

## EXPOSURES OF THE 18TH CENTURY MOVEMENT OF LITHUANIAN STUDIES<sup>1</sup> IN PRUSSIA. A HISTORY OF ONE FAMILY: MIELCKES VS. MILKAI

### *Summary*

The 18th century was one of the most significant stages in the formation of the written Lithuanian language in multinational and multicultural Prussia, in historiography sometimes referred to as the Golden Age of Lithuanian literature. At the very beginning of the century, the state strategy of the Kingdom of Prussia, based on the autochthonous past and culture and the ideas of the Enlightenment, promoted Prussian patriotism and simultaneously the development of written Lithuanian. The reform of churches and schools in Prussian Lithuania, launched by the second King of Prussia Frederick William I (Germ. *Friedrich Wilhelm I.*, 1688–1740, ruled 1713–1740), created a favourable environment for the process, which in the first half of the century resulted in a major breakthrough in Lithuanian translations of religious literature. The 18th century in Prussia, which started with the publishing of the first full Lithuanian *New Testament* (1701) and the first philological polemic over the principles of the Lithuanian language (1706), emerged as a steadily growing movement of Lithuanian studies, just interrupted for several years by the Great Plague (1709–1711).

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<sup>1</sup> The term *Lithuanian studies* is understood as the creation and nurturing of Lithuanian culture, language, and literature.

Active participants of the said movement from the 1720s were the Mielcke (Lith. *Milkus*) family: the father Peter Gottlieb Mielcke (Lith. *Petras Gotlybas Milkus*, 1695–1753) and his three sons Theodor Gabriel Mielcke (Lith. *Teodoras Gabrielius Milkus*, 1728–1762), Christian Gottlieb Mielcke (Lith. *Kristijonas Gotlybas Milkus*, 1733–1807), and Daniel Friedrich Mielcke (Lith. *Danielius Frydrichas Milkus*, 1739–1818). All of them were alumni of the University of Königsberg and worked as Evangelical Lutheran priests or teachers in Prussian Lithuania. Two generations of the Mielcke family were productively involved in the whirlwind of the movement during the three stages of its livening up. Those were: 1) in the first half of the century, a project for the collective preparation of Lithuanian religious books organised by Johann Jacob Quandt (Lith. *Jonas Jokūbas Kvantas*, 1686–1772), professor of theology at the University of Königsberg and the chief court preacher, which was crowned with the publishing of the first full Lithuanian Bible (Königsberg, 1735); 2) at the end of the century, a philological controversy between Gottfried Ostermeyer (Lith. *Gotfrydas Ostermejeris*, 1716–1800) and Christian Gottlieb Mielcke on the principles of editing Lithuanian hymns and compiling hymnals, involving a large number of Lithuanian-speaking Prussian Lithuanian priests and resulting in works of different genres by the opponents of the discussion; 3) at the very end of the century, the period of active Lithuanian studies by Christian Gottlieb Mielcke, initiated and supported in every possible way by Christoph Friedrich Heilsberg (1725–1807), counsellor of Königsberg Chamber of War and Domains and inspector of East Prussian schools, bringing on significant linguistic, educational, and religious publications and the first historical poem in Lithuanian.

The research presented in the monograph focuses on the contribution of the Mielcke family to Lithuanian culture and literature as well as their influence on the development of the Lithuanian written language. The historical research of the authors is based on archival sources kept in memory institutions of Lithuania, Germany, and Poland: the Secret State Archives Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation (Germ. *Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz*, GStA PK), Evan-

gical Central Archives in Berlin (Germ. *Evangelisches Zentralarchiv in Berlin*, EZA), Leipzig Branch of the Saxon State Archives (Germ. *Sächsisches Staatsarchiv, Staatsarchiv Leipzig*, SächsStA, StA-L), the Polish State Archives in Olsztyn (Pol. *Archiwum Państwowe w Olsztynie*, APO), in the Manuscript Department of the Vrublevskis' Library, the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (Lith. *Lietuvos mokslų akademijos Vrublevskių biblioteka*, LMAVB), etc. Most of the primary sources analysed in the monograph have been put into scholarly circulation for the first time. Some of them – official letters of the Mielcke family members addressed to the authorities of the Kingdom of Prussia – were published in the book prepared by the authors of the present monograph: Birutė Triškaitė, Žavinta Sidabraitė (eds.), *Exposures of the 18th Century Movement of Lithuanian Studies in Prussia 2. Documentary Heritage of the Mielcke Family* (Vilnius, 2019).

Chapter 1: *The Mielcke (Milkus) Family in Prussian Lithuania: from the 17th towards the 20th Century* (Birutė Triškaitė) introduces a study of genealogy and family history. The reference person for the study is Peter Gottlieb Mielcke, born in Tilsit (Lith. *Tilžė*) in the late 17th century, future Evangelical Lutheran priest in Georgenburg (Lith. *Jurbarkas*) and Mehlkehmen (Lith. *Mielkiemis*) and developer of Lithuanian writings. He was the first representative of the Mielcke family to get involved in the field of Lithuanian culture. The study aims to identify the ethnic and social origin of the Mielcke family, to restore the missing chains in the family started by Peter Gottlieb Mielcke, to disclose family connections with other famous contemporaries, and to overview the links of later generations with Lithuanian culture. The main source of the genealogical reconstruction was the Prussian Lithuanian Parish Registers.

As evidenced by the study, Peter Gottlieb Mielcke was born into the family of Peter Mielcke (?–1711?), a member of the upper middle class (Germ. *Großbürger*), malt merchant (Germ. *Mälzenbrauer*), and Maria Kross (Kroß, 1667–after 1711). The male line of the Mielcke family took root in Prussian Lithuania in the second half of the 17th century: it was then that Peter Gottlieb Mielcke's father, who came from Kolberg (Pol. *Kołobrzeg*) in West Pomerania, settled in Tilsit. His

mother came from a Tilsitian family of several generations; her father Peter Kroß and grandfather Michel Schwenner were well-known Tilsit merchants. On his mother's line, Peter Gottlieb Mielcke's family tree went back to at least the second half of the 16th century, to the Engelbrecht family living in Tilsit. One of its most famous representatives was Reinhold Engelbrecht, alderman (Germ. *Ratsverwandter*) of Tilsit, who in 1595 established the Engelbrecht Scholarship (Lat. *Stipendium Engelbrechtianum*) for his family descendants studying at the University of Königsberg – it was repeatedly awarded to the members of the Mielcke family.

Regina Louisa Schimmelpfennig (1702–1776), the wife of Peter Gottlieb Mielcke, was the kinship link between the Mielcke family and another famous contemporary – Adam Friedrich Schimmelpfennig Junior (Lith. *Adomas Frydrichas Šimelpenigis*, 1699–1763), priest of Popelken (Lith. *Papelkiai*), translator of hymns, compiler of a Lithuanian official hymnal, one of the translators of the first printed Lithuanian Bible (Königsberg, 1735) and editor of its second edition (1755) as well as initiator of Lithuanian secular poetry. Regina Louisa Schimmelpfennig-Mielcke was his sister and daughter of the Piktupönen (Lith. *Piktupėnai*) priest Martin Schimmelpfennig (Lith. *Martynas Šimelpenigis*, 1668–1735) as well as niece of the Skaisgirren (Lith. *Skaisgiriai*) priest Adam Friedrich Schimmelpfennig Senior (Lith. *Adomas Frydrichas Šimelpenigis*, 1677–1740).

The marriage of Peter Gottlieb Mielcke to Regina Louisa Schimmelpfennig, which lasted for twenty-seven years, was blessed with six children – three sons and three daughters: in addition to the already known Theodor Gabriel (28/03/1728–19/03/1762), Christina Petronella (?/02/1730–19/02/1799), Christian Gottlieb (?/?/1733–06/07/1807), and Daniel Friedrich (11/01/1739–21/03/1818), the couple had another two daughters: Maria Dorothea (?/?/1730/1731–23/09/1807) and Eleonora Charlotta (14/02/1741–after 1753). The family of Peter Gottlieb Mielcke also raised two sons of Regina Louisa Schimmelpfennig from her first marriage to Tobias Tiedtke (1688–1725), priest of Lappienen (Lith. *Lapynai*): Christoph Ernst Tiedtke (03/05/1722–after 1772) and Gottfried Tiedtke (08/11/1723–25/01/1791).

As testified to by archival sources, Theodor Gabriel Mielcke, the eldest son of Peter Gottlieb Mielcke, priest in Pillkallen (Lith. *Pilkalnis*), married Philippina Charlotta Rochau (1734–after 1764), daughter of Johann Christian Conrad Rochau (?–1771), Amtsrat (senior administrative officer) of Ballgarden (Lith. *Balgardis*) near Tilsit, and Magdalena Elisabeth Sophia Domhardt, in June 1755. The marriage established kinship ties between the Mielcke family and Johann Friedrich Domhardt (1712–1781), counsellor of Gumbinnen (Lith. *Gumbinė*) Chamber of War and Domains (Germ. *Kriegs- und Domänenkammer zu Gumbinnen*), who later became the first President of the East and West Prussian provinces and was highly favoured by Frederick II, King of Prussia (Germ. *Friedrich II.*, 1712–1786, ruled in 1740–1786). Johann Friedrich Domhardt was Philippina Charlotta Rochau-Mielcke's maternal uncle (i.e. her mother's brother).

Cantor in Pillkallen Christian Gottlieb Mielcke, Peter Gottlieb Mielcke's middle son of the greatest merit to Lithuanian culture, must have stayed single – no data on his marriage or children's baptism have been found in the church records of Pillkallen. His unmarried sister Maria Dorothea Mielcke is believed to have lived with him; she died in Pillkallen just a couple of months after her brother's death.

The church records of Szittkehmen (Lith. *Žydkiemis*) and Mehlkehmen made it possible to supplement and specify the information on the family of Daniel Friedrich Mielcke, the youngest son of Peter Gottlieb Mielcke, provided in previous historiography. He was married to Louisa Juliana Schröder (1752–1810), the eldest daughter of Paul Schröder (1723–1796), priest in Ballethen (Lith. *Balėtai*) and translator of hymns. They raised five children – two sons and three daughters. Friedrich Wilhelm Ferdinand (1771–1853), the eldest son of Daniel Friedrich Mielcke, was the last priest in Prussian Lithuania under the surname *Mielcke*. August Gottfried Mielcke (1774–1837), the second son of Daniel Friedrich Mielcke, studied law and became secret advisor to the government (Germ. *Geheimer Regierungsrat*). In 1814, he married a descendant of two noble families: his wife Friederike Sophie von Hamilton (1786–after 1832) was daughter of Major General of Prussia Ernst Wilhelm von Hamilton (1744–1811) and Bar-

ness Wilhelmine Juliane Sophie Schenk von Trautenberg (1764–?). Johanna Christiana Mielcke (1783–1873), the youngest daughter of Daniel Friedrich Mielcke, was married to Wilhelm Theodor Schimmpelfennig (1787–1849?), the then precentor of Szillen (Lith. *Žiliai*), and later priest of Ruß (Lith. *Rusnė*) and superintendent of Didlacken (Lith. *Didlaukiai*). In historiography, he was best known as assistant to Martin Ludwig Rhesa (Lith. *Martynas Liudvikas Rėza*, 1776–1840) in collecting Lithuanian folk songs. It is the descendants of the large family of Daniel Friedrich Mielcke that are traced to the present day.

All the boys who grew up in the family of Peter Gottlieb Mielcke – two stepsons and three sons, following the example of their father and perhaps also drawing from the experiences of all three uncles and their maternal grandfather, chose to study theology. All of them, except for the eldest stepson Christoph Ernst Tiedtke, graduated from the University of Königsberg and afterwards worked in Prussian Lithuania. All were ordained as Evangelical Lutheran priests, except for Christian Gottlieb Mielcke with the most distinguished merits to Lithuanian culture, who was introduced as the cantor in Pillkallen parish on 11 July 1762 and worked there all his life. Having grown up in a family with strong Lithuanian traditions, all of them had a good command of the Lithuanian language, and all the three sons seem to have been teachers of the Lithuanian Language Seminar at the University of Königsberg, while the eldest stepson Christoph Ernst Tiedtke taught at the Lithuanian Language Seminar at the University of Halle. He indicated the fact in the application of 12 December 1747 to appoint him as a priest of Ballethen, which is the only known source witnessing that the Lithuanian Language Seminar in Halle functioned longer than merely until the year 1740, as had been previously assumed. Afterwards, Christoph Ernst Tiedtke served as a priest in Brandenburg, in the town of Nauen near Berlin. As evidenced by archival sources, not only Christian Gottlieb and Daniel Friedrich, but also Theodor Gabriel Mielcke worked on Lithuanian writings: he contributed to the preparation of the second edition of the Lithuanian Bible (1755), however, his early death prevented his potential from further development.

Some grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Peter Gottlieb Mielcke also studied theology; however, this trend was steadily declining over time. No longer choosing to be priests, they naturally withdrew from the Lithuanian cultural field. It seems that the number of descendants who had the surname *Mielcke* also declined. On the other hand, the granddaughters and great-granddaughters of Peter Gottlieb Mielcke married priests, including ones who contributed to Lithuanian culture (e.g. Wilhelm Theodor Schimmelpfennig and Karl Wilhelm Otto Glogau, 1805–1875), while his great-great-grandchildren on the female side, already with different surnames, dispersed not only over Prussian Lithuania, but also further to the West and can be traced to the present day. One of the most famous descendants of Peter Gottlieb Mielcke, who continued the tradition of priesthood and literary work, though no longer related to Lithuanian writings, was Jürgen Traugott Henkys (1929–2015), professor of theology at the Humboldt University in Berlin, priest as well as author and translator of church hymns.

Chapter 2: *Peter Gottlieb Mielcke: Fosterer of the Lithuanian Language and Literature* (Birutė Triškaitė) reconstructs the most important facts of Peter Gottlieb Mielcke's life and work related to Lithuanian studies on the basis of primary archival sources. Focusing on the historical, social, and cultural context, the aspects of his transition from the German cultural field to the Lithuanian one have been highlighted, and the significance of the Lithuanian language competence, acquired in childhood, for becoming involved in the Lithuanian cultural field has been revealed.

Peter Gottlieb Mielcke, who grew up in a German family in Prussian Lithuania, was paved the way to the Lithuanian cultural space by the Lithuanian language he had learned as a child in his native Tilsit, which he later referred to as a *God-given talent*, as well as the demand for people proficient in Lithuanian in the period of the 1710s and 1720s, when King Frederick William I of Prussia began the reform of churches and schools in Prussian Lithuania and the Lithuanian Language Seminar was established at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Königsberg.

Johann Jacob Quandt, professor of theology at the University of Königsberg and the chief court preacher, was the person who directly turned Peter Gottlieb Mielcke's future towards the Lithuanian cultural field. Appointed as inspector of churches and schools in Prussian Lithuania by Frederick William I (1721) and the head of the Lithuanian Language Seminar (1723), moreover, tasked to provide Prussian Lithuanians with religious teaching books, Quandt embarked on an ambitious project of updating and publishing Lithuanian religious literature, involving not only long-time Lithuanian parish priests but also the young generation – the most talented theology students of the Lithuanian Language Seminar headed by him. It was at the University of Königsberg that Mielcke's competence in the Lithuanian language was noticed and his creative potential evaluated. Quandt's interest in Lithuanian studies predetermined the two directions of Mielcke's activities: teaching at the Lithuanian Language Seminar at the University of Königsberg and preparing Lithuanian books.

Archival sources testify to Mielcke having been the first teacher of the Lithuanian Language Seminar, re-established in 1723 and headed by Quandt. He taught at the Seminar for a little over two years: from the autumn of 1723 to the end of 1725, or at the latest to the beginning of 1726. While teaching at the Seminar, Mielcke is likely to have also helped Quandt to learn the Lithuanian language. Primary sources evidence the presence of more than one developers of Lithuanian writings among the then students of the Lithuanian Language Seminar at the University of Königsberg: Friedrich Wilhelm Haack (Lith. *Frydrichas Vilhelmas Hakas*, 1707–1754), Adam Heinrich Pilgrim (Lith. *Adomas Henrikas Pilgrimas*, 1702–1757), Johann Richter (Lith. *Jonas Richteris*, 1705–1754) as well as three Schimmelpfennig brothers – the future Mielcke's brothers-in-law: Adam Friedrich Schimmelpfennig, Ernst Gottfried Schimmelpfennig (Lith. *Ernstas Gotfrydas Šimelpenigis*, 1704–1768), and Martin Schimmelpfennig (Lith. *Martynas Šimelpenigis*, 1706–1778).

Peter Gottlieb Mielcke started working on Lithuanian writings in Königsberg in 1724. Up to the present time, he was known as a



translator of religious books, yet the research revealed that he had been commissioned to prepare linguistic works as well. Probably his first attempt in the field of preparing Lithuanian written works was to supplement an anonymous manuscript of a German-Lithuanian dictionary *Clavis Germanico-Lithvana* (the turn of the 18th century; LMAVB RS: F 137-13-14). In addition, he was then tasked to update some previous grammar of the Lithuanian language. The preparation for publishing of a bilingual dictionary and grammar was stimulated by a sharp demand for the Lithuanian language learning tools, which especially increased upon the establishment of the Lithuanian Language Seminar at the University of Königsberg. However, the manuscript of the grammar has not been found, and the dictionary was not completely prepared for publication, presumably due to the fact that priority was initially given to religious literature, and therefore the work on the dictionary was temporarily suspended. The work was not resumed, because in 1730, *Vocabularium Litthvanico-Germanicum, et Germanico-Litthvanicum* with a short course in Lithuanian grammar *Kurtzgefaßte Litthauische Grammatic*, prepared by Friedrich Wilhelm Haack, was published in Halle.

Approximately at the same time or somewhat later, Peter Gottlieb Mielcke was proofreading the text of the *New Testament* (Königsberg, 1727) translated by four Prussian Lithuanian priests and published under the supervision of Quandt. In addition, he was commissioned to translate into Lithuanian a popular work of Johann Hübner (1668–1731) *Zweymahl zwey und funffzig Auserlesene Biblische Historien aus dem Alten und Neuen Testamente* (Leipzig, 1714), but it is not clear whether Mielcke ever began to work on that assignment of Quandt. Be that as it may, the Königsberg period was an intense stage of his Lithuanian studies, even though it lasted only two and a half years.

The most productive time of Peter Gottlieb Mielcke's Lithuanian studies was spent in Georgenburg, and it covered the period of 1726 to 1735. His appointment as priest to Georgenburg, which was just outside Insterburg (Lith. *Isrutis*) where diocesan bishop Johann Behrendt (Lith. *Jonas Berentas*, 1667–1737) lived, testified to Quandt's efforts to ensure smooth continuation of the accelerating collective

project: to concentrate the process of preparation of Lithuanian books, and especially in the editing and proofreading stage, in the hands of two competent Lithuanian language users Behrendt and Mielcke.

In Georgenburg, Mielcke assisted Behrendt in the preparation of a new Lithuanian official hymnal *Isz naujo pérveizdėtos ir pagėrintos Giesmū-Knygos* (Königsberg, 1732): he translated some new hymns and helped to edit the hymnal. Mielcke's contribution to the first edition of 1732 was substantial: out of the ten new translators of the hymnal, he presented the largest number of hymns, the total of nineteen; they accounted for about a quarter of the new repertoire of hymns. Those hymns of Mielcke (with the exception of just one) formed a stable part of the repertoire of the official Evangelical Lutheran hymnal for two centuries and kept being reprinted until the eve of the Second World War.

The first full Lithuanian Bible which appeared in Königsberg in 1735, the publishing of which was the cultural aspiration of Prussian Lithuanian priests since the time of Reformation, was another significant contribution of Mielcke. He was one of the ten translators of the Old Testament and one of the twelve translators of the whole Bible, who also proofread the entire Lithuanian translation of the Holy Scriptures.

Mielcke's moving to Mehlkehmen on the Prussian Lithuanian border with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1736, where he lived for more than seventeen years till the end of his days, moreover, to the neighbourhood of Kristijonas Donelaitis (Germ. *Christian Donalitius*, 1714–1780, priest of Tollmingkehmen since 1743), seems to have marked a full stop in his active preparation of Lithuanian books: after gaining momentum in Königsberg and reaching its climax in Georgenburg, it seems to have completely ceased in Mehlkehmen. This was probably due to the fact that in 1735, the first stage of the project of publishing Lithuanian books initiated by Quandt was completed. Although a small publication from the period of Mehlkehmen, dedicated to the 200th anniversary of the founding of Tilsit (1752), survived to evidence that Mielcke was creating

in German and Latin at that time, there is no information that he continued to work on Lithuanian texts. Archival sources reveal the indisputable fact of personal acquaintance between Mielcke and the great Lithuanian poet Donelaitis.

Peter Gottlieb Mielcke devoted all his creative power to collective works, and therefore it is difficult to properly evaluate his contribution; however, the testimonies of contemporaries and his own official letters leave no doubt: Mielcke was one of the most diligent executors of Quandt's Lithuanian books programme, who made a significant contribution to the breakthrough of Lithuanian religious literature in the first half of the 18th century. The Lithuanian language competence acquired in his native Tilsit ensured an important place for Peter Gottlieb Mielcke in the then field of Lithuanian culture, and the realisation of that competence in the preparation of Lithuanian books earned him a reputation in the historical memory of the Lithuanian nation. Peter Gottlieb Mielcke's engagement in Lithuanian studies was an inspiring example and a strong impetus for his sons to continue to nurture the Lithuanian language.

Chapter 3: *Christian Gottlieb Mielcke: Creativity-Confirmed Loyalty to the Homeland and Its Language* (Žavinta Sidabraitė) focuses on the change in Christian Gottlieb Mielcke's identity and the process of his increasingly active involvement in the preparation of Lithuanian texts, based on the theory of cultural capitalism and some approaches of the postcolonial criticism; on the basis of the social space theory approaches, the characteristics of the historical narrative of Christian Gottlieb Mielcke's poem *Pilkainis*, completed at the end of his life, are highlighted.

The 1781 controversy between Christian Gottlieb Mielcke and Gottfried Ostermeyer on the principles of compiling an official Lithuanian hymnal was a significant event in the field of Lithuanian culture. The controversy arose after Ostermeyer had published a radically reformed official hymnal, the most popular book in Prussian Lithuania, thus ending the tradition, which had been developed for almost a century, that any available edition of the official hymnal could be used during the church service. Ostermeyer's decisive re-

editing of the hymnal acted as a catalyst for the Lithuanian studies of the participants of the Prussian Lithuanian field of culture. The threat of losing the accustomed hymnal, which had become part of the national and cultural identity, agitated both the clergy and a large part of the Lithuanian community.

Both Mielcke and Ostermeyer perceived their command of the Lithuanian language as a significant cultural capital, providing them with exclusivity and giving certain advantages over their colleagues who did not speak Lithuanian. Having grown up in Prussian Lithuania, Mielcke was proud to have learned Lithuanian very well from early childhood, but did not consider it as his native language. Ostermeyer, who came to study in Königsberg from the Polish city of Marienburg (Pol. *Malbork*), started learning Lithuanian only at the Lithuanian Language Seminar at the university during his studies. After their studies, both future opponents lived and worked in Prussian Lithuania: Mielcke in the small town of Pillkallen near the border with Lithuania Major, and Ostermeyer in the parish of Trempen (Lith. *Trempai*) on the border with Polish territories. After learning Lithuanian for some time, Ostermeyer sought to become a member of Johann Jacob Quandt's team preparing Lithuanian books, which included Peter Gottlieb Mielcke, the father of Christian Gottlieb Mielcke, and his uncle Adam Friedrich Schimmelpfennig, and thus join the cultural elite of the region, yet he was not accepted. When rejected, Ostermeyer worked independently: he published two ethnographic works in German (1775, 1780), which earned him the fame of a scholar outside Prussian Lithuania and a place in the Royal German Society of Königsberg, as well as two Lithuanian religious publications: *Agenda* (1775) and the translation of Thomas à Kempis' (c. 1380–1471) hymn *Szirdingas Pagraudenimas* (1781). Christian Gottlieb Mielcke, although he inherited the symbolic capital accumulated by his father and uncle, i.e. the acquired authority of language scholars, had not been involved in the preparation of Lithuanian writings before the beginning of the controversy.

Ostermeyer's energy, diligence, philological abilities, critical evaluation of previous works, and his declared ambitions to revise,

in addition to the hymn, another important Lithuanian publication – the Bible – became a cause for concern to the old residents of the region preparing Lithuanian writings. Ostermeyer attempted at destroying the established tradition of preparing Lithuanian writings, moreover, in his works, he introduced “another” Lithuanian language formed on the basis of religious literature instead of the colloquial language of the population of the country. The publication of the hymnal demonstrated Ostermeyer’s sufficient determination and strength, without compromising, to implement his own programme of publishing Lithuanian books and to become absolute leader in the field of Lithuanian culture. There was a danger that an alien, who had not been considered as “our own” or taken seriously, would outdo the doubting, sluggish old residents of the region, although well-versed in the language. From the viewpoint of Mielcke and his supporters, Ostermeyer claimed to occupy a place in the history of Lithuanian literature that could not belong to him as a *stranger* from elsewhere. That place, as Mielcke believed, legally belonged to the descendants of the old settlers, and therefore to his family. Ostermeyer’s Lithuanian works forced Mielcke to pay attention, to hurry up, and to define his aspirations and identity more clearly after the controversy had begun. In his position, the most important argument for the divide was the criterion of the Lithuanian language proficiency vs. its insufficient command. In the polemic, he drew a clear line between *us (I)*, i.e. the old residents of the region, who had a good command of the Lithuanian language and were followers of the cultural tradition, vs. *he = another = stranger*, i.e. a newcomer who did not speak the language well (did not have a sense of language) and was not related to the cultural tradition of the country. Thus, in order to prove Ostermeyer’s *alienness*, Mielcke also more clearly defined his own “impure”, mixed identity of a German of Prussian Lithuania (his opponent Ostermeyer aptly called him a “German Lithuanian”). The competitive confrontation with Ostermeyer stimulated Mielcke to re-evaluate the cultural capital that he had acquired by birth and took his time to realise – the Lithuanian language learned in early childhood, the experience of preparation

of Lithuanian texts passed down by family members, the inherited authority, and his own talent of philologist – and to actively fight for a place in the field of Lithuanian culture. The dispute with Ostermeyer became an essential impetus for him to concentrate his efforts on the preparation and publishing of Lithuanian books, perceiving it as his most important mission. In his search for self-realisation opportunities, Mielcke with his dual German-Lithuanian identity paid increasingly more attention to the second, Lithuanian, component, which provided him with unique opportunities to earn the un fading glory of an active developer of Lithuanian texts. The Lithuanian language became the most important instrument for achieving this goal, the language which he had learned well from his Lithuanian neighbours at a young age, the living Lithuanian language of the region.

The competitive tension between the two first figures in the field of Lithuanian culture – Ostermeyer and Mielcke – was so great, and the forces concentrated in the controversy were so strong, that at the end of the century the opponents caused a real breakthrough in the preparation and publishing of Lithuanian writings: the accumulated knowledge and experience were realised in significant works of Lithuanian studies. Ostermeyer prepared and published a grammar of the Lithuanian language *Neue littauische Grammatik* (Königsberg, 1781) and the first history of Lithuanian literature *Erste littauische Liedergeschichte* (Königsberg, 1793); Mielcke – the Lithuanian-German and German-Lithuanian dictionary *Littauisch-deutsches und Deutsch-littauisches Wörter-Buch* (Königsberg, 1800), a grammar of the Lithuanian language *Anfangs-Gründe einer littauischen Sprach-Lehre* (Königsberg, 1800), a book of sermons *Miszknogos* (Königsberg, 1800), and a hymnal *Senos ir naujos krikszczoniszkos Giesmės* (Königsberg, 1806).

The beginning of Christian Gottlieb Mielcke's public work on preparing Lithuanian texts coincided with the appointment of Christoph Friedrich Heilsberg, a native of Prussian Lithuania, as inspector of East Prussian schools (1787) and of his brother Daniel Friedrich Mielcke as superintendent (bishop) of Ragnit (Lith. *Ragainė*) diocese, to which Pillkallen parish was subordinate, and school inspector

(1788). The support of like-minded people with administrative powers facilitated the unfolding of Christian Gottlieb Mielcke's philosophical talent.

Christoph Friedrich Heilsberg, who came from Ragnit and was an influential official in Königsberg (counsellor of War and Domain Chamber and inspector of East Prussian schools, Germ. *Kriegs- und Domänenkammerrat und Schulrat*) and who promoted the ideas of regional particularism, became an administrative sponsor and curator of all Lithuanian books prepared by Christian Gottlieb Mielcke in the late 18th century. He perceived the development of the national education system and Lithuanian literature as an important means of preserving and maintaining the uniqueness of Prussian Lithuania. The letters of Christian Gottlieb and Daniel Friedrich Mielcke to Heilsberg, written in the spring of 1799 and 1800, revealed an active involvement of the brothers in the development of education and Lithuanian texts in the region. Heilsberg and Mielcke co-operated in taking care of the affairs of the region's teachers and seeking to give children equal educational opportunity in German and Lithuanian through introducing Lithuanian printed matter in the region's schools and churches.

Heilsberg put a lot of effort into ensuring the publishing of Christian Gottlieb Mielcke's bilingual Lithuanian-German and German-Lithuanian dictionary (*Littauisch-deutsches und Deutsch-littauisches Wörter-Buch*) and Lithuanian grammar (*Anfangs-Gründe einer Littauischen Sprach-Lehre*, 1800). It was he who took care of having the two works published as one book and being accompanied by the speeches of famous scholars and officials. Heilsberg persuaded Mielcke, the compiler of the dictionary and grammar, to write a preface, the final version of which was promised to be reviewed by the most famous professor of management at the then University of Königsberg, philosopher Christoph Jakob Kraus (1753–1807). In addition, Heilsberg himself both wrote a preface pervaded with respect for the Lithuanian nation and language, and also, taking advantage of personal relationships, commissioned the speeches of Daniel Jenisch (1762–1804), the then well-known theologian, philosopher, and lin-

guist, and of Immanuel Kant, philosopher and professor at the University of Königsberg (1724–1804), his close lifelong friends. The idea that arose for the marketing reasons was fulfilled and surpassed the narrow utilitarian framework: the names of Heilsberg, Jenisch, and especially Kant, and the support for the Lithuanian language clearly expressed in the preface, corresponded to the ideas of regional particularism and the spirit of the dawning era of Romanticism. The publication became popular, the famous names drew the attention of European, and primarily German, intellectuals to the Lithuanian language, and it became a clearly heard manifestation of the unique regional social and cultural identity.

Christian Gottlieb Milcke's philological works – a dictionary, a grammar, and an integrated chapter on poetics – testified to his interest in the latest theories of language and literature and his close attention to the processes taking place in the field of Lithuanian culture. In the late 18th century, especially popular ideas of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) about the special possibilities of vivid expression preserved in the original languages of non-civilised nations encouraged Mielcke to increasingly more focus on the Lithuanian language and to take interest in the potential of the development of that language and its phraseological expression, best revealing the unique greatness of the language. Christian Gottlieb Mielcke's first acquaintance with Lithuanian secular poetry took place in his parents' family. His uncle Adam Friedrich Schimmelpfennig's surviving occasional poems in Lithuanian testify to the family tradition to respond to the realities of everyday life with the Lithuanian word. There is no doubt that the said uncle's poems could be also heard at the Mielcke's place in Mehlkehmen, more than once visited by Adam Friedrich Schimmelpfennig. At his parents' home, Christian Gottlieb Mielcke could have met Kristijonas Donelaitis (1714–1780), priest in a neighbouring parish and a friend of his family. It must have been there that his first acquaintance with the work of the great poet Donelaitis took place.

Christian Gottlieb Mielcke was the first critic in Lithuanian literature to respond vividly to not only religious, but also secular literary



works in the Lithuanian language and to follow the fate of Lithuanian books on both sides of the border, both in Prussia and Lithuania. Mielcke understood the ethnic and partly cultural communion of the two Lithuanias. Exceptional philological skills and the talent of a literary critic enabled Mielcke to be the first to pay attention to the two most significant events of the 18th century Lithuanian literature: Kristijonas Donelaitis' poem *Metai (The Seasons)* and Mykolas Olševskis' (1712–1779) book *Broma atverta ing wiecznasti (The Gates Opened into Eternity)*, reprinted for seven times before 1785. Kristijonas Donelaitis' works fascinated Mielcke by their artistic power, witnessing the possibility to write artistically mature works in Lithuanian, while the phenomenon of Olševskis' *Broma* testified to the emergence of the demand for a Lithuanian book. Mielcke became the first populariser of authorial Lithuanian literature in the cultural region of the German language: he translated into German and presented two excerpts from Kristijonas Donelaitis' works (in the chapter on poetry of his grammar) and three excerpts from Olševskis' *Broma* (in the chapter on dialectology).

Christian Gottlieb Mielcke's decision to write a rhymed work on the history of the region was inspired by the general interest in the studies of history, characteristic of the Age of Enlightenment, and his determination to write a poem in Lithuanian must have been encouraged by the example of his great predecessor Kristijonas Donelaitis. The explication in the subtitle of Mielcke's poem *Kiemas, bažnytkaimis, miestas (Hamlet, Village with a Church, and City)* suggested the author's idea to depict the emancipation of the Lithuanian community from paganism to Christianity, from the hamlet to the city. In this aspect, the poem is to be perceived as a creative dialogue with Donelaitis. The interpretation of the stage of development of the pagan land depicted in the poem coincided with the paradigm characteristic of the Enlightenment: paganism was a time of darkness, superstition, barbaric rites, and chaos, true, predetermined not by the natural imperfection of the population, but by natural and economic conditions. The author depicted the ancient inhabitants of the country – Prussians and Lithuanians – with great sympathy: he

poeticised their stamina, courage, and ingenuity in struggles with foreigners. The provision of the first inhabitants of the region with such qualities made it possible to create metaphors of heroic struggles and tragic defeats, comparing the Crusaders to well-armed woodcutters, and Lithuanians to a powerful, branched oak, which was not afraid of the storms, but could not withstand the ax. The defeat of Prussians and Lithuanians, representing irrational naturalness, was inevitable. The settling of the Teutonic Order in the Vistula riverside was presented as an inevitable response of civilisation to the irrational actions of the locals.

The victory of the Crusaders – the conquest of the pagan lands of the region and the resulting enslavement of the local population – was not presented as an absolute victory in the poem. According to the author, the Order failed to achieve it because of forgetting the most important goal of expansion – sincere dissemination of the Christian faith. The Crusaders, who regularly organised military campaigns, were too preoccupied with expansion to be able to appropriate space in the conquered territories, and therefore pagan burial hillforts (majestic tombs) became sites of Teutonic castles, symbols of violence and captivity for the locals. Being concerned merely with wealth and the enslavement of the locals, the knights of the Teutonic Order lost the ideological legitimacy of their activities. Weapon-based appropriation of space was doomed to failure. The way out of the impasse could only have been a mental change in the appropriation of space. According to Mielcke, it was this qualitative change in the occupation of space that was carried out by the last Grand Master of the Order and the first Duke of Prussia, Albert of Brandenburg (Germ. *Albrecht von Brandenburg*, 1490–1568), who severed ideological and structural ties with the Teutonic Order and its state.

Probably in response to the political realities of the late 18th century, Mielcke in his poem emphasised the close kinship between Duke Albert and Sigismund I the Old, King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania (Pol. *Zygmunt I Stary*, 1467–1548) (Sigismund the Old was brother of Sophia Jagiellon, 1464–1512, the mother of Albert of Brandenburg). In the poem, Sigismund I the Old is portrayed not

as the ruler of a hostile state, but as a wise, forgiving uncle of an inexperienced nephew, who generously concluded a peace treaty, beneficial for the new state, and allowed to keep the conquered lands. The substantiation of the political and ethnic communion of the two states was at the time in line with the political interests of Prussia, which annexed new lands after the third partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795.

Duke Albert, according to Mielcke, built the newly shaped Duchy of Prussia in peace with his neighbours and considered the proclamation of *true* Christian faith and the building of churches to be his most important tasks. The poem emphasised the qualitative difference between the new Protestant state and the state of the Teutonic Order: the former was shaped not by force but on the spiritual basis of the new evangelisation. However, the focus was on the material signs of space appropriation. As a result, neither the *Book* nor the *Word*, as might have been expected, became the symbols of a new era. The symbol of the new era was the *church*, whose construction and reconstruction as well as improvement marked the overcoming of the natural worldview of the ancient inhabitants.

At the end of the poem, the theme of a city construction was developed – the final, highest achievement of the consistent development of the region. The poem about the founding of the city, in accordance with the author's idea, was the inclusion of the Lithuanian population of Prussia in the text of civilisation and history; it meant the emancipation of the Lithuanian community and its opening to the world, i.e. the confirmation of its ability to live and build civilisation together with other nations. In the poem, the peasants who built the city became part of it themselves – the new inhabitants of the city. Thus, the city was no longer a space foreign or hostile to the Lithuanian *būras* (peasant of Prussian Lithuania), as it was in *The Seasons* of Kristijonas Donelaitis.

The formation of the city was marked by three symbols – the construction of a church, the town hall, and a mill. They testify to religious, governmental, and economic stability. The cleverly managed city was constantly changing, getting stronger and more modern,

and the good was being replaced by the better: a new, already third, church was being built as well as a new, more spacious, town hall, and a new water mill was being constructed next to the windmill. An optimistic view of the development of the city and the region as a whole in the late 18th century was fueled by the general mood of the era and the economic upswing that the country experienced due to the annexation of new lands after the third partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The concept of the Truth being the Daughter of Time (Lat. *veritas filia temporis*), inherited from medieval theologians in the Enlightenment era, encouraged creators to search for the ontological meaning of the lived moment. By linking the missions of the poet and the prophet, not only the literal meaning of the work but also its form was in poetry transferred to the notional level. The poetic form chosen by Mielcke was related to the theory of numerology, which again aroused special interest in the spheres of music and literature in the 18th century. The narrative of *Pilkainis* is organised through two triads: 1) the stages of the city development: hamlet, village with a church, and city; and 2) the material signs symbolising those stages of development: a church, a mill, and the town hall. As the basis of the poetic structure, Mielcke chose a four-line cross-rhyme stanza. The connection of the three (the number of the divine Trinity, i.e. the beginning of the spiritual world) and the four (the number of the main elements of the world, the number of angels and prophets, i.e. the beginning of the material world) symbolised the close synthesis of the spiritual and material development of the region. The final prayer of the poem connected the horizontal of the historical time with the ontological vertical. Thus, using the models already existing in literature, a human comedy of the modern times, of the Age of Enlightenment, was created – a book with a good ending, in which the collective history of the city in the province of East Prussia was aimed to elevate to the generalising heights and thus acquire prominence.

The concentration on preparing Lithuanian texts determined Christian Gottlieb Mielcke's growing personal interest in and integration into Lithuanian culture. The disproportion of the develop-

ment of the *Pilkainis* plot material is clearly visible – a slow, detailed account of the Prussian and Lithuanian struggles with the Crusaders at the beginning of the poem and the hasty, dotted “passing” through modern events – witness the initial plan having been for a historical poem of a much larger scope; however, evidently after a break in the creative process, the author must have made up his mind to return to the poem and to complete it after an inspiring trip to the New East Prussian Region in the spring of 1800. Favourable political events – the annexation of new Lithuanian-speaking lands to Prussia after the third partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – promoted confidence in the future of the Lithuanian language. Thus, having started with his Lithuanian texts as an executor of the utilitarian Enlightenment programme, Christian Gottlieb Mielcke underwent a gradual transformation: he became a patriot of Lithuanian culture, who both wrote in Lithuanian and also developed and advanced the Lithuanian language through his works and poetry.

Translated by LAIMUTĖ SERVAITĖ