

Lithuania is at last close to its millennium. A German written source dating the early 11th century, the Quedlinburg Annals ('Annales Quedlinburgenses'), contains the following inscription for the year 1009: 'Sanctus Bruno, qui cognominatur Bonifacius, archiepiscopus et monachus, XI suae conversionis anno in confinio Rusciae et Lituae a paganis capite plexus, cum suis XVIII, VII. Id. Martii petiit coelos' ('Saint Bruno, alias Bonifacius, archbishop and monk, on the eleventh year of his conversion killed by the pagans together with eighteen companions on 9 March in the Lithuanian and Rus' borderlands, passed into heaven'). This sentence bore the first mention of Lithuania.

The Quedlinburg Annals, published by the famous Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz as early as in 1710, found their way into the history of Lithuania most probably through the 19th century collection of sources, 'Scriptores rerum Prusicarum', volume I of which contained only extracts from the Quedlinburg Annals with the fragment of the event that occurred in 1009. The year 1009 went down in Lithuania's history relatively late – only with the History of Lithuania edited by Adolfas Šapoka, and only as the said fragment from 'Scriptores rerum Prusicarum'. The brev-

ity of the message determined that the fact was not discussed more extensively in respect of Lithuania's history, moreover that all other sources (including the historiography) referring to St Bruno's mission localised it in Prussia. Consequently, the mention of Lithuania was considered accidental. It seemed that Lithuania had nothing to do with it, that the year 1009 was not a breakthrough in its history. Neither the baptism of the ruler nor the state were referred to – just the criminal event. In addition, we probably could not believe that Lithuania and the name of it could be so tardy. Taught by Simonas Daukantas and Jonas Basanavičius to identify the Aesti (Balts) with the Lithuanians, we expected, after these patriarchs of our homeland, to find a lost Baltic Atlantis; therefore, the message in the Quedlinburg Annals seemed to us fragmentary and accidental. While, usually for historical culture, the first mention of a phenomenon is considered to be the rise of it (e.g. the first mention of Vilnius is considered its founding), such content was not provided to the mention of Lithuania as if in the expectation of discovering other documents that would testify to a much more glorious past of Lithuania. Yet as long as it has not been done, there was an opportunity to make sense to the emergence of the



Fragment of the door in the Gniezn (Poland) Cathedral featuring the mission of St Adalbert in 997 in Prussia

name of Lithuania from the silence of sources.

Knowing the fate of the name of Lithuania (it was attempted to be brought to obliteration: in the mid-16th century, at the time of conclusion of the Union of Lublin, there were suggestions to name it New Poland, while Russia, on capturing the Lithuanian lands in the late-18th century, named it its North-Western territory), even the mention of its millennium makes sense. Exactly such modest formula for 'mentioning the millennium of the name of Lithuania' was originally chosen.

The first discovery:

St Bruno indeed went to Lithuania

The date 1009 started a new era in 1983, when Prof. Edvardas Gudavičius supplemented Lithua-

nia's history with additional sources describing the mission and death of St Bruno. The Quedlinburg Annals that mention Lithuania in the context of St Bruno's death is not the only source telling about this event. There are more of them, including the bishop Thietmar of Merseburg's (1012–1018) Chronicle, the story of the Benedictine monk Wibert of Bavaria 'The History of St Bruno's Sermonizing in Prussia' (ca. 1020), and 'The Life of St Romuald' (ca. 1040) by the Italian theologian and philosopher Saint Peter Damian (a famous medieval philosopher of the 11th century, reformer of the Church, to whom the saying 'Philosophy is the servant of theology' belongs. However, all of them localised St Bruno's mission in Prussia.

And yet in the present times a conclusion that the most precise are namely the Quedlinburg Annals, confirming the Saxon version, while the other, Bavarian and Italian versions are only interpretations of the direct or indirect main version, was arrived at. After all, even in the 13th century, i.e. after more than two hundred years had elapsed since the said events, and even in such a geographically close country as Poland, all Balts were still called Prussians, Mindaugas – the Prussian king, and stories were told how he, together with Lithuanians (!), inflicted an attack on Poland. Having taken all this into account, there appeared a possibility to use the relatively much more detailed descriptions of St Bruno's mission, making the year 1009 a true fact in the history of Lithuania. How can this informedness of the Quedlinburg Annals be explained?

Today, Quedlinburg does not look peculiar in any way – there are a good few of such cities in Germany, but in the 10th century, when the emperors of the Holy Rome were Saxon dukes, the Saxon capital Magdeburg was at the same time an imperial capital. And Quedlinburg is not far from Magdeburg. It was the city of residence, death in 936, and burial in the Church of St Servacius of Henry I, the beginner of the Saxon dynasty, father of

the emperor Otto I the Great (ruled 912-936). To the Church of St Servacius, a convent funded by the wife of Henry I, Matilda – an institution for the upbringing of girls belonging to that time's Saxon nobility, was established. The abbesses of this convent were in close relationship with the imperial family (in 1009, one abbess of the Convent was the sister of the emperor Otto III, Adelaide). News from the Emperor's Court in Magdeburg might possibly be brought right to the Convent. This could also happen with the information of the participants of St Bruno's mission who had remained alive – importantly, they (the fact of their remaining alive is mentioned by Wibert) did not confuse Prussia with Lithuania any more. Thus, the Emperor's Court in Magdeburg, too, which should have been getting the most accurate information, should not already have confused these two territories, and that namely was recorded in the Quedlinburg Annals.

So let us make the first conclusion. It is no accident that Lithuania was mentioned in that year – in 1009, the first disseminator of Christianity, Bruno of Querfurt (ca. 974-1009), a monk, the son of a Saxon duke came to Lithuania, and was killed here. One can say: Columbus discovered America,



The Convent of St Servacius in Quedlinburg (Germany)

and St Bruno discovered Lithuania. In this regard, Lithuania's millennium is not in any way inferior and maybe is even richer in events than Austria's millennium celebrated in 1996, which only marked an accidental mention of the name of Austria in one church document. And moreover is it richer in events than Hungary's millennium celebrated in 1896, which marked the standard date of the invasion of the Magyar tribes in Pannonia.

The second discovery: baptism of the 'king' of Lithuania

The most important event in the detailed descriptions – by Wibert and St Peter Damian – is the baptism of 'king' Netimer. So, the mission of St Bruno started much more successfully than the tragically ended in 997 mission of St Adalbert to Prussia: Netimer appeared to understand the meaning of Christian-

ity and even capable of discussion on theological issues. Netimer and his tribesmen converted and were baptised; he even intended to renounce power in favour of his son and, himself, to join the activities of St Bruno. However, a success at the beginning, St Bruno's mission ended tragically: Netimer's brother, who lived separately, beheaded the missionary and assassinated nearly all his companions. Thus Netimer's baptism in 1009 was the first baptism in Lithuania. As a matter of fact, it was the baptism without subsequent continuation. It cannot therefore be comparable with either the baptism of Clovis, the founder of Franconia, the 1500th anniversary of which was marked in 1996, or with the baptism of Mieszko, the ruler of Poland, in 966, or the baptism and crowning of St Stephan, the ruler of Hungary, in 1000. And yet Netimer's baptism confirms



The medal dedicated to the year 1009 by Petras Repšys

that the year 1009 is not Lithuania's name-day only. It is the first precise date in the history of Lithuania, the first real plot of the Lithuanian history.

The third discovery: Lithuanian public in 1009

If we would accept the traditional historical version that the events of 1009 developed in the Prussian or Yatvingian lands, we could expect an analysis of the sources describing St Bruno's mission, what the-then public of the said tribes was like. This was not done, however. Netimer's public was only considered in the present times. The first mission arrived in Lithuania in 1009. St Bruno presumably headed here because the neighbours knew about the presence of the ruler Netimer in Lithuania. In our days' understanding, Netimer was not a king nor

a duke: he only ruled one of the Lithuanian tribes. He had a formation of 300 warriors – not many for a state, but obviously too many for a tribe. Netimer's rule over not any more a tribe is suggested by other things as well: his power was hereditary; he considered his tribe's territory his patrimony (*patria*), which was clearly bounded and protected. This would suggest about the early stage of formation of the head of the tribe's right of ownership to land, the great allodium. In fact, this process had started not long ago – one brother of Netimer's partitioned off, and lived and ruled separately (so the family could share the tribe's territory), and his other brother continued to live together. Netimer's lodging was called palace, he worshiped idols of his own; there probably existed a pantheon of gods, too, and a shrine that was

governed by the head of the tribe. Thus Netimer could not yet be viewed as the head of the state but he was already more than the head of the tribe.

For Lithuania, the year 1009 is not the same as the marked in our times emergencies of the USA (in 1973), the Mongol Empire (in 2006), and the Empire of Charles the Great (in 2000). This date is also hardly comparable with Poland in 966 or Hungary in 1000 – the Lithuanian state will be created by Mindaugas only, and his baptism will evolve into Christianisation as late as in 1387. In the historians' view, even with a most favourable turn of circumstances, Netimer's Lithuania would have evolved as a state after a span of approximately one hundred years.

And yet these interpretations seem to suggest that in 1009 Lithuania was on its way from a tribe to a state. Consequently, Lithuania was not only discovered but had emerged itself as such. Thus, there will be no mistake: we should mark not only the mention of Lithuania but, also, Lithuania's millennium in 2009.

The fortune of 1009

In 1040 (or 1044, or maybe there have been two marches), Yaroslav the Wise, the ruler of Kievan Rus,

marched to Lithuania, conquered it, and forced it to pay tribute. So the plot of 1009 as if contains encoded the entire subsequent fortune of Lithuania: we stood up, fell, and rose again. Two centuries elapsed; Lithuania created its state anew – the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which in 1253 for a short time became a kingdom and had crowned its first ruler Mindaugas. While apostatised from Christianity, it was nonetheless the only nation in the East Baltic region to withstand the Crusades. Having adopted Christianity, under Vytautas (1392-1430), Lithuania ultimately stopped the Western aggression in the Battle of Grünwald in 1410, and became part of the Central-Eastern European and the Latin Western civilisation. It remained such until 1795, when Russia usurped it. However, in the 20th century, Lithuania rose again twice (in 1918 and 1990) to create the modern state – Republic of Lithuania. It seems, these are the twists of the fate of Lithuania that are regarded by the designers of the three coins dedicated to Lithuania's Millennium. In the tree coins is the fate of Lithuania; in the three coins is Lithuania's millennium.

Prof. Dr. Alfredas Bumblauskas

100 LITAS COIN FROM THE SERIES DEDICATED TO THE MILLENNIUM OF THE MENTION OF THE NAME OF LITHUANIA

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(Millennium of the name of Lithuania)

Designed by Liudas Parulskis and Giedrius Paulauskis

Mintage 5 000 pcs

Issue 2007



Fresco in Pažaislis Camaldolese Monastery featuring St Bruno's mission

Information is available at the Bank of Lithuania

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Lithuanian Collectors Coins

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On the cover: fragment of a transcript (16th c.) of the Quedlinburg Annals

Photographs by A. Baltėnas and R. Ginaitis. The photographs published here are from the archive of A. Bumblauskas

Published by the Bank of Lithuania

Gedimino pr. 6, LT-01103 Vilnius, Lithuania

Printed by the UAB "Baltijos kopija", Karcivių g. 13B, LT-09109 Vilnius, Lithuania

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