XVII a. vidurio Maskvos okupacijos Lietuvoje šaltiniai, t. 1: 1657–1662 m. Vilniaus miesto tarybos knyga; t. 2: 1655–1661 m. Rusų okupacinės valdžios Lietuvoje dokumentai, ed. Elmantas Meilus, Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos instituto leidykla, 2011. 696 and 800 p. ISBN 978–995–847–43–4 (t. 1), 978–9955–847–51–9 (t. 2), 978–9955–847–44–1 (both volumes together).

The basic outlines of the story have long been a part of common historical knowledge about the place and period. In the summer of 1655, the Kmelnytsky Cossack Uprising against the Polish-Lithuanian state was reaching a sort of closure (or one of its closures), the First Northern War with Sweden ('The Deluge') was in its second year, and a 12-year war with Muscovy, which would culminate in the Treaty of Adrusovo and the cession by the Commonwealth of left bank Ukraine to Muscovy, was just beginning. Citizens of Vilnius were clearly hearing rumors of war, and those with the means and foresight were choosing (temporary, in most cases) exile – many of the elite, but not only the elite, in nearby Königsberg, but not only there. The Muscovite forces of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich laid siege to the Lithuanian capital and eventually conquered it, entering the city on Sunday, 8 August 1655 (according to one 'eye-witness' report written in German for European circulation) through four of the gates, between nine and ten in the morning. The city suffered much physical damage, and a demographic crisis of sorts was caused by the numbers of those who had already fled, those who would be killed in the conquest, and those who would be taken prisoner to Muscovy.

Thus – with a city in smoking ruins and its former population of perhaps 20,000 cut in half – began an 'occupation' that would last six years, three months, and 24 days; in other words, from 8 August 1655 to 3 December 1661, when the small remaining Muscovite garrison revolted against the second, much hated Muscovite palatine of Vilnius, Prince Danilo Myshetskii, who would be executed in the Vilnius Town Square, marking the return of Polish-Lithuanian rule to the city and area. In addition to the destruction of buildings and loss of human life, important parts of what would make the historical archive for the city of Vilnius once again (at least the second time that century) would be lost to fire or (in the persistent optimistic scenario) confiscation of some sort. This applies particularly to the main legal instance for the burghers of Vilnius living under Magdeburg Law – the books of *acta* of the Magistracy. One member of the Lutheran burgher elite was told upon his return to the city after a lengthy 'peregrination to

the schools', that 'there are none of the official books of acta that exited ante hostilitatem' (LVIA SA 5335, 477r–478r). Other documents – notably those of the Roman Catholic Capitula, and things like scattered Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist church records – have survived, perhaps carried to safety by some far-sighted clergy (many of whom we also find in Königsberg and elsewhere), and then returned to their original abodes.

I put the word 'occupation' in quotation marks, because a body of work – articles by V.N. Storozhev (1895) and Andrzej Rachuba (1994), but especially and foremost, a lengthy series of much more recent articles by the chief editor of the volumes under review, Elmantas Meilus – have begun to paint a somewhat unexpected picture of life for the remaining (and quickly returning) Vilnians during the Muscovite occupation. Here we begin to sense the details of the mundane affairs of those people. This is what these two volumes bring to us in great detail. The problem has been (is always) the paucity of source materials. Until quite recently, for most scholars, the practical sum total of documents shedding light on the question were one volume of acta from the Vilnius Magistracy (LVIA SA 5099), some scattered documents in neighbouring volumes in that series of archival volumes (LVIA SA 5097 and 5098), an inventory published by V.N. Storozhev (in 1895), and some fascinating, but sometimes difficult to assess, 'primary sources' in lengthy footnotes to Józef Ignacy Kraszewski's *Vilnius from Its Beginnings to the Year 1750* (4 vols., Vilnius, 1840–1842). And practically all of this required (still does require) a visit to Vilnius.

Meilus (with the help of his team) has published two immense and immensely important source books, documents hitherto almost completely unavailable to scholars interested in the history of the city. Volume 1 functions like if the transcription of a missing volume from the Lithuanian State Historical Archive of the acta of the Vilnius Magistracy, in this case for 1657–1662. I was able to read the entirety of the manuscript from the Russian State Historical Archive (RGADA 1603.12.14) during a short research stay in Moscow in the summer of 2005. Access was somewhat difficult, and the only names ahead of mine on the register of readers, if I remember correctly, were Ingė Lukšaitė and Elmantas Meilus (the volume is oddly part of the so-called *Fond Edukacyjny*, which is an incredibly rich collection of post-Jesuit documents that made their way to the Polish *Commission of National Education* [KEN], and then to RGADA, and still await a thorough survey). The second volume here is a carefully culled collection of individual reports back to Moscow from the Muscovite palatines in Vilnius during approximately the same period (1655–1661), mostly dealing with Vilnius affairs, but not only (mostly from the Russian National Library in St Petersburg and RGADA – complete references are in the volumes under review); we find here also some replies back to Vilnius from Moscow.

Vol. 1 (together with LVIA SA 5099 plus the scattered documents in SA 5097 and SA 5098) give us a picture of a Vilnius Magistracy, functioning with remarkable autonomy under conditions of Muscovite occupation. The concerns expressed – rebuilding of houses, restoration of property, proof of legitimate birth in a particular confession (by no means only Orthodox) in the face of missing archival documents – tell us that we have entered a world quite different from the one that existed before 8 August 1655. But what is more remarkable is the picture of a Magistracy, functioning as before as a forum of Magdeburg Law for Vilnius ‘citizens,’ presumably either in *the* Town Hall, as it was being rebuilt (depending on its state at the end of the siege), or in a place in town that served as a temporary office. And citizens continued to bring their petty, and not-so-petty complaints against their neighbors; to register business transactions, terms of apprenticeship (although this in more normal times would probably be registered in the acts of the given guild); to register inventories of possessions and last wills and testaments. Vol. 1 (RGADA 1603.12.14) also allows us on occasion to follow stories that were building in the acta preserved in the LVIA to their conclusion, or at least to the next stages in the dramas: it is simply a matter of following the names.

What lurked for me in the background of my reading of these documents was the presence of a second legal instance, that of the Muscovite palatine, presumably holding court in the Lower Castle. The echoes were rare, but they were definitely there. Vol. 2 of this publication – at least in the documents dealing specifically with Vilnius (and this volume ranges a bit beyond those confines, but the vast majority deal specifically with city affairs) – allows us to flesh out this picture in considerable detail. Vilnius, both before and after the occupation, was a patchwork quilt of legal jurisdictions: the Magistracy, the Roman Catholic Chapter Court, the Court of the *Horodnictwo*, the bishop’s Consistory Court, the Castle and Land Courts. Now we see clearly that at least two jurisdictions functioned during the the years 1655–1661: the Magistracy, which had an almost continuous presence before, during, and after the occupation, and the new court of the Muscovite palatine. But the city continued to conduct its business in a state of pseudo-normalcy. Before, during, and after the occupation, Vilnans of all confessions and religions could be found in any of the available legal venues according to the principle of *actor sequitur forum rei* – essentially, ‘the plaintiff goes to the court that has jurisdiction over the person/matter under dispute.’

This means that what we find in the acta of the Magistracy (vol. 1 of this publication and the documents in the Lithuanian State Historical Archive) deals with normal transactions between Vilnius burghers or between the burghers and the Magistracy. There is at least one instance of a complaint that (remarkably) includes reference to the Muscovite presence, but the complaint is against a profligate wife who was misbehaving (drinking,

singing bawdy songs, and engaging in sexual relations) with members of the occupying troops, and not directly against those soldiers (LVIA SA 5099, ff. 184r–185r). Vol. 2 reveals a series of Vilnans of various confessions and religions coming before the court of the Muscovite palatine to register complaints about the behavior (theft and violence among them) of the occupying forces. A small sampling: Document #38 relates a complaint about ‘ecclesiastial things’ stolen from the Carmelite Church of St Joseph by Muscovite soldiers. Document #75, a complaint about the theft of fine leather by Muscovite soldiers from a Vilnius burgher. Document #76, a case returning stolen goods to the Discalced Carmelites. Document #96, a case returning stolen food goods from the Vilnius Market Square by Muscovite soldiers to their rightful owners. Document #115, the return of stolen goods to a Vilnius Jewess.

In short, both sets of documents reveal the presence of all the confessions (including the Uniates) and all the religions (including the Jews). And they show their willingness to come to, and their trust in, the legal venues of occupied Vilnius, even after Jews had been refused a petition to return to the city, and Uniates had been required to convert to Orthodoxy or leave the city. In actual fact, they were still present and had not changed stripes. What may escape readers’ attention is the fact that the Magistracy, even if there was suddenly a greater preponderance of Orthodox, continued (without comment) to function on the new, Gregorian calendar (introduced in 1582), while the Muscovite palatine’s court in the Castle must have been functioning on the old, Julian calendar. The city was long used to keeping track of both calendars. The only difference was that now, the most important legal venue was running according to what had been (and would soon again be) the ‘minority’ calendar.

The picture is, I think, surprising, and it adds much to our understanding of the peculiar *convivencia* of the confessions and religions that existed in 17th-century Vilnius. It clearly underwent some changes during the occupation, but it continued to function more or less as before, and it was soon reestablished after December 1661. In short, Vilnans continued to think of themselves as such, and of their city, as still ruled in the main by the rights, privileges, obligations, and *autonomies* of Magdeburg Law. This is not the Muscovite occupation modern observers expected.

Scholars of 17th-century Vilnius will use this monumental pair of volumes over and over. The amount of work that went into them is stupendous, beginning with the ‘simple’ matter of gaining access to reliable copies of the documents, which in these cases was no simple matter. Each volume is preceded by a Lithuanian-language preface by the main editor, Elmantas Meilus. Here we get short overviews of the city’s history during the occupation, the functioning of the city Magistracy, and information on the origins of the source materials. Vol. 1 contains a Lithuanian table of contents, followed by the Polish-language inventory that is at the head of

the document. Vol. 2. has most helpful Lithuanian and modern Russian-language descriptive tables of contents. The documents in vol. 1 are largely in the bureaucratic Polish of the time; those of vol. 2 in the equivalent Russian. Both volumes have detailed indexes of names and places, and end with bibliographies, as well as English, Polish, and Russian-language summaries.

Vol. 2 was prepared according to a well-known standard for printing Cyrillic texts of the time and place. I cannot comment on the quality of the transcription. It seems to be consistent, although some readings raise questions. This may simply be the nature of the documents.

For vol. 1, the editor notes the difficulties (and one should add, expense) involved with gaining good access to the document and legible copies of its pages with which to work. So a certain tolerance of gaps and questionable readings is requested of the reader. This is certainly understandable. The volume, however, was not prepared according to any of the existing Polish standards for the edition of old Polish historical or literary texts, which are quite flexible and allow for a number of solutions. Instead what we get, which is often the case with Lithuanian scholarly publications of 17th-century Polish sources, is a literal 'transcribe what is to be seen' method of presentation. This means that the reader is left with the task of inserting diacritics, standardising what was a somewhat standardised orthography, and reacting to punctuation that may or may not have been in the original. This poses no problems, where the reader is certain that the transcription is accurate (which, the editor admits, was not always possible). Other passages, presented as seeming well established, will be open to interpretation. Still, the value of the edition cannot be underestimated.

In short, these two large source collections are the result of an enormous collective effort, headed by Elmantas Meilus. Whatever shortcomings the transcription may reveal are more than outweighed by the sheer importance of the documents presented. These were documents for the most part lost to the larger scholarly discussion about the history of 17th-century Vilnius. Now they are there for all who read the source languages to make full use of them. This is a huge accomplishment for which all will be grateful.

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