

THE ORIGIN OF PERIODICALS
AND CIRCUMSTANCES
OF THEIR APPEARANCE IN EUROPE
AND THE REPUBLIC OF THE TWO NATIONS

Summary

In this article, the origin of periodicals in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL) is investigated. There is also a brief survey of the circumstances in which newspapers in Europe had first appeared, and connections of these newspapers with the certain periodicals published in the 18th century GDL.

The origin of periodicals in Lithuania happens to coincide with the period of rule of Stanislas II Augustus Poniatowski, (1764–1795). In the course of the 18th century, five periodical publications appeared in GDL (the sixth one being published on special occasions), i.e.: *Kurier Litewski* (1760–1763); *Supplement do Gazet Wileńskich* (1761 01 10–1792); *Wiadomości Literackie* (1760 04 19–1763 09 10); *Wiadomości Uprzywilejowane (Wiadomości Cudzoziemskie; 1760–1764); Gazety Wileńskie* (1764–1792 (1793?), 52 issues); a special supplement to the newspapers *Addyament do Gazet Wileńskich* (irregularly published). The Lithuanian newspapers quite adhered to the pattern of the 18th century European information publications, edited in the national languages. They presented the most recent information from all over Europe and even from the further continents.

According to the press, it is possible to grasp how the citizens of the GDL perceived Europe and the world. It is revealed in the contents of the periodicals. As a rule, the Lithuanian newspapers would try to convey news and information from the foreign periodicals; in case of reprinting, certain contribution of the editors may be noted. Also, the Lithuanian newspapers testify to the existence of certain screening of information. Considerable interest in the political news is obvious as well. The readers were informed about the most important political events, of the inventions, the great scientific and geographical discoveries, about the prevailing customs in the European countries, etc. The information was quite diverse and comprised numerous spheres of life. Considerable space in Lithuanian periodicals was occupied by descriptions of the local events: reviews of the church festivals,

information of the academic celebrations, the honoring of royalty (coronations, birthdays and name-days of the royal persons), funerals of the nobles, etc.

In the 18th century, foundations of the modern society and the new European civilization were laid. According to the newspapers, not only the Lithuanian inhabitants, but also those of the whole Middle and Eastern Europe were not secluded from the general European processes of cultural development. Understanding of the new approaches, appreciation of the importance of inventions, application of the technical and material innovations in the daily life primarily expressed their openness to the innovations of culture and civilization. Therefore newspapers performed an important role shaping the social mentality in the GDL, promoting new views and ideas.