

A Word to the Reader

It was the first recorded appearance of the name of Lithuania in the Quedlinburg Annals in 1009 that bestowed meaning upon the subsequent 1000 years of Lithuanian history. In 2009 Lithuania solemnly celebrated the millennium of this event. The celebration involved the organisation of exhibitions, conferences and other events, as well as the publication of a number of books. As a commemoration of this grand occasion, Vilnius Art Academy's Art Research Institute prepared the publication *Lietuva 1009–2009* (Lithuania 1009–2009). Thirty-eight authors—historians, art historians, cultural historians and specialists from a number of fields—produced the seventy essays that lay within the twenty chapters of this book.

The English version of this book was already being envisaged during the preparation of the Lithuanian version, although realisation of this project only became possible four years later—when the project received funding from the Research Council of Lithuania.

With the understanding that a review of the history, art and culture of one thousand years of Lithuanian history is still of great relevance, the decision was made to name this publication—“Lithuanian Millennium: History, Art and Culture”. As in the Lithuanian version of the book, this edition has been designed for the common reader, and, as such is not exhaustively academic in its manner or presentation. Attempts have been made to take a freer look at the project as a whole, and to “arrange” the books contents in a more innovative way—interpreting facts in a more playful manner.

The structure of the book is based on chronology. The principle chosen could be described as one of opening, or incision, i.e. where an epoch is described through a single or small number of aspects—as if they were the strokes of a sketch. In this way a familiar feature may suddenly acquire new nuances or a new feature of that epoch be revealed. The book touches upon a number of subjects that are not central to its chronology—subjects which cast new light on the periods under discussion. One can find within these pages articles on subjects as diverse and illuminating as Lithuanian folk art or the issue of the relationship between Lithuanian ethnicity and citizenship.

It is history, art and culture—those aspects which embody and reflect the spirit of the epoch—that are the most important accents of this book. Especial attention was paid to pictorial presentation and the manner in which images can give colour to the periods which they represent. In some places these images are direct illustrations of the text, while in others they independently illuminate this or that detail of the past. The photographs of documents, historical monuments, art works or their details give breath and life to the many events, moments and processes that the span of this book encompasses.

The appearance of this publication would not have been possible without the work and effort made by a large number of people. The editors of this book would like to express their gratitude to all the authors for their texts and their offers of illustrations.

Special thanks must go to the museum workers, archivists and collectors involved in this project for their kind collaboration, not to mention those private individuals who kindly allowed us to use their collections for the illustration of this book. We are especially grateful to the workers of the Lithuanian Art Museum, National Museum of Lithuania, Vytautas Magnus War Museum, Museum of Genocide Victims, Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, M. K. Čiurlionis National Art Museum, Castle Research Centre “Lithuanian Castles”, Lithuanian Central State Archives, Lithuanian State Historical Archives, Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, Vilnius University and Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania for their goodwill and assistance.

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