Wooden Heritage in Lithuania
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R. Paknio leidykla
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Preface

It is common knowledge that wooden buildings catch fire easily and can be equally easily claimed by it, taking no one by great surprise. The first decade of the 21st century has seen the burning of wooden buildings to become quite a normal occurrence in the historic suburbs of Vilnius, and in particular in the Šnipiškės area, close to the centre of the city. For several years, residents of this historic suburb disturbed by the sirens of fire trucks and wisps of smoke have been looking around anxiously to determine from which side the wind is blowing in one end or the other of the suburb. This is the way business has coveted the attractive areas of Šnipiškės, gradually regaining a larger and larger area and continuing the destruction of this wooden district, which had already begun in Soviet times.

The places of these former small wooden buildings mostly constructed at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, once planted with gardens and orchards, full of flowers, vegetables, birds, and the laughter of playing kids, were left overgrown with nettles and covered with growing heaps of rubbish, as it took quite a while for the new owners to realize their plans. Unfortunately, residents of this district were not informed about any such plans, or how they might have been delayed or altered by the crisis. Now we can see a huge car park or how they might have been delayed or altered their plans. Unfortunately, residents of this district have taken quite a while for the new owners to realize the sirens of fire trucks and wisps of smoke have been looking around anxiously to determine justifying all means necessary to achieve the result.

The situation can only be rectified by the joint effort of all sectors of the public rather than by cultural heritage experts alone. Wooden heritage protection campaigns arranged by heritage protection specialists, showing educational documentary films, organization of meetings, drafting recommendations on how to repair wooden buildings, delivering seminars on the revival of traditional crafts will not be enough if only specialists of culture and cultural heritage, architects, and reflecting both, old and continuing traditions, may come to get to know our culture, our dwellings, and our motherland and native culture, bring us closer to our neighbours, and the Scandinavian countries, that contributed by their example showing us how to work consistently to recover what we are attached to so much.

The burning of wooden buildings to become quite a normal occurrence in the historic suburbs of Vilnius, and in particular during the last ten years is threatening. Rural areas are exposed to demographic changes: villages are becoming deserted, the numbers of local residents are reducing year-on-year, fewer buildings are being repaired, and non-traditional materials, plastic in particular, are becoming more and more popular.

This collection of articles is like a photographic file of everything we had, in what we were rich and what makes us wealthy and unique until the present. It will also be interesting to guests visiting our cities and villages, who come to get to know our culture, our dwellings, temples and us. The book summarises the situation of the heritage of wooden architecture at the beginning of the 21st century. It is meant for the general public, and for everyone who is interested in wooden architecture, cultural heritage and construction traditions. The authors of articles, outstanding researchers of wooden architecture, architects and scientists provide an overview of the architecture in the main areas of the wooden culture heritage: sacral architecture, estates, ancient villages, the suburbs of Vilnius and Kaunas, resorts, and the Klaipėda region each distinguished by its unique history. It also contains two more articles that to a certain extent stretch over the field of investigation of the architectural heritage but are naturally linked with the spirit of our rural dwellers, introducing an awareness of a Lithuanian home and of God and reflecting both, old and continuing traditions. I hope that this book will also contribute to a better understanding of the uniqueness of our motherland and native culture, bring us closer to our neighbours, and the Scandinavian countries, that contributed by their example showing us how to work consistently to recover what we are attached to so much.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to bringing this book to fruition.
Common Baltic Sea Tradition

Wood has always been the natural building material in the Nordic and Baltic countries, since the very beginning of human settlement in these areas. Traditional houses on both sides of the sea were built of timber, the raw material coming from local pine or oak. The most important tools were the broadaxe and the plane, both of which were handled by local craftsmen or by the homeowners themselves.

Medieval timber structures have been preserved: roof constructions and stave churches, but also vernacular buildings, dating back the 12th century. A majority of the manor houses from the 18th and 19th centuries were constructed of timber, although sometimes covered in classical render. The small towns and villages and the suburbs of the industrial era were dominated by wooden architecture until World War II.

There is also a special sense for wood shared by people in the Baltic Sea region. Wooden furniture and tools, the smell of fresh logs or freshly scrubbed floorboards; these are memories that constitute a solid base for a common Baltic Sea identity. ‘Rural folks have always lived in wooden houses; grandma’s kindness and wooden houses come together on an emotional level,’ says resident Tanja Jalasto in Kalamaja – Possibility of a Wooden Town, an Estonian documentary on a wooden suburb of Tallinn.

The Wooden Heritage of the Baltic Sea Region: Revaluation and Preservation

Relics of Poverty

Still, in the early 1960s, when I was a student of architecture, the wooden areas and houses of Swedish towns were merely seen as old and obsolete. Not only were wooden houses neglected and pulled down, they were the majority and the most backward. They were associated with social problems and with an era of poverty. Their replacement was simply a question of time and money.
Wooden structures have always been vulnerable - hit by fires, which were very common in the 19th century, or attacked by fungus or insects. However, this time it was different. The march of progress was not to be stopped. Old houses lacked modern facilities. Their renovation was neither expected nor recommended, and if isolated buildings were regarded as valuable, for historical reasons, they were expected to be moved to a cultural reserve. Their active time was up.

This belittlement or depreciation of wooden heritage was a result of political decisions in the 1950s and 1960s, cheered on by decision makers on all levels and, in most cases, by the residents themselves. New building was supported by all means of control: norms for physical planning, which limited the scale of housing, with proactive plans for preservation and gradual renovation of individual houses. Regulations were revised and new governmental subsidies for conservation efforts were introduced when the National Building Regulations were revised and new governmental subsidies for conservation efforts were introduced.

In the second group, a large-scale transformation is taking place and high-rise blocks are replacing the wooden buildings. The third and smallest group consists of preservation-oriented towns, with proactive plans for preservation, alienation, and a new kind of poverty: the replacement buildings were not necessarily, or in all respects, better than the old wooden houses. Often the new buildings were expensive and ugly, and with them came segregation, alienation, and a new kind of poverty: the problematic side of modernity.

In 1972 and 1973, an overview of the situation was given through the Nordic Wooden Town project initiated by ICOMOS but fully supported by the national heritage authorities in the Nordic countries. The first report, in a series of thirty, gives short presentations of the 160 selected towns, country by country. The situation in general could be summarized as dilapidated houses, empty plots, shattered townscapes, and quite uncertain prospects for the future.

The introduction to the chapter on Finland divides the towns into three groups based on the stage of evolution in the wooden areas. In the largest group, the buildings are in use and people are still living there, but the future is uncertain and therefore maintenance is neglected. In the second group, a large-scale transformation is taking place and high-rise blocks are replacing the wooden buildings. The third and smallest group consists of preservation-oriented towns, with proactive plans for preservation and gradual renovation of individual houses.

The reports demonstrate that wooden heritage is not valued. That is the basic problem and that is why the project is campaigning for a revaluation; it expands knowledge about the history of wooden architecture and specific types of buildings, and it sets out important arguments for a change in the current approach, by presenting:

• Social reasons: out of respect for the residents and for the well-being of all citizens, small-scale housing is a good setting for living.
• Historical and esthetical reasons: important cultural heritage and high-quality architecture, materials and craftsmanship.
• Environmental reasons: the raw material is the forest; wood allows easy maintenance, repair and rebuilding; and wood creates a healthy indoor climate.

It also presents serious material obstacles to any policy for preservation, most obvious in the 1970s: the property prices were adapted to a standard clean-sweep model, as were the regulations for planning and building. Most construction firms and suppliers of building materials were directed towards new high-rise blocks and to building sites like plants for the assembly of pre-fabricated units requiring no future maintenance. The Nordic Wooden Town project exposes the need for revision of legislation and government grants and for new tools in planning and building design.

INTEGRATED CONSERVATION

The idea of integrated conservation was introduced as an alternative planning exercise, taking the complete existing townscape, with its ordinary buildings, their uses, and their inhabitants as starting points. It was a reaction to the hitherto uniform course of action. The process in itself became important, collaboration and participation were key words, and town councils, property owners, and residents were all involved.

Gradually, an integrated approach was also facilitated on the level of single buildings. Rebuilding or renovation 'with a cautious hand' was recommended when the National Building Regulations were revised and new governmental subsidies for conservation efforts were introduced. Rigorous standards for the size of kitchens, bathrooms, and other were replaced by an adapted assessment that takes the existing qualities into account. Thorough documentation of the original structure was made obligatory.

Allungså, a Swedish wooden town of 22,000 inhabitants, was among the first to apply the new integrated processes. The town council, as well as shopkeepers and ordinary citizens, realized that the wooden heritage, mainly modest...
houses from the 19th century, was the distinguishing mark of the town and a decisive part of its identity. Continuous use of the existing urban structure became the common objective. Step-by-step rehabilitation and adapted new construction were the means.

The tools included both the stick and the carpentry. The use of traditional materials and methods was made a condition for governmental subsidies. But the restricting rules were supplemented with practical advice on building preservation and maintenance. Collection and reuse of second-hand beams, tiles and bricks were promoted. Networks of local craftsmen were at the centre of attention. Very few buildings, like the town hall and a 17th century storehouse, were protected in the traditional way as monuments or ‘listed’ buildings, decided upon by the county administration. Ordinary houses along a street, of significant interest when looked at in totality, were established as conservation areas, locally approved by the town council in agreement with the owners, who become active partners in the preservation process.

Since this was also the period of the oil crisis, alternative energy-saving methods adapted to historic buildings was a focus in Alingsås and other wooden towns. Nevertheless, many beautiful houses outside the conservation areas were hidden behind new metal sheeting or asbestos cement. Subsidies were paid for additional insulation and new replacement windows; energy-saving measures in old buildings were a main task for the construction industry.

Traditional Materials and Methods
Successful preservation means managing maintenance and change in such a way as to ensure that what is significant is passed on to future generations. The principles of minimum intervention and traditional materials and methods are paramount. Repair should be preferred to replacement. The original structure and surfaces should be protected and conserved since they are a testimony of history. Work should be carried out with the materials and methods that were originally used. When modern alternatives are accepted, there should be compelling reasons for this, not only lack of knowledge or resources.

Thus, the preservation of wooden heritage is highly dependent on the professional knowledge of skilled carpenters, joiners, forest wardens, historians, and restorers and on the supply of high quality timber, tools, paint, ironwork, etc. The demand for good preservation created by well-informed house-owners and the general public is also an important factor.

Revival of traditional knowledge and materials was given high priority in all the Nordic countries. Projects of all kinds were supported by grants from the national heritage authorities: pilot restorations, documentation of building crafts, transmission of skills, support for producers of building materials, training and information programmes, etc. A great deal of attention was paid to the positive effects on employment for small businesses and local craftsmen. The Norwegian project on the preservation of secular buildings from the Middle Ages combined practical restoration work with the search for knowledge and training. It was initiated and managed by the Directorate for Cultural Heritage, but the craftsmen were self-employed and their pay was calculated by the hour. Although the traditional construction techniques had been maintained for quite a long time in Norway, it was necessary to search for skills and knowledge, which were on their way to disappearing.

“We start out on one building after the other, repairing and restoring with continuous discussion, experimenting and searching for knowledge, materials and techniques, traces and solutions. We buy the timber in collaboration with local forest owners and woodworkers. We also work it up locally and, when needed, support the renovation of mechanised equipment for planing and sawing. Local blacksmiths are engaged in maintenance and production of traditional tools and handmade parts of all kinds for windows and doors’ (translation from the report).

More than 250 medieval buildings, most of them timber structures, were restored. Experience, knowledge and skills were gained by forest owners, carpenters, architects, and producers of traditional tools. A number of vocational schools also realized that training in building conservation was required.

Projects in Sweden and Finland were often organized in the same way, especially when governmental subsidies were involved. Restoration and reconstruction of vernacular buildings served as the basis for research about the assessment and preparation of timber. The production and use of linseed oil paint and pine tar were thoroughly recorded and tested. The objectives in all these cases were the understanding of the traditional materials and tools as a basis for future repair work and the spread of knowledge.

Spreading knowledge was also the main responsibility for the Nordic Center for Building Conservation at Raadvad, north of Copenhagen. Initiated by the Ministry of Environment in the late 1960s, the Raadvad Center published infor-
Members of the Swedish association for contractors specializing in building preservation (Fibor) on study tour in the Baltic Sea States was initiated by the ministers of culture in 1997. Working groups for experts from the participating countries were created. The ‘Building Preservation and Maintenance in Practice’ group held its inaugural meeting in Tallinn in 2001, and it has since been organizing seminars and workshops for professionals of all kinds involved in the process of building preservation. The overall objective is to enhance good management of the existing heritage in the region.

Co-operation in the Baltic Sea States

When co-operation was established in the late 1990s, we came to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and Scandinavia and Finland as colleagues from Scandinavia and Finland and as dedicated supporters of preservation and of traditional materials and methods. The wooden heritage on the other side of the Baltic Sea made a deep impression on us: it was so rich, and it was still in existence, to a large extent neglected but not deliberately demolished. Remembering the dark period for preservation in our own countries, we did not want the Nordic mistakes to be repeated in the Baltic countries.

Co-operation on Cultural Heritage in the Baltic Sea States was initiated by the ministers of culture in 1997. Working groups for experts from the participating countries were created. The ‘Building Preservation and Maintenance in Practice’ group held its inaugural meeting in Tallinn in 2001, and it has since been organizing seminars and workshops for professionals of all kinds involved in the process of building preservation. The overall objective is to enhance good management of the existing heritage in the region. There were also bilateral projects: Nordic universities or national institutions working together with their counterparts in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The University and the County Administration of Gotland (Sweden) were the organizers of further education for heritage experts. Government grants from Norway were used to finance training workshops on carpentry and window renovation. The Swedish ‘Baltic Sea Billion Programme’ was the frame for restoration of three wooden houses: manor houses in Ramava and Ungur (Latvia) and a former dwelling house in Kalamaja, a suburb of Tallinn.

The small Kalamaja house at Väike Patarei Street 5 is partly occupied by the Information Centre for Sustainable Renovation, bringing ‘the necessary information and practical help for sustainable renovation’ to both inhabitants and house owners in Kalamaja and other wooden areas. The means are exhibitions, lectures, workshops, and ‘exchange of information and skills with professionals in neighbouring countries’. Networks of this kind between active NGOs are a lasting result of Co-operation on Cultural Heritage in the Baltic Sea States.

Wooden Heritage and Sustainability

Today, the owner of a wooden house will seek and get support from either an NGO or a private company. In the 1980s and 90s, information on the appropriate maintenance of historic buildings was a governmental responsibility. Now it is included in the activities of organisations such as the Swedish Association for Building Preservation, the Finnish Building Pharmacy, and the now (since 2004) privately managed Raadvad Center in Denmark. There is also a Swedish trade association, inspired by the European AEERPA, supporting education and training for the growing number of contractors specializing in conservation and restoration. We could say that the survival, or the sustainability, of the crafts and trades involved is secured.

From the point of view of ecology and resources, wooden architecture might clearly serve as a worthy model of sustainability. It should be considered as a privilege to live in a wooden house with its healthy indoor climate. The raw material comes from the forest and is selected and utilised in the most economical way: with high-quality wood in load-bearing structures and window frames, protected by easy-to-change panelling and shingles. Houses are easy to maintain and rebuild. Recycling is optimal.

From an economic viewpoint, preservation measures might sometimes enhance the transformation of an area of modest wooden houses into a secluded district for the wealthy. Such gentrification can be prevented by involving the local residents and homeowners and by focusing on systematic improvement of their living conditions. Sustainability demands neighbourhoods with socially mixed communities.

From a cultural point of view, preservation of buildings implies preservation of knowledge; the one is not possible without the other. Without the buildings, knowledge, and crafts, our environment would be very poor; by protecting and using them it will remain as rich as the abundant tradition of styles, technical solutions, and elements of decoration that constitute a characteristic of the Baltic Sea region. Thus, preservation and maintenance of wooden heritage support the development of vital local communities, and in the long run form a basis for a sustainable society.
Development of the Attitude to Wooden Architecture in 1900–2010

The earliest defensive structures were also built of clay and wood. Until the late 14th century, wooden castles served as reliable fortresses and played a decisive role in the fights of Lithuanians with the German Teutonic order. Written sources describing Lithuanian houses first appeared in the 15th and 16th centuries. The Polish historian Jan Długosz described a Samogitian home as one ‘built of logs and straw’. In 1500, Maciej Miechowita (Mathias a Miechow. De Sarmatia Asiana atque Europas Pistorii) provided a similar description of a Samogitian house. According to the historian, it was a structure in which the entire family lived and kept its belongings and which was made from long round horizontally laid logs and had a straw roof and one opening intended for the exit of smoke.

Similar descriptions of Lithuanian residencies are encountered in historical sources from the 17th century.

In the 19th century, the first publications by Lithuanian authors dedicated to the study of Lithuanian history and traditions appeared. Dionizas Poška described a Lithuanian farmstead with beautiful houses for guests and old Lithuanian wooden houses with a fireplace at the centre. In his work The Character of Lithuanians (Būdas senovės lietuvių...), Simonas Daukantas provided a description of a Lithuanian individual farm comprising a house, a granary, a bathhouse (sauna), and other structures. Here
we also find the first written descriptions of our settlements and farmsteads. These sources demonstrate that Lithuanian wooden structures were of great interest to scholars by the 16th century as original and archaic compared to the residential structures found at that time in Western Europe.

**Study of Wooden Architecture in the First Half of the 20th Century**

With the maturation of the ideas of the Lithuanian national revival in the early 20th century, the first publications about the originality and cultural value of Lithuanian art and wooden architecture appeared. The Lithuanian Art Union published Lithuanian Crosses in Vilnius in 1912. The material for the publication was collected by Antanas Jažvydas, and the foreword was written by Dr Jonas Basanavičius. Although the publication was dedicated to Lithuanian cross-making traditions, the idea that ‘all monuments of this type that are full of originality and occupy such an important and significant place in the art of all other European nations should be protected as much as possible so that they are not lost’ could be called one of the first statements encouraging the protection of the Lithuanian cultural heritage.

In 1918, Dr Basanavičius initiated the establishment of a History and Ethnography Museum in Vilnius and was the museum’s first director. The museum was founded on the basis of the Antiquities Museum established in the late 19th century and the collections of the Lithuanian Scientific Union. Following the occupation of Vilnius by Poland, the museum collections were transferred to Vilnius University.

At that time, two more active venues of cultural appearances as well as the Vytavas Magnus Cultural Museum in Kaunas and the Aušra Museum in Šiauliai. Annual expeditions intended for folk architecture studies began to be organised on the initiative of the museum workers. The materials collected during the expeditions were published in the museum publications and stored in the museum collections. Various materials – photographs, drawings, and descriptions – were collected about Lithuanian wooden structures that had not survived. The Šiauliai Aušra Museum, which was founded in 1923, organised 15 to 30 trips every year starting in 1930. These trips resulted in the collection of approximately 70 per cent of the exhibits of the museum and numerous iconographic materials. Starting in 1930, these materials were printed in the periodical informational and ethnographic book Šiaulių Metraštis (Šiauliai Chronicle) and in the journal Gimtasis Kraštas (Native Land).

In 1930, art historian Paulius Galiūnas published Lithuanian Folk Art. This publication was the first Lithuanian book, which provided a comprehensive analysis of the evolution, typology, and structures of wooden residences and also described wooden churches, chapels, and bell towers.

The Kaunas Vytavas Magnus Cultural Museum, which was established in 1926 following the transfer of the M. K. Čiurlionis Gallery into a new building, can be called the first state institution, which took care of the protection of Lithuanian cultural heritage. On the initiative of the director of the museum, Professor Paulius Galiūnas, the position of the protector of Lithuanian monuments was introduced and a monument protection unit was established. The unit comprised four employees: a historian, an archaeologist, an architect, and an artist. One of the first decisive steps in the protection of Lithuanian wooden heritage was made on the initiative of the museum workers: the church in Rumšiškės and the bell tower in Radviliškis were saved from demolition. The museum started preparing the first versions of the Lithuanian law on the protection of cultural monuments and establishment of public cultural museums. The final wording of the law was completed in 1939, and it was enforced on 20 July 1940, after Lithuania was already occupied by the USSR. The law was signed by Professor Vincas Krievius-Mickėvičius, who was the vice-president of the Republic of Lithuania. It was the last day prior to the country’s annexation by the USSR. Following the passage of the law, the registration of cultural monuments and inventories of cultural valuables found on the farmsteads to be nationalised were started. Unfortunately, this work was interrupted by World War II.

Between the two world wars, traditional wood construction remained widely in use because it was the most economical form of building. Lithuania was an agricultural country where most residents living in the countryside or small towns. Only the centres of major cities began to be dominated by stone buildings, thus demonstrating changes in the attitude towards wooden structures.

The main goal of the historical studies of that period was to document the still living tradition of carpentry and to emphasise the originality of ethnic architecture. The following works by M. K. Čiurlionis about the importance of folk art: best describe the attitude of artists and the first museum curators of that time towards cultural heritage: ‘Folk art must be the basis for our art, it must give rise to an original Lithuanian style, and it is our pride, because the beauty that it has within it is pure, original, and exceptionally Lithuanian’.

**Preservation of Wooden Architecture in the Second Half of the 20th Century**

The History Institute of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences started active folk architecture studies after World War II and regular expeditions in 1948, and the History and Ethnography Museum undertook these studies and expeditions starting in 1952.

This was a contradictory period. In the period after World War II, everything underwent dramatic changes: the philosophy, the attitude towards residences, the nature of ownership, materials, methods, and speed of construction. Rural farmsteads were abandoned as people were moved to newly established kolchozes (collective farms) and Soviet farming settlements. Entire quarters of wooden houses were demolished in small towns and city suburbs, and concrete apartment blocks, giant administrative buildings and cultural clubs were built. The growth trends of towns after World War II are best reflected by statistical data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Lithuanian population in rural areas (percentage)</th>
<th>Lithuanian population in towns (percentage)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>1959</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>1985</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>45</td>
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The law was signed by Professor Vincas Krievius-Mickėvičius, who was the vice-president of the Republic of Lithuania. It was the last day prior to the country’s annexation by the USSR. Following the passage of the law, the registration of cultural monuments and inventories of cultural valuables found on the farmsteads to be nationalised were started. Unfortunately, this work was interrupted by World War II.

With the passage of time, these trends became even more rapid. Those were times when timber construction did not withstand the pressure of industrial construction and when ‘comfortable and modern’ living in apartment blocks attract- ed most farm dwellers, who had to spend years on waiting lists to obtain an apartment.

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At the same time, architecture students led by Professor Kazimieras Šešelgis drew and measured the disappearing ethnographic villages. The materials collected during the expeditions became the basis for numerous scientific studies. In 1965–1968, the Lithuanian Construction and Architecture Institute prepared a two-volume publication entitled *Lithuanian Folk Architecture*. It contained a vast amount of material about residential, public, storage, estate and industrial buildings and provided an analysis of building typology, development of architectural forms, decoration, and structures and the development of farmsteads, villages, and small towns. This publication can be called the seminal publication of our wooden architecture.

The objective of the work at that time had to be based on Soviet ideology. This is what Iztodrius Butkevičius wrote in his article entitled ‘An Overview of Studies of Lithuanian Folk Architecture’: ‘We must finally attend to the protection of valuable examples of folk architectural heritage because all these materials are valuable not only in historical, ethnographic, and architectural terms, but also in practical terms if we consider the construction of new residences with traditional forms’. In 1958, lists of valuable cultural monuments began to be compiled. After the passage of a new law on the protection of cultural monuments on 15 April 1967, a new list of archaeological, historical, architectural, urban, and art valuables was prepared. The Scientific Supervisory Council for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the Ministry of Culture of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic completed the first stage of this work in 1972. The list was published in 1973.

The list mentioned numerous wooden structures and ethnographic main-street villages. In the old part of Trakai alone, 28 wooden houses were protected as architectural monuments of local significance. Three main-street villages were protected in the surroundings of Trakai (Trakai District), six main-street and ad hoc villages in Ignalina District; seven ethnographic villages in Varėna District; and six ethnographic villages in Utena District.

It was a crucial time for starting to take care of this cultural heritage. If the lists had not been compiled, we would not have any wooden architectural heritage in Lithuania today.

With rural farmsteads rapidly disappearing, the Open-Air Ethnographic Museum was established in Rumiškės in 1966 on the initiative of scholars of wooden architecture. The first buildings were moved there in 1967. In 1974, the...
The Lithuanian film “Tadas Biela”.

Lithuanian film “Tadas Biela”.

The preparation of the first projects for the regeneration of old towns and ethnographic villages began in the 1970s and 1980s. Unfortunately, registration and restoration/regeneration projects could not change the now deep-rooted attitude towards wooden buildings, which were viewed as poor, wretched, and uncomfortable. Wooden construction traditions continued to disappear, and the protection of the remaining wooden heritage was becoming a formality only. All this was reinforced by lack of experience in the field of restoring wooden buildings. Due to their poor physical condition, it was difficult to preserve the authentic structures of the buildings and the restoration of original structures was hardly possible. Nevertheless, these were only the first, although not highly successful, attempts to revive wooden architecture in Lithuania.

WILL LITHUANIAN WOODEN HOUSE CONSTRUCTION TRADITIONS BE PRESERVED IN THE 21ST CENTURY?

In the late 20th century, following the restoration of independence of Lithuania, political trends and economic relations underwent radical changes. In the first years of independence, the ideas of national identity and heritage protection were very popular in society. Just as in the early 20th century, we were striving to restore statehood and traditions based on Lithuanian cultural foundations, which had formed over the centuries.

Resolution No. 375 of 11 December 1990 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania reinforced the primary legal protection of urban planning prior to 1940 and of buildings constructed prior to 1944. This resolution was of utmost importance for the preservation of wooden architecture because it provided protection of the historical suburbs of larger cities, which mostly featured wooden buildings constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the suburbs of Vilnius alone, almost 2,000 wooden buildings remained in 2006, which demonstrated the special skills of Vilnius craftsmen.

Unfortunately, the resolution lost its power on 24 November 2004. Many people believed that too many old buildings were protected and that they constituted an obstacle to new development. Changes in the newly developing economic relations were not beneficial for the protection of national heritage, particularly for the protection of wooden architecture. New threats, including urban development and the abundance of cheap synthetic construction materials, appeared with the formation of the free market.

The most expensive and attractive areas for the construction of new residential buildings in the major cities were the former city suburbs featuring wooden buildings constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Most of these old houses had not been repaired for decades and did not have basic utilities. Most of the owners of these buildings were looking forward to selling them and moving to new comfortable apartment blocks (an unrealised dream since Soviet times). The talk that these buildings constituted cultural valuables and should not be demolished was not popular either among the owners or among real estate developers, who were chiefly interested in constructing many high-rise buildings as quickly as possible. One occurrence that helped to end the discussions was fire. The number of fires that took place in the Šnipiškės quarter in Vilnius in the first decade of the 21st century exceeded the number of fires in the entire 20th century.

The introduction of new building materials and methods of construction has also threatened old wooden buildings. A short-sighted ‘warm house’ theory arose in which old windows were replaced by plastic ones, carved wooden doors substituted with solid armoured doors, and synthetic siding and insulation were used to cover buildings. This inexpensive low-quality construction resulted in the disappearance of many historical carved details and bargeboards. It was discovered a few years later that this new building technology led to mould and dry rot and that gaps in the plastic window frames let in more wind than the previous wood frame windows. Sadly, this has led to the further decay of these historic wooden buildings, many of which are now beyond repair.

In these suburban settings, it is no longer clear whether these houses represent original cultural heritage or poor hovels. Care for abandoned buildings, which are falling deeper into disrepair, has also been called into question. Perhaps we should pass from official prohibitions to financial support, encouragement, and advice on restoration efforts. In addition, we should draft new regulations that encourage new buildings constructed in the same spirit of the original wooden architecture.

Local communities that understand the significance of traditions have started to form in those parts of cities and small towns where the protection of the heritage has been discussed for over 30 years now. There are some beautifully restored wooden buildings in small towns and villages, and life in wooden farmsteads is being revived little by little. Yet these positive trends are very fragile. Certain contradictions between institutions protecting heritage and building owners have become obvious. Officials often forget that wooden architecture can be preserved only by people who love it and by owners who are delighted to be living in wooden houses. It is hoped that a greater appreciation of these positive examples will encourage the revival of traditional timber construction methods.

The rush of technical and industrial progress that started in the mid-20th century has led us to a time when we have to look at the past and reflect more often. We often forget about simple traditional things, which we are then bound to rediscover. We are coming back to natural fibre apparel, organic food, and medicinal herbs. We are looking for spiritual peace in the countries of the East and in the mountains – in places not reached by modern civilisation. After spending the week in a noisy city made of glass and concrete, we rush to our wooden country houses for the weekend. Perhaps the emerging search for sustainable architecture will lead us to traditional log houses built of logs, i.e. the renewable construction material that is wood.

This is a good time for coming back to the traditional ways of wooden construction and for reflecting on whether we will preserve our wooden architecture, which has a history lasting millennia or whether we will let it disappear.
In the pre-state period (11th–13th centuries), the situation of the individual Baltic tribes and of their villages was different. For example, the Curonians, who lived on the shore of the Baltic Sea, used to trade and fight with most seaside tribes and adopted some characteristics of the Scandinavian cultures and other cultures. Large settlements (with an area of up to ten hectares) were developed next to their mounds, and non-reinforced villages were built somewhat further away from the mounds.

The Teutonic Order, which settled in the confluence of the Western Dvina and Vistula rivers in the 13th century, started to encroach on the lands of the Balts. Fighting with Lithuania lasted for two centuries. Numerous villages were destroyed during the many attacks, and unpopulated areas spread in western and southwestern Lithuania.

The Lithuanian state (the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) was forming at that time, and residences, villages, and towns appeared in the areas that suffered from wars less than the others did. In the 14th–15th centuries, there were three types of rural settlements: castles (manors) of noblemen, villages of noblemen (in addition to landowners, dependent families lived there), and communities of free farmers.

The state border set as a result of the Treaty of Melno signed in 1422 divided the lands of the Balts into Lithuania Major (the lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) and Lithuania Minor (the states of the Order and later the lands of the Prussian Duchy and still later the lands of the Prussian Kingdom).

Starting in the late 14th century, the rulers of Lithuania Major presented numerous lands together with the people living there to noblemen, and as a result of this noblemen managed a considerable portion of the lands by the 15th century. Many villages now were within the boundaries of the nobleman’s large estates. The free peasants of the area began to be forced into serfdom in the late 14th century. The serfs depended on their master and had to fulfil certain obligations. The villages of Lithuania Major underwent considerable change as a result of the Wallach Reform of 1557, which abolished the peasants’ allodial rights. New street-and-patch villages were planned based on western European examples, and local peasants were moved to these villages from their old villages and manors. This forced reform was less dominant in Samogitia (Žemaitija, western Lithuania) where some old settlements remained. Some originally structured settlements (villages of minor noblemen, settlements in forests or more distant areas, etc.) survived next to the now-dominant street-and-patch villages.

The land of the standard street-and-patch village, which had an almost regular shape, was divided into three parts, each of which was divided into narrow, oblong parcels (strips) whose number corresponded to that of the farmsteads in the village. The residential area was arranged in
In the early 19th century, Prussian rulers promoted denser settlements in the region: they allowed settlers to cut down major forests and build new settlers’ villages there. Colonists from the west, the region faced the shore of the Baltic Sea and the Curonian Lagoon. People had lived on the Curonian Spit – the sand strip between the sea and the lagoon – since ancient times. A large area was occupied by the delta of the River Nemunas with numerous branches and large areas of marshes and seasonally inundated meadows.

Prussian authorities and local residents had drained seasonally flooded and perennially wet areas based on the Dutch example since ancient times. The draining of large marshes was promoted in the 19th century, and colonists’ settlements were created next to them.

Because of all this, villages in Lithuania Minor were extremely diverse from functional, ethnocom- mercial, historical, and other points of view.

The development of villages in Lithuania Minor took a different path. No major land reform or mass restructuring of villages was undertaken there. The old street-and-patch villages with their numerous wooden buildings survived there. Forest villages and some small originally structured villages remained there as well.

When the Republic of Lithuania repossessed the Vilnus region at the end of 1919, 57 percent of the land there remained undistributed. Land reform in this region, just as in all of Lithuania, was stopped in 1940 when the Soviets occupied the country. The Soviet occupation was replaced by the Nazi occupation for a short time during World War II, and in the summer of 1944 the second Soviet occupation started, which lasted almost half a century and which radically altered the nature and destiny of villages all over Lithuania.

After Poland occupied the Vilnus region in 1920, 6,955 villages were divided by 1939, including ancient villages of the Balts) formed and remained there until the middle of the 20th century. Starting in the 17th century, Prussian rulers promoted denser settlements in the region: they allowed settlers to cut down major forests and build new settlers’ villages there. Colonists from the west were invited to the late 17th century: some French Huguenots, Dutch, Swiss, Scots, etc. settled there. Major colonisation took place after the plague of the early 18th century, when Austrian Protestants and colonists from various German lands, etc. settled in Lithuania Minor. This way, multinational villages were formed in the region, and next to the old villages (developed in accordance with the Baltic traditions) rationally planned villages and settlements of the newcomers appeared. These settlements were long dominated by wooden buildings.

Lithuania Minor was also different from Lithuania Major in terms of the climate. On the west, the region faced the shore of the Baltic Sea and the Curonian Lagoon. People had lived on the Curonian Spit – the sand strip between the sea and the lagoon – since ancient times. A large area was occupied by the delta of the River Nemunas with numerous branches and large areas of marshes and seasonally inundated meadows.

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Because of all this, villages in Lithuania Minor were extremely diverse from functional, ethnocultural, historical, and other points of view.
The villages of farmers, the number of which was the greatest, stood out by their structure and appearance. There were also some ancient villages typical of the Baltic region in which farmsteads were placed in irregular groups, old villages of newcomers (dense groups comprising several farms), villages comprising separated farms, and colonies with regular layouts. Seaside fishermen lived in small landholdings between sand dunes on the infertile shore of the Baltic Sea. Original settlements between sand dunes, the sea, and the lagoon were created by the residents of the Curonian Spit whose main activity was fishing.

Riverside fishermen villages were situated in the Nemunas delta next to the numerous branches of the river. Farms and buildings were placed along the river, i.e. the main ‘road’ for paddle and sailing boats.

Brick and clay buildings became more popular in Lithuania Minor in the 19th century, but wood continued to be used for some elements of these buildings. Thanks to their wooden elements, they often resembled old wooden structures.

Some of the region’s villages were destroyed in 1914 and 1915 because of World War I and later during the post-war economic turmoil. Lithuania Minor underwent major political change in accordance with the Treaty of Versailles, the region of Klaipėda (the northern part of Lithuania Minor where most Lithuanians lived) was separated from Germany in the early 1920s, to be subsequently joined to the Republic of Lithuania in 1923 and annexed by Nazi Germany in 1938.

Major losses were suffered by villages of the region starting in the autumn of 1944, when the Soviet Army devastated Lithuania Minor as a territory of Nazi Germany. Almost all residents of the region were eliminated because of the forced evacuation and ethnic cleansing.

Old Villages in 1944–2000

The Soviet regime destroyed the basis of the traditional economic organisation of Lithuanian villages (private property, methods of engaging in economic activity and selling products, procedures of developing rural farms, construction and reconstruction, etc.). Repression of residents and nationalisation (appropriation) of major rural farms and buildings were carried out in the occupied lands (both in Lithuania Major and Lithuania Minor). As a result of Soviet collectivisation, no private village economy survived, and rural residents who lost their private property did not need most of their outbuildings and production facilities any longer.

As a result of the persecution of rural residents who were wealthy prior to 1944, the production premises owned by them (water mills and windmills, dairy and cheese production facilities, wool-carding workshops, oil pressing facilities, fulling mills, etc.) were appropriated. During the Soviet period, these buildings were abandoned, and some of them were destroyed. As a result, old villages lost their typical elements.

After the wealthier rural residents were repressed (exiled to Siberia, etc.), the largest and most beautiful residential buildings and outbuildings that used to belong to them were abandoned or destroyed. This way, the nature of the still remaining old villages was changed: mostly the simpler and smaller wooden buildings and modest farms remained there.

In the years of the political ‘thaw’ in the USSR (approximately 1960–1970), people were allowed to create some sort of institutions for protection of cultural heritage and make lists of historical and cultural monuments. However, these had to comply with the political and ideological statements of the Soviet regime: the disadvantages of the past (poor life of rural residents, etc.) had to be emphasised, thus underlining the achievements of the occupying regime. Therefore, sites related to the so-called ‘enemies of the people’, buildings and farmsteads that belonged to wealthy people and similar items were not included in the lists of monuments. Due to the political control of that time, the selection of heritage sites (including rural settlements) lacked objectivity.

Therefore, in Soviet years mostly the street-and-patch villages in eastern and southern Lithuania were declared monuments, without considering the peculiarities of other regions.
Old Lithuanian Villages Today

The distinct village of Švendubrė is located in southern Lithuania, in the Drūkšiai ethnocultural region and to the south of the resort town of Druskininkai. The conventionally located former one-street village later became more densely settled due to the division of old farms among inheritors, until as many as 120 small farms were formed in a small area.

The great Gudai Forest with marshes is located to the east of Druskininkai. It was there that the distinct village of Mūsteika, which is made up of groups of old farms (75) is located. The picturesque villages of Lynežeris, Kabeliai, and the stack village of Senoji Katinautiškė (11 farms) and Kukutėliai (13 farms) and others, including the one-street villages of Mėčionys (21 farms), Tiltai (72 farms), Dargužiai (86 farms), Cūžinai (48 farms), and adjacent villages. This secluded area suffered less Soviet-era restructuring.

Some parts of a network of old one-street villages survived in the surroundings of Valkiškiai (next to the border between the districts of Varėna and Trakai): Vaikšteniai (38 farms), Didžiasalis (27 farms), Tiltai (72 farms), Dargužiai (86 farms), Cūžinai (48 farms), and adjacent villages. This secluded area suffered less Soviet-era restructuring.

Another concentration of old one-street villages can be found in the southeastern part of Lithuania, in the surroundings of Didžiasalas. The picturesque villages of Žilmaiši (56 farms), Poškonys (23 farms), and Rimašai (26 farms) have preserved numerous old wooden buildings.

A number of original old villages have survived in the area of the former Vilnius region in eastern Lithuania.

The large village of Mėžionys (which had approximately 100 farmsteads in the past) is located southeast of Švenčionys, and the village of Medžiūnai (26 farms) is located nearby. The secluded village of Vidutinė (17 farms) is located next to the Belarussian border, and the village of Didžiasalas is located north of Švenčionys. All these examples are of densely built one-street villages typical of the region. The wooden residential houses on the narrow strips of land were usually built with their back facing the street. Near residences, there was a granary for keeping stock and a cattle shed. A large barn for keeping harvested crops and hay was located at the back of the plot of land, behind the garden (picturesque rows of these large wooden structures used to be seen at the edges of villages). The remains of streets in old villages dense with wooden buildings and traditional trees (lindens, maples, ashes, and oaks) have survived in some areas. Small flower gardens, which were some sort of decoration for the farmstead, were created between residential houses and the street.

The area of the farm was surrounded by a wood-enclosed fence with large gates and wicket gates. Numerous old villages can be found in the surroundings of Adutiškis and Tverčai, including the one-street villages of Mėžionys (21 farms) and Kukutišai (15 farms) and others, and the stack village of Senoji Katinautiškė (11 farms). The former represents a more archaic structure of the region’s villages, in which several farms were concentrated around a common area. The wooded hills full of ravines west of Ig- nalina avoided any major changes. A number of characteristic small villages with a non-standard structure survived there in the forest glades and...
on lake shores: Šumai (seven farms), Strazi- 

dai (five farms), Vašonis (four farms), Salos 
(four farms), Varniški (two farms), Stauniai 
(three farms), Saundžiai (four farms), etc. The 
fertile areas of northern Lithuania underwent 
various changes starting in the 16th century. Some 
old one-street villages survived in some areas 
of the region.

The network of straight roads with large 
one-street villages that formed in the period 
of the Wàltach reform next to the Latvian border 
southeast of Zygaùi has survived to the present 
day. The most characteristic are the villages of 
Versìiài, Stungiài, and Graðatiài. These villages 
preserve some traces of the once-flourishing 
intensive agriculture. Some individual pre-war 
farms of major farmers with picturesque wooden 
buildings have survived in the area. The vil-
dge of Dargaičiai, which features old wooden 
buildings and was not divided into individual 
farms before the war, is found in the surround-
ings of Gruzdžiai in Šiauliai District.

Old village elements with wooden buildings 
typical of central Lithuania were recreated in the 
village of Kleboniàkià in Radviliàkis District.

Elements of the traditional villages of Lithu-
ania Major were recreated at the Open-Air Mu-
seum of Folk Art in Rumšiàkis (between the cit-
ties of Kaunas and Vilnius).

Major elements of old villages in western 
Lithuania survived in the surroundings of 
Skudosas (Tusài and Udralaiài) and Krettinga 
(Peldjài, Grùòšlaoke, Erélài, Genačaià, and 
Laždiniàkai). These are elements of old single-
homestead (and sometimes one-street) villages 
with original wooden buildings typical of the 
ethno-cultural region of Samogitia.

For centuries, the centre of this region was 
dominated by small the so-called stack villages 
with large wooden buildings located randomly 
in large areas. Elements of these homesteads 
can be found in the surroundings of Plunge, Teliàai, 
and Sàliàai.

Elements of villages of different styles have 
survived in the region of Klàpàpèda (the north-
ern part of Lithuania Minor). The village of 
Antòvòrasài is situated on the eastern border 
of the region, next to the River Sventoji. 
Homesteads with picturesque wooden build-
ings were used to be located along the earlier na-
tional border. The village of Kalòveliai is located 
on the right bank of the Nemunas, not far from 
Vieviàuli, and once was the centre of local indus-
try and featured its own port. It had a sawmill, a 
brickyard and a glass factory. Foresters used to 
live in the small village of Jàrvà of farmers located in the 
forest glade north-west of Vieviàuli.

Newcomers who cut forest trees and made 
tilled fields in the area used to live in the vil-
lage of Nàusèdai on the forest edge. The nearby 
settlement of Sòkaàkài on the bank of the Nemu-
 nas was famous for its industries (sawmill and 
brickyard) and recreational facilities. South of 
Vëlkòylèkià, the village of Òpòstàniai has main-
tained some elements of its old structure and 
some of its old buildings. The one-street village 
of Tràkinèkià, with homesteads of different 
sizes, is found east of Mikòytas. Sànìòniài, a vil-
lage of users of seasonally inundated meadows, 
stands on a small hill in the Nemunas valley 
located to the south.

Some elements of the large village of Gòdài (which had approximately 80 homesteads of 
farmers) can still be found north of Pagègòiai. The homesteads of the old village of Pàvelèkià 
can be found in the vicinity, on the banks of the 
Vilikà, a streamlet. The local manor was devel-
oped in the 19th century in nearby Jònìkàkià 
x of the rural homesteads.

A concentration of original villages survived 
at the former northern border of the region of 
Klàpàpèda: Ròpòkòjài (a former religious centre), 
Sàkài (a large one-street village), Aukòtièkìà 
(a settlement of major farmers), and Kàlènài 
(settlement located next to the border, near the 
old international road). Plàikàià is located next to 
the seasonally inundated valley of the Nemu-
nàs (which used to be a well-known centre of 
trade, where fishermen, vegetable growers, and 
farmers met).

Sàaugògvàlai, a village of meadow users, is situ-
bated on a small hill between seasonally inundat-
ed areas south of Sòlitè. Zàlìgòrài, which con-
stituted part of a former large marsh dwellers' 
colony comprising 300 homesteads, is located 
to the north.

Sòygìnònài, a village of farmers living on a river 
bank located west of Sòlitè, has preserved some 
elements of its traditional structure. The home-
steads of the village of Ràguòlai (which used to be 
settlements of marsh users) are located further to 
the north-west. The settlement of Minjà, which is the only remaining one-street village of river 
fishermen, is situated on the banks of the Minjà.

The large village of Pakàlinè is situated on 
Raùnò Island in the delta of the Nemunas. The 
homesteads of fishermen and vegetable grow-
ers who used to live there spread for approxi-
mately six kilometres along the river banks. The homesteads of the fisherman’s village of 
Skìròytèlè stand nearby. The fisherman’s villages of 
Stànikìàkià and Sàñèrnài with old homesteads 
remain on the eastern shore of the Curonian (Baltic Sea) Lagoon on the crest of a dry hill.

To the north of Sòlitè, Làpinài is a small 
manor with the nearby homesteads of farmers 
and cattle breeders, are found in the 
surroundings of Prièklàiè.

The distinctive homesteads of fishermen 
spread for several kilometres along the shore of 
the Baltic Sea north of Klàpàpèda. Unfortunately, 
the distinctive village of Kàrkë (Kàrkìlnìàkìà) 
was destroyed during the large-scope new 
construction in the period of the recreational 
boom.

The fisherman settlements of Jòukàkàntà (a 
popular resort starting in the 19th century), 
Nòùà, Pèrèlìà, and Përvàlìà, and the resort area 
of Sìmìònyè are situated on the Curonian Sòpt, a 
World Heritage Site. Some elements of old vil-
lages have survived there even after decades of 
the recreational boom.
Construction with wood has been common in Lithuania since olden times. This is vernacular architecture that has retained original features in different regions: Aukštaitija, Samogitia (Zemaitija), Druskiniai and Suvalkija. Inhabitants of small cities and towns and the gentry that built estates adapted rural architecture. In the past, most buildings in towns were also wooden, but time, fires and wars destroyed them. Even in the largest cities, Vilnius and Kaunas, there were many wooden buildings. A total of 182 brick and 1,069 wooden buildings were registered in Kaunas in 1857, and 833 brick and 806 wooden buildings were registered in Vilnius in 1860.

PERIODS OF WOODEN CONSTRUCTION

Today there are hardly any wooden buildings constructed before the middle of the 19th century left in Lithuanian cities and towns. The existing heritage of wooden urban architecture represents two historical periods: the period of Tsarist Russia (until 1915) and the interwar years (1918–1940). In the Soviet era, wooden construction was only tolerated in small towns and settlements of collective farms (though it was alternated with brick construction), and in independent Lithuania (after the year 1990) only several new apartment buildings that were wooden or of mixed construction were built in the largest cities.

Structures and stylistic features

In the 19th century, urban buildings were constructed from hewed logs, and the external walls were plastered with vertically and horizontally placed small boards. Roofs were covered with shingles or plates. Judging from what we see in old photographs, there were buildings with two-tiered roofs characteristic of Baroque architecture. They can be dated back to the 18th century. The walls of the houses built during the interwar period are of either log or skeleton construction, plastered, and less decorated on the outside than those of the buildings constructed at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. As researchers have revealed, about three-fourths of buildings in Užupis, one of the oldest suburbs in Vilnius are built of logs, and in Žvėrynas this figure stands at almost two-thirds, with the remaining ones being of skeleton or mixed construction (there are houses of both periods in these suburbs). During the interwar period, not only roofing iron but also clay tiles were used for roofing. The old houses of Vilnius often have high brick or stone socles with cellars. There are several wooden houses built in the second half of the 19th century in the Old Town of Kaunas that were built on cellars that have survived from an earlier period.

The ethnic tradition and the Baroque style had an impact on the early churches that have survived (Stelmužė, 1650, rebuilt in 1727; Beržoras, Nijolė Lukšionytė

Wooden Towns

Nijolė Lukšionytė
Vytautas Magnus University Faculty of Arts

Lithuanian towns with especially elaborate carvings: Vytauto St 34 / Treniotos St 1, Vilnius.

Carved porch of the wooden building characteristic of the Baroque period, attached at the very end of the 19th century, Antakalnio St 8a, Vilnius

1246, Palaičiai, 1737, Seda, 1770). Later Classicism was clearly reflected (churches of Buniatidzä, 1788, Imbradas, 1786), which had a profound influence on the estates of the nobility (Antavulė, 1785; Šilainiu, the beginning of the 19th century; Adamony, 1810). The architecture of churches and manor houses from the middle and the second half of the 19th century reflected the styles of the past, this is typical of the aesthetics of Romanticism and Historicism. Forms of Gothic and Classicism were most often interpreted in Lithuania. In wooden construction, forms and elements of professional architecture supplemented the laconic volumes and simple solutions of the plan borrowed from the ethnic tradition. Ethnic traditions and styles were so intertwined that it is difficult to strictly divide the buildings of churches and estates of the 19th century into separate groups according to the formal expression. All the more so that the rural construction of the time also borrowed elements from professional architecture (pilasters, and cornices borrowed from the classicism, historicism styles).

**Geographical range of prevalence**

Following the 1766 decision of the Sejm of the Lithuanian Polish Commonwealth wooden buildings of Vilnius could not be built in the historical centre of the city; they were tolerated only beyond the borders of the then city to avoid the danger of their catching fire. Therefore, in the present-day part of the protected Old Town of Vilnius you will not see any wooden buildings. The greatest number of wooden buildings have survived in the eastern suburbs of Vilnius (Rasos, Markučiai, Belmontas, Pavilnys, Pūčkoriai), in the northern area (Snąpūkės), in the south beyond the railway line (Naujininkai), and in Antakalnis, which stretches from the centre along the Neris River. In the west (Zverynas), which is divided by a regular network of streets, an original area of wooden buildings exists. Many wooden buildings of the earliest period (the first half and the middle of the 19th century) stood in the suburb of Lukšikės, west of the historical core. A characteristic type of building of that time was spacious one-storied houses of an oblong shape, high gabled roofs, and carved, decorated porches resembling manor houses of the nobility: Gardens or at least trees surrounded the houses. Members of the boyars who settled in towns used to build such houses. Summer-houses and villas became popular in the suburbs.

In Kaunas, the oldest wooden buildings (from the second half of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century) have survived on the edges of Naujamiestis. They were built by wealthy residents. The poorer strata of society concentrated in the southern district of Šiauliai and in the west, on the right bank of the Neris River in Vilijampolė. Wooden construction is predominant there. Wooden buildings were built in Žaliakalnis, which is situated on the upper terrace, as well as in the recreational zone of Panevėžys. Žaliakalnis was considered a prestigious district in the town, and employ- ees, servicemen, and the creative intelligentsia took up their quarters there. Contrary to other zones of the town, solely Lithuanians lived there. Houses were built on spacious plots of land with gardens. The wooden structures in those quarters matched the brick ones quite well. Wooden buildings of all types were built: traditional rural-type houses with mezzanines and without them, asymmetric villas, and two-storied buildings intended for flats to be rented.

The early small estates

In Vilnius, this type of wooden building is best represented by the summer residence with a park of Bishop David Pilchowiak in Antakalnis, which was turned into the Tivoli Tavern at the beginning of the 19th century. A wide wooden building characteristic of the Baroque period has survived on the site (Antakalnio St 8a) with three rows of premises and brick interior walls, covered with a two-levelled roof. The carved porch was attached to it at the very end of the 19th century. There used to be more small patriarchal estates in Antakalnis, but they have been destroyed (quite recently one was destroyed at Tado Koscikusko St 26). Porches with columns show the influence of classicism in small estates in Naujamiestis (Tilto St 3) and carvings of acanthus leaves (Zygimančių St 12), and the impact of Romanticism is discerned in arched windows, a balcony supported by columns, and a mezzanine (Labdarų St 6, it has not survived). A prototype of an Italian villa in wooden architecture characteristic of romanticism exists at Mazutaitė Estate (Šabličiaus St 124). Although the style of Italian villas is rarely used in wooden architecture, another example that can be found is the villa Imperial (Maironio St 14), which was built in the estate of Druskini- niki in the second half of the 19th century and is formed of contrasting parts.

Wooden public buildings

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, there were various wooden buildings related to entertainment and recreation in the urban environment of Vilnius and Kaunas. Unfortunately, with needs and the level of comfort changing, they were rebuilt or pulled down. The architecture of urban entertainment and recreation was created by professional architects according to designs drawn up in advance and coordinated with the building divisions of municipalities. The so-called Swiss style that was prevalent in the resorts of other European coun- tries was characteristic of its style. A decorative structure of coupled or diagonally crossed elements used in the pediments of projecting canopies and porches, as well as in open galleries between the responds, represent the Swiss style. Those elements – rafters or king posts, which reinforced the responds – were shaped, and tracery was inserted between them. The most characteristic representative of this trend was the Summer Theatre in Vilnius. Russian-style decor was also found (gates to the Botanical Garden in Vilnius). Art Nouveau and Baroque elements seemed ex-otic: a kidney-shaped window, and convex helm roofs of the turrets of the Exhibition Pavilion of Agriculture and Crafts.

**Houses of city dwellers**

The most popular type of wooden architecture was the houses of city-dwellers that were built near the street. The owners of the houses lived there, and sometimes rooms were rented. At the end of the 19th century, many houses of city-dwellers were built in Naujamiestis area in Kaunas, which was designed in 1867. Wood construction was not limited to the side streets of this part of the town, because it was only in the main boulevard – Niko- liai (current Lazdijų) Avenue — that solid brick buildings had to be built. Houses in Naujamiestis in Kaunas were oblong, built with their sides fac- ing the street, and covered with gabled plate roofs. The log walls in the so-called part were lined with vertically placed boards, and the remaining part was lined with horizontal boards. The windows had folding shutters or shutters divided by fill- ings. (Kristijonas Donelaitis St 5, Karo Ligotės St 9, Trimito St 8). In Vilnius, similar houses have...
survived in the districts that are at some distance from the centre: in Užupis (Krivių St 14), Šnipiškės (Giedraičių St 10, 14, 17, 18), Žvėrynas (Treniotos St 23), and Naujininkas (Janulinskų St 19). These one-storey houses having a simple structure are referred to as farmhouses. Sometimes they have mezzanines, or porches.

Houses of a farmhouse type prevailed in the suburbs of Kaunas. The Jewish people who settled in the narrow scattered small streets of Vilijampolė built small houses with shops there. Some of the houses have their side turned towards the street, and others have their end towards the street. The houses are covered with gabled plane roofs, and do not have garrets, or mezzanines. The doors go out straight into the street, and the windows have shutters.

Wooden houses were gradually built on small plots of land in small streets laid on the banks of the Nemunas River. Small farmhouse-type houses were especially common in Šančiai. Some of them had open porches or verandas, and shutters. During the inter-war period, many farmhouse-type buildings were constructed in Žaliakalnis. They had one-storey, and a rectangular plan, and consisted of one or two flats. Some of them appear higher because of mezzanines, or garrets, and others had glazed verandas. Open porches had profiled wooden columns. There were also verandas with window-frames of geometrical design and coloured glass. Shutters, pediments, imitations of pilaster and tracery rendered expressiveness to the houses. Though the size of the houses is related to the Lithuanian ethnic tradition, the décor (Neo-classicism, Neo-baroque, Art Deco motifs) are sometimes closer to those of professional architecture.

Houses to let

Another type of wooden structure that was common in the largest cities of Lithuania was two-storey houses containing four or more flats to let. For financial reasons such buildings were not decorated. Their appearance was utilitarian; they were rectangular and covered with a gabled roof, and in-filled walls were lined with boards. At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, houses to let were built not only in less wealthy suburbs of Vilnius such as Šnipiškės (Giedraičių St 17), but also in Žvėrynas (Malo-nioji St 15), which was considered the zone of summerhouses of the city because of its pine forests. Very similar two-storied houses were built in Riga, alongside solid brick apartment houses of Historicism and Art Nouveau style. The popularity of houses of this type in Riga was most probably influenced by Scandinavian architecture, perhaps the same tendencies affected Lithuania too. In Kaunas, two-storied houses to let began to be built somewhat later – in the third decade of the 20th century. They are found in Žaliakalnis (Minties Rato St 24, Aukštosios St 96), in Šančiai (Sodų St 86), in Aleksovas (Veršvė St 20). In the district of Vilijampolė, two-storied houses were more compact, due to small plots of land and sometimes had fireproof wall openings and openings for entering the yard (Jurbarko St 52).

Variety of décor

From the end of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century, houses with a more complicated structure and more lavishly decoration were also built for city dwellers. One of these houses is a two-storied house decorated with tracery resembling lace at Polocko St 52 in Ūţupis. The balcony arch, the rails, and the roof cantilevers are carved in a highly professional manner. Décor of tracery wood was common...
the beginning of 20th century in Žvėrynas, Birutės St. 36, Vilnius. The one-storied houses formerly the Orthodox Cathedral (Kristijono Donelaičio St 5, 1896) has a different décor – that of modified Russian style in Lithuanian towns. The nearby house of Rudolf Marker (Kristijono Donelaičio St 5, 1896) has a different décor – that of modified Russian style the Church of St. Michael the Archangel, of Login Shcherbakov, the building contractor owners. Russian motifs were used on the house during the period of historicism in Europe, in the Slavic countries, in particular. But we would not be right if we failed to discern links with the decoration of rural houses in Lithuania. Jurgis Gimbutas has recorded chambranles, cornices and bargeboards in the villages of Dzūkija and Aukštaitija that are close to those of Vilnius houses. In Kaunas, décor that borrowed ethnic motifs can be found on houses in Šančiai (Krantų Av. 89), and Panemunė (Upelio St 30) and houses in Žaliakalnis that were built somewhat later (Juozės Kralavičės St 7, 1912). The motifs used for the décor of wooden houses in Kaunas at the end of the 19th century were related to the national identity of their owners. Russian motifs were used on the house of Login Scherbakov, the building contractor of the Church of St. Michael the Archangel, formerly the Orthodox Cathedral (Kristijono Donelaičio St 7 and 11). The one-storied houses that were lavishly decorated with tracery ornaments were built in 1895 by carpenters invited from Chernigov Governorate (they also decorated the interior of the cathedral). One house has a porch with columns that have a complicated edifice and redecoration of theachine of the architecture of Moscow of the 17th century. The nearby house of Rudolf Marker (Kristijono Donelaičio St 5, 1896) has a different décor – that of modern forms of Neo-Classicism. Several Orthodox Churches built of wood (in Družkiniškės and one that has not survived in the Kaunas district of Šančiai) and some buildings intended for entertainment represented a distinctly Russian style in Lithuanian towns. Such motifs are rare in the architecture of housing. They sometimes occur in the houses of Žvėrynas built by Russian officials, sometimes in quite pure form (Trenioto St 18), but most often they are mixed with elements of the historicism, Art Nouveau, and even the Moorish style (Vytauto St 27 and 29, and Dionizo Poškos St 61). Examples of the Swiss style have survived until now in resorts (mainly in Palanga) because it was especially popular in the architecture of villas. Seeking attractive expression, not only lavish décor was made use of but also dynamic volumes. The villas Būro s aika and Anapilis (Birutės Av. 32, 30), built on the initiative of the Palanga estate owner Žofija Tyszkiewicz, are distinguished by their splendour. The imitation Fachwerk (timber framework) wall coverings and shingled roofs with complicated forms add an original feature. The décor included elements made by mortising technique and with tracery. 

**Military and railway buildings, health resorts**

It is natural that tracery characteristic of the Russian style was adapted to the buildings of the military fortress in Kaunas. Large barracks and smaller houses containing officers’ flats in the military town in Šančiai (1895–1899) were made of red bricks, and the oblong one-storied houses of non-commissioned officers were built of wood. Low gabled roofs were covered with roofing iron, and similar curved bands surrounded the garrets. The wooden barracks and health resorts in Kaunas started to be established only in the interwar period. After Aukštaitiški Panemunė was granted the status of a resort in 1933, mineral water and balneological sanatoriums, and two beaches were established in the Jonas Basanavičius forest. The residents of Kaunas liked the pine forest in Panemunė very much. Paths given the names of animals and birds were built in it, and live music concerts were performed there.
From the artistic point of view, the most expressive wooden structures are town villas. The largest number of such buildings is found in Žvytnas, which lies in the loop of the Neris River and whose northern part has retained the vegetation of a natural forest. In 1902, this territory was divided into spacious plots of land intended for building residencies, summerhouses and villas. The villas have a complex design, with cocklofts, towers, and open and glazed terraces, porches and verandas. Motifs of the Swiss style prevail in the villas built before the Second World War.

They are sometimes combined with elements of Historicism, Art Nouveau, and carved décor that originated in Poland and affected the Vilnius area to some extent at the beginning of the 20th century was styl zakopański (the Zakopane style), which was created by an artist of Lithuanian origin, Stanisław Witkiewicz. The houses have high roofs with curved configurations, decorated with stylised sunbursts, and small arches in the gables of garrets. These features are reflected in the villa in Mykolo Kazimiero Paco St 5, which, like the houses in the Tatra Mountains, is built on a steep slope and on a high stone socle. The roof was originally covered with tiles, differently from the terrace contain elaborate carvings with plenty of details). The Swiss style with crossed tie beams between the responds is reflected in the composition of the porch of another villa (Jurates St 31). Another villa in Antakalnis, Milda St 17, is made of one-storied and two-storied parts and a tower covered with a broach roof. The windows have compartment shutters, and there are plenty of carvings.

At the beginning of the 20th century, wood- en houses in Vilnius were sometimes built by well-known professional architects. In this way, a thoughtful attitude towards searching for an original style based on local traditions manifested itself. Architect Vaclav Michnevičius (Waclaw Michniewicz), who was from Central Lithuania where wooden houses of small boyar gentry were common, took over and stylised the forms of a small estate of his native land in his own house in Pranciškaus Skirnios St 5 (1913). This is a one-storey building with a mezzanine intended for two flats; it is covered with a two-levelled tile roof. At the beginning of the 20th century, this type of roof was brought back to life by styl dwórkowy (the style of small estates) that originated in Poland. The architect’s house is similar to a villa: its size is divided by a complex roof and risalit on the main façade with porches and terraces. Windows of different sizes that have decorative divisions of the frames are spaced out on the façades. Contrasts of materials (tiles, wood) are emphasised. This is an interpretation of styl dwórkowy typical of Vilnius in wooden architecture. Two flats in the building are connected as a mirror image; day premises (a study, a living-room, a dining room, and a kitchen) are arranged on the ground floor, whereas bedrooms, a bathroom, and a toilet are arranged in the mezzanine and the cockloft. Open porches serve as entrances to the flats, one gets into the mudrooms between the responds is reflected in the composition of the porch of another villa (Jūratės St 25). Another tendency that originated in Poland and affected the Vilnius area to some extent at the beginning of the 20th century was styl zakapański (the Zakopane style), which was created by an artist of Lithuanian origin, Stanisław Witkiewicz. The houses have high roofs with curved configurations, decorated with stylised sunbursts, and small arches in the gables of garrets. These features are reflected in the villa in Mykolo Kazimierio Paco St 5, which, like the houses in the Tatra Mountains, is built on a steep slope and on a high stone socle. The roof was originally covered with tiles, differently from the majority of the houses of that time which had roofs covered with smooth painted roofing iron. The motifs of the Zakopane style can be seen in the architecture of the wooden church in Pavilnys, and in some houses in Žvytnas, and in Paplauja. A villa characteristic of this trend with a tower in Druskininkai (Mikalojaus Konstan- tino Čiurlionio St 83). The Zakopane style was most consistently implemented in the interior of the dining room of the estate in Rokiškiai (1905), with built-in wall cupboards, decoration of the fireplace, and furniture made custom-made by master craftsmen. This is an especially artistic stylisation of ethnographic motifs.

During the inter-war period, Modernism exerted a strong impact on wooden villas in the city of Vilnius. Buildings became more compact, and symmetric, and sometimes they have porches with columns. The roofs have four gables, are cockloft-like, and are covered with tiles. The window frames are divided into small segments, and the shutters are of a louver type (Valakapių, Rato St 3a, Zvytnas, Vyktinto St 15 / Kęstutio St 11). The wall covering is solid (the socle is no longer separate), and boards are placed horizontally. The architecture of these villas is expressive by its laconism.

Several asymmetric wooden villas (that have not survived, only their designs are known) were built in Naujamiestis in Kaunas. A two-storied villa with towers (1897) that belonged to the factory owners Tillmans had elements of Swiss and Russian styles. The facades of the house of the physician Wincencys Kognowicki (1911) had Art Nouveau décor. Art Nouveau interpretations

Architects Władysław Styppulkowski and August Klein used shaping of projecting roof rafters and joined tie beams of rafters in triangular gables. These motifs are associated with the Swiss style, but in general, the buildings resemble the rural style houses of the suburbs. Another tendency that originated in Poland and affected the Vilnius area to some extent at the beginning of the 20th century was styl zakapański (the Zakopane style), which was created by an artist of Lithuanian origin, Stanisław Witkiewicz. The houses have high roofs with curved configurations, decorated with stylised sunbursts, and small arches in the gables of garrets. These features are reflected in the villa in Mykolo Kazimierio Paco St 5, which, like the houses in the Tatra Mountains, is built on a steep slope and on a high stone socle. The roof was originally covered with tiles, differently from the majority of the houses of that time which had roofs covered with smooth painted roofing iron. The motifs of the Zakopane style can be seen in the architecture of the wooden church in Pavilnys, and in some houses in Žvytnas, and in Paplauja. A villa characteristic of this trend with a tower in Druskininkai (Mikalojaus Konstan- tino Čiurlionio St 83). The Zakopane style was most consistently implemented in the interior of the dining room of the estate in Rokiškiai (1905), with built-in wall cupboards, decoration of the fireplace, and furniture made custom-made by master craftsmen. This is an especially artistic stylisation of ethnographic motifs.

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The Zakopane style
Villa built on a steep slope and on a high stone socle in Mykolo Kazimiero Paco St 5, Vilnius.
During the Soviet era the majority of wooden houses were nationalised, their inhabitants changed, and those who moved in had neither the interest nor the money to maintain them. Owners of the houses in Kaunas managed to preserve their ownership better; in 2002, when carrying out an investigation in Kaunas Žaliakalnis, it was discovered that the majority of the inhabitants of the houses were original residents. Wooden houses that have neither been taken care of nor renovated in Šnipiškės and Žvėrynas in Vilnius and Naumiestis in Kaunas are being replaced, and plastic windows and doors are being installed.

Legal protection of wooden houses is also insufficient, though the majority of the most valuable buildings have been included on the Register of Properties of Cultural Values, and some of the wooden buildings in the quarters of Žvyūnas, Antakalnis, Šnipiškės and Pašušys in Vilnius stand in protected territories. Žaliakalnis quarters near Gelu Street and Minties Rato Street in Kaunas, together with the fan-shaped network of streets planned in 1933, and the system of planting public spaces with trees and shrubs, is protected in this way. Until 1940, 80% of the houses there were wooden, and today this figure stands at about 70%. Technically, it is impossible to preserve all of them, though wooden houses create the spirit of that locality.

According to the Protection Regulation approved in 2004, protection with the condition of restoration is applied to the eleven most valuable houses in the territory, and freer rules have been established for the remaining ones.

**Originality and Value**

Wooden construction is a unique part of the urban heritage of Lithuanian cities and towns in which the local character of the buildings and environment is reflected. Wooden houses were built on spacious plots of land that were surrounded by orchards and kitchen gardens. There was no strict separation between brick and wooden constructions in any of the geographical areas of prevalence – brick and wooden houses created an organic whole. From the point of view of quantity, more houses of the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century have survived in Vilnius, whereas in Kaunas the heritage from the inter-war period is richer.

From the typological point of view, the most varied architecture is found both in Vilnius and in Kaunas: estates, rural style houses of the inter-war period is richer. From the typological point of view, the most varied architecture is found both in Vilnius and in Kaunas: estates, rural style houses of the inter-war period is richer.

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**Difficulties of preservation**

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The geographical position of Lithuania and abundance of forests have determined the spread of wood as the main building material from the Stone Age to the present day. Wooden houses were overwhelmingly dominant in cities and towns until the 19th century. In villages, in all regions of Lithuania, wood was the only building material for dwelling houses until the middle of the 20th century. Resorts are no exception. Wood, as an excellent natural building material, dominated both now.

The golden age of resort architecture is considered to be from the middle of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century. That was an especially quiet period favourable to the establishment of resorts, non-canonised creative architectural work, and a general understanding of the significance of recreation.

Wooden resort architecture is a very important part of the whole heritage from the point of view of history because it helps to understand the singularity of the origin and development of architecture of Historicism not only in Lithuania but also in the entire Baltic coast region. Due to its specific features, resort and park architecture is an especially significant part of the history of the culture of Lithuania, and reflects the world outlook of Romanticism without a literary basis.

Wooden Resort Architecture in Lithuania

Stylistic characteristics of resort buildings

The canons of designing and developing landscape parks inspired by Romanticism at the beginning of the 19th century, when their visitors...
had to feel the space and time of the surrounding world, directly encouraged interest in architectural styles of all periods (time) and architecture of different regions (space). Therefore, during the period of Historicism all European styles from Gothic to Neo-Classicism were tolerated and interpreted in architecture as were exotic oriental motifs. Swiss and Russian styles, which are distinguished by the complicated form of the roof, the abundance of architectural elements, voluminous skylights, towers, etc., had the greatest impact on wooden resort architecture of Lithuania. However, another type of buildings is also characteristic of the Swiss style.

Hotels and resort homes of the Swiss style distinguished themselves for their asymmetric composition, high roofs with a complicated configuration, the abundance of small towers, bay windows, and pointed pediments, which were embellished with carved wooden ornaments. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, kurhauses, sanatoriums, and other types of resort buildings were designed under the influence of Swiss architecture. The spread of the Russian style in Lithuanian resort architecture is also of great significance to resort architecture: Characteristics of which are a multilayered construction cornices of broken lines, pediments above the windows, and the abundant tracery, the most characteristic feature of which is a multilayered nature.

The diversity of resort architecture was also supplemented with local ethnographic traditions, which are especially obvious in the seaside region. Buildings with a fachwerk (timber framework) structure enriched the arsenal of instruments of resort architecture. Quite often elements of different styles harmoniously match in a single building, which was tolerated in the period of Historicism as an additional means of expression. The appearance of new types of buildings is also of great significance to resort architecture: kurhauses, restaurants, bathing places, and minor structures – arbours, and observation decks – markedly enriched and added variety to resort.

The main curative springs resort Druskininkai

Druskininkai, as a place of curative mineral springs, has been known since the 18th century. In 1794, Stanisław August Poniatowski, the king of Lithuania and Poland, visited Druskininkai with his noblemen and ordered the healing springs to be analysed. In that year, the king issued a decree officially designating Druskininkai a healing centre. Following the Third Partition of the Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth, when Russia occupied Druskininkai, the Society of Physicians of Grodno took interest in the place. The year 1873, when the first treatment facility was built near the mineral springs, is considered the beginning of the resort. Within four years, the rural settlement became a town with many shops, inns, a chemist’s, and a bookstore. Though the resort was damaged by fires twice, in 1871 and in 1880, this did not interfere with rapid works of reconstructing the buildings and receiving holidaymakers.

Two stages of the development of the town can be distinguished in the resort Druskininkai. The first stage took place from the beginning of its establishment in 1837 to 1920. During this stage, especially intensive construction work was carried out several years before the First World War. The influence of the Russian style dominated in this period. The second stage began the year Polish rule started. In that stage the Swiss style began to prevail. It should be noted that all villas from the point of view of style are eclectic, but there is often a dominant style, that provides the character of the building.
The most characteristic example representing the resort architecture of Druskininkai is the palace of Druskininkai, which is located on the second half of the 20th century is the Villa Imperiale (Maironio St 14). The spatial structure of this villa – its asymmetric volume, an observation tower at its side, and open galleries on both sides of the two-storey palace – is a typical feature of modernist architecture. However, the decoration and separate elements are characteristic of the buildings of the Russian style: multilayered verandas decorated with tracery, protruding curvy window pediments, and carved columns on both sides of the windows. The corners of the building were traditionally decorated with pilasters with the motifs of classical architecture. Impressive inside staircases with covered landings made of cast iron were characteristic of the resort homes of the Swiss style. Different facades accentuated by a risalit with a polygonal base, a large pediment divided by inter-window capitals, and projecting wings are joined by tracery balconies. Closed enclosures made of cast iron were characteristic of the Swiss style the main accents on the façade are semicircular narrow openings covered with net-like tracery, which is associated with the tradition of oriental harem. The diagonal cantilevers under the windows are filled with tracery. The eclecticism of the villa is supplemented by inter-window capitals and the décor of the porch. It is a pity that after reconstructions no authentic, finer division of windows remains.

Similar elements of the décor – tracery walls of the porch – are also found in the Markievicius’ Villa (St. Jokūbas St 17), which was built in the 1920s. This one-storey building is rare in its symmetric composition and its magnificent band of planted volutes under the cornice of the central porch. Though the building has no socle, it appears as if it has ‘grown’ into the ground, and open porches render lightness and decorativeness to the whole building.

The Villa Omega, which stands next to the Imperial (Maironio St 16), is the largest and most expressive resort home built in the 1920s. The complex plan of the villa, its playful silhouette, and its prolonged rafters and roofs are characteristic of the resort homes of the Swiss style. Different facades accentuated by a risalit with a polygonal base, a large pediment divided by inter-window capitals, and projecting wings are joined by tracery balconies. Closed enclosures made of cast iron were characteristic of the Swiss style the main accents on the façade are semicircular narrow openings covered with net-like tracery, which is associated with the tradition of oriental harem. The diagonal cantilevers under the windows are filled with tracery. The eclecticism of the villa is supplemented by inter-window capitals and the décor of the porch. It is a pity that after reconstructions no authentic, finer division of windows remains.

The construction of octagonal and quadrilateral towers – in an imitation of rectangular Fachwerk – adds variety to the diagonally crossed rafters and boards nailed together in a fir-tree manner. This playful building has preserved its silhouette and its most important features of style.

The oldest seaside resort Palanga

Lithuania’s premier seaside resort is Palanga, where examples of resort architecture represent the diversity of styles of the end of the 19th through the 20th century. Though the first holidaymakers went to Palanga as early as the middle of the 19th century, there were no special purpose buildings in the town then. The history of the present-day resort began when Count Michal Tyszkiewicz, a colonel in the tsar’s army, bought the village and surrounding land. The first family of Tyszkiewicz in the territory of Vytautas St in front of the Kurhaus has not survived, but from sources of iconography one can see to what extent the taste of the owner influenced resort architecture in the entire town of Palanga. The analogous construction solution of terraces and the oblique rafters, that frames the terrace, is later repeated in the solutions of the terrace of the Villa Baltoji and the veranda of Kęstutis St 19. Covered open terraces are characteristic of resort architecture of all geographical latitudes because this is a necessary element of the culture of recreation and the resort life. People used to spend more time on such terraces than on the beach or at bathing places. This was the place for communicating and leading a social life by open terrace houses – Danusia, Zbyszko, and Ursus – and a summer theatre was built in a small park near the Kurhaus. Unfortunately, only one villa, Ursus, survived until the end of the 20th century, and it was pulled down several years ago. Although during the reconstruction undertaken at the beginning of the 20th century the Kurhaus was enlarged to a two-storey brick house, the remaining wooden part preserved all the characteristic features of wooden buildings of public resorts. The inside halls were joined with a large covered open terrace whose roof was supported by carved columns joined by the construction of oblique rafters. Imitation of material is tolerated in these buildings as principle of creation. Wood is used to imitate both brick elements and cast iron (elegant wooden columns whose proportion corresponds to the image of more solid material).

Another important aspect of resort life is the sphere of health and body therapy. At the beginning of the century, sea and mineral water therapies began to be taken seriously. Cold bathing pavilions on the beach and warm bathing pavilions in Kęstutis St were built for that purpose. The cold bathing pavilions functioned only in summer, whereas the warm ones could operate all the year round because not only sea water, but also carbonated water was used in the baths. The cold bathing pavilions (which have not survived) were built as an imitation of a defensive castle with corner towers following the traditions of beach architecture that prevailed in Europe at that time. In winter, against the background of the stormy sky, they seemed threatening and monumental.

These bathing pavilions were cosier and had a more humane scale. The main part of the building was constructed away from the street and the area in front of it was planted with bushes.
The main façade was glazed like a large veranda. All attention was oriented towards dividing the picture of the plain and proportions. The hall and the nearby waiting rooms were decorated with Neo-Classicalistic elements of the historicist style. These are bandings of door and window handles imitating pilasters with stuccos, trimming up the walls with bandings imitating the future silk upholstery. All other elements such as carved ends of rafters, crossbars, and the spire of the pediment are elements characteristic of all wooden buildings of that period. However, according to typology, such a building, which is characteristic of a resort only, testifies to the presence of real sanatorium life in Palanga.

The intensive building of resort homes started when Count Feliks Tyszkiewicz decided to allot a part of the park surrounding the estate to building summerhouses. The territory was divided into large plots of land in which summerhouses began to be built. The important thing is that they were large and of the sanatorium type. These were not summerhouses for a private personal rest. The activity of Feliks Tyszkiewicz included the social sphere too; he wanted to draw as large a part of the public as possible into the orbit of the culture of recreation. Architects involved from Poland and Germany designed the villas. There were therefore many manifestations and imitations of the above-mentioned historicist style of these countries in the resort homes. Major influence from the Swiss style is seen in the summerhouses. In Palanga villas, this intertwines with the tradition of the fachwerk construction of neighbouring Prussia (the wooden wall construction is filled with bricks).

Imitation fachwerk, which is also a means of decorating that enriches the composition of the façade, is especially popular in the resort. All large summerhouses in Palanga are noted for the asymmetry of their facades and free volumetric composition. This naturally follows from the organised life of the holiday hotels and recreation, which influences the planned structure. In summerhouses, apart from living rooms, there was a dining and sitting room, which was annexed to the main building, and verandas for a quiet rest. Rooms on the first floor usually had autonomous exits through balconies, which were joined into long terraces surrounding the entire building, such as the Villa Danute in Vytauto St (has not survived), the villas Romeo and Juliet in Birutės Av. 34 and 36. To protect terraces from rain, rafters were made much longer than necessary for the roof construction, and therefore the forms and structures of the roofs of the resort homes are much more expressive and sophisticated than those of dwellings. Large skylights and polygonal towers imitating the architecture of brick castles and estates added variety to the silhouette of the resort homes.

Until the First World War, all resort homes belonged to the members of the Tyszkiewicz family. The theatre and the villas for guests – Danusa, Zbyzko, Ursus, Chalon and Basia – situated in a small park around the Kurhaus, belonged to Count Feliks Tyszkiewicz. He was also the owner of the cold and warm bathing pavillons and the patisserie near the sea. A complex of all villas (currently Jono Basanavičiaus St 24–34) – Aldona, Pajuta, Giraityna and Sowjačka – situated on the other side of the street was owned by the count’s mother. Apart from these buildings, Sophia owned the villas Jūros Akis, Mohorta, Baltija, Romeo, and Juliet. Countess Sophia’s daughter Maria Tyszkiewicz inherited the Villa Svyturys from her father, and the Villa Vaiždilute belonged to the eldest daughter Maria Tereza. All these villas were built in an area that was planned exclusively for rest and recreation. All of them were built within a very short time, approximately during a ten-year period. The architects were regulated by a single customer, and therefore one kind of style – the Swiss resort style – clearly prevailed in their architecture. It is distinguished for both fachwerk (timber frame-work) and the abundance of its imitations, a complex plan and composition, constructions of oblique cantilevers, a complex roof configuration, and the abundance of architectural forms and elements. A tower with an observation deck was the most necessary attribute in villas of this type. The most characteristic examples of this trend are the villas Jūros Akis (Jono Basanavičiaus St 33), Mohorta (Birutės Av. 35) and Anapilis (Birutės Av. 34A). All the possibilities of wood were made use of when decorating these buildings. Elements turned out on a lathe, scooped and made by means of tracery technique cover and accentuate the construction.

One of the most beautiful resort homes that has survived up to the present day is Anapilis. The structure, rafters and oblique cantilevers, and columns of the impressively sized wooden building abound in wooden details, and the building also contains some imitation of fachwerk. The composition of the villa is especially complex. The main tower is of Renaissance form.
It has sharp-edged roof lights, and a complex roof, and therefore its silhouette is highly expressive. It is this silhouette that was featured in the majority of old photographs. The Villa Mohorta as a dynamically sized building with a tower. Its walls are decorated in an imitation of fachwerk. The embellished veranda is lavishly decorated with tracery ornaments. The Villa Jūros Akis has an analogous style. These three villas represent the first type of the Swiss style – buildings with a dynamic size and a complex silhouette. Resort homes of the second ‘chalet’ type are the villas homeo and juliet in Birutės Av. These buildings are compact and have moderate décor. The most significant architectural elements are the roof with carved ends of rafters and balcony enclosures. Unfortunately, the entire gallery surrounding the rooms of the first floor and justification of the roof consoles has not survived.

The villas Gražina, Vilija and Pajauta situated in Jono Basanavičiaus St 28–32 near the Rąžė enclosures. Unfortunately, the entire gallery surrounding the rooms of the first floor and justification of the roof consoles has not survived. Unfortunately, the entire gallery surrounding the rooms of the first floor and justification of the roof consoles has not survived. Unfortunately, the entire gallery surrounding the rooms of the first floor and justification of the roof consoles has not survived.

The construction of resort homes influenced the dwellings of the residents of Palanga. Even travellers and holidaymakers notice that open porches, which are characteristic of fishermen’s houses on the seashore, are much more lavishly decorated in Palanga (e.g., Pirkutn.nio 14 and 15). They undoubtedly took over elements of decoration of resort buildings, which are absolutely uncharacteristic of the local tradition of fishermen’s dwellings. For example, the hip-knob at the end of the ridge, the ‘horses’ at the intersection of verge-boards, were replaced with a tuned steeple, which is an element of professional architecture. The traditional vertical siding of the facades, simple boards with a plank covering the joint, is replaced with horizontal siding with profiled boards.

Resort buildings in Curonian Spit

Three settlements on the Lithuanian section of the Curonian Spit (Kuršių nerija) – Nida, Juodkrantė and Smiltynė – can be called resorts. The oldest resort on the Curonian Spit is Juodkrantė, where the owner of hotels from Tilst, Edward Stellmacher, built the Hotel Kuracher Hof in the 19th century, around which he has formed a quarter of villas. In 1870, there were eleven villas in that area. During the years of independence, the resort area became famous for its healing mineral waters, and parabolic dunes covered with grasses, shrubs and trees, which were turned in a forest park. Pavilions, observation points, and new pedestrian paths were built there. Unfortunately, only some resort homes and hotels have survived unchanged in Kalno St up to the present day. The architecture of all of them is related to the local building tradition – fachwerk, which was decorated with the image of small carved planks. The Villa Flora (Kalno St 7) has a very interesting spatial structure – an open, glazed gallery joins three-storeyed blocks. Windows in the very unusual form of a pointed wave combined in threes create the ornamented picture of the façade. The open gallery of the second floor is newly decorated with tracery and a rail of small carved carved boards, but also has an inter-floor band, and the ends of the floor joist beams are decorated with scooped lion heads. The construction of oblique cantilevers and carved columns of two-floor terraces of the central riaul has survived in the Hotel Bachman, an impressive fachwerk, building, and Villa Hubertus (Kalno St 4).

Until the beginning of the 20th century, Nida was an almost unknown small town. Then artists noticed the beauty of its environs. At first they stayed at a local hotel run by Herman Blode. In 1913, after Nida had been declared a resort, the number of people who came to Nida from abroad and stayed in the newly equipped villas, hotels and guesthouses increased. Unfortunately, the houses of that period that have survived were strongly changed by the post-war reconstructions. The Thomas Mann house and museum have survived; the Misko Namas has preserved its original image, and the restored décor under the cornice of the end pediments and mezzanines of the Villa Hafner have survived. Only the old dwellings of fishermen, which were used as resort homes in the post-war years, have survived in Nida.

The settlement of Smiltynė started to grow in the year 1900 after the ferry had been built and after the Kurhaus was built in 1901. This two-story building with a garret distinctly dominates the entire panorama. Such fachwerk zurhausen was built in the resorts of Germany and Thuringia in the second half of the 19th century. The quarter of summer houses south of the Kurhaus was begun to be built in 1903. Only four buildings have survived until the present time at Smiltynės St 19, 20, 21 and 22. Sofija (Smiltynės St 22) is an excellent example of the fachwerk tradition. The riaul blocked with a hexagonal tower forms the silhouette of the building, and the plain of the façade is decorated with the fachwerk design. The wooden parts are decorated in the hollowing technique.

A part of kurhauses, bathing pavilions, and resort homes, there are many smaller architecturally creations in the resorts that accentuate the recreational function of the town. The influence of landscape parks on resort planning is obvious. The structural elements of a romantic park with a naturalistic park have successfully used to plan the pedestrian paths. Arbours and observation points were designed, making maximum use of the relief and elements of nature.

Wooden buildings have to be taken care of and parts that deteriorate have to be regularly restored. The greatest part of the resort heritage of the 19th–20th century disappeared because of the invasions of wars, fires, and post-war reconstruction into the resort medium. This process is still going on now. The 21st century was especially merciless to wooden resort architecture in Lithuania because the builders’ desire for profit and their greediness were at variance with the scope of cosy small rest centres. New constructions have therefore destroyed both individual buildings and the scope of the resort space. Today we can be happy with what has survived and reminds us of the treasures of recreational culture of the beginning of the 20th century.
Even today, the remnants of manors with wooden buildings, surrounded by ponds and gardens can be found in various parts of Lithuania. They are especially numerous in Vilnius, Ucker, Jona and Radviliškis regions as well as in Samogitia (Žemaitija), where many small and medium-size manors have been located since old times. According to historical sources, all buildings constructed in 16th–18th centuries, including those found on large manors, were wooden. Ensembles of masonry architecture on large manors appeared only in the 19th century. It shows that wooden architecture was present on all the manors until the late 18th century, and on small and medium-sized manors dominated until the middle of the 20th century. Wood in Lithuania was a convenient and cheap building material, easy to obtain from the forests that belonged to manors. In damp and cool Lithuanian climate, wood was ideal for residential building.

While forests were felled, new areas of agricultural land were cultivated. Manors became larger and more splendid. According to various historical sources (the main sources of data about the composition and architecture of manors are manor inventories), in the late 16th–early 17th centuries, manors of important noblemen of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, such as Kurtvenai, Kėdainiai, Taurage, Šiaulentai, Iwe, Smargon, comprised 20 to 30 buildings forming several yards. Along the perimeter of the main yard stood houses for the landlord’s family and guests of an equal rank, a stable, a servants’ house, a kitchen, barns, a bathhouse and a brewery. The secondary yard comprised houses for workers, cattle-sheds, poultry houses, granaries and creameries. Threshing-barns yard comprised threshing-barns, mows and granaries. Yards were surrounded by gardens and kitchen gardens, and the manor-seat itself was surrounded by a small river or by ponds created in the place of the embanked river. Mills, located next to the river, thrashed and milled. Yards, gardens and kitchen gardens had a rectangular plan and were fenced. The main yard was fenced with sharp edged poles, surrounded with ramparts, and sometimes with water channels as well. The yard’s gates resembled defence towers. For this reason, the fenced yard had an image of a wooden castle emphasising noblemen’s status among the other nobles and often showing their ducal origins as well. The manors of less wealthy noblemen had two yards. Houses, barns, cattle-sheds and other auxiliary structures comprised the main yard, and threshing-barns and mows – the other one, threshing-barns yard. On even smaller manors, all buildings comprised one yard. In such yard buildings were arranged without order according to the natural environment and the yard itself fenced with simple wattle or pole fences. No buildings from the 16th–mid-17th centuries have survived. The earliest, particularly rich
and original, wooden Lithuanian heritage was destroyed due to historical calamities. Still, old inventories describe impressive architecture of wooden buildings located on the manors owned by dukes Radziwills, Kiszkas, and Wołowicz. The most magnificent structures on the manors were manor houses, gates, barns and treasuries. These were rectangular buildings that usually had a socle storey built of wood, but lower than the main storey. Façades were decorated with loggias railed with fine carved pillars and shaped balustrades, as well as open or closed porches and stairs. Cupolas and weather vanes rose above four-sloped roofs. Two main buildings stood out among all the others: the residential house, used for everyday life, and the ball-house (so-called “table” house), used for holding parties and gatherings (dukes Radziwills’ residences in Deliatichi and Smargon, in Geranony, Subotniki Manor). The residential house had a spacious entrance hall with a stair-case leading to the main hall upstairs and rooms for the owner and his wife. The main room in the ball-house was so-called hall of tables. It was a spacious, tall room equipped with a balcony for musicians. The interior of the room was richly decorated: stained-glass windows, walls covered with imported silk fabrics, doors and window shutters were carved or painted. There were colourful glazed stoves decorated with coats of arms representing the owner and richly decorated fireplaces.

Secluded, based on rational arrangement and functionality, manors dominated in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania until the end of the 18th century. In the early 17th century, dignitaries and major noblemen started to implement certain changes in the appearance of their manors. Changes were determined by the strengthening economic, political and cultural relations with Western Europe. Noblemen became fond of more open, public, western lifestyle, which they got to experience while travelling or studying at universities in Italy, Germany, Scotland and Poland. Books written by Italian renaissance theorists such as Leon Battista Alberti, Sebastiano Serlio, Andrea Palladio as well as local authors – Antanas Gisieniškis, Jakub Kazimierz Haur, Lukas Opaliński, working under the influence of the European tradition and equipped with halls and rooms for owners and guests, a barn, a treasury, a stable, a kitchen-house and a servants’ or a manager’s house. In order to emphasise the importance of the manor house, the layout of the yard was divided into four parts and each of them was separated into separate yards, and the yards themselves moved further away from the main (representational) part of the manor, beyond a small river or a garden (e.g. Voš Manor, Jve Manor, Šaulėnai Manor). High fences and large gates had been removed, and the main buildings were now surrounded by splendid Italian gardens. Due to the lack of money or conservative way of life, less wealthy landlords found it difficult to re-establish existing household yards in a new place. Trying to catch up with new trends they only rearranged the buildings in the existing yards, i.e. moved away buildings that were not of a representational purpose from the main to the household yards. In the middle of the 17th century, after changes had been implemented, all major manors comprised two parts: the representational part with a spacious fore-court – main yard so-called manor yard, and the household part. The main representational yard comprised a multifunctional manor house, built under the influence of the European tradition and equipped with halls and rooms for owners and guests, a barn, a treasury, a stable, a kitchen-house and a servants’ or a manager’s house. In order to emphasise the importance of the manor house, the layout of the yard was based on principles of axial composition. The manor house stood on the axis opposite to the side of the main gates (e.g. Raguvė, Taurage and Byeliss Manor). A drawing created in 1658 and called Abrys Medeksz illustrates a manor typical for 17th century that was owned by a wealthy nobleman. The manor comprising wooden buildings was located next to Kedainiai. It had two-yard-located next to each other: the representational yard and the household yard. Next to them was a garden. The manor house stood at the far end of the rectangular yard, in front of the gates. On the sides stood a barn and a treasury, one in front of the other. On the same side, next to the treasury, stood a double-end dwelling and one more building located next to it already on the gates’ side. The other side of the courtyard contained an L-shaped stable. All the buildings were connected with fences. The main axis of the yard was emphasised by the entrance gates. Tall tree lines protected the household yard and the garden from winds and lightning. The manor house, which was the main building on the estate, is portrayed on the drawing in a more precise and detailed manner than the other buildings. It had a rectangular plan, a socle storey and a high four-sloped roof decorated with weather vanes. In the centre of the front façade there was a porch decorated with a balustrade and a mezzanine erected above it. Windows were nearly square-shaped. Windowpanes were divided into four parts and each of them into even smaller ones. A small turret attached at the end of the building, had a cupola-shaped roof with a weather vane on top. The influence of various international styles is evident in the architectural solutions of the house: the shape of the windows is typical of the renaissance architecture, while the massive cornice and the symmetry of the main façade were baroque. The structure and composition of the building also resembled certain common features of manor...
houses located in foreign countries, even those very distant from Lithuania, for e.g., the 16th and early 17th century’s timber-framed manor houses in Normandy, which also had wooden or stone socle storeys and single corner turrets attached.

In the early 18th century, the country was in turmoil because of even greater misfortunes, wars and plagues, which caused Lithuania to lose almost one-half of its population. Cities and towns were devastated, villages and manors were destroyed. Abandoned fields were overgrown with shrubs and forests. In times of disturbance, higher noblemen became even wealthier and minor noblemen poorer. Subsequent restoration of the country lasted for about half a century. Noblemen of high rank manors turned into centres of cosmopolitan masonry architecture. Meanwhile, wooden manors of noblemen of the lower rank, due to the lack of money, were restored on the remains of the former structures.

In the middle of the 18th century, major noblemen, who managed to generate some funds, started renovation of their manors. With a century’s delay, axial mirror symmetry appeared in the layout of representational yards (manor houses built in 16th and 17th centuries). The central part in such houses was an excellent example of Baroque architecture. It carried all the requirements set for a manor house of that time: a strictly symmetrical composition of layout and façades, large windows, spacious, tall rooms, and a loggia at the centre of the back façade. The loggia seemed to be a remnant of splendid arcades that used to be common feature in representational manor houses built in 16th and 17th centuries. Whether because of local tradition or damp climate, houses built in 16th and 17th centuries maintained features of Lithuanian ethno-architecture: an organic setting in the environment, delicate shapes, and peculiar proportions.

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of all treasuries that have survived to the present day is the treasury of Gryba Manor (the building is in exposition at the Lithuanian Folk Museum in Rumšiškės), while the most beautiful of the known barns is the Kurtuvėnai Manor barn. Magnificent two-storey barns and treasuries were built only on the manors of very wealthy noblemen. Less wealthy noblemen built one-sto-
rey square-shaped barns of bigger and smaller size equipped with several rooms. The entrance to these rooms was organized in two ways: either directly from the outside (each room had a door on the façade), or from a common indoor porch. In buildings of the latter type, on both sides of lockable indoor porch there were two small rooms (one on each side) and one or two bigger ones behind it. Such barns usually had double doors made of planks placed in various directions and a massive moulded cornice. The barn of Pyotr Pyatyrskiy, a Manor located in Samogitia could be an excellent example.

No household buildings from the 18th century remained. Landlords did not pay any major atten-
tion towards their construction or architecture. Threshing barns, mows, breweries, cattle sheds, poultry sheds, other houses and granaries were built with less care and were often reconstructed. Cattle-sheds of modern farm complexes have original proportion in size of turrets and corner turrets were especially popular, turrets have original proportion in size of picture. Buildings presented the coats of arms of the owners (e.g., Szymon Bogumił Zug is considered to have de-
signed the Tyszkiewicz residence in Hrodna, built in 1778–1782. An unknown architect designed the Przezdziecki manor house, built in 1779–1781 and situated in Ashmyany District of Vilnius voivodeship. A very beautiful manor is the Kurtuvėnai Manor. Large manor houses, con-
taining many premises, were equipped with brick and stone chimneys, while smaller ones had one chimney located in the centre of the building. A pre-war photograph of Pupynauskis manor house (in Silalė District) portrays an interior typical of manor houses owned by middle rank noblemen in the 18th century: the ceiling was laid on beams and painted white, the floor was made of planks (co-called popular parquet), the walls were plastered, whitewashed and wallpapered. Barns (buildings for storing grain and goods) and treasuries (buildings for keeping expensive items and archives) were the second most deco-
rated buildings after manor houses. They symb-
olised the richness of noblemen and were usually located in the representational part of the manor, i.e. in the main court or near it. In the 18th cen-
tury, wealthy noblemen used to build two-storey barns and treasuries decorated with loggias and arcade-type porches. Treasuries resembled the vertical structure of a 16th century building called pavilions. It usually had a nearly square plan, a scock porch and a well decorated porch. Noble-
men used to keep their most treasured property, military apparel and arms, in it. Treasuries built in the 18th century not only remained the main features of pavilions but became even more decorated. Porches of treasuries and barns were railed with balustrades, walls were crowned with massive moulded cornices, and roofs acquired an elegant curbed shape. The most magnificent

of other countries as well, yet each of them used to have original proportion in size of turrets and the main volume. For e.g., in neighbouring Po-
land, where manor houses with attached single corner turrets were especially popular, turrets usually had one storey, whereas in Lithuania, following the traditions of the 17th century (Kurkliai and Mauliščiai mansions), turrets were two storeys high. Ulventas manor house is an example of a long, rectangular-shaped house, original in volume, with two entrances on the main façade. This type of building appeared in early 17th century when, in accordance with European etiquette requirements, all residential, guest and rep-
resentational premises have been moved to one building (prior to that, they have been situated in separate houses). Due to it manor houses became longer and an additional entrance hall was necessary to have a convenient access to the more distant part of it. Existing fragments of buildings, iconography and written sources reveal what the building equipment and interior looked like. Halls and rooms in the manor house were decorated with glazed tile fireplaces and stoves. Floors made of planks placed in different directions imitat-
ing parquet. In manor houses of more wealthy noblemen, walls and ceilings were covered with thematic polychrome painting, and fanciful fire-
places and stoves were decorated with tiles rep-
resenting the coats of arms of the owners (e.g., Būžinėnai Manor). The canons of Classicism demanded for a la-
conic size, flat roof and portico. In major man-
ors, volume and proportions of manor houses perfectly corresponded to the classicist require-
ments. They had considerable classicist décor and expressive two-storey porticos (Veliuona Manor, Ausenėnai and Lašmenpamūšis mans-
ors). The houses of less wealthy noblemen, espe-
cially at the beginning of the classicism period.
The architecture of manors comprised with wooden buildings was influenced by both the social changes and the local traditions based on rationality. The representational yard remained as the main part of manor-seat. The composition of the yard did not undergo any major change as well. In addition to the manor house, it comprised a barn, sometimes a stable and a coachshed, and large manors also had a servants' house (oficina) containing the manager's apartment, servants' rooms, and other auxiliary rooms. The layout of buildings was often based on the principles of axial symmetry. The forecourt of larger manors used to be equipped with a parterre, while in smaller ones – with a flowerbed. Even on small manors, manor houses were surrounded by English gardens. Most of the newly built manor houses, just as in the past, were one-storey high, of symmetrical composition and had a porch at the centre of the main façade. They had a high, usually half-hipped roof and rooms equipped in a spacious attic. Seldom, a manor house had a mezzanine erected on the axis with an exit to the balcony located above the porch. As lobbies got simpler, the layout of premises became more functional. In the middle of the 19th century, the so-called English stoves spread over the country. Stoves of a masonry construction were equipped with cast-iron plate on top, which had several fire holes covered by cast-iron rings. Due to it cooking became less complicated and much safer in terms of fire protection. Therefore, the kitchen and related premises, which prior to that were located in a separate building, now were arranged directly in the manor house. In newly constructed buildings, kitchens were located at the side of the back façade, in the corner of the building next to the household corridor, whereas in the existing manor houses, built in the 18th and early 19th centuries, kitchens were usually located in a wing attached at the back façade. Therefore, in the second half of the 19th century, virtually all older houses acquired an outbuilding. Separate kitchen-houses disappeared. Cellars, woodsheds and ice-houses that were once located next to the kitchen-house were now moved closer to the main house.

Buildings constructed or reconstructed in the second half of the 19th century acquired a new style that was considered fashionable at that time. Neo-classicist forms that seemed to incorporate the classic features of a traditional manor were often used in the architecture of manor houses (Bniubiskių Manor).

In late 19th century, villa-type manor houses became more and more common. They had a symmetric or asymmetric layout composition, steep double-sloped roofs, glazed verandas and porches. Buildings were richly decorated with carved wind-boards (hargeboards), window rims, planking (Grazialioni Manor). The use of factory-made tools ensured the high quality of wood processing techniques. In late the 19th–early 20th centuries, smaller or reconstructed buildings were equipped with comfortable and warm glassed porches. Original glass and wood compositions of such porches decorated the façade's exterior (e.g. Pujačiai manor house, which has not survived).

Household buildings changed according to the development of new agricultural technologies. As the dairy industry developed, in large
Many large manors received some attention on the part of the minor noblemen and the intelligentsia, some of whom were descendants of the nobles. In Soviet times, a manor had the image of a ‘foreign’ culture (anti-national and anti-class) concept. This concept, already in the early 20th century, was still rich and unique. Historical sources of the original and so important Lithuanian nobility’s cultural heritage as well, and thus everyone could properly experience the richness and magnificence of manors wooden heritage themselves. These are wooden buildings restored or still under restoration process. Funds granted by the state and local governments, organisations, international foundations and private funds make such restoration possible. Funds for restoration work are obtained. Therefore, barns and mows were purchased factory-made equipment. As meadows and fields were fertilised, greater harvest was obtained. Therefore, barns and mows were reconstructed. The main household buildings usually had a mixed frame construction. Buildings constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, especially those on large farms, were distinguished by the high quality of construction and materials treatment. Cattle-sheds were large, long, rectangular, or cross-shaped buildings with double-sloped roofs. Threshing-barns and mows had a traditional wooden roof structure and a half-sloped roof. On large manors, threshing-barns and mows were equipped with so-called ascending bridges (e.g. the threatening-barns of Biržuvėnai Manor). Buildings looked attractive due to right proportions and matching materials. Wooden elements perfectly matched with decorative dark stone chip or natural reddish-grey granite and red brick columns. Buildings were also decorated with big double-leaf doors made from planks placed in different directions and with beautifully planked pediments.

In the early 20th century, heritage of manors was still rich and unique. Historical sources of that time documented approximately 3,300 manors. Most of these comprised wooden buildings built in the 18th and 19th centuries. Unfortunately, the 20th century was not favourable for the retention of these. Nobles, who became poor after the abolition of serfdom, sold their manors in Lithuania, historical sources, iconography and old literature. Their works present to the society lost virtues of nobility’s culture that originated and blossomed on wooden manor-seats. In addition, some specimens give an opportunity for amateur visitors to discover the richness and magnificence of manors wooden heritage themselves. These are wooden buildings restored or still under restoration process. Funds granted by the state and local governments, organisations, international foundations and private funds make such restoration possible (e.g. manor houses in Adomynė, Džiuginėnai, Ilguva, Pavirytis and Vilkiški manors; the barn on Kurtuvėnai Manor, etc.; wooden ensembles such as the representational courtyard of Biržuvėnai Manor). An exposition of a large traditional manor-seat is being arranged at the Lithuanian Folk Museum in Rumšiškės. Perhaps in the future, there will be funds for exhibitions of medium-rank or minor-rank nobility’s cultural heritage as well, and thus everyone could properly experience the richness of it. Recent changes give us hope that at least some of the original and so important Lithuanian heritage will be preserved for future generations and will provide with knowledge of our historical identity.
Wooden Churches, Belfries, and Chapels

Churches

Catholic churches are the most beautiful and best-preserved old wooden buildings in Lithuania. They outshine other buildings by the expressiveness of their structure and perfection of form. They are not only valuable remnants of old architecture but also priceless monuments of the spiritual culture of our ancestors closely related to their emotional attitude and daily life.

Wooden churches stand in the central part of small towns and villages, most often on a hill. They dominate the area by their size. Churches are surrounded by tall deciduous trees growing in the churchyard, which protect the building from storms and fires and which clearly highlight the grounds in the view of the town.

The work of masters who built churches was determined by the traditional scheme for a sacred Catholic building dictated by liturgical requirements. Each Church building consisted of the following parts: the prodomos, the nave, the presbytery, one or two sacristies, and often side chapels.

This format of a sacred building dictated its plan and size. The traditions of folk architecture and styles that spread at that time determined the inside and the outside composition. The architecture of folk churches is simple and functional. When building a folk church the greatest attention was paid to the expressiveness of the silhouette, the harmony of the proportions, and the organic relation of the architecture with the surrounding environment rather than the complexity of the layout and richness of shapes. The architecture of the inside of the churches is not complicated either. The main elements of the interior are pillars and ceiling. Attempts were made to make them strong and elegant. The subdued architecture of the church created a favourable background for lavishly decorated altars, the pulpit, and the organ loft.

Historical circumstances were such that Lithuania was the last country in Europe to be converted to Christianity. Christianity first came to the eastern lands of Lithuania where its capital Vilnius was situated in 1387, and somewhat later, in 1414, it reached the western part, Samogitia (Zemaitija). In 1422 due to the Treaty of Melno, Suvalkija was given over to Catholic Lithuania. Immediately following the conversion to Christianity, there was intensive development of churches in the ethnic regions of Lithuania. However, in the first half of the 16th century the ideas of Humanism and the Reformation began to spread. The Reformation put a stop to the building of new Catholic churches and repairs of the old ones, but at the end of the 16th century, their number started to increase. Most of the churches built at that time were wooden. They have not survived up to the present day. However, judging by descriptions, those churches were rectangular and without big towers, but there were often one or several small towers placed on a high roof covered with shingles. Churches
church in Beržoras, built in 1746, in the district of Plungė. Both churches are very similar in structure and form.

During the wars that were fought in the middle and the second half of the 17th century, almost all the wooden churches were burned down. During the time of peace, at the beginning of the 18th century, the numbers of sacral buildings began to increase again. As before, many folk churches were built. Their shape remained rectangular and cross-like, however, polygonal buildings also appeared. Quite distinct peculiarities in the structure of the churches appeared in different ethnic regions of Lithuania. The façades of Samogitian churches distinguished themselves by their size: they had heavy, massive proportions, an especially high roof or hip roof. The proportions of Aukštaitian sacral buildings were lighter, their roofs were lower.

It was during the 18th century that the largest number of and the most beautiful folk churches were built in Samogitia. The oldest sacral wooden buildings that have survived are in Plateliai, built in 1744, and in Beržoras, built in 1746, in the district of Plungė. Both churches are very similar. They have the form of the Latin cross and are single-nave with three-wall apses. They are tall, with hip roofs that dominate the exterior. The interior of Plateliai Church is more ornate than that of Beržoras Church. It has a Baroque high altar, the font decorated with roccoco elements and the pulpit with a tracery, crowned canopy. At the end of the nave, there is a three-walled organ loft with a graceful arcade above and boxes for chanters below. A low horizontal opening connecting the prodomos and the nave have survived under the loft of Beržoras Church.

Two other similar churches are in Užventis in Kelmė District, and in Tryškiai in Telšiai District. They have the form of the Latin cross and are three-nave churches. The slope of a jerkin head roof ends the top of the main façade of Užventis Church built in 1703 and there is a beautiful, small tower of a Baroque silhouette. An especially spacious central nave dominates the interior: it is as much as ten times wider and somewhat higher than the side ones. The naves are covered with a flat joist ceiling with open beams. At the end of the presbytery and the side naves there are Baroque altars decorated with tracery carvings. The high altar is especially rich, with tracery columns. Tryškiai Church, which was built in 1731, was extended and acquired a new main façade at the end of the 19th century. In 1928, a tower was built on the roof. The expertly constructed altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Scapular dating back to the 17th century stands out in the interior of the church. The altar of mature Baroque forms is decorated with tracery vine columns and effective, side wings that frame the sculptures of the saints.

Similar folk architecture links the churches in Lioliai and Seda. The buildings are covered with high gambrel roofs with Baroque towers in the crossings. The tower of Lioliai Church in Kelmė District, built in 1768, is not original – it was most likely built in 1878. The high altar of the church built at the beginning of the 18th century, during the period of mature Baroque, is interesting and original. One of the most beautiful and largest wooden churches in Samogitia was built in Seda in Mažeikiai District in 1770. It is covered with a large gambrel roof. Two rows of windows are arranged in the high walls as they were originally: high, Baroque curved windows at the bottom and small round ones on top.

The interior of the church is especially interesting and ornate. There are galleries on top of the narrow side naves. Church flags were hung on them during feast days. A broad playfully curved arch separates the organ loft, which is supported by the verges located at the end of the central nave, from the nave. There is a lavishly decorated Baroque organ behind it. The balconies for the chanters are somewhat lower with a seaptum made of carved boards supplementing the loft at the sides. The artistic accents of Seda Church – professionally created altars of late Baroque – are important. The altar in the left chapel is especially elegant and its composition and forms imitate brick altars.

Rectangular church buildings of the 18th century are similar to the churches with a cross-like plan in their architectural harmony, proportions and forms.

Pikeliai Church in Mažeikiai District built in 1752 is one of the most monumental buildings of wooden church architecture in Lithuania. An especially tall, as much as 17 times the height of the walls, jerkin head roof prevails in the exterior of the church. In the past a slim tower of a Baroque silhouette was built in its middle. The façades with their heavy proportions and very simple forms are especially picturesque but harmonious.

Unlike the exterior, the interior of the church is lavish – decorated, colourful and festive. The walls and the convex ceiling of the central nave used to be decorated with multi-coloured figurine symbolic painting in the past. There is an ensemble of three white gilded Baroque altars of unique beauty in the presbytery. Amply illuminated, stucco, with swirling tracery carvings these altars are full of worldly joyful charm. Altars that face one another and that separate the broad central nave from the side ones, as well as the carefully carved altar of Saint Jude Thaddeus located at the end of the right nave supplement the ensemble of the presbytery. The lavishly decorated, rich altars are a striking contrast to the background of simple folk architecture but creating a harmonious artistic balance.

The wooden triangular Degučiai Church in Šilutė District built in 1737 is very original. The low projecting vestries and the prodomus are built on all three sides of the main building of the church. There is a small tower on top of the high, pyramidal roof that was covered with straw in the past. The triangular space inside is covered with a flat ceiling supported by two poles. In the corner, in front of the main entrance, there is a presbytery, which contains three Baroque altars. The high – central – altar is the most complicated and expressive. Its tracery columns, curved
side wings, even the frames of the picture placed in the centre have carved acanthus branches, bunches of grapes, and twisted bands.

The afore-mentioned churches are the most prominent among the existing traditional Samogitian church buildings of the 18th century. Other churches are somewhat simpler, but they contain many interesting architectural subjects too. Churches in Veiviržėnai, in Telšiai, in Lauksodis in Pakruojis District, in Pagramantis in Taurage District, in Žemaičių Naumiestis in Šilute District, and others are noted for their harmonious proportions, authentic simplicity and originality.

In the 18th century, fewer folk churches were built in eastern Lithuania than in Samogitia. Church buildings which were created in a more professional way under the influence of style were more popular there. However, in Stelmužė, in eastern Aukštaitija in Zarasai District, the oldest Lithuanian folk wooden church has survived. It was built around 1650, and in 1727 it was rebuilt and adapted for the Calvinists. The present altar and the pulpit were built then too. In 1752, the church was taken over by the Catholics. Most probably, it was at that time that it acquired the present portico with the erratically spaced columns at the front and sides.

Stelmužė Church is rectangular, with a presbytery that is somewhat narrower than the nave. There is a beam between the presbytery and the nave on which the Crucifix used to hang. Two unique accents are distinguished in the interior: a lovely Baroque style wooden altar and an interesting pulpit. They are lavishly decorated with relief work of statues of saints and angels, ornaments of lush plants. The sculpture of the Crucified Christ with a wreath accentuates the centre of the altar. There are coupled columns twisted in spirals and carved tracery wings on the sides. Earlier there was an artistic relief of The Last Supper at the bottom. The décor of the altar is exclusively sculptural, without any paintings. The pulpit is also lavishly decorated. Prominent figures of the apostles are arranged in its septum and angels in different poses and at different levels are placed on the canopy. Bands of plant ornaments and heads of winged children decorate the pulpit.

A valuable church architectural monument – the church of Pališė in Ignalina District – was built some time later, in 1757. It was built in a picturesque place near Lake Lūčis, on a high hill. In 1800 an octagonal shaped belfry and a gate were built in front of the main façade of the church near the churchyard fence. Both buildings form a cohesive architectural ensemble of memorable harmony.

The exterior of the church in Pališė has nice proportions, simple folk forms. At the front, a protrusion is lower and narrower than the part of the naves that ends with a triangular pediment on top. In the 18th century, there were three towers on the roof of the church. An interesting colourful high altar painted on the wall stood out from the interior decorated with painted figures of the apostles and the saints. The present Neo-Baroque altars were only built at the end of the 19th century. Among other churches in Eastern Lithuania built in the 18th century the churches of Ceikiniai in Ignalina District, Svedasai in Anykščiai District, Dieveniškės in Šalčininkai District, and others are noted for their harmonious proportions, authentic simplicity and originality.

The architecture of the church in Dieveniškės was changed most considerably in the last decade of the 20th century.

Some of the wooden churches built in the 18th century were created according to Baroque principles rather than folk traditions. Their size and plan were almost the same as those of brick church buildings of this style; their façades and the interiors were built in a similar way. But the proportions of wooden churches were heavier,
the walls were flatter, the outside forms were
generalised. The main façade had one or two
towers. The walls of the towers are horizontally
divided into two or three tiers. Windows are ar-
ranged in the lower tier, and the upper ones are
most often windowless. Bells were not hung in
the towers because a belfry was usually built in
the churchyard. The tops of the towers ended in
helmets of a winding silhouette. Between the
towers, at the beginning of the gable roof, the
pediment of a curved or triangular contour is
inserted on top of which there was sometimes
a small tower.

There is a beautiful Baroque two-tower wood-
en church in Kėdainiai built in 1766. In the past,
the Church of St Joseph belonged to the Carmel-
ite monastery. The towers of its main facade do
not stand on the ground but are raised above the
crowning cornice. The tops of the towers end in
the helmets that were reconstructed in 1991.

A broad, high space of the central nave pre-
vails inside the church. The arcade of curved
arches separates the narrow, lower side naves. A
similar arch borders the organ loft, and there is
a traditional transverse beam between the nave
and the presbytery.

The Baroque church in Smilgiai, Panevėžys
District, built in 1764, is famous for its unique high
altar. In the past, there were three Baroque altars
in the presbytery. The former high altar, which
was varnished white and gilded was made of three
tiers, decorated with spiral columns on colourful
consoles, abundant carvings and pictures. In 1873,
the master J. Balčius-Balčiauskas united all three
altars into one, by building the columns in the
gaps and extending the pediment.

Some wooden Baroque churches have no
towers. Their central nave is much higher than
the side ones, with a window above, and the sil-
houette of the main façade copies the contour
of a transverse cut. Either one or two graceful
small towers are placed on top of the main fa-
çade. Such interesting churches have survived in
Tabariškės in Šalčininkai District, built in 1770
and in Alsėdžiai in Plungė District, built in 1793.
The church in Tabariškės stands out from oth-
ers by its unusually short naves. The presbytery
ending in three walls extends it at one end and
the protrusion of the prodomos and the organ
loft at the other end. An obvious cornice placed
on top of the main façade separates the high
pediment of the curved silhouette characteristic
Griškabūdis, Šakiai

The architectural ensemble of Griškabūdis is a wooden church in Šakiai District

The architecture of the interior is complemented with Baroque altars painted in different colours placed in the chapels. The altar of St Bartholomew is decorated with spiral columns and abundant tracery carvings is especially beautiful.

Folk church buildings at the beginning of the 19th century differed little from the earlier ones. In the interior of the church the middle square, and it is given the form of a vault. Inside the church the octagonal ceiling of the aisles is flat. Rumbonys Church is a monumental building of the size characteristic of Classicism, and has strict and rational forms that are typical of brick architecture are successfully adapted to the features of wood.

A professionally created rectangular classicist church was also built in Šalčininkai, Šalčininkai District. It was built in 1834 according to the design of the famous architect Professor Karol Podczaszyński. However, in the last decade of the 20th century the valuable creation of the architect was drastically changed and lost many features characteristic of Classicism.

The Classicist composition was very popular in wooden churches in Lithuania. In the middle of the 19th century, however, Classicism was re-placed with Romanticism in architecture and art. It did not create any new principles or forms of composition but followed various styles that were common earlier and imitated folk traditions. At that time principles of a single style were repeated and forms of other styles were used in the architecture of churches, or one trend of style prevailed: folk, Classicist, Baroque or Gothic.
ing is a professional ‘Renaissance’ piece of work. Three pairs of columns connected by arches across the length and breadth divide the inside space covered with the level ceiling. Arcades above the sanctuary and window lintels repeat the motif of arches. Altars that are decorated with columns and carvings, as well as the ‘Gothic’ organ prospect harmoniously supplement the architecture of the interior. Kaučiūkai Church in Plungė District, built in 1852, Intruče Church in Moletai District, built in 1875, and other churches also represent the folk trend of Romanticism.

Classicist wooden churches of the Romanticism period were most often rectangular with four-column porticos. However, their exterior was supplemented with the forms of other styles, and the interior was quite far from that of Classicism. A typical folk classicist church of Romanticism was built in Paberžė in Kėdainiai District, in 1859. The portico of brick columns (until 1967 they were made of wood) is placed at the front of the church. An octagonal small tower ending in a ‘Baroque’ bell-shaped helmet is placed on top of a high triangular pediment. ‘Gothic’ lancet windows divide the side façades. An impression, original baroque high altar connected as far back as the 18th century stands out in the coherent space of the interior of the building covered with the level ceiling. The unified synthesis of motifs of the classicistic, Gothic, Baroque, and folk architecture in the composition of Paberžė Church forms the harmonious whole.

Churches of the Romanticism period created according to the principles of Classicism were also built in Kurkli in Anykščiai District in 1871, in Ančiūnai in Kėdainiai District in 1871, in Ubilės in Telšiai District in 1881 and other places. Based on them are lavishly decorated. Ideas of Romanticism enriched Lithuanian wooden church architecture, with new ideas and forms. The architectonic trends and brick buildings, many similar elements of the interior, including the altars, are stylish. The same stylistic trends became obvious both in wooden and brick buildings. Neo-Gothic, Neo-Baroque and Neo-Classicist church buildings were built. Also, a combination of the trends of these styles – eclecticism – remained popular. Wooden Neo-Gothic churches were built with one or two large towers ending in spires on top. Lancets divided the walls of these churches. However, wooden façades were much simpler than those of brick buildings.

A professionally created Neo-Gothic church was built in Salos in Rokiškis District in 1887. Georg Werner from Tyrol, one of the architects of the magnificent Neo-Gothic Church in Rokiškis, designed it. The plan of Salos Church is that of the Latin cross. The façades are of elegant proportions and have strict forms. In the middle of the main façade there is a square tower ending in a high spire. The decorated round window accentuates its middle space. Inside the church, two towers of transverse section support the ceiling of a cross vault form decorated with ribs. Altars of the same style perfectly match the Neo-Gothic architecture of the interior. There are not many Neo-Gothic one-tower churches in Lithuania. Two-tower church buildings were by far more popular. A church with two towers was built in Marcinkonys in Varena District, in 1860. Three-tier towers project something from the wall in its main façade. The top of the central space ends in triangular shields. The unusually slender and high top spaces of the towers end in small shields and spires. At the end of the church roof, there is a large octagonal dome. The interior of the building was influenced by Neo-Baroque.

Two towers rise in the church built in Dubičiai in Varena District, in 1904 and in the church in Rozalimas in Pakruojis District, reconstructed during the Historicism period and in Medingėnai Church in Plungė District, built in 1902 and many other similar Neo-Gothic churches. A two-tower composition was also popular in the constructions of Neo-Baroque style. Wooden Neo-Baroque churches remind one of the Baroque churches of the second half of the 18th century but the date of their construction – the Historicism period – is attested to by the forms of other styles used alongside the prevailing Baroque style.
A Neo-Baroque church with its distinct architecture was built in Vilkšiai Ruda in Marijampole District in 1883. Square towers ending in the helmets of the Baroque style that become somewhat narrower when rising in tiers prevail in the main beautifully proportioned façade. Carved boards were used instead of lavishly profiled cornices, and the corners of the towers painted in darker colours were made instead of pilasters. The architecture of Daugailiai Church in Utena District, built in 1878 and Suginčiai Church, Molėtai Region, built in 1910, is somewhat further from the Baroque tradition.

A large number of two-tower Neo-Baroque churches were built in Lithuania, they were also built after the Historicism period had come to an end, and in the interwar period. To build two towers was not the only solution of a sacral building of this stylistic trend. Neo-Baroque churches without towers were also built. The only surviving church is in Kartena in Kretinė District. It was built in 1879. Its plan is that of the Latin cross, the central nave is much higher than the aisles. A high pediment of a curved contour crowns the façade with a step square tower on top. Though the architecture of the church tries to imitate Baroque church buildings without towers, the proportions of the façade, the planar solution and the small towers built at both ends link it to the folk traditions.

The curved ceiling covers the central nave that is amply illuminated from above in the spacious interior of Kartena Church. Rich, artistic altars of Neo-Baroque forms and the plastic pulpit with a canopy attract attention. Balconies of the chanted boxes with daintily carved septums are arranged on the front wall. There is a small altar inside them.

Kartena Church is one of the most embellished wooden church buildings of the Historicism period in Lithuania. The main attribute of Neo-Classicist churches built at the end of the 19th century is a portico consisting of four or six columns that continues the traditions of Classicism. Stakiai Church in Jurbarkas District, built in 1875 and Imbradas Church in Zarasai District, built in 1882, have the afore-mentioned rectangular plan division of the façades. Classicist forms prevail in the architecture of both the interior and the exterior.

Seeking to come as close as possible to the brick classicist buildings, the columns of the portico of Imbradas Church were made of bricks. They support a wooden pediment with a tower.

Some wooden Neo-Classicist churches are designed in an innovative and creative way. A characteristic example of such a building is in Šventėkertos in Laidajų District, built in 1874. It consists of three volumes arranged on a single axis. The main, largest volume is square with bevilled corners and covered with a pyramidal roof. A portico with a tower prevails in the harmonious main façade of Šventėkertos Church. Four slender columns support a low pediment decorated with carved bargeboards. Examples of the brick architecture are imitated by a two-tier tower. The corners of the tower are accentuated by pilasters; its walls are divided by arched openings.

The main space of the church that is covered with a flat ceiling in the middle is surrounded by a gallery on three sides. There is a vaulted ceiling in the centre. The most important artistic accents of the interior are the Neo-Baroque altars and the organ prospect.

Neo-Classicism, like other neo-styles, did not create in essence any new ideas in wooden churches; the composition of previous styles was repeated supplemented with elements borrowed from other styles. But foreign elements do not overshadow the prevailing forms of the chosen neo-style. The eclectic church architecture that spread in the Historicism period is quite different. The composition of the eclectic buildings is a collection of forms of different styles. A church like this was built in Tverai in Plungė District in 1887. It has two towers, and the top of the towers is octagonal with spires. Arch windows with rectangular frames are arranged on the front and side façades.

The vaulted ceiling covers a wide central nave inside the church. Poles with the upper part extended sideways that divide the naves imitate arcades. At the place where the central nave and the presbytery meet, there is a beam with the Crucifix and figures of the Saints characteristic of folk architecture. Lithic images of the church create a particular emotional atmosphere as if inherited from old times. The high altar is a valuable piece of art of Late Baroque dating back to the end of the 18th century. Architectural motifs, winding curves of the volutes, flower vases, and abundant sculptures of the saints and angels, and pictures framed in beautifully carved settings merge into the whole of the interior of different styles.

Balbieriškis Church in Prienai District, built in 1886, Skiemonys Church in Anykščiai District, built in 1874, Kuktiškės Church in Utena District, built in 1890, Aukštadvaris Church in Trakai District, built in 1913 and many other churches were built according to the eclectic principle.

Chapels

Many wooden chapels are located in small towns and villages in Lithuania. They are built on the roadsides, in churchyards, but most often in cemeteries. During the times of war, the tsarist oppression and during the Soviet occupation chapels suffered greatly. Many of them are now neglected and in ruins, and some of them have completely disappeared. Many chapels were repaired at different time, modern doors and windows were installed, and sometimes even worse things were done: porticos were boarded up, paintings were defaced. The architecture of chapels has changed significantly.

The chapels that have survived or that are known from the pre-war photographs can be classified into small chapels in which no services were held, medium-sized chapels and large chapels. The small ones, which are mostly in Samogitia, are rectangular, windowless, with the door occupying the larger part of the front wall. There is a small altar inside them.

The medium-sized and large chapels are either rectangular or polygonal. There is a triangular gable above which there is a cross or a small square tower on top of the main façade of rectangular chapels. A low closed gable porch is built in front of some chapels. Perhaps the only chapel with a tall two-tower was built in Verpna in Kelmė District.

Chapels were built with gambrel roofs in Samogitia in the 18th century too. The top of their main façade ended in a roof pitch. On the northern edge of Lithuania, in Joniškis District, interesting chapels covered with a gambrel roof with a broad pent roof running along the main façade became popular. The sacristy covered...
with a gable roof is projected on the side of these rectangular chapels, and an elegant octagonal small tower rises in the middle of the roof. Chapels with pent roofs are of various sizes, of different proportions, but their silhouettes and the composition organically fit the environment. Such chapels were built in Maironiai, Linkmenys and elsewhere.

The most important decorative accent standing out in a simple main façade of folk chapels is the door. It is usually rectangular and arched, single-leaf or double-leaf, ledgeged and braced in a herringbone or diamond design, and sometimes decorated with panels. Windows are arranged in the side walls of the chapels. The number of chapels, which were affected by different styles, is not large. The chapel in Gruzdžiai in Siauliai District, which has not survived imitated the exterior of two-tower Baroque churches on a reduced scale. If the influence of Baroque on the composition of Gruzdžiai chapel is obvious, there is only one feature that chapels borrowed from Classicism - the portico. The porticos of the chapels always have four poles. Their resemblance to the ante granary of folk granaries is unquestionable. The doors of the chapels also resemble those of granaries. However, the chapels never became as lavishly decorated as granaries. There are no profiled verges, carved bargeboards, hip knobs, or ornaments on the peak of the gable. There are ornamented bargeboards in the chapels built at the end of the 19th– the beginning of the 20th century.

There is an original type of chapel with porticos that is widespread in Lithuania. It had a flat wall with a pediment supported by four low chunky columns or verges at the front (Deltuva chapel in Umgirtė District, Truskava chapel in Kėdainiai District, built around 1860). The variety of stylistic trends of the Historicism period was poorly reflected in the architecture of chapels. Perhaps the only wooden Neo-Gothic chapel-mausoleum that has survived was built in the park of Liubavas in Vilnius District estate around 1892.

Traces of styles and the style trends of professional architecture were not so deep in the structure of chapels as those in wooden churches. Chapels borrowed only long-term manifestations of styles that became tradition- al, and dynamic changes in style trends hardly affected them. That was most probably because folk masters rather than architects created these buildings. Unlike churches, style forms were used more often in the exterior of the chapels. The interiors were simple, covered with a flat ceiling with open beams. A low inner space was divided into prodomos, the nave and the presbytery restricted by a balustrade. In rare cases, a beam and the Crucifix separated the presbytery. The organ lofts of the chapels are low, surrounded by septums of carved planks and balustrades. The coloured décor played an important role in the interior. Embellished, carved Baroque altars were not abundant in chapels. Most often they were small and modest.

Rectangular chapels form a large group of wooden church buildings. Another large group is polygonal chapels. They are polygonal, hexagonal, or octagonal, for example, Kalšnaičiai chapel in Šilalė District; Kūlaičiai chapel in Plungė District. Sometimes small sacristies are built on to one or two walls of a polygonal chapel.

At the front of some chapels, next to the main entrance, there is a small porch with a square or octagonal small tower on top. Some polygonal chapels have the shape of a long-drawn rectangle or squares or small towers in the middle of their roofs. Such chapels were common in Samogitia and Central Lithuania (Kartena chapel in Kretinga District). The architecture of the exterior and the interior of the polygonal chapels is entirely of folk character. Separate style elements can be seen in their façades and interiors.

Beginning with the 17th century complexes of many chapels - Stations of the Cross. They consisted of 19 stations with a chapel in each of them. Characteristic wooden crosses were created in Beržorai and Zemaičiai Kalvarija (Plunge District).

**BELFRIES**

In almost every small town or a church hamlet near the church there is in the cemetery three stands a belfry. Bells hang inside it, rang at dawn, in the afternoon, and at the end of the day inviting people to come and pray. The bells ringing also announced threats of war fires and other calamities, and also accompanied the deceased on their last journey to the cemetery. A belfry was usually built in the corner of the churchyard, near a square or a street, at the side of the church, near the fence. A number of belfries were built in front of the entrance to the church, they were connected by a fence, and the gate to the churchyard was made below.

Belfries were not tall. Many of them were lower than churches. The architecture of a belfry does not necessarily follow the structure of a church. Quite often brick belfries stand next to wooden churches and belfries of a certain style were built next to the folk ones and visa versa. However, usually belfries form an inseparable part of the ensemble of a church building, giving it artistic balance. This is especially true of the belfries that stand in the foreground, at the front of churchyards (Gintalėnė, Plunge District, Sėlėnai, Ukmėrė District, Paliūnai, Įgulnų District, Tabariškės, Salcininkai District)

The simplest, most primitive belfries are open - stave belfries. The bell is hung there on a crosspiece fixed between two trees or poles. Sometimes such a belfry is covered with a cottage shingle roof. There were stave belfries in many countries as far back as the 16th century, but in 1616 the Warmia Synod decided that belfries had to be closed, and bells had to be hung high so that strangers could not ring them. Most probably, it was then that closed belfries became more common than open ones.

Closed belfries have various forms and sizes. Square and octagonal belfries consisting of two or three parts of the same form that became narrower towards the top were most popular. When the widths of the volumes differed considerably, pent roofs were built between them. The upper tier of the belfries with holes and open arcade galleries is the most expressive (in Šaudingė, Akmenė District, in Kėdainiai). Obvious Baroque features are seen in Tabariškės belfry - gate in Salcininkai District, where the arcade of large semicircular arches surrounds the upper tier and an octagonal small tower ending in a small dome rises on top of the roof. The architecture of the octagonal belfry in Paliaužiai with a gallery in the upper tier is really harmonious. High, octagonal belfries that resemble one another were built in Radviliškis and Smilgiai in Panevėžys District.

Their tops are decorated with tracery ornaments characteristic of the professional wooden architecture of the 19th century. Various belfries consisting of sizes of different forms are of great interest. They were most common in Samogitia. These belfries are different sizes and proportions, with two (Seda, Mažeikių District; Beržorai, Plunge District) or three tiers (Kalsaišis, Kretinga District). The most magnificently built belfries of three tiers were built in the 18th century. A part of them is surrounded by two rows of arcades (Tryškiai, Telšiai District). The expression of the architecture of these belfries is characteristic of Baroque.

Wooden churches, chapels and belfries in Lithuania became deeply rooted in the natural and urban landscape of the country, and they have become its usual inseparable part.
Between the 18th century and the Second World War, about 150 wooden Jewish houses of worship were built in Lithuania. Only sixteen synagogues have survived to the present day. The majority of these buildings have been rebuilt or brought to ruin and no longer resemble the former houses of worship. The architecture of synagogues of different periods can be inferred hypothetically from the historical documents, literature, and iconographic material: old photographs and designs.

Many factors influenced the building of synagogues in Lithuania and had an impact on the architecture of the buildings: various prohibitions, changes in the liturgy of Judaism, and the influence of local building traditions. The development of the construction of wooden synagogues covers the period between the second half of the 17th century and the Second World War. This period can be divided into two main periods. The first period was from the second half of the 17th century to 1830, when more brick than wooden synagogues were built. The architecture of wooden synagogues of that period differed from the architecture of brick synagogues. Churches and traditional houses of Lithuanian farmsteads exerted a great influence on the forms of the wooden buildings. The second period was between 1830 and 1940 when the construction of brick synagogues prevailed. The architecture of wooden Jewish houses of worship of that period became similar to the forms of brick synagogues.

Synagogues used to be built in the already formed surroundings of cities and towns where the Catholic Church played the most important role, and later the Orthodox Church was added to that milieu. Though synagogues never dominated the skyline, in the perspectives of the neighbouring streets their size stood out from the surrounding buildings (the early synagogues of the 18th century, in particular). Unlike Catholic or Orthodox churches, which were built on spacious plots of land, wooden synagogues most often stood in densely built-up quarters surrounded by houses (and only synagogues that were built later in the 19th century had separate, more spacious plots of land). Early wooden synagogues had high roofs of several levels, despite prohibitions, and stood out clearly among the low dwellings and looked especially impressive.

Over the course of centuries, the image of wooden synagogues in Lithuanian cities and towns changed: high broken roofs disappeared, the forms of the buildings became simpler, the details and elements of the decor characteristic of ethnic architecture decreased in number, and more distinct symbols of Judaism and details characteristic of brick buildings appeared. In the second half of the 19th century, forms of synagogues became similar to those of brick buildings, i.e., pilasters, cornices, ledgement tables, rustic brick, and details characteristic of the architecture of Romanticism were used. At
Symbols of Judaism – signs of identification of a synagogue, a va-
sity of symbols and a system of biblical signs are used – signs of the zodiac, stories from the Bible, scenes from the town of Jerusalem or the place of worship, ritual articles, musical instru-
ments, various animals and plants, geometrical ornaments, and Hebrew characters.

The most wooden synagogues appeared in Galicia in the 16th century and then spread into Eastern and Central Europe (Poland, Bu-
larus, and Ukraine). Wooden synagogues began to be built in Lithuania in the second half of the 17th century. In the 1840s, Polish King and Lith-
uuanian Duke Vladislav IV granted privilege to the Jews of Jurbarkas; the Jews were allowed to build a synagogue and have their own cemetery.

Based on this privilege, the first wooden syna-
gogue was built in Jurbarkas in the second half of the 17th century. At that time, the largest Jew-
ish communities were in Kedainiai, Beržai, and Vytinai. The first mention of the Jewish com-
unities of Panevėžys and Kražiai was made in the third quarter of the 17th century. At the end of the 17th century the Jewish communities of Vilnius, Kaunas, Vilnius (mention of a synagogue is also made), Pasvalys, Salantai, Šėta, and Šiauliai were mentioned. Several Jewish families lived in Anykščiai and Vilija, and a synagogue in Ukmergė was also mentioned.

At the beginning of the 18th century, a synagogue stood in Švėkšna. By the middle of the 18th cen-
tury, Jewish communities were found all over Lithuania, with synagogues standing in the large cities and towns. According to the data of differ-
ent inventory, at the end of the 18th century the Jews accounted for 26 per cent of the population of Lithuania.

There is no information available about the wooden synagogues of Lithuania built in the second half of the 17th century. Several wooden synagogues from the second half of the 17th to the first half of the 19th century have been re-
corded in pictures and plans of the towns. Quite a number of drawings of the wooden synagogues created between the second half of the 17th and the first half of the 18th century have survived.

The early synagogues were of an integral vol-
tume, and their inner structure was not reflected outside, that is, there was no division into a prayer hall for male worshippers and a western side (a lobby and female premises). On the ba-
sis of iconographic material the conclusion can be drawn that the oldest wooden synagogue in this document as if you were reading it naturally.
and it resembled the fire in 1886, it was rebuilt in 19th century. Following the beginning of the 19th century, the proportion of synagogues of that period are close to those of traditional Lithuanian architecture. Only the synagogue of Pakruojis has survived up to the present day from the period of the early Classicism. Its size has remained unchanged, and the four-pitched roof of two levels has survived, but the windows of the segmental arches have been boarded over and the interior has been destroyed. Evidence of those things has survived in historical pictures only. The windows had a curved upper part, were divided into small pieces, and were surrounded by arcing with a carved lower part. The Aron Kodesh was really magnificent, and the interior has been destroyed. Evidence of those things has survived in historical pictures only. The volume became more reduced to two levels only and its vertical planes insignificantly. The roof became smaller; it was a double-pitched roof. The interior has been destroyed, only one column of the Bimah out of four has survived. The size of the synagogue is close to that of a dwelling house, and the frames of the windows are influenced by Classicism. There was a synagogue in Seda already in 1818. Following a fire in 1868, it was rebuilt and it resembled the burned one. The synagogue in Seda is of a compound monumental volume, and is covered with a half-hipped roof. The layout is an irregular rectangular with a closed console of the staircase on the western side. The influence of style architecture is already seen in the forms of the attic. The windows are crowned with a triangular pediments decorated with ‘fans’ and a double-cornice with fine dentils surrounds the attic. The synagogue is in bad repair and has partly fallen down. Features of ethnic and professional architecture intertwine in the exteriors of the synagogues in Tirkšliai and Seda. The synagogue in Tirkšliai seems to be older. It is small, rectangular, and covered with a double-pitched roof. The interior has been destroyed, only one column of the Bimah out of four has survived. The size of the synagogue is close to that of a dwelling house, and the frames of the windows are influenced by Classicism. There was a synagogue in Seda already in 1818. Following a fire in 1868, it was rebuilt and it resembled the burned one. The synagogue in Seda is of a compound monumental volume, and is covered with a half-hipped roof. The layout is an irregular rectangular with a closed console of the staircase on the western side. The influence of style architecture is already seen in the forms of the attic. The windows are crowned with a triangular pediments decorated with ‘fans’ and a double-cornice with fine dentils surrounds the attic. The synagogue is in bad repair and has partly fallen down. Features of ethnic and professional architecture intertwine in the exteriors of the synagogues in Tirkšliai and Seda. From 1890 to the Second World War, a greater number of brick synagogues were built in Lithu-
The architecture of wooden and brick synagogues built during that period became similar. However, one could discern features characteristic of Lithuanian traditional architecture even in the forms of wooden synagogues built later (according to the approved designs).

During that time the evolution of the forms of wooden synagogues continued: the composition of their facades became closer to that of the brick synagogues, elements of style architecture started to be used more extensively – pilasters, windows with semicircular arches, pediments, horizontal ledgement tables, rustic brick, etc. A more distinct boundary between single-storied and double-storied sides had different forms (arched and rectangular). The synagogue became a clear double-storied sides appeared, and sometimes it seemed that two building were connected. Quite often the windows of the single-storied and double-storied sides were made high, decorated with bandings, and end in semicircular arches, whereas in the female premises the windows are lower, and have semicircular arches, and those of the two-storied side are rectangular. The main façade was decorated with a portal framed by pilasters and a triangular pediment. The span of the prayer hall is even, four columns (only two of them have survived) accentuated the middle part between which the Bimah was placed. The opening of the female gallery has survived.

Synagogues of the period of Romanticism differed from the Jewish houses of worship of earlier epochs by lower volumes and asymmetrical layouts (extensions to staircases were often connected to some corner of the building). The boundary between the one-storied and two-storied sides became more distinct on the exterior. The windows were not only arranged at two levels but also differed in form, thus emphasising the significance of the male hall. Its windows were made high, decorated with bandings, and often ended in semicircular arches. Symbols of Judaism and elements of architecture characteristic of houses of worship began to be used. Though the difference in the composition of the facades and the décor of wooden and brick synagogues almost disappeared, features of ethnic architecture can be still found in the forms of the wooden buildings.

The style of architecture of the synagogues of the period of Historicism between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century (until the First World War), is more varied – elements of the architecture of the Middle Ages, the East, and the Moors were used, and various eclectic combinations of former styles spread. During that period, two types of synagogues were built: 1) traditional (with four pillars or with integral space), 2) reformed. Similar laws regulating the building of synagogues were in effect in provinces of Vilnius, Kaunas and Suwałki. Synagogues could be built only with the governor’s permission according to approved drawings. They could not stand close to the sacral buildings of other faiths: distances from Catholic and Orthodox churches had to be at least 100 fathoms – about 2.13 metres if a synagogue stood in the same street and not less than 50 fathoms if it was built in another street.

Wooden synagogues were built in a traditional way. The structure of the plan and the inner space of these synagogues reflected themselves in the composition of the exterior – with clear division into a single-storied male hall and a dual-storied side with the female premises. The close relation
The forms of the wooden synagogues built during the inter-war period, as in the period of Historicism, according to designs created by architects, were similar to those of brick synagogues. Windows that ended in triangular apses, and the Star of David, began to be used more often. Small synagogues of simple architecture with rectangular windows resembled dwellings, and large houses of worship most often resembled schools. It was only the Star of David and the composition of the side façades – the division into one-storied and two-storied sides – that showed the purpose of these buildings. Though the majority of wooden synagogues of the inter-war period were built according to the design, the size of these buildings, structures or various details were close to Lithuanian traditional architecture. Some synagogues with forms influenced by Baroque synagogues were built. The most striking example that has survived up to the present day is the synagogue in Kurkliai, which was built in 1935 according to a design created by the technician P. Jurėnas. The synagogue stands near a small river. Its volume with the rising angular tower of the staircase is similar to that of synagogues built in the 18th century. Cages divide the facades; the windows are high and end in triangular apses. Similar windows are also designed in Christian churches. The symbol of Judaism – a small Star of David – is placed outside the synagogue, on the top of the tower.

The construction of Jewish houses of worship ended around the year 1940. During the Second World War, a majority of the old wooden synagogues were destroyed. Only a small portion of wooden synagogues (sixteen) built in the 19th and the 20th centuries has survived up to the present day. Apart from the already mentioned ones that were formerly wooden synagogues standing in Ašledžiai (Plungė District), Kaltinėnai and Laukuva (Šilalė District), Veisiejai (Laždai District), Žemaičių Naumiestis (Švenčionys District) and some others – are rebuilt (flats have been made there) and do not resemble any house of worship at all. All the existing wooden synagogues are rather different. Their architecture is simple, but the facades have various compositions, some buildings have retained the authentic compositions of separate parts and original décor. The majority of synagogues are in bad condition repair and stand unused, with boarded-up openings. From the second half of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century (until the Second World War), synagogues were an inseparable part of the architecture of Lithuanian cities and towns. They differed from other sacral buildings of that time in their compact volumes and the original elegant composition of their façades, which were enlivened by the interconnection of the forms of prevailing styles and décor characteristic of Lithuanian ethnic architecture and Jewish art.
Russian churches were built in Lithuania by the Orthodox and by the Old Believers. Wooden churches were mostly built by Old Believers, while the Orthodox usually constructed stone churches.

The Orthodox faith reached Lithuania in the 13th century. The Orthodox Metropolis of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was established in 1300. The first Orthodox diocese with various divisions was established in Navahrudak. There were Orthodox believers in the present-day territory of Lithuania as early as in the 14th and 16th centuries. After the Union of Brest in 1596, some Orthodox believers in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania became Uniates. After the third division of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, from 1795 to 1915 Orthodox Christianity was the state religion in Lithuania. Seventy-two Orthodox churches survived the war, of which 41 were taken over by Catholic parishes. In 1923, Orthodox parishes in Lithuania were divided into Kaunas, Panevėžys, and Šiauliai-Telšiai deaneries. At the end of 1939, the Vilnius deanery was established. There were 46 Orthodox parishes in Lithuania in the period between the two world wars. During World War II and in post-war years, several Orthodox churches were destroyed or adapted for needs other than religious ones.

No information remains about what the first wooden churches in Lithuania looked like. The wooden churches found in Lithuania today were constructed from the early 19th to the early 20th century and in the period between the two world wars. There are some churches constructed after 1990. The architecture of the old churches that have survived until the present day, especially of those that are not used as places of worship now, has not undergone any major change, yet the condition of most of the buildings is poor. The churches that are still used as places of worship and that underwent repair or reconstruction have changed somewhat.

The peculiarities of construction and the architecture of Lithuanian Orthodox and Old Believers’ churches are different. These differences were caused by certain objective conditions and by liturgical peculiarities.

**Old Believers’ Churches**

It is stated that the first Old Believers’ church was constructed in 1710 in Rokiškis District (in Girelė, next to Kriaunos). Later, in 1819, this church was transferred to Bobriškis (Rokiškis District). Sources also contain some references that the first Old Believers’ church appeared in 1701 in Puščios Village (next to Kriaunos) in Rokiškis District. It may be assumed that it is the same location and that the Russian name was used in the latter case. In the late 18th century, there were 16 Old Believers’ churches in the present-day territory of Lithuania. The first Old Believers’ churches in Zarasai District were mentioned in Gudžiūnai (next to Dubkiai)
in 1728. In 1812, a church in Miltinai (Rokiškis District) was mentioned, and in 1860 or 1863 a church in Sipailiškis (Rokiškis District) was built. In 1825–1855, of the 33 Old Believers’ churches that operated in Lithuania, 15 were closed (8 of them were destroyed). 1862 saw the construction of a church in Aukštakalnis (Zarasai District), and somewhat later the construction of a church in Raistiniai (Zarasai District). In the late 19th century a church was built in Rūsteikiai, and in 1904 one was built in Mminauka (Zarasai District). In 1913, an Old Believers’ church was built in Paežeriai (Anykščiai District). Another church was built in Sidarai (Radviliškis District) in 1920, and a church in Dubiniai (Šiauliai District) was built in 1922. In the period between the two world wars (in 1923), 53 Old Believers’ churches were operating in Lithuania. In 1933, the construction of a church in Turmantas (Zarasai District) was completed, and in 1935 a new church (on the site of the old one) was constructed in Manevros (Rokiškis District). After the war, two Old Believers’ churches were destroyed. By 1953, out of the 74 Old Believers’ churches that had operated in 1944, only 58 remained. Today, even fewer Old Believers’ churches remain, and some of them are not being used and are deteriorating. Old Believers were not persecuted in Lithuania as they were in Russia, yet for the sake of safety communities were usually established in distant villages, in less accessible locations, and in forests. This is what probably determined the selection of construction materials and the location of their churches. Old Believers’ churches were usually found somewhere near the edge of the village or in the forest and were surrounded by trees, and thus were difficult to spot. This unique situation in the construction of these churches influenced the structure and architecture of the buildings.

The walls in Old Believers’ churches were built from trimmed logs and covered with planis placed in one or two directions. The outside walls were usually left unpainted or covered using dull colours, any decorative elements were used moderately, and the ornaments of decorations were fairly simple. Since Old Believers’ parishes were established at a certain distance from major cities, the architecture of wooden churches was less influenced by stone buildings of various styles. A greater influence was exerted on them by the wooden buildings found in villages and small towns. Therefore, the forms and layouts of these churches resembled the architecture of residential buildings. The sacred purpose of these churches was manifested by towers of various height and blind back façades facing the east.

Old Believers’ churches usually had a rectangular shape or had a narrow protruding porch. There was an entrance room (with one or two doors) on the western side, a prayer hall behind it (which was sometimes divided along its axis into men’s and women’s sections), and a separated room for keeping icons at the back eastern wall. Sometimes the churches also had some other premises. Old Believers’ churches were usually small and had bell towers of simple forms. Some churches did not have towers, or had a small decorative tower only and a second small tower at the eastern end of the building on the ridge of the roof. The towers had top pieces in the shape of a poppy head (or, on rare occasions, were onion-shaped) or tent-like top pieces. The layout and proportions of these churches often resembled those of residential buildings or popular wooden churches. Old Believers’ churches rose in the direction of the western façade, the composition of which was dominated by a bell tower. The bell tower usually had one or two sections or on rare occasions three sections, while the tower itself was incorporated into the vertical axis of the façade in one of the following manners: 1) protruding to the front; 2) as an overhanging tower (bay window); 3) attached to the roof slopes; 4) placed on the pediment of the façade; 5) matching the plane of the pediments and extending it.

The main façade was sometimes decorated with open or closed, low or two-storey porch(es) or porticos. Hanging porches (roofs) were used as well. Back eastern façades were blind and sometimes had some small openings. Side façades were usually identical, and only the number of windows was sometimes different. The covering of the façade was usually placed horizontally or in two directions, and on rare occasions the façade was decorated with herring-bone pattern. The dominating elements of décor were as follows: window vaults with extended side planks, carved elements at the bottom, and imitations of small pediments. The façades of the churches built in later periods (in the period between the two world wars) had more diverse coverings, and planks with carved geometrical ornaments were used as decorations.

The icon stand in Old Believers’ churches was usually made up of a composition of icons placed on boards of various sizes, which were attached to the eastern wall. The area of the presbytery or its centre was sometimes emphasised by a vault and the floor by protruding elements of various shapes. Old Believers’ churches still stand in the districts of Anykščiai, Biržai, Ignalina, Jonava, Kaišiadorys, Kaunas, Kelmė, Klaiptė, Kupiškis, Lazdijai, Moletai, Panevėžys, Radviliškis, Rokiškis, Šalčininkai, Šiauliai, Švenčionys, Telsiai, Trakai, Ukmerge, Utena, Vilnius, and Zarasai. Most of them are made of wood. Two wooden Old Believers’ churches have survived in the villages of Giriūnė and Paežeriai in Anykščiai District. The church in Giriūnė has a bell tower and an additional lower tower. An entrance room with two doors (for men and women) is separated by a transverse wall. The main façade is dominated by a two-section bell
tower, which is an extension of the triangular pediment. The doors and the windows have segmented lintels, and those of side façades have a rectangular shape. The small tower rising above the ridge of the back eastern façade has eight angles, elegant proportions, and a poppy-head shaped headpiece. There are hardly any decorations: there are only narrow bargeboards with a simple geometrical ornament. The main façade with a bell tower of this church resembles that of a Catholic church. The purpose of the building is manifested by the sacred symbol of the Old Believers: the three-barred crosses attached to double-leaf doors.

The church in Paežeriai (still functioning) has a two-section bell tower protruding to the front and a small additional tower. The main façade is dominated by a large, high tower. The bottom section of the tower is square shaped, and the upper one has eight angles and a poppy-head-shaped headpiece with a cross. A wooden Old Believers’ church can be found in the village of Kvedariškis in Biržai District. This church (still functioning) does not have any towers and has a narrow porch. There is a lower two-sloped closed entrance protruding to the front on the blind main façade. The church in Kvedariškis has very moderate forms. Its silhouette resembles that of a residential building.

Wooden churches are found in Baltromiškiai, Paskutiškiai, and Perelozai in Jonava District. The church in Baltromiškiai has a porch and an eight-angle tower rising above the roof slopes. The porch is open in the imitation of a portico. The windows are small and rectangular. The church in Paskutiškiai also has a porch and a tower attached to the roof slopes. The porch is supported by carved poles (in an imitation of a portico). The windows have segmented lintels. The church in Perelozai has a long rectangular shape and two parts that are connected with an entrance room: the church itself and an apartment for the priest. The centre of the prayer room is dominated by a fairly prominent eight-edged tower with a tent-like roof with an onion-shaped headpiece. Next to it, above the entrance room, there is a higher and more elegant bell tower. It has three sections and is covered with a tent-like roof with an onion-shaped headpiece. This church was well built and richly decorated. Its structure, layout, and external forms resemble those of Orthodox churches rather than Old Believers’ churches.

The church in Didjeji Ibenai (still functioning) in Kaunas District combines various types of materials: it is wooden and has an outbuild- ing made of red bricks and topped by a tower made from white silicate bricks with a hip roof with a cross. The church in Šlyžiškė in Kelmė District has a long rectangular shape and horizontally placed finishing elements. Along the axis of the main façade, above the gable roof, there is an eight-angle cross-section tower with a tent-like roof with a cross. The forms of this church are laconic and simple. Its main structure (except the tower) and windows are similar to those of residential buildings.

There are wooden Russian churches in Panevėžys, Ferma, and Pempės in Panevėžys District. The church in Panevėžys (still functioning) has a low tower as a continuation of the pediment. The church has a half-hipped roof and is rectangular in shape. The tower has a hip roof with an eight-angled drum and an onion-shaped headpiece.

The church in Ferma does not have a tower. The main western façade has an open gabled entrance supported by four poles (in an imitation of a portico). The vertical axis of the façade is finished with a small, gable, cantilever balcony supported by two poles. The form of the church in Ferma is laconic and resembles the buildings of ethnic Lithuanian architecture. No symbols typical of Old Believers’ churches have remained on the outside of this church.

The church in Pempės has a tower rising above the gabled roof ridge and horizontally placed finishing elements. A small cupola with a cross rises above the back eastern façade ridge. The church in Sidariai in Radviliškis District has a low square tower rising above the low hip roof and is equipped with a small onion-shaped cupola.

Wooden Old Believers’ churches are found in Bobriškis, Manevaiškiai, Bobrikiskiai, and „Rokiškis in Rokiškis District. The church in Bobriškis has two small towers and a porch. The vertical axis of the main façade is emphasised by an open two-storey, gabled porch with a balcony fenced with a balustrade. A low square tower with an eight-angled drum and a poppy-head-shaped headpiece rises above the entrance
room. There is also an elegant small eight-angled tower with a poppy-head-shaped cupola at the other end of the roof.

The church in Maneivos has a bell tower and a smaller back tower above the ridge. A tower with two sections continues the triangular pediment of the main façade: the bottom section is square-shaped, whereas the upper one is eight-angled and has a small, low poppy-head-shaped cupola. The church in Miliūnai was made of wood and has one room and a gable roof. The church is now covered with bricks.

The church in Sipailiškis has a square tower rising above the triangular pediment. The simple composition of the main façade, which includes small rectangular windows, is enlivened with a small triangular pediment covering the window inserted above the double-leaf door.

The church in Rokiškis (still functioning) was reconstructed and covered with bricks, but its structure and layout did not undergo any change. It has two small poppy-head-shaped cupolas. The church in Gojus in Šalčininkai District (still functioning) has undergone repair and has laconic forms. At the front, there is an open porch and a two-section tower attached to the gable roof.

Wooden Old Believers’ churches are found in Dubiniai and Smilgiai in Šiauliai District. The church in Dubiniai has a single room. It has small low towers rising at the back of the roof. The external form of the church is very laconic and resembles the architecture of residential buildings.

The church in Smilgiai has a bell tower and an additional small tower. The church has a rectangular shape and a small protruding porch with a roof. The voluminous bell tower with two sections continues the triangular shield of the main façade. A low, small two-section tower with a poppy-head-shaped cupola rises above the ridge of the back façade.

The church in Jurgeliškiai in Švenčionys District is considerably different from other wooden Old Believers’ churches. At the front, it has a tower with a high pyramid-shaped roof with a small cupola and a second smaller tower rising from the central part of the roof. The tower is high, has two sections and eight angles, and is located above the protruding rectangular porch.

The church in Daniliskiai in Trakai District has a porch and a low tower above the roof. The main façade has an open porch and is windowless. Side façades are provided with segmented windows.

In Utena District, wooden Old Believers’ churches are found in Nėčinai, Stalnioniškis, and Seimatis. The church in Stalnioniškis has a bell tower with a protruding cupola-shaped shield and a small poppy-head-shaped cupola over the roof end. The composition of the western façade, with an eight-angled cantilever tower protruding to the front, has more originality than other churches: the tower is placed on a rectangular porch and looks like a massive bay window. It has an original tower and a non-traditional portal structure.

The church in Seimatis has a protruding bell tower and an additional low, small tower. The bottom section of the porch (tower) is rectangular in shape, and the upper one is eight-angled and has a tent-like roof with a small cupola. A small eight-angled tower with a small tent-like roof rises at the back above the ridge of the roof. The exterior of the church combines the features of popular architecture and of various architectural styles.

The church in Nėčinai has a two-section tower that does not protrude to the front but rather rises above the pediment of the main façade and is attached to the gable roof. The first section of the tower is square-shaped, and the second one is eight-angled and covered with a small tent-like roof with a small poppy-head-shaped cupola.

The church in Utena (still functioning) was built in 1991. It has a main tower (rising above the hall rather than above the entrance room) and a small tower at the back of the half-hipped roof. The northern (side) façade includes a double door.

The church in Maseliškės in Vilnius District has a laconic form and a two-section tower which continues the plane of the shield. The bottom section of the tower is square-shaped, and the upper one is eight-angled.

In Zarasai District, wooden Old Believers’ churches are found in Aukštakalnis, Rastiniškės, Rūsteikiai, Turmantas, and Zarasai. The church
in Aukštaitkalnis has a tower and a small porch under the roof. The tower is placed on a trapezium-shaped pediment. The bottom section of the tower is square-shaped, and the drum is eight-angled. The forms of the church in Aukštaitkalnis combine moderate popular features and some features typical of different architectural styles.

The church in Raistiniškės has a tower and a porch. The tower has one section and is placed on a trapezium-shaped pediment. An eight-angled lantern with a poppy-head-shaped shield rises above the four-slope roof. The church in Rūsteikiai has a bell tower and a small porch. The tower is square-shaped, and its upper section is narrow, eight-angled, and has a headpiece of the main façade. Bell towers (comprising one or two sections) rose above the pediments of the main façade and usually (with a few exceptions) were fairly voluminous. Any additional towers, which emphasised the centre of the prayer hall, had smaller proportions and were usually the tallest vertical elements of the building. Façades were covered with finishing elements placed in several directions and enlivened with sharpened board ends painted in contrasting colours. In Orthodox churches, all façades are usually considered equal and representational. Elements of décor are abundantly used to embellish windows, friezes, and cornices: spatial projected pediments, stylised plant ornaments and strict geometrical forms, ornamental carvings, and elements of different architectural styles. The main item inside prayer halls in Orthodox churches is the icon stand.

The Orthodox Church in Lebeniškiai in Biržai District has two towers, is built from round pine logs and is partially covered with boards placed in different directions. The structure of the church is complex and comprises three separate parts that become taller as they reach the centre: an entrance hall, a prayer hall, and an apse. The structure is stepped, has a wide central part, a narrow entrance room, and a five-wall apse. The form of the roof above the said parts is also different: the entrance room has a gable roof, and the central part has a hip roof with a small tower and a cupola. The façades are decorated with boards and decorative elements with strict geometrical shapes. The exterior of the church combines the traditions of ethnic Lithuanian architecture and transformed features of Russian churches.

The church in Kolainiai in Kėdainiai District has two towers and comprises three different spaces emphasised by three crosses. The walls of the church are covered with finishing elements placed both vertically and horizontally. The pediment of the main façade is extended by a two-section tower with a tent-like roof and a small octagonal cupola with a cross. The wide main room protrudes to the side façades, and there is a small eight-angled tower with an onion-shaped headpiece rising above the main room. This church has a moderate architectural form.

The church in Mažeikiai (still functioning) also comprises three separate spaces and has a stepped structure. There is a porch protruding

**Orthodox Churches**

The Orthodox used to settle in big cities and towns and usually built stone churches. There were fewer wooden Orthodox churches in Lithuania than there were wooden Old Believers’ churches. An Orthodox church in Druskininkai was built in 1865 (the date is indicated above the main door). Some sources state that a wooden Orthodox church was built in Panevėžys in 1891 on the basement of a destroyed Catholic cemetery chapel. It is also stated that a wooden Orthodox church was constructed in Gegabraitsa in Pasvalys District between 1889 and 1900, that a church in Kaunatava (Telšiai District) was constructed in 1893 in place of a Catholic church, that the church in Pasvalys was constructed in 1905, and that the churches in Lebeniškiai (Biržai District) and Utena were constructed in 1914. Most of the churches were built or rebuilt in the period between the two world wars. After the old Orthodox churches in Lebeniškiai and Pasvalys were destroyed in the period between the two world wars, new ones were built, and an Orthodox church was established in a residential building in Rokiškis (in approximately 1933) in Mažeikiai. Orthodox churches were often built in central streets or squares, in quite visible locations. Wooden churches were built from round or trimmed logs and covered with boards placed in different directions. The form of wooden Orthodox churches (especially starting from the middle of the 19th century) was considerably influenced by stone Orthodox churches.

Orthodox churches were usually built in central streets or squares, in quite visible locations. The form of wooden Orthodox churches was considerably influenced by stone Orthodox churches. The structure of most Orthodox churches was stepped, with a widened central part (hall), similar to stone churches. The structure of such churches was developed to ensure that the building rose in the direction of the centre or of the main façade. Bell towers (comprising one or two sections) rose above the pediments of the main façade and usually (with a few exceptions) were fairly voluminous. Any additional towers, which emphasised the centre of the prayer hall, had smaller proportions and were usually the tallest vertical elements of the building. Façades were covered with finishing elements placed in several directions and enlivened with sharpened board ends painted in contrasting colours. In Orthodox churches, all façades are usually considered equal and representational. Elements of décor are abundantly used to embellish windows, friezes, and cornices: spatial projected pediments, stylised plant ornaments and strict geometrical forms, ornamental carvings, and elements of different architectural styles. The main item inside prayer halls in Orthodox churches is the icon stand.

The Orthodox Church in Lebeniškiai in Biržai District has two towers, is built from round pine logs and is partially covered with boards placed in different directions. The structure of the church is complex and comprises three separate parts that become taller as they reach the centre: an entrance hall, a prayer hall, and an apse. The structure is stepped, has a wide central part, a narrow entrance room, and a five-wall apse. The form of the roof above the said parts is also different: the entrance room has a gable roof, and the central part has a hip roof with a small tower and a cupola. The façades are decorated with boards and decorative elements with strict geometrical shapes. The exterior of the church combines the traditions of ethnic Lithuanian architecture and transformed features of Russian churches.

The church in Kolainiai in Kėdainiai District has two towers and comprises three different spaces emphasised by three crosses. The walls of the church are covered with finishing elements placed both vertically and horizontally. The pediment of the main façade is extended by a two-section tower with a tent-like roof and a small octagonal cupola with a cross. The wide main room protrudes to the side façades, and there is a small eight-angled tower with an onion-shaped headpiece rising above the main room. This church has a moderate architectural form.

The church in Mažeikiai (still functioning) also comprises three separate spaces and has a stepped structure. There is a porch protruding
at the front, and a narrow two-section, eight-
angled tower with a high tent-like roof with an
onion-shaped headpiece rising above it. The
wide central part is emphasised by a shield nar-
rowed in the upper direction in an imitation of a kokoshnik (corbel arch) and by a wide win-
dow. An onion-shaped cupola rises above the
tent-like hip roof. The apse comprises two parts
that become taller in the direction of the main
tower at the top and are completed with stylised kokoshnik-shaped shields. A small onion-shaped cupola rises above the central part of the roof. The exterior of the church in Maežiai is dominated by archi-
tectural elements typical of Russian Orthodox
churches.

The church in Panemynys (still functioning) is
located in a cemetery. The church has a three-
section tower with a small, eight-angled cupola
completed with an onion-shaped headpiece at the
front of the main façade. An eight-angled cupola
with an onion-shaped headpiece and a cross rise above the roof of the three-walled apse. The structure of this church resembles
that of one-towered Catholic churches. The ex-
erior of the church is dominated by elements of
various styles of stone architecture, while the
headpieces and crossings are typical of Orthodox
churches.

There are two wooden Orthodox churches in
Pasvalys District: in Gegabrasta and in Pasvalys.
The church in Gegabrasta has two towers, an ax-
ial and stepped layout, and comprises three parts
(a porch with a narrow entrance room, a wide tall
tall, and a lower eastern room completed with a
three-walled apse). A tall two-section square bell
tower rises above the main façade. The church has
a tent-like hip roof with a headpiece. The cen-
tre of the hall room is emphasised with a lower,
small, eight-sided tower. The church is girded with
carved friezes and has a carved cor-
nice. The exterior of the church combines the
traditions of ethnic Lithuanian architecture and
of various architectural styles with the features
of Russian Orthodox churches.

The church in Pasvalys (still functioning) does
not have any towers, is cross-shaped, and has a three-walled apse. A wide hall protrudes on the side façades. The hall, the entrance room, and the apse are equal in height, and therefore the structure of the building looks fairly smooth. The vertically placed bottom and upper finish-
ing elements of the walls are enlivened with
small arches and sharp-edged board ends, and
the corner boards of the façades are finished in
an imitation of pilasters. The building is enliv-
ened by the contrasting colours of the walls and
decor. The shape of the structure of the church
resembles that of Catholic churches, and only the
proportions of some individual elements of the
structure are different. The exterior of the church combines features of popular and pro-
fessional architecture.

The Orthodox church in Rokiškis (still func-
tioning) was reconstructed by adapting a resi-
dential building for the church. Therefore, it has
a fairly non-traditional structure, a protruding
gabled porch on the western part and a single-
layered outbuilding next to the back façade. A mezzanine rises in the central part of the façade that faces the street. The structure of the church and the composition of its side façades resemble those of residential buildings. The actual purpose of the building is manifested by a tower with a headpiece and a cross rising above the roof.

The church in Kaunatava in Telšiai District has
two towers and three rooms of various heights
rising in the direction of the centre and covered
with roofs of different shapes. The middle part
stands out: it has a tent-like roof, a long lantern,
an onion-shaped headpiece. A volu-
minous eight-angled bell tower with a tent-like
roof rises above the main façade. The elected elements of the church comprise geometrical
gilt, and softly carved elements of the building are different. The shapes and layouts, structures, façades, and décor of the buildings are different. The structure of wooden Old Believers' churches is rectangular or with a narrow porch on the west-
er side, whereas the structure of Orthodox churches (with rare exceptions) is stepped and includes a widened central part. The structures of Old Believers' churches rise in the dire-
tion of the main façade, while the structures of Or-
thodox churches usually emphasise the central
part of the building (although sometimes their
structure also rises in the direction of the main
façade). Old Believers' churches have one ma-
ner bell tower, while in Orthodox churches both
towers (the bell tower and the central tower) are
usually considered equal (except in one-tower
churches). The external forms of geometrical
wooden Old Believers' churches are simple. Sometimes, their exterior and tower silhouettes resemble those of Catholic rather than Orthodox churches, while in some cases the building without any towers they resemble residential buildings. Their back (east-
ern) façades are blind and have straight walls.

The architecture of wooden Orthodox churches is more expressive, all façades are considered rep-
tresentational and girded with decorated friezes
and cornices, and the apse is usually three-walled
or five-walled and has a blind internal plane. The
façades of wooden Old Believers' churches are sim-
erve and some decorative elements are usu-
ally placed in one direction. Orthodox churches
are finished using boards placed in different
directions. The shape of wooden Old Believers' churches is simple and any décor is used mod-
erately (usually smooth edgings with straight or
curved pediments and carved planks at the bot-
tom), while the shape of windows in Orthodox
churches is more diverse, and their edgings have
more decorations, which usually include pro-
cut pediments held by moulded supports and
decorated with ornamental carvings. The halls in
Old Believers' churches are sometimes divided
along the axis into men's and women's sections.
In Orthodox churches, the hall is not separated
by any partitions. The eastern wall of Old Believ-
ers' churches is equipped with shelves for keeping
elements of the church combine the features of
ethnic architecture and sometimes contain simple elements of different architectural
styles, while the purpose of the building is usu-
ally manifested only by a three-bar cross. The
forms of wooden Orthodox churches in Lithu-
ania combine the features of ethnic architecture
and different architectural styles and some ele-
ments typical of Russian Orthodox churches.
A bout a 15–25-kilometer-wide strip along the lower reaches of the River Nemunas and the Curonian Lagoon (the gulf of the Baltic Sea) was called Klaipėda Region during a period between 1920 and 1944. That was the northern part of Lithuania Minor (or Prussia) that had existed for five hundred years.

The culture of Lithuania Minor formed under the influence of culture of both the Germanic nation and the nations of Northern Europe (the English, Dutch, Austrians, Swiss, Scandinavians and others), as well as that of western technologies.

Since olden times wooden buildings have prevailed in the border region that was overgrown with forests. It was not difficult to provide oneself with wood in the 17th century when settling of newcomers in the deforested state-owned areas was encouraged.

Long-lasting rafting of wood down the Nemunas River determined the rise of original wooden architecture. Rafting of wood intensified greatly after the Treaty of Melno signed in 1422 when large quantities of rafts were floated on the rivers of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Belarus. For example, 1.5 million cubic meters of rafts were floated on the Nemunas between 1911 and 1913. Local people took the logs which had separated from the raft. Large quantities of wood floated encouraged the establishment of new sawmills. This enhanced the development of wooden architecture in Klaipėda Region.

In olden times (as in other Baltic countries) buildings made from round logs (later made from logs that were rough-hewed by an axe or squared by a seesaw) prevailed there. Abundance of sawn timber finally replaced the constructions of wooden buildings. Soon building of houses from timber was replaced with the construction of pillars so-called blankės. Abundant sawmills of the country made them of a standard length (girders of a rectangular cross-section of standard length with teeth – protrusions at the ends). When constructing a more modern building the frame of the latter was made of erect pillars with cutouts at the sides. Pillars were horizontally mortised between them, and the building was speedily assembled often from standard elements. Such a building was boarded with upright planks from the outside.

In the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century the sawmills of the country made various wooden products that met the needs of demanding customers: boards of different width, profiled squared beams, individual decorative details and others. Thus, it was possible to construct buildings from purchased semi-finished items spending less time on the building site.

In this way, traditional folk architecture was changing too. Semi-finished items that were ever-more often used in the 19th century from which desirable ornaments and a desirable image of facades were combined, supplemented the
work of masters on the construction site, which was customary in olden times.

Several different zones were distinguished in Klaipėda Region. Influences of various ethnic groups, traces of different histories can be discerned there. The nature of local wooden architecture was also determined by the traditional lifestyle that prevailed in that area. Fishermen, inhabitants of flood-meadows, colonists of marshes, inhabitants of the forests constructed different buildings. Farmers lived in the areas of farmlands and built wooden outbuildings for their animals and harvest. Craftsmen, tradesmen and others lived in their own way in villages with a church and small towns.

In the course of centuries, the colonists who arrived from Western Europe and brought their own wood processing traditions influenced the nature of wooden architecture of the country. The variety of traditional architecture of Lithuania Major was increased by a change in local climatic conditions of the Baltic seashore: frequent rainfalls, windstorms, increased humidity. A firm construction of the roof, its reliable covering was of paramount importance.

To protect houses from abundant rainfalls four-pitched roofs that had the form of a stack were build in olden times. Openings were left at the ends of the apex of the roof in smoke dwelling houses to let out smoke. Later the roofs of more complicated forms spread.

In olden times roofing with pieces of fir tree bark was widespread in Lithuania Minor. Later the authorities of Prussia banned such roofing as dangerous in case of fire. From then on an ordinary covering of straw was used for roofing. In the delta of the Nemunas River and on the shores of the Curonian Lagoon reeds that grew there were used for roofing. Such roofs spread in a larger area. The entire business was set up: after areas of water froze, reeds were cut, tied in bundles, and carried to be sold to distant places. From the 19th century, after brickyards became common in Lithuania Minor, there was a demand for resistant red bricks – additional waterproofing – were built. Nice wooden doors made by the craftsmen of the region and bought in cities were installed. Various wooden details manufactured at the factories of the region (different hardware, door handles, fasteners, etc.) were used in wooden buildings. Almost everywhere, solid foundations of rubble stones with a row of resistant red bricks – additional waterproofing – were built. Nice wooden doors made by the craftsmen of the region and bought in cities and small towns were installed in the dwelling houses in the countryside.

Building masters used quite modern processing tools and were acquainted with the rudiments of western technologies. This determined the quality of construction works, a more professional nature of local folk architecture.

Decoration of wooden buildings was well developed in Lithuania Minor. In some part of the farmsteads, even outbuildings were decorated with carved bargeboards, etc. Granaries and dwelling houses were especially refined. It was quite often that farmers themselves made wooden decorations for their buildings. The custom to replace constantly older and crumbling wooden decorations with the new ones prevailed in the region. In this way, a neat appearance of buildings was maintained (because in humid climate carved wooden decorations fall into decay much faster than the main constructions of a wooden building).

The developed industry of the region, import of goods from Western Europe determined early widespread prevalence of polychromy – painting buildings and their parts. Wooden decorations of buildings were painted especially often thus making the latter more distinct (and at the same time prolonging their life).

In Klaipėda Region various ornaments were used to decorate different parts of wooden buildings: roof shields, bargeboards, the ridge (decorated with figures of little horses or hip-knobs), wall boarding, the porch, windows, doors and others.

In olden times, sheathing of the roof shield with diagonal boards was widespread. Later simpler sheathing with upright boards became prevalent often dividing the plane of the shield into separate (contrary to boarded) parts. Refined small windows decorated the roof shield (semicircular, round, arched and of other forms) with carved frames, glazed with small pieces of glass.
Different drawings of bargeboards were used in different places of Lithuania Minor. There were especially smart two-layered or even three-layered bargeboards that were carved quite elaborately painting every layer in a different colour. In later times (at the end of the 19th–the beginning of the 20th century) bargeboards of sophisticated plant ornaments made by skilled masters became more common.

In old times traditional symbolic horses (a pair of two stylised horse heads) decorated the roof ridges, later they were replaced with differently decorated hip-knobs (vertical carved boards). Quite often the initials of the owner, the date of construction, and favourite symbols, etc., were carved there. A symbolic image of the Tree of the World – a carved tree, which supports the heaven, thereby connecting the heaven, the earth, and, through its roots, the underground, was often placed between the bent necks of the two horses in ancient decorations of the roof ridge.

After articles of wood processed in workshops and sawmills had become widespread, much attention was paid to daintiness of siding the outside walls. In some places profiled doubling planks (decorated with grooves), various profiled sheathing boards (made of different cross-section and form) were used. The upper part of the walls was more decorated by arranging sloping ledgement table, roof cornices, etc. from planks and woodcarvings of various profiles.

There were smart porches of dwelling houses. Sometimes they turned into as if a separate neat small house – with their own hip-knob and porch. A symbolic image of the Tree of the World – a carved tree, which supports the heaven, thereby connecting the heaven, the earth, and, through its roots, the underground, was often placed between the bent necks of the two horses in ancient decorations of the roof ridge.

Smart window bandings were not common in Lithuania Minor in the 19th century, the old buildings were preferred (as healthier and cosier for having a rest), decorated with ornaments characteristic of the locality.

With the passing of time wooden buildings characteristic of the region changed – some kinds of these buildings disappeared, whereas others formed with life conditions changing.

In the 19th century the number of buildings of Lithuanian Minor were wooden. Then people lived in large farmsteads in entire families. Apart from a large smoke dwelling house (a building of the inhabitants of Lithuania Minor) appeared. For example, a raised loft became common. With the trend of folk architecture increased. Wealthy town dwellers built summer resorts near the Nenumas and other rivers and on the shores of the Curonian Lagoon. At that time wooden buildings were preferred (as healthier and cosier for having a rest), decorated with ornaments characteristic of the locality.

In the 19th century manifestations of the so-called Swiss style chalets spread from Western Europe – elaborately profiled wooden elements of buildings, sophisticated ornaments in roof ridges, frames, etc. (as healthier and cosier for having a rest), decorated with ornaments characteristic of the locality.

On the centers of Lithuanian villages various drawings of bargeboards were used (as healthier and cosier for having a rest), decorated with ornaments characteristic of the locality.
embellishments. Many wooden buildings could be found in the countryside. The large barns to keep hay and cut corn in were built exclusively from wood. There were wooden buildings for other purposes too. Countryside abounded in wooden ornaments and wooden elements (quite often a wooden amply decorated glazed veranda was attached to a brick dwelling house).

Right up till the year 1945 wooden architecture of Lithuania Minor by its variety (abundance of building types, schemes of composition, variants of décor, etc.) outshone wooden buildings of neighbouring Lithuania Major.

In this way by the year 1945 original and picturesque wooden architecture had formed in the region, which clearly differed from traditional architecture of the neighbouring areas of Lithuania Major. Buildings characteristic of Lithuania Minor spread in the so-called Paprūsė (the border section of Lithuania Major along the former state border with East Prussia) where experienced building masters from Lithuania Minor used to arrive for a long time to work and where dainty doors, various ornaments from masters and market places in Klajpeda Region were brought.

Everything changed in the region in the autumn of 1944 when the Soviet army invaded it. Prior to that, the majority of the region withdrew to the West abandoning their farms. Many people who stayed in the region were killed; buildings and farmsteads were burned in the occupied region. A large part of the refugees who returned to their native places after the war found neither their farmsteads nor buildings. After the war, the old houses were pulled down en mass for wood – to heat headquarters of the then users. In this way, a great number of authentic things have been destroyed.

During the decades of destruction wooden buildings were the first to suffer – they were burned, demolished for wood, and neglected. For example, during the fifty post-war years about 95% of the old buildings were destroyed in the environs of Naktšiškiai. Large areas (for example, around the city of Klajpeda) became empty after the old villages, farmsteads and countrysides had been destroyed.

During the decades of destruction wooden buildings were the first to suffer – they were burned, demolished for wood, and neglected. For example, during the fifty post-war years about 95% of the old buildings were destroyed in the environs of Naktšiškiai. Large areas (for example, around the city of Klajpeda) became empty after the old villages, farmsteads and countrysides had been destroyed. The old wooden buildings of the region were destroyed during the soviet era at the time of the so-called land reclamation by liquidating abundant farmsteads with large solid buildings, by altering the plan of entire settlements, etc. For example, during the fifty post-war years about 95% of the old buildings were destroyed in the environs of Naktšiškiai. Large areas (for example, around the city of Klajpeda) became empty after the old villages, farmsteads and countrysides had been destroyed.

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Different wooden buildings in the region and decorated with carved bargeboards and hip-knobs, has survived at its western end. Some brick houses are still embellished with dainty wooden doors, and wooden window frames are decorated with carvings. Wooden decorations have also survived on the outskirts of Vieviškiai. The large sawmill that operated there in the past used to process large amounts of timber, that was brought floating by the Nemunas River from its basin or brought to the river were rearranged there preparing them to be floated on to Klaipėda or to process timber there.

Several farmsteads with wooden houses have survived in the village of Bitenai nestled against Rambynas Hill. Similar houses can also be found in the neighbouring village of Sardėnai. The picturesque Bitenai-Rambynas cemetery has survived between Bitenai and Rambynas. Elements of small wooden architecture of the region – the fence of the cemetery, wooden crosses, called krikštas – are being recreated in the cemetery.

Several old wooden houses have survived in the village of Pagėgiai: dwelling houses, various outbuildings that are typical of the town. There were large wooden barns in the Šilgaliai estate, which were characteristic of large farms engaged in horse breeding in the region. The villages of Rukai and Stoniškiai stretching along the high road to Žalgiriai. This is an important historical and cultural value – the remainder of the former largest agricultural colony (named after Bismarck) of the inhabitants of the marshes who settled (they grew potatoes and vegetables in the peat bog) built small wooden houses and out-buildings. These light wooden houses on poles as if floated in the peat bog where brick houses would have sunk. The small houses were embel-
floods, dried quicker than the brick ones and were islands during the time of floods. Their wooden build their houses on hillocks, which turned into meadows. Some impressive wooden buildings and their remnants of the marshes stood on the northern edge of the Aukštumala marsh. This is the last remnant of the large colonies of the inhabitants of the marshes that surrounded the marsh. There used to be farmsteads of large inhabitants of the meadows containing big houses in the village of Alka. The houses impressively embellished with traditional elements have survived in the Gminai-Peteriškių farmstead. Like other rural farmsteads, it is nestled on the road, on an old sacred hill among the areas of flooded meadows. Interesting wooden houses and old details have survived in the village of Petreliu whose farmsteads are also closely concentrated on a hill among wet areas. A farmstead of the village of Bružai with wooden houses built in the 18th–19th century – an ancient dwelling house, a granary and a large barn – still stands nine kilometres north of Sūlūn. One can see interesting wooden houses on the roadsides and more remote homesteads when going along Sūlūn highway towards Priekulė. Another section of original wooden buildings has survived on the shores of the Curonian Lagoon. The village of Minija is referred to as the “Venice of Lithuania”. Such villages that are situated on both banks where the river was the main street and the boat was the only means of transportation, were especially common in the Nemunas delta until the year 1944. Unfortunately, the majority of them have been destroyed. Even the village of Minija, which has been declared a monument of architecture, has been greatly devastated. Now only separate old wooden houses and parts thereof surrounded by modern buildings have survived in the village. The picturesque wooden house in the Šukai homestead on the left bank of the river has preserved the old embellishments. A greater number of less altered pre-war farmsteads containing wooden buildings have survived in smaller settlements of Preila and Peršvaika. In other places, picturesque wooden villas still stand. The unique spot attracted famous people in the past. Before the war the German writer, the Nobel Prize winner Thomas Mann built a summerhouse in the settlement of Nida on a dune near the Curonian Spit. There are old wooden buildings on the edges of the town of Priekulė and in the neighbouring villages. An ethnographic homestead containing interesting old wooden buildings stands in the settlement of Aghionėnai. Wooden houses can be found in the old homesteads of the seashore fishermen in Dervenna and Sventecė near the Lagoon. Fishermen who lived in the Curonian Spit in the past built wooden houses using wooden elements of the old or lost boats. Picturesque dwelling houses (some of them remained smoke houses for a long time – they had no chimney stacks) embellished with interesting hip-knobs stood there. In 1944, large shifting sand dunes were planted with vegetation, holidaymakers and tourists became interested in the place. Since then fishermen’s settlements have been modernised, nice wooden villas, hotels and inns-restaurants, as well as other recreational buildings have been built. Unfortunately, original wooden buildings of the Curonian Spit suffered during the decades of the soviet occupation, and during later times of the recreation boom when new constructions em mass were started destroying the authentic heritage of traditional wooden architecture.
Cross-crafting through the Centuries

Cross-crafting is a unique phenomenon in Lithuanian folk art and culture. It consists of the creation of an ornamented wooden monument with sculptures, sometimes even with painted pictures, and an iron cross forged by a blacksmith. Such a monument is closely related to the life and customs of an individual and a community. This is a peculiar symbol embodying the religious feelings, requests, and gratitude of the individual or community that built it and the talent of the cross-crafter.

The history of cross-crafting in Lithuania covers a period of about 400 years. The first knowledge of cross-crafting is from the 16th century. However, we do not know what the crosses looked like then because neither the crosses nor iconographic material has survived. The majority of the crosses that are known (that still stand or are stored in museums) or recorded by the first researchers (photographs and drawings by Adomas Varnas, Adomas Galdikas, Balys Buračas, and others) are dated from the 19th century. Then there were many of them: on almost every farmstead, on roadides, in fields, villages, forests, let alone cemeteries and churchyards. At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, researchers and travellers noticed that it was easy to trace Lithuanian ethnographic boundaries according to the abundance of lavishly decorated crosses.1

The history of cross-crafting in Lithuania is dramatic and marked by various bans, which were especially strict during the periods of occupation. After the 1863 uprising, Imperial Russia banned the erection of new crosses and the repair of old ones in places that were not consecrated, that is, in places other than churchyards and cemeteries. This ban lasted for about 40 years. The Soviet period, which lasted 50 years after the Second World War, was especially dramatic: then not only was the erection of new crosses banned, but also the old ones were destroyed. Besides individual crosses, the Hill of Crosses, a unique place known all over the world today, was destroyed twice. During both the Tsarist and the Soviet occupation, however, crosses were erected in secrecy. Therefore, the most difficult periods in the history of the nation did not only preserve cross-crafting, but also made it a peculiar symbol of national identity, a manner and sign of resistance.

The last 20 years have influenced the development and existence of cross-crafting in a peculiar way. After the re-establishment of Lithuania’s independence, all bans were lifted. The first five years of the Rebirth Movement showed how important traditional crosses and monuments were to the people: crosses were erected with renewed vigour. Crosses that had been destroyed during the occupation or that had fallen into decay (in villages and small towns and on waysides) were rebuilt. Many new crosses have been built.
cially ones dedicated to the partisans who were killed in the post-war fight for freedom and to the people who died in exile in Siberia. A great number of crosses were erected in former villages that had disappeared because of deportations, collectivisation, or land reclamation; these crosses were mainly built by the former inhabitants of those villages or their children. More wooden monuments began to be built in cemeteries, too. Now, somewhat fewer crosses are being put up, but the development of cross-crafting continues and many talented cross-crafters work.

Over the past ten years, a new phenomenon has emerged: creating exact copies of old crosses. Valuable but already decaying crosses that have survived since the 19th or the beginning of the 20th century are chosen as copies. The old monuments are preserved and moved to museums, and perfect replicas are erected in their place. In this way, it is as if the traditional monument has started to live a new life and become a live witness to tradition. Besides, the character of the landscape is also preserved. This is nothing. In all times, attempts have been made to put up a new cross in place of an irreparably decayed one, but not necessarily a similar one. According to custom, the old cross was never preserved; it was burned.

The creation of ensembles of wooden monuments did not come to an end with the re-establishment of Lithuania’s independence. Two groups are clearly distinguished between the latest ones: the memorial group (for example, the Way of the Nation’s Suffering in Domeikava, Kaunas District) and the recreational ones created in parks and resorts.

Diversity of Wooden Monuments and Regional Peculiarities

Lithuania stood out from other Catholic countries not only for the abundance of wooden folk monuments, but also for the variety of forms of these monuments and regional differences. Seeking to systematise this variety, almost every investigator of the first half of the 20th century and later ones (Wandalin Szukiewicz, Michał Eustachy Brenzetti, Paulius Galaute, Jonas Basanavičius, Jonas Grinius, etc.) created their own classification of forms of wooden monuments. They most often used the repeated elements of the form and structure as the basis for their classification. In this way, from some to several or even several dozens of types are distinguished.

It is most expedient to take the structural qualities on which the architectural structure, the décor, and the number of sculptures on the monument (partly their plots) depend as the basis for the classification. According to structure, several main groups of constructions are distinguished. These are crosses (crosspiece or pillar-type crosses), shrines (on the ground or in trees), and pillared shrines. Since olden times, people have called all these structures, with the exception of the small shrines on the ground, by a single word – crosses.

Crosspiece crosses in Lithuania have the shape of the Latin cross. The intersection of the vertical and horizontal lines, the crossing, is the centre of the entire structure, its main part. It is decorated most richly because the sculptural...
of the crucified Christ hangs there. This type of cross may contain some architectural elements: small roofs or small shrines (at the crossing, on the trunk, and on the base). Double crosses with two, or more rarely three, crossings are a specific type of crossepiece crosses.

Pillar-type crosses are made of a pole on which one or several roofed pillars filled with sculptures are mounted. The height of a pillar-type cross depends on the number of roofed pillars. The top is usually decorated by an iron cross made by a blacksmith (sometimes with a small tower).

A pillared shrine consists of a small shrine with statuettes placed on a pole. Its size and plan vary and it is covered with a roof that can have various forms (gable, broach, or crossepiece). The roof, like that of pillar-type crosses, is decorated with an iron cross, often with a small tower.

There are two types of small shrines: those placed on the ground and in trees. The former have various sizes and structures – from simple rectangular houses covered with a gable roof to complicated structures with columns, porches, and various types of covering (sometimes even tiny copies of churches or chapels). The roof is most often decorated with a profiled tower with an iron top. The structure of shrines hugging in trees is simple; they are mostly 30 to 50-centimetre-high rectangular houses-boxes covered with a gable roof.

In the second half of the 20th century and in the 21st century, modern forms appeared alongside the aforementioned traditional structures. The role of architectural elements in the structure decreased. Large sculptures and bas-relief occupy more of these monuments. These modern wooden monuments are also very different. Their common feature is that usually a solid trunk of a tree, usually an oak, is used. Modern wood processing techniques enable such large masses to be modelled. Elements of décor are often large too and carved like a sculpture. They are usually related to traditional monuments by various kinds of roofs and iron tops.

Contrary to traditional crosses and shrines, it is difficult to discern regional peculiarities in modern folk monuments, the manner of individual craftsmen and peculiarities of their individual style are seen more clearly in them. Overall, researchers started pay attention to the regional peculiarities of traditional wooden monuments, though these peculiarities are obvious, rather late, only at the end of the 1920s (Aantas Rūkštelis’ investigations) 3.

Crossepiece crosses are characteristic of all regions, but it has its own peculiarities in each of them. For example, it is only in Drūkšiai that crosses have the peculiar silhouette of an overturned triangle, which consists of a spear and a long-handled axe intersecting with a crossepiece (the instruments used to torture Christ). The people in Aukštaitija decorated their crosses with several layers of carved ornaments, mainly tracery. Such décor consists of geometric (small triangles, bows, holes, trapezoids, etc.) and plant (small leaves, twigs, and blossoms, especially those of lilies) ornaments into which small sculptures are harmoniously inserted.

There is an abundance of pillar-type crosses having several storeys in Aukštaitija. Varieties of the ancient one-storey pillar-type cross can also be found in other regions, but only in Aukštaitija it is made into a three-storey, or more rarely four-storey, structure.

Crosses that were built in great numbers during the pre-war period according to the designs made by the artist Adomas Varnas and his disciples, rendered originality to region of Suvalkija. These are richly ornamented crosses that include elements of structures and décor characteristic of other regions.

The form and size of crosses in Samogitia (Zemaitija) vary, but tall, massive crosses that often are moderately decorated with shrines on the trunk are prevalent.

Double crosses, sometimes referred to as plaque crosses or St Benedictine’s crosses, were also found in Lithuania, but in every region differences can be seen (in their height, decoration, etc.). These crosses were put up as an expression of a special request, begging the Almighty or those of the crucified Christ, to save people from plague or other deadly epidemics. In the first half of the 20th century, double crosses erected to mark the most significant occasions of the nation’s life (subles, the liberation of Vilnius, etc.).

Shrines built in trees can be found all over Lithuania; they were usually put up in old trees on the waysides, or at misleading crossroads in the forests. They were especially abundant in Suvalkija. By the way, it is exclusively in Suvalkija that one finds crosses of different sizes nailed to trees.

Pillared shrines were also put everywhere, but their largest number and greatest variety of forms were found in Samogitia. In different regions, the height of pillared shrines, the size of the shrine, etc. differ. Only people in Samogitia did build shrines on the ground and filled them with lots of statuettes of saints. The region of Klaipėda, Neringa in particular, is distinguished by grave markers having a peculiar shape – crosses of plank construction that consist of a decorated and profiled plank with carving or tracery and symbols.

Sculpture in Wooden Monuments

A wooden folk monument cannot be imagined without sculptures whose sizes, depending on the form of the construction, range from 25–35 centimetres to 1–1.5 meters. The roofed pillars of the pillar-type cross have the smallest sizes, and those of the shrines built on the ground have the largest. The number of statuettes in a single monument is also dictated by its form and structure. Traditional statuettes are usually painted.

Prototypes of the subjects of folk sculptures were dictated by Christian iconography, and they clearly reflected the styles of religious art. Folk sculptors carefully observed sculptures in churches, illustrations in prayer books, religious pictures whose contents were detailed in folk songs that were very popular in Lithuania. According to their subjects, folk sculptures can be divided into three large groups: Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and the saints. A Latin cross, a pillar-type cross, or a shrine and the image of the crucified Christ were necessary for every religious structure, no matter what it was. The images of the crucified Christ were not necessarily wooden, and especially in the 20th century, massive crosses are often associated with traditional religious structures.
Museum of Lithuania, Vincas Svirskis's wooden cross. The Open Air of Our Lady of Lourdes, the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin Mary, and others can sometimes be found. From the abundance of the saints of the Catholic Church, folk sculptors chose those who were closest to the folk people, those who satisfied their needs best, and those whose help the people trusted most. Like the sculptural group of the Baptism of Jesus, many sculptures of St John Nepomucene and St John the Baptist of different sizes were placed in shrines near rivers, lakes, and bridges, asking protection against the dangers that they posed. St Isidore the Laborer, as the guardian of farmers and ploughmen, can often be found in monuments placed in fields. Alongside sculptures of the crucified Christ and the Virgin Mary, statuettes of St George, honoured in Lithuania as the guardian of the household and animals, are often placed in pillared shrines and shrines built on farmsteads. Statuettes of the saint guardians of the owners of these farmsteads are common in these monuments. Statuettes of St Anthony, who is known as a wonder-worker, are found in many monuments; his help is sought when something is lost, in case of serious illness, etc. In case of illness, people often appeal to St Roch. To prevent houses from catching fire, a pillared shrine with a sculpture of St Florian, and sometimes with a sculpture of St Agatha, is placed in the middle of a village or a small town. Because of this clearly perceived spiritual importance of the image of the saint (not only the insufficient professional skills of a folk master) and the great attention is paid to the character and clothing of the person being represented. Often, the saints were “dressed” in the traditional clothes of a Lithuanian peasant, and Lithuanian features were easily recognised in their faces.

Crosses erected on the borders of villages were an obligation and are often called votive crosses. There are many of such reasons: to commemorate a person or a family (especially a respectful family) and deeply personal reasons. In this case, the sacred monument is a peculiar form of prayer and gratitude, hence, a certain decorative shrubs by it. Wreaths were used to decorate crosses during church festivals and major holidays. It was customary to place some fresh flowers at the cross, to fence it, to plant flowers and even low decorative shrubs by it.

Choosing a cross-crafter was determined by the idea, and purpose of building the cross. Most often individuals built crosses on farms, in cemeteries, on waysides, and in fields. Crosses in squares of small towns or churchyards were built by rural communities or parishes in the first half of the 20th century by various religious and public organisations. The scale of intentions expanded too: monuments were built for various national jubilees, in honour of famous people, for anniversaries of organisations, etc.

At present crosses are built in memory of deportees or partisans, in places related to literature, in memory of villages that have disappeared, etc. Wooden monuments have begun to be built near offices, even in large cities. After the decision to put up a monument had been taken and the place for it had been chosen, attempts were made to find a master. Almost any man in the village was able to make a simple cross without any elaborate décor as he could make many other things necessary to use on a farm; for that purpose he had to have suitable wood and elementary carpentry skills. A well known cross-crafter was invited to make a more complicated, richly decorated monument. Having erected a cross, it was necessary to sanctify it. That was considered the beginning of the life of the cross and its first veneration in the community. A new monument that had not yet been consecrated was marked in a special way (most often with a handful of straw or dried grasses), and the cross was decorated with a wreath in preparation for its consecration. The cross was consecrated according to the ritual of the Catholic Church.

Customs and Rituals

A wooden monument featuring the main episodes from the life of Christ or a representation of the Virgin Mary or the beloved saints who assist in all matters is always related to the life of an individual person or a community and are an inseparable part of their life. Therefore, the conception of cross-crafting as a phenomenon of syncretic folk culture, encompasses the entire history of a traditional wooden monument: from the idea, for the intention, the choice of a place and craftsman, making it, and its consecration, from which the real life of the cross in the community starts (ways of venerating it, processions, chanting, adoration, customs, etc.), to its decay (an irreparably decayed cross is burned according to custom and a new one is erected in its place).

The idea to build a cross is also influenced by customs (for example, it is important to have a cross or a small shrine on a farmstead because it testifies not only to faith but also to an orderly, respectful family) and deeply personal reasons. In this case, the sacred monument is a peculiar form of prayer and gratitude, hence, a certain vowe offering. There are many of such reasons: asking for health, children, or a happy life; requiring to protect men who go to war; gratitude for men who return from war or for the birth of a child, etc. Some of these monuments are built as an obligation and are often called votive crosses. Crosses erected on the borders of villages were supposed to protect people who lived there from various misfortunes, and pillared shrines with a sculpture of St Florian were supposed to protect people and property from fires.

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Wreaths were used to decorate crosses during church festivals and major holidays. It was customary to place some fresh flowers at the cross, to fence it, to plant flowers and even low decorative shrubs by it.

A monument, especially statuettes of the saints, is worshipped in a specific way testifying to the request by special signs, which were different in every region. They are especially obvious in Samogitia. It is only there that sculptures of the Virgin Mary (sometimes those of Jesus) are dressed in clothes made of fabric and decorated with beads, ribbons, etc. In Drūkšiai, one can often see crosses girded with a national sash and a special small apron tied around it (the latter most often means not only special respect
for the cross but also the request of a woman to have a baby).

An individual’s behaviour at a cross is also regulated by custom. For example, when passing the cross men have to take off their caps, it is obligatory for everyone to say a short prayer, no noise can be made, no litter can be left at the cross.

The village community visits crosses, and says prayers by them on certain dates. It was common to organise processions near crosses on Ascension Day all over Lithuania. On Day of the Cross, while chanting the Litany of the Saints, people visit all the crosses in the village, and the procession ends in the village cemetery. In some places, processions were organised on St Mark’s Day too. While walking, people chanted (most often some hymns; prayers were also said). In other places, traditional Marian prayers are chanted at crosses. The tradition of organising processions on Day of the Cross were almost abandoned in Soviet times (only traditional Marian prayers have survived in some places) when all public services beyond the church were banned.

The end of the existence of the cross is also related to customs. Traditionally, a decayed cross is burned and a new cross is erected in its place. Rites of this burning still take place. For example, in Samogitia crosses were burned on Good Friday during the fire sanctification ceremony. The rite of communal burning of crosses in cemeteries in the evening of All Saints Day and the octave of All Souls’ Day has survived in villages in Dzūkija (in case there are no such crosses, a bonfire is made of firewood and people say prayers and sing hymns around it).

**Folk Monument in Rural and Natural Environment**

A Lithuanian’s life, everyday routine and work in a traditional village was related to nature and its cycles in many respects, and it was not accidental that extraordinary attention was devoted to nature, especially to trees and the forest in the faiths of the pre-Christian era. This relationship with nature changed, but it has never been terminated, and it has manifested itself in new forms in cross-crafting.

A cross or a shrine is not built just anywhere. A place of exceptional beauty or significance is chosen (the approaches to a village, a crossroads or any other place on the wayside or in the field that is significant for something, a thicket of a forest, a place near a bridge, etc. was chosen: shrines were also built on large boulders that sometimes had a connection to something mythological.

Field and wayside crosses were usually fenced, and flowers and sometimes trees were planted around them. For example, on farms, a cross was often built near the gate through which people went in and out, and drove animals to a pasture, or it was put in a flower garden, without which a typical farmstead of a tidy farmer cannot be imagined.

The Lithuanian cross has never dominated the background of nature, as a live tree overshadowed the vegetation around it, but it does not disappear in it either; it simply grows into it as an equal partner. A handmade wooden monument and a live tree supplement and enrich each other as twin brothers and testify to man’s ability to include work created by his hands into the eternal and mysterious world of nature.

Besides single crosses and shrines, there are many places in Lithuania that abound in densely placed big and small crosses (in some places there are dozens of them, whereas other places, like the famed Hill of Crosses, abound in hundreds and thousands of crosses). These are called self-formed complexes or hills of crosses. They number more than thirty in Lithuania. They have appeared at different times; some of them are centuries old, whereas others appeared some
Cross-makers and Folk Sculptors

The role of the master was especially significant in making the cross. Good craftsmen, that is, those who were capable of erecting a nice richly decorated cross, were honoured and were familiar in some parishes. However, their authorship was not recorded in any way; it was not regarded as an important thing, therefore a large number of folk masters, having created priceless masterpieces, for us did not leave their names (even today only few of these craftsmen leave their initials on their work).

Cross-making, having in mind the creation of a wooden monument, is a certain craft, though it is not enough to have the skills of carving or a carpenter only. Quite a number of cross makers were famous in some parishes. However, their authorship was not recorded in any way; it was not regarded as an important thing, therefore a large number of folk masters, having created priceless masterpieces, for us did not leave their names (even today only few of these craftsmen leave their initials on their work).

There were no cross-crafting schools in Lithuania. As has already been mentioned, beginning cross-crafters, to crosses and church sculptures, and they often learned from a famous craftsman or worked as his assistant. They most often started carving in their early childhood when tending semi-wild animals. Following this, he lived mainly by and for his creative work.

Nowadays there are also many talented wood carvers: cross-crafters and sculptors. Of course, the ancient classical masterpieces serve as an original starting point. Among the contemporary masters, Lioginas Sepka deserves special mention. An exposition of his best works is on display at Rokiškis Museum. This is the artist of extraordinary talent whose sculptural compositions look like an ornament. The sculptural form and the rhythm of the ornament merge into a whole structure in his work, impressing one by the force of its expression. Like all the others, he lived mainly by and for his creative work.

Today there are no special cross-crafting schools in Lithuania. As has already been mentioned, beginning cross-crafters, to crosses and church sculptures, and they often learned from a famous craftsman or worked as his assistant. They most often started carving in their early childhood when tending semi-wild animals. Following this, he lived mainly by and for his creative work.

The making of a monument itself has changed most considerably, that is, the way of processing wood has changed. Tools have changed too; besides the traditional tools, craftsmen have been using electric chisels, drills, planes, saws, etc., chainsaws, and other equipment for several decades already. This speeds up primary wood processing and enables large pieces of wood (Oak, Ash) to be modelled in a comparatively easy way.

Preservation and Continuation of Traditions

In 2001, when Lithuanian cross-making and its symbolism was added to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the vitality of cross-making traditions and its natural development from the days of its origin to the present day served as the decisive factor. Proclaiming cross-making a masterpiece of the intangible cultural heritage, Lithuania has had a great impact on the development, research, and proliferation of cross-making traditions. It helped draw attention to protecting the heritage that has survived. Following this declaration, the Lithuanian Folk Culture Centre, together with UNESCO, drew up an Action Plan, the first stage of which was financed by UNESCO, to safeguard and revitalize traditions of cross-making. According to this plan, the CD ‘Cross-Crafting in Lithuania’ was released (in Lithuanian and English), four regional seminars for collectors of data on cross-making were held, and a complex of the most characteristic traditional crosses of Aukštaitija was created at the Ramiškės Open-Air Museum. An international scientific conference was also held, and support has been provided to a centre for cross making in Prienai. The status of a heritage masterpiece obligates the authorities and culture institutions to protect the certified objects or phenomena of cross-making traditions. The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which was adopted by UNESCO and signed by Lithuania, is related to the protection of cross-crafting traditions.

Two things are required for cross-crafting to exist and develop: a master craftsman and a man who needs his works. Always, even during the most difficult times, Lithuania has had and, one should think, would have both. The need to give a meaning to some important event, express religious feelings, perpetuate the memory of the dead, etc. by means of a wooden monument is a feature of the mentality and social awareness of Lithuanian people. Therefore Lithuania, which has been referred to as the land of crosses since olden times, can today also be regarded as a peculiar open-air exposition of cross-making where one can see a reflection of authentic traditions and signs of modern searching.

Cross-makers and
despite supervision by the police and KGB. However, traces of the destruction vanished were destroyed during the Soviet occupation; the authorship was not recorded in any way; it was not regarded as an important thing, therefore a large number of folk masters, having created priceless masterpieces, for us did not leave their names (even today only few of these craftsmen leave their initials on their work).

One of the greatest ever cross-crafters, who worked at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, was Vincas Svirskis. His outstanding talent merged inherited traditions and peculiarities of the baroque style. Svirskis’ work, in which the relation between the structure of a cross, a pillared shrine, and sculptural forms is an inseparable whole, has made a considerable impact on present day cross-crafting, especially on the structure of a monument. He was the first to carve a cross and sculptures from a trunk of a tree.

Nowadays there are also many talented wood carvers: cross-crafters and sculptors. Of course, the ancient classical masterpieces serve as an original starting point. Among the contemporary masters, Lioginas Sepka deserves special mention. An exposition of his best works is on display at Rokiškis Museum. This is the artist of extraordinary talent whose sculptural compositions look like an ornament. The sculptural form and the rhythm of the ornament merge into a whole structure in his work, impressing one by the force of its expression. Like all the others, he lived mainly by and for his creative work.

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Rural architecture developed using local natural resources, which in essence determined the structure of buildings. Remnants of wooden buildings that have survived in archaeological layers and still existing village houses of the 19th–20th century testify to the tradition of wooden construction. The architecture of peasants’ homesteads changed very slowly, and until the 20th century, usual methods and structures of wooden construction were used. The different ethnic regions developed quite separately. Original types of houses formed under the influence of the natural environment and historic and economic factors. Buildings differed in size, proportion, structure, technology, decoration and terminology.

Lithuania is divided into five ethnographic regions: Samogitia (Žemaitija), Aukštaitija, Dzūkija, Suvalkija and Lithuania Minor. According to the nature of construction, Lithuanian vernacular architecture is attributed to the geographical range of Northeastern or Central Europe. The architecture of western Lithuania is close to that of the countries of Western Europe, and the architecture of eastern Lithuania is similar to the construction of the northeastern countries.

The common building tradition is spread beyond the borders of the present territory of the Republic to areas that were earlier inhabited by Lithuanians (Kaliningrad Region, western Belarus, and Northern Poland).

**Constructions of Rural Houses**

**Traditional Building Materials and Techniques**

Wooden construction prevailed in Lithuania until the 20th century. Pine and fir trees were most often used. Oak was sometimes used for the lower logs, sills and jambs. Timber was especially grown and carefully prepared: it was cut only in midwinter and dried for a couple of years. Walls, windows, doors, floors, ceilings, roofs, finishing, sometimes even the foundations were made of wood. Fieldstones were more often used for foundations, rarely for the walls and clay was common for the inside facilities, dirt floor, stoves and chimneys. Roofs were covered with straw, reeds, bulrushes, wooden planks and shingles.

The axe was the main tool. Logs of old houses and barns were rough-hewed with an axe or adze, sometimes also planed on the inside. Split and planed boards were used for the ceiling and door. At the end of the 18th century, when the cross-cut saw (two-handed saw) began to be used or when logs began to be sawn at sawmills, houses became larger and more refined. They had more decorations, dirt floors were replaced with wooden floors, walls and gables were planked. At the end of the 19th century, bricks and glazed tiles spread for building stoves and chimneys, and iron works (devices, joints, hinges, handles) for doors and windows. In the middle of the 19th century and especially in the first half of the 20th century, people began to look for new alterna-
In southern Lithuania, conifers, were popular in wood piles foundation. Outbuilding with wooden construction was used. Latter on, in the 18th century, walls of mixed materials were built: clay, stone, or brickwork poles with a wooden fill or wooden poles with clay, straw fill. When industrial wooden products began to be prepared in large quantities at the beginning of the 19th–20th century, plank framed construction became common.

Houses built from horizontal logs have been prevalent in Lithuania for more than a thousand years. Pressing one another with their weight, the logs lie tightly, such a wall is stable, warm, and durable. Before people learned to join logs, houses were built as wide as the logs allowed, 5–6 metres. Dwelling usually was formed from two square blocks placed beside one another and covered with a single roof. This method of construction has survived in eastern Lithuania.

The walls of houses were fitted differently: in Eastern Lithuania, logs had grooves whereas in the Western region in the 14th century more rational framework construction formed. Less timber was used to build them, and different materials were used as fill: wood, clay, bricks, and straw. At first, purely wooden construction was used. Later on, in the 18th century, walls of mixed materials were built: clay, stone, or brickwork poles with a wooden fill or wooden poles with clay, straw fill. When industrial wooden products began to be prepared in large quantities at the beginning of the 19th–20th century, plank framed construction became common.

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houses. Seeking to make the walls stronger and protect them from outside influences they were planked with vertical boards.

Visible parts of the structure (lining, ends of logs) were trimmed, matched to those that were beside and decorated with nice ornaments and forms. In all cases structural and functional elements rather than details created specially for décor, were decorated: walls, porches, doors and window binding, ends of beams and rafters, cornices and gables. Sometimes even joints of corners or walls finished in different figures—served as decoration for a house.

The majority of old dwellings and outbuildings were built without any foundations, simply on the ground. Birch bark was used to insulate bottom beam from moisture. The gap that formed between the ground and the wall was filled with soil, shive, and moss and tamped with clay. This mound (50–80 cm wide, 15–30 cm high) of soil – the place along the outer walls of the house strengthened with an additional framework of logs, poles or wicker fencing – had not only a practical but also a decorative purpose; planted logs, poles or wicker fencing – had not only a practical but also a decorative purpose; planted

in rural houses. Poor peasants did not have double-glazed windows and in cold weather covered them with straw mats. Shutters (single-layer, double-layer, panel-type) were used with almost all windows. Like doors, they were decorated with various ornaments, carvings and colours. Original plant motifs were sometimes painted on them. Small openings of different forms (heart, moon) were cut out in the shutters to see whether it was light outside.

There was a great variety of roofs. Pole, beam and rafter roofs are characteristic of the architecture of rural houses.

The development and spread of the variety of roofs most adequately reflect non-simultaneous changes in building technique and the impact of foreign cultures. Pole construction was the oldest one not only in Lithuania but also all over Northeastern Europe. These roofs, following the tradition related to the older pole wall building, remained unchanged up to the beginning of the 20th century. In the oldest houses, the roof of a single row of poles was supported by posts that were dug into the ground in the middle along the building. Poles at the top held a horizontal crossbeam on which rafters were hung. In later barns, poles were built in pairs and joined by beams. This construction differed by the number of poles, their arrangement, and the way rafters were hung and supported. Rafters were hung on the crossbeam with the butt-end upwards on a natural branch, root or wooden peg.

Joint of the walls. Sometimes it finished in different figures and served as decoration for a house.

Granary with a beam roof in Vyžai, Utena district. The oldest beam roofs were covered with shingles, fir tree bark, or covered by clay and turf.
In the 17th–20th century, windows were used with almost all houses. Shutters were prevalent in rural areas, while roofs often had a gabled or flat design. The height of the roof was determined by the width of the building. Traditionally, the length of rafters (from their resting against the cut in the wall to the ridge) totalled two-thirds or rarely three-fourths of the width of the building. The roofs of all Lithuanian houses therefore had a similar slope of 42°–49° (roofs were more gabled in Western and flat in Eastern Lithuania). The wall of a building mostly consisted of 12–14 logs and the height differed between 2.5 and 3.8 metres. Houses built in Western Lithuania were much broader than those built in Eastern Lithuania; therefore proportions differed.

**Regional Features of Rural Structures**

The essence of vernacular architecture is determined by the construction, i.e. the ratio of structural elements united into a harmonious structure. The architecture, form, proportions, and decoration of a building also depend largely on the building method. Original techniques and construction solutions are marked by the nature of ethnic regions. They testify to the different intensity of development in various regions and to two essentially different trends in Eastern and Western Lithuania. Two regions can be distinguished – Eastern Aukštaitija and Samogitia – in which the oldest forms of houses and the purest (unmixed) construction techniques have survived. Houses were mixed forms prevalent in other regions of Lithuania and reveal the interaction of different constructions (those of Eastern and Western Lithuania).

In the 19th century, standardised products were used, and there was an abundance of complex profiles and various carvings. According to the construction and finish of buildings, one can see that the architecture and camp-farmsteads was influenced by the styles of Europe, scientific and technical innovations, and neighbouring regions. Innovations in construction spread from the villages to towns and cities, towns and cities, and from centroids into the countryside. Due to the inertia of tradition, however, clearly recognised regional peculiarities of building with historical structures remained in the country until the beginning of the 20th century: what was forming over the course of centuries and what today can serve as the key to the history of our country and the future of regional development.

In other cases, they were pierced by a small pole or joined with one another near the ridge. With new farming methods the old manner of building no longer complied with the requirements: beams interfered with stacking hay in the mows and limited the width of a barn. At the beginning of the 20th century truss construction, for which no solid beams were needed, became common in Western Lithuania. Another type of double log roofs has survived in barns in Eastern Lithuania. The gable beams were closely joined with the logs of the roof covering. Such roofs were safe and strong and were therefore used in the granaries. They helped protect property and crops from thefts. This construction could have been borrowed from the neighbouring Slavic and Scandinavian countries, where it was widely used not only in barns but also in dwellings and churches. The oldest beam roofs were covered with shingles, fir tree bark, or covered by clay and turf. Later, when straw began to be used, the structure changed: in one case the beam roof remained part of the supporting structure, joined with the logs of the gable, in another case it was merely an additional protective means unrelated to the structure of the roof. A relict of the beam roof has survived in Western Lithuania: the purlins joined with the gable logs. In the long run, the post and beam constructions were replaced with rafter roofs. The rafters were joined in pairs and fastened with horizontal ties. The ends of rafters, which markedly jutted out (1.5m to 2m) beyond the walls, formed wide eaves that protected the walls from rainfall.

In Western Lithuania hip roofs with an opening near the ridge for smoke to go out were most widely used. Dwellings and granaries had the trapezoidal gable that was decorated with an ornament (made of boards nailed in different directions) or carvings. Ridges were most often finished with carved boards. The roof opening in Southern Lithuania transformed into a triangle gable, and roofs acquired the broken form of a four-slope surface. The oldest covering was made from birch, spruce bark and split boards. Straw, which was longer used. All houses were made of horizontal logs, rafters were constructed of rafters and had a four-sloped form with broad loss. The falling shadow covered a large part of the walls, therefore windows were made low and rarely decorated. Also the ends of the sheathing had a somewhat different nature. Beginning in the 19th century, standardised products were used, and there was an abundance of complex profiles and various carvings. According to the construction and finish of buildings, one can see that the architecture and camp-farmsteads was influenced by the styles of Europe, scientific and technical innovations, and neighbouring regions. Innovations in construction spread from the villages to towns and cities, towns and cities, and from centroids into the countryside. Due to the inertia of tradition, however, clearly recognised regional peculiarities of building with historical structures remained in the country until the beginning of the 20th century: what was forming over the course of centuries and what today can serve as the key to the history of our country and the future of regional development.
Historical Evolution of the Lithuanian Dwelling

Formerly people lived in pillar construction houses in the Lithuania’s territory. They were built by hammering down wooden poles, weaving gaps with branches, and covering cracks with clay. These dwellings were cold, their thin walls were only good as a shelter against nasty weather. Cosiness was only kept by the heat of a constantly burning fire. Blockhouses made of horizontally placed logs appeared in Lithuania at the end of the first and in the beginning of the second millennium. Coastal areas were the first to use this construction technology.

The 16th century author Jan Długosz, also known as a mentor for princes, was the first to write about the Lithuanian house. To him it looks like a boat turned upside down. In the middle of a building is an open firepace and smoke escapes through the hole in the roof. The author writes that in such buildings (pirkios) Lithuanians lived with their wives, children, family; they kept there livestock, weapons, crops, and all other household appliances.

In the second half of the 16th century, at the time of the Wallach reform, houses that are more comfortable appear – two very different types of the house layout formed. Samogitian stubos or stubųs are mostly made of two parts with a chimney in the middle – an area from stones and bricks, narrowing to the top and finished with the chimney pot. A copper kettle is hung on pegs inside the chimney over the open fire-place. At both chimney sides there are porches; from there one door leads to the main living area, another – to the accessory presimintė.

Poorer people in Samogitia (Žemaitija) built houses that consisted of only one part. Very different is a house called pirkia in Aukštaitija and its modifications in Suvalkija and Držkija regions. It is a long and narrow building, divided into almost equal areas by cross walls: pirkia, priesmene and seklycia. Everyday life took place in pirkia. Seklycia also called pirkantė was meant for guests. The porch priesmene was without a ceiling, from there a ladder led to the top floor. There under the thatch roof fat bacon and sausage rings hung. Sometimes there settles a friendly house spirit aitvaras bringing in all sorts of goods. A small area was enclosed by the wall called kamaraitė. There was the place for all sorts of food and the millstones to keep. In pirkia the main space was occupied by a oven for baking bread. A table stood in the corner, opposite the oven opening and wide benches put along the wall.

Which Lithuanian region had the best looking houses? The Aukštaičiai had finely decorated window frames and nice porches. Samogitian stubos were impressively proportioned and had exceptional roof forms. Coastal fishermen’s houses distinguish by their colours and ornaments. One thing is common though: a fine harmony with surrounding landscape.
Choosing the Building Site

Old people had a saying: a living place must be happy. You cannot settle where the fire was raging or a lightning struck, since it can happen again. One cannot build the house where a tree stump once stood. It is believed that the prohibi-
tion reaches deep layers of mythological beliefs. The tree is an axis of the ancient world model; it connects its components: the underground, our living space, and the heavens. The souls of the dead go up to heavens via the tree. A bad place for construction is where the path or even worse where the road went. Perhaps it is due to the same mythical reason that even to this day there is a saying: ‘There will be no harmony in the fam-
ily, everything will be mixed up’ It is not allowed to build a new house square with the one that
stood here before: people will not live long there, will die soon. Perhaps, this belief is because such orientation resembles the cross. The best spot for the house is the southern end of the plot. Rela-
tions among family members will be strong and the household will prosper.

Building logs must be cut down when the trees are ‘asleep’: the best time is in February, when the seeds germinate; then garners will be full each year. Before starting work, on Pentecost the chosen
place is sprinkled with holy water using lime branches. The place for building a stockyard or
a shed is sowed with crops. Work will be started when the seeds germinate; then garners will be
full each year.

Start of the Construction

Building commenced on the even day of the week, not on Monday by any means, otherwise
the job may take too long and face many obstacles. The moon phase was also taken to considera-
tion: a dwelling house was advised to be built during the full moon, household premises – during the waning
moon. It is good to start works when the wind is from the north, it will keep rats out of stack yard.
In order to avoid them, in Drūkiai Region such
actions were made: a handful of moss was thrown into the left shoulder. To keep inhabitants healthy
a wormwood branch, sometimes a garlic clove or charcoal out of the Easter fireplace was buried un-
der the foundation. A handful of corn was thrown into every corner for good luck. The corn was not
ordinary but blessed during the Assumption Feast in the church, usually ears of oats and wheat. To
keep household hospitable and rich, of course, some poppy seed was peppered in the corners.

After craftsmen raised the first corona, in one of the corners where a krikštasuolė will be, a cross
was cut out in between the logs. The property owner put a piece of a mourning candle, some blessed herbs, and thorns of the Easter palm, after craftsmen raised the first corona. In one of the corners where a krikštasuolė will be, a cross
will keep fire away, herbs illness and misfortune, thorns will keep household hospitable and rich, and some
charcoal out of the Easter fireplace was buried under the foundation. A handful of corn was thrown
over it, because some evil spirit might find a place here.

To make the cattle grow fast some pig bristles, horsehair, sheep wool, chicken feathers, some
times goat horn were buried at the corners of a structure base. To prevent mouse from spread-
ing, some ash was spilled under each halving. Samogitians had a custom to hide some metal
items – a horse shoe or a coin under the founda-
tion stones or the step. Ethnologists generally call above-mentioned customs as a mythical look back. It is very rich and diverse in our country, speaking about huge
efforts to fathom processes of nature and to look
for inner connections and dependencies.

End of the Construction

These customs have less mythical meaning,
but more fun and play. The sign of the made raf-
ters was a raised wreath. In the Nemunas delta it was called beringis and in the Biržai region
frunys. They differ from a wreath because they
were raised horizontally, just like some kind of
crown for the house. The frame is made from branches of fir, willow or hazel, stuffed with
small branches of oak, birch or maple and some
garden flowers. A peony bloom as well as dahlia
would fit here. If work ends in late autumn, a
wreath will have to be made using pine and fir
branches. It was even decorated with rye spikes
during the summer. Especially often oak wreaths
were made; it was thought that it makes a struc-
ture stronger. Samogitian craftsmen used to
incorporate wooden cheese and bottle into the
middle – a hint of an expected treat afterwards.

Ethnologists generally call above-mentioned
customs as a mythical look back. It is very rich and diverse in our country, speaking about huge
efforts to fathom processes of nature and to look
for inner connections and dependencies.
Rumšiškės. Museum of Lithuania, had wooden floor. A lacy pillows on the wall there were pieces of furniture. Along with the mountain of traditional pieces Seklyčia and its can do anything. ‘Eyes are full of fear but hands and doors put in, and a oven to be build. But as roof must be put on, flooring made, windows regions. After that, there is still a lot to be done: placing a large bowl of ragout (stačiokė) and a song. In the meantime, a housewife was already helpers; then they welcomed the landlord with a closing feast has its ceremony, the child’s hand used to be taken and ‘the evil eye’. Returning after the baptism ceremony was made so that elders and children would be love home and protected against ‘the evil eye’. The stove’s top was leveled, a small depression was made so that elders and children could sleep there comfortably during the cold period of the year with some sheepskin underneath. This place was also used for corn to be dried before grinding it. Niches were made in the sides of the walls to dry clothes. All efforts were made to finish the stove during the waste moon that it would be durable, cracks would not appear, and crickets would stay away. In addition, the stove should be finished before the sun goes down, otherwise ‘cockroaches and other crawlies’ might gather in it. The chimney must be completed during the full moon so that the landlady would always have something to pray for. The bread-baking oven took over the image of a fire uniting the family. The oldest woman in the family had to start the fire for the first time using chips left over from making the first house corona. Some consecrated herbs were added, the sides were sprinkled with holly water on the inside. Neighbours, coming to the house warming, used to bring bread and salt, place it on prizulas and kiss the ‘forehead’ of the oven. It was believed that the household spirit lives in this main household structure, so the proper ingratiation must be done. This custom is even more obvious during the wedding, when a new family member is accepted. A daughter-in-law brought from a barn must put a towel on prizulas and another towel must be thrown over a rake or a mottled ribbon tied on it. A pregnant woman had to deal with the stove especially respectfully since the temper of a newly born will depend on it. It was not allowed to eat in front of the stove because a baby will dribble too much. She could not brush the dirt on the top of the stove lid because her children would not be able to marry. The midwife used to give to the woman who had given birth to a boy some crushed charcoal, which had fallen out of the stove. ‘The water from the child’s first bath was poured over the base of a stove so that the child would be love home and protected against ‘the evil eye’. Returning after the baptism ceremony, the child’s hand used to be taken and rubbed against the stove ‘forehead’ so that the child would love his home. The fire in the stove was rekindled before Easter by sprinkling the old one with holly water on the Holy Saturday. A priest used to bless the fire in the churchyard. Kids would light sponge and try to achieve some sense of security in this world. Whips snakes and ducks are water animals; perhaps that is the reason why they are not allowed to climb through the door. If this family has already a dead child, godparents would be handed water through a window, but does not carry it to pray for them. Wood chopped during the Advent cannot be started to fire because flame will leave the chimney with great noise. Usually a bread-baking oven was stoked using alder and pine wood with some birch wood added as well.

**Windows: The Eyes of the House**

A large amount of beauty was put into the decoration of windows by the elders. Very likely it is all because of that mythical prominence. A window is put into a frame consisting of top, side, and bottom legs. All parts are ornamented. Window shutters also had some sort of decorative elements; sometimes they were painted. Top legs were usually decorated with such ornaments: a circle in the center, divided into eight segments. Exactly the same ornaments are used to decorate a distaff or any other household tool. A circle is often surrounded by a tree or some other plant silhouette. Waves are running off the sides, sometimes turning into fairly realistically depicted whirlsnakes. Bird silhouettes are cut out in the corners, especially often a duck is depicted. The tree and the eight segment circle is interpreted as a world’s model scheme by a folk art researchers. Four corners of the world and four directions for the Sun’s position during the solstice. That is a wheel of the year and a partition of the space.

The tree is a vertical axis of a model that reflects a three-part arrangement of the Universe. Such a model was thought up by our ancestors, starting to understand and to know the nature, and trying to achieve some sense of security in this world. Whip snakes and ducks are water animals; perhaps that is the reason why they are not allowed to climb through the door when there is a peaking through the window to see when the rain stops. Even the cornice ornament looks like it was made from raindrops. Mythically thinking, a window is a boundary between the comfortable home world and the outside world, which is full of danger and evil spirits. It becomes clear from the following customs and believes. The midwife used to open a window in order a child might come easily into this world. The would-be-father in the house would be father in the hope of having a son hands in wood to heat the water through a window, but does not carry it in through the door. If this family has already a dead child, godparents would be handed a newborn through the window for taking him to the church to be baptized. Before that, he...
should be carried three times around the stove. The same way he is taken back, but through one window side and sideways so that he would love home, but not become a bum.

Until the 19th century, if there was a bedridden terminally ill person there was a custom to open all windows. If a person is laid out after committing suicide, the coffin will be taken out through a window. This was done in order to confuse the soul that it could not find the way back and haunt the house. On the eve of All Saints’ Day, the windows would be opened and ritual meals would be placed on the windowsill. On Christmas Eve, a bowl of cold corn soup would be put out. Therefore, it was really believed that the window is a contact point between the worlds of the living and the dead.

A conversation between the household head and Christmas carol singers went through the window. In front of the window, speeches and greetings are delivered, and songs are sung. Ethnologists think that the revelers in disguise during calendric celebration used to act as aliens from the above are shadows of ancestors. They believe that spilling ashes over the step after the sun goes down, it is possible to pour ash into the eyes of relative spirits. If you reach your hand over the step, you will be taken beyond. After escorting the dead, it was tried to disassemble the stand as quickly as possible and over the step, some water was poured on the yard. This way it was assured that the spirit wouldn’t come back, mythical heavens are across the waters.

There are other prohibitions related to the threshold. It is not allowed to sit on it: a girl would not get married soon, a farmer would have many debts, a pregnant woman may give a birth to a sick child. The homemaker cannot chop wood on the step because she might ‘chop the legs her own happiness,’ arguing would continue at home. On the other hand, it was good to sit on a threshold when it was needed to fix one’s health. For example, an aching joint was healed this way: before the sunrise or the sunset, sitting on the step some red wool thread was wound around a sore spot. A mother used to heal the child, if he was ‘harmed by an evil eye.’ He would be laid there naked on the top of the step, sprayed with water from the mouth three times, each time wiping him off with the wrong side of a skirt or he was pulled over the horse-collar placed on the step.

Such a lot was cast if fishermen were constantly out of luck. Some rowan branches were put into a net and some salt poured in it. Then the axe would be put onto the step and the net pulled out. Sometimes this happens in the farm: a hen starts to crow like a rooster which means a disaster to the house. It may be avoided by measuring the length from the back wall till the step using the culprit as a measuring tool. Measuring was done like this – head–tail, head–tail. The part that would reach the step must be chopped off; a disaster would not happen then.

Girls used to put a Christmas cookie (kūčiukas) on the doorstep after Christmas Eve dinner and to call a dog. Whose cookie was taken first, that girl will be the first to get married. To get revenge for being unfaithful, boys used to nail the pregnant man’s eal’s call into the girls home step. They would give birth to a bastard.

Rituals were performed near a threshold when introducing a new family member. A father used to greet the newlyweds with bread and salt, glass of a drink, while a mother was waiting for being unfaithful, boys used to nail the pregnant man’s eal’s call into the girls home step. They would give birth to a bastard.

Children grow up and step over the threshold of the native home. This metaphor means that they are starting to walk on their independent ways.

other customs. For example, in Držkija there is a belief that spilling ashes over the step after the sun goes down, it is possible to pour ash into the eyes of relative spirits. If you reach your hand over the step, you will be taken beyond. After escorting the dead, it was tried to disassemble the stand as quickly as possible and over the step, some water was poured on the yard. This way it was assured that the spirit wouldn’t come back, mythical heavens are across the waters.

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The book summarises the situation of the heritage of wooden architecture at the beginning of the 21st century. It is meant for the general public, and for everyone who is interested in wooden architecture, cultural heritage and construction traditions. The authors of articles, outstanding researchers of wooden architecture, architects and scientists provide an overview of the architecture in the main areas of the wooden culture heritage: sacral architecture, estates, ancient villages, the suburbs of Vilnius and Kaunas, resorts, and the Klaipėda region each distinguished by its unique history. It also contains two more articles that to a certain extent stretch over the field of investigation of the architectural heritage but are naturally linked with the spirit of our rural dwellers, introducing an awareness of a Lithuanian home and of God and reflecting both, old and continuing traditions.