



WOODEN HERITAGE IN LITHUANIA



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R. Paknio leidykla

CONTENTS

6	Alfredas Jomantas Preface
8	Hans Sandström The Wooden Heritage of the Baltic Sea Region: Revaluation and Preservation
16	Giedrė Filipavičienė Development of the Attitude to Wooden Architecture in 1900–2010
24	Martynas Purvinas Old Lithuanian Villages
34	Nijolė Lukšionytė Wooden Towns
46	Maja Ptašek Wooden Resort Architecture in Lithuania
56	Dalė Puodžiukienė Wooden Architecture of Manors
68	Algė Jankevičienė Wooden Churches, Belfries, and Chapels
84	Marija Rupeikienė Architecture of the Wooden Synagogues of Lithuania
94	Marija Rupeikienė Wooden Russian Church Architecture in Lithuania
106	Marija Purvinienė, Martynas Purvinas Wooden Architecture in Klaipėda Region
118	Elena Počiulpaitė Cross-crafting in Lithuania
130	Rasa Bertašiūtė Constructions of Rural Houses
138	Libertas Klimka Lithuanian House: Customs of Construction and Mythologems
146	Index of Personal Names
147	Index of Place Names

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 of such plans, or how they might have been delayed or altered by the crisis. Now we can see a huge car park here and a new marketplace being erected from prefabricated constructions and rock wool. Šnipiškės with its centre of attraction – the his-

torical Kalvarijų marketplace – has already lost its integrity. Sandwiched between this ‘modern’ market place and a looming glass wall of skyscrapers of the brand new downtown Vilnius, there remains but an island of wooden buildings. Some of them are of a small estate type and other wooden houses typical of the Vilnius region with traditional shutters, decorated in summer by hollyhocks. Yet these extant houses are mostly in a deplorable state, which makes their original beauty hard to appreciate. Guarded only by the rows of ancient lilac bushes and huge maple trees, these wooden buildings stoop lower and lower each year, neglected equally by their residents and the town’s authorities. Tourists interested in wooden architecture are rare guests in Šnipiškės, and the historic suburb may be gone before it is ‘discovered’ by Vilnius’ tourist guides.

Žvėrynas, located on the bank of the Neris within half an hour walking distance from Šnipiškės along the river tells us the story of the success of wooden buildings. The first attempts to repair the wooden houses and to show that even those buildings that have many owners can be properly repaired and maintained were made here. The wooden architecture of this suburb attracts tourists with its uniqueness and attempts to preserve and demonstrate to the residents of this and other suburbs the possibility of a modern lifestyle in a wooden building offering both cosiness and a quality of life. This suburb is a

living example of a community that cares about each building of this historical suburb and in particular of wooden houses.

These two examples reflect the situation of the wooden heritage in Lithuania and show two different ways of dealing with this situation. The case of Šnipiškės is a demonstration of passive waiting, carelessness and deterioration, while Žvėrynas is the example of an active community, self-education, learning, and joint actions – constructive attitude and search for solutions.

The processes taking place in urban and rural areas of Lithuania in particular during the last ten years are 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. The biggest problem is cheap plastic windows and plastic facing. Urban dwellers purchasing wooden houses in the countryside only stay in them at the weekend as a rule or spend part of their holidays there. Without trying to understand local traditions or the local character, people want to live in such villages in the same way as they do in the city and therefore justify all means necessary to achieve the result. Rural dwellers are often tempted to assume this ‘advanced’ practice.

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 promotion campaigns arranged by heritage protection specialists, showing educational documentary films, organisation 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, educated people and communities are concerned about them. Lithuania needs large-scale campaigns based on economic mechanisms and

economy, or, to be more precise, ecological and economic arguments. It is obvious that we will not avoid losses if we do not understand, before it is too late, that we are losing what has existed for many centuries and, I hope, still exists in our blood, memory and language. We all carry inside ourselves the thresholds of our homes and the doorframes, where we marked how much we had grown during our childhood summers.

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.



Hans Sandström

THE WOODEN HERITAGE OF THE BALTIC SEA REGION: REVALUATION AND PRESERVATION

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.

◀ Early 19th century residential houses in the wooden suburb of Landala, Goteborg (Sweden), demolished in the 1960's. The neighbouring suburb of Haga, with the same kind of buildings, renovated in the 1980's, is among the most...



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.

▶ Traditional farm buildings in the County of Halsingland (Sweden). The material coming from local pine and spruce, processed only with axes and planes



🏡 Merchant's summer residence, late 19th century, island of Bassholmen (Sweden)

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 1930s and 1940s, 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, building regulations, and financial subsidies. A modern standard of living demanded a completely different kind of housing. There needed to be bathrooms, parking lots, and playgrounds. Streets needed to be wider and more spacious.

Deceived and blinded by the progressive, dynamic side of modernity, we had lost sight of the

wooden towns and buildings, of their qualities and their possibilities.

THE NORDIC WOODEN TOWN

It was not until the late 1960s that the policy of demolition was called into question. Reactions came from both preservationists and groups of residents. Their struggle was against the destruction of cultural heritage, but also for a simpler lifestyle and the right to decide upon one's own environment. It had become obvious that 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



« Wealth demonstrated in the porch of a farmer's house in the County of Halsingland (Sweden)

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.

Alingsås, a Swedish wooden town of 25,000 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



12 ➤ Imposing gable of a farmhouse in Halsingland (Sweden); the upper floors were used only at very special occasions.



➤ Sustainable timber structure according to Swedish tradition, lifted above the ground moisture and protected by Falun red paint

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 carrot. 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 knowl-

edge, materials and techniques, traces and solutions. We buy the timber in collaboration with local forest owners and wardens. 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 1980's, the Raadvad Center published infor-

➤ Ungurmuiza, 18th century manor house near Cesis (Latvia); the renovation was organized as a training site for craftsmen, within the Swedish Baltic Sea Billion Programme



Members of the Swedish association for contractors specializing in building preservation (Fibor) on study tour in the County of Halsingland

mation and guidelines and organised training courses and study tours for various professionals, raising awareness and creating a demand for and a confidence in the materials and methods originally used.

CULTURAL HERITAGE CO-OPERATION IN THE BALTIC SEA STATES

When co-operation was established in the late 1990s, we came to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia 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 cul-

ture 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 means continuous use of resources, taking care of former generations' skilled work and of high quality materials. It is adapted to and supports a small-scale economy, with local contractors and craftsmen specialising in maintenance. Their competence is also of great value in new construction.



Väike-Patarei 5, Tallinn (Estonia), since 2001 used by the Information Centre for Sustainable Renovation, under the umbrella of the Estonian Heritage Society

From a social 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

‘No other plant species is so dear to humanity as the tree. It was the first, and remains the most important, of the plants used by humans, and its significance in the development of civilization cannot be underestimated.’¹

Like people, wood changes over time: first, it is born and then it grows, matures, dies, and disappears. Starting from prehistoric times until the 12th century, wood was the only construction material used by our ancestors.

The tradition of wooden construction in our country has developed for over two millennia. Wooden construction gave way to other construction types in the second half of the 20th century only when new construction materials that were easier to process and facilitated the construction process were introduced.

FIRST SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT LITHUANIAN WOODEN HOUSES

Until the second half of the 20th century, wooden houses were the most popular structures in Lithuania. Information from archaeological investigations provides evidence of the presence of early wooden structures.

The remains of one of the oldest Lithuanian wooden houses were found at the bottom of Lukesai Lake. The wooden structures of this pile settlement are thought to be from the 8th–3rd centuries BC (770–210 BC).

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 Dlugosz 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 residences 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

◀ Karaim
houses in Trakai.

1. Preface by Christoph Affentranger, in: Naomi Stungo, *The New Wood Architecture*, Laurence King Publishing, 2001, p. 8

we also find the first written descriptions of our settlements and farmsteads.

All these sources demonstrate that Lithuanian wooden structures were of great interest to scholars by the 16th century as original and archaic structures 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 1912². The material for the publication was collected by Antanas Jaroševičius, 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’² can 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 culture appeared as well: the Vytautas 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. Vast amounts of 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 start-

ing 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 *Gimtasīs Kraštas (Native Land)*.

In 1930, art historian Paulius Galaunė 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 towers³.

The Kaunas Vytautas Magnus Cultural Museum, which was established in 1936 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 Galaunė, 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 compiling lists of architectural monuments and 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 was enforced on 20 July 1940, after Lithuania was already occupied by the USSR. The law was signed by Professor Vincas Krėvė-Mickevičius, 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 with 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 heritage studies of that period was to document the still living tradition of carpentry and to emphasise the originality of ethnic architecture. The following words 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 *kolkhozes* (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 data⁴:

Year	Lithuanian population in rural areas (percentage)	Lithuanian population in towns (percentage)
1939	77	23
1959	61	39
1965	56	44
1983	45	55

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 attracted most farm dwellers, who had to spend years on waiting lists to obtain an apartment.

➤ Dwelling house in Žvėrynas suburb in Vilnius, 1934.

2. Preface by J. Basanavičius, in: *Lietuvių kryžiai*, compiled by A. Jaroševičius, Vilnius, 1912, p. 30

3. Paulius Galaunė, *Lietuvių liaudies menas: jo meninių formų plėtojimosi pagrindai*, Kaunas, 1930.

4. K. Šešelgis, V. Milukštis, „Lietuvos TSR miestų tinklo dėsningas vystymasis“, *Lietuvos TSR architektūros klausimai*, vol. I, Kaunas, 1960, p. 245–261.



➤ Zervynos ethnographic village.

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 towns⁵. 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 Izidorius 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’⁶. 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 1973⁷.

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 Rumšiškės in 1966 on the initiative of scholars of wooden architecture. The first buildings were moved there in 1967. In 1974, the

5. *Lietuvių liaudies architektūra*, vol. I–II, Vilnius, 1968.

6. I. Butkevičius, ‘Lietuvių liaudies architektūros tyrinėjimų apžvalga’, *Lietuvos TSR architektūros klausimai*, vol. I, Kaunas, 1960, p. 155

7. *Lietuvos TSR kultūros paminklų sąrašas*, vol. I–II, Vilnius, 1973–1977.



➤ P. Isenfels's house in the settlement of Nida.



22 🏡 Šuminai village, Utena district, was chosen for shooting a famous Lithuanian film “Tadas Blinda”.

museum opened for its first visitors. By that time, 57 buildings and six farmsteads had been transferred to Rumšiškės.

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 fea-

turing 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 quickly 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, to 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 50 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-19th 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.

🏡 Ethnographic farmstead-museum of priest and famous Lithuanian poet Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis, Bernotai, Raseiniai District.



OLD LITHUANIAN VILLAGES

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 south-western 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 Mi-

nor (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 noblemen'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

◀ Samogitian homestead, The Open Air Museum of Lithuania, Rumšiškės



➤ Ethnographic
Kleboniškis village – one
of the best preserved
street style villages in
the middle of Lithuania,
Radviliškis district

the central part: the area occupied by residences was also divided into narrow strips. A straight road passed through the entire village. Residential buildings were located in a regular manner next to the road. The width of strips belonging to individual residential buildings depended on the area of land used: those who administered a *valakas* (approximately 21–24 hectares of land) received an approximately 50-metre wide strip, while those who had less land received a narrower strip in which they had to place their buildings in a more compact manner. Usually, villages with ten to 20 residential buildings of this type were developed, but smaller and larger ones could also be found in some areas. Numerous new wooden structures were built in the process of developing villages.

The so-called ancient stack villages had remained in some areas of Samogitia, where farms were placed in an irregular manner not very close to each other. Buildings on such farms were constructed in a free manner on more spacious plots of land.

In the early 19th century in south-western Lithuania (where serfdom was abolished in 1807), peasants began moving from the inconvenient and overpopulated street-and-patch villages to individual farmsteads, where they found

it easier to undertake their economic activities. This way, villages of individual farmsteads started developing, and these villages contained newly built wooden buildings or those moved from old villages.

Individual farms became common prior to World War I in southwestern and western Lithuania. From 1907 to 1914, 1,770 villages were divided in this manner in Lithuania, but in central and northern Lithuania only about one-half of peasants lived in villages, whereas in eastern Lithuania almost all of them did.

After World War I and the establishment in the territory of Lithuania Major of the Republic of Lithuania, land reform was undertaken in 1919–1940; large estates were divided and peasants were assisted in moving from one-street villages to individual farms.

There were 9,604 undivided villages in Lithuania in 1919; 6,955 villages were divided by 1939, thus creating 159,118 new farmsteads¹. Numerous new wooden buildings were constructed within a short period of time.

After Poland occupied the Vilnius region (southern and eastern lands of Lithuania) after World War I, universal land reform was not undertaken there, and only in some areas were villages restructured at the initiative of local



➤ Ethnographic
fisherman's homestead
in Rusnė, Šilutė district

residents. 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 Vilnius region at the end of 1939, 57 percent of the land there remained undistributed.² 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.

The development of villages in Lithuania Minor took a different path. No major land reform or mass restructuring of villages was undertaken; therefore, rural settlements of various types (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: in 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.

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, ethno-cultural, historical, and other points of view.

¹. VASKELA, G. *Žemės reforma Lietuvoje 1919–1940 m.* Vilnius, 1998, p. 248–252.
². Ibid.



🏡 Ethnographic Šuminai village, Utena district

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 1920, to be subsequently joined to the Republic of Lithuania in 1923 and annexed by Nazi Germany in 1939.

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



Žiemai - ethnographic one-street style village, Šalčininkai district

and ignoring the diversity of the old villages of Lithuania Minor (which was considered an ethno-cultural region that had to be destroyed). This is why some particularly valuable old villages were lost, because they did not receive the formal status of heritage sites and lacked lobbyist support.

There was no actual and efficient protection of the so-called monumental villages: they were dying just as the other remaining old villages. The buildings that were declared as subject to protection, i.e. the most valuable wooden buildings, were demolished, and settlements gradually lost their traditional features. Young people also left these villages, while the old people who remained there were unable to take care of their old wooden buildings.

The Republic of Lithuania restored its independence in 1990, but the downfall of the Soviet Union and of the Soviet system provoked a long-lasting economic and social crisis. The remaining old villages and wooden heritage continued to disappear, and any effective mechanisms for the protection of heritage were absent for a long

time. The survival of some old villages was determined by the efforts of individual people or by specific circumstances. After the beginning of privatisation and the boom of rural tourism, most old villages were replaced by newly constructed buildings lacking traditional elements, and many valuable items of heritage were destroyed.

All this influenced the fact that the remaining old villages in the present-day territory of the Republic of Lithuania, which are assigned a certain value, are distributed very unevenly and their value as heritage sites differs greatly. All old villages suffered to a greater or lesser extent and lost many of their traditional elements in 1940–1944. The remaining elements represent various historical periods: from the 15th century Baltic villages and 16th century heritage of the Wallach reform (street-and-patch villages) to the early 20th century volunteers' villages (built for those who fought for the independence of Lithuania). Some elements of villages that were used for different functions (for example, the farms of fishermen and marsh or meadow dwellers in Lithuania Minor and forest villages in southern Lithuania) have survived.

OLD LITHUANIAN VILLAGES TODAY

The distinct village of Švendubrė is located in southern Lithuania, in the Dzūkija ethno-cultural region and to the south of the resort town of Druskininkai. The conveniently 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 Musteika, which is made up groups of old farms (75) is located. The picturesque villages of Lynežeris, Kabeliai, and Margionys are located in the forest glades. The large village of Zervynos with numerous wooden buildings is near the River Ūla.

Some parts of a network of old one-street villages survived in the surroundings of Valkininkai (next to the border between the districts of Varėna and Trakai): Vaikšteniai (38 farms), Klepočiai (27 farms), Tiltai (72 farms), Dargužiai (80 farms), Čižiūnai (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 Dieveniškės. The picturesque villages of Žižmai (56 farms), Poškonys (23 farms), and Rimašiai (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 Modžiūnai (26 farms) is located nearby. The secluded village of Vidutinė (17 farms) is located next to the Belarusian border, and the village of Didžiasalis is located north of Švenčionys. All these are examples 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 wooden fence with large gates and wicket gates.

Numerous old villages can be found in the surroundings of Adučiškis and Tverečius, including the one-street villages of Mėčionys (21 farms) and Kukutėliai (13 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 Ignalina avoided any major changes. A number of characteristic small villages with a non-standard structure survived there in the forest glades and

19th century one-street village of Poškonys, Šalčininkai district

on lake shores: Šuminai (seven farms), Strazdai (five farms), Vaišnoriškė (four farms), Salos (four farms), Varniškė (two farms), Stasiūnai (three farms), Šiaudiniškis (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 Wallach reform next to the Latvian border southeast of Žagarė has survived to the present day. The most characteristic are the villages of Veršiai, Stungiai, and Gražaičiai. 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 village of Dargaičiai, which features old wooden buildings and was not divided into individual farms before the war, is found in the surroundings of Gruzdžiai in Šiauliai District.

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

Elements of the traditional villages of Lithuania Major were recreated at the Open-Air Museum of Folk Art in Rumšiškės (between the cities of Kaunas and Vilnius).

Major elements of old villages in western Lithuania survived in the surroundings of Skuodas (Tauzai and Udraliai) and Kretinga (Peldžiai, Grūšlaukė, Erlėnai, Genaičiai, and Lazdininkai). 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 Plungė, Telšiai, and Šilalė.

Elements of villages of different styles have survived in the region of Klaipėda (the northern part of Lithuania Minor). The village of Antšvenčiai is situated on the former eastern border of the region, next to the River Šventoji. Homesteads with picturesque wooden buildings used to be located along the earlier national border. The village of Kalveliai is located on the right bank of the Nemunas, not far from

Viešvilė, and once was the centre of local industry and featured its own port. It had a sawmill, a brickyard and a glass factory. Foresters used to live in the small village of Jūrava located in the forest glade north-west of Viešvilė.

Newcomers who cut forest trees and made tilled fields in the area used to live in the village of Nausėdai on the forest edge. The nearby village of Sokaičiai on the bank of the Nemunas was famous for its industries (sawmill and brickyard) and recreational facilities. South of Vilkyškiai, the village of Opstainiai has maintained some elements of its old structure and some of its old buildings. The one-street village of Trakininkai, with homesteads of different sizes, is found east of Mikytai. Šakininkai, a village 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 Gudai (which had approximately 80 homesteads of farmers) can still be found north of Pagėgiai. The homesteads of the old village of Pavilkiiai can be found in the vicinity, on the banks of the Vilka, a streamlet. The local manor was developed in the 19th century in nearby Jonikaičiai next to the rural homesteads.

A concentration of original villages survived at the former northern border of the region of Klaipėda: Ropkėjai (a former religious centre), Šakiai (a large one-street village), Aukštvilkiiai (a settlement of major farmers), and Kalėnai (settlement located next to the border, near the old international road). Plaškiai is located next to the seasonally inundated valley of the Nemunas (which used to be a well-known centre of trade, where fishermen, vegetable growers, and farmers met).

Sausgalviai, a village of meadow users, is situated on a small hill between seasonally inundated areas south of Šilutė. Žalgiriai, which constituted part of a former large marsh dwellers' colony comprising 300 homesteads, is located to the north.

Šyšgiriai, a village of farmers living on a river bank located west of Šilutė, has preserved some elements of its traditional structure. The homesteads of the village of Ruguliai (which used to be settlements of marsh users) are located further to the north-west. The settlement of Minija, which is the only remaining one-street village of river fishermen, is situated on the banks of the Minija.



The large village of Pakalnė is situated on Rusnė Island in the delta of the Nemunas. The homesteads of fishermen and vegetable growers who used to live there spread for approximately six kilometres along the river banks. The homesteads of the fishermen's village of Skirvytėlė stand nearby. The fishermen's villages of Stankiškieiai and Suvernai 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 Šilutė, Lapynai is a small manor with the nearby homesteads of farmers and was formed from an old village in the 19th century. The old villages of Bružai and Miestaliai are located nearby. Petreliai (a village of the old so-called swarm structure) and Alka (a village of wealthy farmers located on a small hill between seasonally inundated areas) remains

on the banks of the Tenenys. The traditional villages of Mėželiai and Voveriškieiai, settlements of farmers and cattle breeders, are found in the surroundings of Priekulė.

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

The fishermen settlements of Juodkrantė (a popular resort starting in the 19th century), Nida, Preila, and Pervalka, and the resort area of Smiltynė are situated on the Curonian Spit, a World Heritage Site. Some elements of old villages have survived there even after decades of the recreational boom.

One-street village of Mėčionys, Ignalina district



WOODEN TOWNS

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 (Žemaitija), Dzūkija 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 1860¹.

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 planked 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-levelled 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, planked, 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 construction² (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,

« A two-storied historicism style villa having a corner risalit with especially elaborate carvings, Vytauto St 34 / Treniotos St 1, Vilnius

¹ Lietuvos architektūros istorija, vol. II: nuo XVII a. pradžios iki XIX a. vidurio. Vilnius, 1994, p. 215.

² Jūratė Jurevičienė, „Medinė architektūra istoriniame priemiestyje: Vilniaus Užupio autentiškumas“, *Urbanistika ir architektūra*, vol. XXVI, No 1, 2002, p. 14.

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



1746; Palūšė, 1757; Seda, 1770). Later Classicism was clearly reflected (churches of Buivydžiai, 1788; Imbradas, 1786), which had a profound influence on the estates of the nobility (Aristavėlė, 1785; Veliuona, the beginning of the 19th century; Adomynė, 1810). The architecture of churches and manor houses from the middle and the second half of the 19th century replied 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 that 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, Pūckoriai), in the northern area (Šnipiškės), in the south beyond the railway line (Naujininkai), and in Antakalnis, which stretches from the centre along the Neris River. In the west (Žvėrynas), 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 Lukiškės, 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 Šančiai 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 Panemunė. Žaliakalnis was considered a prestigious district in the town, and employees, 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 Pilchowski 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 century³. There used to be more small patriarchal estates in Antakalnis, but they have been destroyed (quite recently one was destroyed at Tado Kosciuškos St 26). Porches with columns show the influence of classicism in small estates in Naujamiestis (Tilto St 3) and carvings of acanthus leaves (Žygimantų St 12), and the impact of Romanticism is discerned in arched windows, a balcony supported by columns, and a mezzanine (Labdarių St 6, it has not survived). A prototype of an Italian villa in wooden architecture characteristic of romanticism exists at Markučiai Estate (Subačiaus 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 resort of Druskininkai 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 style⁴. 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 décor was also found (gates to the Botanical Garden in Vilnius). Art Nouveau and Baroque elements seemed exotic: 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 in them, 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 1847. Wood construction was not limited to the side streets of this part of the town, because it was only in the main boulevard – Nikolai (current Laisvės) Avenue – that solid brick buildings had to be built. Houses in Naujamiestis in Kaunas were oblong, built with their sides facing the street, and covered with gabled plate roofs. The log walls in the socle 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 fillings (Kristijono Donelaičio St 5, Karo Ligoninės St 9, Trimito St 8). In Vilnius, similar houses have

» 19th century summer-house, Kazimiero Būgos St 4 / Stakių St 1, Kaunas

³ Nijolė Lukšionytė-Tolvaišienė, *Istorizmas ir modernas Vilniaus architektūroje*, Vilnius, 2000, p. 105–106.
⁴ Juliusz Ross, „Architektura drewniana w polskich uzdrowiskach karpackich (1835–1914)“, *Sztuka 2 połowy XIX wieku. Materiały sesji SHS, Łódź*, 1971, Warszawa, s. 151–172.



➤ Neo-baroque forms house of the architect Antanas Jokimas, built in 1924, Minties Rato St 2 / Vydūno Alley 17, Kaunas

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 25), and Naujininkai (Iešmininkų 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. The suburb of Žemieji Šančiai started to be developed after the railway line had been built in 1862. Factories were set up there, and workers made their home there. 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 (Malonioji St 15), which was considered the zone of summerhouses of the city because of its pine forests. Very similar two-storey 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-storey 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, Aukštaičių St 36), in Šančiai (Sodų St 80), in Aleksotas (Veiverių St 20). In the district of Vilijampolė, two-storey houses were more compact, due to small plots of land and sometimes had fireproof wall openings and openings for entering the yard (Jurbarko St 65).

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-storey house decorated with tracery resembling lace at Polocko St 52 in Užupis. The balcony arch, the rails, and the roof cantilevers are carved in a highly professional manner. Décor of tracery wood was common

➤ The façade of the building reminiscent of the architecture of castles, built in 1928, Antano Smetonos Av. 29 Kaunas

5 Jurgis Gimbutas, *Lietuvos kaimo trobesių puošmenys*, Vilnius, 1999.



➤ Dwelling house of the beginning of 20th century in Žvėrynas, Birutės St. 36, Vilnius

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 houses⁵. In Kaunas, décor that borrowed ethnic motifs can be found on houses in Šančiai (Kranto Av. 89), and Panemunė (Upelio St 30) and houses in Žaliakalnis that were built somewhat later (Juzefo Kraševskio St 7, 1925).

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 Shcherbakov, the building contractor of the Church of St. Michael the Archangel, formerly the Orthodox Cathedral (Kristijono Donelaičio St 7 and 11). The one-storyed 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 profile and remind one 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 modified forms of Neo-Classicism.

Several Orthodox Churches built of wood (in Druskininkai 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 (Treniotos St 18), but most often they are mixed with elements of the his-



◀ Wooden house in Žvėrynas, built by Russian officials, mixed with elements of the historicism, Art Nouveau, and even the Moorish style

toricism, 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 Jūros akis, and Anapilis (Birutės Av. 32, 39), built on the initiative of the Palanga estate owner Zofia 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 built of red bricks, and the oblong one-storyed houses of non-commissioned officers were built of wood. Low gabled roofs were covered with roofing iron, and similar carved bands surrounded the garrets (Antano Juozapavičiaus Av. 15, 40, and others). Standard variants of décor are common in military architecture. The houses in another group of military houses in

Freda are smaller, and motifs of décor taken from the Swiss style are found (Lakūnų Rd 46)⁶. The houses of railway employees that were built at the end of the 19th century close to the railway station have modified Russian style décor. Russian carvings and window bandings are matched with the profiled ends of rafters and elements joined crosswise in the garrets that are characteristic of the Swiss style (Tunelio St 17, Antano Juozapavičiaus Av. 124c, 125, 131)⁷. A combination of this twofold style is also found in the houses of railwaymen in Vilnius Rasos (Liepkalnio St 17) and the buildings of the Railwaymen Hospital (Vilkpėdės St 3)⁸. The wooden buildings of the Sapiega Hospital in Vilnius, Antakalnio St 17, follow the same style. Designing a hospital complex in separate houses situated in natural surroundings that was popular at the beginning of the 20th century was used there. Similar in this respect are the buildings of the hospital of contagious diseases in a pine grove in Žvėrynas near Birutės Street⁹.

Suburban sanatoriums and health resorts in Kaunas started to be established only in the inter-war period. After Aukštoji 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.

⁶ Andrius Surgailis, text by Nijolė Lukšionytė-Tolvaišienė. *Medinis / Wooden Kaunas*. Vilnius, 2008, p. 157, 138.
⁷ Ibid., p. 142–147.
⁸ Andrius Surgailis. *Medinis / Wooden Vilnius*. Vilnius, 2006, p. 158, 164.
⁹ Ibid., p. 40–41.
¹⁰ Maja Ptašek, „Medinė architektūra Vilniaus Žvėryno rajone“, *Medinė architektūra Lietuvoje*, Vilnius, 2002, p. 89–93.
¹¹ Nijolė Lukšionytė-Tolvaišienė, „Architekto Vaclovo Michnevičiaus kūriniai Vilniuje“, *Kultūros paminklai*, vol. 8, Vilnius, 2001, p. 170–183.



➤ The *Zakopane* style Villa built on a steep slope and on a high stone socle in Mykolo Kazimiero Paco St 5, Vilnius

ARCHITECTURE OF VILLAS AND SUMMERHOUSES IN VILNIUS

From the artistic point of view, the most expressive wooden structures are town villas. The largest number of such buildings is found in Žvėrynas, 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 villas¹⁰. 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 is close to vernacular architecture. A two-storied villa having a corner risalit with especially elaborate carvings in Vytauto St 34 / Treniotos St 1 and one-storied villas with mezzanines in Vytauto St 61 and Vytauto St 63 / Latvių St 2 stand out. Semicircular arches borrowed from professional architecture were used in them. Carvings of windows and cornices are identical, and the cornice decorations are very similar (most likely, the same craftsmen built them). A villa has survived in Antakalnis (Pavasario St 14), that also combines motifs of the professional and vernacular

architecture (the windows of the ground floor have triangular pediments and the cockloft and 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 (Jūratės St 25). Another villa in Antakalnis, Mildos 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, wooden 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 Vaclovas Michnėvičius (Wacław 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 Skorino St 5 (1913)¹¹. 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 dworkowy* (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 / terraces. Windows of different sizes that have decorative divisions of the frames are spaced out on the facades. Contrasts of materials (tiles, wood) are emphasised. This is an interpretation of *styl dworkowy* 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 with twisting wooden staircase through them. A glazed veranda extends the area of the dining room through which one gets into the yard.

Wooden elements as signs of local expression are found in three housing complexes built on the initiative of the well-known philanthropist Juozapas Montvila (Józef Montwiłł) in Vilnius in 1898–1903 (Rasos, Šnipiškės and near Mikalojaus Konstantino Čiurlionio Street). When designing the brick one- and two-storey houses of the



complexes, architects Władysław Stypułkowski and August Klein used shaping of projecting roof rafters and joined tie beams of rafters in triangular garrets. 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 zakopański* (the *Zakopane* style), which was created by an artist of Lithuanian origin, Stanisław Witkiewicz. The houses have high roofs with curb configurations, décor of stylised sunrays, 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 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 Žvėrynas, and in Paplauja. A villa characteristic of this trend with a tower was built in Druskininkai (Mikalojaus Konstantino Čiurlionio St 85). The *Zakopane* style was most consistently implemented in the interior of the dining room of the estate in Rokiškis (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 (Valakupiai, Rato St 3; Žvėrynas, Vykinto St 15 / Kęstučio 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.

VILLAS AND SUMMERHOUSES IN KAUNAS

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 Wincenty Kognowicki (1911) had Art Nouveau décor. Art Nouveau interpretations

➤ The inter-war period villa, expressive by its laconism in architecture, Vykinto St 15 / Kęstučio St 11, Vilnius

¹² Nijolė Lukšionytė-Tolvaišienė, „Kauno Žaliakalnio reglamentas ir tvarios raidos nuostatos“ // *Meno istorija ir kritika*, vol. 1, Kaunas, 2005, p. 24–31.



continued in Kaunas after the First World War, too. One of the most impressive buildings was a two-storied villa built in the 1920s on the slope of Žaliakalnis, Žemaičių St 20. A tower with a dome, a curved pediment, and glazed verandas created its expression. Caved wooden elements, consoles of projecting roofs, and frieze bands were used for décor.

In the 1920s, Kaunas architects were obsessed with the idea of an original national style. Since Baroque had left a deep trace in Lithuania, attempts were made to stylise and adapt its forms. Inter-war Neo-Baroque also affected wooden architecture. A curb cockloft roof, a tower helmet with streamline forms, and a porch with columns were adapted to the villa in Kipro Petrausko St 23.

The house of the architect Antanas Jokimas (Minties Rato St 2 / Vydūno Alley 17, 1924) has a pediment of neo-baroque forms with volutes. One of the villas built in Kaunas, Linksmadvaris (Planetų St 15 / Sietyno St 17) includes a tower in Art Nouveau style, and elements of Lithuanian vernacular architecture were used for décor (hip knobs of the roof, etc.). In the 1930s, villas resembling modernistic brick cottages were found in Kaunas. They were two-storey structures, and had a one-piece volume and tile roofs. The windows were large and wide, the sliding was placed horizontally, and no décor at all was used (Žaliakalnis, Minties Rato St 51, 1935; Panemunė, Birutės St 22).

A district of villas and summerhouses was constructed on both sides of Birutės Street in

the resort town of Panemunė. Plots of land were relatively large with trees and shrubs. The number of wooden houses there was much larger than that in Žaliakalnis. Summerhouses were intended for the warm season only, and they were occupied by holidaymakers during the inter-war period. Later the buildings were turned into flats. Summerhouses had two-storeys, and were large. For example, the building in Gailutės St 28 (1926) has hexagonal risalits with domed roofs. Similar tower-like risalits, reminiscent of the architecture of castles, frame the façade of the building in Antano Smetonos Av. 29 (1928). Another large, two-storey summerhouse in Antano Smetonos Av. 25 (1920) has a curved pediment, and a porch with a balcony on the yard side, which is covered with a mezzanine capping. Summerhouses in Panemunė are not decorated, the sliding consists of vertical, slanting, and herringbone battens. Villas were smaller than summerhouses, and they are usually intended for the owner's family. The villa with the mezzanine in Vaidilos St 5 (1933) has profiled elements characteristic of the Swiss style in the pediment gable and the carved decorations of the windows, as well as the balcony bargeboards, which have rotted away. The villa on Gailutės St 19 stand out because of its laconic architecture that is close to modernism; a stylised plant motif and volutes in the décor of the pediment are another interpretation of the search for a *Lithuanian* style.

DIFFICULTIES OF PRESERVATION

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 residents¹². Wooden houses that have neither been taken care of nor renovated in Šnipiškės and Žvėrynas in Vilnius and Naujamiestis in Kaunas are falling into disrepair. Others are being renovated carelessly; parts of the elaborate décor and the profiled lining of the walls are being removed. Materials of the roofs and walls 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 Žvėrynas, Antakalnis, Šnipiškės and Paplauja in Vilnius stand in protected territories. Žaliakalnis quarters near Gėlių Street and Minties Rato Street in Kaunas, together with the fan-shaped network of streets planned in 1923, 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 construction 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 city-dwellers, two-storey houses for rent, villas, and summerhouses. There were also many wooden buildings for public purposes in towns, but they (with one or two exceptions) have not survived.

Wooden buildings reflect several stylistic trends: imitation of professional brick architecture and transformed forms of the vernacular architecture of a different origin. It can be stated that the traditions of urban, rural and estate culture intertwine in wooden architecture.



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WOODEN RESORT ARCHITECTURE IN LITHUANIA

THE FORMATION PERIOD OF RESORTS

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.

Resort architecture, which has not been investigated extensively enough, is one of the fundamental semantic blocks of the entire ideology

of the architecture of Historicism. However, wooden resort architecture exists in the same geographical range as any other professional architecture of Historicism, its specific stylistics and typology have much more in common and a closer relation with general trends of recreational culture in Europe.

There are two types of resorts in Lithuania: balneological sanatoriums in Druskininkai, Birštonas, Likėnai and Smardonė, and seaside resorts. The seaside resorts formed under especially different conditions from the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century. The main settlements on the Lithuanian section of the Curonian Spit (Nida, Juodkrantė and Klaipėda) and the seaside regions (Smiltynė and Giruliai) were in the territory of Prussia, and Palanga and Šventoji were in the territory of Lithuania, which after the Third Partition of the Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth in 1795 remained part of the Russian empire. During the interwar period (1918–1939) Druskininkai, together with Vilnius, became a province of Poland. Therefore, all resorts, alongside general stylistic trends, retain regional peculiarities, which were inspired by the taste of the then local society.

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

« Building tradition –
fachwerk. Villa Flora,
Kalno St 7, Juodkrantė



📍 Villa Flora, Kalno
St 7, Juodkrantė

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, the needs of tourists and their attitude towards recreation changed. Tired city dwellers sought to isolate themselves from the rhythm of hectic life and wanted to take a rest from the habitual surroundings of life. Designers were quick to respond to such needs; they changed the scale and style of resort

homes, leaving the level of comfort unchanged. The size of hotels decreased considerably because the hotels began to be styled according to Swiss farms and mountain chalets.

Wood began to dominate as the main building material rather than a means of embellishment. This was an all-round inclusion of local architecture and local tradition into professional designing. A very new type of a resort home appeared. A large volume was covered with a solid gabled roof, and surrounded with wooden galleries, which were used as terraces of living rooms covered by the prolonged plain of the roof. The major load-carrying constructions were decorated with a scooped ornament and additional elements were embellished with tracery.

At the end of the 19th 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 often identified with the political situation and the unavoidable influence of the Russian empire in the 19th century. It goes without saying that toadying to the holidaymakers who arrived in Druskininkai from St Petersburg and Moscow encouraged the appearance of buildings in the Russian style. Buildings of the



📍 Villa Mauré, Laisvės
Sq. 21, Druskininkai

Russian style were distinguished by the impressive size of their mortised columns and pediment 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 1837, 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.



🏡 19th century villa
Imperial, Maironio St 14,
Druskininkai

The most characteristic example representing the resort architecture of Druskininkai of the second half of the 20th century is the Villa Imperial (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 a two-storey risalit – is close to what was locally called the Italian style. However, the décor and separate elements are characteristic of the buildings of the Russian style: multilayered verge boards decorated with tracery, protuberant curb 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 enclosures made of cast iron were characteristic of the second part of the 19th century. Some of the décor has already been changed because this villa was repaired during the interwar period and the rails of the porches are now identical with the décor of the Omega, the villa that stands next to it (Maironio St 16).

The Villa Mauré (Laisvės Sq. 21) is a very interesting example of the ‘exotic’ style. Its name (the Moorish) represents the oriental source of inspiration. Though the pediment of the main façade decorated with an arch construction with angular cantilevers and embellished with a steeple and the tracery under the rafters is characteristic of the Swiss style the main accents on this façade are semicircular narrow openings

covered with net-like tracery, which is associated with the tradition of oriental harems. 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 Markevičius’ Villa (Šv. Jokūbo St 17), which was built in the 1920s. This one-storey building is rare in its symmetric composition and its magnificent band of plaited 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 hexagonal tower, a large pediment divided by interlocked cantilevers, and projections, are joined by tracery balconies. Closed and open galleries add variety to the monotony of the facades. The walls of the ground floor hall and veranda are constructed from semicircular arches with tracery panelling in the lower part with motifs that repeat themselves in the cantilevers that fasten the poles of the open verandas. The villa has been repaired many times, one risalit of the yard has been replaced with a brick one, part of the décor has been lost, and another part has been replaced, but its impressive volume testifies to the scope of resort architecture of the interwar period.

The Villa Radium (Tado Kosciuškos St 7) is a resort home typical of the Swiss style. It has a simple prolonged rectangular plan whose integrity and monotony are broken by open terraces at the ground floor level, angular towers, and a bay window. Thin poles fastened with decorative rafters support the porch, which imitates a portico. Its pediment is embellished with straight and curved profiled rafters with tracery characteristic of the Swiss style. Volute motifs prevail in the décor of the pediment and rhombi dominate in the rails of the porch. 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 Michał Tyszkiewicz, a colonel in the tsar’s army, bought the village and surrounding land in 1824, but it was not until 1875 or 1876 that a banqueting hall was built on the initiative of Józef Tyszkiewicz. Since then the beginning of the establishment of Palanga as a resort can be counted. Around the year 1880, the building was extended and the first hotel with a restaurant, which, according to the traditions of that time was called Kurhaus (Vytauto St 45), was set up there. The first estate of the Tyszkiewicz family in Vytauto 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 tracery, is later repeated in the solutions of the terrace of the Villa Baltoji and the veranda at Kęstučio St 19. Such 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. The first resort homes – Danusia, Zbyszko, and Ursus – and a summer theatre were 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



🏡 Villa Anapilis, Birutės
Av. 34A, Palanga

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 Kęstučio 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 seawater 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.



Warm bathing pavilion, Kęstučio St 31, Palanga

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-Classicistic elements of the historicist style. These are bandings of door and window handles imitating pilasters with flutings, 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 invited 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 Danutė 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 – Danusia, Zbyszko, Ursus, Chilon 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 pavilions and the patisserie near the sea. A complex of all villas (currently Jono Basanavičiaus St 24–34) – Aldona, Pajata, Gražyna and Szvajcaraka – situated on the other side of the street was



Modern style fachwerk villa in Smiltynės St 11, Smiltynė

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 Švyturys from her father, and the Villa Vaidilutė 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 framework) 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.



🏡 Fisherman's house in Juodkrantė

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 is 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 Romeo 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 justifying the roof consoles has not survived.

The villas Gražina, Vilija and Pajauta situated in Jono Basanavičiaus St 28–32 near the Rąžė River are the most beautiful examples of fachwerk construction. The ensemble, consisting of five buildings of different sizes but similar styles, forms the space of not only the street but also

the inside of the quarter. The buildings provide a great contrast: the red bricks and bright colours of the décor against the background of green trees and shrubs. The villas are embellished with tracery, and the ends of rafters and the columns of the open verandas are carved. The dainty summerhouses Meilutė and Vaidilutė have survived in Jono Basanavičiaus St (N 14 and 5).

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., Piktuižio St 11 and 13). They undoubtedly took over elements of decoration of resort buildings, which were absolutely uncharacteristic of the local tradition of fishermen’s dwelling houses. 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 Tilsit, Edward Stellmacher, built the Hotel Kurischer Hof in the 19th century, around which he 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, observations 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-storey 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 not only decorated with tracery and a rail of small 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 risalit 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 1933, 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 Miško Namas has preserved its original image, and the restored décor under the cornice of the end pediments and mezzanines of the Villa Helene 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 kurhauses were 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 1905. 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 risalit 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. Somewhat more traditional is the silhouette of the villa at Smiltynės St 22, but the construction of its roof and mezzanine is a complicated composition of three arches. The most beautiful building in Smiltynė is a fachwerk villa at Smiltynės St 11. Fachwerk modelled under the influence of the modern style supplements the picture of pediments characteristic of the Swiss style. The remaining wooden villas have been repaired many times and have lost their authentic appearance.

Apart from kurhauses, bathing pavilions, and resort homes, there are many smaller architectural 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 were 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 construction 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.



WOODEN ARCHITECTURE OF MANORS

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, Ukmergė, Jonava 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 Kurtuvėnai, Kėdainiai, Tauragė, Šiaulėnai, Iwye, 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

« Veluona Manor house, built in the beginning of the 19th century



► Pavirvytis Manor house, built in the beginning of the XVIII century

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, Kiskzas, and Wołłowiczs. 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 Deliaticchi and Smargon, in Geranyony, Subotniki Manor). The residential house had a spacious entrance hall with a staircase 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 16th 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 Batista Alberti, Sebastiano Serlio, Andrea Palladio as well as local authors – Anzelm Gostomski, Jakub Kazimierz Haur, Łukasz Opalinski, working under the Italians’ influence, promoted the structure of a manor corresponding the new lifestyle. The manor itself had to be adapted for a representational and comfortable life: surrounded by gardens, ponds and works of art. Dominating previous arrangement of yards, the vicinity of household structures turned into an obstacle while reorganising the manor. In that case, buildings for household and production, also houses for servants of a lower rank had to be 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. Vokė Manor, Iwye Manor, Šiaulėnai Manor). High fences and large



► Gražioniai villa-type Manor house, built in late 19th century

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 forecourt – 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. Raguva, Tauragė and Byelitsa manors). A drawing created in 1678 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 Kėdainiai. It had two yards 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

» Front porch of
Džiuginėnai Manor
house



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's 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. Buildings of various sizes and functions (barns, treasuries, stables, coach-sheds, houses for servants and other workers, kitchen-houses, cattle sheds) formed a spacious rectangular-shaped yard, the shape and layout of which resembled the courts of the early 17th century (Vištytis, Maišiagala, Dagiliai, Raudondvaris in Vilnius Distr., Užventis manors, etc.). Household yards have been set near the main court. Perhaps the only faint expression of Versailles was the strict geometric garden located behind the

manor house (Raudondvaris in Vilnius Distr., Ilguva, Pakražantė manors, etc.). When restoring manors in the first half of 18th century, more attention was paid to the architecture of buildings standing in a representational yard. Strict axial symmetry in layouts and façades, splendid shapes and décor became dominating feature under baroque influence. At the same time, international architectural styles got mixed with local tradition of Lithuanian wooden architecture of the 16th and 17th century. For this reason, the architecture of wooden manors, built in the 18th century and later, maintained features of Lithuanian ethno-architecture: an organic setting in the environment, delicate shapes, and peculiar proportions.

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 (manors Dudy in Grodna District and Sary Dvor in Lida District, and Biržuvėnai Manor). Relicts of the existing built up environment, such as terrain, greenery and roads, interfered with the implementation of a new layout. The representational court of Biržuvėnai Manor, owned by the Samogitian castellan Mykolas Gorskis, was reconstructed approximately in the middle of the 18th century. It comprised the manor house set on the axis of the courtyard and two servants' houses on each side, standing one in



« Sriubiškiai Manor
house, built in the
second half of the 19th
century

front of the other. Behind the manor house was a garden embracing the whole area down to the River Virvytė. Due to existing terrain and road network, entrance to the geometrically planned court from the old Telšiai–Šiauliai road was not located on the axis but rather on the south-eastern corner.

In the 18th century, impressive buildings, mostly manor houses and barns, representing the mixture of international architectural styles and local traditions, have been built. It may be assumed that professional architects took part in creating design and construction of those buildings. Unfortunately, the names of these architects remain unknown to us and only a few buildings from that period have survived to the present day.

The manor house of the above-mentioned Biržuvėnai Manor, which was constructed or reconstructed in the middle of the 18th century, 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 with loggias facing the garden were very popular among Lithuanian noblemen (Grinkiškis

and Raudondvaris in Vilnius Distr. manors). In the late 19th century, Biržuvėnai manor house has been reconstructed. The building acquired some of new forms that were popular at the time: the shape of the roof, wall-planking, décor was changed and a new wing was built. However, the initial layout of the building was maintained, just as the other numerous elements. In 2004, the building was damaged by a fire and it is being restored.

Blinstrubiškis manor house (has not survived), that was built around 1732, had a strictly symmetrical layout and façades composition. Raisalitis with tall pediments rose above the central part of the front and back façades. The plan of this manor house had the so-called cross layout, typical for manor houses built in 16th and 17th centuries. The central part in such houses used to be occupied by the main entrance hall and richly decorated representational halls on the upper floor above it. The central part of Blinstrubiškis manor house maintained the principle layout but instead of representational halls on the upper floor, it comprised several secondary rooms. All those changes – the use of premises, wavy pediments and four-sloped roof, reflected the Baroque influence upon the manor house's architecture.

Panemunėlis manor house, built in the sixth decade of the 18th century that has not survived, had single corner turrets. In mid-17th and 18th centuries, such buildings were common in many



62 🏡 Kurtuvėnai Manor barn, built in the second half of the 18th century (is now being reconstructed after a fire in 2001)

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 Poland, 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 Maišiagala manors), turrets were two storeys high.

Užventis 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 representational 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 imitating parquet. In manor houses of more wealthy noblemen, walls and ceilings were covered with thematic polychrome painting, and fanciful fireplaces and stoves were decorated with tiles representing the coats of arms of the owners (e.g.,

Biržuvėnai Manor). Large manor houses, containing 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 Papynaujis manor house (in Šilalė 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 decorated buildings after manor houses. They symbolised 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 century, 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 *pavolušas*. It usually had a nearly square plan, a socle storey and a well decorated porch. Noblemen used to keep their most treasured property, military apparel and arms, in it. Treasuries built in the 18th century not only retained the main features of *pavolušas* 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 all treasuries that have survived to the present day is the treasury of Grybai 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-storey 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 Pavirvytis Manor located in Samogitia could be an excellent example.

No household buildings from the 18th century remained. Landlords did not pay any major attention 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 formed large structures with enclosed or semi-enclosed courtyards (paddocks) for cattle. Large threshing barns and mows, that could easily catch fire, were built further away from the other buildings. Their massive four-sloped roofs were supported with wooden poles and a beam structure, traditional for local farmsteads.

The first examples of wooden architecture shaped up with classicist forms and décor were manor houses of noblemen of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Manor houses were designed by famous professional architects of that time. The Italian architect Carlo Spampani designed the Radziwiłł summer residence in Radziwiłłmonty, built between 1780 and 1783, and the Benica manor house, built in 1779–1781 and situated in Ashmyany District of Vilnius voivodeship. An unknown architect designed the Przewdziecki manor house in Zaslavl, built in 1778–1782. Szymon Bogumił Zug is considered to have designed the Tyszkiewicz residence in Hrodna (all these buildings were found in the territory that is modern-day Belarus; they have not survived). It is proved once again that architecture of wooden buildings was of great importance in

the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and that from old times leading masters took part in design and construction of these buildings. However, unlike in Baroque, wooden buildings appeared on the manors of magnates almost by accident: hurriedly building a structure for some event (e.g. for a visit of the king at Hrodna Manor), or under the influence of local knowledge in an attempt of quick implementation of some new aesthetics using old methods (e.g. the wooden summer residence at Radziwiłłmonty Manor). Since the late 18th century, wooden buildings, with a few exceptions, remained only on the manors of medium and less wealthy noblemen. The amount of money allocated for wooden construction was considerably smaller than it was in previous centuries. Buildings became smaller, and their forms more simple. On the other hand, as the press and education got cheaper, less wealthy noblemen took deep interest in new trends and constructed manors based on the publications of professional architects of that time (Karol Martin, Bolesław Podczaszyński). In early 19th century, principles of axial symmetry became much more common in the layout of the main, representational, yard of the manor. The manor house was built on the yard's diagonal axis. Other residential and household buildings, either a barn and a stable or a barn and a servants' house, were placed on the right and left sides of it, one in front of the other. Usually an alley led to the manor's representational part. On the small Palyessye Manor, owned by the Jasenski family, representational yard of such type was built up around 1824. No rest elements in the layouts of manors underwent any major changes. In smaller manors, the household yard was located near the representational one. Usually both yards were separated by a large cattle shed with an enclosed paddock. On its side facing the main yard, stables, coach shed, and an apartment for a stableman were located, while the part facing the household yard used to house premises for cattle.

The canons of Classicism demanded for a laconic size, flat roof and portico. In major manors, volume and proportions of manor houses perfectly corresponded to the classicist requirements. They had considerable classicist décor and expressive two-storey porticos (Veliuona Manor, Ausieniškės and Lašmenpamūšis manors). The houses of less wealthy noblemen, especially at the beginning of the classicism period,



▲ Papinauja Manor house living room, 1939

maintained proportions close to those typical of 18th century's houses – they were rectangular-shaped and had rather steep roofs. Gradually as the style became more and more popular, it featured small porches imitating one-storey porticos and flat cornices (the Pavirvytis manor house). Since the middle of the 19th century, less wealthy noblemen used to build small buildings in classicist style with fairly flat, four-sloped or half-hipped roofs. A moderate four-column portico was built on the axis of the main façade. On less wealthy manors, the columns were substituted by plain pillars.

Layouts of manor houses in the late 18th and early 19th centuries lost their strict symmetry. Rooms in newly constructed buildings were placed in two lines connected in enfilade system at will. In large buildings, there was a corridor in-between the lined rooms. In early 19th century, as cast-iron hatches started to be used for shutting stove mouths, chimney-rooms were not needed anymore and disappeared from larger manor houses. Less wealthy noblemen, who used chimney rooms also for their household needs, continued to construct them until the early 20th century. Wealthy noblemen have changed layouts and interiors of their baroque style buildings based on new etiquette standards. Representational rooms in manor houses traditionally remained equipped with stoves, fireplaces and parquet flooring. Halls were decorated with polychrome paintings, just as in the 18th century, for e.g. the hall of Aristavėlė Manor house was painted in the classicist manner (the Aristavėlė manor house was transferred to the Museum of Folk Art in Rumšiškės).

Barns remained the second most important buildings on manors. Noblemen usually constructed so-called side-type one-storey barns with an open or semi-open porch (e.g. the barn of Kelmė Manor), decorated with so popular tiny pillars (e.g. the barn of Rokiškis Manor). However, some non-traditional solutions could also be found. In 1803, the so-called end-type barn for storing grain was built on Būdvielis Manor. The original style of this barn encompassed architectural features of masonry warehouses found in towns with those of local wooden two-storey barns.

In the 19th century, in order to create a harmonious layout of the whole manor, greater interest was set on architecture of household yards. Wooden household structures were gradually replaced by similarly shaped and structured buildings of stone and clay walls or by framed buildings of a mixed construction. In the latter, the wooden elements (such as logs) were set in stone, brick, or compacted clay poles. Interior structures supporting ceilings and roofs remained wooden. Houses for hired labourers appeared on manors. These houses were built of wood or clay in order to make them cheaper.

About the middle of the 19th century, the architecture of manors as well as lifestyle became more rational. Residential buildings were made more comfortable, clearly and accurately built. Household buildings were accommodated to the level of mechanisation of that time. Changes were caused by the society turning towards capitalism. The culmination of those changes was the serfdom-abolishment reform in 1861. Manors became capitalist-type farms.



▲ Blinstrubiškis Manor house, built in 1732 (has not survived)

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 coach-shed, 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 lifestyles 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 facade. 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 (Sriubiškiai 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 (bargeboards), window rims, planking (Gražioniai 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. Pajūris manor house, which has not survived).

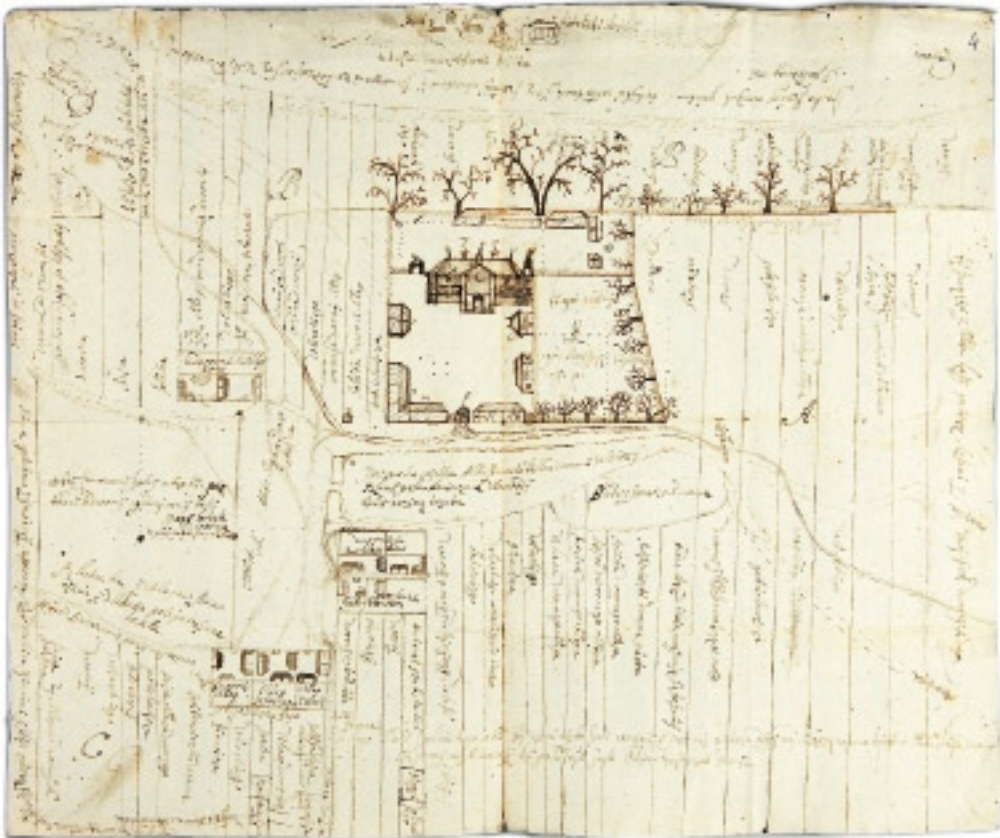
Household buildings changed according to the development of new agricultural technologies. As the dairy industry developed, in large

manors more attention was paid to raising cattle. Rectangular-shaped cattle-sheds with diagonal passages were more suitable for feeding and watering cattle than the old square-shaped cattle-sheds with a closed courtyard. As agricultural technologies improved, major landowners imported various agricultural machinery and mineral fertilisers, while less wealthy landowners 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-hipped roof. On large manors, threshing-barns and mows were equipped with so-called ascending bridges (e.g. the threshing-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 and moved to towns or abroad. Agricultural reform and so-called anti-manor ideology speeded up the process. In 1940, the Soviet authorities by means of deportation physically destroyed the remaining noblemen of medium rank who had got used to the new farming conditions, as well as the minor noblemen and the intelligentsia, some of whom were descendents of the nobles. In Soviet times, a manor had the image of a ‘foreign’ culture (anti-national and anti-class) concept. Manor buildings and cultural environment surrounding them were abandoned. Ensembles of large manors received some attention on the part

of architectural research, culturology and some protection from the State. The traditional manors of middle rank and less wealthy noblemen, comprising wooden buildings, were not valued and thus were not preserved.

Wood remains a long-lasting construction material as long as it is properly cared for. Yet, wood rots away quickly if the building is abandoned during historical cataclysms. The 20th century was full of these. Two world wars, the post-war deportations, Soviet collectivisation, melioration and four land reforms have altered rural areas in Lithuania beyond recognition. Many valuable buildings were destroyed, and others deteriorated and gradually lost their initial beauty and authenticity. A very valuable part of the country’s material cultural heritage, just as the knowledge about the manors wooden architecture and the importance of noblemen’s role in the history of the country, was lost. Today, experts learn about manor wooden architecture while studying its remains (approximately five hundred manors or their parts with wooden buildings have remained 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, Pavirvytis and Vilkija 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 expositions 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.



« The only one drawing found so far, which depicts a wooden 17th century Manor house near Kėdainiai in Lithuania

» Biržuvėnai Manor house in the manor land plan, 1824



» The representational courtyard of Biržuvėnai Manor





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 (Žemaitija). 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

« The oldest Lithuanian folk wooden church in Stelmužė, Zarasai District. It was built around 1650, and in 1727 it was rebuilt and adapted for the Calvinists.



🏡 Folk style wooden church in Beržoras, built in 1746.

with a cross plan began to be built in the third decade of the 17th century.

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 ridge 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 rococo 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 1751, 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 Scapu-

lar 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 septum 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 1.7 times the height of the walls, jerkin head roof prevails in the exterior of the church. In the past a slim tower of a winding 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 lavishly decorated, colourful and festive. The



🏡 Wooden triangular Degučiai Church in Šilutė District, built in 1757.

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 quivering 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 1757 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, pyramid 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



➤ Palūšė church with the belfry – a valuable monument of wooden architecture in Ignalina District, built in 1757.

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 Tauragė District, in Žemaičių Naumiestis in Šilutė 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 sur-

vived. 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 1808, 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 Palūšė in Ignalina District – was built some time later, in 1757. It was built in a picturesque place near Lake Lūšis, 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 Palūšė 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, Svėdasai in Anykščiai District, Dieveniškės in Šalčininkai District, deserve mention. However, with the passing of time they have lost many original forms. 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,

➤ Baroque high altar of church in Smilgiai, Panevėžys District. In the past, there were three Baroque altars in the presbytery. In 1873, the master J. Balčius-Balčiauskas united all three altars into one, by building the columns in the gaps and extending the pediment.



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 arranged 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 wooden church in Kėdainiai built in 1766. In the past, the Church of St Joseph belonged to the Carmelite 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 prevails 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 façade. 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 others 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



➤ The octagonal wooden church in Griškabūdis, Šakiai District, built in 1796.

of Baroque. Large windows with curved lintels are placed in couples and singly in the façades.

Inside, the low, narrow aisles are separated from the spacious central nave by walls rather than by poles at the ends of which there is a broad arched opening. Three altars with groups of slender, even and spirally twisted columns are arranged in the presbytery. The central part of the organ loft with the balustrade septum that protrudes in a semicircle into the space of the nave imitates examples of a brick building and the rococo organ prospect of plaster forms decorated with tracery carvings. The pulpit that is lavishly decorated with reliefs, memorial plaques of the founder and his wife and pictures painted in the 18th century supplement the artistic whole of the interior.

A church that is similar to that in Tabariškės but of a more protracted rectangular plan was built in Alsėdžiai, in the place where Samogitian bishops lived for a long time. The main façade of the church that has heavy proportions is free of any decorations. The triangle-shaped pediment and a large tower with the helmet of a winding silhouette end its middle part, which is raised high.

Inside the church, the low and narrow aisles are divided into three chapels, which are connected with the central nave by means of broad

openings of the toothed arches. The presbytery is separated from the central nave by the arch wound in the Baroque manner and the beam with the Crucifix and sculptures. At the end of the nave, behind a large opening with a trapezoid lintel, is the organ loft fenced by a balustrade. Chanters' boxes are built under it. The architecture of the interior is complemented with Baroque altars painted in different colours placed in the chapels. The altar of St Bartholomew 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 that were popular in the 18th century. Church designs in Samogitian and Aukštaitian lands remained rectangular and cross-like as before, and in Suvalkija rectangular and polygonal church buildings were built. With the influence of style architecture increasing, the roofs of folk churches became lower and the proportions of the façades changed. The outside structure remained traditionally simple, but classical forms appeared in the façades. They were used in newly built churches and the ones that were rebuilt.

The main façade of the folk churches in Pavandenė in Telšiai District, built in 1802, had a four-pole porch near the exit, most probably in the form of a portico. Even now, its traces are visible. The windows of the pediment are still decorated with triangular frontends. The proportions of the rectangular windows and some other architectural forms of the exterior and the interior also reflect the influence of this style. The steeple of the church was built much later, in 1912.

The architecture of folk churches of Viduklė in Raseiniai District, built in 1806, Skaudvilė in Tauragė District, built in 1797, contain many forms of Classicism. The church in Ilguva, built in 1814, and Sutkai, built in 1825, both in Šakiai District deserve mention among the folk churches built in Suvalkija at the beginning of the 19th century.

A large number of wooden churches built at the beginning of the 19th century were created according to the principles of Classicism and were similar to brick buildings of that style. Their plans are most often rectangular; sacristies are fenced off in the corners on both sides of the presbytery. There are also polygonal classicist churches. The main façades of church sacral buildings contain four-, more rarely, six-

column porticos. The columns of the porticos of wooden churches are thinner than those of brick churches, the spaces between the columns are wider, and the slopes of the pediments are steeper. Often a small tower is placed on top of the pediment.

The interior of the churches sometimes has only separate motifs of the classicist style: pillars in the form of columns, a ceiling that is arched like a vault, etc.

One of the most characteristic examples of rustic Classicism in Lithuania is a rectangular wooden church built in Rumbonys in Alytus District in 1795. It is a spacious building with a six-column portico that supports a high triangular pediment on top of which the sculpture of St. Helen once stood. Four pairs of columns divide the naves inside the church. The ceiling in the form of a vault covers the spacious central nave, and the 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 Šalčininkėliai, Šalčininkai District. It was built in 1834 according to the design of the famous architect Professor Karol Podczaszynski. 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.

Pivašiūnai Church in Alytus District built in 1825 is really interesting. Its main façade contains a portico of four brick columns with a wooden pediment. A majestic altar lavishly decorated with sculptures resembling that of Vilnius Cathedral, stands out in the interior of the church. Lavishly decorated entrances to the sacristy are built on both sides of the altar.

The most magnificent Classicist wooden sacral buildings are polygonal ones. Griškabūdis Church in Šakiai District, built in 1796, is famed for its especially elevated professional architecture. It is thought that its author was the Carmelite friar Juozapas Vališauskas, a student of architecture at Vilnius University and in Paris. Annexes were connected on the southern and northern sides, and small projections for altars were built on the eastern and western sides. A pyramidal roof ending in a bell-shaped helmet covers the central octagon. In front, there is a small portico of



➤ Interior of Griškabūdis church. Original altars created by the artist Guty (or Gustry) in 1877–1881 continue the Baroque traditions.

four brick columns with an elegant small tower above the pediment. Inside the church the octagonal space is divided by four large brick columns placed in a square. The ceiling is raised in the middle square, and it is given the form of a vault. A narrow gallery stretches along the walls. It becomes wider at the organ loft. The walls of the church were richly painted to imitate architectural details, and plant and geometrical elements were painted on the ceiling. Original altars created by the artist Guty (or Gustry) in 1877–1881 continue the Baroque traditions.

The Classicist composition was very popular in wooden churches in Lithuania. In the middle of the 19th century, however, Classicism was replaced 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.

Babtai Church, in Kaunas District, built in 1853 represents the folk trend of Romanticism. Large semicircular arch windows add variety to its simple main façade with the triangular pediment. The richly decorated interior of the build-

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 sacristy 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.

Kantaučiai Church in Plungė District, built in 1852, Intrukė Church in Molėtai District, built in 1855 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 impressive, original baroque high altar created 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 undivided 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 Kurkliai in Anykščiai District in 1871, in Ančiškis in Kėdainiai District in 1871, in Ubiškės in Telšiai District in 1851 and other places.

Baroque also spread in church architecture in the Romanticism period. Baroque wooden churches always have two towers, their exterior is rather simple, and the interiors are much smarter. Such churches are in Slavikai in Šakiai District, built in 1835, in Antašava in Kupiškis District, built in 1862. Joniškis Church in Molėtai District, built in 1848, deserves mention for being a more complicated building of this stylistic trend. In the corners of its façade above the cornice stand square towers with low triangular little gables and spires. The most elaborate and most 'Baroque' part of the façade

is the pediments of a wavy contour placed between the towers. Two pairs of slender poles holding the flat ceiling with open beams divide the naves in the interior. This kind of ceiling is a tribute to the folk tradition. Other elements of the interior, including the altars, are stylish. In the middle of the organ loft surrounded by an elegant balustrade is a perfectly made organ prospect decorated with tracery carvings resembling laces with rococo forms.

The composition of Gothic churches of the Romanticism period like that of Baroque churches is of different complexity. Some of them are lavishly decorated. Ideas of Romanticism are especially obviously embodied in Nemajūnai Church in Prienai District, built in 1878. The main idea of the composition of this church is a romantic nostalgia for the Middle Ages, a naïve aspiration to imitate the façade of the most magnificent Gothic monument in Lithuania – the main façade of St Ann's Church in Vilnius. This idea has been realised by the means characteristic of Gothic of the Romanticism period – applications of wooden laths marking the contours of the medieval forms.

Though the Gothic decor prevails in the exterior of the building, its architecture was influenced by other stylistic trends. The rectangular plan was created according to the traditions of Classicism; Baroque dictated the massive 'dome' at the end of the roof, and partly the two-tower structure of the façade. Its impact is obvious in the interior too.

Romanticism enriched Lithuanian wooden church architecture with new ideas and forms. The architecture of wooden and brick churches of the Romanticism period is closely related. The same stylistic trends became obvious both in wooden and brick buildings, many similar elements of composition were used in them.

Though the rudiments of returning to the historic styles in architecture became obvious during the Romanticism, these phenomena gained momentum at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. That period was the time of the most important changes and innovations in the history of the architecture of wooden churches of that period.

Forms of neo-styles were extensively used in folk churches that were built or rebuilt during that time. One of the most characteristic examples of a church building of the Historicism



period was the church in Eržvilkas in Jurbarkas District, reconstructed in 1902 with lancets, towers ending in high spires, and the embellished entrance to the sacristy. Its forms follow Neo-Gothic that was common in brick architecture. The altars of the church, the pulpit and other elements of the interior are also Neo-Gothic.

A combination of folk traditions and Neo-Baroque is characteristic of the façades of the Ukriņai Church in Mažeikiai District, rebuilt in 1913.

The number of folk churches continued to decrease in the Historicism period; the majority of church buildings were built according to the designs of professional architects. Wooden churches were created according to the same principles as brick ones. 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 tow-

er ending in a high spire. The decorated round window accentuates its middle space. Inside the church poles 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 Varėna District, in 1880. Three-tier towers project somewhat 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 Varėna District, in 1909 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 wooden 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 typical folk classicist church of Romanticism in Paberžė, Kėdainiai District, built in 1859.

A Neo-Baroque church with its distinct architecture was built in Višakio Rūda in Marijampolė 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 1883 and Suginčiai Church, Molėtai Region, built in 1910, is somewhat farther 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 Kretinga District. It was built in 1875. 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 chanters' boxes with daintily carved septums are fixed to the walls of the prodomos.

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 and the beginning of the 20th 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 1891 that have the afore-mentioned rectangular plan deserve mention. The slender columns of Stakiai Church support the flat triangular pediment on top of which a tracery octagonal small tower is

placed. Rectangular windows of classicist proportions divide 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 Šventežeris in Lazdijai District, built in 1882. It consists of three volumes arranged on a single axis. The main, largest volume is square with bevelled corners and covered with a pyramidal roof. A portico with a tower prevails in the harmonious main façade of Šventežeris 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 individual 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 1897. 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. Liturgical objects of the church create a particular emotional atmo-

sphere 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, abundant sculptures of the saints and angels, and pictures framed in beautiful carvings 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 1884, 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, prodomoses were arranged. 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-tier tower was built in Verpena 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



Baroque Church in Lioliai, Kelmė District, built in 1768.

Interior of Lioliai church. The high altar of the church built at the beginning of the 18th century.



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 and double-leaf, ledged 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 Šiauliai 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 are never 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 Ukmergė District; Truskava chapel in Kėdainiai District, built around 1880).

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 traditional, 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 pentagonal, hexagonal, but most often they are octagonal, for example, Kaltinėnai chapel in Šilalė District; Kuliai 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. There are crosses 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 began to be created – Stations of the Cross. They consisted of 19 stations with a chapel in each of them. Characteristic wooden complexes were created in Beržoras and Žemaičių Kalvarija (Plungė District).

BELFRIES

In almost every small town or a church hamlet near the church or in the cemetery there 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 (Gintališkė, Plungė District; Šešuoliai, Ukmergė District; Palūšė, Ignalina District; Tabariškės, Šalčininkai 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 1610 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 Šiaudinė, Akmenė District; in Kėdainiai). Obvious Baroque features are seen in Tabariškiai belfry-gate in Šalčininkai 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 Palūšė 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 of different sizes and proportions, with two (Seda, Mažeikiai District; Beržoras, Plungė District) or three tiers (Kalnalis, Kretinga District). The most magnificent 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.

Baroque church in Smilgiai, Panevėžys District, built in 1764, famous for its unique high altar (see page 73).



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ARCHITECTURE OF THE WOODEN SYNAGOGUES OF LITHUANIA

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

« Synagogue in Kurkliai (Anykščiai District) – the most striking example that has survived up to the present day with forms influenced by Baroque synagogues, built in 1935 according to a design created by the technician P. Jurėnas.

the end of the 19th and in the 20th century the size of wooden synagogues hardly differed from those of dwelling houses.

The Jewish religious law – the halacha – regulates the general requirements for the construction of synagogues. It is required that the synagogue should stand on the shore of the sea or on the bank of a river, in the highest place of the city and should rise above other buildings. The Jews of Lithuania could not fulfil these requirements (with the exception of building the synagogue near a body of water) because this was at variance with the laws regulating the construction of synagogues (the synagogue could not stand above the Catholic church or the Orthodox church). There were no requirements for the architecture of the exterior, with the exception of the requirement that there should be light inside and that twelve windows (symbolising the twelve tribes of Israel, Dan 6, 11) should light the building.

The architecture of synagogues is determined by the liturgy of Judaism and the major functional requirements characteristic of Middle Eastern places of worship: dividing them into male and female premises, and equipping places for keeping and reading holy scriptures (the Aron Kodesh [the Holy Ark] and the Bimah). The long axis of the synagogue runs in the western-eastern direction. On the western side is the entrance lobby from which one gets into the prayer hall for male worshippers and the premises for females on the first floor. In one-story buildings of worship, a corridor on one side of the hall or at its sides is meant for females. The main room is the prayer hall for male worshippers. The place for keeping holy scriptures, the Aron Kodesh, must be on the eastern side (turned toward Jerusalem), and the entrance into the prayer hall must be in front of it. The place for reading holy scriptures, the Bimah, is erected in the middle of the hall. Premises for females are equipped on the sides of the hall or in the galleries of the first floor.

Symbols of Judaism – signs of identification of Jewish houses of worship – play an important role in the architecture of synagogues. Most often two main symbols are used in the exterior: the Decalogue tablets (the two slabs of the Ten Commandments put together) and the Star of David. In the interior, apart from these main sign of the identification of a synagogue, a va-

riety 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 instruments, various animals and plants, geometrical ornaments, and Hebrew characters.

The first wooden synagogues appeared in Galitsya in the 16th century and then spread into Eastern and Central Europe (Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine). Wooden synagogues began to be built in Lithuania in the second half of the 17th century. In the 1640s, Polish King and Lithuanian 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 synagogue was built in Jurbarkas in the second half of the 17th century. At that time, the largest Jewish communities were in Kėdainiai, Biržai, and Vyžuonos. The first mention of the Jewish communities 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 Vilkaviškis, Kruonis, Valkininkai (mention of a synagogue is also made), Pasvalys, Salantai, Šėta, and Žiežmariai were mentioned. Several Jewish families lived in Anykščiai and Vilkijs, 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 century, Jewish communities were found all over Lithuania; wooden synagogues stood in many cities and towns. According to the data of different 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 recorded in pictures and plans of the towns. Quite a number of drawings of the wooden synagogues created between the second half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century have survived. The early synagogues were of an integral volume 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 basis, of iconographic material the conclusion can be drawn that the oldest wooden synagogue in



Lithuania stood in the town of Vyžuonos. Most likely, it was built at the interface between two periods – the Renaissance and the Baroque – and had simple forms that were close to Renaissance stylistics.

The most interesting wooden synagogues were built during the Baroque period and at the interface between the periods of Baroque and Classicism. More features of ethnic architecture can be found in the architecture of the exterior of these synagogues than in wooden Jewish houses of worship that were built later.

During the Baroque period wooden synagogues stood in Vyžuonos (Utena District), Jurbarkas, Vilkaviškis, Šaukėnai (Kelmė District), Kelmė, Valkininkai (Varėna District), Prienai, and other places. They were built from rough-hewn logs, sat on a foundation made of stone and bricks, and were covered with high shingle roofs of several levels. When investigating their architecture, we have to base our studies on historical pictures and analogous buildings in neighbouring countries – synagogues recorded by Polish researchers. Volumes of synagogues were either integral or complex. They resembled manor houses separate towers), barns (solid and monumental), or granaries (spatial with open galleries). These common features can be clearly seen in the composition of the main facades of complex graduated synagogues. The synagogues in Jurbarkas, Valkininkai, Vilkaviškis, and Šaukėnai looked impressive.

Décor was used with moderation in the exterior. Most often the facades were brightened up by using planks creating “eyes” or the ornament of several directions, carved balustrades or columns, fastenings dividing the walls or the imitation of pilasters, ornamented cornices, planes connecting roof levels and highlighted with carved ornaments, and original windows in the attics. The most important elements of the facades, windows and doors, were also decorated with moderation: their forms and elements of décor were characteristic of Lithuanian ethnic architecture and were similar to the details used to embellish churches or granaries. Symbols of Judaism were rarely used on the exteriors of wooden synagogues and they were not conspicuous. Most often, the Star of David was found in the design of the windows put into skylights or the upper part of windows. The interiors of synagogues were decor and symbols of Judaism typical of Jewish art. Mostly four pillars formed the space of the hall. They were placed in the central part and had a constructional relation with the ceiling; they divided the space into nine parts and covered the Bimah that stood in the centre. This constructional solution was borrowed from four-pillar brick synagogues. It was sought to raise the prayer hall by means of different floors, which were constructed so that they should rise evenly from the walls of the hall towards the centre and should form a ‘dome’ of a certain form there. Two- or three-level ‘per-

➤ The windows of Synagogue in Kurkliai (Anykščiai District) are high and end in triangular apices. Similar windows are also designed in Christian churches.

» Synagogue in Seda (Mažeikiai District) – ethnic and professional architecture intertwine in the exterior. The synagogue was built at the beginning of the 19th century. Following a fire in 1886, it was rebuilt and it resembled the burned one.



spective’ vaults were made especially creatively: with cantilevers, illusionary balconies or galleries, and covered rails of balustrades.

The Aron Kodesh and the Bimah of wooden synagogues of the 18th century are the main components of the prayer hall. In their forms, they are quite similar to the pulpits and altars of Catholic churches; only the décor and symbols differ. The freely standing Bimah is an independent construction similar to an arbour or a baldachin. By its size and the location, the Bimah of the 18th century plays a more significant role in the synagogue than does the pulpit in the Catholic Church. Some similarity can be found too: an octagonal plan and various baldachins resembling a crown prevail.

The Aron Kodesh and the altar in Catholic churches have even more common features. In the 18th century, both of them were especially magnificent, made of several stages that grew

narrow upwards, were decorated with columns and carvings and sometimes painted in many colours. Lithuanian folk art and features of Baroque architecture, construction traditions, and the skills and fantasy of builders, the ‘Jewish’ character of the interiors and the visual link of their furnishings with those of Catholic churches intertwined in the forms of wooden synagogues of the 18th century.

At the end of the 18th century, at the interface between the Baroque and Classicism, an insignificant evolution in the forms of wooden synagogues began. The majority of synagogues of that period retained the distinct features of Baroque style. Compared with the Baroque ones, wooden synagogues of the first period changed insignificantly. The roof became smaller; it was reduced to two levels only and its vertical planes almost disappeared. The volume became more integral, without lower buildings surrounding

the hall, and the forms became stricter, with horizontal divisions of the facades appearing.

At that time synagogues stood in Skuodas, Raguva (Panevėžys District), Rietavas (Plungė District), Švėkšna (Šilutė District), Varniai (Plungė District), Užventis (a summer synagogue in Kelmė District), Židikai (Akmenė District). Synagogues of a compound volume were built in Panevėžys, Šiaulėnai (Radviliškis District), and Pakruojis. Features of ethnic architecture and forms characteristic of the styles of Baroque and Classicism intertwined in the exteriors of the synagogues. One can often see the impact of both Baroque and Classicism, as well as features of folk architecture in the same building. The proportions of many 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 banding with a carved lower part. The Aron Kodesh was really magnificent – with narrowing stages carved from wood and painted. The Bimah was built like an open arbour – of an octagonal plan, and surrounded by a tracery rail; carved arched friezes connected the columns above. The vault of the wall and the ceiling was lavishly decorated. Exotic and local motifs of flora and fauna were used for decoration: deer, lions, tigers, eagles, camels, Leviathan with its tail in its mouth, birds, trees, and flowers. Symbols that are characteristic of Jewish art were combined with décor representing traditional plants and birds of Lithuanian farmsteads. Primitive painting prevails and today it is difficult to determine whether it was authentic or appeared at the end of the 19th century; only the frieze surrounding the hall was decorated with meander and dentils, elements characteristic of Classicism.

At the beginning of the 19th century, during the period of Late Classicism (1800–1830), the forms of synagogues became even simpler: roofs of two and three levels, and arched and paired openings disappeared. Closed exten-

sions to the stairs and lobbies appeared, two-floor western facades began to form and the side facades began to be divided into one-floor and two-floor parts. Synagogues were built in Raseiniai, Užventis (a winter synagogue), Tirkšliai (Mažeikiai District), Tauragė, Kražiai (Kelmė District), Laižuva and Seda (both in Mažeikiai District) and other places. Sizes of synagogues of the late period were similar to those of dwellings, they had gambrel roofs, quadruple- or double-pitched, lobbies, or extensions were covered with double-or-single-pitched canopies. Forms and mapping of plans remained the same as those of the synagogues built at the end of the 18th century. The composition of the facades changed most markedly; they became original, typical exclusively of synagogues. Certain schemes of arranging facades formed: a two-storey western façade, a one-storey eastern façade with a broader inter-fenestration and side facades made of two-storey and one-storey parts. The main entrance was usually made on the western façade. The boundary between the one-storey prayer hall for male worshippers and the two-storey female area with a lobby was accentuated more clearly in the side facades.

Only two synagogues of the afore-mentioned synagogues have survived – those 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 1886, 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 exterior: the windows are crowned with 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 1830 to the Second World War, a greater number of brick synagogues were built in Lithu-



ania. 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 appeared, and sometimes it seemed that two buildings were connected. Quite often, the windows of the single-storied and double-storied sides had different forms (arched and rectangular). The synagogue became a clear semantic sign with a strict composition of facades. Features of ethnic architecture are found in the proportions of the buildings, forms of their roofs, division of the walls, finishing of boards, and bandings of the windows.

Wooden synagogues during the Romanticism period stood in Skaudvilė (Tauragė District), Upyna (Šilalė District), Veliuona (Jurbarkas District), Ukmergė, Kaunas, Paberžė and Maišiagala

(Vilnius District), Balbieriškis (Prienai District), Alytus and Sudargas (Šakiai District), Simnas (Alytus District), Pilviškiai (Vilkaviškis District), Aukštoji Panemunė (Kaunas District), Giedraičiai (Molėtai District), Liudvinavas (Marijampolė District) and elsewhere. Only two synagogues have survived up to the present day – in Alanta (Molėtai District) and Žiezmariai (Kaišiadorys District).

The existing synagogue in Alanta is of a small integral volume, has two-stories and has a rectangular layout with a lobby and the staircase on the western side. The façade is divided by vertical cages and a horizontal ledgement table. The walls are planked vertically as high as the windows, and higher they are planked horizontally. The windows of the prayer hall for male worshippers are high, and have semicircular arches, whereas in the female premises the windows are rectangular.

The synagogue in Žiezmariai must have been built in the middle of the 19th century. Features of ethnic and stylish architecture intertwine in its forms. The synagogue has a compound monumental volume and a drawn rectangular layout with a closed staircase annexe in the southwestern corner. Cages and horizontal ledgement tables divide the facades; the walls are planked

with vertical boards as high as the windows; higher they are placed horizontally. The windows of the prayer hall for male worshippers are high, and end in 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 Suvalkai. 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



92 ➤ Synagogue in Alanta (Molėtai District). Based on the assumptions and architectural style, it is considered that the synagogue was built in the second part of XIX century.

between the volume, layout and facades formed the image of the architecture of a synagogue of the Historicism period as an original semantic sign. Such traditional one- and two-storied wooden synagogues having a compound volume stood in Giedraičiai (Molėtai District), Linkmenys (Ignalina District), Mielagėnai (Ignalina District), and Molėtai. Small single-storied wooden synagogues of an integral volume in which female premises were made at the sides of the male hall were built in provinces. Such synagogues similar to traditional dwelling houses were built in Kruonis (Kaišiadorys region), Labanoras (Švenčionys District), Kiemeliškės (Švenčionys District), near Ignalina railway, and in Lentvaris (Trakai District) on land that belonged to Count Tyszkiewicz.

Wooden synagogues in Telšiai, Rozalimas (Pakruojis District) and Plungė have survived up to the present time. The volume of the synagogue in Telšiai is integral, and covered with a dual-pitched roof. Its forms are not complicated: the walls are divided by vertical cages and planked horizontally. The composition of the exterior walls is traditional, and divided into one-storied and two-storied sides; high rectangular windows light the hall. The composition of the exterior walls of the synagogue in Telšiai, which had a clearly distinguished two-storied side, is close to that of brick synagogues. The synagogue in Rozalimas is built from logs joined with dovetails and divided by vertical cages. Its volume is mon-

umental, it is covered with a half-hipped roof, and its architecture is close to that of a country dwelling house or even an outbuilding. The synagogue in Plungė (pulled down in 2008) had of a small integral volume covered with a quadruple-pitched roof. Its walls were divided by cages and covered with vertical boards. The windows were small and rectangular.

Forms of the synagogues of the period of Historicism are simple; hardly any symbols of Judaism were used in their exteriors. The majority of synagogues of that period were therefore similar to traditional dwellings.

During the inter-war period, a new stage of the development of architecture started. At first, in the 1910s and 1920s, retrospective trends from the period of Historicism continued, and at the same time radical new trends of modernism formed. The order gradually vanished, and even plains with metrically arranged windows prevailed. Horizontal ledgement tables and continuous stripes of windows were used in the compositions of façades. The search for a ‘national’ style was also going on; stylised traditional décor borrowed from folk art began to be used. Both these trends also had an effect on the architecture of synagogues. Synagogues having simple forms characteristic of the architecture of functionalism were designed in Luokė (Telšiai District), Kulautuva, Pagiriai (Ukmergė District), Ramygala (Panevėžys District) and other places.

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 apices, 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 facades – 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 designs, 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 apices. 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 century has survived up to the present day. Apart from the already mentioned ones that were formerly wooden synagogues stand in Alsėdžiai (Plungė District), Kaltinėnai and Laukuva (Šilalė District), Veisiejai (Lazdijai District), Joniškėlis (Pasvalys District), Troškūnai (Kelmė District), Žemaičių Naumiestis (Šilutė District). Most probably, they were all built during the inter-war period.

The synagogue in Alsėdžiai has a small integral volume, and is covered with a quadruple-pitched roof. Its walls are planked with vertical boards; at that time, the windows were made smaller. Three two-leaved gates on the main façade deformed the architecture of the building.

The synagogue in Kaltinėnai consists of two parts of different height: the synagogue and the rabbi’s flat covered with double-pitched roofs. It is built from logs joined with dovetails. The windows of the prayer hall for male worshippers are semicircular arches, and the windows of the lower building (the rabbi’s flat) are rectangular. The Star of David is placed in the semicircular part of the window (at the present time the windows are boarded up and are seen from the inside only). This synagogue in Kaltinėnai is the only one in which Jewish symbols have survived.

The synagogue in Laukuva was built from logs in 1928. It has a monumental compound volume, with a stone socle rising towards the north. The composition of the side facades betrays the former purpose of the building: the eastern side is one-storied with high rectangular windows, and the western side is two-storied with smaller windows. There are two entrances in the main façade (for males and females); they are accentuated by an open double-pitched. The forms of the synagogue in Laukuva are close to the styles of folk architecture and the influence of stylish architecture is felt in some parts.

The synagogue in Veisiejai was built according to the 1927 design. It stands near a lake, has a monumental volume, and has a two-storied staircase built in the corner. The forms of the exterior are very simple: even walls planked with horizontal boards and divided by rectangular windows. The synagogues in Joniškėlis, Troškūnai, and Žemaičių Naumiestis have been 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 18th 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 facades, which were enlivened by the interconnection of the forms of prevailing styles and décor characteristic of Lithuanian ethnic architecture and Jewish art.



WOODEN RUSSIAN CHURCH ARCHITECTURE IN LITHUANIA

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 1710 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 Gudiškiai (next to Dūkštas)

« Old Believers' church
in Bobriškis (Rokiškis
District), built in 1819

in 1728. In 1812, a church in Miliūnai (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 were present in Lithuania, 13 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 Raistiniškės (Zarasai District). In the late 19 century a church was built in Rūsteikiai, and in 1904 one was built in Minauka (Zarasai District). In 1913, an Old Believers' church was built in Paežeriai (Anykščiai District). Another church was built in Sidariai (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 Maneivos (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 planks placed in one or two directions. The outside walls were usually left unpainted or painted 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 exert-

ed 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 porches or porticos. Hanging porches (roofs) were used as well. Back eastern façades were blind and only 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 herringbone 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



« Wooden Orthodox church in Panevėžys, built in 1892 (still functioning)

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, Klaipėda, Kupiškis, Lazdijai, Molėtai, Panevėžys, Radviliškis, Rokiškis, Šalčininkai, Šiauliai, Švenčionys, Telšiai, Trakai, Ukmergė, Utena, Vilnius, and Zarasai. Most of them are made of wood.

Two wooden Old Believers' churches have survived in the villages of Girelė and Paežeriai in Anykščiai District. The church in Girelė 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 Baltromišķiai, Paskutiškiai, and Perelozai in Jonava District. The church in Baltromišķiai 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 resem-

ble those of Orthodox churches rather than Old Believers' churches.

The church in Didieji Ibėnai (still functioning) in Kaunas District combines various types of materials: it is wooden and has an outbuilding 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, Maneivos, Miliūnai, Rokiškis, and Sipailiškis 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



Old Believers' church in Raistiniškės (Zarasai District), built at the beginning of the XIX c

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 Daniliškiai 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 Nečėnai, Stalnioniškis, and Šeimatis. 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 Šeimatis 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 Nečėnai 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 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, Raistiniškės, Rūsteikiai, Turmantas, and Zarasai. The church



in Aukštakalnis 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 Aukštakalnis 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 porch. Its walls are covered with finishing elements placed horizontally, and on the triangular pediment these are placed in a herringbone manner. A closed, gabled porch is dominating on the main façade. An eight-angled, one-section tower with a tent-like roof with a small poppy-head-shaped cupola rises above the

triangular pediment. The shape of the church combines features of popular architecture and those of different architectural styles.

The church in Turmantas (still functioning) has undergone repair. It has a high protruding tower. The first section of the tower is rectangular, and the second one is low, eight-angled, and has a flat cupola. The walls are covered with finishing elements placed horizontally, and the second section of the tower is covered with finishing elements placed slantwise.

The church in Zarasai (which serves as a place of worship) was built in 1990–1992 following the construction traditions of old wooden churches of Old Believers. It has a two-section tower coinciding with the plane of the shield of the main façade. A low, gabled porch protrudes at the front of the building. The bottom section of the tower is square, and the upper section is narrower, eight-angled, and has a headpiece

with a cross. A small, low tower with a small cupola rises above the ridge of the back façade. The church in Zarasai has simple and laconic forms.

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 small wooden Orthodox church was built in Panevėžys in 1892 on the basement of a destroyed Catholic cemetery chapel. It is also stated that a wooden Orthodox church was constructed in Gegabrasta in Pasvalys District between 1885 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 the churches in Lebėniškiai (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 Lebėniškiai 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 Gedimino Street) in 1937 based on V. Kopylov's project. A wooden Orthodox church was also built in the period between the two world wars (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 usually had two towers, and on rarer occasions one major tower and several low, smaller towers that emphasised the main parts of the building. Some Orthodox churches did not have any towers at all. 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 Lebėniškiai 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 Kelmė 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 onion-shaped 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 narrowing in the upper direction in an imitation of a *kokoshnik* (corbel arch) and by a wide window. An onion-shaped cupola rises above the tent-like hip roof. The apse comprises two parts that become narrower 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 Mažeikiai is dominated by architectural elements typical of Russian Orthodox churches.

The church in Panevėžys (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 exterior of the church is dominated by elements of various styles of stone architecture, while the headpieces and crosses 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 axial and stepped layout, and comprises three parts (a porch with a narrow entrance room, a wide tall hall, and a lower eastern room completed with a three-walled apse). A tall two-section square bell tower rises above the main façade. The tower has a tent-like hip roof with a headpiece. The centre of the hall room is emphasised with a lower, small, eight-angled tower. The church is girded with a frieze with dentils and has a carved cornice. The exterior of the church combines the traditions of ethnic Lithuanian architecture and of various architectural styles with the features typical 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 finishing 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 enlivened by the contrasting colours of the walls and décor. 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 professional architecture.

The Orthodox church in Rokiškis (still functioning) was reconstructed by adapting a residential building for the church. Therefore, it has a fairly non-traditional structure, a protruding gabled porch on the western part and a single-sloped outbuilding next to the back (eastern) 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 still 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 ridge of 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, an eight-angled lantern, and an onion-shaped headpiece. A voluminous eight-angled bell tower with a tent-like roof rises above the main façade. The elements of décor combine strict geometrical shapes with elegant stylised plant motifs. The building is girded with a carved frieze and a cornice. The forms of the church combine the features of ethnic Lithuanian architecture and the construction traditions of Russian Orthodox churches.

The wooden Orthodox church in Utena was built in 1990–1992. It does not resemble a traditional Orthodox church. It has a voluminous structure but does not have any towers. It has a mezzanine covered with a two-level, gable roof. The structure of the building resembles that of the Orthodox church in Rokiškis.

The church in Zarasai is located in the town cemetery. The church comprises three parts, which become taller in the direction of the main façade, and has a stepped structure. A one-section square tower rises above the porch, which is covered with a tent-like roof with a small cupola. The middle part, which is the widest, has a tent-like roof with a small cupola provided with a cross.

The church in Druskininkai has six towers rising from the corners of the façades, the porch, and the centre of the roof. The structure of the church is stepped and cross-shaped and rises in the direction of the main façade. The windows of the church are different in size: narrow or wide, rectangular, and completed with triangular headpieces. The windows have beautiful edgings, relief stucco mouldings, and some order elements. The forms of the church have distinct features of Russian Orthodox churches and some elements typical of periods of Romanticism and Historicism.

When we compare the architecture of Old Believers' and Orthodox churches, we can see that 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 western 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 direction of the main façade, while the structures of Orthodox 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 major 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 wooden Old Believers' churches are simple. Sometimes, their exterior and tower silhouettes resemble those of Catholic rather than Orthodox churches, while in the case of buildings without any towers they resemble residential buildings. Their back (eastern) façades are blind and have straight walls.

The architecture of wooden Orthodox churches is more expressive, all façades are considered representational and girded with decorated friezes and cornices, and the apse is usually three-walled or five-walled and has a blind internal plane. The finish of wooden Old Believers' churches is rather primitive and the finishing elements are usually 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 moderately (usually smooth edgings with straight or curved pediments and carved planks at the bottom), while the shape of windows in Orthodox



churches is more diverse, and their edgings have more decorations, which usually include projected 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 Believers' churches is equipped with shelves for keeping icons and sacred books. In the apses of Orthodox churches, beautifully decorated icon stands are arranged next to the transverse fence, and a free space is left behind them. The forms of wooden Old Believers' churches are dominated by features of ethnic Lithuanian architecture and sometimes contain simple elements of different architectural styles, while the purpose of the buildings is usually manifested only by a three-bar cross. The forms of wooden Orthodox churches in Lithuania combine the features of ethnic architecture and different architectural styles and some elements typical of Russian Orthodox churches.

Wooden Orthodox church in Gegabrasta (Pasvalys District), constructed between 1885 and 1900



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WOODEN ARCHITECTURE IN KLAIPĖDA REGION

About 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

« Wooden house in the village of Minija, situated on the bank of the river.



Old dwelling house in Šilutė (Rusnė St 10).

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 Minor was increased by a change in local conditions too. There were extremely fertile areas inhabited by field-crop growers who constructed large and magnificent buildings. In some places sterile sands stretched where small farmsteads of poor field-crop growers with modest wooden buildings stood. Holdings of different size, as well as separate categories of inhabitants historically formed. This determined an especially great variety of wooden architecture in Lithuania Minor.

Wooden buildings prevailed in the region for several thousand years (as in the whole geo-

graphical range of wooden culture and wooden architecture of Western Europe). It is thought that the oldest wooden buildings had low walls made of timber and large massive roofs with wide lofts. Such buildings corresponded to 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 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. In forested areas, shingled roofs or roofs covered with boards could be found.

In the 19th and especially at the beginning of the 20th century, after brickyards became common in the region, terra cotta – a long-lasting and firm roof covering spread in villages.



P. Isenfels's house in the settlement of Nida.

Klaipėda Region differed greatly from Lithuania Major in abundance of such more expensive roofs.

The region (like the whole of Lithuania Minor – East Prussia) markedly outdid neighbouring Lithuania Major in the level of its economic development, industrialisation of the region, a spread of western technologies. Therefore, more modern details and improvements were used in traditional wooden buildings. For example, at the beginning of the 20th century, to preserve wooden buildings drop-chutes and drainpipes made from nonferrous metals, which served to let water run down orderly from the roofs, 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 deco-

rated 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 crumbled 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 fell 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 (semi-circular, 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 common.

In olden times traditional symbolic horses (a pair of two stylised horse heads) decorated the roof ridges, later they were replaced with differently decorated hop-knobs (vertical carved boards). Quite often the initials of the owner, the date of construction, and favourite symbols, etc., were carved therein. 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 bars (made of different cross-section and form) were used. The upper part of the walls was more decorated by arranging sloping ledge ment 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 a bargeboard, a finished roof shield, windows glazed in different ways, dainty doors and other elements. The lower part of the porch was often lined with carved boards. Large glazed porches became widespread in the Curonian Spit – on a strip of sand between the Baltic Sea and the Curonian Lagoon – in the 19th century. After the place had become a popular resort, local fishermen added such verandas to their houses so that holidaymakers could sit there in bad weather.

Smart window bandings were not common in Klaipėda Region, the carved fronton was more often used. Windowsills were not decorated at all. Later even simpler embellishment of the top of the window made of the bars that were profiled in a complicated manner, were used.

Wooden shutters were often installed in dwelling houses. They were one-layered, made

from broad boards or filling. They were painted and decorated with an opening in the form of a heart or a cross, or any other form made in the centre of the shutter.

There were also highly elaborate doors: they were often of town-style with smart carvings, a glazed window, and other elements. Ornamented doors carved by local masters were more original. In olden times two-layered doors lined in a herringbone or diamond pattern, decorated with favourite ornaments were used.

Ends of the principal rafters (*canterius*) were embellished in later wooden buildings and sometimes they were decorated in a quite sophisticated manner. Ends of the ceiling beams, which were also embellished in different ways by carving them, were thrust outside in some of the buildings. In the 19th century, such decorated ends of the principal rafters replaced the ancient ones – elements of the roof constructions that were rough-hewed by an axe. More sophisticated wood processing tools and high professionalism of local masters determined their prevalence.

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 17th century almost all rural buildings of Lithuanian Minor were wooden. Then people lived in large farmsteads in entire families. Apart from a large smoke dwelling house (a building common for all dwellers), several granaries (a separate one for each married couple) stood in the farmstead. There was also a drying barn where cut corn was kept and which later was dried and flailed. Flax was dried and processed in a separate wooden were flax was kept. There was a bathhouse, cowsheds, stables and pigsties, as well as barns to keep fodder in the farmstead. Wooden fences with gates and wicket-gates surrounded the farmstead.

At the beginning of the 17th century, the authorities of the state of Prussia and separate localities began to regulate traditional wooden building of the inhabitants of the region by ordinances. It was forbidden to build bathhouses and drying barns because they could cause a fire. By trying to avoid big fires in the region (which often destroyed wooden buildings, entire farmsteads and villages) traditions of the inhabitants of the region and the character of folk

architecture were regulated in an administrative manner. Later building of dwelling houses with chimneystacks, which replaced ancient smoke houses of the residents of Lithuania Minor, was encouraged.

With economic well-being rapidly improving in Lithuania Minor in the 19th century, the old buildings were renewed ever more often. More and more brick cattle-sheds, dwelling houses and other buildings were constructed. Cheap clay buildings became common. However, new (though already modernised) wooden buildings were continued to be built. There were many wooden details and elements in brick and clay buildings (rafters and other parts of the roof, ceiling beams, floors, doors, window frames, etc.). Such buildings were often embellished with wooden ornaments (bargeboards, hip-knobs and the like).

In the 19th century the number of buildings of resort architecture increased. Wealthy town dwellers built summer resorts near the Nemunas 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 centre manifestations of the so-called Swiss style chalets spread from Western Europe – elaborately profiled wooden elements of buildings, sophisticated ornaments in roof ridges. Elements and ornaments of different nature that rendered an original shape to the buildings were often used in wooden buildings. At the beginning of the 20th century, picturesque ornaments and parts of Jugend-style became common. With the trend of folk architecture gaining in popularity, more and more stylised wooden houses, which resembled the old buildings of the region, started to be built. Traditional or variously stylised wooden ornaments were used in them.

In the 19th–at the beginning of the 20th century, elements of buildings typical of the new generation of wooden constructions (which replaced old constructions of the inhabitants of Lithuania Minor) appeared. For example, a raised loft became especially popular. Windows installed at its sides lit the loft of the building conveniently. Hay was stored in such lofts of cattle sheds, which was put there through the door in the wall of the loft. Wooden mows where hay was better aired



Wooden house (former school) in the village of Minija.



Old dwelling house in Rusnė (Šilutės St.).



Fragment of the picturesque wooden house in the Šukiai homestead on the left bank of the river that has preserved the old embellishments.

through the gaps between the siding boards were built even over the brick cattle-sheds. People who lived in damp places, marshes and meadows found such lofts especially convenient. They were dry and reliable storerooms, which were reached by convenient wooden stairs.

At the end of the 19th–the beginning of the 20th century old wooden rural dwelling houses (one-storied buildings of a rectangular plan) were ever more often replaced with higher and more spacious houses with a side garret – mezzanine – which earlier were typical of the cities and small towns only. Such a mezzanine (more often covered with a gabled roof) became a significant decoration of the house embellished with a hip-knob, horse heads or another ornament of the roof ridge. Glazed and decorated verandas, which replaced modest ancient porches, were attached to such houses. Well-equipped comfortable wooden stairs that were often embellished with decorative details, led to the premises installed in the loft. The high loft, as well as high foundations tidily made from rubble stones and red bricks often increased the volume of such a house. Such more modern houses with large windows differed sharply from low and long old huts with small windows inhabited by the residents of Lithuania Minor.

Wooden buildings continued to be built in larger settlements right until the year 1945 too. Irrespective of strict requirements of fire safety, there were wooden buildings in the cities of the region. Wooden ornaments decorated many brick urban buildings, and dainty wooden articles were used everywhere (elaborate doors, decorated window frames, stairs with variously

embellished handrails, etc.). Wood processing industry was developed in the region, a great number of craftsmen made lots of different wooden articles.

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.) outdid wooden buildings of neighbouring Lithuania Major.

In this way by the year 1944 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 Lithuanian Minor used to arrived for a long time to work and where dainty doors, various ornaments from masters and market places in Klaipėda 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 residents of the region withdrew to the West abandoning their farmsteads. 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 masse for wood – to heat headquarters of the new soviet authorities, barracks, etc.

Newcomers from the Soviet Union and Lithuanian Major settled in old farmsteads quite often turning out their old residents of their houses – after the war their real owners were deprived of any rights as the conquered ‘fascists’. The majority of newcomers robbed and plundered the farmsteads. They often pulled down wooden houses of the farmsteads for wood. The ethnocide of the region often was supplemented with the genocide in Lithuania Minor – the physical destruction of the former inhabitants.



An outbuilding in the village of Meželiai.

It was sought to destroy signs of ethno-cultural singularity of the region. In this way vandalism of individual newcomers was supplemented with a purposeful policy of the soviet regime, which purposively destroyed traces of Lithuania Minor and the heritage of the region.

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 Natkiškiai. Large areas (for example, around the city of Klaipėda) became empty after the old villages, farmsteads and countryside 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, after traditional drainpipes and drop chutes had been torn down (selling them to metal scrap), with insufficient care taken of the tile, reed and other kinds of roofs, penetrating dampness of rainfall rotted wooden constructions of the buildings. Therefore, wooden buildings fell into decay – out of several per cent of the old buildings that have survived in the region only a small part is wooden houses.

When compiling lists of historical and cultural monuments of Soviet Lithuania during the years of the Khrushchev Thaw, the then

still existing valuable buildings and complexes of Klaipėda Region were not declared as such. It was only the fishermen villages of Skirvytėlė and Minija visited by the Soviet functionaries who were having a rest in the delta of the Nemunas River at that time that were put on the list. Therefore wooden houses of the region, which were not even formally protected, rapidly fell into decay and were destroyed without carrying out any serious investigations into the heritage of traditional architecture of the region.

In Soviet times, a majority of the old wooden building in the Curonian Spit were altered and adapted to be used for having a rest. The size, forms and the shape of the buildings that were formally declared to be architectural monuments were altered according to the wishes of the then users. In this way, a great number of authentic things have been destroyed.

The old wooden building of Klaipėda Region continued to be destroyed even after the year 1990 by not taking proper care of the remnants of the traditional architectural heritage. With every year, there remain fewer and fewer original wooden buildings and authentic wooden ornaments are falling into decay. A part of the old wooden buildings are altered in an improper way, some part thereof is destroyed altogether.

Therefore, today the last remaining wooden buildings of the region are of great interest and value. The last reflections of original culture of

the ethno-cultural region of the old Balts – Lithuania Minor can still be discerned in them.

Objects that are of great value are found on the eastern border of Klaipėda Region. In Jurbarkas District, on the right bank of the Šventoji River (which divided Lithuanian Minor from Lithuanian Major from 1422) in the village of Antšvenčiai, there is an ancient farmstead of the Meškaitis family. The old dwelling house – a long and low house consisting of the parts that were built at different times has survived there quite well. This is the house that is highly characteristic of the old villages of the inhabitants of Lithuania Minor. The western end of the house with low walls, low premises with wooden ceiling beams touching the head is the oldest. That end was built of logs in an ancient manner by crossing them in the corners, lined with especially broad boards. The western shield of the roof is projected outside like a cap covering and protecting the wooden wall from the rainfall. Also, the ancient lining of a part of the shield in a herringbone pattern with diagonal boards has survived. Old doors, traditional household utensils can also be found in the dwelling house. A raised loft installed in a wooden cattle-shed of the farmstead in an old-fashioned way, as well as some interesting elements have also survived.

Traditional wooden dwelling houses – long one-storey buildings – still stand in Smalininkai. An interesting example of national architecture – a wooden dwelling house built during the inter-war period and stylised according to the examples of wooden architecture of 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 Viešvilė. 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 from the neighbouring wood.

There are still various wooden buildings in the remnants of the old villages that have survived between the Šventoji and Jūra rivers, on the edges of the woods and their openings: barns of the field-crop growers, scarce dwelling houses.

There are still wooden houses in the old village of Vilkyškiai with a church (the large barn

of the old presbytery at the Lutheran Church, which was destroyed after the war and is being rebuilt, dwelling houses, and outbuildings in the roadside farmsteads).

When going south of Vilkyškiai one can see wooden houses of the farmsteads of the villages of Opstainiai and Keleriškiai on the roadside. Houses of the estate workers with decorations typical of the southern part of East Prussia and Masuren – wooden colonnade at the end (street) façade of the house – still stand in the destroyed former large Šereiklaukis estate.

Several farmsteads with wooden houses have survived in the village of Bitėnai nestled against Rambynas Hill. Similar houses can also be found in the neighbouring village of Bardėnai. The picturesque Bitėnai-Rambynas cemetery has survived between Bitėnai 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 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 Stonišiai stretching along the high road Smalininkai–Pagėgiai–Šilutė abound in old wooden houses.

One can see wooden houses in the Vyžiai and Juknaičiai environs on the roadsides. People lived very poorly in sandy environs of Paleičiai, they built small wooden houses there (which are more modest than those built in the areas of more fertile lands). The wooden building of the Paleičiai School was really impressive – embellished with carved barge-boards and hip-knobs, and distinguished for its “T-shaped” plan.

The town of Rusnė was the most famous wood processing centre in the lower reaches of the Nemunas River where several sawmills operated. Rafts floated from the upper reaches of the river were rearranged there preparing them to be floated on to Klaipėda or to process timber in place. Therefore almost exclusively wooden houses were built there. Until 1944, picturesque two-three-storey wooden houses embellished with different woodcarvings and dainty wooden details were built on the streets of the town. Large wooden multi-apartment houses for



factory workers were characteristic of Rusnė. Some typical old wooden houses, as well as nice wooden details, ornaments of houses, have survived on Neringos, Šilutės and other streets.

In the past large boats were built from wood processed in Rusnė. Large wooden two-master sailboats (the main means of transporting cargoes in the Nemunas delta and the neighbouring regions) stood in Rusnė quays as an inseparable part of the wooden town. From there they sailed along the rivers and canals to Western Europe.

The Pakalnė River separated the fishermen village of Skirvytėlė from the town of Rusnė. The ethnographic homestead of V. and K. Banys houses the museum of the traditional lifestyle of that place. A small wooden dwelling house with the preserved or recreated typical interior and traditional interior equipment is characteristic of the locality. It is only in this farmstead that the entire complex of buildings (a dwelling house, a barn, a woodshed, a storeroom) has survived. Today this farmstead is the most accurate reflection of the traditional lifestyle on Rusnė Island.

Farmsteads of the village of Pakalnė stretch along the banks of the Pakalnė River – from the impressive large homestead near the town of Rusnė to smaller farmsteads of fishermen or

market-gardeners with their old wooden buildings.

The long village of Šyškrantė with its various wooden houses (from large buildings of a small estate to the former Jewish colony whose small buildings were concentrated on the riverside) runs from the town of Rusnė along the left bank of the Atmata River. Impressive wooden buildings in the former estate, which belonged to the Anckers (Šyškrantės St 5) have survived: a dwelling house of a typical structure with an extension to it and interesting inside facilities, original outbuildings.

A dense forest on the roadside from Rusnė to Šilutė screens the remnants of the village of Žalgiriai. This is an important historical and cultural value – the remainder of the former largest colony (named after Bismarck) of the inhabitants of marshes in Klaipėda Region. The largest marsh of Rupkalviai drained as far back as the 19th century was divided into small plots of land in which several hundreds of small homesteads were established. The inhabitants of the marshes who settled (they grew potatoes and vegetables in the peat bog) built small wooden houses and outbuildings. These light wooden houses on poles as if floated in the peat bog where brick houses would have sunk. The small houses were embellished

Thomas Mann House summerhouse in the settlement of Nida on a dune near the Curonian Lagoon.



Fragment of the wooden house in the village of Minija.

lished with wooden carvings and were painted different colours. Dried peat used for heating stoves was stored in peateries, and stocks of fodder for scarce animals were kept in wooden boxes. Wooden houses withstood spring floods. Life of the riverside fishermen was also original. Their wooden houses were built on higher foundations choosing drier hills, which were not so flooded, to build them on. Such wooden houses had to withstand floating of the ice too. The last house of this kind of the extinct village of Juodkrantė stood near the Ragininkai Island. Homesteads of the villages Rupkalviai and Šlažai are situated on a hill near the road Rusnė–Šilutė. The inhabitants of the flooded meadows used to build their houses on hillocks, which turned into islands during the time of floods. Their wooden houses, which were waterlogged during the floods, dried quicker than the brick ones and were healthier to live in. The inhabitants of the mead-

ows were engaged in making hay on lush meadows, bred animals. Therefore their wooden outbuildings differed from those of the farmers. Interesting wooden houses have survived in Šilutė: embellished dwelling houses and simpler rural farmsteads are characteristic of small towns. In the past many of them were decorated with wooden ornaments, they had dainty wooden doors and other elements. The homesteads of the inhabitants of the meadows containing different wooden buildings can be found in the nearby village of Šyšgiriai. In some places, the houses there retain wooden embellishments. Some impressive wooden buildings and their interesting decorations have survived in the village of Rūgaliai. Nearby, there are remainders of the village of Vabalai with the remnants of the original wooden houses. People lived between the Aukštumala marsh and the Minija River,

which posed the threat of frequently overflowing its banks. The last farmstead of the village of Aukštumala with picturesque wooden houses of the inhabitants 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 Griniai–Pėteraičiai farmstead. Like other rural farmsteads, it is nestled on the roadside, on an old sacred hill among the areas of flooded meadows. Interesting wooden houses and old details have survived in the village of Petreliai 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 Šilutė. One can see interesting wooden houses on the roadsides and more remote homesteads when going along Šilutė 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 Šukiai homestead on the left bank of the river has preserved the old embellishments. Nearby, on a hill, pressed together are farmsteads of the inhabitants of the meadows containing different wooden houses typical of the village of Stankišiai. An old wooden house with a half-hipped roof covered with reeds and the roof shield in the herringbone pattern (following age-old traditions) stood there for a long time. One can see wooden houses of different periods in a row of farmsteads of seashore fisher-

men and farmers from Ventė in the south to the villages of Povilai and Suvernai in the north. Interesting wooden houses have survived in the neighbouring villages of Kintai: in Uogaliai, Prycmai, Kiškiai, Sakučiai, Bundulai. There were picturesque farmsteads of farmers and the inhabitants of the meadows in the large village of Lankupiai whose farmsteads stretched on both sides of the Minija River. 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 Agluonėnai. Wooden houses can be found in the old homesteads of the seashore fishermen in Dreverna and Svencelė 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. When in the 19th century, 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 en masse were started destroying the authentic heritage of traditional wooden architecture. A greater number of less altered pre-war farmsteads containing wooden buildings have survived in smaller settlements of Preila and Peralka. 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 Lagoon. This is an interesting example of national architecture, which, according to the traditions of the region, was designed by the local architects. Next to it the publisher P. Isenfels built a nice wooden house with an original interior. Those two houses show how creatively pre-war designers and local builders managed to continue the traditions of regional wooden architecture.



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CROSS-CRAFTING IN LITHUANIA

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 roadsides, 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 crosses¹.

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, espe-

« Sculpture in wooden cross in Domeikava, Kaunas District.

119

¹. Szukiewicz W., „Krzyże zdobne w gub. Wileńskiej”, Wilsa, vol. XVII, 1903.

120 ► Pillared shrine
in Godeliai,
Plungė District.



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 Brensztejn, Paulius Galaunė, 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 sculpture

► Memorial group –
the Way of the Nation's
Suffering in Domeikava,
Kaunas District.



◄ Pillared shrine,
Adomynė, Kupiškis
District.

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 crosspiece 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 crosspiece). 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 hung in trees is simple; they are mostly 30 to 50-centimetres-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 (Antanas Rūkštelė's investigations)².

Crosspiece crosses are characteristic of all regions, but it has its own peculiarities in each of them. For example, it is only in Dzūkija that crosses have the peculiar silhouette of an overturned triangle, which consists of a spear and a long-handled axe intersecting with a crosspiece (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 geometrical (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 is it 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 (Žemaitija) 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 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 (jubilees, 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 25–30 centimetres to 1–1.5 meters. The roofed pillars of the pillar-type cross have the small-

est 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

▲ Pillared shrine, The Open Air Museum of Lithuania, Rumšiškės.

² Rūkštelė A., *Vilniaus kryžiai*, Kaunas, 1937.



Reconstruction of Vincas Svirskis's wooden cross. The Open Air Museum of Lithuania, Rumšiškės.

century, mass-produced metal crucifixes were often used. Features of the styles of church art of different historic periods depending on the examples that a folk carver followed are clear in wooden sculptures of the crucified Christ. Sculptural images of the Nazarene, Jesus Christ carrying the cross and the Pensive Christ are also popular. The latter became especially common in the second half of the 20th century because it was often perceived and treated as the symbol of a dramatic fate of the Lithuanian nation, even its multinational character. There are very few wooden monuments without a sculpture of the Virgin Mary. This personage, her suffering in particular and the graces received through her, were very important to the villagers. From the many plots offered by art in churches, the following are prevalent in Lithuania: the Pieta, Our Lady of Sorrows, Madonna with the Infant Christ, and Our Lady of Grace (the latter plot became common beginning in the middle of the 19th century). Beginning in the second half of the 20th century, sculptures of Our Lady of Lourdes, the Immaculate Heart

of the Blessed 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. Sculptures 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 Florin, 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) less 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.

CROSS IN INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY LIFE: 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 that 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, 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, decoration, 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 votive offering. There are many of such reasons: asking for health, children, or a happy life; requests 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.

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 or 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. Wreathes 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 Dzūkija, 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 acci-

dental 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 overshadows 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

decades ago. Perhaps the oldest is Panų (Maidens') Hill in Telšiai District, whose origin is related to the Swedish wars. The date of the origin of the largest of these places, the world-famous Hill of Crosses on Jurgaičiai Hill, is not known exactly. There are small hills of crosses that appeared in the last decade of the past century.

Hills of crosses usually appear in places that are noted for something or are regarded as miraculous (on mounds, near miraculous springs, at places where revelations occur, or at places where rebels or loved ones had been killed). Crosses are carried and placed in such places spontaneously to express various prayers or gratitude. As has already been mentioned, some of these hills were destroyed during the Soviet occupation; the crosses were torn down and the hills ploughed under. However, traces of the destruction vanished almost immediately, and the crosses reappeared despite supervision by the police and KGB.

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 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).

Cross-crafting, 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 in traditional folk culture (the beginning of the 19th–20th century) were artists by calling; it was God-given gift. Some of them even did not have their own homes or families. They did not care about where they were going to live or what they were going to eat the following day. The majority of them were self-taught. They lived where they worked. Having finished work in one place, they moved on to another customer.

Some cross makers had homes, families, and sometimes even a small farm. The latter had workshops with the necessary wood processing equipment. The most necessary equipment possessed by nomadic craftsmen included an axe,

a saw, chisels, knives, and a plane. They learned cross-crafting from famous master craftsmen, worked as apprentices for them, or simply closely observed monuments and church sculptures that had been erected. Almost every villager had elementary wood processing skills and managed to make a simple cross without any décor as a thing necessary to have in the household.

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, Lionginas Šepka 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 Svirskis, he lived merely by and for his creative work.

There were no cross-crafting schools in Lithuania. As has already been mentioned, beginning cross-crafters studied 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 grazing animals.

Today there are no special cross-crafting schools either, and carving is learned from other craftsmen (more rarely in art schools), and experience is acquired when working independently. Hence, as in previous centuries, traditions are handed down directly from one craftsman to another. Some of them are professionals in a way, making a living from their work, some of them have other professions, and cross-crafting, the creation of sculptures, is their hobby only. The environment of the modern master craftsman has changed. The present-

day cross maker/sculptor is influenced not only by the rather closed folk culture but also by the mass media and various impacts of professional art. It is therefore not enough to look for the possibilities of self-expression; one needs both knowledge and engagement to take over the traditions.

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 trunk) to be modelled in a comparatively easy way.

PRESERVATION AND CONTINUATION OF TRADITIONS

In 2001, when Lithuanian cross-crafting 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-crafting a masterpiece of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity has had a great impact on the development, research, and proliferation of cross-crafting 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, revive and continue traditions of cross-crafting. 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-crafting were held, and a complex of the most characteristic traditional crosses of Aukštaitija was created at the Rumšiškės 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-crafting traditions. The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which was adopted by UNESCO and signed by Lithu-



« Sculpture of Jesus on wooden cross made by greatest Lithuanian cross-crafter Vincas Svirskis in Paberžė church, Kėdainiai District.

ania, 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 need 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 Lithuania 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-crafting where one can see a reflection of authentic traditions and signs of modern searching.



CONSTRUCTIONS OF RURAL HOUSES

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).

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-

« Wooden barn with stone foundation in Berklainiai, Pasvalys district.



tive building materials that could replace wood, and clay construction became popular. During the agrarian reform when people moved onto farmsteads or established new ones, many clay cattle sheds and barns were built. During the interwar period, a new trend, compact houses, spread. Houses were most often built from sawn logs and skeleton construction became popular. The brick houses were on the increase, wooden houses were built on concrete and stone foundations, roofs covered with shingles, tin, and tiles. At that time, the manufacture of new materials and the use of standardised products were encouraged. This facilitated, simplified and speeded up rural construction, but at the same time unified regional peculiarities. The decline in traditional building that started in the 19th century strengthened greatly in the 1920s with the implementation of new principles of construction that were common to all Lithuania. Though wooden building prevailed in rural areas until the Second World War, many old techniques had already been forgotten.

WOODEN CONSTRUCTION

A building is usually characterised according to the material used for the walls: wooden, clay or brick. Building material defines possibilities

of construction solutions, which vary depending on technologies. For example, logs can be placed and fastened in a different manner: vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. According to the manner of placing the logs, walls are divided into pole, framed and timbered construction. They appeared at a different time. The pole construction is the oldest and most primitive and is found in archaeological settlements of the first millennium. It was made of massive posts spaced 1–1.5 meters apart and dug in the ground (of hardwood or resinous conifers with notches cut in the sides). The gaps between posts were filled with horizontal beams, split logs, poles, boards, wattle, reeds or straw. Palisade construction (made of vertical logs) did not spread in Lithuania, though in rare cases they were used for outdoor buildings. Pole walls disappeared because in our climatic conditions they were insufficiently tight and durable. They have survived in the construction of barns in Eastern Lithuania. Gradually (in the Western region in the 14th century, in the Eastern, in the 20th 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. 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 the porch were inserted between vertical poles.

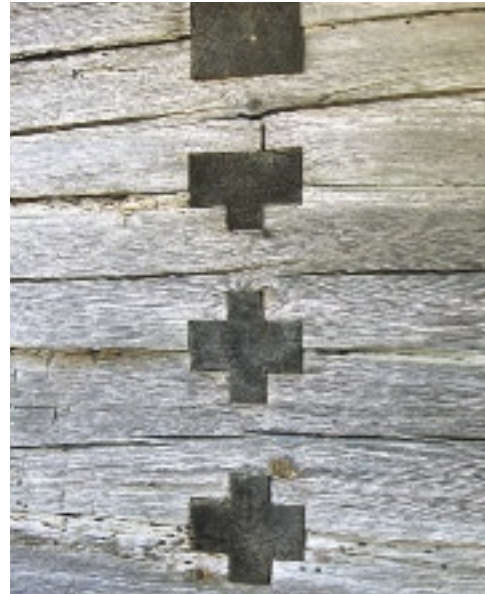
The walls of houses were fitted differently: in Eastern Lithuania, logs had grooves whereas in western Lithuania they were joined by means of equal planes without any mortise. The oldest houses were built with the mortise on the top of logs. This way of joining logs was easier but irrational because water that ran down the wall accumulated in the mortises, causing fast deterioration. Therefore, in the long run a more

effective way of fitting the logs was found, with the groove at the bottom of the log. Long walls were fastened with wooden dowels or tie rods. The construction of tie rods was simple: vertical poles fastened with planks or installed in the burned holes of the beams.

Fitting logs horizontally determined certain methods of joining the corners. In eastern Lithuania, various ways of joints were used (by means of convex, trapezoid-like, or double-sided). The old fashion corners with log ends hewed hexagonally was especially interesting and original. It is related to the old building tradition of North-eastern Europe, especially in the Scandinavian countries. In western Lithuania, corners were made with slanting incisions. In the long run dovetailing of corners spread all over Lithuania. In rare cases horizontal logs were fit into poles in the corners.

Great attention was paid to the tightness of wall constructions and insulation of gaps. In the oldest houses bark on the round logs served as heat insulation. Gaps between the logs were covered with clay. Later they were packed with moss or oakum. In the 16th–17th century hewed logs were used to build the houses of wealthy farmers, estates, sacral buildings, whereas only the inner side of logs was hewed in peasants'

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



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 with flowers of different colours, it adorned the house. In southern Lithuania, there were no stones and under the corners or along the walls of houses logs of oak or resinous conifers were placed. Such foundations can be still found in old barns and granaries. At the end of the 19th century solid stone foundations became common. They were built from natural field boulders or rubble and bound with clay and lime mortar.

Sometimes they were flattened with a row of bricks on the top or decorated with ornaments made of small pebbles.

The door and windows were an important part of the wall. Doorposts were installed when building the lower beam. They had grooves on the sides into which wall logs were interlocked. The oldest door was of totally wooden construction; it was low (1 m to 1.20 m) and wide (60 cm to 1.20 m), made of wide split boards placed tightly together. The door leaf was supported by a wooden doorpost – the hinge. Fixed to the doorpost at the top and bottom point, the hinge turned easily around its axis. The door was firm and durable but not tight enough. As boards dried, gaps formed, which were stopped with wooden bands.

Iron hinges replaced wooden doorposts. The transverse ties of the door and door strips began to play the main role in construction. The doors of smoke houses were made of two separately opened parts (only the upper part of the door was opened to let out smoke). To save boards, the doors of outbuildings were sometimes woven from wicker, straw or reeds. To keep houses warmer, the doors began to be planked with an additional layer of boards. Planks nailed in different directions made original, geometric ornaments of peculiar patterns, which were often accentuated by bright colours.

At the end of the 19th century, panel doors became common. Most often, they were used inside a house. Sometimes panels were decorated with relief patterns, additional profiled details or paint.

Windows were formed in a manner similar to doorposts. The simplest window used in dwelling at the end of the 19th century was a small opening cut out in one or two logs, without any frame, and shut with a horizontally sliding plank. The majority of houses in the 16th century had framed windows, however. At first bladders and hides of animals, fish, tarpaper, fabric, and mica sheets were used instead of glass. In the 17th–18th century, when glass became cheaper, window openings became larger. Casement windows usually were divided by tin or iron frames into 12 or 16 parts. The first glass windows in peasants' houses were often made of small pieces of glass of irregular forms that were fastened with wood laths. In the 17th–20th century windows of four or six parts prevailed



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.

Granary with a beam roof in Vyžiai, Utena district. The oldest beam roofs were covered with shingles, fir tree bark, or covered by clay and turf.



☛ Windows – the eyes of the house. In the 17th–20th century windows of four or six parts prevailed in rural houses. Shutters were used with almost all windows.

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 jugged out (1.5m to 2 m) 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 laid in two ways, was most often used in rural construction: with heads upward or downward. In the first case, the straw was spread in rows, pressed with small laths and tied to the rafters, then smoothed with a special tool. In the other way, roofs were covered with small sheaves of straw, and each of them was fixed to the rafter with a straw tie. This way of covering was common only in Southern Lithuania. The edges of the roof were fastened in a similar way. To

protect the roof against the wind its top was weighed down with some barling construction. Sometimes it was finished with decorative straw weaving.

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 more 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 flatter in Eastern Lithuania). The wall of a building mostly consisted of 12–14 logs and the height differed between 2.5 and 2.8 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 even decoration of a building also depended largely on the building method. Original technique and construction solutions are characteristic 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 with mixed forms prevail in other regions of Lithuania and reveal the interaction of different constructions (those of Eastern and Western Lithuania).

At one time, all building methods, especially roof constructions, were used in Eastern Aukštaitija. The oldest pole construction was applied in the barns. It can sometimes still be found in old houses and cattle sheds. Alongside it, buildings with quite different structures were built - granaries with a beam covering. In the 20th century more modern roofs with rafters were used in dwellings and cattle sheds. The methods of building walls remained almost unchanged, however. Buildings were built from separate blocks joined by jambs or wall insertions. The width of buildings remained stable

(6 m to 7 m), they extended mainly in length by adding new blocks. In this way, narrow rectangular buildings (of several blocks) formed. These structural peculiarities dictated distinctive features of the dwellings in Aukštaitija. The walls of dwellings were high and open, lofts were small, windows were not covered with a shadow falling from the roof (they were easily visible), and therefore the decoration of the windows was especially developed. Roofs with easily visible gables then one or two-storey porches were lavishly decorated. Thus decorative, playful, rich ornamentation formed in Eastern Lithuania.

More advanced building techniques were used in Western Lithuania, innovations were introduced faster, and larger houses having more complicated structures began to be built earlier than in eastern Lithuania. Because of richness of the region and high technical level, Samogitian houses were distinguished by their large size and monumental harmonious forms. The architecture of Samogitia was integral, and earlier constructions or building techniques were no longer used. All houses were made of horizontal logs, roofs were constructed of rafters and had a four-sloped form with broad lofts. The falling shadow covered a large part of the walls, therefore windows were made low and wide and hardly decorated. Also the ends of the sheathing of rafters, beams, the gables and hip knobs were decorated. Moderate, laconic ornamentation was characteristic of buildings in Samogitia, which was in line with the character of the people who lived there. Construction in Lithuania Minor had a somewhat different nature. Beginning in the 19th century, standardised products were used, and there was abundance of complicated profiles and various carvings.

According to the construction and finish of buildings, one can see that the architecture of farmsteads was influenced by the styles of Europe, scientific and technical innovations, and neighbouring regions. Innovations in construction spread from the cities, towns and estates 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.



LITHUANIAN HOUSE: CUSTOMS OF CONSTRUCTION AND MYTHOLOGEMS

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 fireplace 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 *trobos* or *stubos* 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 *pryšininkė*.

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 Dzūkija regions. It is a long and narrow building, divided into almost equal areas by cross walls: *pirkia*, *priemenė* and *seklyčia*. Everyday life took place in *pirkia*. *Seklyčia* also called *pirkaitė* was meant for guests. The porch *priemenė* 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 in porch 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.

« Table – according to Lithuanian traditions is a place for all family to gather. People used to eat together all the time. The table was also used for other small jobs in the evening with just one light above. All the over family business was discussed, joys and troubles were shared. Samogitia, The Open Air Museum of Lithuania, Rumšiškės.



➤ Symbol of the Lithuanian house – the birthplace of Dr. Jonas Basanavičius in Ožkabaliai.

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 prohibition 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 family, 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. Relations 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 moon neares to its change. Then windows ‘will not cry’, woodworms will not harm logs, it will be warm and cosy inside a house. Among prepared for construction wood there cannot be any parts of wooden constructions previously hit by lightning. It was thought that it can attract the fire. Not suitable are those trees that had a close contact with one another, were squeaking and moaning – this house may be haunted. It is not advisable to incorporate any old house components, family may not be lucky living here. A log made of the

first cut down tree was put aside. It will be raised to the highest position, into the last corona, this way the smoke out of the oven will go straight up. To make the step a hard and straight log must be selected, not too curvy and branchy, otherwise some family member may go crazy.

Before starting work, on Pentecost the chosen place is sprinkled with holly water using lime branches. The place for building a stackyard or a shed is sowed with crops. Work will be started when the seeds germinate; then garnerers 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 consideration: 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 Dzūkija Region such actions were made: a handful of moss was thrown over the left shoulder. To keep inhabitants healthy a wormwood branch, sometimes a garlic clove or charcoal out of the Easter fireplace was buried under 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, a rue branch, and silver coin there. The candle will keep fire away, herbs illness and misfortune, thorns will bring happiness into the home, and silver will guard against the ‘bad eye’. Shortly speaking ‘the devil will not sit in the corner’.

To bless the ongoing construction Samogitians performed such a ritual: they took a twelve-year-old rowan and dragged it crabwise seven times around the blockhouse. The oldest family member, who came to the building site, used to say: ‘Help God to rot it at the place!’ Then he hit the first corona with an axe. Builders were to take their hats off, make sign of a cross, and the work commenced.



There's no point sitting down on a blockhouse to rest – one might get lazy or construction will take too long. It is not advisable to step 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, sometimes goat horn were buried at the corners of a structure base. To prevent mouse from spreading some ash was spilled under each halving. Samogitians had a custom to hide some metal item – a horse shoe or a coin under the foundation 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 rafters was a raised wreath. In the Nemunas delta it was called *bėringis* and in the Biržai region

kruonis. 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 structure stronger. Samogitian craftsmen used to incorporate wooden cheese and bottle into the middle – a hint of an expected treat afterwards. Elsewhere the professional mark was hanged up – a wooden saw, axe, pliers, square or calipers. Such finish wreaths may be seen in Užnemunė and Dzūkija regions.

There is a custom to put a present for the head of a construction into *bėringis*, for example, boots, gloves, shirt or a woven towel. Only the head of the construction could take these things out. He had to crawl on to the rafters. The workers would rattle all sorts of utensils ‘playing a

➤ Stove used to be in the middle of an old house. It provided comfort for the house during winter and other seasons, if weather turned nasty. Up-wood stoves appeared at the beginning of the 20th century. Samogitia, The Open Air Museum of Lithuania, Rumšiškės.



☛ *Seklyčia* and its traditional pieces of furniture. Along the walls there were speckled dowry chests, a commode and a bed with the mountain of a lacy pillows on the top. *Seklyčia* always had wooden floor. Aukštaitija, The Open Air Museum of Lithuania, Rumšiškės.

march’ and making jokes. The master who successfully reached presents was lifted up by his helpers; then they welcomed the landlord with a song. In the meantime, a housewife was already placing a large bowl of ragout (*šutinys*) and a frying pan of *stačiokė*. A closing feast has its name, although it differs in different Lithuanian regions. After that, there is still a lot to be done: roof must be put on, flooring made, windows and doors put in, and a oven to be build. But as the saying says ‘Eyes are full of fear but hands can do anything.’

STOVE IN THE HOUSE

There used to be a stove in the middle of an old house. It provided comfort for the house during winter and other seasons, if weather turned nasty. Neighbours helped to build it. First, a base was tramped, usually a good yard long and almost the same width, so that six big

loaves would easily fit in it. The finishing of the base was usually celebrated with some beer. Afterwards a wooden frame for shaping the arch was made. It was called ‘a pig’. In front of the opening a place for ash to be swept out and cooking bowls to be placed was made called *prieždas*. 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 wane 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 make dinner.

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 housewarming, used to bring bread and salt, place it on *prieždas* and kiss the ‘forehead’ of the oven. It was believed that the household spirit lives in this main household structure, so the proper ingratiating 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 *prieždas* 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 put it on a string of wire. Then they would run home swinging it around to make it sparkle in the wind. Wheels of fire roll out in every direction – what a fantastic sight! It was not allowed to climb onto the stove on the first day of Easter; otherwise, pigs may ruin the crops in summer. On the second day, all Easter egg shells were burned in the stove so that frost would disappear.

It was believed that the stove is a temporary residence of spirits. That is why its sides cannot be hit with a rake or a broomstick in order not to hurt spirits. If burning wood makes a lot of noise that means spirits of the dead are asking

to pray for them. Wood chopped during the Advent cannot be used to start 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 lags. All parts are ornamented. Window shutters also had some sort of decorative elements; sometimes they were painted. Top lags 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 whipsnakes. 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 here, when there is a peeking 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 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 had a dead child, godparents would be handed a newborn through the window for taking him to the church to be baptized. Before that, he



► *Pirkia* in Aukštaitija – a long and narrow building, divided into almost equal areas by cross walls: *pirkia*, *priemenė* and *seklyčia*. Everyday life took place in *pirkia*. *Seklyčia* also called *pirkaitė* was meant for guests. The Open Air Museum of Lithuania, Rumšiškės.

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 revellers in disguise during calendar celebration used to act as a aliens from the above are shadows of ancestors. They bring prophecies of the future. That is why girls tried to see into their future near the windows on Christmas Eve dinner night. If they heard

words 'go' or 'please', this year's matchmaking would be successful. It was also believed that if you look through the crossed broomsticks or a wooden harrow, it would be possible to see your destiny's chosen one.

The moon looks in through a window at night. The light of the full moon can make a sleeping child ill. It is not good for an adult as well, especially for pregnant women. Waning moon's light, on the other hand, is good if you want to get rid of warts and tetters. Using the baby finger of your left hand you should wipe the dew off the window, spread it onto the wart and whisper three times: 'Disappear as this waning moon does.'

When a frightening storm cloud used to come and it was scary not to be hit by a lightning, old people used to light a mourning candle and put it on a windowsill or some thorns from the Easter palm were sprinkled there.

WALKING OVER THE THRESHOLD

The threshold is a boundary between the unknown, perhaps an alien world, and the comfortable home shelter. This is why a mythologem of a threshold is very important. The boundary sense opens very clearly in the prohibition to shake hands over the step. It is explained by

other customs. For example, in Dzūkija 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.

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 mare's calk into the girls home step. She will 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 inside. When stepping over the step they would



be sprayed with corn by house guests in order to be fertile. There also was a custom to drop fur onto the step. If you step over them, you will be rich. In other regions of Lithuania, a daughter-in-law was put by a mother-in-law to some kind of a sensibility test near the step. She would put a loaf of bread, a piece of cloth and men's trousers with the left one. Brought inside bread must be respectfully placed on the table, and other stuff should be put on the bench. An unwanted daughter-in-law used to find a rod on the doorstep placed by her mother-in-law. It showed the wish that she would get lots of beating from her husband. If when the bride stepped over the step there was somebody under the stove, it was believed that a family would be childless. To ease the first birth a midwife used to walk pregnant one over three thresholds asking to kick each one. Water of the first newborn was poured over the step wishing that a girl would get married quickly and happily.

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.

► Spinning wheel – a device for spinning thread or yarn. Spinning wheel replaced the earlier method of hand spinning with a spindle. The spinning wheels were made of native woods – ash, linden, alder. It appeared in Lithuania in the first half of eighteenth century. Aukštaitija, The Open Air Museum of Lithuania, Rumšiškės.

INDEX

Affettranger Christoph	Radziwills
Alberti Leon Battista	Rūkštelė Antanas
Anckers	Serlio Sebastiano
Banys	Shcherbakov Login
Basanavičius Jonas	Stanislaw August Poniatowski
Blode Herman	Stelmacher Eduard
Brensztejn Michał Eustachy	Stypulkowski Vladislaw
Buračas Balys	Strandmann
Butkevičius Izidorius	Stungo Naomi
Daukantas Simonas	Svirskis Vincas
Dlugosz Jan	Szukiewicz Wandalin
Galaunė Paulius	Šepka Lionginas
Galdikas Adomas	Šešelgis Kazimieras
Gimbutas Jurgis	Tyszkiewicz Feliks
Gorskis Mykolas	Tyszkiewicz Józef
Gostomski Anzelm	Tyszkiewicz Maria Tereza
Guty (Gustry)	Tyszkiewicz Michał
Haur Jakub Kazimierz	Tyszkiewicz Zofia, Sophia
Isenfels P.	Vališauskas Juozapas
Jasenski	Varnas Adomas
Khrushchev	Varnas Adomas
Kiszkas	Vladislav IV
Klein August	Werner Georg
Kopylov V.	Witkiewicz Stanislaw
Krėvė- Mickevičius Vincas	Wollowiczs
Maciej Miechowita, Mathias a	Zug Szymon Bogumił
Miechow	
Mann Thomas	
Marker Rudolf	
Martin Karol	
Meškaitis	
Michnevičius Vaclovas, Wacław	
Michniewicz	
Miliukštis V.	
Montvila Juzefas, Jozef Montwill	
Opalinski Lukasz	
Palladio Andrea	
Pampani Carlo	
Pilchowski David	
Podczaszyński Bolesław	
Podczaszyński Karol	
Poška Dionizas	
Przedziecki	

Adomynė
Agluonėnai, Šilutė distr.
Alanta, Molėtai distr.
Aleksotas, Kaunas
Alka, Šilutė distr.
Alsėdžiai, Plungė distr.
Ančiškis, Kėdainiai distr.
Anykščiai District
Antakalnis, Vilnius
Antašava, Kupiškis distr.
Antšvenčiai, Jurbarkas distr.
Aristavėlė
Ashmyany District
Atmata, river
Aukštadvaris, Trakai distr.
Aukštaitija
Aukštakalnis, Zarasai distr.
Aukštavilkiai, Tauragė distr.
Aukštoji Panemunė, Kaunas
Aukštumala, marsh
Auseniškiai
Babtai, Kaunas distr.
Balbieriškis, Prienai distr.
Baltromiškiai, Jonava distr.
Bardėnai
Beržoras, Plungė distr.
Bienica, Ashmyany distr., Belarus
Birštonas
Biržai
Biržai District
Biržuvėnai
Bitėnai
Byelitsa
Blinstrubiškis
Bobriškis, Rokiškis distr.
Brest
Bružai, Šilutė distr.
Būdvietis
Buivydžiai
Bundulai, Šilutė distr.
Ceikiniai, Ignalina distr.
Curonian Spit
Čičiūnai, Varėna distr.

Dagiliai
Daniliškiai, Trakai distr.
Dargaičiai, Šiauliai distr.
Dargužiai, Varėna distr.
Daugailiai, Utena distr.
Degučiai, Šilutė distr.
Deliatičiai
Deltuva, Ukmergė distr.
Didieji Ibėnai, Kaunas distr.
Didžiasalis, Ignalina distr.
Dieveniškės
Domeikava, Kaunas distr.
Drevena, Šilutė distr.
Druskininkai
Druskininkai, M. K. Čiurlionio g. 85
Druskininkai, Maironio g. 14, Villa Imperial
Druskininkai, Maironio g. 16,
Villa Omega
Druskininkai, Markevičius Villa
Druskininkai, T. Kosciuškos g. 7,
Villa Radium
Druskininkai, Villa Imperial
Druskininkai, Villa Maurė
Dubičiai, Varėna distr.
Dubingiai
Dubiniai, Šiauliai distr.
Dūdai, Lida distr.
Džūkija
Džiuginėnai
Erlėnai, Kretinga distr.
Eržvilkas, Jurbarkas distr.
Ferma, Panevėžys
Galitsya
Gegabrasta, Pasvalys distr.
Gėlių Street, Kaunas
Genaičiai, Kretinga distr.
Geranyory
Germany
Giedraičiai, Molėtai distr.
Girelė, Rokiškis distr.
Giruliai

Gražaičiai, Joniškis distr.
Gražionys
Grinkiškis
Griškabūdis, Šakiai distr.
Grybai, Švenčionys distr.
Grūšlaukė, Kretinga distr.
Gruzdžiai, Šiauliai distr.
Gudai, Pagėgiai municip.
Gudiškiai
Gudų, forest
Hill of Crosses, Jurgaičiai Hill
Hrodna
Ignalina District
Ilguva, Šakiai distr.
Imbradas, Zarasai distr.
Inturkė, Molėtai distr.
Israel
Italy
Iwye
Jonas Basanavičius Forest
Jonava District
Joniškėlis, Pasvalys distr.
Joniškis District
Joniškis, Molėtai distr.
Juknaičiai
Juodkrantė
Juodkrantė, Hotel Bachman
Juodkrantė, Villa Flora
Juodkrantė,Neringa mucip.
Jūra, river
Jūrava, Jurbarkas distr.
Jurbarkas District
Jurgeliškiai, Švenčionys distr.
Kabeliai
Kalnalis, Kretinga distr.
Kalno Street, Juodkrantė
Kaltinėnai, Šilalė distr.
Kalveliai, Jurbarkas distr.
Kantaučiai, Plungė distr.
Karklė, Klaipėda municip.
Kartena, Kretinga distr.
Kaunas
Kaunas District

Kaunas District
Kaunas District
Kaunas, A. Juozapavičiaus Ave. 124c
Kaunas, A. Juozapavičiaus Ave. 125
Kaunas, A. Juozapavičiaus Ave. 131
Kaunas, A. Juozapavičiaus Ave. 15
Kaunas, A. Juozapavičiaus Ave. 40
Kaunas, A. Smentonos Ave. 25
Kaunas, Aukštaičių g. 36
Kaunas, Birutės g. 22
Kaunas, Gailutės g. 19
Kaunas, J. Kraševskio g. 7
Kaunas, Jurbarko g. 65
Kaunas, K. Donelaičio g. 11
Kaunas, K. Donelaičio g. 5
Kaunas, K. Donelaičio g. 5
Kaunas, K. Donelaičio g. 7
Kaunas, K. Petrausko g. 23
Kaunas, Karo Ligoninės g. 9
Kaunas, Kranto Ave. 89
Kaunas, Laisvės Ave.
Kaunas, Lakūnų kelias 46
Kaunas, Minties Rato g. 2 / 17
Kaunas, Minties Rato g. 24
Kaunas, Minties Rato g. 51
Kaunas, Planetų g. 15 / Sietyno g. 17
Kaunas, Sodų g. 80
Kaunas, Trimito g. 8
Kaunas, Tunelio g. 17
Kaunas, Upelio g. 30
Kaunas, Vaidilos g. 5
Kaunas, Veiverių g. 20
Kaunas, Žemaičių g. 20
Kaunatava, Telšiai distr.
Kėdainiai
Kėdainiai District
Kelerišiai

Kelmė
Kelmė District
Kiemeliškės, Švenčionys distr.
Kiščiai, Šilutė distr.
Klaipėda District
Klaipėda, region of
Klebiniškiai, Radviliškis distr.
Klepočiai, Trakai distr.
Kolainiai, Kelmė distr.
Kražiai, Kelmė distr.
Kretinga District
Kriaunos, Rokiškis distr.
Kruonis, Kaišiadorys distr.
Kuktiškiai, Utena distr.
Kukutėliai, Ignalina distr.
Kulautuva
Kuliai, Plungė distr.
Kupiškis District
Kurkliai, Anykščiai distr.
Kurtuvėnai
Kvedariškis, Biržai distr.
Labanoras, Švenčionys distr.
Laižuva, Mažeikiai distr.
Lapynai, Šilutė distr.
Lašmenpamūšis
Lauksodis, Pakruojis distr.
Laukuva, Šilalė distr.
Lazdininkai, Kretinga distr.
Lebeniščiai, Biržai distr.
Lentvaris, Trakai distr.
Likėnai
Linkmenys, Ignalina distr.
Linksmadvaris, Kaunas
Lioliai, Kelmė distr.
Lithuania Major
Lithuania Minor
Lithuania, Republic of
Liubavas, Vilnius distr.
Liudvinavas, Marijampolė distr.
Lynežeris
Lukiškės, Vilnius
Luokė, Telšiai distr.
Luokesai, lake

M. K. Čiurlionio Street, Vilnius
Maironiai
Maišiagala, Vilnius distr.
Maneivos, Rokiškis distr.
Margionys
Markučiai, Vilnius
Maseliškės, Vilnius distr.
Masuren
Mažeikiai
Mažeikiai District
Mėčionys, Ignalina distr.
Medingėnai, Plungė distr.
Melno, lake
Mėželiai, Klaipėda municip.
Mėžionys, Švenčionys distr.
Mielagėnai, Ignalina distr.
Miestaliai, Šilutė distr.
Mikytai, Pagėgiai municip.
Milliūnai, Rokiškis distr.
Minauka, Zarasai distr.
Minija
Minties Rato Street, Kaunas
Močiūnai, Švenčionys distr.
Molėtai District
Musteika
Natkiškiai
Naujamiestis, Kaunas
Naujininkai, Vilnius
Nausėdai, Pagėgiai municip.
Navahrudak
Nečėnai, Utena distr.
Nemajūnai, Prienai distr.
Nemunas, river
Neris, river
Nida
Nida, Miško Namas
Nida, Thomas Mann house
Nida, Villa Helene
Old Town, Kaunas
Opstainiai
Opstainiai, Pagėgiai municip.
Paberžė, Molėtai distr.
Paberžė, Vilnius distr.
Paežeriai, Anykščiai distr.
Pagėgiai
Pagiriai, Ukmergė distr.
Pagramantis, Tauragė distr.
Pajūris
Pakalnė, river
Pakalnė, Šilutė distr.
Pakražantė
Pakruojis District
Palanga, Birutės al. 35, Villa
Mohorta
Palanga, Birutės al., Villas Romeo
and Juliet
Palanga, Birutės Ave. 32, villa
Jūros akis
Palanga, Birutės Ave. 39, villa
Anapilis
Palanga, J. Basanavičiaus g.,
Jūros Akis
Palanga, J. Basanavičiaus g., Villa
Grażina
Palanga, J. Basanavičiaus g., Villa
Meilutė
Palanga, J. Basanavičiaus g., Villa
Pajauta
Palanga, J. Basanavičiaus g., Villa

Vaidilutė
Palanga, J. Basanavičiaus g.,
Villa Vilija
Palanga, Kęstučio g., bathing
pavilions
Palanga, Villa Baltoji
Palanga, Vytauto g., Villa Danutė
Paleičiai
Paliesė
Palūšė, Ignalina distr.
Panemunėlis
Panevėžys
Panevėžys District
Panų Hill
Papynaujis, Šilalė distr.
Paplauja, Vilnius
Paprusė
Paskutiškiai, Jonava distr.
Pasvalys
Pasvalys District
Pavandenė, Telšiai distr.
Pavilkiai, Pagėgiai municip.
Pavilnys, Vilnius
Pavirvytis
Peldžiai, Kretinga distr.
Pempės, Panevėžys distr.
Pereložai, Jonava distr.
Pervalka, Neringa mucip.
Petreliai, Šilutė distr.
Pikeliai, Mažeikiai distr.
Piktuizio Street, Palanga
Pilviškiai, Vilkaviškis distr.
Pivašiūnai, Alytus distr.
Plaškiai, Pagėgiai municip.
Plateliai, Plungė distr.
Plungė
Plungė District
Poland
Poškonys, Šalčininkai distr.
Povilai, Šilutė distr.
Preila, Neringa mucip.
Priekulė
Prienai District
Prycmiai, Šilutė distr.
Prussia, East Prussia see
Lithuania Minor
Pūčkoriai, Vilnius
Puščios, Rokiškis distr.
Radviliškis
Radviliškis District
Radzivilimontai
Ragininkai, island
Raguva, Panevėžys distr.
Raistiniškės, Zarasai distr.
Rambynas, hill
Rasos, Vilnius
Raudondvaris, Vilnius distr.
Rietavas, Plungė distr.
Rimašiai, Šalčininkai distr.
Rokiškis
Rokiškis District
Ropkojai, Pagėgiai municip.
Rozalimas, Pakruojis distr.
Rozalimas, Pakruojis distr.
Rūgaliai, Šilutė distr.
Rukai
Rumbonys, Alytus distr.
Rumšiškės, Kaišiadorys distr.
Rupkalviai

Rusnė, island
Russia
Rūsteikiai, Zarasai distr.
Sakučiai, Šilutė distr.
Salantai
Salos, Ignalina distr.
Salos, Rokiškis distr.
Samogitia
Sausgalviai, Šilutė distr.
Scotland
Seda, Mažeikiai distr.
Senoji Katinautiškė, Ignalina
distr.
Siberia
Sidariai, Radviliškis distr.
Simnas, Alytus distr.
Sipailiški, Rokiškis distr.
Skaudvilė, Tauragė distr.
Skiemonys, Anykščiai distr.
Skirvytėlė
Slavikai, Šakiai distr.
Smardonė
Smargon
Smilgiai, Panevėžys distr.
Smilgiai, Šiauliai distr.
Smiltynė, Neringa mucip.
Smiltynė, Smiltynės g. 11
Smiltynė, Smiltynės g. 19
Smiltynė, Smiltynės g. 20
Smiltynė, Smiltynės g. 21
Smiltynė, Smiltynės g. 22, Villa
Sofia
Sokaičiai, Pagėgiai municip.
Soviet Union
Stakiai, Jurbarkas distr.
Stalnioniškis, Utena distr.
Stankiški, Šilutė distr.
Stasiūnai, Utena distr.
Stelmužė, Zarasai distr.
Stoniškiai
Strazdai, Utena distr.
Stungiai, Joniškis distr.
Subotniki
Sudargas, Šakiai distr.
Suginčiai, Molėtai distr.
Sutkai, Šakiai distr.
Suvalkija, Užnemunė
Suvernai, Šilutė distr.
Svėdasai, Anykščiai distr.
Svencelė, Šilutė distr.
Šakiai, Tauragė distr.
Šakinininkai, Pagėgiai municip.
Šalčininkai District
Šalčininkėliai, Šalčininkai distr.
Šančiai, Kaunas
Šaukėnai, Kelmė distr.
Šeimatis, Utena distr.
Šereiklaukis
Šėta
Šiaudinė, Akmenė distr.
Šiaudiniškis, Utena distr.
Šiaulėnai
Šiaulėnai
Šiaulėnai, Radviliškis distr.
Šiauliai
Šiauliai District
Šilalė
Šilalė District
Šilgaliai

Šilutė
Šilutė District
Šyšgiriai, Šilutė distr.
Šyškrantė
Šlažai
Šlyžiskės, Kelmė distr.
Šnipiškės, Vilnius
Šriubiškiai
Šuminai, Utena distr.
Švėkšna, Šilutė distr.
Švenčionys
Švenčionys District
Švendubrė
Šventežeris, Lazdijai distr.
Šventoji, river
Tabariškės, Šalčininkai distr.
Tauragė
Tauragė District
Tauragė District
Tauzai, Skuodas distr.
Telšiai
Telšiai District
Tenenys, river
Thuringia
Tilsit
Tiltai, Trakai distr.
Tirkšliai, Mažeikiai distr.
Tyrol
Trakai
Trakai District
Trakininkai, Pagėgiai municip.
Tryškiai, Telšiai distr.
Troškūnai, Kelmė distr.
Truskava, Kėdainiai distr.
Turmantas, Zarasai distr.
Tverai, Plungė distr.
Ubiškės, Telšiai distr.
Udraliai, Skuodas distr.
Ukmergė District
Ukrinai, Mažeikiai distr.
Ūla, river
Uogaliai, Šilutė distr.
Upyna, Šilalė distr.
Utena District
Užnemunė, Suvalkija
Užupis, Vilnius
Užventis, Kelmė distr.
Vabalai
Vaikšteniai, Trakai distr.
Vaišnoriškė, Utena distr.
Valakupiai, Vilnius
Valkininkai
Varėna District
Varniai, Plungė distr.
Varniškė, Utena distr.
Veiviržėnai, Telšiai distr.
Veliuona, Jurbarkas distr.
Ventė
Verpena, Kelmė distr.
Versailles
Veršiai, Joniškis distr.
Viduklė, Raseiniai distr.
Vidutinė, Švenčionys distr.
Viešvilė
Vilijampolė, Kaunas
Vilka, river
Vilkija
Vilkyškiai
Vilnius

Vilnius District
Vilnius Region
Vilnius, Antakalnio g. 17, Sapiega
Hospital
Vilnius, Antakalnio g. 8
Vilnius, Birutės g. 1 / 20, hospital
of contagious diseases
Vilnius, d. Poškos g. 61
Vilnius, Giedraičių g. 10
Vilnius, Giedraičių g. 14
Vilnius, Giedraičių g. 17
Vilnius, Giedraičių g. 18
Vilnius, lešmininkų g. 19
Vilnius, Jūratės g. 25
Vilnius, K. Paco g. 5
Vilnius, Kęstučio g. 11 / 15
Vilnius, Krivių g. 14
Vilnius, Labdarių g. 6
Vilnius, Liepkalnio g. 17
Vilnius, Malonioji g. 15
Vilnius, Mildos g. 17
Vilnius, P. Skorinos g. 5
Vilnius, Pavasario g. 14
Vilnius, Polocko g. 52
Vilnius, Rato g. 3
Vilnius, Subačiaus g. 124,
Markučiai Estate
Vilnius, T. Kosciuskos g. 26
Vilnius, Treniotos g. 25
Vilnius, Treniotos, g. 18
Vilnius, Vilkpėdės g. 3,
Railwaymen Hospital
Vilnius, Vytauto g. 27
Vilnius, Vytauto g. 29
Vilnius, Vytauto g. 34 / Treniotos
g. 1
Vilnius, Vytauto g. 61
Vilnius, Vytauto g. 63 / Latvių g. 2
Vilnius, Žygimantų g. 12
Virvytė
Vistula, river
Višakio Rūda, Marijampolė distr.
Vištytis
Vyžiai
Vyžuonos, Utena distr.
Vokė
Voveriškai, Klaipėda municip.
Western Dvina, river
Zarasai
Zarasai District
Zarasai District
Zarasai District
Zaslavl, Belarus
Zervynos
Žagarė
Žalgiriai, Šilutė distr.
Žaliakalnis, Kaunas
Žemaičių Naumiestis, Šilutė
distr.
Žemieji Šančiai, Kaunas
Židikai, Akmenė distr.
Žiežmariai
Žižmai, Šalčininkai distr.
Žvėrynas, Vilnius

Photographs and archive documents by
Gotenburg City Museum p. 8
Hans Sandström p. 9, 10, 11, 12 (2), 13, 14, 15
Arūnas Baltėnas cover, frontispiece, p. 16, 54, 72, 74, 102, 115, 123, 124, 138, 141, 142, 144, 145
Gediminas Trečiokas p. 19, 40, 41, 43
Mindaugas Kaminskas p. 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 42, 44, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 70, 71, 76, 83, 90, 92, 94, 97, 100, 105, 106, 108, 109, 111 (2), 112, 113, 116, 118, 120, 121 (top), 130, 135, 136, 140
Giedrė Filipavičienė p. 23
Alfredas Jomantas p. 31
Raimondas Paknys p. 56, 68, 73, 77, 79, 81 (2), 84, 87, 88, 121 (bottom), 126, 129
Stasys Vaitkus, Šiauliai „Aušra“ museum p. 64
Šatinskas, National M. K. Čiurlionis Art Museum p. 65
Manuscript Division of Vilnius University Library 67 (top)
Kaunas University of Technology, Institute of Architecture and Construction p. 67 (bottom, right)
Lithuanian State Historical Archive p. 67 (bottom, left)
Rasa Bertašiūtė p. 132, 133, 134

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Front cover: Baroque wooden church in Tabariškės, Šalčininkai District, built in 1770
Frontispiece: The Open Air Museum of Lithuania, Rumšiškės

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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.