholic Church Crisis in the Second Half of the 16th Century]. In *Krikščionių visuomenės raidos atodangos...*, p. 223–243; SKURDAUSKIENĖ, J. Prisitaikyti prie naujų ekonominių sąlygų: Solomereckių Kelmės valdos atvejis (1550–1591 m). I ir II dalys [To Adapt to the Economic Conditions: the Case of Solomereckis' Kelmė Holding (1550–1591), two parts]. In *Kultūra – ekonomika – visuomenė...*, p. 162–177, 178–189.