

Introduction

Representations of Social Identities in the Culture of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, volume 4 in the series 'Art History Studies', presents articles based on papers given at an international conference which was held by the Institute of Culture, Philosophy and Art (known since January 2010 as the Lithuanian Institute of Culture Research) on 4 and 5 December 2008 in Vilnius.

The research, by Lithuanian, Polish and Belarusian scholars, includes studies on the culture of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania that have been carried out in these countries, and reveals the experience of connected branches of the humanities (art criticism, literary research and history) in analysing and interpreting the cultural heritage of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The articles analyse phenomena in the visual and written cultures of the grand duchy. In analysing the functioning of visual and written images, the relations between their function and meaning, conditioned by the social nature of culture, are revealed. The focus of the analysis is the representation of social identities in culture, the expression of status, the religious, ethical and cultural values of different social groups in visual and written images, and the influence on cultural phenomena of the social experience of their sponsors and creators.

Most of the articles are based on an analysis of the culture of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Some of them explore phenomena that appeared outside the region, but were closely related to its culture, such as new buildings built by the nobility of the grand duchy in the 18th century in Volyn, an area that was part of the grand duchy before the Lublin Union but was ceded to the Kingdom of Poland, but which remained an area

of patrimonial estates of families of the grand duchy and was consequently affected by their cultural activities. In analysing various geographical contexts of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland, not only is the uniqueness of the culture of the grand duchy revealed, but also its relationship with the general development of the whole culture of the Commonwealth of the Two Nations. The earliest works discussed in the articles date from the 15th century, and the latest ones reveal the tradition of imagery of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 19th century. The historical shifts in the periods of the Enlightenment and the partitions of the state are also discussed.

General images of the history of Lithuania are conveyed by historiographic narratives, which are covered by several articles in this collection. An heroic picture of the military history of the grand duchy typical of the Renaissance era is conjured up the article by Krzysztof Obremski. The author analyses the rhetoric of the verse chronicle 'On the Origins of the Glorious Nation of Lithuanians, Samogitians and Ruthenians ...' by Maciej Strykowski, and, for the first time in historiography, assesses in detail specific features of the visualisation of this poem. Sławomir Baczewski analyses historiographic-genealogical writings by Bartłomiej Paprocki, who worked in Poland and polemicised with Strykowski, and explains the reasons for the negative view of the nobility of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania that was typical of Paprocki. Marcin Bauer's article deals with memoirs and diaries from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania which write about the war with Muscovy in the middle of the 17th century. He shows how the content of the memoirs was determined by the social position and experience of the authors.

The theme of the research by Mariola Jarczykowa and Anna Nowicka-Struska is occasional works of literature from the Baroque period. They explore the integrity of the visual and verbal information in the eulogies extolling the nobility of the grand duchy. Mariola Jarczykowa draws our attention for the first time to occasional descriptions of architecture and art in funeral sermons from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the first half of the 17th century, and analyses objects of architecture and art as motifs and sources for literary writing. Anna Nowicka-Struska points

out the relationship between graphic images and literary texts that are characteristic of emblematic works of the 17th century. The literary historian Michał Kuran, for the first time in the historiography of research into the culture of the grand duchy, reviews and systematises literary works of different genres and analyses their visual expression, including eulogies dedicated to and commissioned by Janusz Skumin-Tyszkiewicz and his family, the palatine (*voivode*) of Vilnius, and one of the most active patrons of publishing in the grand duchy in the first half of the 17th century. The articles by the authors in this group help us to deepen our knowledge about the spread of emblematic thinking in the culture of the grand duchy, explore the influence of commissions on literature, and show the origins and expression of images extolling noblemen.

Several scholars look at writing of a didactic religious nature, bringing out features of the mentality of the society of the grand duchy, revealing people's fears, and the ethical and class values that formed their thinking and behaviour. Jolita Sarcevičienė explores images of hell and their social conditioning that appeared in written sources, and Mikas Vaicekauskas looks at the tradition of Baroque literature on 'the art of dying' in the 19th century. Connected to the articles by these authors is the research by Viktorija Vaitkevičiūtė on Baroque sermons, mainly solemn speeches at noblemen's funerals, collections of written images conveying concepts of virtue and death that were typical of society.

Tojana Račiūnaitė, a specialist in art, in her analysis of a portrait of Maria Anna Teresa, the daughter of the King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania John Casimir Vasa and Queen Louise Marie Gonzaga, discusses the image of the child, which has hardly been addressed in Lithuanian art history. She shows how the image of the child is constructed by applying traditional schemes of representation, and how it is determined by the general social, cultural and religious intentions of the king and queen.

Another group of articles deals with art commissioned by and dedicated to various religious communities. The articles by Volodymyr Aleksandrovych, Aleksandr Yaroshevich and Yury Piskun explore the painting of icons in the grand duchy in the 15th to the 19th centuries,

the sources of their imagery, and their use in the Greek Catholic and Orthodox communities. Dorota Wereda analyses the festivities held by the Greek Catholics, and the construction of their churches and residences, and presents new information about the daily lives of Greek Catholic bishops. She reveals the uniqueness of the social status of Greek Catholics, the reasons why they commissioned art and architecture, and the influence on them of Catholic imagery.

The Catholic heritage of the grand duchy is also presented in various forms. Maria Kałamajska-Saeed analyses information contained in publications promoting miracle-working paintings and their illustration, and reveals specific features of the reception by society of sacral works. Dorota Pyramidowicz, referring to written and iconographic sources, recounts the development of the Carthusian monastery in Biaroza and themes related to its patron. Marcin Zgliński's research is notable for its interdisciplinary approach: he analyses the perpetuation of victims of supposed Jewish ritual killings and their sacralisation in the culture of the grand duchy. He explains the reasons for the emergence of monuments to the victims, and their spread in the Catholic and Orthodox communities, and explains the meaning of the religious and representational intentions of the sponsors of these monuments.

Various phenomena in secular culture, mainly connected with the court, are also presented. Hanna Osiecka-Samsonowicz, referring to descriptions of the trip to Rome of Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, the Vilnius *voivode* and military commander of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, reconstructs the journey made by the nobleman and the ceremonies connected with it. The theme of festivities in the Radziwiłł family is continued in the article by Barbara Judkowiak, on the dramas by Franciszka Urszula Radziwiłłowa, and the genesis and propagandist meaning of their imagery, and also in the article by Filip Wolański discussing the funeral rites of the Radziwiłł family in the 18th century. Anna Oleńska, using written and iconographic sources, recounts the story of the construction and use of several noblemen's residences in the grand duchy in the 18th century. Andrzej Józef Baranowski surveys the architectural heritage of families of the grand duchy in Volyn.

Several articles explore the art of civic society, which has been relatively little researched. Aistė Paliušytė analyses the requirements and the art collections of Kaunas burghers. Zbigniew Michalski examines the reception and effects of images of Tadeusz Kościuszko in the burgher community of Krakow, and explains the social causes of changes in the iconography of art in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The articles contained in volume 4 of 'Art History Studies' not only draw our attention to so far unexplored cultural phenomena in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, but also reveal their social conditioning and representativeness. Many of the authors emphasise visual representations of social identities, and show the tendencies in visualisation in the culture of the grand duchy. Thus, these articles may be valuable for further studies, not only on the society of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, but also on the visual culture of the entire region.

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