

WELCOMING THE 30TH ISSUE: WE COLLECT “EVERYTHING THAT HAS BEEN SCATTERED OVER THE PAGES OF LITHUANIA’S PARLIAMENTARISM DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS STATEHOOD”

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Seventeen years have passed since the Interinstitutional Decision on the Establishment of *Parlamento studijos* was signed, and today we can delight in the results of the persistent and consistent work of the journal’s editorial team and authors. When listing through the pages of *Parlamento studijos* (“Parliamentarism Studies”) and reading its articles, one feels respectful surprise at such abundant variety. The journal features research articles and presentations addressing the tradition of history, law, linguistics, political studies, information management and national and European parliamentarism as well as expressions of the state’s political life, which can obviously contribute to the maturity of Lithuania’s political culture. A truly valuable archive has been accumulated. It encompasses research on issues of parliamentarism from various time periods evaluating, from the perspective of democratic progress, events, personalities, consequences of decisions, processes and political situations and covers “Everything that has been scattered over the pages of Lithuania’s parliamentarism during the development of its statehood [...]”.¹

¹ Vaišnys, A. Leidinio koncepcijos metmenys. Available at: <https://journals.lnb.lt/parliamentary-studies/about>

As it is with every other anniversary, the 30th issue of the journal invites to return to the starting point, its origins, and look for new aspects of its evaluation. What is the date that indicates the journal's establishment?

The process of the evolution of Lithuania's independence, having liberated humanities and social sciences and accelerated the clarification of the strands of these research areas and researchers' priorities regarding subjects and demands, brought to light the deficit of studies in the field of parliamentarism, which is a specific political, law and communication phenomenon. In the early 21st century, Lithuanian research institutions did not yet undertake subjects which could have contributed to maintaining currency of the institutional expertise of the parliament, as there were other issues conforming to a greater number of research interests and even triggering more inspiration. Even in 2000, the year of the 80th anniversary of the Constituent Assembly of Lithuania, there were not so many researchers who could have been invited to participate at an international scientific conference not only for delivering presentations selected according to the novelty and importance of their subject matter but, in the first place, for discussing since the presentations' summaries had been issued as a separate publication before the event.² The importance of the subject of the history of Lithuania's Parliament (the Seimas), which extends over several centuries as does that of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, was emphasised by one of the conference's speakers the British historian of parliamentarism Dr. Paul Seaward. A lack of research on the history of the Seimas was also referred to by the Chairman of the Committee for the Commemoration of the Anniversary of the Constituent Assembly set up by the Seimas the Speaker of the 7th Seimas Vytautas Landsbergis. The issue of establishing a publication devoted to

² 1920–1922 metų parlamentinė patirtis: sprendimų politika, tikslai, aplinkybės (konferencija) Steigiamajam Seimui – 80. (2000; Vilnius). 87 p. : iliustr.

parliamentarism became even more self-evident to the leaders of the subsequent term's parliament and, therefore, it was discussed, among "other issues", at least at two meetings of the Board of the Seimas. Both the Office of the Seimas and the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, which provides the Seimas with information analysis and bibliographic information, had to admit that there was no permanent specialised research on this subject.³ All this led to a decision to initiate a journal aggregating research on parliamentarism issues. For a certain period of time, the implementation of this idea was impeded by a lack of adequate state policy and financial support. The first step in this direction was taken when chief executives of several research institutions, among whom there was the author of this text representing the National Library's administration, were invited to a meeting at the Seimas in the May of 2004, at which the Interinstitutional Decision on the Establishment of *Parlamento studijos* was signed. This Decision, having laid groundwork for the emergence of a research journal, was ensued by the assembling of an editorial team,⁴ which was obliged to draw regulations for the journal, and asking the administration of the Seimas to provide mediation at the Government with the purpose to get finance for the journal's preparation and publication. At a meeting of the administration of the Seimas, the editorial board was recommended to choose as the journal's founder and publisher the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania.

Though numerous things irretrievably fade from memory, it still holds vivid recollection of unusual circumstances that suspended the publishing of *Parlamento studijos*, which had already gained momentum. Not everybody was satisfied with the journal's success

³ Vaišnys, A. (2018). Kam įstatymų leidėjui istorija? *Parlamento studijos*. Nr.25, p. 5. Available at: <https://journals.lnb.lt/parliamentary-studies/article/view/43>

⁴ This initiative was joined by the Rector of Vilnius University Benediktas Juodka in the name of this higher education establishment: he sent a letter in 2006.

and the decision that the National Library be granted the publishing right. In 2007, the contemporary Secretary-General of the Seimas requested that the National Library cede the publishing right of *Parlamento studijos* to the Seimas on the grounds that from that time onwards, the publishing of the research journal, given its subject matter, should be the prerogative of the Office of the Seimas and that it would be financed from the Office's funds. Since the journal's authors and other researchers did not agree to cooperate with the contemporary publishers of the Seimas *Valstybės žinios* and the contemporary Secretary-General, the publishing of *Parlamento studijos* ceased for two years. On the other hand, the effort taken by the interinstitutional editorial board, researchers and authors of articles to resume the journal's publication were not in vain, and on 1 April 2009, the Board of the Seimas set out a requirement for the Office of the Seimas to return the publishing right to the founder and publisher, the National Library. In other words, the speaker of the 10th Seimas Arūnas Valinskas and its Board, after hearing the members of the Editorial Board Dr. Aivas Ragauskas and Dr. Andrius Vaišnys, re-established the conditions for the publishing of this significant research journal, once again ensured its immunity from political influence and thus expanded the area of parliamentarism studies in Lithuania.

That same year, a new issue of *Parlamento studijos* appeared. Thus, the 2004 approval by the members of the Board of the Seimas the Acting Speaker of the 8th Seimas Česlovas Juršėnas and the Deputy Speaker Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis of the journal's concept and the decision to grant the National Library its publishing right turned out to be far-sighted. This decision was undeniably based on the fact that, alongside the National Library's key functions as a national library, this institution had been performing the function of a parliamentary library together with structural units of the Seimas starting with 20 November 1991 under the Resolution of the Presidium of the

Supreme Council (in 2004, this function was enacted by law). In 2018, Andrius Vaišnys repeatedly stated the reason for publishing *Parlamento studijos* by the National Library. The rationale behind such an aim was safeguarding the journal from external attempts to make adjustments to objective results of research or even to suppress its publication: “One of the reasons for publishing *Parlamento studijos* by the National Library was a conceptual purpose to start a tradition of independent evaluation of texts. And such a tradition is already there”.⁵

We are welcoming the 30th issue of *Parlamento studijos* and can say that the journal has already acquired its authors and readers. They are not only politicians or observers of politics but also investigators of the history and law of the state and proactive admirers of history. Over time, dissemination of the journal’s content underwent development. A more convenient search functionality conforming to the altered behaviour of users has been introduced into the journal’s Website by applying Web tools. It is not only attractiveness that these changes have provided to the journal and its Website. Individual issues and articles became more easily accessible and more convenient to read, and the Website, as a platform for the investigation of parliamentarism, opened up to a broader audience of information users. In perspective, it would be appropriate for the Website to employ technologies of Web 3.0 based on a methodology for open linked data. It would allow users’ search retrieving not only digital articles by Lithuanian authors aggregated on the Website and information about them but also referring to open access parliamentarism studies by researchers from other countries. Though somewhat behind time, the world’s memory institutions and publishing industries are already embracing Semantic Web technologies.

⁵ Vaišnys, A.(2018). Kam įstatymų leidėjui istorija? *Parlamento studijos*. Nr. 25, p.7. Available at: <https://journals.lnb.lt/parliamentary-studies/article/view/43>

According to the analysis that has been done,⁶ since 2009, when the journal's publication was resumed, its content has been enriched by new issues related to information management, communication, economics and sociology, though the historical aspect of parliamentarism still prevails and makes the bulk of the material published in the present issue. The first three articles in this issue are devoted to the evaluation of forms of activities and political behaviour of the Seimas of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania after the Union of Lublin of 1569 during various periods of the existence of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and to the evaluation of the Union of Lublin itself in the latest Lithuanian historiography. As far back as before the Union of Lublin, the Seimas of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania became the leading institution where new ideas of the state's modernisation were nurtured and realised. Therefore, the investigation of the history of the Seimas of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania after the Union of Lublin raises certain issues: did this Union, the Act of which was signed in 1569, end the history of the Seimas of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a state institution? What were the forms of parliamentary activity that the political community of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania applied, and what was its position within the communication with the Union's partners when representing interests of the state within the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth? What was the political union of Poland and Lithuania after the Union of Lublin like? Do today's realities affect the policy of historical memory? These issues are addressed in the articles by Dr. Habilitatus Jūratė Kiaupienė, Dr. Ramūnė Šmigelskytė-Stukienė and Dr. Gintautas Sliesoriūnas, which I will discuss and attempt to find their common aspects.

In the article “The Parliament of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a Link in the Process of State Modernisation (1572–1587)” by Dr.

⁶ Šuminas, A. (2014). Parlamentarizmo mokslinių tyrimų dešimtmetis: 2004–2013 m. „Parlamento studijų“ ir pasaulinių tendencijų apžvalga. *Parlamento studijos*, Nr. 16. Available at: <https://journals.lnb.lt/parliamentary-studies/issue/view/no16>

Habilitatus Jūratė Kiaupienė, the major focus is on the forms and content of parliamentary activities of the Seimas of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1572–1587 after the Union of Lublin of 1569. Drawing on the results of the research, the author concludes that the Seimas of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania not only renewed its independent activity within the Sejm of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth by consolidating the political community for representing the interests of the Lithuanian State within the Commonwealth but also was capable to bring situation under control in its own country during the first three interregna (1572–1573, 1574–1576 and 1586–1587), which befell the Commonwealth. The author emphasises that such high-level commitment by parliamentary institutions strengthened the sovereignty of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania within the Commonwealth and favoured processes of the modernisation of the Lithuanian State which had begun in the first half of the 16th century and engaged an increasing number of representatives of the political community.

The research subject of the article by Dr. Ramunė Šmigelskytė-Stukienė “The Issue of the Sustainability of the Union of Lublin in the Face of the Centralisation of the State: Position of the Lithuanian Nobility (During the Period Between the Four-Year Sejm and the Grodno Sejm)” is closely linked with that of the above-mentioned article. The author presents to readers the final decades of the 18th century in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, which were rich in political events and brought the state to the epoch of the Constitution of 3 May 1791, called the “gentle” revolution. As in the first article, here the author, by building upon the research results, justifies that the stance of the political community of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania towards the Union of Lublin in 1788–1793 helped to stabilise the internal situation in the state against the background of intense processes of centralisation and consolidate the dualistic model of the state, which in principle did not differ from laws adopted in 1569 and

did not change until the final years of the existence of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The article by Dr. Gintautas Sliesoriūnas “A Tragedy’, But ‘Very Beneficial’: the Evaluation of the Union of Lublin in the Latest Lithuanian Historiography” has a common aspect with the above-discussed articles, i.e. the identifying of the nature of the political union of Poland and Lithuania. By building on the research results, the author shapes his approach to the character of the joint Polish and Lithuanian State founded in Lublin and presents the evaluation of the consequences of the Union of Lublin for the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Though the author agrees with the view that, during the several recent decades, there was general consensus regarding the evaluation of the fundamental consequences of the union of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Act of which was signed in Lublin in 1569, for the Lithuanian State and its society, he attempts to identify the emerging diverging aspects related to endeavours to rationalise and classify, by using modern terms, the phenomena of historical past. These diverging aspects are brought to light by analysing research publications from various time periods addressing the subject of the political union of Poland and Lithuania, which came into existence in 1569, and by presenting a detailed panorama of the analysis of these concepts, which stimulates the readers’ reflection. According to the author, by today’s understanding, “a federation” is a state the federal subjects of which have broad autonomy, and “a confederation” is a loose union of states that have retained their sovereignty. The author brings notice to the fact that in the 16th–18th centuries, the opposite was true. “A federation” was generally understood as a military union of states, and “confederations” were states with a specific structure, e.g. the Netherlands and the Old Swiss Confederacy. Though the term “confederation” began to be used and was increasingly gaining popularity in the Lithuanian historiography of the late 20th century, the author notes the fact that the Act of the Union of Lublin and its

accompanying documents contain no such notion for identifying the nature of the union of the states. The author recommends treating this Act's sentence "is declared a federation" as historiographic interpretation of the close and rigid relationship between Poland and Lithuania declared at the beginning of the Act. The article's author takes the side of more moderate evaluators who avoid using the terms "federation" and "confederation" for identifying the political union of Poland and Lithuania and considers that it would be advisable not to squeeze the union of Poland and Lithuania into the framework of modern terminology.

We can conclude that the above-discussed articles hold a unanimous approach that, though the existence within the same state together with Poland restricted the potential of Lithuania's sovereignty, the forms and content of the parliamentary activity employed by representatives of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's political community and their position toward the Kingdom of Poland during various periods of the existence of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth ensured sovereignty of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania within a joint state, which was not abolished until as late as the forced destruction of the Polish-Lithuanian State in the late 18th century. On the other hand, one can recognise certain diverging aspects in the articles, e.g. regarding the identification of the nature of the political union of Poland and Lithuania. Jūratė Kiaupienė and Ramunė Šmigelskytė-Stukienė identify this nature in line with the tradition that gained ground in the late 20th century and had originated in Poland. Gintautas Slišoriūnas holds another methodological approach and recommends not squeezing the political union of Poland and Lithuania into the framework of modern terminology, which does not suit for identifying the unique type of the contemporary political union of Poland and Lithuania. The differences in terminology between the above-discussed articles regarding the political union of Poland and Lithuania confirm

that facts of today's life affect the policy of historical memory by encouraging researchers to look for new aspects in the evaluation of historical past or even apply for it modern terminology. These articles, which build on analysis of archival sources and research publications, substantially contribute to the research on parliamentary institutions of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania during various periods of the existence of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. On the other hand, the differences of approaches to the same research subjects leave room for further scholarly discussion, the necessity of which is confirmed by the statement by the outstanding scientist William Hamilton: “We are never sure that an opinion which we are inclined to suppress is erroneous”.

The article by Dr. Juozas Skirius “The Meeting of the Nationalist American Lithuanian Seimas on 5–6 February 1944 and its Significance” is devoted to the evaluation of the goals of the American Lithuanian Seimas, which gathered in New York City in 1944, and the motivating factors for its summoning. Consistent analysis of archival sources made it possible for the author to collect sufficient amount of data about political activities of the USA's Lithuanian expatriate community, which perceptibly gained momentum during the last years of World War II, when the situation on the Eastern Front was rapidly evolving. Just at that time, Lithuania was under a second threat of Bolshevik occupation. It was this fact that forced the USA's Lithuanian expatriate community to mobilise for political activity devoted to more active engagement into supporting the quest for Lithuania's independence. According to the author, it was just at that time that the idea of the American Lithuanian Seimas with a remit to develop a joint programme for political activity of all American Lithuanians and support for Lithuania originated. However, this idea could not be realised because of differences of political views within political communities of Lithuanian expatriates. The exhaustive panorama of discussions and disputes of various political streams of

American Lithuanians presented by the author suggests the opinion that the main reason for the disagreements between the contemporary political powers, the American Lithuanian Council and the nationalist political movement, was the issue of the leadership as regards the instituting of the American Lithuanian Seimas. The author concludes that the American Lithuanian Seimas, convened in New York City by the nationalist political movement on 5–6 February 1944, though having gathered over 400 participants (who were not only nationalists) and having adopted decisions intended to gain support by the USA authorities in the opposing to Lithuania's occupation, was not treated as a parliament representing all American Lithuanians even by the organisers themselves. The conclusion is based on this event's material documenting that the Executive Committee was assigned to a task "to convene the Seimas of all American Lithuanians". Though the term "Seimas" is no longer used for identifying this event, its role is significant to Lithuania and its people as it motivated the USA authorities not to support Lithuania's occupation. From an internal policy standpoint, this event contributed to the consolidation of Lithuanian nationalists in the USA. Since there had practically been no investigation of activities of the Lithuanian ideological nationalist movement in the USA during the last years of World War II prior to the publication of this article, it will significantly contribute to the knowledge about activities of this political stream of Lithuanians in America and its support for Lithuania's quest for independence.

The text by Dr. Asta Petraitytė-Briedienė "Untold History: Supreme Council Foreign Affairs Commission (Main Aspects of Activity)" invites to return to the period of 1990–1992, when the struggle for Lithuania's independence was underway and the accomplished goal, i.e. the restoration of independence, enabled to ensure permanent work of the Supreme Council – the Reconstituent Seimas and renew structures that were essential for parliamentary activity. One of such structures was the Foreign Affairs Commission approved on 14 March

1990, which carried on its work until the last session of the Supreme Council (on 11 November 1992), to the analysis of which this article is devoted. The investigation of parliamentary activities is based on qualitative analysis of archival sources preserved at the Seimas and publications devoted to the promotion of conferences and other events held at the Parliament. The author presents analysis of parliamentary activities by drawing on carefully collected factual material, which includes the selecting of the Commission's composition and its approval on 20 March 1990, diplomatic itineraries and their tasks and goals, the organisation of the receiving of foreign delegations, support for Lithuania's parliamentary activities provided by Lithuanians from abroad and the international acknowledgement of Lithuania's statehood. The author presents well-justified arguments that after the August session of the Foreign Affairs Commission, a new activity stage oriented to visibility on the international stage by joining or re-joining international organisations as a full member began. The article confines itself to analysis of this parliamentary activity up to 1992; therefore, the author's commitment to further develop this research is encouraging because further research would help to reconstruct parliamentary activities of this significant institution after 1992 and more correctly identify the contribution of these activities to bringing Lithuania back to the international community.

As a final remark, I wish the Editorial Board to expand the publishing of results from research on other branches of parliamentarism since a certainly large number of authors have been assembled for investigating the history of the Seimas; at present, it is important to encourage the publishing on issues of law, economics, political communication and linguistics. We also need a public discussion on the journal's format: is it feasible to continue publishing it in the traditional format or a digital version alone is sufficient as there is the National Library's Website *Journals.lt*. It would also be important to discuss the issue of promoting the results of the parliamentarism research on an

international level. Their publication in English would substantially assist such effort.

Parlamento studijos has finally succeeded in anchoring within the array of Lithuania's acknowledged research publications because the National Library possesses a solid cornerstone for ensuring the statutory function of the parliamentary information service.