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DEAR READERS,



We have a pleasure to present you the sixth issue of our publication. Again, we try to bring closer the cultural variety of the lands which used to be the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and which today are, to a degree, in the European Union. In the issue, beside our cyclic theme articles, we also present the participants of the events organized by us: young people from Lithuania, Poland and Russia on a common language camp.

We are glad that our activities meet such a strong feedback. The transnational cooperation, originated during the project, which is coming to the end, brings concrete effects. We believe we managed to start initiatives which has already begun their "independent lives."

We hope we have moved a small stone which will start an avalanche.

*Chairman of Amicus Society
Piotr Sobolewski*

Editorial:

Paulina Wolfram
Jarosław Marek Chodyncki
Adam Kozłowski
Piotr Sobolewski

Publisher:

Association „Towarzystwo Amicus”
15-427 Białystok, ul. Lipowa 14
phone/fax: 0048 85 653 77 53
www.towarzystwoamicus.pl
e-mail: eurobialystok@bia.pl
Agencja „Benkowski”
Legionowa 28, 15-281 Białystok
phone: 0048/85 745 52 45
fax: 0048/85 674 30 22

Białystok Scientific Society

We show the place of our Borderland in the European culture

The society came to existence in 1962 and consists of academicians of various museums, archives and universities in Białystok, Warsaw and Toruń as well as other institutions propagating Polish science and arts.

The aim of the Society is to conduct researches, development and support of science and arts in all fields, especially in relation to the Podlasie Province, Podlasie as a cultural region and historic areas of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

Volumes of the knowledge of the region

The objective of the BSS is a permanent activation of the region's academic life, cooperation with scientific research institutions, associations and both home and foreign higher schools. The Society



Białostoczczyzna 1989, the quarterly Białostoczczyzna no 2(14)/1989, published by the Białystok Scientific Society



Congress 2000. The end of the regional conference of the Congress of Polish Culture 2000. The participants in the assembly hall of Collegium Nobilium in Drohiczyn.

cooperates with local authorities in creating social and economic as well as cultural and academic development of the Podlasie Province. It also supports organizationally and substantially individuals and organizational units which run such activities. The site of the BSS is Białystok but its libraries are also in Mońki and Jaświły.

It is the library that the Society may be especially proud of. Since its beginning it has collected 24 thousand volumes in it. It is the only library in the Podlasie Province which possesses such rich serial collections, including a large set of foreign titles. Due to the location of Białystok and the research interest of the academicians, the publications which are distinguishing are from Belarus, Russia, the Ukraine and Lithuania as well as the Scandinavian countries. The

most valuable of the book collection is the BORDERLAND department of old, hardly available prints concerning the history of the former lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which was made thanks to gifts from some former professors of the Wilno University (Vilnius), who arrived in Białystok after the war.

Can you see us, Europe?

The Białystok Scientific Society has been for several years an organizer of the European Days of the Cultural Heritage of the Podlasie Region (7 conferences), a cyclic event initiated and under the patronage of the European Council. The Days, organized every year in most of the European countries, have an objective to demonstrate a cultural heritage especially impor-

tant for our continent. Meetings within the framework of the EDH gave an opportunity to present cultural ties connecting our region with the all-European culture. Due to this event, the past, the present and the knowledge of particular regions of our country reached wide opinion-making circles. Thanks to the EDH the culture of Podlasie became known among the people who shape the image of the cultural circles, and the peculiarity of our region attracts many new well-wishers.

The Białystok Scientific Society is an organizer of a several international source-study conferences (including scholars from Belarus, Russia, Lithuania, the Ukraine and Germany) organized under the patronage of the Scientific Research Committee.

The BSS runs also a large publishing activity. It has been publishing, among other things, the Scientific Quarterly *Białostoczczyzna*, and a number of research papers.

*prof. Józef Maroszek,
the President of the BSS*



The Catalogue of Parks: The Catalogue of Parks and Gardens in the Province of Białystok. Vol. 1: the detailed part. The Białystok Scientific Society 2000.



The Academic Conference: 40 years of the State Archive in Białystok. Białystok 1993.

Most important accomplishments of the BTN:

- Series of academic publications: Works of the Białystok Scientific Society (Vol. 1-51);
- Quarterly *Białostoczczyzna* (no 1-60);
- Studies and materials for the history of Białystok (vol. 1-5)
- Series of source-study conferences concerning Podlasie and areas of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania
- European Days of Cultural Heritage of the Podlasie Region under auspices of the European Council (7 conferences)
- Congress of the Polish Culture 2000 (co-organizer).

The Białystok Scientific Society offers also several academic publications. They include mainly works on the history of Podlasie and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, as well as items in other branches of knowledge. The Publishing House of the BSS possesses publications of two types: the quarterly "*Białostoczczyzna*" and "The Works of the Białystok Scientific Society", including post-conference materials, monographs and source publications. They are, among other things:

- Dąbrowski Jan, *Epoka brązu w północno-wschodniej Polsce*, Białystok 1997.
- Król Bronisław Władysław, *Szkoła jako instytucja wychowawcza w środowisku małomiasteczkowym (na tle konkretnego środowiska małomiasteczkowego – Iwieniec)*, Białystok 2000.
- *Księga wizyty dziekańskiej dekanatu podlaskiego, przeze mnie - księdza Bazylego Benedykta Guttorskiego dziekana podlaskiego, plebana golniewskiego w roku 1773 miesiąca Novembra dnia 17... sporządzona*, opr. J. Maroszek, W. F. Wilczewski, Białystok 1996.
- Laszuk Anna, *Ludność województwa podlaskiego w drugiej połowie XVII wieku*, Warszawa 1999.
- Ołędzki Piotr, *Wspólne dziedzictwo. Portret sarmacki w dziedzictwie narodu Rzeczypospolitej szlacheckiej*, Białystok 1999.
- *Pamięć fundatora. Świątynie-mauzolea w krajobrazie kulturowym Podlasia*, opr. J. Maroszek, P. Ołędzki, W. F. Wilczewski, Białystok 1998.
- *Przyszłość kultury Polaków na Kresach, t. I-II Kraj rodzinny Matki mej*, pod red. J. Maroszka.
- *Studia i materiały do dziejów Siemiatycz*, pod red. H. Majeckiego, Warszawa 1989.
- *Studia językowe z Białostoczczyzny. Onomastyka i historia języka*, pod red. I. Maryniakowej, E. Smułkowej, Warszawa 1989.
- Śleszyński Wojciech, *Okupacja sowiecka na Białostoczczyźnie w latach 1939-1941. Propaganda i indoktrynacja*, Białystok 2001.
- Śnieżko Aleksander, *Wydobył z ziemi gród, o którym nikt nie wiedział. Wspomnienie o Józefie Jodkowskim*, Białystok 2000.

How to understand the others preserving own values, or...

Young people from Lithuania, Poland and Russia on a summer camp

An attempt at mutual understanding, preserving one's own values, brings mutual benefits. This truth, among other things, was made familiar to pupils from Lithuania, Poland and Russia (the Kaliningrad District) on a common summer language camp.

The camp lasted from 6th to 19th August 2007. The children stayed in a campsite of the Capital Headquarters of the Police, in Dworek Mazurski near Olecko. It was part of the project Transborder Center for Education and Civil Information in Białystok, within the Program of Neighbourhood: Lithuania, Poland, the Kaliningrad District of the Russian Federation INTER-REG IIIA/TACIS 2004-2006.

Ludvinavas, Bakalarzewo and Kaliningrad

The Lithuanian group, ten children with counselors, came from the Commune Ludvinavas in the Marjampole Region: Vilma Meškinytė, Neringa Juknelytė, Edita Glinskaitė, Vaida Surdokaitė, Gintarė Surdokaitė, Žilvinas Akelelis, Geda Kilikevičiūtė, Simona Stepanavičiūtė, Žilvinas Ančiukaitis and Jurgita Biskytė. Mr Waldemar Narkiewicz (a Pole from the Vilnius Region), the interpreter, was of invaluable importance in building mutual agreement.

The representatives of the Polish youth were pupils from the Podlasie Province (12 people): Rafał Skrocki, Karolina Skrocka, Moni-



ka Gajewska, Daniel Sak, Emilia Górka, Karol Ulanowicz, Marlena Krzesicka, Marek Grzybowski, Paula Masłowska, Magdalena Jeleniewicz, Karolina Michałowska and Dominika Aleksandra Makarewicz. This group's counselor was Mr Tomasz Naruszewicz.

The Russian kids were inhabitants of Kaliningrad: Ruslan Igorovich Doncov, Iryna Vladimirovna Ivanova, Aleksandr Viktorovich Izotov, Ekaterina Adreevna Nikolskaya, Anna Aleksandrovna Pakuleva, Snerzanna Stanislavovna Pilopavichite, Marina Vladimirovna Smirnova, Ksenia Ivanovna Sokolina, Lilya Olegovna Gubar, Aleksandr Olegovich Sharofeev. This group's counselor was Dimitry Osipov.

The security of the campers was provided by the camp manager

and a nurse. Among the others who stayed there were also representatives of the Society "Amicus": Paulina Wolfram, Krystyna Kryszewicz, Jarosław Marek Chodynicki, Piotr Sobolewski and Adam Kozłowski.

We are similar to each other

The campers were finalists of the contest: „I'll show you my Little Homeland," organized by the Society "Amicus." The young people described their home places in their papers. A special attention was paid by the young people to religious and ethnic multiculturalism. Thanks to them we learned about the common life of the Lithuanians, the Germans, the Poles, the Russians and the Jews on the territory in question.

The main objective of the camp of activation, intercultural education teaching about ethnic groups inhabiting the transborder territories of Poland, Lithuania and the Kaliningrad District. The pupils became familiar with the material and non-material output of the Borderlands.

Thanks to the stay and didactic plays together they became familiar with new cultures. They learned to cooperate with the representatives of other nations and ethnicities. They understood that compromise may be very effective. And the attempt at mutual understanding, preserving own values, brings mutual benefits. They saw that people coming from different countries do not differ so much from them. There are similar trends in fashion, entertainment (especially discos) and life aims.

It turned out that they all knew the world pop and dance stars' hits. And the communication was easier due to the English language, which became a "bridge" connecting everybody. The language classes were held almost every day (apart from the days, when the young people went on trips or to a fete). Their participants were divided into three groups depending on their level of advancement. During the camp there were also workshop classes in intercultural studies led by a well-qualified trainer.

By coach around cities and towns of the Borderland

An important attraction of the camp was 5 coach trips.

The first, organized on August 7, ran through:

- Dowspuda (with the ruins of the Pac Palace of the beginning of



The campers by the viaduct in Stańczyki, August 13, 2007.



The campers in the monastery in Supraśl, August 15, 2007



The campers near the shelters in Bakalarzewo, August 11, 2007

the 19th century and the park on the river Rospuda);

- Augustów (sightseeing in the 16th-century marketplace and relax on the beach);
- Studzieniczna (the 18th-century sanctuary, which was visited by Pope John Paul II);
- Mikaszówka (watching the sluice of the Augustów Canal and visiting a beautiful wooden church);
- Giby (with an obelisk dedicated to the soldiers of the Home Army murdered by the Soviets in the so-called Augustów round-up);
- Sejny (sightseeing in the multi-cultural town with a Dominican monastery of the 17th century, a Jewish synagogue, a statue of Baranaskas, the bishop and Lithuanian activist);
- Wigry (post-Camaldule monastery of the 17th century).

The second coach trip took place two days later. It embraced two places important for the history of Masuria: the baroque post-Jesuit monastery in Święta Lipka and Hitler's headquarters from WWII in Gierłoż.

In Święta Lipka the participants were especially impressed by a organ concert. The male part of the group were especially fascinated with Gierłoż. Even heavy rain did not ruin a good time.

The subsequent outing took place on Saturday, August 11, to Bakałarzewo. Passive and combat shelters (commonly known as "bunkers") of WWII were visited there, as well as a water mill of the turn of the 20 century, a Catholic church of 1936 and a Jewish cemetery (Kirkut). Nearly all the Polish pupils were hosts there, since they go to the primary



"Unusual fashion show" arranged during the International Language Camp in Olecko



"Unusual fashion show" arranged during the International Language Camp in Olecko

school and the junior high school in Bakałarzewo.

The fourth trip was organized on August 13. It ran through two old towns (Filipów and Przerośl) and then Stańczyki (seeing bridges of the first half of the 20th century, the biggest constructions of that type in Poland). It was continued by the "three-junction point," or the place where the borders of Po-

land, Russia and Lithuania meet, by Smolniki (where some scenes of "Pan Tadeusz" were shot), Cisowa Góra and Puńsk. The latter is "the capital" of the Polish ethnic Lithuanians, where the campers met their culture, visited the local church and an ethnographic park. In Suwałki, the subsequent point on the route, there was some time for little shopping.

The last trip took place on August 15. The first place visited was Knyszyn, where the architect of the Polish-Lithuanian Union of 1569, King Zygmunt August, used to stay and where he died. Then the campers visited the charming town of Tykocin, where until WWII a strong Jewish community used to live. Until now a powerful brick synagogue has survived there. It is also worth visiting the baroque church. They also visited the main city of the Podlasie Province, Białystok (the 18th-century Branicki Palace), then Supraśl (the post-Basilian monastery of the early 16th century) and Bohoniki (the Tartar village with a wooden mosque and a Muslim cemetery or *misar*).

The dark-haired versus the blonde and the final of the literary contest

In the time free from classes and trips, the young people used the guarded beach. They played billiards, table tennis and volleyball. In the evening various games and competitions were arranged, for example "The dark-haired versus the blonde," unique fashion shows or the quiz "A clever head."

On August 12, on the premises of the Commune Cultural Centre in Bakalarzewo, the International Fete of Cultural Output took place, in which dance-and-vocal groups from Russia (Kaliningrad), Lithuania (Lidvinavas) and Poland (Bakalarzewo, Olecko) took part. The visitors were presented with the aims of the project and the program Neighbourhood Lithuania-Poland-Kaliningrad District. The young people from the three countries sang together a song in Eng-



The campers during the contest "Brunettes versus Blondes"



The Gala of Cultural Output, Bakalarzewo, August 12, 2007



The Gala of Cultural Output, Bakalarzewo, August 12, 2007

lish. The winners of the contest “I’ll show you my Little Homeland” were awarded (with, for example, a laptop, digital cameras, books). Local people, tourists and foreign visitors had fun till late at night by the sounds of folk and pop music; they admired shows of the guests and participated in several competitions. During the fete one could taste traditional regional specialties prepared by local associations, as well as buy and admire craftsmen’s works presented by exhibitors from the three countries.



The Gala of Cultural Output, Bakalarzewo, August 12, 2007

“Amicus” gathers friends

Ten students of secondary schools in the Kaliningrad District spent two weeks of holiday on an international language camp. They rested in a campsite “Dworek Mazurski” by the lake, near Olecko. And together with their Polish and Lithuanian peers they took part in the contest “I’ll show you my Little Homeland.”

The contest was conducted by the Association “Amicus” from Białystok (according to the program of neighbourhood Interreg III A - Lithuania-Poland-Kaliningrad District of the Russian Federation, within the framework of the project “Transborder Center for Education and Civil Information in Białystok”). It was one of the forms of strengthening neighbourliness and international co-operation.

On the Russian part the project was coordinated by the district Teacher’s House, and financed by the European Fund of Regional Development and the program

TACIS. The arrangement of the event was also supported by the “Landsmanship Kaliningradians,” as one of the directions in the work of the forum for the development of the eastern areas of the District.

And where actually is my Homeland?

“What is Homeland? Everybody understands it in their own way. For one “Homeland” is a place of birth while for another it is a place where you have lived for a longer period of life. It is a land with which memories are connected, about the family fire, Mom and Dad, who gave you life, give you their love, warmth and care; it is a place where you want to come back. What brings me to my Homeland? What for should I come back here? And where, actually, is my Homeland?”

Thirteen years ago, in the town of Neman, a little girl was born, who was given the Russian name Katerina. Did she know how her fate would roll? Of course not. She was interested in toys, in the morning she ran in the yard, and in the

afternoon she would wait for her Dad. Her life happened to bring Katerina to live in the Children’s Home in the village of Zhylyno. It had taken long until she got used to this situation but finally she did. In Zhylyno there are a lot of interesting places. There is an Orthodox church: you know, some residues of wall paintings are preserved there! They are beautiful!

I have also my favourite place: a hill at the edge of the village. Have you ever looked at your village or town from the bird’s eye perspective?! Isn’t it wonderful?

I’ll tell you about my beloved family town from the height of my look and knowledge.”

That is how the pupil of the eighth grade, Katerina Nikolskaya from the Neman Children’s Home in the village of Zhylyno began her composition: about her new home, which has become her family home; about the town of Neman, where she was born.

Her composition, with 30 other compositions by the pupils from the Kaliningrad District, Lithuania (Commune Marjampole),

and Poland (Commune Bakalarzewo), was qualified for participation in the international stage of the contest. And it was recognized the best! As an award she received a laptop.

The third place was taken by Aleksandr Sharafeev (13) from School No 26, who wrote about Kaliningrad. He was awarded with a consolation prize: a book on Bakalarzewo written by the local expert Tomasz Naruszewicz.

It is in Bakalarzewo, in the square in front of the Community Center, that the results of the contest were announced; during the international festival of the three countries' cultures, to which came creative groups from the Kaliningrad Children and Teenager Center at Molo-dezhnaya Street and the band "Shafir" (the village of Partyzancki, Bagra-tionovsk region).

Studies, sightseeing and friendship

Two weeks on the international camp passed by very quickly. The organizers from "Amicu" arranged the program in such a way, that nobody felt bored. English lessons were provided and after a week the Russian, Lithuanian and Polish children could communicate on the basic level, and in special classes (on last days) they



Acknowledgments - The Management of the Neman Children's Home of the Kaliningrad District offer thanks to The Society "Amicus" and the European Fund for an opportunity to stay on the international language camp at the holiday centre "Dworek Mazurski" in Olecko and to participate in the project "The Transborder Centre for Education and Civil Information in Białystok" in the international contest of compositions "My Little Homeland" The days the children spent on the camp will remain in their hearts for a long time, and the international friendship, which began during the camp will help create peace and develop good-neighbourly relations! With kindest regards the direktor of the Neman Children's Home

Swietlana Iwanowa

could carry out tasks in mixed groups.

Plenty of trips took place, during which the pupils went sight-seeing in a number of interesting place in north-eastern Poland: Białystok, Suwałki, Augustów and other towns of the districts of Podlasie and Warmia-Masuria. They saw the Orthodox monastery in Supraśl, the sanctuaries in Święta Lipka, Wigry and Sejny, the town of Puńsk, the Lithuanian "capital" of Poland, the mosque

in Bohoniki, as well as the residue of the ruined headquarters of Hitler "Wolf-schanze" near Kętrzyn.

Almost every evening interesting events were held, such as an evening of questions and answers, teenage fashion shows with humorous commentaries, and "Neptunia" (similar to the Russian Neptun's Day) concluded with a bath of all the participants in the lake. Nobody forgot, of course, about discos and campfires with indispensable roasted sausages.

"We were doing our best to make all the kids to like it on the camp," says the project coordinator Paulina Wolfram. "I think, we've managed to. I saw the kids exchanging addresses with their new friends on the last day. They departed with tears in the eyes. And for us it was very nice to receive self-made gifts from the children of the Neman Children's Home.

Every pupil was given a diploma of participation in the camp, a T-shirt with the logo of the program "Neighbourliness" and other souvenirs. On the last day the new friends form "Amicus" (Latin: friend) literally showered the Kaliningradians with presents, which will be useful for games and sports: balls, rings, table-tennis and badminton sets and many others.

*Dmitrij Osipow
The Kaliningrad daily
"The Citizen"*

The Jews and their culture in the Neman, the Bug and the Narew basins from the 14th century to 1950s

The Tykocin Kehilla and Vilnius libraries

The Jewish commenced migrating to Lithuania in the 14th century, after the epidemic of bubonic plague in Germany. Another wave appeared later, after 1492, after they were expelled from Spain and Germany. In the year 1495 Grand Duke Alexander Jagiellon, in order to prevent from the further influx of the Jews, passed a sentence that those who refused to convert into Christianity should be expelled outside the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

In this situation, many Jews, especially those richer, received baptism. Thanks to this they obtained the confirmation of their rights to possessions, houses or estates and tenancies. The remaining had to wander to Poland having left their real estates for the disposal of the Grand Duke.

The persecution did not last long. When King Alexander needed money for the war against Moscow in 1503, he restored the Jewish rights to settle in Lithuania in the towns they had inhabited before their expulsion. The Lithuanian Jewish were obliged to maintain collectively, during a war, the unit of one thousand riders.

The unpleasant should be chased and removed

The first mass influx of the Jewish settlers, however, began at the turn of the 18th century. The Jews reached Podlasie fleeing from persecutions in Germany, Russia, Austria and Prussia. They were not



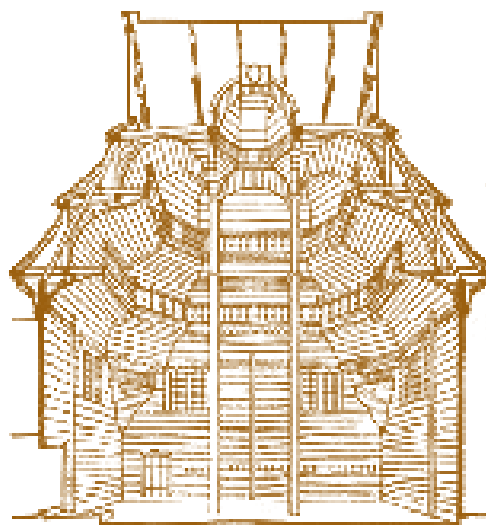
Tykocin, the Podlasie Province. The bird's eye view of Kaczorowo and the Grand Synagogue. Photo: Piotr Sawicki, [in] J. Maroszek, W. Nagórski, Tykocin. Miasto królewskie, Białystok 2004.

allowed to settle in old centers or towns by the local “kehilla clans” which monopolized the sources of income. Also the royal towns did not let them in, requesting monarchs for the privileges “de non tolerandis Iudeis.” Consequently,

the new waves of Jewish settlers sought for shelter in noble and church properties. About 1667 one of the most powerful kehillas, that in Tykocin, complained about the new settlers to the Sejm of the Polish Crown Jews or the Va’ad.



Wolpa, a non-existent synagogue of 1781. The façade.



Wolpa,, a non-existent synagogue of 1781. Perspective cross-section.

They received a response: “and now newcomers have rushed into their borders, surrounded them at all sides, besiege them to such a degree, that the Tykocin kehilla is not able to gain food because of the newcomers.” The Va’ad allowed the Tykocin kehilla to “be watchful to the people living in all the villages of Podlasie, and the ones they find unpleasant they can chase and expel.”

However, in the 18th century the Jewish lived practically in all towns on the whole territory of Lithuania and in the 19th century they constituted 40-50 per cent of her inhabitants.

Paradisus Judeorum

The Commonwealth was the most tolerant country in Europe. She became a homeland to one of the largest and most dynamically developing Jewish communities. Their contemporary called Poland of that time a paradise for the Jews (Latin: paradisus iudeorum) and the 16th-century rabbi from Cracow, Moses ben Israel Isserles emphasized that “if God had

not given the Jews Poland as shelter, the fate of Israel would really be unbearable.” The main Jewish centers on the territory in question were Vilnius, Grodno, Tykocin, Białystok and Zabłudów.

According to the legislation of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Jews settling in towns were granted interior autonomy and protection from the kings and dukes, and later also the owners of towns and estates. The autonomy involved independence from the town authorities. The Jewish within the kehilla stayed under the jurisdiction of the Jewish, traditional law based on the Torah and the comments thereon or the Talmud. The Jewish community had their Management of 6 to 40-50 people, chosen in multi-stage elections for one year. The Management secured the proper functioning of the community, managed its property and finances, established and executed taxes from its citizens, provided them with protection and exercised jurisdiction. There was a court-of-law in the community, including

the rabbi as a chairman and the representatives of the elderly. It solved internal problems between the citizens, passed rulings concerning the observance of religious regulations etc.

The community possessed a synagogue, houses of prayer (beit midrash), a ritual bath (mikvah) and

Vilnius was an important center of Zionism or the movement for the return of the Jews to their historic lands. In 1925 the JIVO, the Jewish institute of Yiddish, moved there from Berlin (after WWII it moved to New York).

In 1897 64 thousand Jews lived there, which constituted 40.9 per cent of the city population. In the subsequent years this number decreased a little. In the late 1930s 55 thousand Jews lived there, which made fewer than 30 per cent of the population.

The Germans with their Lithuanian collaborators murdered about 95% of the Lithuanian Jews out of 220 thousand who had lived on this land before the war. Their property and cultural goods were looted and part of the community's buildings were demolished. The Soviet authorities continued the work of destruction commenced by the Germans.

In 1957 the Grand Synagogue was demolished, one of the largest in Europe, able to provide room for over 3 thousand people.

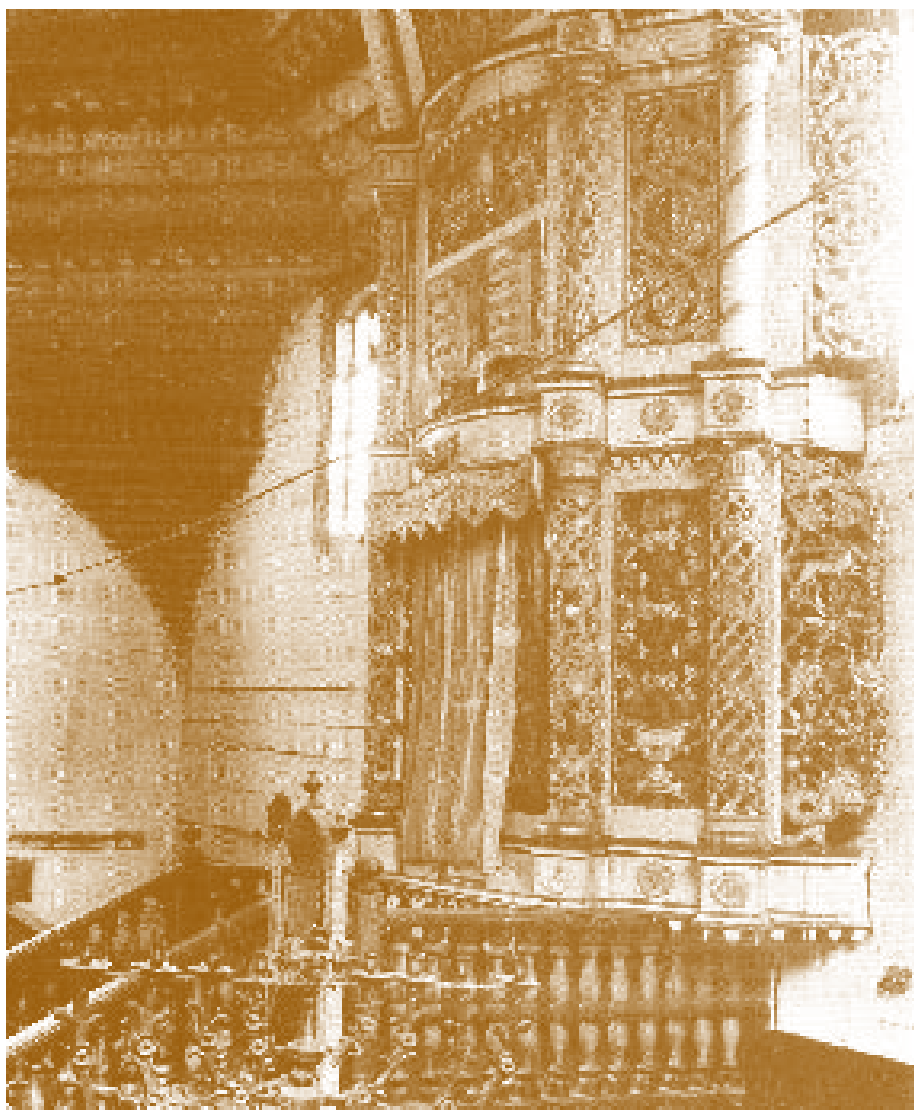
a cemetery (beth olamin). To deliver religious services special people were appointed, with whom an agreement was signed for 1-3 years. These were: the rabbi, the shechita (ritual slaughter), the hazzan (cantor, vocal artist), the shamash (janitor) and others. The kehilla was as if a town within a town. It facilitated its citizens to function in society, securing the life in accordance with the regulations of the Talmudic law and demanding benefits for the community. The kehilla represented, through its delegates, the Jewish community of a particular area in contacts with the royal authorities, the proprietor of the area, Christian churches and in general the non-Jewish world. In the old Commonwealth the kehillas had their hierarchies resulting from the tax system of the Polish state.

At the end of the 16th century, the Sejm of the Four Lands was summoned being the representative body of the whole Jewry as well as the highest legislative instance regulating affairs between the kehillas.

Vilnius: the city of a hundred synagogues

The Jews called Vilnius “Jerusalem of the North.” From 1527 the privilege “de non tolerandis Iudaeis” was in force there, forbidding any Jewish settlement in town. In 1551 the Jews were granted the right of settling on the territories of estates which belonged to boyars.

The first note about the existence of a Jewish community came from 1568, and in 1572 the old synagogue was erected. The city became one of the most important centers of Talmudic teaching. One



Janów Sokólski, a non-existent wooden synagogue. Aron Ha Kodesh. Fot. Sz. Zajczyk 1930. Instytut Sztuki PAN.

of the most outstanding scholars was Rabbi Elijah ben Shlomo, the Talmudist, the supporter of religious rationalism and studying secular knowledge, and the uncompromising enemy of Hassidism.

The cultural and spiritual life of the Vilnius Jews flourished in the 19th century. One of the two Jewish printers in the Russian Empire was active there, as well as M. Straszun library, one of the most important Jewish libraries in Eastern Europe (it possessed, for example, the minutes of the Jewish sejms for the period 1623-1764) and the Institute

for the Jewish Teachers, the only one in the Empire. Before WWII there were over 110 synagogues and houses of prayer in Vilnius. The Grand Synagogue, built in the mid 17th century, stood out with its size. It was surrounded by the schulhof or the synagogue yard, where 11 houses of prayer were located, including the kloyz of Gaon Elijahu, the great Jewish thinker of the modern era. His closest disciple, Khaim of Wołożyn, founded a famous yeshiva, which became a model for other schools of this type. In Vilnius the most known

was the yeshiva Ramailles, which, in 1840, was managed by the ideologist of the Musar trend, Israel Salanter.

Beside the Grand Synagogue the building of the Straszun Library was erected. Scholars from many countries arrived there to become familiar with its treasures including 5 incunabula. About 45 thousand readers a year used the library. The Vilnius publishing house of the Romm widow and brothers was famous for the Talmud edition, regarded perfect and the most professionally elaborated.

The Tykocinian Galil Tiktin

In 1522 a Jewish town was established in Tykocin, in Kaczorowo, in place of the burnt Gasztold's castle, west of the main marketplace. There, behind the port canal (a former moat), the Motława, a synagogue with trading stalls were erected in the Jewish marketplace. The Jewish settlement grew within the subsequent centuries eastwards. After the partitions, especially from the mid 19th century, the largest cluster of Jewish houses was between the synagogue and the parish church.

All the Jewish groups in towns and villages of Podlasie were submitted to Tykocin. The Tykocin Kehilla had the status of the district kehilla (Hebrew: Galil Tiktin). Przykahaleks (units smaller than kehilla, branches), bringing in taxes and other tributes to the main kehilla, obtained in return a profit proportional to the contribution in form of assistance in any areas of religious, community and economic life.

In the 17th and 18th centuries the kehilla's branches attempted to

separate from maternal Tykocin. In the case of Choroszcz, Zabłudów, Gródek and Wasilków the point was the rivalry between Tykocin and Grodno, because Grodno, as one of the largest Lithuanian kehillas, claimed supervision over those communities. In Lithuania there were better legal conditions and the kehillas were vitally interested in passing under the supervision of Grodno. The dispute lasted, for over 100 years, before the elderly of the Seym of the Four Lands, which always made decisions in favor of Tykocin. As the result, however, Grodno took over the disputable kehillas. It was not until the Jewish Seym of the Crown and Lithuania was dissolved in 1764, Zabłudów and Gródek returned voluntarily under the control of Tykocin.

In the beginning there was Chanajki

The origins of Białystok, the capital of the region are connected with the Jewish settlement. In 1692, by force of the privilege, the proprietor, Stefan Mikołaj Branicki, established Białystok as a charter town. He exchanged with the parson the

land adjacent to his residence, where a village marketplace in an irregular triangular square had already developed. He granted the Jews settling in Białystok the area called Chanajki by Suraż Road, where they founded the Jewish district. In 1715 they built a synagogue, called the Old Synagogue and established a cemetery. The numerous group of the Jewish people in town resulted in the rise of animosity between the Christian inhabitants of Białystok and the Jewish. The enmity became deeper during the building of the Daughters of Mercy's convent was built in the old cemetery, when the body of the child Franciszek Maciejczuk was found. It was buried in 1767 but it had not decomposed. The public opinion blamed the Białystok Jews of a ritual murder. The body was ceremoniously carried away and buried in the crypt under the altar of Mother of God of Mt Carmel in the Old Parish Church. A year later, it was taken and buried in the founder's crypt, under the main altar.

In the 19th century the number of the Jewish people in Białystok grew 60 times! In the year 1895 47,783 inhabitants out of 62,993 were Jew-



Kossów Lacki, a non-existent wooden synagogue of the 18th century. Rys. Z. Gloger.



Jedwabne. a non-existent wooden synagogue of the 18th century.

ish, whereas in 1912 (according to The Jewish Encyclopedia) among 98,700 citizens 73,950 were Jewish!

The city was multilingual: the intelligentsia and majority of working class used Polish, part of craftsmen spoke German, merchants and part of working class used Jewish, peasants talk in Belarusian and officials, gendarmes and soldiers spoke Russian. It is not by accident that Ludwik Zamenhof, the inventor of Esperanto, was born in Białystok.

Unwanted in the city, they went to the country

In the royal towns which possessed the privilege “de non tolerandis Iudeis,” the Jewish settled on the grounds of the wójt (village mayor) or the starosta (district prefect). It was so in Knyszyn, where they settled in the place after King Zygmunt August’s mansion, and in Goniądz where they filled the emptiness after the burnt Radziwiłł castle.

Commercial exchange, till the end of the 18th century, was to be conducted in towns only. How-

ever, Podlasie and the adjacent territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Prussia were the area where numerous village markets were held. They were settlements which were granted royal permits for markets and fairs despite not having town charters and not being inhabited by the people who used the town law. Such examples were very frequent, in Podlasie they were: Sokoły, Ostrożany, Juchnowiec, Topczewo, Wyszonki, Jabłoń, Jabłonka, Dolistowo and others; in Mazovia: Stawiski, Jedwabne, Czyżew, Szczepankowo, Śniadowo; in Prussia: Biała Piska, Prostki; in Lithuania: Suchowola, Dąbrowa and others.

In these marketplaces the village Jewish were in the lead, those who not having found place in the Jewish kehilla centers: Vilnius, Grodno, Tykocin, Siemiatycze, Zabłudów and Ciechanowiec, settled in these villages running purchase of agricultural goods, presenting their commodities in their stalls on Mondays, at church fairs and regular fairs. Therefore, in our region more than half of the Jews lived not in towns but in villages! In 1791 the Tykocin Jewish kehilla attempted to fight the competing settlement in Sokoły, which lied within its jurisdiction. The Tykocin Jews requested the proprietor, Izabela Branicka: “We report that Sokoły of Honorable Kruszewski (3 miles from Sokołów to Tykocin), which are registered as a village avoiding in this way the Commonwealth taxes, and because according to the constitution [of 1507] markets and fairs were canceled, with which Sokoły is a great nuisance for us, where eminent markets and fairs used to be held, which we probably did not express in our memorial to Your Ladyship, we apply that Your Ladyship be so kind and do not allow, because Mr Kruszewski tries as he can to have Sokoły restored the freedom of markets and fairs. Against this Sokoły, if this freedom fell, our town will rise. And if it came to the event that Sokoły was to be a town, then Tykocin would be a village. We apply, the most humbly, to maintain us.”

*prof. Józef Maroszek
University of Białystok*

Only on this territory: Podlasie, eastern Masovia and the Grodno district, there used to exist very valuable, because of their carpentry, wooden Jewish synagogues. The most splendid were synagogues in: Zabłudów, Grodno, Wysokie Mazowieckie, Wolpa, Janów Sokólski and Suchowola. They all were butli in the 18th century and imitated, in wood, the most important in rank, brick Synagogue in Tykocin (1642). The Tykocin Jewish kehilla belonged to the most influential in the country. It did not allow the Jewish from przykahaleks (units under the kehilla) to build brick synagogues. They had to do with wooden ones. Because of the fact that synagogues could not be higher and larger than Christian temples, they compensated this drawback with ornaments and interior proportions.

Those wooden, non-existent synagogues, imitating the type of 9-field brick buildings, belong to the most important accomplishments of carpentry on the territory of the old Commonwealth.

Education for intercultural sensitivity in the borderlands

Creating community

In the borderlands, in order to use their undoubted cultural richness, we need community. Community is a notion referring to the sense or will to belong to the category “We,” to build a community, a value for itself and a reference group for individuals.

Belonging to a community is not dependant on any procedures of acceptance and exclusion. It is regulated by the system of values and norms.

One system of values and norms

The sense of community is symbolic belonging. The object, on the other hand, is an imaginary group: without borders and structure. The range of a community is determined by the communication circle of the group or collectivity members. A human interaction is foremost a symbolic interaction, and the borders of a community

are determined by the borders of communication.

We are a community inasmuch as we are able to exchange symbols in the process of communication. Behaviors different from ours, beliefs and emotions of the Others are understandable for us. To great extent, the category of community is identified with the notion of culture. However, the community is constructed. We should take an effort to implement these ideals, and the way thereto seems education.

Belonging to the community is determined by particular behaviors communicatively established, gestures and principles of proxemics developed within the framework of culture (community). On the psychological level of the culture analysis we reach the deepest layers, community binders, which is the system of values and norms shared by the people and expressed in psychological proximity of individuals belonging to the commu-

nity. Defining culture and making community is, in this light, or may become an educational task.

After the above considerations we can attempt to mark some of the community qualities which will determine educational goals:

- Community is the reality of communicating.
- Community constitutes a cultural circle around which cultural identity is built.
- Community may be identical with the culture of the individual's origin or it may be constructed on ideological premises.
- Community is created in accordance with the cultural awareness of individuals.
- Community is based on the opposition We vs. They.

Intercultural dialogue

Creating a community must be, to great extent, based on the confrontation of “our” and “their” values. It will happen on the base of intercultural experience. Intercultural experience expresses itself by the goal and practice of an intercultural dialogue. It requires a disposition to understand the difference between “them” and “us” as well as to emphasize these differences and treating them as an alternative offer of equal values. The effect of the so-understood intercultural experience is the attitude of cultural relativism, which as an idea seems a fundament of groups' cohabitation.

This attitude is based on the premise that we can understand the others' behaviors only when they are considered in the context of their culture. The evaluations





concerning these Others must be done in relation to the cultural background from which they rose. In other words, intercultural experience, which is the base of building community in the borderland, is a process leading people to a profound awareness of their own culture (norms, behaviors, connections and visions) through a quality immersion in a different culture. The belonging and the deep setting of one's own Ego within the framework of a particular community, enables the individual to leave the borderland safely for his/her identity, and even to construct subsequent communities. Intercultural

experience seems important both for the process of constructing cultural identity of the individual and the existence of the individual in many communities.

Sensitivity to what differs

The way of constructing identity, as well as the possibility of effective functioning in many community constellations, depends on the development level of intercultural sensitivity. Intercultural sensitivity may be defined as peculiar competences to begin a dialogue with the Others and taking values for one's own development from this

contact. Researchers working on this problem assume that cultural experience is foremost individual experience, and consequently, the development of intercultural sensitivity requires concentration on a particular reception of the contact by individuals. The key to define the level of intercultural sensitivity of individuals is the category of cultural difference, as seen by an individual. Individuals may see cultural differences from two perspectives.

The first is an ethnocentric analysis of the cultural difference. It involves our ability to classify and evaluate cultural differences

only in relation to ours (treated as standard, universal); norms, the system of values and behaviors characteristic of one's own group are perceived then as good, correct and proper. On the other hand, the qualities of the foreign group are considered as bad, incorrect and improper.

Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism in contacts with others and in the process of development of intercultural sensitivity is dysfunctional. The ethnocentric approach may be described through the interpretations of the cultural difference special for the individuals (strategies of the contact with the Others), its importance in the common life of the individuals of different cultures.

One of them is the strategy of denying the existence of differences. This approach ignores the cultural differences and does not ascribe them any importance in human contacts. The other is basing on cultural variety. Generally, an individual recognizes some cultural differences but, simultaneously, evaluates these differences negatively. Yet another strategy within the ethnocentric attitude is minimizing of the importance of differences. People recognize then surface cultural differences, such as ways of eating or dressing, but there is a strong tendency to emphasize similarities in the ethnocentric grasp: "Everybody is similar to us."

A different approach to cultural difference, definitely more affecting the development of intercultural sensitivity, is the attitude of cultural relativism. The awareness of difference and developed competences in interpreting cultural differences enable individuals to read the difference from the perspective of the whole system of the culture of origin and not, as it used to be, from the perspective of one's own culture.



The strategies of contact with the Other in this system are based on a dialogue. The first strategy is the acceptance of variety. On this level people consciously experience a contact with the culturally different. Appreciation and encouragement to present cultural differences in human contacts can be observed. The cultural differences are treated as the room for training of respectful attitudes towards other people and inciting curiosity of the world.

Further strategies which build our competences to create multicultural community are: the adaptation of cultural differences and the integration of varieties. They demonstrate how people become accustomed to the cultural difference and how they provide it with meaning, which is decisive in both social and interpersonal contacts.

Preparation for openness

Through the diagnosis of the competence level in the interpre-

tation of cultural difference, it is possible to determine the development degree of intercultural sensitivity among the participants in the group. It enables to define the most effective methods and techniques of learning, to determine an appropriate educational goal for the group as far as the development of intercultural sensitivity is concerned. Educational activities in this order take also the issue of individual attitudes. It shows that preparing the others to openness and possibility to participate in various communities, in the light of the development of intercultural sensitivity, must occur successively and proceed in accordance with the level of development of intercultural sensitivity of the learners. It is an individual process, although in its initial period it bases on the social values of the group and uses the group mechanisms for the change.

*dr Dorota Misiejuk
University of Białystok*

Weird and wonderful; with complexes of inferiority and rebellious or what the Lithuanians are really like and why they do not talk about it even between themselves

The country of contrasts

Tourists say that Lithuania is a country of beautiful women, cheap beer and charming Old Town in the capital city. Lithuania is the country of many cultures and of contrasts. I'll tell you about what we can find neither in guidebooks nor in encyclopedias, or not even in politicians' speeches. I'll tell you about what the Lithuanians are really like and why they do not talk about it even between themselves.

We enjoy little things

When Queen Elizabeth II of Britain paid an official visit in Lithuania a year ago, the Lithuanian daily newspapers struck the eyes with the news about... the Lithuanian origin of the monarch. And the famous Lithuanian historian, Alfredas Bumblauskas, confirmed that in the 15th century, the daughter of Grand Duke of Lithuania and King Casimir of Poland married the prince of Brandenburg. It is just one of many examples of how the Lithuanians try to emphasize the fact that famous people belong to them. For example, it turned out that Lithuanian blood also circulates in the veins of Roman Abramovich, the Russian billionaire and the owner of the Chelsea football team. Also Pope John Paul II and Anthony Kiedis, the star of the Red Hot Chili Peppers had Lithuanian ancestors. It is worth emphasizing that the Lithuanians are really able to enjoy little things. A few weeks ago a short documentary on the Baltic countries was broadcast on the



Vilnius – bird's eye view

BBC channel. Michael Palin, the English actor, said in it that there is a strange mess in the Lithuanians' heads. They still consider 6th position in Eurovision 2006 a triumph! (Let me remind you that the band "LT United" performed their song "We are the winners").

In this context, however, it is worth remembering the year 2002. The vocalist Aivaras Stepukonis, then famous in Lithuania, won the Lithuanian stage of "Eurovision" and got to the final in Estonia. There he was the last. On returning to Lithuania he met a wave of anger, because the Lithuanians treated his failure as the catastrophe of the whole nation. Stepukonis finished his musical career then and dedicated himself to studying philosophy. It was not until some years had passed that he tried his luck on stage again.

Another Lithuanian "second religion", basketball, is like that too. When at the Championship of Eu-

rope this year we gained the third place, the streets of Vilnius at night after the match were completely jam-packed with people. Traffic-jams in the roads... Crowds of people in the Cathedral square... Old and young, women and men shed tears of happiness. And when a few years ago the basketball team "Žalgiris" placed themselves last in the European Basketball League, the criticism was so sharp that the coach of the team had to leave immediately.

However, failures toughen the Lithuanians. They know that a small country may be noted only through the best results. Therefore, their only goal is gold.

Two faces of Lithuania

The Lithuanians may be divided into two groups: conservatives and cosmopolitans. The former try to preserve Lithuania as their grandparents lived in... I'm not talking,

of course, about the communist period, about which the Lithuanians do not want to talk at all. They believe it is a black stain in their history and it is better to forget it... And returning to the subject, the conservatists want the Lithuanian children to read the books by the writer Žemaitė and to recite the poems of the Lithuanian poet Maironis. They protest against the high-rise buildings in the Old Town. They submit petitions to the authorities of the capital against the building an additional storey on the old house in the main street! And it happens in the times when apartments in the center of Vilnius are so expensive that when Lithuania received independence, people could not even imagine that such sums exist!..

In the summer, the conservatists sing folk songs by lakes, put flower wreaths on the water and jump over fires. The Lithuanian-traditionalist will always buy an apple which is dry but Lithuanian and not a shining, juicy but Spanish.

And the other side of the coin: the Lithuanian cosmopolitans. They return to the country from the world metropolises and, full of new ideas, create the new image of Lithuania. Today we have 44 Catholic churches in Vilnius, but perhaps nobody can count enormous supermarkets, not to mention the megaenormous department store "Akropolis" with several avenues, streets and alleys. Teachers bring children here to visit this Lithuanian miracle, which they can see in the colour screens of their television-sets almost every day.

The so-called cosmopolitans' eyes in general see something different. Probably instead of the Town Hall they see a recreational com-

plex, and a concert hall instead of a church. Their eye is happy when in place of the old store "The Children's World" (Lithuanian "Vaikų pasaulis") the glistening "Novotel" with English posters is erected. Their ear enjoys it when walking down Gedyminas street they reach the department store "Giedyminas 9," opened a few months ago, and the speakers standing in front of it, nearly get torn with the yelling of a hostess who is specifying in English what you can buy there. I think I won't be surprised if in a few years' time a growing Lithuanian kid will say to his/her mom: "Einu susitikti su *Friends* ir po to eisime pirkti *Food*." (I'm going to meet my friends to buy some food).

The Lithuanians - polyglots

Continuing the subject of languages, the Lithuanians may be easily called polyglots. Although it is just a part of the truth.

According to the newest statistics ("Eurobarometras" 2007) only

8 per cent of the Lithuanians speak their mother tongue, Lithuanian only. For example in Great Britain 62 per cent of the citizens uses their mother tongue exclusively. At the same time, almost every fifth Lithuanian may communicate in three languages! According to these data we are almost leaders in Europe. But, as I said, the data do not reflect the real image. Because it is important to understand what languages the Lithuanians speak. Recently, the Lithuanian weekly "Veidas" ("Face") noticed that. The command of languages is illustrated nicely by the following example. Three students from Belgium, who arrived in Lithuania within the exchange program "Erasmus" (24-year-old Wim, 22-year-old Soetkin and Stephanie), admitted that they had to go through hell before they opened an account in the bank and paid in the money. They had visited three branches of banks before somebody communicated with them in English or in German.



Vilnius - bird's eye view

It is these languages the Lithuanians deal with worse. But 80 per cent of the inhabitants of Lithuania speak Russian, 15 per cent can communicate in Polish. In Vilnius nearly every other inhabitant speak Polish. It is worth to note that it is the older generation that have problems with English. The young do not feel the language barriers.

On October 18, another interesting survey was published (source: Skambučių centras: Fonitel). To the question “Which country does Lithuania maintain the closest relations?” as many as 17.5 per cent answered: “with Germany.” Almost the fewest, to be exact, 4.1 per cent of the Lithuanians calls Poland a country-friend.

Unpopular Polish studies

Although the Polish, according to questionnaires, do not consider us the nicest in the world, conflicts between us occur rarely; the most frequently on political grounds. My colleagues in the editorial board explain the low level of fondness between the two nations with the recent events which sharpened the Polish-Lithuanian relations. At the beginning of October a hot topic was the “sparkling” at the Vilnius Conference. President Valdas Adamkus of Lithuania and President Lech Kaczyński of Poland did not confirm the important, for the two parties, energy program (the Baltic countries and Poland are planning to build a common power station in Lithuania). The Lithuanian press called this a misunderstanding between Vilnius and Warsaw.

The Poles are the most numerous ethnic minority in Lithuania. According to the data of the Lithuanian Department of Statis-



Vilnius – bird’s eye view

tics of July 2007, about 212 thousand Poles live here. Most of them live in Vilnius, the Vilnius Region and the Šalčininkai Region. The Polish are a very active minority. It is enough to mention the festivals of Polish folk and pop songs (“Kwiaty Polskie,” “Rudziszki”), poetry evenings (“Kresy”). A lot of young Poles study at prestigious colleges the most popular professions: law, economics and acting.

It is not a secret that the profession of a Polish teacher is chosen only by those students who had low grades in their final certificate and did not get anywhere else. Of course, I do not talk about exceptions, meaning real lovers of the Polish literature and grammar.

The new generation of the Poles in Lithuania climbs successfully the ladder of career. Plenty of people

who work in ministries, renown law firms and run their own businesses could be mentioned. They identify themselves with the Lithuanians, but it does not mean that they have forgotten their roots. They simply call Lithuania their homeland and feel here at home.

To me Lithuania is also my home. The home I always come back. Even from Poland. They often ask me: “Where is your homeland?” I reply with no hesitation: “It’s Lithuania.” I love her with her rebellious character, with all her complexes and peculiarities. I love Vilnius with its charming Old Town and ugly suburbs. I love the Lithuanians. Although they get on my nerves asking: “Whose is Vilnius then?”

But I know, they are joking. I know they still love the Poles the most in Europe and call them their brothers.

*Agnieszka Narkiewicz
„Veidas”*

Variety of forms and types of material and spiritual landscape of the Baltic Coast

Sand, amber and sea air

There are two anecdotes, which, depending on the circle of listeners, are told in a little different versions. One has a story about Lord God, who finishing the work of creating the Earth forgot a piece of the world surrounding the south-eastern coast of the Baltic Sea (e.e. West and East Pomerania, Sambia and the Kuronian Spit). He got down to its creation only in the end, when he had already “modeled” the whole globe. He built these “last things” from the leftovers: sand, clay, stones and other materials. In this way this area benefited from this divine variety... There is, however, another anecdote, similar to the first as for the main idea, but referring to people. It has it, that when God distributed languages to peoples, the inhabitants of the south-eastern coast of the Baltic Sea were on sea, fishing. When they came back the languages had already been allocated and distributed. Lord God realized that the fishermen should also be given something. And He gave them scraps, wastes from the whole pool of languages that had already been disposed. Thus on the Baltic Coast, from the Oder mouth to the Vistula Spit, the Delta of the Pregola and the Neman, there are the greatest in the world variety of languages and their variants used by the Veleti, Pomeranians, Kashubians, Yotvingians, Prussians, Galindians, Kuronians, Lithuanians, Letgilians, Latvians, Selonians, Zemgalians and Samogitians. Part of them do not function any more. They became



extinct along with the people who used them.

Whatever, the variety, multitude of the forms and types of the material and spiritual landscape is the most conspicuous determinant, the characteristic of the Baltic Coast.

The Baltic Sea

The Baltic Sea is one of the newest seas on the globe. It appeared about 12 thousand years ago out of the waters of a melting glacier. Its first name is the Yoldia Sea, after the mussel living therein: *Yoldia arctica*. The water from the melting masses of ice gradually overflowed the Baltic basin, and the ultimate forming of the coastline occurred c. 3 thousand years ago. However,

the process of further shaping is still on. The Baltic is an inland sea of 415 square kilometers of area and of the average depth of 52.3 meters. The Baltic bottom consists of basins separated by bars. One may imagine that if the sea level fell down by 50 meters, on the Baltic bottom a few independent lakes would emerge.

We'll conduct our trip within the area called the Proper Baltic, around the edge of the Gdansk Depth. On the way we'll be looking for the greatest treasures of this land. The first is...

Sand

The Baltic coastline is approximately 22,000 kilometers long.

Different types of coast constitute it, namely: sandy shores, archipelagoes, fiords, cliffs as well as bays. We are interested in sandy shores and bays, because this type of landscape dominates along the coastline from Gdańsk through Klaipėda and Liepāja.

The **Vistula Spit** is the first characteristic fragment of the Baltic Coast met in our trip: it is a powerful sandy bank spreading from Gdańsk to Baltiysk (Kaliningrad District), at the length of about 60 kilometers.

This bank is the newest part of land belonging to Poland. Not completely shaped, it grows along with the Vistula Delta. As recently as a few centuries ago, in place of one sandy bank there were a few separate islets. The spit separates the water of the Vistula Bay from

the sea. The whole of the Spit (on the Polish side) along with the Vistula Bay constitutes a uniquely interesting tourist area, for which the Landscape Park Mierzeja Wiślana was arranged in 1985 (area: 4,400 hectares). It is a high (3-10 kilometers) belt of land with a string of dunes covered with the coastal pine wood.

On the territory of Poland 2 natural reserves were organized:

- “Buki Mierzei Wiślanej” (Beeches of the Vistula Spit) near Przebrno, protecting c.150-year-old beeches
- “Kąty Rybackie” (Fishermen Angles), area: c. 100 hectares, to protect the largest in Poland colony of herons and cormorants.

Moreover, in the surrounding belt of the Park there is a re-

serve protecting a colony of terns: “Mewia Łacha,” made at the Vistula mouth to the Gdansk Bay.

Here the importance of the Vistula Bay and the Vistula Spit must be emphasized as an important spot on the birds’ route from Africa to Skandinavia and backward. It is a dream area for bird watching, not only by professionals. Altogether 230 bird species have been counted, including 107 nesting ones.

Beside the birds there occurs a numerous representation of mammals. The most interesting are: the black seal, numerous bats and, attention, a turquoise blindworm. The attractions of the Vistula Spit are not only natural values, but also architectural relics of the past left by the Mennonites (Krynica Morska, Piaski, Stegna) or fishermen’s villages with timber framing hous-



es and wooden shade houses. In Stutthof one should visit the Museum of Martyrdom on the premises of the former Hitler concentration camp. Interesting points on the map of the Polish part of the Vistula Spit end 2 kilometers behind the last tourist village of Poland. Here is one of the best guarded borders in Europe: the border with the Kaliningrad District.

Because of the fact that at the end of the Vistula Spit, called in Russian “Baltiyskaya Kosa,” is Baltiysk, the most important Russian war port on the Baltic, we can forget any further peregrinations.

However, on receiving a Russian visa, we can begin further hiking in the town of Yantarniy in Sambia, heading along the sea coast towards the Curonian Lagoon.

The **Curonian Lagoon** is a narrow belt of land separating the Curonian Bay from the Baltic Sea. In the widest place the Spit is 3,800 meters wide and in the narrowest it does not extend 400 meters. Sandy dunes are here over 100 meters high and are partly covered with pine woods. The present landscape of the Curonian Lagoon resulted from the civilization pressure in the last thousand years. As recently as the beginning of the second millennium, the dunes of the Curonian Lagoon were covered with oak forests, linden and mixed woods. Felling the woods for farming fields and for building material, resulted in dramatic changes in the state of vegetation. At the beginning of the 19th century an enormous bank of sandy dunes was formed, which permanently changed their position. Their moving sand absorbed several villages. The most important dunes are: Sklandytoyu, Angiu Kalno and Urbo Kayno.

In 1991, on the Lithuanian part of the Curonian Lagoon the National Park Kursiu Nerija was created, embracing the area of c. 26.5 thousand hectares. Two strict reserves were made therein: Grobstas and Naglis, and four landscape parks: Parnidys, Karvaiciai, Joudkrante and Leptugrais as well as two cultural parks: in Nida and in the villages of Joudkrante and Preila.

Old fishermen’s houses from wooden logs covered with boards outside, as well as thatched roofs, are turned characteristically with their front wall towards the Bay. The village of Nida is the most interesting to visit.

The remaining part of the Curonian Lagoon, and the Curonian Bay, belongs to Russia (the Kaliningrad District). On the land part of the Spit, the Russians established “Natsyonalniy Rezervat Kurskaja Kosa.”

Wandering along the beaches of the Vistula Spit, the coast of Sambia and along the moving dunes of the Curonian Lagoon is an unforgettable contact with the endless sandy landscape, a unique landscape form in this part of Europe. Over 200 kilometers of vast, free from compact complexes of buildings areas is the first of the treasures on our way.

Amber

The second treasure is as known and old as our civilization. Who has never traversed the Baltic beaches in search for yellow-orange bits mixed with sand? The Baltic beaches, especially after storms, are full of amber-seekers. Who has not seen wonderful works of Gdańsk, Królewiec or Liepaja masters in the form of pen-

dants, rings, monstrances, chests, frames incusted with amber or alter parts? Who has not devoured, breathless, the beauty and majesty of the Amber Chamber in Tsarske Selo near St.Petersburg?

Amber is fossil resin of evergreen trees, less frequently deciduous, formed in the Devon layers (the oldest in Canada, the newest in South America, Africa, Australia and New Zealand). In the world there are 60 types of amber. And it was called different names:

- the Greek: elektron (shining, glistening);
- the Romans: lyncurium (lynx’s urine);
- the Egyptians: sokal;
- the Arabs: anbar, because of the scent released from a rubbed piece of amber;
- the Persians: karuba (gold robber);
- the Italians: ambra giallo;
- the Swedish: bärnsten;
- the Lithuanians: gintaras;
- the Phoenicians: yaintar (sea resin).

In Poland the name bursztyn caught on, after the German Bernstein, which means a stone which burns. Although an ancient name jantar (yantar) is also used. Among sculptors, jewelers and artists of the whole world the Baltic amber or succinite is the most valued.

The Baltic amber makes monolith lumps, the biggest of which weigh about 10 kilos and are nothing but a cooled down enormous drop of resin from trees whose species has never been established. In the 19th century they were collectively marked amber-yielding pine. These pines grew about 45 million years ago on the whole track of so-called Fennoskandia, including the bottom of the Baltic Sea. Inside

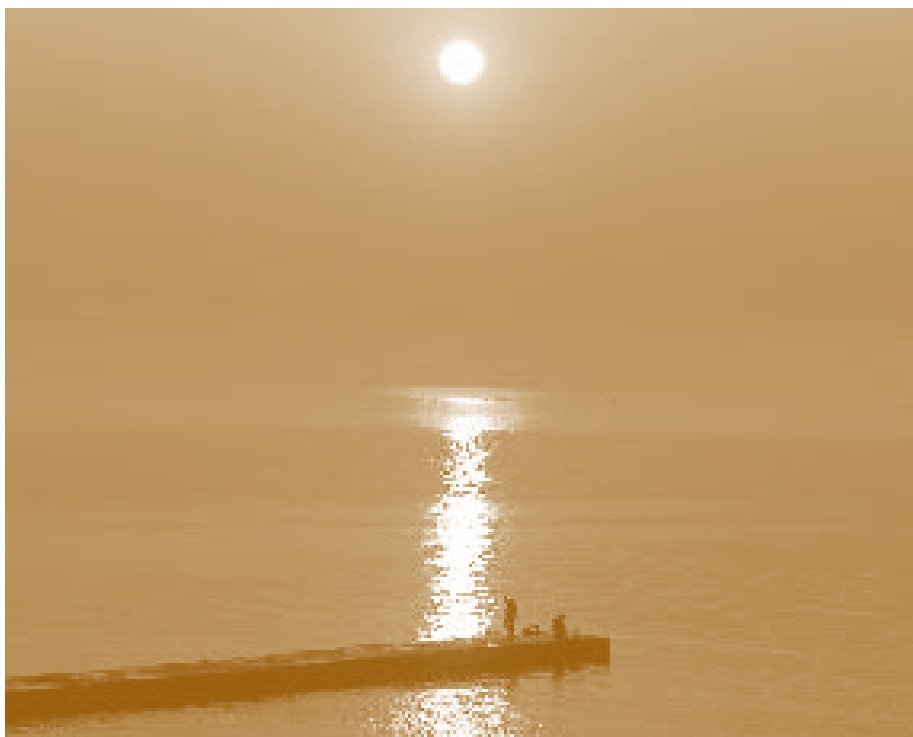
the lumps of amber one may find tiny plants or insects sunk millions years ago. These forms are called inclusions.

Collecting amber is conducted in different ways. From the purely amateur activity on beaches, through the industrial enterprise with huge refullers, conveyor belts and giant washers applied on the territory of Sambia in the Kaliningrad District. The largest place of amber extraction is the open-cast mine "Primorskoya," near the town of Yantarniy, of some hundreds of area, 60 meters of depth and having worked for 25 years. The second biggest mine "Plazhovaya" consists of layers of the so-called "blue earth" a few meters under the beach sands. From this mine come 80% of the raw material processed in the Combine "Yantarniy," which makes nearly half of the world amber production. Opportunities of visiting the amber mine in the Kaliningrad District are limited. This is possible exclusively with a permit from the authorities and in groups of at least 10 people. However, it is worth visiting this giant mine and, in a moment, return to the Baltic beach in search for tiny bits of the mysterious living stone; a little treasure of a thousand years' fame.

Walking and running along the Baltic beaches we deal all the time with the third treasure, which is...

Sea air

My instinct gives me a hint that it is a treasure of great future. Amber will become rare one day, especially at this level of extraction. Sand and its vast spaces will sooner or later be occupied by buildings. Air will stay. The most important factor determining the value of the



sea air is the content of certain elements, foremost iodine, and also magnesium, manganese, calcium, selenium and others.

Staying in the sea climate is good for treating and supporting the treating of such diseases as: inflammations of upper and lower respiratory tract, various forms of bronchial asthma, tonsillitis, emphysema, thyroid, hear diseases, high blood pressure and many, many others.

A great deal of iodine in air, especially during a storm and immediately after it, makes special bioclimatic conditions, not only supporting the treatment of thyroid diseases but also regenerating the state of the thyroid gland of healthy people. The sea air by the Baltic Sea is characterized with a high level of ionization and low temperature fluctuations. High humidity reaching 70 per cent is especially important in treating breathing tracts. Staying (i.e. walking, hikind, lying) on the sea beach, we

are affected by the presence of a great amount of sodium chloride, which secures up to 10 times better air purification from bacteria.

It is important, especially for tourism, recreation and sea treatment organizers to know that the presence of iodine grows during storms, i.e. from October to March, which is beyond the vacation season. This, practically, extends the tourist season over the whole year.

And, finally, one more reflection. Using the climatic resources of the Gdańsk Bay coast, including Sztutowo (Stutthof), Stegny, Krynica Morska, Piasek (in Poland), Yantarniy, Zelenogradsk, Polesskiy Les and Ribachiy (the Kaliningrad District) as well as Nida, Preila, Joudkrante, Palanga (Lithuania), we deal with a unique complex of natural climatic conditions with the passing by or extinct pre-Baltic culture. It is the only place like this in Europe.

*Krzysztof Wolfram
Foundation Green Lungs of Poland*

Russian cuisine

Rossolnik, frozen vodka, blins and “chai” out of a samovar

In the previous part I described the Russian cuisine and actually its connections with the Polish and French cuisines. It is time to return to the real Russian cuisine. Its special characteristics is the preparation of dishes which stay warm long, quite fat and stored in ovens. And it is not caused by the sharp climate, but by a prosaic fact that the so-called English stove plate reached Russia as late as the 19th century. The technology was simple then: a piece of meat in a roasting-pan was placed in the bread oven and the result was excellent roast meat. It was a complete opposition to the Polish cuisine where roast meat dominated.

Salutary effect of sour stuff

Russian soups such as *shchi*, *borshch* and *rossolnik* are often seasoned with natural acid from beetroots, cucumbers, cabbage or bread, and additionally thickened with sour vegetables. This is a very practical idea, because sour stuff, served also in form of beverages such as kvass, either bread or crane, have a salutary effect on the microflora of the alimentary canal. Besides, this was quite important with the fatty cuisine “sprinkled” with fine frozen vodka.

Due to quite early contacts with the Orient, the Russians mastered perfectly technologies of natural food preservation. Salting, drying and marinating performed by the Russians provides the pantries with perfect soured apples and wonder-



ful marinades of garlic or onion. And only dried fish, almost national “beer appetizer” of the Russians, does not attract the Poles.

Among the appetizers, various types of fish prepared cold or hot in sauces and jellies had the lead. In addition to appetizers the Russian used mustard. If somebody has never tried this specialty, he/she had better be careful. French mustards of Dijon are nothing in

comparison with the Russian mustards.

A blin, the symbol of the spring sun

Russian cuisine is the abundance of various types of pirogi made of yeast dough, baked or fried with different fillings.

Similar to Polish *pirogi* are *vareniki*, of which the best known are



thicker and also spongy. They are often baked with apples, raisins etc. They are served with cream, honey, jam or fruit sauce.

The soups worth mentioning are solanka, shchi and rossolnik. I do not mention borshch because it is of Ukrainian origin, but if you want the recipe of solanka: here you are!

By the way, the name solanka (originally selanka) is derived from selo or village, so we have further evidence of the rural origin of the old-Russian cuisine. This delicacy is made by the Russians on the base of fish, meat and mushrooms. To all types of solanka onion, sour cucumbers, capers or gherkins, olives, tomatoes and green vegetables are added.

Fish solanka

Ingredients: *1½ l fish stock, 60 g fish, 200 g onion, 70 g sour cucumbers, 70 g tomato paste, 50 g capers, 50 g marinated olives, 50 g butter, half a lemon, salt, pepper, allspice, laurel leave, 10 g parsley top.*

Peel the onion, chop and fry on hot fat with tomato paste. Peel the cucumbers, cut along, remove the seeds, cut into half-slices, 3 millimeters thick. Remove stones from the olives, select capers, wash and dry the green vegetables. Pour the clear fish stock to the pan, put in the fried onion, cucumbers and the necessary number of pieces of raw fish. Boil slowly for about 20 minutes, then add the salt, some peppercorns, laurel leave, capers and some olives. Cook for about 5 minutes.

Before serving, apportion the fish on the bowls, pour the soup, add a slice of lemon, olives and freshly cut green tops of vegetables.

Siberian *pelmeni*. The classics of this “genre” is buckwheat *blins* with caviar. A round hot blin was considered the symbol of the spring Sun and consequently dominated in the kitchen during the so-called *Maslenitsa*, celebrated as the end-of-winter festival. In the past, the *blins* were baked in the Russian stove and even today people often say “bake *blins*,” and not “fry *blins*.” The fried blin from well-kneaded dough should be spongy and, looked at against the light, almost transparent.

Buckwheat blins

Ingredients: *600 g of buckwheat flour, 15 g of sugar, 40 g of yeasts, 3 eggs, ½ liter of milk, salt, fat for frying.*

Rub the yeasts in a bowl and dissolve them with a glass of milk.

Add 200 g of sieved flour, knead well and put in a warm place covered with a tea-towel for rising. When the dough has doubled its size, add the salt, yolks, the remaining warm milk and flour. Knead well and beat with a wooden spoon. Before finishing the beating, combine gently with the foam of beaten egg whites and leave in a warm place for rising again. The risen dough bring carefully towards the stove plate and fry the blins on a fatted pan. The dough should be spread in a 5-milimeter-thick layer. Fry on both sides until slightly brown. Serve with caviar or... cream.

An old-Russian dish is also oladki. They are cooked like blins, from yeast dough but thicker and it is not spread throughout the pan. Thus, oladki are smaller,

The story of the kvass

Rassolnik is a very interesting kind of soup. It is a variation of a Polish cucumber soup but, we must admit it, much richer. It is cooked on the meat, poultry, of-fal or fish stock. The characteristic addition is sour cucumbers with their natural sour juice.

“Leave” vegetables, especially sour cabbage (sauerkraut), are used to cook shchi or the so-called lazy shchi from fresh cabbage. Besides, we can cook shchi from sor-rel, nettle or spinach.

And finally the kvass (bread kvass), a dish to which Russian origin is ascribed, but is typical of the Borderlands. We may find recipes of kvass in Belarusian, Ukrainian and Lithuanian cuisines. Unfor-

tunately, in Polish cuisine various types of compotes dominate.

I would ascribe the kvass to the Lithuanians. They used to bake, and still do masterly, perfect dark bread. And since they are a thrifty and resourceful nation, inventing the kvass was just a question of time.

Ascribing this beverage to the Russians probably comes from the communist period, when in the most of the Soviet streets you could find water-carts with kvass. And although produced industrially, its taste was quite good.

And finally tea

Considered a national Russian beverage, tea is a drink known

and spread all over the world. What is really typically Russian is the samovar and the way of serving: in glasses and with jam on the saucer.

The best teas are drunk in St. Petersburg and in general all over Russia, because China border with Siberia and hence there is no need to transport tea to Moscow or Petersburg across the sea, and it is known that sea journeys are very harmful thereto (...). To a great surprise of foreigners, men in Russia drink tea in glasses whereas women in cups made of Chinese porcelain.

*Alexander Dumas,
Culinary Dictionary*

As for the vessels to drink tea from, the amateurs of this drink are divided into two clans: those who recognize glasses only and the supporters of china cups.

The Russians and the Arabs belong to the first clan, they drink tea in glasses. They find them manlier than porcelain, which, especially in the sons of Albion’s opinion, is the only material able to enhance the flavour and beauty of the amber liquid.

The Russian merchants popularized Chinese tea, called the “caravan tea” because of the way it was transported: camel caravans. Istomin, Kuznetsov, Shumilin and Perlov used to sell it in characteristic tin boxes with painted images of dragons, flowers or the Chinese.

The samovar in Poland met a strange fate. This soul of the Russian salon, introduced by one conqueror, was made just history by the other. In 1915, the Germans, during the action of requisition of color metals, melted down the gem of Tula and recast them into bullets for the Big Bertha.

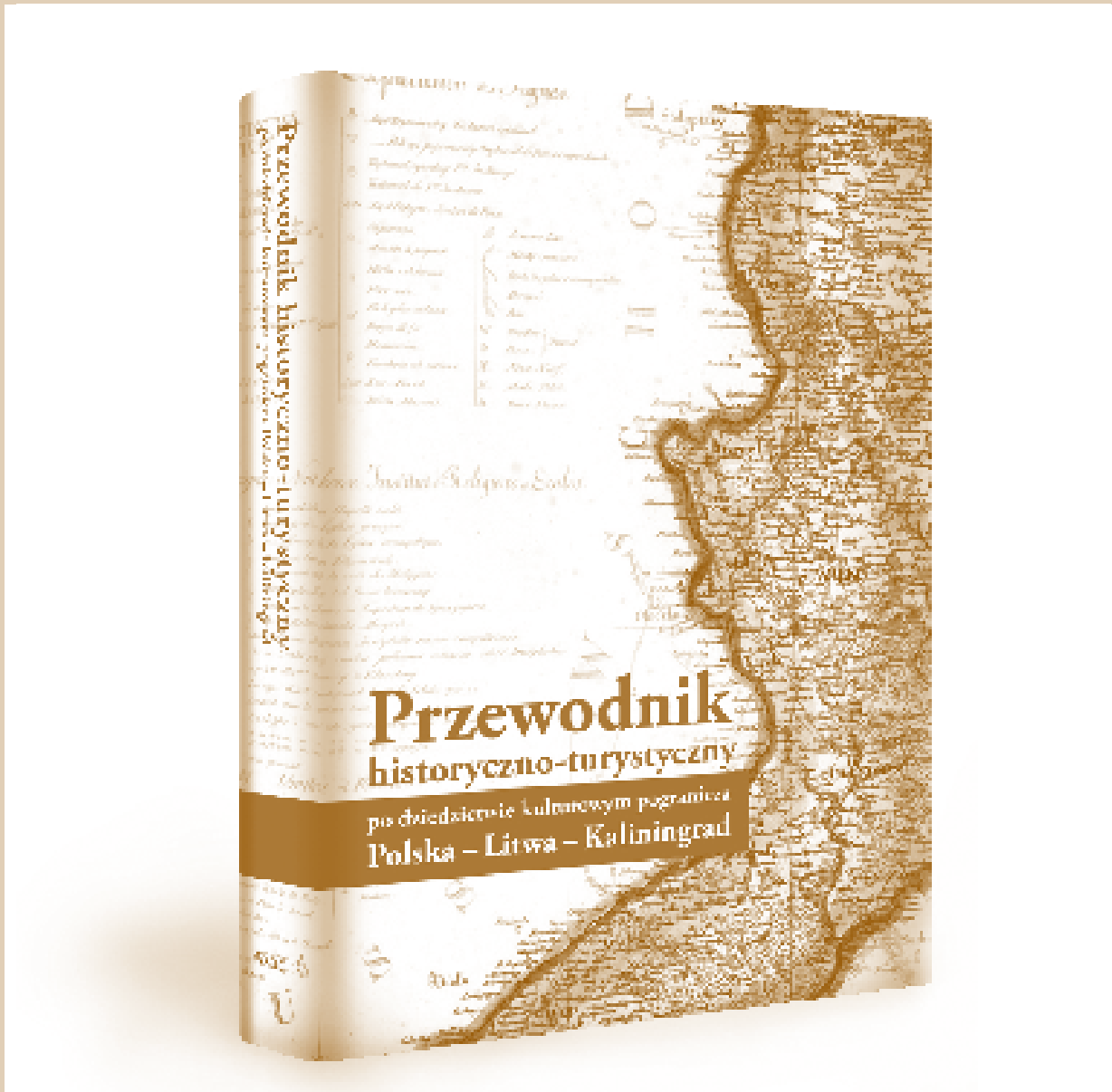
Andrzej Fiedoruk



Those interested in the subject of cultural heritage are invited to read the book:

A Historical and Tour Guide to the Cultural Heritage of the Borderlands. Poland – Lithuania – Kaliningrad.

The guide describes the cultural, ethnic and religious variety of part of the lands once called the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Beside history and culture you will also find interesting and useful tourist tips, addresses of hotels and restaurants as well as places worth visiting and curiosities of history.



Our publication is free. All interested are invited to contact us:

Towarzystwo Amicus

15-427 Białystok, ul. Lipowa 14

tel/fax: 0048 85 653 77 53, www.towarzystwoamicus.pl, e-mail: eurobialystok@bia.pl

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