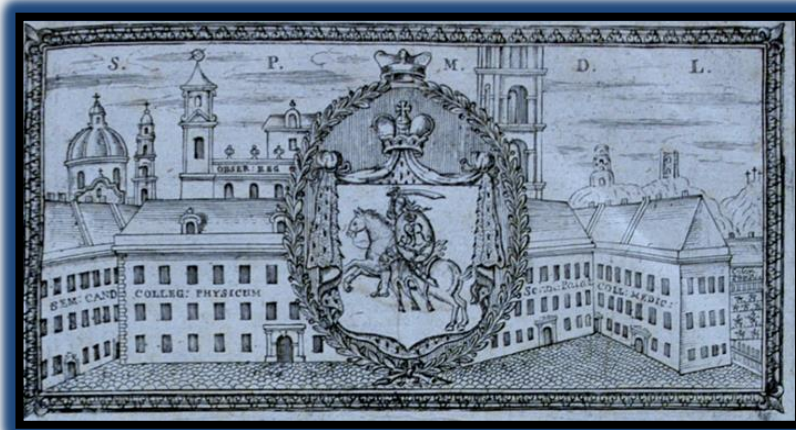


LITHUANIAN INSTITUTE OF HISTORY  
VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY  
NATIONAL MUSEUM – PALACE OF THE GRAND DUKES OF LITHUANIA

19th International Scientific Conference

## The Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 18th Century



### Men and Women (I): Status, Relations, Images

December 3–4, 2020, Vilnius

The rise of centralized states and the growth of absolutism in Western Europe during the early modern period led to increasing external controls imposed on an individual. A private family, kin and home life was placed under the observation and even regulation of the State and the Church. The modern era was marked by mentality changes, which were essentially influenced by the Reformation, as it put the marriage-based family into the centre of public life and abolished clerical celibacy and monasteries in many regions across Europe. Marriage was probably the only permissible form of existence for a woman in Protestant regions. The processes that took place in Europe in the 16th–18th centuries had a direct influence on the situation of women. There is a certain controversy among researchers as to how these changes should be interpreted; however, it is generally stated that the legal and social situation of women deteriorated during the early modern period: the division into ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ activity spheres increased and occurred together with the devaluation of the feminine sphere.

The Age of Enlightenment brought essential changes to the sphere of gender relations. It encouraged to rethink the question of a woman’s role in society and attempted to harmonize the assertions about the differences in the position of men and women and the universalist philosophy of the Enlightenment. The ideas of the social contract, the education of women, partnership in marriage, which were brought forward at the end of the 17th century and in the 18th century, opened the way for the emancipation of women.

In the second half of the 18th century, the ideas of the Enlightenment reached the remotest corners of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Discussions on the status of men and women and their role in society were probably most vigorous in the 8th decade of the 18th century when special attention was paid to the education of the children of both genders in the course of the national education reform launched in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Statutes of the Commission of National Education adopted in 1783 laid down the requirements

for the education of girls. The aim was to educate them as good wives, mothers and mistresses of the house devoted to their Homeland.

Despite the rich historiography addressing “the world of women” in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (significant studies on women’s mentality, the noblewomen’s manor, women’s patronage, communicative networks and other problems have appeared in the last decades), a more holistic look at gender relations in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 18th century, the legal, social and economic status of men and women as well as the ideal images of men and women that dominated in society at that time is still lacking.

The scope of the problem and a wide range of topics encourage us to initiate a cycle of several conferences focusing on the situation of men and women in the 18th century, their images and relations as well as the interpretations of these relations. In the words of Vytautas Kavolis, one of the first in historiography to address the topic of the women and men of the Enlightenment in Lithuanian literature, we would like to invite you to consider whether “the giving of voice to women in the 18th century means that the mindset of men had actually changed”.

The traditional 19th conference of the researchers of the 18th century to be held on December 3–4, 2020 intends to address the following questions:

- theoretical and methodological aspects of gender studies;
- legal, material and social status of women in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 18th century;
- social roles of men and women and their construction;
- male and female daily routine; relations in a family, kin, society;
- manifestations of masculinity and femininity;
- images of men and women in literature and art;
- woman as a writer and creator: female ego-narrative and its studies;
- origins of the emancipation of women: opening of the public sphere for women.

The conference welcomes historians, sociologists, literary scholars, education historians, art critics as well as the researchers in other fields. Please send the topics of your papers and brief abstracts of 3–4 sentences to the conference coordinators until **June 30, 2020**.

**The conference will take place** at the National Museum Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania (Katedros a. 4, Vilnius) and Lithuanian Institute of History (Kražių 5, Vilnius).

**Conference languages:** languages of historiography of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

**Conference Organizing Committee**

Dr. Lina Balaišytė (Lithuanian Culture Research Institute)

Doc. dr. Vydas Dolinskas (National Museum – Palace of The Grand Dukes of Lithuania)

Doc. dr. Liudas Glemža (Vytautas Magnus University)

Doc. dr. Robertas Jurgaitis (Education Academy of Vytautas Magnus University)

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