

Geografia historyczna
Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego

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Historical Geography of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania

Historical geography is one of the disciplines auxiliary for historical studies, situated on the border between history and geography. In this paper, historical geography is understood very broadly as the borderland between many sciences, apart from the abovementioned also archaeology, ethnology, architecture, city planning, the history of towns and villages, the state and the law, Church (not only Catholic), economy (roads, harbours, etc.), culture, military science (fortifications), medicine (elementary disasters) and historical demography.

The aim of this paper is to present the development of research into historical geography of one of the great states of Central East Europe (Grand Duchy of Lithuania) in the period since its establishment in the 13th century until its downfall at the end of the 18th century. Practically, the paper focuses on the research from the end of the 19th century until the present time, at the threshold of the third Millennium, and tries to define the main research problems for the future.

The studies concentrate on five extensive subjects: natural landscape, cultural landscape (settlement, roads, geography of art and literature), historical-political landscape (administrative divisions as well as the state and church borders), geographical horizon and historical cartography.

The conclusions can be summarized as follows: the studies of geographical history have a rich, most often 19th-century origin, are quite well advanced, although to a different degree (e.g., natural landscape leaves much to be desired) and need a well-thought and comprehensive development within the framework of co-operation between the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

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