

About the “Lietuvos Valsčiai” series

Established in 1994 the Versmė Publishing House, a serial book publisher, is dealing with preparation and publishing of monograph series only under the title of “Lietuvos Valsčiai” devoted for Lithuania’s Millennium celebrated in 2009, and starting from the 15th monograph of “Gelvonai” also for the Centenary of the Restoration of the Lithuanian State to be celebrated in 2018. The books published are also dedicated to other anniversaries of events important to the state, its towns, settlements and parishes.

At the very start of preparations for the Millennium celebrations, the “Lietuvos Valsčiai” series was included into the Programme for the Millennium of Lithuania approved on 2 December 1999 by the State Commission on the Millennium of the Name of Lithuania. In 1998, the “Žagarė” monograph of this series was the first book issued in Lithuania with the official commemoration token of the Millennium of Lithuania.

The title of the series is not accidental: the rural districts called valsčiai formed in Lithuania in mid-19th century and abolished in 1950 were the smallest and rather stable administrative territorial units, which had united the people of the same ethnical culture (e.g., the boundaries of valsčiai and parishes, as well as dialect areas coincided).

Based on reminiscences of people, archive data, scientific studies, written sources and material, each serial book is being written by large teams consisting of up to 115 author teams: prominent Lithuanian historians, archaeologists, ethnologists, folklorists, linguists, sociologists, naturalists, local lore investigators et al. Total number of authors is over 1 700 with more than 300 persons holding scientific degrees (see www.versme.lt).

The “Lietuvos Valsčiai” series is a multi-volume edition about Lithuania’s towns, townships, villages, homesteads, landscapes and their history from the olden times to the present days, about independence fights, traditional culture, trades, calendar and family traditions, custom laws, folk wisdom, churches, celebrities, features of dialects and local sub-dialects, folklore, ethnical minorities and their traditions etc.

“Gruzdžiai” – the 17th two-part monograph in the “Lietuvos Valsčiai” se-

The head of the Acquisitions Department of the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania Vytautas Gocentas speaks at the presentation of the “Gruzdžiai” Part I monograph in Gruzdžiai





Presentation of the “Gruzdžiai” Part I—the 17th monograph in the “Lietuvos Valsčiai” series—to the public. The actors in national costumes at the Gruzdžiai Culture Centre show three exceptional editions: the Catechism—the First Lithuanian Book issued by Martynas Mažvydas in 1547 (centre), the first book about Gruzdžiai (1999) and the “Gruzdžiai” Part I monograph published by Versmė in 2009



At the presentations, the “Lietuvos Valsčiai” monographs published could be seen for the first time both by their readers and authors. The authors of the “Gruzdžiai” Part I monograph—(from left) Aurelija Malinauskaitė, Birutė Salatkienė, Genovaitė Žukauskienė and Leonardas Skėrys—deeply involved are turning over the leaves of the book they took in their hands for the first time. Gruzdžiai. 22 August 2009. Photo by J. Kliučius

ries—is dedicated to the 375th anniversary of Gruzdžiai in 2011 (Part 1–1000 p., appeared in 2009; Part 2–1304 p., in 2010).

The following series have appeared before: “Žagarė” (dedicated to the 800th jubilee of Žagarė, 912 p. in 1998) that was the first book issued with the official logo of the Lithuanian Millennium Celebration; “Obeliai. Kriaunos” (2nd; 480th anniversary of Obeliai, 864 p., 1998), “Plateliai” (3rd; 550th anniversary of Plateliai, 800 p., 1999), “Žiobiškis” (4th; 200th jubilee of Žiobiškis parish, 1 024 p., 2000), “Širvintos” (5th; 525th anniversary of Širvintos, 776 p., 2000), “Lygumai. Stačiūnai” (6th; 90th jubilee of Stačiūnai parish, 896 p., 2001), “Veliuona” (7th; 500th anniversary of the Magdeburg Law granting to Veliuona, 1 176 p., 2001), “Raguva” (8th; 500th jubilee of Raguva, 1 128 p., 2001), “Seredžius” (9th; 710th anniversary of Seredžius, 1 238 p., 2003), “Kvėdarna” (10th; 675th anniversary of Kvėdarna, 1 160 p., 2004), “Papilė” (11th; 665th anniversary of Papilė, Part I, 1 082 p., 2004; Parts II and III, 752 p., 2006), “Tauragnai” (12th; 750th jubilee of Tauragnai, 1 364 p., 2005), “Musninkai. Kernavė. Čiobiškis” (13th; 445 years for Musninkai, 725 years for Kernavė, 475 years for Čiobiškis, 1 304 p., 2005), “Laukuva” (14th; 750th jubilee of Laukuva, Part I, 924 p., 2005; Part II, 950 p., 2008), “Gelvonai” (15th; 625th anniversary of Gelvonai, 1 384 p., 2009), “Baisogala” (16th; 470th anniversary of Baisogala, 1 056 p., 2009), and “Gruzdžiai” (17th; 375th anniversary of Gruzdžiai, Part I, 1 000 p., 2009) and “Endriejavas” (18th; 230th anniversary of Endriejavas in 2010) is the 18th. Total number of pages of these 18 monograph books published (21 volumes) together with the maiden soft-cover book issued under the title “Sintautai. Žvirgždaičiai” (430 p., 1996) is 24 160 pages.

The celebration of the Millennium of the first reference to Lithuania in written historical sources is reasonable to relate with more modest jubilees of its towns and townships and give an implication to these anniversaries of their first written reference by a written word—a book.

In pre-war Lithuania there were more than 400 rural districts (*valsčiai*), which were later replaced by neighbourhoods (*seniūnijos*) numbering now about 300. With a hope that our capacities will enable us to publish books about the majority of them, we kindly invite culture institutions, district governments, neighbourhoods, local activists, local lore investigators, state men, culture activists, sponsors and all writers to join, without hesitation, the team preparing and publishing the hundred volumes of the “Lietuvos Valsčiai” series about Lithuanian history and traditional culture. A great work to last several decades is waiting for you.