The Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the Retrospective of Comparative Historical Sociology of Empires

Zenonas Norkus*

*Department of Sociology, Faculty of Philosophy, Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania, howlett@sfu.ca

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Abstract

The article discusses the problem that was recently raised in Lithuanian historical literature and public discourse by G. Beresnevičius, A. Bumblauskas, S.C. Rowell: was the medieval Lithuanian state (Grand Duchy of Lithuania; GDL) an empire? Traditional historiography did not use concepts of "empire" and "imperialism" in the work on GDL. For Non-Marxist Russian historians, GDL was simply another Russian state, so there could not be Russian imperialism against Russians. For Marxist historians, imperialism was a phase in the "capitalist formation," immediately preceding the socialist revolution and bound to the specific period of world history, so the research on precapitalist empires and imperialism was suspect of anachronism. For the opposite reason, deriving from the hermeneutic methodology, the talk about how the medieval Lithuanian empire and imperialism was an anachronism for Non-Marxist Polish and German historians too, because they considered as Empires only polities that claimed to be successors to Roman Empire. However, the Lithuanian political elite never raised such claims, although theory of the Lithuanian descent from Romans (Legend of Palemon) could be used for this goal. Using the recent work in comparative historical sociology of empires by S.N. Eisenstadt, I. Wallerstein, A. Motyl, B. Buzan, R. Little, A. Watson, M. Beissinger, Ch. Tilly, Th.J. Barfield and M. Doyle, the author argues that GDL was an empire because it was (1) the greatest state in Europe in the late 14-early 15th century, (2) militarily expansive in all directions if not held in check by superior military power, (3) displayed the territorial structure characteristic for empires, consisting of metropole and periphery, (4) had an informal empire and sphere of hegemony, (5) established imperial "Pax Lituanica" on broad territories securing long-distance trade roads. Typologically, it was a patrimonial empire, typologically distinct from the "barbarian kingdoms" created by ancient Germans and Vikings. After the internal crisis in 1432-1440 that is interpreted as "Augustan threshold" (in M. Doyle's sense), the Lithuanian empire evolved into a federal state by the early 16th century. Drawing on the distinction between "primary empires" and "shadow empires" proposed by Th.J. Barfield, GDL is classified as subtype of "shadow empires," called "vulture empires." GDL started as a "vulture empire," using for its expansion a geopolitical situation created by the decline of the Mongol empire and aspiring to unite under its power all lands of the former Kiev Russia. The most important outcome of the failure of the Lithuanian imperial project is the emergence of the three different Eastern Slave peoples (Belorussian, Ukrainian, Great Russian), while the probable outcome of its success would be the continuation of the undivided old Russian ethnicity.

KEYWORDS: Lithuania, history, government, politics

1. Introduction

The destiny of words in a social-political vocabulary is full of permutations, just like the destinies of human beings and books are. A popular trademark, which copyright is contested by competitors, may turn into a curse, as it had happened to the words like 'fascist', 'nationalist' or 'communist'. It also happens that a dirty word 'washes out', discharges of its positive and negative value load to become a more or less neutral term and then, again, starts gradually accumulating a positive value load. This had happened to the word 'capitalism'. Such process of neutralization and successive rehabilitation is experienced by the word 'empire' (or at least the author of this article thinks this to be the case).

To call some country 'empire' during the Cold War was equal to its condemnation, an expression of disapproval of its policies or even of its existence. This was meant by American President Ronald Reagan, when he called the Soviet Union 'an empire of evil', and by Soviet propagandists who wigged an 'American imperialism'. On the contrary, before the First World War, 'empire' sounded differently: the greatest powers of the world officially titled themselves empires and their rulers were crowned emperors. In our days, too, to call the USA 'empire' is not an anti-American assault any longer; especially if it is specified that this country is not just an empire, but an empire of freedom and of good. In a similar way, the famous British political actor of the 19th century Benjamin Disraeli proudly called the British Empire 'an Empire of liberty, of truth, and of justice'.[1]

The change in attitude towards empires and imperialism was encouraged by an outburst of nationalism and ethnic conflicts in Eastern Europe and the Balkans after the fall of the USSR and Yugoslavia. Some empires were even recalled with nostalgia, especially the Hapsburg Empire, which previously was called 'a prison of nations'. Today many historians and political scientists consider it as a successful example of cohabitation of many nations within a single state, which can teach valuable lessons for present and future architects of a united Europe.[2] The actual experiences of implementation of this political project prompt to take a new and more positive look at the previous imperial 'unificators of Europe', from Charlemagne to Napoleon. In a book with an expressive title 'In Praise of Empires: Globalization and Order', the famous American economist of Indian origin Deepak Lal writes of USA president Woodrow Wilson as of the biggest villain of the 20th century. He declared the principle of national self-determination and destroyed the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires; thereby he created the conditions for Adolf Hitler to come to power, who in turn became an icebreaker for the expansion of Stalinist totalitarianism to the West.[3]

To sum up, 'empire' ceases to be a dirty word; and the imperial past is not anymore something to only be ashamed of, excused for or what one can be

threaten with demands by the victims of imperialism to pay reparations or compensations. These changes of *Zeitgeist* explain, at least partially, the question which has been raised recently in Lithuanian historical literature and public discourse: 'was the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (the GDL) an empire?' The GDL is called an empire by Stephen C. Rowell, for example, who in 1994 published a book with an indicative title 'Lithuania Ascending: a Pagan Empire within East-Central Europe, 1295-1345'.[4] Alfredas Bumblauskas, too, applies the notion of 'empire' to describe characteristics of the GDL from the reign of Gediminas, though with certain reservations.[5] Gintaras Beresnevičius introduced to public discourse an idea of Lithuanian empire in the Middle Ages or even earlier Migration Period (*Völkerwanderung*) at times of the fall of Roman Empire. In his geopolitical studies and essays he takes the imperial nature of the GDL for granted, claims that Lithuanians have a natural inclination towards imperialism and formulates a grand vision of contemporary Lithuania's mission in Europe. The goal of such imperial myth is to help modern Lithuanians to solve painful problems of identity.[6]

The answer to the question whether the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was an empire, depends not only on new historical facts (which are not presented in this article), but also on the definition of the concept of empire. The question how to define "empire" attracts an enormous attention in contemporary comparative historical sociology, comparative politics, anthropology and theory of international relations. The comparative research on empires and imperialism is a separate and intensively developing research area for already several decades. Achievements in this area should be taken into account aiming to provide fruitful discussion of the imperial nature of the GDL. To introduce these achievements into the field research in the history of the GDL's is one of two aims of the article. The other is to complement the geopolitical analysis of contemporary Lithuania[7] with an historical dimension. Such historical dimension includes both factual history and its alternatives – windows of opportunity, which were open in certain historical situations, but later have been closed.

To pursue the first aim, I shall start with discussing why the question of imperial nature of the GDL has been raised only recently and is absent from previous studies (at least such is the impression of the author, whose acquaintance with the historiography of the GDL is far from comprehensive). Then, I shall move to discuss the theories of empires and imperialism, which are most influential in the literature of contemporary social science. Discussion of these theories is neither detailed nor comprehensive – its task is to open a conceptual space for the next question: what empire was the GDL? The latter question is analyzed in the last part of the article, where the instruments of counterfactual analysis[8] are applied to research about the windows of opportunity of Lithuanian imperialism.

From 1385, the history of the GDL became closely interwoven with the history of Poland, and many historians consider the year 1569 to be the end of the history of the GDL as an independent state. The issue of Lithuanian statehood after 1569 would make the analysis of the topic too complicated. Therefore chronologically this article deals with the history of the GDL until the Union of Lublin only. The question of whether the Commonwealth of the Two Nations was an empire requires separate analysis, though this question cannot be easily avoided because of the conventionality of chronological boundaries.

2. Question of Imperial Character of the Grand Duchy in Historiography

The first comprehensive works on the GDL history were written by Russian, Polish, and German historians. Pre-Soviet and non-Soviet Russian historians (Michail Kojalovich, Nikolai Ustrialov, Matvei Liubavskii etc.) considered the Grand Duchy as a western Russian state. From such perspective, the GDL expansion to the east and south was part of the unification process of the Russian lands. Who would unite them, was an object of competition between Western Russia and Eastern Russia (as the unification of German lands in the 19th century was an object of competition between Austria and Prussia). Consequently, imperialism on the part of the GDL until the end of the 14th century was logically impossible because Russians cannot be imperialists towards Russians. To speak of the GDL empire is as senseless as to call Capet' or Valois' policies, aimed at submitting under their rule the lands of Bretagne, Provence or Burgundy, imperialism of Il-de-France. These policies were not imperialism but unification of France; no matter how huge the ethno-cultural differences among its regions were.

It is not accidental that Russian historiography emphasizes the peaceful nature of the GDL expansion to the lands of the Eastern Slavs. It holds a "notion that Lithuanian expansion was almost thrust upon the grand duke by Rus'ian cities which preferred incorporation into the Grand Duchy to independence".[9] Imperialism came out later, but it was not Lithuanian. It was Polish imperialism, who subjugated the GDL through the Union and Catholic Christianization of its pagan inhabitants, which also brought religious and national oppression to the Orthodox believers, living in the Grand Duchy. It culminated at the beginning of the 17th century, when Poland attempted to take advantage of the crisis in Russia to subjugate it. Michail Glinka's opera 'Ivan Susanin', which represents the events of that period, remains one of the most often performed musical works during the Russian national holidays, and since 2004, Russia celebrates on November 4th the "day of national unification" (instead of the 7th November – day of the "Great October Revolution") to commemorate the events in the distant year

1612, when the Polish-Lithuanian army under hetman Khodkevich was expelled from Moscow by troops of Minin and Pozharsky.

The Marxist-Leninist conception of imperialism was compulsory to Soviet historiography. Characteristic to this conception is the social-economic reduction of imperialism to a phenomenon of capitalist formation. Such conception of imperialism is presented in V. Lenin's pamphlet "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism".[10] The title of the pamphlet simultaneously formulates the main notion of Marxist-Leninist approach to imperialism and delineates its boundaries. Imperialism is an inevitable stage and a product of the development of capitalism. It emerges when (1) concentration of capital creates monopolies which start to play a decisive role in national markets; (2) bank capital merges with the industrial capital, and the financial oligarchy or "finance capital" becomes a dominant group of the capitalist class; (3) the export of capital (in comparison to the export of commodities) acquires exceptional importance; (4) international capitalist monopolies emerge, which divide the world among themselves economically; (5) the territorial division of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers is completed. To V. Lenin, empires were first of all capitalist great powers, which possess overseas colonies and "spheres of influence", e.g. The Great Britain and France in the beginning of the 20th century.

In the light of conception of imperialism as a certain stage in history, which is conceived as a sequence of formations, research on Ancient or Medieval empires and imperialism was suspect of anachronism and methodologically flawed, like research of capitalism in Ancient Rome or Greece. A Marxist-Leninist by no means would deny that the Roman Empire was an empire and that its politics were imperialistic. But she thinks that a researcher who investigates empires and imperialism beyond capitalist formation is under risk of leaving 'unnoticed' a different social-economic essence which lies beyond externally similar political phenomena of 'superstructure'. Consequently, this implies a risk of an 'a-historical' projection of concepts, proper to the context of capitalist formation only, to the feudal and slavery past. Marxism-Leninism analyzes imperialism as a phenomenon, related to global expansion of capitalism to less developed countries, which solves the internal problems of most-developed capitalist countries. Once the territorial division of the globe is completed, the capitalist powers, because of their uneven development, are forced to engage, from time from time, in world wars for the re-division of the globe, which would correspond to the changed balance of economic and military power.

To avoid being accused of 'methodological illiteracy', Soviet historians, no matter whether they were Marxist-Leninists by conviction or were forced to write in a "politically correct" way, never attempted to conduct the research on empires and imperialism in pre-capitalist times nor used these terms even when analyzing questions to which these terms could be applied naturally. In his book

'Lithuanian nation in the fight against the Golden Horde', Romas Batūra wrote about the GDL 'aggression' and not about 'imperialism': 'generally, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania played a certain positive role, by defending Russian lands against invasions by the Tartars and by the Teutonic Order. But the expansion of Lithuanian feudalists into Russian lands during the reign of Gediminas and Algirdas, had turned later into centuries-long aggression of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania against Russian lands, against Belarus and Ukraine'.[11]

On the other hand, the description of the GDL as empire can be methodologically disqualified on grounds that are diametrically opposed to those that prevent Marxist-Leninist researchers from seeing empires and imperialism before capitalist formation and force them to identify imperialism with a specific historical epoch. Hermeneutical methodology, which had guided German historiography in the 19th century – first half of the 20th century (known as 'German historism'), prescribes to classify a particular polity as imperial or not on the basis of the latter's legitimating rhetoric and ideology. Empires cannot emerge earlier than the idea of 'empire', which is an ideal force acting in the history itself. The history of imperialism is the history of development of that idea and of political practice, which is grounded in that idea. The idea of empire had been born in Ancient Rome; the sphere of its spread comprises civilizations or cultures, which took it from Ancient Rome as its legacy and included in their own tradition. To talk of empires and imperialism in other civilizations (e.g. China) is possible only in a figurative sense. An exception can be made for cases where the idea of empire was borrowed from the West together with other products of cultural import, as it happened in the second half of the 19th century in Japan, when the Japanese *Mikado*, a sacral figure of Shintoism, was proclaimed "emperor" after the Meiji revolution.[12]

How did idea of empire come into being as a historical idea, which defines self-understanding of historical actors and shapes their political practices? In its original sense, the word '*imperium*' meant authority of the highest officials or magistrates of the Roman Republic. It was applied to public authority to distinguish it from '*dominium*': the power that officials and any Roman citizen exercised over members of his family and slaves. Eventually '*imperium*' was reserved to refer to authority of the highest military chiefs only. The word 'emperor' became an honorary title of top military generals and, after the fall of the Republic, of Roman rulers. During the late Roman Republic already, the expression '*imperium populi Romani*' was used to refer to Roman domination over other nations, and later – to the right to rule the whole world. Gaius Sallustius Crispus (85-35 B.C.) used the expression '*imperium Romanum*' to name all the lands that submitted to Roman rule.[13] In 395, the Roman Empire was divided into Western and Eastern parts. The latter was known by the name of the

Byzantine Empire and ended its history in 1453, when the Ottomans conquered Constantinople.

We are taught in the school that the history of the Roman Empire ended in 476, when the Germanic chieftain Odoacer serving as a Roman mercenary revolted and deposed Romulus Augustulus, the 'last' emperor of the Western Roman Empire. However, the Roman Empire was still alive in the minds of Christians who aimed to Christianize the pagan Lithuanians. The so-called 'theology of empire', a product of the synthesis of Roman and Christian cultural traditions, attributed a sacral meaning to the Roman Empire. On its basis, Orosius (385-420), a disciple of St. Augustine, had constructed a scheme of universal history, which had a substantial impact on historical thinking in medieval Europe. Orosius follows the revelation in the Book of Daniel, which says that till the end of the world four kingdoms shall exist – of gold, of silver, of brass and of iron: 'and the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in peaces and bruice' (Daniel, 2,40). Orosius identified these kingdoms with the states of Babylon (Eastern Empire), Carthage (Southern Empire), Macedonia (Northern Empire) and Rome (Western Empire).

Being the last of the kingdoms, the Roman Empire is eternal. It shall crumble only by the end of human history, i.e. when the apocalypse, prophesied in the Gospel of St. John, shall start. Such scheme of history implies that the authority of the Roman emperor is the highest secular authority: The Roman emperor is higher than all the other Christian rulers, whose authority is legitimate only when the emperor acknowledges it to be legitimate. It also implies that Empire is a proper name. If more than one ruler claims to be emperor, only one of them may be acknowledged as true emperor – the one, who legitimately inherited title and rights of Roman emperor.

To eastern Christendom (Orthodox believers) the continuation of the Roman Empire was obvious and unproblematic up untill the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The situation was different in the case of western Christendom, where the Roman Papacy created a doctrine of succession to Empire (*translatio imperii*).[14] This doctrine claimed that the Roman emperor Constantine transferred his authority to the Roman Popes, who, in their own turn, had a right to transfer it to one of the Christian rulers. Such ruler at the same time becomes the senior secular defender of the "true" Christianity and is superior to all other Christian rulers, whose authority means, at the best, '*regnum*' and not '*imperium*'. The first successor to the rights of Roman emperors was Charlemagne, who was crowned emperor by the Roman Pope in 800 A.D. After the division of the Carolingian Empire into three parts, these rights were transferred to the rulers of its eastern part, i.e. to the rulers of future Germany. A political entity emerged, known by the name of 'the Holy Roman Empire of

German Nation' (germ. '*Heiliges Römisches Reich Deutscher Nation*', lat. '*Sacrum Imperium Romanum Nationis Germanicae*'). Formal beginning of this entity is the coronation of Otto II as emperor on 2 February 962. From that time, every new ruler of Germany started his rule with the expedition to Rome, where he was crowned 'Roman Emperor'.

During the Middle Ages the fights between Papacy ('*sacerdotium*') and emperors ('*imperium*') continued because Popes (as rulers of the Papal State in Italy) had claims to secular authority and emperors attempted to control the administration of Catholic church (first of all, the appointments of new bishops). At the ideological frontline of these fights was the interpretation of the doctrine of *translatio imperii*. Despite the contestation over the interpretation of this doctrine, it drew the legal horizon for medieval European international society, i.e. played the role that the doctrines of human rights or sovereignty of states play in contemporary international society. The words 'German nation' in the title of Empire suggested that Germans had claims to superiority over other Christian nations, similar to the superiority of Romans in the times of the '*imperium populi Romani*'. As there were no Romans any more, the succession to Empire could be interpreted not only in the sense of dynastical succession but also in the sense that one nation inherits the superior position of the other.

Such interpretation became especially important when the national self-consciousness of European nations started awakening in the 15th century. In German, '*das Reich*' corresponds to the Latin word '*imperium*'. '*Das Reich*' was the name for the authority of the rulers of the Holy Roman Empire, as distinguished from the authority of kings ('*das Königtum*'). The number of kings may be large and increasing, but 'das Reich' may be only one, because the emperor is 'the king of kings'. To a German historian of the 19th century or of the early 20th century, who was used to this particular meaning of the word 'imperium' ('*das Reich'*), which permeated the lexicon of his native language, the idea that in the context of medieval history this word may refer to anything other than 'the Holy Roman Empire' was oxymoronic. 'Empire' in the direct sense of the word can only be the name of the state, which claims to be successor to the Ancient Rome.

The Grand Duke of Lithuania titled himself 'emperor' only once, in the Duke Algirdas' letter of 1371 to the patriarch of Constantinople.[15] But even in this case we may have doubts whether Algirdas understood that the scribe, by titling him as emperor, equaled him to his addressee, the Byzantine Emperor, which was an insult to the latter. Neither the GDL nor the united Polish-Lithuanian state had such claims; therefore, there are no grounds to qualify them as empires, despite their size. Therefore, both German historians and others, guided by hermeneutical methodology, avoided to call the GDL an empire. The Grand Duchy did not even become a kingdom, so it certainly cannot be called empire.

The German interpretation of the doctrine of the '*translatio imperii*' never gained a universal acceptance in medieval Europe. French and English kings did not recognize the claims of the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire to superiority and their jurists declared the principle '*rex est imperator in regno suo*'[16], anticipating the future (modern) principle of sovereignty of state, which was established in international law by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. But the rulers of new states, which aimed to join the club of European Christian states (European international political society of these times), could not blink at the doctrine of '*translatio imperii*'. At the risk to be treated as a self-styled impostor, the Christian ruler could not crown himself. To become king was only possible with the sanction of the Pope, the highest spiritual authority of Christendom ('*sacerdotium*'), or of the emperor, the highest secular authority ('*imperium*'). The Grand Duke Mindaugas was in the first situation, as he was crowned in the period when the power of Papacy reached its summit. Vytautas was in the second situation, aiming to be crowned during the period of the so-called Conciliar movement, when the institution of the Papacy was in crisis and the General Church Council attempted to take over the highest authority of the Catholic Church.

No one of the Gediminds had ever aspired beyond the '*regnum*', even though the famous Legend of Palemon, a myth documenting the political-historical self-consciousness of the GDL ruling elite, was an ideological device that could be employed for more ambitious purposes than it actually was (to declare and establish superiority of Lithuanians as Roman successors over Poles as successors of Sarmatians). In the literature, devoted to the interpretation of the Legend of Palemon, there are no references to the context of political public debates of the 15-16th century concerning the doctrine of '*translatio imperii*'.

This doctrine, as it was already mentioned, could be interpreted in the sense of collective '*imperium*' – idea of the German nation as successor to the extinct Roman nation. However, the assumption of 'extinction' of the Roman nation may be questioned. Italians have substantial grounds to think of themselves as successors to the Romans, thereby challenging the legitimacy of German succession to Empire. The straightest way to 'appropriate' Empire is to declare the Roman origin of the nation or ruling dynasty. Such way of appropriation of Empire is used in the Russian analogue of the Palemon Legend: 'The Tale of the Grand Princes of Vladimir'. According to this Tale, Augustus had a cousin Prus, who became the founder of the Rurikids (Riurikovichi) clan. This legend was yet another idea and symbolic action of the end of the 15th century designed to build a specifically Russian imperial ideology.

The core of this ideology was the well known doctrine of "Moscow as the Third Rome", which was even more convincing to Orthodox believers after the fall of Constantinople and the Turkish conquest of the Balkans, when the ruler of

Moscow remained the only powerful secular ruler in the Orthodox world. Ivan's III marriage to Zoe Paleologina, niece of the last Byzantine emperor Constantine IX, and introduction of 'tsar's' title were symbolic actions by the rulers of Moscow to declare that they treated themselves as equal to 'Latin emperors', not to speak of the Gediminids, who were just descendants of serf stableman of Vytenis, vassal of Smolensk prince Rostislav.[17] Since the tsars of the Muscovy were descended from the Rurikids the legend shows that the Russian tsars were the equals of the Holy Roman Emperors at the very least. Moreover, by linking Rurikids genealogically to the first Roman emperors, the legend suggested that they were even nobler than the Hapsburgs or other German dynasties that sat in the throne of the Holy Roman Empire, being the true successors to Empire as the only defenders of the true (Orthodox) Christianity and as direct descendants of Roman emperors.

Prus was a cousin of the noble Augustus, while Palemon was just a far relative of unrighteous Nero. The legendary genealogies of the Rurikids and the Gediminds reveal differing scopes of the political imagination of the Muscovite and GDL elites at the end of the 15th century – early 16th century. In the first case, there are clearly expressed claims to succession to the Empire with all the resulting consequences. Though the Lithuanian 'Roman' origin could logically lead to claims of succession to the Roman Empire, such idea was foreign to the imagination of the GDL ruling elite. Even at the peak of the Jogiellonians' power, when they ascended the thrones of Poland and Lithuania, Czech, and Hungary and competed with the Hapsburgs, the argument of their Roman origin was never used in this competition and no representative of the dynasty ever claimed the throne of the Holy Roman Empire, though the Legend of Palemon could legitimate such claims. Only in our days G. Beresnevičius offered a hypothesis, that there was another episode of imperial past in the history of the ancient Balts before the emergence of the GDL, when part of the ancient Balts allegedly participated in the events of the Migration Period (*Völkerwanderung)* in the 4-6th centuries. This episode is recalled as the Romuva or 'new Rome' ('Romanova', 'Roma nova').[18]

Reminiscences of 'Lithuania from the Baltic to the Black Sea' and of Vytautas in the saddle looking into the reaches of the Black Sea[19] were extraordinarily vivid in the historical consciousness of interwar Lithuania and post-war émigrés. The 'Vytautian Empire passed like the bright meteor'[20] – writes Zenonas Ivinskis in the preface to his unfinished Lithuanian history. But the status of small state in the neighborhood of hostile powers and the discredit of the terms 'empire' and 'imperialism' did not encourage looking at the GDL history through the lenses of empire and imperialism. The interwar Lithuanian republic legitimated its rights to independent statehood not by appeals to its existence, but with reference to the principle of national self-determination, which clashes with imperialism and imperial ideology.

Lithuanian historians rejected the thesis of Russian character of the GDL, but accepted the thesis of essentially peaceful and voluntary accession of Russian lands to the Grand Duchy, which took place through dynastical marriages in the first place. S.C. Rowell criticizes such conception and notices that "the theory that Lithuania expanded thanks to the good will of Rus'ian princes is a Russian fallacy as old as Ivan the Terrible. It is a subtle anti-Lithuanian myth popular in the nineteenth century historiography which portrays the Lithuanians as benefactors from Muscovite direction (Ivan's propagandists depict Gediminas' expansion into Kiev as a task set y Ivan Kalita of Moscow) or Rus'ian preference to govern the pagans apparently from below rather than submit to the Mongols".[21]

What historians were silent about was said by artists. The most open statement of imperial character of the GDL is the sculpture by Vincas Grybas of Vytautas the Great, which was erected in the Panemune Park in Kaunas in 1932. Today its copy stands in the main street of Kaunas – Laisves aleja. A biographer of the sculptor conjectures that the artist wrote an application to join the Communist Party in 1940 after the rumor reached him of the plans to repress him because of the artistic propaganda of Lithuanian nationalism and imperialism.[22] Artist escaped the wagons to Siberia, but was killed by Lithuanian insurgents during the June uprising 1941. The fact that the monument of Vincas Kudirka remained in Kudirkos Naumiestis throughout the Soviet era may be explained by the nimbus of a victim of Hitlerite occupants and bourgeois nationalists, who surrounded Vincas Grybas, the creator of this monument. But this nimbus did not save from destruction the monument to Vytautas the Great, initiated by Antanas Sniečkus himself.[23] The ideological load of this monument was too obvious.

The tragedy of Vincas Grybas and his artwork anticipates the situation of Lithuanian historians during Soviet rule. To describe the Grand Duchy as empire and the politics of Gediminas, Algirdas, and Vytautas as imperialist was tantamount to condemn them as reactionary phenomena with all the following consequences to the 'politics of memory'. Therefore, Lithuanian historians were fully satisfied with the 'scientific' Marxist-Leninist conception of imperialism as the phenomenon characteristic to capitalist formation. They accepted the thesis, which was established in Soviet historiography by Vladimir Pašuta, of the Lithuanian character of the Grand Duchy [24], acknowledged Lithuanian 'aggression' in the east, simultaneously emphasizing the peaceful and voluntary nature of accession of Russian lands to the GDL. Such image of the GDL's history pictures it as a temporary protector of Western Rus'ian lands from more dangerous aggressors – Germans and Mongols-Tartars – until Moscow, their proper master, shall become stronger. The threat of Moscow has no impact on historical investigations any longer and today we can ask the question whether the GDL was an empire, and if it was, then what type of empire?

2. Empire as an Object of Comparative Historical Sociology

The starting point to answer these questions is the contemporary comparative research of empires, which during the last decades became a separate area of interdisciplinary research, where historians, sociologists, anthropologists, specialists of comparative politics and theory of international relations cooperate.[25] After the liquidation of colonial empires in the 1960s, the topic of empires and imperialism ceased to be an object of political passions and transformed into an object of academic research. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, which was qualified as 'the last empire' by critical observers, empires and imperialism became a purely historical phenomenon, which can be objectively investigated.

The founder of the contemporary comparative sociology of empires is famous American-Israel sociologist Shmuel N. Eisenstadt.[26] Following his example, contemporary historians, and especially historians-comparativists, apply the name of empire to political systems, which have neither direct nor indirect relations to the Roman Empire and its legacy.[27] Ancient states of Akkad[28], Assyria[29], Maurya, Persia, Gupta, the states of the Inca[30] and Aztecs[31] in pre-Columbian America, Mogul[32] and Vijayanagara states in India, states established by Genghis-Khan and Genghisides[33] and by Tamerlan in Central Asia, not to speak of China from the times of the Chin dynasty or Ottoman, Habsburg, and Russian empires – all these states are called empires.

S.N. Eisenstadt defined the concept of empire in the following way: 'the term 'empire' has normally been used to designate a political system encompassing wide relatively highly centralized territories, in which the center, as embodied both in the person of the emperor and in the central political institution, constituted an autonomous entity. Further, although empires have usually been based on traditional legitimation, they have often embraced some wider, potentially universal political and cultural orientation that went beyond that of any of their component parts."[34] When this definition is compared to the examples S.N. Eisenstadt provided, it becomes apparent that the second part of the definition applies better to what he called "bureaucratic" empires that to their predecessors – patrimonial and nomadic empires. A characteristic feature of patrimonial empires is the absence of distinction between the state as public institution and personal property of a ruler or his dynasty ('patrimony'). The state could be divided and given as a gift like any other private possession; though often consent of influential members of the ruling clan as a collective owner had to be granted (the GDL of the Gediminds may be an example). Such conception of patrimonial state is expressed by the storyline, which recurs in the folk tales of various nations, of a king who gives to a brave knight half of his kingdom as a dowry for his daughter.

According to S.N. Eisenstadt, such practices reveal a relatively low degree of differentiation of social texture. He, like other structural functionalists, considers the degree of differentiation between functional spheres of social life as expression of social progress. An important form of this differentiation is differentiation of religious life out of syncretic unity of social life, which on the institutional level may by expressed by the division between religious and secular powers. S.N. Eisenstadt associates the emergence of empires with the availability of 'free floating resources', which can be mobilized and concentrated by the rulers. Such resources are money, recruits, workers, which can be mobilized for building castles, pyramids, temples, and which can be transferred from one part of empire to another. The ruler of patrimonial empire relies on his household and its servants. The feature of bureaucratic empires is the organizational distinction between household servants and public servants, who specialize in performing certain functions (e.g. collection of taxes, warfare, maintenance of domestic order, adjudication).

Among the abundant comparative sociological work on empires, there are several studies which dedicate much effort to theoretical analysis of the concept of 'empire' (Michael W. Doyle,[35] Aleksandr J. Motyl[36] and Thomas J. Barfield). According to M. Doyle, "empire, then, is a relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be achieved by force, by political collaboration, by economic, social, or cultural dependence. Imperialism is simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an empire".[37] M. Doyle formulates one of the classification criteria of empires – empires may be either formal, or informal, or mixed, when they are composed of two parts: one part is comprised of formally controlled political societies and the other – of informally controlled political societies.

In the first case, the territories under control are incorporated into the controlling state and have the status of protectorate, colony or province. Russian, Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires before the World War I belong to this type of empires. The control may also be informal, when the political societies are formally sovereign but in reality their domestic and foreign policies are controlled by other state. M. Doyle gives an example of Athenian *arche* (5th century B.C., which also known as the Delos Union), which formally was a military-political union of independent Greek polis under Athenian leadership. Often an imperial state has both a formal and an informal empire. The Great Britain of the 19th century is an example, having a broad formal empire and simultaneously controlling the foreign and domestic policies of many formally independent countries of Latin America until it was 'replaced' by the United States at the end of the 19th century. Relations between the Soviet Union and the countries of the 'Socialist camp' also correspond to M. Doyle's definition of informal empire.

The main difficulty with the concept of informal empire is the question, of how to distinguish between a relation that ties an imperial state with the territories, which belongs to its informal empire, and a relation of alliance, which exists among independent states. Answering this question, M. Doyle states that relations of imperial control are asymmetric while in the case of an alliance the state's influence over the politics of other states is symmetric and exists only in the area of foreign policy. Such criterion of differentiation between relations of imperial control and alliance is not satisfactory, because it is complicated to talk of symmetric relations in the case of allies, which differ in their power. Additionally, it is possible to formulate such criteria as the voluntary or involuntary character of the union, correspondence of the union to the interests of states with smaller power etc.

The problem with such criteria is that it may be difficult to establish the fact of voluntary basis of the union and the 'real' interests of the state. The involuntary character of the union is more or less obvious when political society becomes an 'ally' after the lost war, as in the case of the expansion of the Roman Republic in the Italian peninsula in the 6-4th centuries B.C. The definition of interests is an object of internal political struggle in a society, when the competing parties may disagree over what constitutes the interests of society, and over which unions and alliances would correspond to these interests. The alliance is 'real' when there is a broad consensus among ruling elite and masses over these issues (e.g. protection by powerful neighbor is demanded and asked for by all). When there is no such broad consensus, it may difficult to classify the relation between a powerful state and weaker ones as a case of alliance or that of inclusion of weaker states into the sphere of hegemony or informal empire of the stronger state.

In the opinion of the author of this article, the real character of political relationship between states with different powers is revealed by 'extreme' situations, the importance of which in revealing the essence of political phenomena was demonstrated by German political theorist Carl Schmitt.[38] We may judge the character of relations between weak and powerful states only in retrospective, when situations emerge where the interests diverge and the weaker state takes steps of which its powerful neighbor does not approve. Has a powerful partner enough checks to ensure the necessary direction of events? If yes, then this 'extreme' situation reveals the true nature of the relation: that it was not a 'true' alliance or not 'just' an alliance. If not, then the alliance was a 'true' alliance. However, this becomes known only after its end. In the case of absence of such 'extreme situations' relations between allies may remain ambivalent even in the eyes of historians, who investigate them retrospectively.

The relation between two or more states may start as a voluntary alliance and then may transform into a relationship of imperial subordination, because its evolution depends not on the interests of a weaker state but on the interests and

decisions of the stronger state. In exchange for military or economic assistance, powerful states demand support against other states, even when such support is not beneficial to a weaker state. This leads to the control its foreign policy. To ensure the reliability of an ally, penetration into its domestic life may begin by providing support to "friendly" political forces and keeping them permanently in power. Imperial control comprises control over both foreign and domestic politics. Control over domestic politics means that a foreign controlling state is the final instance, determining which government shall rule the country under control. A controlling state is powerful enough to replace an unacceptable government, and no government is able to establish its power without approval of the imperial 'center' or to make important decisions of domestic policy without coordinating them with the center in advance. By selecting the other state's rulers, the imperial state can control both its important domestic and foreign policy decisions.

First secretaries of Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria or any other 'socialist' countries Communist parties in the Eastern Europe could be appointed only with the approval of Moscow. Therefore, these countries belonged to an informal empire of the USSR. The imperial character of relations between the Great Britain and USA on the one hand and Latin American countries on the other in the 19th century – first half of the 20th century is indicated by frequent and successful interference into domestic political processes of Latin American countries, when unacceptable dictators were removed and replaced with the new ones. In all these cases, the states under imperial control are governed by local protégés of empire, who coordinate their decisions with the centre or its representatives. Such representatives may be formal envoys of the imperial state or representatives of its companies (e.g. 'Gazprom') or banks, to which the state under control is indebted (as in the case of Central American 'banana republics' in the second half of the 19th century – first half of the 20th century).

According to M. Doyle, an intermediate case between alliance and imperial control is hegemony. A hegemonic state controls the foreign policies of the states falling under its hegemony, but is either too weak to control their domestic political processes or does not aim at such control. To explain the difference between (informal) empire and hegemony, M. Doyle compares the Athenian Arche during the Peloponnese war to the anti-Athenian coalition under Spartan leadership. Relations between Athens and its allies may be described as imperial control, because Athens intervened actively into internal political struggles between democratic and aristocratic parties, taking place in the allied countries, and supported the proponents of democracy. Sparta, on the contrary, did not aim at changing political arrangement in the polis of the Anti-Athenian coalition. In the post-war period, the hegemonic sphere of the Soviet Union (but not its informal empire) included capitalist and democratic Finland and feudal Afghanistan, which became a part of informal empire only after the coup d'état

staged by local communists, which had not been sanctioned by Moscow and made Moscow the arbiter in their local internecine struggle for power. Empires do not necessarily aim at controlling domestic politics. They may be satisfied with control over the foreign policies of countries, which fall under their influence.

In the case of informal empire, the biggest challenge is to distinguish between relations of imperial control and relations of alliance or hegemony. In the case of formal control, the challenge is to distinguish between empire and federation, imperialism and federalism. A state, composed of two or more political societies, is not necessarily an empire – it may also be a non-imperial federative state (e.g. modern India or Canada). In a federative state, power is divided between central government and regional governments. Regions are not just administrative units, but political units with distinct laws and legislatives. The population of these political units has a more or less expressed self-consciousness of affinity, based on shared historical traditions, ethnic, national, religious, and similarity or shared economic interests, caused by an uneven distribution of natural resources or economic development. The opposite of a federative state is a unitary state, where the decision-making is more centralized. The division of powers between regional and central governments may differ, but in any case the central government retains control over foreign policy and defense. Because of such division of power, a federative state is similar to a formal empire, as the difference between countries included into the formal empire from the countries in the informal empire is that the first do not implement foreign policy and do not have their military forces.

The governments of pre-modern empires were neither capable of nor aimed at the unification of law in all the territories under their formal control or at the subjugation of social life to the direct rule by centrally appointed and accountable officials. With some exceptions, emergence of such unified and centrally administered states is characteristic of the modern times, as it requires certain technological (first of all, in the area of communication and transportation) and economic conditions. Therefore, in the expanded pre-modern states the system of indirect rule was applied, when local authority was retained by the local elite (often – landowners), who followed local customs and abided by the law, which was in force before the accession to empire. The biggest of modern empires – the British Empire – also followed such philosophy of government. In an empire, which relies on the system of indirect rule, we find the division of power, which is characteristic to organization of federative state. Charles Tilly, one of the prominent representatives of contemporary comparative historical sociology, emphasizes that indirect rule is the main distinctive feature of empires: 'an empire is a large composite polity linked to a central power by indirect rule. The central power exercises some military and fiscal control in each major segment of its imperial domain, but tolerates the two major elements of indirect rule: (1)

retention or establishment of particular, distinct compacts for the government of each segment; and (2) exercise of power through intermediaries who enjoy considerable autonomy within their own domains in return for the delivery of compliance, tribute, and military collaboration with the center'.[39]

What is the difference between empires (especially the ones, which exercise an indirect rule) and federations, which are not empires? To answer this question we may follow the same logic, which was applied to find out the difference between state alliance, imperial subordination and hegemony. A federation is a voluntary or consensual union of culturally distinct populations, while an empire uses the instruments of 'nonconsensual control over culturally distinct populations'.[40] The state structure is imperial when the cultural groups, which belong to it, treat that dependence as illegitimate and enforced. This insight is well-conveyed by the metaphorical description of empire as "a prison of nations".

This answer creates similar perplexities. Certain "culturally distinct" population may be internally heterogeneous concerning the question of belonging to another state. Some may be proponents, but others may oppose it and fight for the creation of an independent state or for accession to some other state. The proponents of Basque independence treat contemporary Spain, which provides a rather broad territorial autonomy to Basques, as an empire, just like Lithuanians thought of the Soviet Union or Kashmir separatists think of India. The difference is that only a minority supports independence in the case Basques, while Lithuanian independence from the Soviet Union expressed the will of majority.

But the criterion of 'majority will' cannot be easily applied when more ancient times are investigated. First of all, no survey data or referendum data, which would reflect majority's will, is available to a historian. Next, the criterion, which requires treating all adult men and women as the members of political society, may be anachronistic not only because political equality of women is historically new and culturally particular phenomenon. In pre-modern societies personally dependent (unfree) people were not considered to be members of 'political nation'. The author of this article proposes to solve this problem by applying the 'extremalist' methodology of C. Schmitt: the essence of culturally distinct groups of the same state is best revealed by the behavior in extreme situations. Such situations are situations of war (especially of the lost war) and political disintegration. Does a certain 'culturally distinct' population remain loyal to a state, when it has to fight a war against another state, and particularly against the state where the majority of citizens or subordinates is culturally closer to that population than its fellow citizens? Does the 'culturally distinct' population after the lost war and in the situation of state failure take the occasion to separate or remain loyal to a political entity, which comprises other 'culturally distinct' populations? In the absence of such extreme situations the question of separation

remains an abstract possibility and to give an unambiguous answer to the question of imperial character of a particular multi-cultural state entity is difficult if not impossible. Another criterion may by used as well: federations are created from the bottom up, by the consensus of its members, and empires are imposed from above, by a dominating established polity.[41] Definitely, such criterion cannot be absolute too, because after the change of generations 'foreign' political society may turn into 'one's own'.

The possession of a definition of empire, which provides criteria to assign certain entities to the population of empires, allows certain generalizations. First, it has to be mentioned, that the duration of empires varies very much. Some empires do not outlive their founders. Examples are the Chin Empire in China (221-207 B.C.), Tamerlane's Empire in Central Asia (1365-1405) or Hitler's Empire, which lasted even less. Other empires may last for several centuries. In such cases several critical points in their development may be distinguished, which are called by M. Doyle 'thresholds'. The first is the 'imperial threshold', which is passed by a certain political entity when it turns into empire. Empires does not emerge out of nothing. Its predecessor is a non-imperial political entity which starts expanding and becomes the *metropole* of new empire.

A specific feature of creation of many new empires is their rapid expansion in the beginning, when in one or two generations they reach the boundaries which do not change after or get narrower. This stage of expansion is related to the activities of charismatic leader. An exponential expansion of empire can be explained by the fact that empires may employ the resources of subordinated peripheries for their future expansion. However, the more the empire expands, the higher are the costs of control over subordinated territories. A. Motyl shows that empires meet with the same problem which was an 'Achilles' heel' of totalitarian states of the 20th century.

Attempts to control the life of the entire society from one center cause an information overload, which the center is unable to evaluate and to deal with adequately. Therefore, the quality of the centre's decisions gradually decreases and the probability of mistaken political and military decisions increases.[42] The situation in pre-modern times is further complicated by communication problems which aggravate together with the expanding territory. The center was unable to solve the issues (first of all, military issues) of the periphery which require quick decisions. Delegation of power to imperial officials, acting in distant peripheries, eventually enabled them to consolidate their power by seeking support in the local political society and to become *de facto* independent. Efforts to re-establish the state of affairs implied a civil war which could end up in the disintegration of empire.

Contrary to A. Motyl, M. Doyle does not think that these problems can not be solved. In the development of empires he identifies the so-called 'Augustan

threshold'. Ancient Rome, a classical empire, encountered this threshold after conquest of Mediterranean countries, when the non-congruence of its political structure as city-state to new conditions became apparent. Such incoherence between Roman political organization and its newly acquired status of imperial power caused the internal crisis of the 1ˢᵗ century B.C.: civil wars which nearly destroyed a newly established empire. Only few empires succeed in passing this threshold, which is why most of them have such a short history. In the case of Rome, the crisis was successfully solved by Octavian Augustus, winner in the civil war. His reforms guaranteed the sustainability of the Roman Empire and enabled it to further its external expansion.

The problems of the Roman Empire and the factors, which delimitated its expansion, are universal. M. Doyle emphasizes that it is impossible to explain the rise and decline of empires by taking into account only the processes which take place in *metropole* societies. Such type of explanation is characteristic of classical theories of imperialism, which tend to explain the emergence of empires and imperialism as the outcome of the solution of conflicts and problems internal to the *metropole* societies.

An alternative to the metro-centric explanations of empires and imperialism is peri-centric theory. The latter explains the expansion of empires by the processes, which take place in the peripheral societies. These processes may be endogenous or caused by cultural or commercial contacts with other societies. Empires emerge when political societies involve other societies into their internal affairs, i.e. when political forces, which lose internal political fights, seek the assistance of neighboring states; when refugees to the neighboring *metropole* state cause economic, cultural or other problems; when the violence of criminals or pirates on the border with the failed state starts to threaten the security of the citizens of the neighboring "normal state". Even without wishing it, one state is compelled to intervene and to 'create an order' in such territories where the agencies, able to implement the monopoly of legitimate coercion, are absent.

A classical example of peri-centric approach is the famous explanation of the British imperialism in the 19ᵗʰ century, given by Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher. It argues that Great Britain acquired most of its possessions by accident.[43] The foreign policy aim of the political elite of the country, which was guided by the philosophy of liberalism, was not to create an empire, but to ensure freedom of commerce. However, when British traders suffered from local bandits or rulers, who confiscated their goods or simply did not pay their debts, the government was simply unable to resist the pressure of the public opinion to use the British navy and army and to punish offenders. Soon it became clear, that peace, which is necessary to ensure freedom of commerce, can be sustained only when the 'rebellious' regions, from where bandits or pirates attacked, are subjugated.[44]

For the same reasons, the boundary of control had to be expanded until there were no territories 'under nobody's control' left, where mercenaries, bandits or other threatening forces could find an asylum. The parallels with the situation of modern Western states, involved into the 'war against terror', are clearly visible. Though their first preference is to leave less-developed countries, torn by internal violent conflict, to themselves (unless such countries are rich with natural resources), they are forced to intervene into the internal affairs of the failed states which tend to become bases of activities of terrorists, contrabandists, pirates and other criminals and the sources of illegal migration.

It is important to notice that the boundaries between *metropole* and periphery, imperial core and its domain, suzerainty and hegemony are mobile. A peripheral political society, once included into formal empire, may eventually merge with the society of *metropole*. Such processes are most rapid on the level of elites, but the cultural differences among the 'bottoms' may gradually disappear as well. A classical example is the Romanization of Roman provinces. Just one century after the conquest of Spain, Senators of Spanish origin already sat in the Roman Senate, and after another 50 years Rome got an emperor, who came from Spain. In 212, Emperor Caracalla declared an edict, which granted the rights of Roman citizenship to all free inhabitants of the Roman Empire.

Treating such development of the Roman Empire as the typical model, M. Doyle distinguishes in the development of empires the 'Caracalla threshold'. Having passed it, empires cease to be empires in the precise sense of the word and become just great powers. "At this point an empire no more exists, and the many peoples have become one. In the case of Rome the many were assimilated into a common despotism, but the continuing and intriguing moral attraction of the otherwise reprehensible international domination of empire lies in the possibility that all might be assimilated to a common liberty".[45]

Returning to an example of the making of the French nation, we may ask whether not all great powers (with the exception of the territories colonized by the immigrant white populations in the modern times in America, Australia, and New Zealand) emerged from empires, which had passed the 'Caracalla threshold'? Medieval Burgundians and Bretons, not to speak of Lorraine and Alsace, conquered by Louis XIV, did not understood themselves as members of one and the same nation. All or almost all great powers were empires in the pre-modern times, and the big nations, which later became a basis of national states, were created on the basis of imperial unifications, when assimilation processes in empires were successful or when history provided sufficient time to complete these processes. The creation of big political societies (nations), then, should be treated as a historical mission of empires and imperialism.

M. Doyle thinks that different approaches to explain empires and imperialism can be reconciled and provides a theory which is a synthesis of these

approaches. American researcher complements his synthesis with yet another factor, which is usually ignored in other approaches to empires and imperialism. It is a factor of the so-called 'transnational forces', which originate in *metropole* societies and prepare other societies for the political subjugation by gravitating them towards the *metropole*. In the case of European imperial overseas expansion such forces were represented by self-interested traders, whose activities engaged peripheral societies into commercial exchange with the future *metropoles*. New commodities destabilized the power relations, which were established in the peripheral societies, created new elites, who became a pillar for European expansion, and caused internal conflicts, which externalities forced Europeans to subjugate these societies politically. The activities of Christian missionaries, who were interested not in private monetary benefits but were guided by 'ideal' motives, had similar consequences.

According to M. Doyle, societies from which such 'transnational forces' originate, most often pass 'imperial threshold' and become *metropoles* of empires. On the other hand, examples of imperial expansion abound, when it is difficult to identify any civilizing 'transnational forces' in the *metropole* society, in the guise of new religious or political ideas, supply of new commodities etc. Expansion may rely on brutal military force only (e.g. nomadic imperialism and its state entities – the Hun Empire, Avar Kaganat, Genghis Khan's Empire, states of Genghizids, including the Golden Horde, which was the GDL neighbor and rival). Should we expand the concept of 'empire' so that it comprises both the above mentioned entities and the Roman Empire and the Soviet Union?

An interesting answer to this question is provided by Thomas J. Barfield, the contemporary American specialist of steppe Nomads history, who distinguishes between 'primary empires' and 'shadow empires'.[46] Primary empires are predecessors of modern great powers, because these empires created culturally homogenous masses of population, the basis of modern national great powers. Besides, they invented techniques of bureaucratic administration which are necessary for even a superficial control of large populations in vast territories. The cases of 'primary' empire are Assyria, Achaemenid Persia, Rome, China, the Spanish and Ottoman Empires, the Incas and Aztec Empires. The distinguishing features of primary empires are:

(1) They have a proper organization both to administer and exploit the economic, political, religious or ethnic variety. The appropriateness of such organization is indicated by their sustainability – such empires do not disappear together with their founders or founding dynasty. Their elites assimilate representatives of conquered nations, and the structures of the state continue despite changes of the personal composition of elite. Such empires practice deportation of entire groups of population from one place of empire to the other, colonization of outskirts etc.

(2) Empires establish systems of transportation which ensure military and economic connections of centre (*metropole*) with the periphery. Classical examples are ancient Persian, Roman, Incan systems of roads and Chinese system of channels.

(3) Empires have sophisticated systems of communication, which enable direct administration of subordinated areas from the center, e.g. regular postal systems as in the case of ancient Persians; archives, chanceries, *lingua franca*, standardized systems of measures.

(4) A policy of territorial expansion and stability of *limes* (after the end of expansion stage). The stabilization of the 'limes' is determined by encounter with other empires or strong powers or by certain ecological boundaries (mountains, steppes etc.). Territorial expansion may be also stopped because of the calculations of 'grand strategy'.[47]

(5) An imperial idea or project, which eventually turns into shared values that overcome local differences.

Finally, empires surpass other co-existing political entities in terms of population and/or territory.

'Shadow' empires are secondary phenomena, which are an answer to the emergence of imperial states in the neighborhood and imitation of such states. Such empires do not possess part or a majority of the listed features. They were 'shadows' which acquired the form of empire without acquiring its substance. In a certain way they were parasitic "on larger systems, although under exceptional conditions they could transform themselves into self-sustaining primary empires'.[48] The American historian distinguishes four types of shadow empires.

First, 'mirror empires', e.g. empires, established by nomads in the Eurasian steppes from the 3rd century B.C on the border with China. These empires were an answer to the emergence of the Chinese Empire and they existed by exploiting the latter's resources. The disintegration of the Chinese Empire was usually followed by the disintegration of parasitic states beyond the Great Wall of China. Only one of many 'mirror empires' transformed into a primary empire – the Mongol Empire established by Genghis Chan.

Second, maritime trade empires: e.g. the network of Phoenician city states or Athenian Arche in Ancient times, Portugal in the 16-17th century, Medieval Venice and Genoa.

Third, 'vulture empires', which emerged on the border or periphery of disintegrating empires, when subordinates, clients or allies of the empire subjugated part of its territory (including the *metropole* area). Usually, they also take the cultural inheritance and administrative structure of the broken empire. Th. J. Barfield provides the example of Ancient Egypt, which was ruled by Nubian dynasties, or several episodes in the Chinese history, when the unity of empire was rebuilt by non-Chinese dynasties. The most important among them was the

last (Qing) dynasty (1644-1912), the basis of which power was located in Manchuria, previously under indirect Chinese rule.

Fourth, 'empires of nostalgia,' which live with the memories of the already collapsed empire, appropriating its traditions and symbols without exhibiting either of the listed features of 'proper' empire. Examples of such empires are the Carolingian empire, which had neither permanent capital nor network of transportation and communication, and political entities in Ethiopia, where ruling dynasties claimed the title of 'emperor' even when Ethiopian statehood was close to disappearance.

3. Was the Grand Duchy an Empire?

The review of comparative research of empires leads to a somehow paradoxical and unexpected conclusion. If we apply the Barfield's and other researchers' concepts of 'empire' and 'imperialism' to the political entities, which existed in the 14-15th centuries in Europe, we find out that we have firmer grounds to apply it to the Grand Duchy than to the Holy Roman Empire, the political entity which claimed the status of empire. To use the famous expression by Voltaire, the Holy Roman Empire was neither holy nor Roman nor empire. It does not fit all or almost all the definitions of empire, which have been discussed, because in its case it is hard to distinguish between periphery and *metropole*, unless we treat as *metropole* the patrimonial lands of the ruling dynasty, which changed together with the changes of the dynasties themselves. This was one of the reasons why the Holy Roman Empire did not have permanent capital city. It could not have it either, because, according to the theory of *'translatio imperii'*, only Rome could be its capital (at least formally). However, Rome was the residence of the Pope, who was not only the highest spiritual authority of Catholic Christendom but also the ruler of the Papal State in Italy with its capital in Rome, which claimed to be independent from the emperor. Besides, the Holy Roman Empire did not have systems of transportation and communications or other attributes, which, according to Th. J. Barfield, are the attributes of 'primary empires'.

The Holy Roman Empire was more an 'empire of nostalgia' than its predecessor – the Carolingian Empire. Meanwhile, one could hardly call Lithuania during the reign of Gediminas, Algirdas and Vytautas an 'empire of nostalgia'. A. Bumblauskas, one of (few) historians, who have raised the question of the imperial character of Lithuania, claims that 'Lithuania during the reign of Vytautas was at the closest to the state, which could be called empire'.[49] It has to be added only that the Lithuania of that time had approached the state, which could be called empire, more than the Holy Roman Empire and all other European states of the same period. I shall provide the arguments to support such statement.

(1) From the reign of Algirdas, the Grand Duchy was the largest state in Europe. It may be that there were more states in the medieval Europe of the 14-15th centuries, which could be called empires. But should not we grant the name of 'empire' to the largest one?

(2) The Grand Duchy implemented an aggressive and expansionist foreign policy. It organized military expeditions and expanded in all the directions where it was not held in check by superior rivals. As it was noted, the peaceful nature of the Lithuanian expansion to the East is a myth which had been uncritically accepted by Lithuanians. Even in the cases when the expansion was not violent, it was not more voluntary than the Soviet annexation of Lithuania in 1940. The peaceful and non-violent nature of the annexation does not mean that it is voluntary – submission is granted when resistance is hopeless. This is usually the case of imperial expansion when the great military power expands into the area of weak and small political entities. After the fall of Macedonia, Romans did not need to use military force against the Greek polis. The Greeks submitted under the "protection" of less "civilized" Romans in exchange for their promise to preserve the traditions and to abstain from reforms. Still, it does not mean that Greek adhesion to Roman Empire was voluntary or that Greeks were members of a voluntary federation. This is testified by revolts in some Greek polis and by subsequent Roman repressions.

We are used to treat Lithuania as a victim of aggression by 'the Knights' or 'Germans', because its war against the Order in the west was defensive. However, if the crusaders had not moved into Prussia and to the lands by the Daugava, then Prussia and the lands of the present Latvia or Estonia would have been the object of expansion of the Grand Duchy, just like the lands of Polotsk, Vitebsk, Smolensk or other Russian lands. In fact, Lithuanian invasions into the lands by the Daugava were already taking place in the beginning of the 13th century. The relative ease, with which the Germans had conquered the Baltic tribes, which became the ethnic substrate of contemporary Latvians, can be explained by the fact that these tribes treated baptism and submission to Germans to be lesser evil than the unending Lithuanian onslaughts. The Grand Dukes of Lithuania would probably had to put more effort to conquer the Prussians, whose resistance to the Lithuanians could be as fierce as the resistance of Zemaitians to the Germans was. But to pass the 'threshold of Caracalla' thereafter would be, most probably, a relatively easy task and we cannot dismiss the probability of the formation of one big Baltic political nation.

That the rulers of the Grand Duchy could have such imperial aspirations is testified by the demands of Algirdas and Kestutis to the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in 1358. In exchange for the Lithuanian Christianization the Dukes demanded that the lands of all Sambia (Samland), Courland, Semigallia, and part of Latgalia were given to Lithuania. The western border of the GDL

should be established along the rivers Alna and Prieglius, the Baltic Sea and as far as the mouth of the Daugava river. The northern border should be established along the Daugava river up to the mouth of the Aivekste, and along the later across lake Luban towards Rus.[50] That this was not a short outburst of political fantasy but revealed the 'mental map' which the Gediminids had of their lands, is shown by the famous episode from the Vytautas negotiations with the Teutonic Knights in 1413 in Salynas near Kaunas. Vytautas repeated essentially the same demands, claiming all the Prussian lands up to the Osa river to be his patrimonial lands.[51]

(3) The Grand Duchy was a multi-ethnic state. The core of the ruling elite was composed by the nobility of one of its ethnic groups – ancient Lithuanians. The territory, inhabited by Lithuanians, which can be approximately identified with the Aukštaitija (the Higlands) (including its eastern area, which later became Slavonicised), was the original location of the state-building and remained the nucleus of the state during all its history. Though due to territorial expansion of the GDL, these lands appeared on its outskirts, its rulers had never had an idea to move the capital to some more centrally located place – Minsk, Polotsk, Kiev, Smolensk, or Luck even if at the end of the 14th century some of these lands were more secure than ethnic Lithuania, which suffered from intensive attacks from the Teutonic Knights, and some were more densely populated and more fertile (Volynia). Only after the union of Lublin, Grodno, because of its proximity to Poland, became an 'auxiliary' capital of the GDL, while Poland moved its capital closer to Lithuania from Cracow to Warsaw. The *Urėdai* (stewards) of the Palatinates of Trakai and Vilnius were the most prestigious, and the noblemen who occupied these positions were the highest ranking officials in the state. By referring to the whole of the GDL as Lithuania, the contemporaries at the same time conceived the meaning of the name in its more narrow sense – as the name of the GDL's nuclear territories. These territories can be identified with the "metropole" of the GDL.

The border line between the GDL's *metropole* and periphery remained sufficiently clearly expressed during all the existence of the GDL. The *metropole* comprised the areas with paganism, and later – Catholicism, as dominating religion (not only among elite). The exceptional position of this region is reflected and represented by the prohibition, in force after the baptism of Lithuania, to build new Orthodox churches in the region, and for the Orthodox believers – to occupy state *urėdas* (with the only exception, which was made to Constantine Ostrogsky because of his personal distinctions). Religion drew a clear line between the Catholic elite of the *metropole* and the local Orthodox elite of the periphery, including, from the middle of the 16th century, the Protestant Livonian elite. The precise localization of the *metropole* area of the GDL is the object of discussions. No wonder that Belarusian historians tend to move its eastern and

western boundaries further to the East and to search for the nucleus of Mindaugas' Lithuania in the Black Rus'.

A similar tendency could be found in the works by Matvei Liubavski, who claimed that 'Lithuanian dukes could get more support and instruments for their rule from Russian society than from Lithuanian society'.[52] Writing about post-Vytautian Lithuania, the author identifies its metropolian area with the territories of Vilnius, Grodno, Minsk, Mogilev *guberniyas* of tsarist Russia as well as with the eastern part of the Kaunas *guberniya*. 'This area was in a dominating position in the Lithuanian-Russian state. It was most densely populated and had the largest population. Here most of estates of the Great Duke were concentrated as well as the estates of the ruling Lithuanian nobility – dukes Golšanskis, the magnate families of Goštautas, Radvila, Zaberezinskis. This area was distinguished by its rules of government and adjudication, its customs, its Lithuanian law'.[53]

To solve this discussion, C. Schmitt's extreme methodology could be applied. The boundary between the GDL's *metropole* and periphery is revealed by the events of the internal war in the 1340s. Territories, which after Ašmena's coup d'état in 1432 remained loyal to Švitrigaila can be assigned, with certain provisions, to the periphery of the Grand Duchy, while the territories, which immediately took the side of Zigmant I, can be assigned to the *metropole*. At the same time it has to be noted that, because of the rapid integration of the peripheral elite into the ruling elite of the GDL, the eastern boundary of the *metropole* had been moved to the East already in the beginning of the 16th century and coincided with the boundaries, drawn by K. Liubavski.

(4) If we look at the territorial structure of the GDL of the 14-15th centuries through the conceptual lenses of contemporary comparative research of empires, we may distinguish in its composition all the structural elements of a typical empire. Apart from the *metropole*, it also had its periphery or peripheries, which were referred to by the name *ukraina*, a translation of the word 'periphery' into Ruthenian language. The *Ukraina* of the GDL was composed not only of the lands, which later became the territorial nucleus of the country, known today as Ukraine. *Ukrainians* of the GDL were also the inhabitants of Zemaitija, where a separate 'political society' with its ruling elite, self-government, regional self-consciousness and local law existed (at least in the 14-15th centuries). At the very least, the '*Ukrainian*' status of Zemaitija, as a peripheral political society under indirect rule of the GDL, leaves no doubts during the period when the eldership of Žemaitija belonged to the Kęsgailas' family. We also find a separate political society in the Volynia of the same period. 'A special position was occupied by the landowners and nobility of Volynia, whose interests the central power had to take into account. Intervention into distribution of lands and local offices was rare, and the local dukes, the Gediminds and Alšėniškiai, preserved their patrimonies'.[54]

Consolidation of local political communities in the lands of Kiev and Podol', constantly under attacks from the steppes in the 14th century, did not take place. Up until the 15th century the land of Smolensk and the duchies in the Belorussian territories, ruled by the Gediminds and Riurikoviches, preserved territorial autonomy, though eventually they were transformed into big units of landownership. [55] The land of Chernigov and the conglomerate of the principalities in the Upper Oka can be ascribed to the sphere of 'informal empire' or suzerainty of the GDL. One of the main concerns of the imperial centre in Vilnius at that time were the unending quarrels among the Riurikovich descendants concerning the inheritance rights. Though the end of these quarrels depended mainly on the decision of the Vilnius authority or on his representative in Smolensk, formally the lands of Rurikovich descendants were their patrimonies, and not the fiefs given by the Grand Duke.

As it is characteristic to pre-modern empires, up until the end of the 15th century the GDL did not have clearly delineated boundaries in the east. The sphere of informal empire or suzerainty gradually evolved into the sphere of hegemony. The latter in various periods comprised not only part of the principalities in the Upper Oka, but also Tver', Ryazan', Pskov, Novgorod, Moldova. The hegemonic sphere of the GDL was the most expanded during the reign of Vytautas. 'In the end of the twenties of the 15th century, Vytautas started acting as the ruler of an independent great power. All of Eastern Europe was in the sphere of Vytautas' influence. His suzerainty was acknowledged by Pskov, Novgorod and Ryazan', even Moscow was under his protectorate (Vytautas became a protector of his grandson, future Basil II), and the Tatar khans were Vytautas' placemen'.[56]

(5) S.C. Rowell points to yet another circumstance, which is important in answering the question of what kind of empire was the GDL. The rule of the Grand Duchy guaranteed a *pax lituanica* in vast territories, securing long-distance commercial routes, which do not function or almost do not function under conditions of political anarchy. In that respect, Lithuanian domination in Eastern Europe can be compared to the role, played by Romans with their *pax Romana*, or even with the one of Mongols, whose domination in the second half of the 13th century – first half of the 14th century secured safe commercial routes from China to the Crimea through the steppe zone from Mongolia to the Black Sea. The Lithuanians controlled the old "road from Varangians to Greeks", which was vitally important to Novgorod, and part of its branch in the Daugava river, which led to Riga. 'Like the Ottomans in Byzantine Asia Minor, the Tatars in Rus' and other warrior societies, the Lithuanians left their subject people in peace in return for armed service and payment of taxation. We can speak of a *pax lituanica* which safeguarded the commercial routes between the Baltic and the Tatar Black Sea, northern Germany and Rus''.[57]

It has to be acknowledged that there is no data which would support the statement that statehood of the GDL had as its economic base a distinct economic world, whose boundaries would delineate the "natural" boundaries and shape of territorial expansion. Here the concept of "economic world" is used in the sense, which F. Braudel and I. Wallerstein give to it, as the territory, which is connected by territorial division of labor and inter-local commercial exchange of not only luxury goods. The existence of an "economic world" is indicated by the presence of the commercial and financial centers, such as the Champagne markets or, later, Bruges and Antwerp in Medieval Europe. Though important transit commercial routes crossed the territory of the GDL, it did not have commercial and financial centers which were equal to Novgorod, Cracow or Riga. In the 16th century, Vilnius was ahead of Riga and Tallinn as the political centre of empire ("imperial city")[58], and not as the centre of economic world.

The boundaries of the GDL expansion were drawn not by gravitation fields of territories, formed on the basis of economic labor division and commercial relations. These boundaries were drawn by the international political situation in Eastern Europe, which emerged in the middle of the 13th century, when the invasion of Mongols-Tatars destroyed the balance of power in the region and created a vacuum of power. The vacuum of power was created when th eMongols defeated the principality of Galich-Volynia (which, during the reign of Mindaugas attacked Lithuania more often than was attacked itself), as well as when Mongols subordinated the Vladimir princes. The Golden Horde was a dualistic nomad-sedentary empire, where the 'equestrian metropole' of the Nomads subordinated and economically exploited the agricultural periphery. Political structures of such type dominated in Central Asia, Arabia and many other Eurasian areas up until the modern times. The nomads of the steppes and the Bedouins of deserts took tribute from the inhabitants of oases in return for 'protection' from other nomad or Bedouin tribes and attacked the territories under 'protection' of other tribes.

Genghis Khan succeeded in stopping such inter-tribal fights and in directing the united military force of the steppes' tribes towards external expansion. However, after his death, the Mongols-Tatars were soon to engage into internal fights again. In the beginning such fights took place during the crises of succession to the throne of the Great Khan, but eventually they turned into a permanent state of relations among the imperial states of the Genghizids. As long as the Genghizids had sufficient resources not only for the internal fights but for external expansion as well, such expansion took place in the southern and south-western directions, not in western and north-western directions. They were less interested in the territories of Western Russia (current Belarus), which was far away from the steppes. These territories became the sphere of the GDL's hegemony, and later – of its informal empire, until they were formally annexed.

Having these territories incorporated in the middle of the 14th century, the Grand Duchy could launch a military challenge against the Tatars, thereby claiming to be more than 'a jackal, who follows a Mongolian tiger' (Edvardas Gudavičius)[59], and eats everything what the tiger left uneaten. Sometimes both imperial predators shared their haul – subordinated to Lithuanian rule; Kiev still paid tribute to the Tatars.

During its most rapid territorial expansion (in the middle of 14th century) the Grand Duchy had most of the attributes of a 'vulture empire'. It was a vulture with regard to the Golden Horde, exploiting and taking advantage of its weakening. Such was the initial 'imperial idea' of the GDL – to take over the suzerainty over Russian lands from the Tatars. 'Imperial claims of Lithuania had been laid down the best by Algirdas, who declared that 'naturally all the Russia should belong to Lithuanians''.[60] Eventually Lithuanians started intervening into the internal politics of the Tatars, thereby attaching them to their informal empire. Such interventions were prompted by the processes internal to the Mongolian societies, when one of the fighting parties started to look for political asylum and assistance in the GDL.

Another important pre-condition of successful imperial expansion of the Lithuanians was the process of internal fragmentation of the Russian lands. These processes created an optical illusion of the 'peaceful expansion' of Lithuania. Such expansion was 'peaceful' only because local Russian political societies were permanently in a state of internal crisis, when one of the parties (local princes, fighting for the rights of inheritance), which lost the fight, sought the support of the Lithuanians and an alliance with them through marriage. However, there always are two parties – not only the 'Lithuanian' one, which was ultimately a winner, but also the anti-Lithuanian, of which we know less only because history is written by scribes, who are serving the winners. Once the 'others' (in this case, Lithuanians) got involved into domestic affairs, usually it was not possible to get rid of them. In such way, the wave of Lithuanian military-political expansion moved from the ethnically Lithuanian *metropole* to the east, south-east and south. The anti-Lithuanian party, the existence of which can be conjectured theoretically even when there are no sources, witnessing its existence, did not treat the expansion of Lithuanians as either peaceful or merciful.

Though the Lithuanians were neither destroying the ancient traditions nor introducing new ones, their rule definitely implied very painful personal changes in the lives of the local princes and part of nobility, who had to give their place to the new-comers Gediminids and their chiefs. Besides, the most reliable way to destroy the ancient traditions is to introduce gradual changes. The absence of such changes in the beginning of Lithuanian rule does not imply that they were not introduced later. Not every conqueror is a revolutionary. When Russian princes were replaced with Lithuanians, this was a change of a personal nature. But the

reforms of Vytautas, who abolished the ancient system of partial principalities, were radical if judged by the criteria of that period. After the repeated conquest of Smolensk in 1404, 'the government of the state redistributed and enlarged landownership of nobility, thereby creating a layer of loyal population'.[61] The conservative nature of Lithuanian rule (with regard to the local Russian 'Ancient regime') is a myth of Russian historiography, similar to that of the peaceful expansion of Lithuanians.

The picture of the internal fights on the Ruthenian border of the GDL (which up to the 15th century moved deeper into the east), which weakened local Rus'ian societies from inside and prepared them for Lithuanian annexation can be found in the well documented history of political fights in Novgorod. It is a history which describes the 'Lithuanian' party, sometimes stronger, sometimes weaker. By providing support to that party, the GDL subordinated Novgorod to its hegemony for shorter or longer periods even without military actions, directed against the town. Surely, Lithuania also had experienced such internal political crises (for example, the succession strife after the murder of Mindaugas or the death of Algirdas), which made the country vulnerable to external aggression. 'When the clan was united, Lithuania was strong'.[62] The difference between Lithuania and its neighbors was that such political crises were not a permanent and normal, but exceptional and extreme state of affairs in the Grand Duchy, which was able to overcome such crises in a comparatively short period.

Such relatively greater cohesion of Lithuanian political society can be explained by the delayed social economic development under conditions of a relative overpopulation. Because of it, the service in the dukes' armies was the optimal channel of vertical mobility for young men. Comparison of Lithuanian society with the local Scandinavian societies in the period of Vikings' expansion could help to provide a more detailed explanation of economic and social factors, which conditioned the Lithuanian expansion from the end of the 12th century. Lithuanians are sometimes referred to as 'terrestrial Vikings'.[63] But there is also a significant difference between these nations. Emergence of statehood in Scandinavia was accompanied by the decreasing external activity. States in Scandinavia emerged not before, but after the external expansion and they were not *metropoles* of the lands, subordinated by the Vikings (in South Italy, Normandy, England, Rus'). According to Tomas Baranauskas, events took an opposite course in Lithuania.[64]

The answer to the question when the Lithuanian state emerged remains the object of discussions. Still, it is obvious the Lithuanian military expansion reached its peak more than hundred years after the establishment of a centralized state in the *metropole*. It can be disputed when Lithuania had passed the 'imperial threshold' (the lands of Black Rus' and Polotsk were annexed already in the 13th century), but the state during the reign of Gediminas can be unconditionally called

'empire'. 'During the reign of Gediminas Lithuania became the centre of a political system and the centre of gravity of not only the lands of Black Rus' and Polotsk, but also Galich-Volynia, Kiev, Pskov, all of which were in the sphere of political influence of Lithuania. This enabled Lithuania to become the participant of great political combinations and the dominating power in the region – the great power'.[65]

The expeditions of Vikings are the last episode in the Migration Period (*Völkerwanderung),* when entire agricultural populations moved to establish themselves in foreign countries. But "we do not witness anything similar to the military expeditions of folk migration type in the early Lithuania; none of the Lithuanian groups had ever attempted to establish its colony, independent of metropole". [66] In that respect the Grand Duchy differs typologically from 'barbarian kingdoms', established in the previous territories of the Roman Empire by Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Vandals, and Lombards. The similarity between the Grand Duchy and these 'barbarian kingdoms (as well as Viking states, established outside Scandinavia) is that in both cases we observe how less civilized and militant pagans submit to their rule a more civilized Christian majority of inhabitants. But the Russian princes did not have armies, formed of Lithuanian mercenaries, which could be compared to the troops of Germans and Vikings in the service of the Roman and Byzantine armies, which often had to defend their masters from other Germans and Vikings. The Lithuanian expeditions to Russian lands were leaded by their own dukes. They came there as soldiers and not as agricultural colonists.

It has to be mentioned that there are testimonies of entire Lithuanian villages, which had been moved by the Grand Dukes to the depth of Russian lands (e.g. by Algirdas to the district of Obolc in the principality of Vitebsk).[67] However, it was not a migration of the 'folk migration' (*Völkerwanderung)* type, but typical imperial practice of enforced deportations, which is even better exemplified by settlement of Tatars and Karaites in the ethnographic Lithuania during the reign of Vytautas. There are no sufficient grounds to identify the GDL with the 'barbarian kingdoms' (states established by German in the Roman Empire or states established by Vikings). Kiev Russia during the reign of Riurik and his successors was also a barbarian kingdom. The GDL, however, was a state of a different type. It was an empire with its *metropole* and periphery which is not characteristic to 'barbarian kingdoms'. The GDL emerged as a 'vulture empire' and even though it did not become a 'primary empire', it acquired many of the latter's features.

The ruling Lithuanian elite did not assimilate the local elite, but was assimilated itself, which is characteristic of both barbarian kingdoms and 'vulture empires'. This trend took an opposite direction after the Christianization of Lithuania, which initiated the Polonization of local Orthodox believers in the imperial periphery. The Polonization took place among Lithuanians as well, both

in the periphery and the *metropole*, but the disappearance of ethnic specificity of the Lithuanian nobility did not inhibit its clearly expressed political self-consciousness. Like in the case of the Roman ruling elite (estate of Senators), which later became composed not of Latin families but of Romanized provincials, the share of assimilated Ruthenian nobility (Kchodkevich, Sapiega) increased in the GDL ruling elite. But they considered themselves to be Polish-speaking Lithuanians.

Neither systems of transportation nor systems of communication in the GDL could be equaled to the classical examples of such primary empires as the Roman Empire or Achaemenid Persia. From the reign of Vytautas we know about the duty of *pastote* (analogy to post service) and its introduction into every land, submitted under the rule of the GDL ruler. In any case, it is difficult to imagine an imperial state without regular postal system and we should ask historians, whether they investigated profoundly enough the sources of the GDL history to find information of how the communication system in the Lithuanian empire was organized.

We know more about the system of central administration from the product of its functioning – the *Lithuanian Metrica* or court records. Offices of central administration of the GDL remained underdeveloped because of the GDL's federalization, which started after the death of Vytautas. Egidijus Banionis notes that "the GDL, covering vast territories, was, in essence, not centralized".[68] Still, the empire had a successfully functioning "central chancery", even if it was not very impressive. For its purposes, it used the language of the cheapest 'human resources' available to the grand dukes – Orthodox priests (I guess that salaries of Gediminas's Franciscan scribes, who could write in Latin, were higher twice or more). To use a 'foreign' or even a 'dead' language for the purposes of administration of the empire was not an exceptional characteristic of the GDL. Such was the practice of many other ancient empires, not to speak of the universal use of Latin in medieval Europe.

The GDL as empire was not a short-term state entity. It existed longer than many other more famous empires, which had not survived their founders. Therefore it can be stated that it passed the 'Augustan threshold' – was able to find a form of state organization, which guaranteed the sustainability of the political entity. Chronologically, such threshold was passed two decades after Vytautas' death. Until that time, the GDL was just a patrimony of the Gediminids, ruled by dukes collectively, abiding by the will of the representative of family, who had the top authority and who possessed the lands of *metropole*. The dynastical conflicts for the succession to the throne and the independent political activities of the magnates led to the conception of the state as 'public office' and of loyalty to the state as distinguished from loyalty to the ruler personally or to the ruling dynasty. From that crisis until the rebellion of Mykolas Glinskis (1507-

1508), there were no more internal conflicts, which would pose a threat to the state's existence, and the rebellion of Glinskis could be defined as the extreme situation, which demonstrated (in C. Schmitt's sense) that the Grand Duchy was close to the 'Caracalla threshold'. Political elites in the *metropole* and periphery merged into a single elite, even if 'bottoms' were still divided by the ethnic and religious differences.

The main trend of post-Vytautian development of the GDL was its transformation from patrimonial empire into federative estate monarchy. The process was finalized during the reign of Kazimieras, who granted privileges both to the nobility of the whole the GDL and its separate areas. "Starting with the 16th century, the Lithuanian state became a federation with clearly expressed hegemony of three Lithuanian palatinates. The state was entirely centralized but it was united by a unified system of territorial administrative offices".[69] It was a specifically Lithuanian (and atypical in the comparative perspective) way to overcome problems, related to the 'Augustan threshold'. A 'typical' reaction to the problems is centralization with the establishment of a strong bureaucratic apparatus of central power. Such apparatus was rudimentary in the GDL, which did not become 'a bureaucratic empire' in S.N. Eisenstadt's sense. The unity of the state was guaranteed by the integration of the peripheral political elite into the elite of the *metropole* through cultural homogenization on the basis of Polish cultural import. This process took different speeds in different areas of the empire (depending on their geographical distance from the western border) and its acceleration was accompanied by the mounting pressure from another empire – the Moscow Empire in the east.

In the wars with Moscow at the end of 15th century – beginning of the 16th century the GDL lost almost one third of its territory. Michail Krom [70] demonstrated that Moscow's aggression was successful in those Ruthenian lands which were relatively un-integrated into the political body of the GDL and exhibited the features, characteristic to the areas of informal empire and imperial periphery. The nobility of Smolensk, because of the pressure from below, agreed to open its gates to the Muscovite army. But the inhabitants of Vitebsk, Orsa, Krichev, Polotsk and other cities further to the west fought harshly against the Muscovites, and after the conquest rebelled to come back to the Grand Duchy. To consolidate the control of these territories, Moscow deported the local elite to the depth of the Moscow state and replaced it with service men resettled from inner areas of Muscovy.

Therefore, the dependence of these lands to the GDL was already voluntary. Local elites (though a majority of them still Orthodox believers) perceived the GDL as 'their own' state and themselves as 'Lithuanians'. Aggression from Moscow stopped at the eastern border of contemporary Belarus and remained there for more than two hundred years. Stabilization of the eastern

border of the Grand Duchy created the pre-conditions for the ethno-genesis of the Belarusian ethnos. Successful integration of ancestors of the Belarusians into the *metropole* of the GDL is the reason for contemporary Belarusians to speak of the GDL as of 'their' state. The problem of the "division of the GDL's inheritance" that still is on the agenda of contemporary Belorussian and Lithuanian historians, is a typical problem of imperial history. The imperial character of the GDL and its approximation to an ideal type of 'primary empire' is best revealed by its ability to cause the sense of nostalgia in the hearts of its descendants and quarrels about to whom it does "really belong".

After the GDL lost its hegemonic sphere, its informal empire and these eastern areas which at the end of the 15th century could still be qualified as its imperial periphery, the rest of its remaining territory (which corresponds to the territory of contemporary Lithuania and Belarus) transformed into a federative state. The integration of the southern *ukrainas* was not as advanced, and these lands, until they were annexed to Poland in 1569, were not part of the *metropole* but of the periphery under imperial control. In times when its internal situation was relatively stable, the GDL exploited the occasions to expand in the directions where the regional power equilibrium was disturbed, opening a "power vacuum".

The GDL aimed to have influence on domestic and foreign policies of the Crimea and Moldova. The Great Dukes Jagiellonians attempted to exploit the GDL's resources for their dynastic aims in competition for the thrones of Eastern and Central European kingdoms. But the ruling elite of the GDL resisted such attempts successfully, and on its own turn attempted to exploit the common rulers with Poland and other countries in the interests of the GDL. The last episode of the GDL imperial expansion was the intervention into the internal affairs of Livonia, which was destabilized by the Reformation. This intervention aimed to forestall Moscow's effort to use the disintegration of Livonia for the purposes of its imperial expansion. The treaty with Livonia, signed in November 1561, had established the submission of this country to Lithuania suzerainty. "What has happened was what Lithuanian armies aimed already in the beginning of the 13th century, and what Lithuanian diplomacy never tended to forget in subsequent ages".[71]

The last triumph of the Lithuanian empire was simultaneously its 'swan song'. The GDL had lost its war for Livonia with the Moscow state and this posed a dilemma: to acknowledge defeat and to lose not only newly acquired lands but also part of its own territory, or to seek the Polish support and pay its price: 'to implement' several acts of union, which were repeatedly signed from the end of the 14th century, but did not function *de facto* by that time. The history of Lithuanian and Polish relations from the Unions of Kreva and Lublin is a very complicated issue, which can not be taken into proper consideration in this article.[72] It is the opinion of the author that until 1569 Lithuania was a separate

and independent state. Though in some periods (during the war between Zygmantas I and Svitrigaila) the Polish impact on Lithuanian internal politics became stronger, the statements in the acts of unions about the 'adjoinment' or incorporation were just empty phrases There were no common institutions of state, and the Lithuanian ruling elite led domestic and foreign policies independently. Joint statehood of Lithuania and Poland acquired a real content only in 1569, when the Union of Lublin was signed, creating joint state institutions.

To discuss the imperial character of the GDL after 1569 is rather complicated, because it ceased to be an independent state and became a part of united Polish-Lithuanian state. The character of this state and the circumstances of its creation are a separate topic, which requires to discuss problems of Polish imperialism (which in Lithuanian historical literature is often referred to as 'hegemonism'[73] and 'expansionism'[74]) and its relation to Lithuanian imperialism. I shall give only few remarks concerning that problem.

The specific character of Lithuanian and Polish relations explains why comparative researchers of empires in the West avoid inclusion of the case of Polish-Lithuanian state into their sample of empires. On the one hand, the history of Lithuanian and Poland approachement can be described as the history of Polish imperialism, which is interesting from the perspective of comparative imperiology as a case demonstrating that imperial expansion does not necessarily take the shape of military conquest. Such is A. Motyl's view: "The historical record offers just as many examples of dynastic unions between powerful and weak monarchs that led to the incorporation of the latter realms on imperial terms. The emergence of the Polish-Lithuanian Rzecz Pospolita and the rise of the Habsburg Empire are two such cases. Queen Jadwiga's union with Grand Duke Jogaila in 1386 pushed Lithuania down the slippery slope of dynastic union, incorporation, and empire".[75] From such perspective, Poland emerges as the subject of expansion and Lithuania as its object. But then we should be able to identify in the history of Lithuanian-Polish relations the threshold when Lithuania first became part of Polish hegemony (in the sense of M. Doyle), then part of its informal empire and eventually a periphery of the empire. History of Lithuanian-Polish relations may be interpreted in such a way, but with considerable difficulties.

As it was already emphasized, Lithuania continued to pursue independent domestic and foreign policies after its union with Poland. It has to be acknowledged that Polonization of the GDL ruling elite took place at the same time, but this process of Polonization hardly can be subsumed into the concept of imperial expansion unless 'cultural imperialism' is considered as a distinctive form of imperialism. In the conception of M. Doyle, the dissemination of the culture of metropolitan society is a 'transnational' force which establishes pre-conditions for imperialist expansion, but is not the part of the latter, because imperialism is understood as a phenomenon of international politics. Working

inside an already established (by military force) empire, dissemination of the *metropole* culture operates as integrating factor (which moves the empire to the 'Caracalla threshold'). If we make the concept of imperialism so broad that it includes the notion of 'cultural imperialism', we may state that empires possess both hard power (economic and military resources) and soft power (attractive cultural values and goods and active cultural life in their capitals, which attracts the intellectuals from the periphery).

On the eve of the Union of Lublin, the Lithuanian magnates were more Polonized than the GDL's nobility, but it were the magnates who defended the independence of the GDL and not the nobility which was the proponent of the Union. Because the political nation of Lithuania was identical to the nobility, a conclusion is unavoidable that the Union of Lublin was a voluntary union of two political nations, which can be better described by the notion of Lithuanian-Polish confederation and not of Polish empire. Federative states may be empires, but federation is a political arrangement of *metropole*, while political societies, subjugated by the united efforts of federative subjects, belong to the periphery, informal empire or hegemony of the federation. In the case under consideration, the periphery, informal empire and hegemony sphere of the confederative Polish-Lithuanian state included at the end of the 16th century – 17th century Livonia, Eastern Prussia, and Ukraine. Political problems, which had been created by the Polish colonization of Ukraine, and the inability of the Republic of Two Nations to solve them, caused political and military catastrophe of the middle of the 17th century, after which the Republic was just an object of imperial expansion of neighboring countries, instead of being a self-assertive empire itself.

The solution of Ukraine's problem was complicated by the interpretation of the idea of '*Antemurale Christianitatis*' (Bastion of Christianity), which became dominant in the Polish-Lithuanian state from the beginning of the 17th century. This idea was a united imperial project of the Polish-Lithuanian state which had to embody shared values, able to overcome the differences between peripheries and *metropole*. After the victory of the Counter-Reformation, 'Christianity' was identified with the Catholicism, and such interpretation of the imperial idea transformed it into a barrier to integrate the Orthodox periphery in the southeast. If the Reformation in the GDL had ended with the victory of Protestantism, the geopolitics of Eastern Europe could have acquired a different shape and the Republic of Two Nations could have to stand the attacks of Russia only. Now it had to fight Russia and Sweden, the Protestant Empire of Northern Europe in the 17th century. The Swedish attacks were caused not only by the conflict of interests in Livonia but also by the claims of the representatives of the Catholic branch of the Vasa dynasty, ruling as elected kings of the Polish-Lithuanian state, to the throne of Sweden, realization of which would have meant the arrival of Jesuits to Scandinavia.

'*Antemurale Christianitatis*' was the imperial project of the united Polish-Lithuanian state. Had the Gediminds' or Jagiellonians' Lithuania any similar project? The absence of such project makes the historians speak about the imperial character of the GDL with certain reservations. 'It is true that we usually tend to think of empires as states with concentrated central power of monarch, which are able to impose their language, religion and even way of life on subordinated countries. This is not the feature of Lithuania during the reign of Gediminas and Algirdas. On the contrary, the Gediminds on thrones of annexed principalities tended to accept the Orthodox faith and even the language of the land'.[76] We mentioned already the claims of the Gediminids to rule over all the territories inhabited by the Baltic tribes. But even if such 'pan-Baltic' imperial project had ever existed, it was already forgotten in the 15th century and remembered as 'pure history'. The evidence, supporting such diagnosis, is the fact that the Lithuanian ruling elite never showed any attempts to exploit favorable conditions and to annex Prussian lands. When Lithuania annexed Livonia, this last victory of Lithuanian imperial expansion had nothing in common with the 'pan-Baltic' idea. 'Lithuania annexed Livonia and not Latvia'.[77]

The idea of subordination of all Russian lands (testified by the historical documents from the reign of Algirdas) was more operative in practice. Suzerainty over these lands was claimed by the Golden Horde and Tatar political entities, therefore the GDL rulers thought that the necessary condition to subordinate Russian lands is to subordinate under Lithuanian hegemony part occupied by the Tatars. In the situation of threat from Lithuania, the princes of Moscow sought the assistance of the Tatar Khans. Lithuanian rulers concluded that the best way to subordinate Moscow was to have control over its suzerains. Such idea underscored the 'grand strategy' of Vytautian Eastern politics. It could even seem during the reign of Vytautas that the subordination of Russia was very close – with Vytautas' grandson (Basil II) on the throne of Moscow it remained only to put under Lithuanian control the Tatar steppe, because otherwise the control of north-east Russia could be neither long-term nor stable.

Subordination of all Russian lands is an imperial idea, which is typical of a 'vulture empire' and of certain species of 'shadow empires'. They lack 'soft' power, i.e. power of cultural attraction. The aspirations of their ruling elites do not go beyond claims to be legitimate successors to certain political (imperial) or civilization tradition. The Gediminids claimed the inheritance of Kiev Russia. The success of their project would have meant that the inheritance of Kiev Russia is not divided among three nations of eastern Slavs, which emerged out of the Ruthenians because of the failure of the GDL's imperial project.

The differentiation of Belarus and Ukrainian ethnos is the most significant long term outcome of the GDL's imperial expansion to the east. Such outcome was possible because Algirdas did not succeeded in crushing Moscow and

Vytautas did not win at Vorskla. If the results of these fights had been different, Moscow would not have had the chance to become 'the third Rome', but Vilnius would have become 'the second Kiev'. 'Unification of western Russian lands around Lithuania was essentially the re-building of destroyed political unity of the Kiev epoch, the rediscovery of the lost political centre. The difference was only that because of the historical circumstances such centre was established at the Vilija river, and not at river of Dnepr, as it was in the end of the 9th century'.[78] But the new centre did not become the 'second Kiev'. Vilnius did not become the centre of rebuilt political unity of the Ruthenians but caused the division of the latter into separate nations of Belarusians and Ukrainians.

Samuel Adrian M. Adshead gives a similar picture of geopolitical consequences of the possible success of imperial the GDL's project: 'Yet the Vorskla may have made a difference. If it had gone the other way, Vytautas might have separated from his cousin Wladyslaw of Poland, undone the union of Krevo, and reunited the Russians round Vilnius or Kiev rather than round Moscow'[79] But the idea of S.A.M. Adshead that liquidation of Kreva Union was an inevitable result of Vorskla victory is untenable. Rus' of the "Second Kiev" could have been different from the factual Muscovite Russia and from its predecessor Byzantine Russia of 'the first Kiev'. To change Catholicism into Orthodox faith was not politically beneficial to Vytautas, because this would have provided the Teutonic Order with the necessary justification to continue the war against Lithuania.

What is even more important, after the Christianization of the *metropole*, the subordination of all Russian lands did not exhaust the imperial project of the GDL. After Christianization, the latter could be described by the words which S.N. Eisenstadt wrote of empires, that 'they have often embraced some wider, potentially universal political and cultural orientation that went beyond that of any of their component parts'[80] The episode of Grigoryi Tsamblak during the second half of the reign of Vytautas, when the grand duke took care to both establish a separate province of the Lithuanian Orthodox Church and to unite it by the bonds of Church Union to the Roman Catholic Church, was not accidental. The success of such Unite Church was a key to the cohesion of the state during the existence of the Grand Duchy, and later – of the united Polish-Lithuanian state.

In the 16-17th centuries, for representatives of local Ruthenian elite, to belong to Unite Orthodox meant the half-way on the way to Catholicism and the membership in Lithuanian nation of noblemen, which was a part of Polish macro-nation.[81] The areas of the Polish-Lithuanian state, where church union did not take roots, remained not-integrated into its political organism. The potential of the Union to perform such role was limited by Muscovite support to those Orthodox, who opposed the Union. Therefore the Union did not become a reservoir of resources of "soft power". The Lithuanian dependence on Polish support to

defend against Moscow was pre-determined by the failure of the GDL to subordinate the whole Rus' under its political control.

The success at this could have lead to the different role of the Union: something more than just a half-station for Orthodox Ruthenian nobles under way to become Polish speaking Catholic Lithuanians. Such Union of Orthodox and Catholic churches, and potentially – the synthesis of two cultural traditions (Byzantine-Russian and Western-Latin), could became the distinctive idea of the GDL empire. However, this idea was viable only if the GDL had submitted all Russian lands under its rule and had eliminated the forces, which had political interest in preservation of distinction of Orthodoxy.

During the Interwar period, the idea that the Lithuanian historical mission is to provide the synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures, was advanced and defended by Stasys Šalkauskis.[82] This idea was and is both utopian and politically harmful both in the Interwar Lithuania and today.[83] But it reflects the historical possibilities which existed more than 500 years ago. This is the possibility of transformation of the GDL from "vulture empire" to "primary empire", and thereby, possibly, to a separate civilization. The Lithuanian authors of the 20-21st centuries, who treat the Lithuanian historical mission as the "synthesis of Western and Eastern cultures" or as becoming "a bridge between West and East" were born about 500 years too late.

Notes

[1] B. Disraeli. Berlin Treaty. Speech in the House of Lords (18.07.1878) // Selected Speeches of the late Right Honourable the Earl Beaconsfield, ed. Th. E. Kebbel, vol. 2. London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1882. P. 201.

[2] See e.g. E. Gellner. Language and Solitude: Wittgenstein, Malinowski and the Habsburg Dilemma. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.

[3] See D. Lal. In Praise of Empires : Globalization and Order. New York: Palgrave, 2004.

[4] S.C. Rowell. Lithuania Ascending: a Pagan Empire Within East-Central Europe, 1295-1345. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994.

[5] A. Bumblauskas. Senosios Lietuvos istorija 1009-1795. V.: R. Paknio leidykla, 2005, p. 106.

[6] See: G. Beresnevičius. Imperijos darymas. Lietuviškos ideologijos metmenys. Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2003. See also N. Putinaitė. Šiaurės Atėnų tremtiniai. V.: Aidai, 2004.

[7] See Č. Laurinavičius; E. Motieka; N.Statkus. Baltijos valstybių geopolitikos bruožai. XX amžius. V.: Lietuvos istorijos instituto leidykla, 2005.

[8] A. Belkin; Ph.E. Tetlock (Eds) Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics : Logical, Methodological, and Psychological Perspectives. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996; See also Z.Norkus. Kontrafaktiniai sąlyginiai teiginiai istoriografijoje. Problemos, 1998, 53, p. 43-60.

[9] Rowell S.C. Lithuania Ascending, p. 93.

[10] See V.I. Lenin. Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism : a Popular Outline... New York: International Publishers, 1939.

[11] R.Batūra. Lietuva tautų kovoje prieš Aukso Ordą. Nuo Batu antplūdžio iki mūšio prie Mėlynųjų Vandenų. V.: Mintis, 1975, p. 234.

[12] Cp.. D. Lieven. Empire. The Russian Empire and Its Rivals. New Haven: Yale UP, 2000, p. 8.

[13] See Imperialismus. In O. Brunner; W.Conze; R.Koselleck (Hrsg.). Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland. Bd. 3. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982, S. 172.

[14] See A.Demandt. Der Fall Roms. Die Auflösung des römischen Reiches im Urteil der Nachwelt. München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1984, S. 71-89. See also: „Reich" // O. Brunner; W.Conze; R.Koselleck (Hrsg.). Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland. Bd. 5. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982, S. 423-508.

[15] A. Bumblauskas. Senosios Lietuvos istorija 1009-1795, p. 107.

[16] "King is an emperor in his own kingdom" (Lat.).

[17] See M. Jučas. Lietuvos ir Lenkijos unija (XIV a. vid. – XIX a. pr.). V.: Aidai, 2000, p. 236.

[18] G.Beresnevičius. Palemono legendos periferinis turinys. Religinė istorinė studija. V.: Sapnų sala, 2003, p. 81-82.

[19] Vytautas himself most probably never visited the shores of Black Sea..

[20] Z.Ivinskis. Lietuvos istorija iki Vytauto Didžiojo mirties. Roma: Lietuvos Katalikų Mokslo Akademija, 1978, p. 6.

[21] S.C.Rowell. Lithuania Ascending, p. 94.

[22] N.Tumėnienė. Vincas Grybas. Gyvenimo ir kūrybos drama. V.: Lietuvos dailės muziejus, 2004, p. 65-66.

[23] Ibidem, p. 45.

[24] See: V. Pašuta. Lietuvos valstybės susidarymas. Vilnius: Mintis, 1971.

[25] See the survey of the recent work on empires and imperialism with the main attention paid to literature from the field of the theory of international relations: Lopata R.; Statkus N. Imperijos, pasaulio tvarka ir mažosios valstybės // Lietuvos metinė strateginė apžvalga 2005. Vilnius: Lietuvos karo akademija, 2006.

[26] See S. N. Eisenstadt. The Political Systems of Empires. N.Y.: Transaction Publishers, 1993. First edition of the book was published in the 1963.

[27] See C.M.Sinopoli. The Archaeology of Empires // Annual Review of Anthropology, 1994, vol. 23, p.159-180; M.T Larsen M.T. Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1979; S. E. Alcock; T.N.D'Altroy; K.D.Morrison; C.M.Sinopoli (Eds). Empires. Perspectives from Archaeology and History. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001; P.Garnsey; C.R.Whittaker. Imperialism in the Ancient World. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1978; M.Cox; T.Dunne, K. Booth (Eds) Empires, Systems and States : Great Transformations in International Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001. See also Российская империя в сранительной перспективе. Под ред. А.И.Миллера. Москва: Новое издательство, 2004; Российская империя в зарубежной историографии. Сост. П.Верт, П.С.Кабытов. Москва: Новое издательство, 2005; С.И. Каспэ. Империя и модернизация: Общая модель и российская специфика. Москва: РОССПЭН, 2001.

[28] See M.Liverani (Ed.). Akkad: The First World Empire. Padua: Sargon, 1993.

[29] J. N.Postgate. Taxation and Conscription in the Assyrian Empire. Rome: Biblical Institute, 1974; B. Oded. Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire, Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1979.

[30] G.W.Conrad and A.A.Demarest. Religion and Empire: The Dynamics of Aztec and Inca Expansionism. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984; Demarest A.A., Conrad G.W. (Eds.) Ideology and Pre-Columbian Civilizations. Santa Fe, NM: School Am. Res. Press, 1992; Th.C.Patterson. The Inca Empire: The Formation and Disintegration of a Pre-Capitalist State. New York: Berg, 1991.

[31] F.F.Berdan. The Aztecs of Central Mexico: An Imperial Society. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982.

[32] S. Blake. The Patrimonial-Bureaucratic Empire of the Mughals //Journal of Asian Studies, 1979, Vol.39, p. 77-94; J.F.Richards. The Mughal Empire. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993.

[33] Th. Allsen. Mongol Imperialism: The Policies of the Grand Qun Mongke in China, Russia, and the Islamic Lands, 1251-1259. Berkeley:Univ. of California Press, 1987.

[34] S.N.Eisenstadt. Empires. In International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences. Vol. 5. New York: Macmillan, 1968, p. 41.

[35] See M. Doyle. Empires. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1986.

[36] See A.J.Motyl. Revolutions, Nations, Empires: Conceptual Limits and Theoretical Possibilities. New York : Columbia University Press, 1999; Same author: Imperial Ends: the Decay, Collapse, and Revival of Empires. New York: Columbia UP, 2001.

[37] Doyle M. Empires, p.45.

[38] See C. Schmitt. The Concept of the Political. Translated and with an introduction by Georg Schwab. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996. Pirmas knygos leidimas išėjo 1932 m.

[39] Ch. Tilly. "How Empires End" In K. Barkey; M. von Hagen, Mark (Ed.) After Empire. Multiethnic Societies and Nation Building. The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires. Boulder: Westview Press, 1997, p. 3.

[40] M.Beissinger. Rethinking Empire in the Wake of Soviet Collapse // Z. Barany; R. Moser (Eds) Ethnic Politics and Post- Communism: Theories and Practice. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005, p. 17.

[41] See J. Donnely. Sovereign Inequalities and Hierarchy in Anarchy: American Power and International Society //
European Journal of International Relations , 2006, Vol. 12(2), p. 141.

[42] See ibidem, p. 46-53. A.J. Motyl applies the analysis of the informational problems of the totalitarian regimes, provided by famous American political scientist Karl W. Deutsch, who used this analysis to substantiate the forecast of the unavoidable decline of totalitarian regimes. See K. Deutsch. Cracks in the Monolith: Possibilities and Patterns of Disintegration in Totalitarian Systems // H.Eckstein; D. E. Apter (eds), Comparative Politics: A Reader. New York: Free Press, 1963, p. 497–508.

[43] J. Gallagher; R. E. Robinson. The Imperialism of Free Trade // Economic History Review, Second Series, 1953, Vol. 6, p. 1-15; The same authors: Africa and the Victorians. The Official Mind of Imperialism. London: Macmillan, 1961.

[44] See J. E. Thomson. Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns : State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe. Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1994.

[45] W. Doyle. Empires, p. 137.

[46] See Th. J. Barfield. The Shadow Empires: Imperial State Formation along the Chinese-Nomad Frontier In Alcock, Susan et al. Empires. Perspectives from Archaeology and History. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001, p. 10-41. Žr. taip pat: jo paties, The Perilous Frontier : Nomadic Empires and China. Cambridge, Mass. : Basil Blackwell, 1989.

[47] See E. N. Luttwak. The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1976; M. Mann, The Sources of Social Power. Vol. 1. A History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986, p. 250-300.

[48] Th. J. Barfield. The Shadow Empires, p. 34.

[49] A. Bumblauskas. Senosios Lietuvos istorija 1009-1795. p.164.

[50] M. Jučas. Lietuvos ir Lenkijos unija, p. 95.

[51] A. Bumblauskas. Senosios Lietuvos istorija 1009-1795, p. 145.

[52] М. К. Любавский. Очерк истории Литовско-Русского государства до Люблинской унии включительно. Изд. 2. Москва: Московская художественная печатня, 1915, с. 16.

[53] Ibidem, p. 82

[54] E. Gudavičius. Lietuvos istorija nuo seniausių laikų iki 1569 metų, p.389.

[55] Ibidem, p.388.

[56] A. Bumblauskas. Senosios Lietuvos istorija 1009-1795, p. 144.

[57] S. C. Rowell. Lithuania Ascending, p. 294.

[58] See D. Keene. Cities and Empires. Journal of Urban History, 2005, Vol. 32(1), p. 8-21.

[59] Citation according to: A. Bumblauskas. Senosios Lietuvos istorija 1009-1795, p. 106.

[60] Ibidem, p.107.

[61] Gudavičius. Lietuvos istorija nuo seniausių laikų iki 1569 metų, p. 389.

[62] Rowell. Lithuania Ascending, p. 294.

[63] See A. Bumblauskas. Senosios Lietuvos istorija 1009-1795, p.32-34. Žr. taip pat: S.C. Rowell. Iš viduramžių ūkų kylanti Lietuva, p. 312

[64] See T. Baranauskas. Lietuvos valstybės ištakos. V.: Vaga, 2000

[65] A. Bumblauskas. Senosios Lietuvos istorija 1009-1795, p. 70.

[66] T. Baranauskas. Lietuvos valstybės ištakos, p. 163.

[67] E. Gudavičius, Lietuvos istorija nuo seniausių laikų iki 1569 metų, p. 143.

[68] E.Banionis. Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės pasiuntinių tarnyba XV–XVI amžiais", Vilnius: Diemedis, 1998, p. 36.

[69] Ibidem, p. 396.

[70] М. М. Кром. Меж Русью и Литвой: западнорусские земли в системе русско-литовских отношений конца XV-первой трети XVI в. Москва: Археографический центр, 1995.

[71] E. Gudavičius. Lietuvos istorija nuo seniausių laikų iki 1569 metų, p. 615.

[72] Comprehensive survey of the scholarly work on this topic see in M. Jučas. Lietuvos ir Lenkijos unija.

[73] Cp. E. Gudavičius, Lietuvos istorija nuo seniausių laikų iki 1569 metų, p. 207, 292.

[74] Ibidem, p. 289.

[75] A. Motyl. Revolutions, Nations, Empires, p. 135.

[76] A. Bumblauskas, Senosios Lietuvos istorija 1009-1795, p.106.

[77] E. Gudavičius, Lietuvos istorija nuo seniausių laikų iki 1569 metų, p.615.

[78] М. К. Любавский. Очерк истории Литовско-Русского государства до Люблинской унии включительно, с. 36.

[79] S. A. M. Adshead. Central Asia in World History. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993. http://coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/~fisher/hst373/readings/tamerlane.html. Accessed 20.11, 2007.

[80] S.N.Eisenstadt. Empires, p. 41.

[81] See E. Gudavičius. Bajoriškoji lietuvių tauta ir Didžioji Lietuvos kunigaikštija // jo paties, Lietuvos europėjimo keliais. Istorinės studijos. V.: Aidai, 2002, p. 187-188.

[82] See S. Šalkauskis, Stasys. Dviejų pasaulių takoskyroje. In Raštai, t. 4. V.: Mintis, p.21-193; jo paties: Lietuvių tauta ir jos ugdymas // ten pat, p. 197-441; Maceina A. Kultūros sintezė ir lietuviškoji kultūra // Raštai, t. 1. V.: Mintis, 1991, p.396-524.

[83] See A. Jokubaitis. Stasys Šalkauskis and Antanas Maceina kaip politikos filosofai // The same author.. Liberalizmo tapatumo problemos. V. : Versus Aureus, 2003; N. Putinaitė. Šiaurės Atėnų tremtiniai, p. 119-131.