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MILINKEVIČIŪTĖ

The Collective Biography of Professors and Adjuncts of the Imperial University of Vilnius (1803–1832)

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VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETAS
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MILINKEVIČIŪTĖ

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profesorių ir adjunktų kolektyvinė
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SUMMARY

Research problem

In the early nineteenth century, most of the former territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania belonged to the Russian Empire, which set up the Ministry of Education and organised a unified education system. On the initiative of Emperor Alexander I, the universities of the empire were reorganised: Dorpat (Tartu) in 1802, Vilnius in 1803, Moscow, Kazan, and Kharkov in 1804, and Saint Petersburg in 1819. All of them were united not only by the state imperial status of a higher education institution, but also by the fact that they had to evolve in a new common direction. To become modern scientific study institutions, they renewed lecture content and methodological material, invited highly qualified lecturers, and adequately equipped their research facilities.

Professors and adjuncts of the Imperial University of Vilnius (hereinafter – IUUV) played a significant role in the process of the implementation and dissemination of the education reform. They faced challenges in the changing academic world and made efforts to validate their attitude to science with new methodological approaches and to introduce the education reform in practice. So far, the names of all these visionary men of science have not been known. Their research activities in a wider European context have not been studied, and there is no general picture of these scientists and lecturers as a significant group of society.

In the nineteenth century, the professors and adjuncts of universities formed a separate group within academic communities subject to their own rules and characterised by specific features. This study focuses on those aspects in the evolution of a university scholar that would allow treating professors and adjuncts as an academic group transcending the boundaries of one university and becoming involved in the European research network. The collective biography is constructed around the internationalism and mobility of

this academic group, which are revealed through the examination of the research trips, works, and contacts of its members.

From 1803 to 1832, the academic community of the IUV consisted of professors, professors emeriti, assistants, the administration, and students, and teachers of special disciplines, the so-called masters. All of them (except students) joined a specific societal group united by the formal status of a civil servant, the nature of their activities (research and teaching), exclusive protection by the imperial authorities, and their rights.

A group of professors and adjuncts was the core of the university that carried out research, exchanged and disseminated educational ideas and scientific knowledge. It took place in various forms. Professors and adjuncts developed links with universities, science academies, and associations of other countries. They studied abroad, went on research trips, were members of foreign scientific societies, and thus were part of the internationally-oriented European academic network. It is therefore important to form the picture of the academic individual, who had a degree in science, carried out scientific and pedagogical work, and who transformed the IUV into a centre of European science in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

The dissertation is focused on the professors and adjuncts as the people of science, but does not address their pedagogical activities and contributions to the Lithuanian education system. These issues could be an object of a separate investigation. The study does not include masters (teachers), who did not participate in research activities and did not give lectures.

Research object

The object of this study is a collective biography of a group of 115 professors and adjuncts of the IUV, who were scientists and educators at the university, and its international aspects. They

conducted research, disseminated scientific knowledge and made efforts of integration into the European academic network.

Research aim and goals

The purpose of the work is to study the collective biography of the professors and adjuncts of the IUV in a prosopographic (social and academic) aspect and to single out individual cases (people and their activities) from the analysed group (composition) and examine the forms of their involvement in the European academic network (science, travel, and membership in foreign scientific societies). To achieve this aim, the following objectives are set:

1. Using prosopographic tools, to analyse the composition of the professors and adjuncts of the IUV, their social and territorial origins, religious affiliation, education, and academic duties as a social-cultural foundation of the collective biography.
2. To examine comprehensively the integration of foreign scientists into the group of the professors and adjuncts of the IUV.
3. To examine research trips as a criterion of an academic career and a prerequisite for developing scientific relations abroad.
4. To analyze the membership of the researchers from the IUV in European scientific societies, academies, and institutes as a condition for participation in the European scientific network.

Novelty and relevance of research

The 1803–1832 history of the IUV has been studied quite widely and in various aspects, but little attention was paid to such an important aspect of the IUV as the involvement of the Lithuanian

scientists of the imperial period into the scientific network of Europe and the Russian Empire.

For the first time in historiography, a biographical list (a prosopographic list) of all the professors and adjuncts of the IUUV has been compiled and is presented in this dissertation. The list is based on the criteria of the prosopographic method, which, combined with the collective biography, allows describing a typical academic personality, a professor and an adjunct, of the Imperial University of Vilnius. Also, the dissertation traces the untypical pathways of academic careers, scientific potential, and interaction with other researchers.

New sources were used in the dissertation: service sheets, travel instructions and reports of the professors and adjuncts of the IUUV were introduced into scientific circulation. For the first time in historiography, use was made of the eighteenth-century foreign press in Italian, English, German, and French, the analysis of which allowed raising the problems not addressed so far, taking a fresh look at the activities of scientists of the University of the period in question, describing its context, and tracing contacts with the foreign world of science. The dissertation provides valuable information on the academic staff of the IUUV and their achievements to the current and future researchers.

Research method

This dissertation used the underlying principles of the prosopographic method: a sample of subjects was selected and a prosopographic list of professor and adjuncts of the IUUV was compiled. It should be noted that determining the sample of the professors and adjuncts of the IUUV was complicated. In his monograph on Ignacy Daniłowicz, Augustinas Janulaitis wrote that there were 32 professors and 12 adjuncts at the IUUV at the beginning of the nineteenth century, emphasising that ‘this was written in the law, but the reality did not always match it’. *Vilniaus universiteto*

istorija (The History of Vilnius University) mentions 95 surnames of professors. Daniel Beauvois noted that the only scientist who attempted to draw a list of the staff of the IUUV was Ludwik Janowski, but he mixed professor up with well-known teachers and students and therefore the list should be viewed critically. Based on Janowski, Beauvois estimated that 150 persons taught at the university from 1803 to 1832: professors, adjuncts, emeriti, and masters. He distinguished 135 professors, including adjuncts, teachers, and assistants.

In this study, the number of 115 professors and adjuncts of the IUUV was determined on the basis of their service sheets. The object of the investigation includes all individuals who occupied professorial positions (including professors emeriti and vice-professors), and the lecturers that had acted as adjuncts.

Other teachers of practical subjects (foreign languages, riding, music, fencing, and dance) were not adjuncts and therefore were excluded from the research sample. The remaining staff of the IUUV that performed auxiliary functions (the assistants of the librarian or in the astronomy observatory, the assistants of the medical division and any administrative staff performing the duties similar to those of an adjunct) are also excluded from this sample, because the data on them in service sheets was insufficient. The only exception is Kazimierz Kontrym, an adjunct librarian's assistant, who coordinated all university-related matters (organization of research visits, scholarships, salaries, acquisition of books, equipment of study rooms, recruitment of professors, and the like). After identification of the research sample, a database of the used sources was defined and a questionnaire was developed. Prosopography works by analysing the gradual career development and change, acquisition of research degrees, and pedagogical activities of professors and adjuncts.

The construct forming the research problems of the prosopographic method in the empirical part of the dissertation is relevant to a certain extent, because the indicators characteristic of

the prosopographic method (the civil status, age, geographical and social status, the composition of the professorial corpus) were examined in great detail by Beauvois. The dissertation gives a detailed analysis of other issues (memberships in scientific associations, the professors' connections with the academic world) and addresses the exchange of scientific news and the development of scientific ideas. The prosopographic method can only partially be applied to the analysis of these aspects and therefore it is combined with the approach of collective biography, which examines the lives of individuals. Thus, collective biography is used to examine the problems of the appearance of foreigners at the IUUV, internships abroad, and aspects in career development.

The object and methodological procedures of the method of collective biography are close to the prosopographic method, but, according to Zuzanna Zbróg, it is completely or almost unknown in Central and Eastern Europe. The prosopographic method leads to the calculation of the sample of individuals, and the compilation of the prosopographic list revealed and raised problems that had not been comprehensively analysed in historiography. These problems were further analysed with the help of collective biography, descriptive, and problem analysis methods. The combination of the selected methods allows formulating new research problems and provides criteria for full analysis of the group of professors and adjuncts of the IUUV.

Historiography

The history of the Imperial University of Vilnius has been studied in various aspects. Scholars wrote about the organization and activities of the university, examined the history of science, the university's influence on culture and education, and published biographies of a number of professors and adjuncts. The historiography dedicated to the IUUV is particularly abundant, but not equally important for the problems addressed in the dissertation.

Therefore, the historiography relevant to the theme of the dissertation can be divided into *historiography dealing with problem issues* and *biographies of the professors and adjuncts*. The works include studies on the history of science and the history of the university.

Historiography related to the research problem. Lately, historians have been taking considerable interest in the social history of Russian and German universities. The Institute of German History in Moscow has been publishing a series of books ‘Ubi University, ibi Europe’, which released a collective monograph about the universities of the Russian Empire in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. It analyses the ideas for the universities and their adaptations in the period researched; the evolution of the Russian imperial universities is compared to common European trends. Selected articles by Trude Maurer published in this series under the title “‘Barometers’ or ‘Beacons’ of Society?” analyse the collective biography of professors as a new approach to the analysis of the social history of a university. The author of the articles investigates traineeships of future Russian professors in Germany and examines their situation between the intelligentsia and civil servants.

In Lithuanian historiography, the topic of the academic career has been addressed in a fragmented way through the issue of recruitment and research degrees. Award of research degrees in the Department of Physics and Mathematics was examined in more detail by Ieva Šenavičienė. In her view, it is difficult to assess the scientific level and significance of the whole university without discussing the granting of degrees in other departments.

Research visits of the lecturers of the IUUV are not an entirely new topic: new material about them was found in the study by Daniel Beauvois, which was widely used in this dissertation. Julian Dybiec published a very important article about travelling of Vilnius scientists (1803–1831) and a significant publication on the trips of nineteenth-century Polish scientists to France. In Lithuanian

historiography, the trips of the university's physicists Stefan Stubielewicz and Feliks Drzewiński were investigated by Šenavičienė, who suggests that such journeys had a significant impact on the development of physics in Lithuania.

There is no work that would be dedicated to the membership of the university professors in foreign research or promotion societies and academies, and the information that investigates this issue is particularly fragmented. Therefore, works that examine the history of research institutions (institutes, associations, academies), analyse their regulations, terms of admission, and publications, and introduce their most important members were useful to the dissertation.

In current historiography, a new approach to the higher education in the Russian Empire was presented by Andrei Andreyev, who traces back the pathways of the educational reform of the nineteenth century, investigates their sources, and searches for the common features and differences between the universities of the Russian Empire. The author examines the emergence of Russian universities and the peculiarities of their system. His work is probably the first and so far the only comprehensive analysis of the circulation of scientific ideas not only from the west to the east, but also from the north to the south (from Dorpat University to Vilnius, etc.) So far, the history of the universities has not been analysed at such a new angle: through global trends and reforms that took place across Europe in the nineteenth, which found their reflection in the 1803 reorganization of Russian imperial universities.

Professors' biographies. Józef Bieleński's paradigmatic three-volume work has not lost its relevance and value. Along with service sheets of the professors and adjuncts of the IUUV, it became the basis for the compiled prosopography of the university professors and adjuncts and allowed comparing the factual errors observed in historiography (such as the dates of birth of professors and adjuncts, the dates of obtaining scientific degrees, and the dates of joining the scientific societies) and correcting them. This monumental piece of

research includes a list of works by and biographies of the scientists of the IUW which has been poorly researched.

Despite Bieliński and Beauvois' advanced researches, the collective biography of professors and adjuncts of the IUW as an academic group has not been written yet. The main trend of existing historiography consists in biographies of individual professors. It should be noted that there are hundreds of works about some professors, and not a single one about others. Much has been written about Joseph Frank, Józef Gołuchowski, Gottfried Ernest Groddeck, Joachim Lelewel, Jan Śniadecki, Jędrzej Śniadecki, and Hieronim Stroynowski.

The authors note the impact of the period on scientific activities of the professors and adjuncts of the IUW, but they neither elaborate on it nor provide a broader European context. They write about the impact of the ideas of Enlightenment with reservation, although at the same time they observe that one scientist or another relied on a certain philosophical system of the worldview of the time. An internal conflict on the ideological level between German and Polish professors of the IUW is reflected in historiography, but no detailed analysis of this issue has been carried out.

Scientific biographies have drawbacks: they do not contain a wider European context and do not explore the ideas that guided professors in their scientific and pedagogical activities. Although the authors observe scientific contacts between the professors of the IUW and famous European scientists, their findings are limited to stating the facts: they do not systematise the data on the actual manner of such communication and acceptance of ideas. Most often, biographies are limited to a description of a person's life.

Works in the history of science, which include studies on individual science disciplines, are also useful for collective biography as all nineteenth-century scientific knowledge and innovations were produced by particular individuals and their scientific work. Works dedicated to the history of science and their specific terminology clearly point to a scientist's contribution to the specific field of science and its development at the local level. These works contain interesting

insights and facts and highlight the relationship between science and the scientist. However, except for a few recent studies they are rather limited; such works lack an integrated approach covering the research of a branch of science in famous European universities at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Such a comparison would enable assessing the situation of science in the IUUV on a broader scale, identifying the trends in scientific developments, introducing prominent representatives of foreign science and the reception of their ideas, innovation trends, and the impact on the specialists of the IUUV.

In addition to works on specific fields of science, there exists a whole series of overviews of the history of the IUUV intended for the general public or used as textbooks. The works dedicated to the history of the university have been repeatedly expanded, rewritten, and transformed into a historiographical tradition, which is particularly evident in honouring the anniversaries of the modern Vilnius University, when occasional works highlighting dates important to the university are released.

In summing up historiography, it should be stressed that through the use of approaches and methods of social history, the dissertation is primarily focused on the group of professors and adjuncts that formed the academic core of the Imperial University of Vilnius. Consequently, the history of the university and science plays a secondary role in this study.

Sources

The base of the sources of the dissertation consists of published and archival documents. By their nature, the published sources can be divided into: (1) memoirs and (2) correspondence. The scientific press of the period in question forms a separate group of the published sources. In addition to the above, various other sources were used: published scientific works by the professors and adjuncts of the IUUV, texts of lectures, public speeches, panegyrics, dissertations, polemics, and festive acts of meetings.

The manuscript sources consist in the documents stored in the archives of Lithuanian State Historical Archives (LVIA), the Manuscript Department of the Wróblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (LMAVB RS), the Manuscript Department of the Library of Vilnius University (VUB RS), and the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA). By the nature of the documents, the sources are divided into: (1) service sheets of professors and adjuncts, (2) correspondence, (3) formal (guidelines and the reports of the travelling scientists to the university) and informal (travel journals, notes) documents pertaining to research visits.

Timetables, plans, and notes of lectures, diplomas, various documents (biographical information) from the so-called ‘Teki Polińskiego’, and the documents from the collection of the Vilnius Medical Society (f. 26) stored at the Manuscript Department of the Library of Vilnius University were also used.

Research structure

The work consists of the introduction, four parts, a list of sources and literature, and an appendix: prosopography (a biographical list) of the professors and adjuncts of the Imperial University of Vilnius.

In Part I of the dissertation, the biographical data are analysed by the prosopographic method. The data includes social aspects of the professors and adjuncts of the IUV: the origins, religion, age, marital status, and what it tells about the university personality. The dynamics of the acquisition of degrees and positions and the structure of these positions are analysed; the essence of being a professor and an adjunct of the IUV, and the correlation of their age and the scientific career are explained. This part presents a broader and more detailed analysis of the professors’ career development, their hierarchy, and what the schedule of lectures can say about it.

Part II describes the career of foreign scientists and highlights their merit to the IUV. Not only did the extraordinary example of

August Louis Bécu reveal numerous aspects of the internal life of the IUV, but it also gave a broader picture of the university people and their scientific environment. It explains the circumstances under which new branches of science emerged and the consequences of discussions and expression of different outlooks. Basically, the analysis of the relationship of a single individual with the immediate scientific environment revealed little known yet important scientific achievements at the IUV.

Part III analyses research trips of the university staff, investigates formal aspects of scientific travel to Western European countries and its informal expressions. It examines the organisation of a scientific trip, the criteria for selecting and sending a person abroad, and the role that the university, the deans of scientific divisions, and the university curator played in this process. Most importantly, it explores the significance of the research trip to the scientist's professionalism, the opportunities it offered and how they were exploited, and the role the foreign experience played in the career of a university scientist.

Part IV follows the traces of Vilnius scientists in Western European scientific societies and analyses completely new problems not yet raised in historiography about the memberships of the professors and adjuncts of the IUV in European scientific societies.

The structure of the work is problematic, but it is aimed at maintaining the chronological boundaries that were brought about by major changes within the IUV: the arrival of new scientists from abroad and their employment from 1803 to 1805 and the related processes: the establishment of foreign scientists and the characteristics of their activities; organization of research visits, which intensified between 1816 and 1822 when the largest number of scientists were sent abroad, when the dynamism and consolidation of the university's academic community were at their highest and when all the forces were working towards the improvement of the university persona and building of a university of science and research.

Conclusions

1. The purpose of the dissertation was to study the collective biography of the professors and adjuncts of the Imperial University of Vilnius from the point of view of social and academic characteristics and to examine the forms of involvement of this special social group in the European academic network. Based on the prosopographic investigation, it was found that the composition of the professor and adjunct group of the IUUV changed noticeably from 1803 to 1832: from the start of the university reorganization until its closure, this group increased almost four times and was the largest compared to other universities of the Russian Empire and larger than in some Western European universities (such as Oxford or Erfurt). The analysis of the data on 115 professors and adjuncts led to the definition of a typical professor and adjunct of the IUUV in the social and academic context. Most often a professor or an adjunct was a representative of nobility, a Roman Catholic, married and with children, a holder of the doctoral degree who had started his academic career in his early thirties. Almost a third of university lecturers were foreigners, but it is important to note that foreign scientists never dominated the IUUV as preference was given to local scientists. A foreign scientist was usually from German lands, an evangelical Lutheran, married and with children, a graduate of one of the most advanced nineteenth-century German or Italian universities with a master's degree equal to a doctoral degree, who brought his research experience and his status to Vilnius. Although these two early-nineteenth-century individual types differed in their social origins, they had common features such as higher education and qualifications, which entitled them to be attributed to the same group of professors and adjuncts of the IUUV.

2. Based on the data of prosopographic list, it was estimated that during the entire period considered, the IUUV employed 29 scientists from abroad, which accounted for 25 per cent of the group. Most of them came from German lands because there higher education

reforms were being implemented like in other Western European universities, the number of universities decreased, and scientists had to look for jobs elsewhere. This moment is very important because it is contrary to the established historiography that the recruitment of foreign scientists depended on the needs of the administration of the IUUV. The dissertation revisits this problem. The dynamics of the careers and the contribution of foreign scientists to the research at the university from 1803 to 1832 are analyzed in a broader European context, accentuating the example of other universities of the Russian Empire. The analytical part of the dissertation shows clearly that it was the representatives of foreign science who brought to the university the latest methods of organizing and disseminating science. They introduced new branches of science (physiology, toxicology, comparative anatomy), founded scientific societies, established the first science magazines and a new genre of the academic press (review), applied innovative teaching methods (seminar, private tutoring), the need for assistants, and introduced the idea of translating the schedule of public lectures into Latin and Polish. Competition between foreign and local lecturers became a form of incentive thanks to which the university had ambitions to become a research institution. Thus, the empirical part of this study reveals not only special cases, such as August Louis Bécu's, who not only made efforts to prove a high level of science and withstand his positions upon the arrival of famous foreign medical scientists but also raised the issue of scientific competence, pointed to varying qualification of foreign scientists, and to the role of protection for Italian scientists whose research was not always of the highest level.

3. Since the method of prosopography was not sufficient for the analysis of research trips as a criterion for an academic career and the emergence of research contacts abroad, the approach of collective biography was employed: all the trips of the university scientists were analysed collectively, on the basis of the sources that for the first time in historiography were subjected to a comprehensive and full examination (travel reports, instructions,

travel journals). This brought to attention the periodisation of the university research trips and variations in its different stages (the scientists' self-funded travel, travel without the highest research degree, Mikołaj Mianowski's arbitrary departure abroad). The university instructions defined the conduct on scientific trips and specific tasks corresponding to the needs of each department and specialist, the observance of which was of great importance. Interestingly, these instructions revealed the intentions of their authors, mostly senior professor and deans of research divisions. The instructions demanded submission of half-yearly reports that would be presented at the meetings and discussed, and the content of the reports would be forwarded to the Ministry of Education of the Russian Empire, which was charged with the control of funds. So far, no attention has been paid in historiography to the favourable attitude of the imperial authorities to the advanced training of their subjects, professors and adjuncts, and to sending them abroad. The interaction between the highest power and the academic environment manifested itself through the role of Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, the curator of the Imperial University of Vilnius, in the organization of scientific trips: he was concerned about the return of well-educated scientists back to the university. Therefore, even when the situation digressed from the university rules and Ignacy Abłamowicz did not send reports about the course of the trip, attempts were made to persuade him to return and he was offered a professorship. Scientific trips increased personal competences of the university lecturers and, in the long run, enabled them to occupy higher positions of ordinary professors at the university, guaranteed a career, and secured a high level of university science as an important indicator of "intellectual prominence".

4. Western European societies and the membership of the university professors in them have not been addressed in historiography. This dissertation is the first attempt to analyse the participation of the university researchers in European scientific societies, academies, and institutes as a condition of involvement in the European science

network. It allows a wider look at the scope of scientific information and international academic communication of the professors and adjuncts of the IUUV. Thirty-one professors and adjuncts were members of around 40 different scientific societies and academies, both in the Russian Empire and in Western Europe, mostly in Italy and France. The analysis shows, however, that a membership in Russian imperial scientific associations was more formal and the university professors and adjuncts were not inclined to take an active part in these societies. Still, scientific societies were important because they made efforts to engage the professors and adjuncts of the IUUV in the European science network: they provided the opportunity to publish works in societies' publications and disseminated scientific research through their corresponding members. It should be admitted only a small number of IUUV professors and adjuncts, mainly the assistants of foreign scientists who had arrived in Vilnius between 1803 and 1805 and who had joined scientific societies still in the eighteenth century, took advantage of these opportunities. Marcin Poczebutt, the only local member in the group of the university's professors and adjuncts, laid foundations for international communication in the eighteenth century and speeded up the modernisation of the IUUV. It was not their research degrees or their scientific activities that the young representatives of science at Vilnius University based their claims to join European scientific societies, but their acquaintance with outstanding professors of the university. Only Joachim Lelewel dared to renounce the honour of becoming a member of some scientific societies and even taking up positions in the societies: to him, the most important thing was his research and any extraneous work, including research trips, interfered with his work. Membership in a scientific society allowed the professors and adjuncts of the IUUV to feel part of the world of science that encompassed the exchange of information of the science world, faster communication, adjustment of their own studies, and the possibility to be heard and recognized outside the country. From 1803 to 1832, membership of the

professors and adjuncts of the IUUV in European and Russian imperial scientific societies was a critical element of modernisation. The issue of the scientists' international communication and its forms, publication of research studies in the foreign press, research contacts and their expansion, and the yet-unexplored archives of Western European scientific societies with centuries-long traditions are still awaiting the attention of scholars.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

1. D. Milinkevičiūtė, Mokslinių kelionių į Vakarų Europą aplinkybės ir jų organizavimas Vilniaus universitete (1803–1832) [Circumstances of scientific travels to Western Europe and their organisation at the University of Vilnius (1803–1832)], *Lituanistica*. 2018, Vol. 64 No. 1, p. 1–13.

2. D. Milinkevičiūtė, Relations between the professors of the University of Vilnius (1803–1832) and the students' associations, *Będziemy wzorem innym, sobie samym chluba*” – w 200. rocznicę powstania Towarzystwa Filomatów, pod red. Andrzeja Szmyta i Elżbiety Klimus, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego w Olsztynie, 2020, p. 35–47.

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Dalia Milinkevičiūtė graduated in history with a master's degree *cum laude* from the Faculty of History, Vilnius University, in 2015 and started doctoral studies the same year. During her doctoral studies, she published three papers (two of them on the theme of the dissertation), presented her research at eleven conferences, five of which were international (in Lithuania, Poland (Olsztyn), and the United Kingdom (Ormskirk, Edge Hill University). In 2019, Daiva Milinkevičiūtė was awarded the scholarship of the Research Council of Lithuania for her achievements in doctoral studies. She is interested in the cultural history of the Age of Enlightenment.

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