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# LIETUVOS IR RUSIOS KRONIKOS MĄSTYMO PARADIGMA VĒLYVAISIAIS VIDURAMŽIAIS

Lithuanian-Ruthenian Chronicle Paradigm  
of Thinking in the Late Middle Ages

## SUMMARY

This article is devoted to the analysis of the ideological context, historical mission and paradigm features of Lithuania, Belarus, Kyiv Rus, and their chronicles, which were formed by the memoirs written in the Late Middle Ages. The emphasis is made on the historical mission of chronicles and their reception in the social space of the era. The article examines the changes in anthropological understanding regarding the development of literature in Lithuanian-Ruthenian state. It also focuses on the modern vision of the role of Western Ruthenian chronicles in the development of late medieval European culture and literature. The main dominant features of the texts that contributed to the integration of the Ruthenian discourse into the cultural space are determined. The literature of the Late Middle Ages, styles, genres, spiritual and aesthetic dominants, religious vectors of thinking, have been studied in this work. The role of the Belarusian-Lithuanian Chronicles in the process of formation of national, political and cultural lines of the Lithuanian-Ruthenian state is highlighted. The paradigm of annalistic thinking is defined as the system performing socio-political, historical, cultural-literary, artistic, and aesthetic functions. The political role of Lithuania and cultural dominant of Rus are harmoniously synthesized. During the Late Middle Ages, the Belarus-Lithuanian Chronicles and the Short Kyiv Chronicle became the continuation of the Ruthenian Chronicle. They show a literary and social-historical tradition, an awareness of Ruthenian, which at that time was part of the Lithuanian-Ruthenian state, as a legacy of the state of Kievan Rus and the newly created part of it.

## SANTRAUKA

Straipsnyje analizuojami Lietuvos, Baltarusijos, Kijevo Rusijos ideologinis kontekstas, istorinė misija ir paradigminiai bruožai bei jų metraščiai, kuriuos suformavo vėlyvaisiais viduramžiais rašyti memuarai. Akcentuojama kronikų istorinė misija ir jų suvokimas to meto socialinėje erdvėje. Straipsnyje nagrinėjami antro-

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pologinio literatūros raidos Lietuvos Rusios valstybėje supratimo pokyčiai. Taip pat akcentuojamas šiulaininis požiūris į Vakarų Rusios kronikų vaidmenį vėlyvųjų viduramžių Europos kultūroje ir literatūroje. Nustatomi pagrindiniai dominuojantys tekstų bruožai, kurie prisidėjo prie rusėniško diskurso integracijos į kultūrinę erdvę. Šiame darbe nagrinėjama vėlyvųjų viduramžių literatūra, stiliai, žanrai, dvasinės ir estetiškos dominantės, religiniai mąstymo vektoriai. Pabrėžiamas baltarusių-lietuvių kronikų vaidmuo Lietuvos Rusios valstybės tautinių, politinių ir kultūrinių linijų formavimosi procese. Metraštinio mąstymo paradigma apibrėžiama kaip sistema, atliekanti socialines-politines, istorines, kultūrinės-literatūrinės, menines ir estetiškas funkcijas. Politinis Lietuvos vaidmuo ir kultūrinė Rusios dominantė darniai siejamos. Vėlyvaisiais viduramžiais Baltarusios ir Lietuvos metraščiai ir Trumpasis Kijevo metraštis tapo Rusios metraščio tęsiniais. Juose atsiskleidžia literatūrinė ir socialinė-istorinė tradicija, Rusios, kuri tuo metu buvo Lietuvos Rusios valstybės dalis, suvokimas kaip Kijevo Rusios valstybės ir naujai sukurtos jos dalies palikimas.

## INTRODUCTION

The Late Middle Ages in the Ruthenian literature is the era lasting from the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was the period of integration and historical-spiritual, cultural-religious synthesis of both Lithuania and Rus states. The European context was viewed as significant socio-political and cultural transformation. The tragic consequences of the Mongol invasion were replaced by the restoration of political and cultural life on the former territory of the Kyivan Rus state. The scribes set 2 main goals - to revive the heritage of the Rus state and to establish renewed Ruthenian literacy in the Lithuanian-Ruthenian context. The

authentic tradition was being continued and developed. Ruthenian people began to create new cultural and literary existence together with the Lithuanian Principality. Thus, in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Lithuanian Ruthenian State was established, and a new era of literature of the Late Middle Ages was formed. A significant place in its context belongs to Belarusian-Lithuanian Chronicles, which testified the formation of the new chronicle paradigm of thinking. The latter became the embodiment of the vectors of vision and interpretation of the state, law, and books that were dominant in the period of Lithuanian-Ruthenian state.

## SPECIFICS OF LITERATURE OF THE LATE MIDDLE AGES IN THE CONTEXT OF LITHUANIAN-RUTHENIAN STATE

In post-Soviet era, there was a huge change in the paradigm of scientific ideas about the cultural, literary, and artistic and aesthetic significance of the literacy. That was due to the appearance of new studies and dizzying changes in the European discourse. I. Franko calls this period “300 years of decline of any

spiritual work, any literary creativity”, “lethargy” (Franko 1983: 216). The scientist admits that the fall of education did not occur since the scribes copied the memoirs of the Kiev Rus era, however, he notes that “there was not a spark of lively opinion, there was no grain of spiritual interest” (ibid) in the literature

of that time. M. Hrushevskiy highlights that “for all its poverty in the sphere of production, this period was full of inner content. It was prepared the previously unprecedented intense social, ideological activity of the first revival” (Hrushevskiy 1995: 6). Emphasizing on its national role, the researcher focused on the great potential of the literature of the Late Middle Ages. Not knowing a lot of facts, D. Chyzhevskiy called that period “a pause in literary development” (Chyzhevskiy 1994: 212). In his studies, there are almost no characteristics of monuments and authors representing the era of the Late Middle Ages. The fact of the creation of the Lithuanian-Ruthenian cultural and literary discourse characterizes the era of Soviet science. The work of T. Sushitsky “Western Rus Chronicles as Monuments of Literature”, published in 1929, was banned for a long time and has not been reprinted yet.

Thus far, Lithuanian-Ruthenian chronicles are still underresearched texts. Some parts of them have been analyzed, however it is necessary to make a comprehensive study that will specify the cultural and literary mission of the texts and their role in establishing a new historical worldview. Several tasks are analyzed in our article. It is also important to make the new edition of these texts with a scientific commentary. It is essential to realize the mission of chronicles in the new historical stage for Ruthenia and Lithuania. Among modern scientific studies about the period of creation and existence of chronicles, it is necessary to mention the work of N. Yakovenko “Essay on the history of medieval and early modern Ukraine”. She

emphasizes on the historical role of Vytautas: “In the memory of the inhabitants of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Vytautas became a symbol of law and justice – it was starting point of “good old days” when the organization of the state began” (Yakovenko 2006: 143).

In general, modern scientists note the important role of literature in the processes of national identification and European integration. It was time when the Ruthenian people were revived after the invasion of Mongol-Tatars, declaring the burden of state and cultural traditions. During that period, Europe experienced the process of nationalization. We can also observe their genesis in the former territory of the Kyivan Rus. The Ukrainian nation began to recognize itself as the certain territory with its own history, culture, and way of life. It was the literature of Ruthenian people, whose area was the part of the Lithuanian Ruthenian State. It should be noted the Rus language was official language. This increased attention to the old and modern Ruthenian literature. That was the period of creation of common Ukrainian and Lithuanian works, which testified to the existence of the Lithuanian-Ruthenian cultural and literary field. The invasion of the Mongol-Tatars hastened the collapse of Ruthenia as well as the struggle of the specific princes for power. The literature of the Late Middle Ages was defined as the literature of preservation and gradual filling itself with a new modern meaning. Its historical mission was to revive the Ruthenian tradition and facilitate its development. The literature of the Late Middle Ages formed the ide-

ological and thematic background, on which the Renaissance era was formed.

In the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the political role of the Lithuanian State increased. Olherd Hedyminovych, Lithuanian Duke, united Kyiv, Podolsk, Chernihiv, Siversk in the Lithuanian state. That fact contributed to the mutual influence of cultures and literatures, their European dialogue, and the creation of a Lithuanian Ruthenian literary context. A new inter-literary context was being formed under the significant influences of Europe. Ukrainian ethnos had an important position in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, where the Ruthenian language was the official one. The Lithuanian Charter was written in it. The political role of Lithuanian-Ruthenian cultural dominant was harmoniously synthesized. V. Lytvynov wrote that “a part of the lands that fell under the rule of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania ... created a national dual-stage state on the basis of the Lithuanian and Ukrainian-Belarus ethnic groups” (Lytvynov 2008: 12). It is the significant fact that the Vytautas used the title of the Grand Duke of Lithuanian-Ruthenian state. Along with the monumental and ornamental style, the role of author is increasing in literature. The author is defined as a writer-creator with his/her own individual role. The literature of the Late Middle Ages preserved and conveyed to the present the heritage of Kyivan Rus.

During this time, new lists of Kyivan texts were created, testifying to the continuity of the tradition. The introduction of the Magdeburg law was the indicative fact in favor of the European character of Ukrainian cities.

After signing of the political agreement between Lithuania and Poland in 1385, ties between Russia, Ukraine and Europe were strengthened. Unification processes were observed between different European states in the fight against Turkish-Tatar aggression. An important cultural phenomenon was the second South Slavic cultural influence. Metropolitans Kyprian, Hryhoriy Tsamblak, and Yosyf Bolharynovych were its promoters. Hesychasm came to Ukraine through Bulgaria. P. Bilous calls it a phenomenon that “defined the rhetorical program of medieval Christian culture in the Orthodox East of Europe, thus marked the worldview and practical (prayer) strategy of asceticism” (Bilous 2015: 235). The promoter of hesychasm in Ukraine was the Greek Metropolitan of Kyiv Theognostus. In general, hesychasm testified to the existence of a second South Slavic influence and integration into the European Pre-Renaissance. It was the worldview of hesychasm that contributed to the revival of Slavic Orthodoxy, as well as ancient Mysticism on a late Byzantine basis. Hesychasm became the ideological basis of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

## BELARUS-LITHUANIAN CHRONICLES

In the late Middle Ages, Belarusian-Lithuanian Chronicles and the Short Kyiv Chronicle became a continuation

of “Chronicle”. They testified to the duration of literary and social-historical traditions for recognition of Rus, which

was a part of Grand Duchy of Lithuania. These writings were created in 14<sup>th</sup> - early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Baroque Ukrainian-Polish artist Matviy Strykovskyi was the first writer, who used them as the literary sources. After that, the works acquired the role of significant sources relating to the history and culture. The Belarusian-Lithuanian Chronicle was first published in 1823 by I. Danilovych, who accompanied the text with his own notes. He emphasized on the great importance to the Ruthenian language, which was the official language in Lithuania. I. Danilovych also described the manuscript. The most complete list of these chronicles is the text published by F. Narbut. The most similar to the Ukrainian language and historiography was the chronicle created in the Supralskyi Monastery in Poland. The most likely place for writing the chronicle was Smolensk, and the Smolensk chronicle is the basis of the Lithuania chronicle. Volyn, Kyiv, Podil, and Volodymyr chronicles, official documents, and court notes were also used as sources in the Belarusian-Lithuanian Chronicle. There are fourteen lists of Western chronicles – Supralskyi, Uvarovskiy, Nykyforovskiy, Akademychnyi, Vilenskyi, Rumiantsevskiy, Krasynskiy, Arkheolohichnyi, Patriiarshyi, Rachynskoho, Yevreinovskiy, Dubrovskiy, Bykhovtsia, Tykhonravova.

The first part of the Belarusian-Lithuanian Chronicle is “The Tale of the Faithful Holy Rus Princes”. It is some information adopted from the Kyiv and Novgorod chronicles. In a point of fact, this chronicle outlines events of the previous centuries. Even though the chro-

nology is not followed everywhere, the second part is called “Chronicle of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania” (1431-1466). The third part (1447-1505) is about the western and southern lands. Considered all around, the Belarusian-Lithuanian Chronicle is a synthesis of various notes, facts, stories, novels, and legends. The stories of the history of Lithuania, aimed to represent the origins of the Lithuanian elite, are represented in the beginning of the chronicle. The history of ancient Lithuania is presented as a mythical one. There are legendary and artistic interpretations are paramount, and historical background is supporting aspect. Thus, the families of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas and the Roman emperor Augustus are bound.

There is a list of seven sons of Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas at the beginning of the “Chronicle of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania”. It is noted here that Olgierd is the father of Jagiello, and Kiejstut – the father of Vytautas. It is described the feud between Kiejstut and Jagiello. From the perspective of the text, it becomes clear that the chronicler was a contemporary of the described events. It is represented the detailed story of how Jagiello got Catholicism and married Jadwiga, who is the daughter of Polish king. After the marriage, Catholicism began to spread in Lithuania very actively.

Then there is the story of how Vytautas ran off to Germans, and Jagiello persecuted him. There are also stories about the unsuccessful campaign of Andrii Duke of Polotsk and Svyatoslav Duke of Smolensk against the Lithuanian principality. Extensive and detailed story is

dedicated to the story of how Podillia was conquered. Its task is to prove the historical affiliation of the region to Lithuania, not Poland. It was the Lithuanian Princes Koryatowicz, who became the founders of Kamianets and other cities, as well as the defenders of Podillia from Tatar raids. Then Vytautas Grand Duke of Lithuania subjugated all of Podillia. The confrontation between Lithuania and the Principality of Smolensk is also described here. The image of Smolensk Prince Andrew is quite obnoxious, he is represented as an opponent of Lithuania. The chronicle also describes the struggle of Lithuania and Moscow for the lands of the Principality of Smolensk. The epilogue of the stories about Vytautas Grand Duke of Lithuania is "Praise to Vytautas Grand Duke of Lithuania". It is the individual work – highly artistic and adopted by the idea of Lithuania patriotism, national and political independence of Lithuania. The work is characterized by sublime panegyricism. It is emphasized on the merits of Vytautas, his contribution to the development of the Lithuania-Russian Principality. Researchers notice several similarities between the story of Podillia and the panegyric in honor of Vytautas Grand Duke. It is obvious that both texts were originally written, but later experienced the significant changes. According to T. Sushchysky, "The Tale of Podillia" "has a strictly government-Lithuanian character. It clearly embodies the idea of the Lithuanian state, which has an exclusive, historically sanctified and historically highlighted right to own Podillia" (Sushchysky 1929, 162).

Basically, the Lithuanian part of the chronicle is much longer than all-Rus one. If the latter is based on northeastern sources, the Lithuanian one is in fact original, based on local Lithuanian records. The all-Rus part represents short descriptions of general events, paying attention to purely Lithuanian ones only at the end. However, the Lithuanian part is devoted only to Lithuanian history. The specific feature of this part of the chronicle is a surge of patriotism, full of awareness of their own statehood. T. Sushchysky summarizes that the Lithuanian part differs in pragmatism of presentation, style, originality of presentation of information and national Lithuanian character. This part was written in Smolensk (ibid: 143).

At the end of the chronicle, there is a story about the Konstantyn Ostrogski, sent by Alexander Jagiellon against Ivan of Moscow. It is said that in the battle of the Smolensk region near Vedrosh, Rus troops defeated the Lithuanians, and Ostrogski became a prisoner. The story describes the psychological state of the army, the mood of the soldiers before the battle and after their defeat. It is obvious that the author was a contemporary of those events because he provides their detailed description as well as names the exact years, months, and dates of events.

Principally, the Western chronicle became the hallmark of the reign of Vytautas Grand Duke of Lithuania. It represented a description of the rise and fall of the Lithuanian state. The commissioned Lithuanian Statute of 1446 was not completed due to the fall of the state. The beginning of this was the death of

Vytautas Grand Duke of Lithuania, who was the promoter of the state and its culture. T. Sushitsky emphasizes, “despite the fact that the law of Vytautas did not lose its state significance for the history of Lithuania ... Belarusian-Lithuanian Chronicle... has the important historical significance” (ibid: 159). The style of the chronicle is marked by the influence of Lithuanian charters and the Galician-Volynian Chronicle.

The Short Kyiv Chronicle (“The Beginning of the Russian Princes of the Russian Reign”) is included in the Codex Suprasliensis. This chronicle was compiled at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, although it is fully preserved in the traditions of the Middle Ages. The events in the chronicle cover the period of 862–1515 years. The events based on the impressions of the chronicler dating back to 1491–1516 are described in detail. The first edition of the chronicle ends with the events of 1382, the second – 1405, the third – 1461, the fourth – 1505, to which a description of the events of 1481–1500 is added. There are many important

events related to Kyiv, Volyn, Lithuania, Belarus of the XIV–XV centuries. In a point of fact, the image of Konstantyn Ostrogski is main in the chronicle. It was he who was sent to the battle with Vasili III, the Grand Prince of Moscow near Orsha, where the Ukrainian ruler won in 1515. The author compares Vasili III, the Grand Prince of Moscow, with the Macedonian king Alexander, the Indian ruler Porus, and other world-famous rulers. The author considers Tatars as the main enemy of Lithuanian Ruthenian State. In the Short Kyiv Chronicle there are many quotations from the Bible and other church books. It is also mentioned about the visit of the Sigismund II Augustus to the Suprasl Orthodox Monastery in 1543. It is obvious that the author of the chronicle was a clergyman, who paid significant attention to the affairs of the church and religion. However, the chronicle is a secular book, which is manifested in the explanation of the causes of victories and defeats, descriptions of nature, and estimation of historical facts and characters.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, the chronicles of the Late Middle Ages showed that Rus state and its political, cultural, ecclesiastical, and literary traditions were not lost after the fall of the Kyivan Rus. They gradually revived and developed. The common Lithuanian Rus literary context was formed. The chronicle mental paradigm revealed the idea of statehood, which acquired political and national features.

The system of images represented in the Belarus-Lithuanian Chronicle determined the vision of the single historical space of Lithuania and Ukraine and the commonality of their worldviews and national traditions. In the conditions of the Ukrainian Hetmanate, the chronicle of the Baroque period has been based on the traditions of the Belarusian-Lithuanian Chronicle.



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