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NATIONAL vs. HISTORICAL IDENTITY: LITHUANIAN CONTEXT

Lithuanian history often unfolds in two different domains of identities. One is based on constant care about statehood, Lithuania's place in the world's knowledge, and principles of defending the homeland. Here, issues concentrate on independence, diplomacy, connections with Europe and the world. Unlike the genesis of the royals with their lineage covering centuries, the meaning of the Lithuanian identity based on language has retreated. This other type of national identity was accepted as an issue of being of the "lower quality socially" because prominent Lithuanian families became more powerful in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth Union. This influence brought in an alternative nationality dependent on the social life status (serfs versus nobles) so the national Self split into two identities: Lithuanian and Polish, or national and historical.

This confrontation became stronger in the Vilnius case in the 20th century, when the Lithuanian capital was occupied by Poland and Lithuania was in the process to regain its historical soul. This stand-off deepened even more until WWII. Then Vilnius was returned to Lithuania but under the Soviet occupation, which damaged even more of Lithuanian Self. This really painful experience of confrontations between Lithuanian national and historical Selves has ended only now with reflection in great 21st-century literature works “Silva Rerum” (2012-2017), four volumes of nobility family history by Kristina Sabaliauskaite (*1973). The genesis of the Lithuanian-Polish Self here appears in a very impressive way as unique aesthetic linguistic creativity of united identities by a talented writer and art scientist of a new generation.