THE RISE OF THE LITHUANIAN NATIONAL MONUMENTS:
CULTIVATION, EXPRESSION AND RESURRECTION

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Abstract

The thesis is about the cluster of interwar Lithuanian national monuments – the Vytautas Magnus War and Culture museum and the Church of Resurrection – which arose in the 1930s in Kaunas, the temporary capital of Lithuania. It draws the origins of the monuments from the prewar idea of the Lithuanian "National House" rather than the dominant historicist discourse of the authoritarian regime, propagating the memory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the lost historical center Vilnius. The dynamic experience of the interwar Lithuanian national monument is revealed instead through the developement of the three national projects questing for national *cultivation*, *expression* and *resurrection.*

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Moment bienheureux

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes
but in having new eyes (*Marcel Proust*)

The national monument is essentially paradoxical, occupying the intersection of the national idea and its material expression. Despite the wish of national leaders to reify the nation in the form of a national monument, its intellectual source – the concept of the nation – remains fluid, subject to internal contradictions and revisions. Any attempt to consolidate a single national idea in a physical, monumental, form, is therefore a constant struggle. To grasp this fluid nature of the national monument the historian usually seeks to explain the interests of the activists, groups, and institutions involved in the project of national memory, and rely on the historical textual and visual records and the physical monument. I suggest that this belongs to an attempt to reconstruct the *voluntary memory* of the national monument, as Proust calls it, the moments of consciousness, immediate experience and reason. It provides only a reserved knowledge of the contested nature of national monuments and their historical experience. This thesis instead searches for some kind of a *moment bienheureux* (felicitous moment) of the history of idea of the Lithuanian national monument; "forgotten" in order to be remembered, endowed with new significance and insights. Ideally, it is an aspiration to tackle on a kind of *involuntary memory* of the national monument which binds together the snapshots of historical records of an East Central European national monument into a comprehensive whole, where the material space and the national idea intersect. This new approach leads to a suggestion of how a redemption of the national urban experience, the reunification of the mind and the body, is possible in the historical writings about interwar East Central European cities.

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The well researched historicist approach to the Lithuanian nation of the nationalist authoritarian regime in power from 1926 onward, dominates as a core interwar national experience along with other interwar Eastern European nationalist regimes. As a source of national identity it was based on a set of recognizable national symbols, consisting of Lithuanian folk tradition and the memory of the medieval Grand Duchy of Lithuania. However, the fascist style cluster of Lithuanian national monuments – Vytautas Magnus War and Culture museum and the Church of Resurrection – which emerged in the 1930s in Kaunas, could not be easily called "intentional" modern national monuments in an unambiguous sense of Austrian historian Alois Riegl[1]. They appeared in the temporary capital of newly independent Lithuania as local initiatives while the regime was officially waiting for the historical center Vilnius, then under control of Poland, to be regained. In this thesis I argue that the Lithuanian national monuments were a sort of "unintentional monuments" whose origins I search not in the dominant regime but in the tensions of the prewar idea of the "National House", which endowed Kaunas for the first time with a potential to become a central cultural capital of Lithuania.

On the other hand, the leaders of the three national projects were no less "intentional" than the dominant historicist regime. The spokesmen of the War and Culture museums and the clergy were united by a common search for public support in their need for contemporary homes in the temporary capital. Thus they were more "diversifiers" of the dominant nationalist discourse rather than its opposition, complementing and challenging it at the same time. In the case of the National Garden, which was part of the War Museum, the rhetorical *cultivation* of the medieval national history intersected with its founder's cultivation of the recent memory of the nation's wars, while the idea of the Čiurlionis Gallery on its own

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[1] Alois Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development" in Nicholas Price et al. (ed.), *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage* (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 1996), 69-83.

questioned the official art and heritage policy by advocating modern national *expression* and artistic autonomy. The project of the Church, on the other hand, called for a *resurrection* of Catholicism as the main basis for the nation building, calling into question the centrality of the secular regime in the national idea.

It is unusual in Lithuanian historical studies to see the three projects as part of a whole. It is exactly my approach which aims to reveal the continuities in the idea of the Lithuanian national monument. It shows how the unrealized prewar idea of the Lithuanian "National House" crystallized to a complex of national monuments in the temporary capital Kaunas. It was in the prewar debates about the potential capital city, when for the first time the divergent approaches between the national elite in Vilnius and the Catholic church in Kaunas emerged. The idea of the "National House", finding itself at the core of this discussion between those who advocated the national "reclamation" of Vilnius, the historical capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and those who stood for organic national cultural production in Kaunas. This endowed it with competing potential historicist and organicist sides. I argue that this inner duality remained a descriptive paradoxical experience of the emerging cluster of national monuments throughout the interwar period. While the dominant rhetoric was virtually "nationalizing" the official historical capital Vilnius, the material space of the temporary capital was undergoing the establishment of the modernist national center. I suggest that endowed the complex of fascist style Lithuanian monuments with a particular East Central European experience.

I argue that the cluster of Lithuanian monuments in Kaunas is an example of the quest for the redemption of the national experience in interwar East Central Europe, where the maturation of nationalist ideologies in the 1930s coincided with the disappearance of the attempts at a *national style.* Because of their ornament-less facade there is a need to take a

step further from identity-focused approach which claims the architecture is speaking in monologue though "identitarian images", which are either successful not to reach their audiences. Instead of searching for "national languages" on the facades, what is the common practice in the studies about the late 19th and early 20th century East Central European architecture, I suggest dwelling in the imagination of the Lithuanian national monument in search for its dialogical nature. By following the shifting idea of the three national projects, the War and Culture museums and the Church of Resurrection, from the 1920s to the 1930s, I am searching for a *moment bienheureux,* an attempt at the "liberation" of national ideas in flux as they manifested in changing architectural projects and their descriptions. The *experience* of a particular national monument here is not a moment of the first encounter but the transcendence of its time and space. It could be more deeply reflected in *émigré* literature rather than a historical account of a passerby. The personal feelings of visitors, however, lie beyond the scope of the thesis. I look instead for the radiant national sensibilities of a particular national monument leaving aside the question how they interact with the visitors who were taking part or at least were following the process of Lithuanian nation building, who were aware of the key national debates, and thus were able to reach some kind of dialogue.
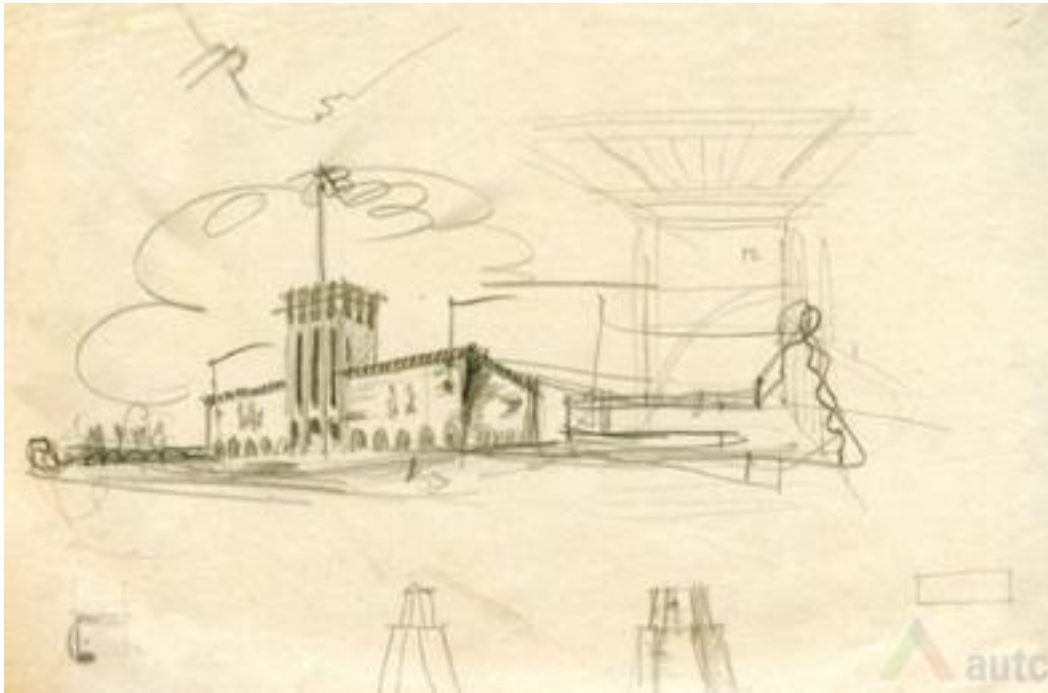
Fig 1. *Vladimiras Dubeneckis, sketch of the War Museum, 1920.*

To delineate the structure of the thesis, the theoretical chapter reviews the literature on urban experience which helps to uncover the dynamism of the experience of interwar East Central European national monuments. After the short introduction to the prewar origins of the idea of the Lithuanian national monument, the three interwar national projects are discussed. I focus on how the War and Culture museum and the Church of Resurrection imagined themselves in the material space though national *cultivation*, *expression* and *resurrection*. Those shifting ideas of the national projects were closely related to the personalities which guided them though their search for a home: Vladas Nagevičius, the founder of the War museum and the National Garden, Paulius Galaunė, the director of the Čiurlionis Gallery, and Feliksas Kapočius, the spokesman of the Church building committee.

After the individual cases have been examined, I will take them as a whole in order to place into the broader discussions on interwar Lithuanian national culture, in the dynamism

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between the historicist and more integrative perceptions of the nation. The latter is often forgotten in the interwar East Central European urban studies precluding from discovery of a much more dynamic national urban experience. In Lithuanian case I will tackle on the strong school of Lithuanian cultural philosophy who debated with the historicist regime about the nature of the Lithuanian nation suggesting a more synthetic approach.

Chapter 1
The Experience of National Monument

This chapter seeks to tackle on a question how to approach a national monument in order to recognize its potentially redemptive national experience. Similaly Walter Benjamin did in the interwar period when he revised the twenty years old Georg Simmel's diagnosis about urban alienation in the metropolis of the turn of the century[2], to find the possibility of the redemption of the urban experience of the historical city Paris.

In East Central European historiography the question of national content of national monuments is often limited to a search for a meaning(s) of architecture as they were prescribed by national activists and architects, "discovered" in formal analysis of space or political and ideological contexts. The use of certain artistic vocabulary, shared by the Western Europe, the imperial center Vienna, or the local neighboring nations did not "necessarily reflected the identity, but it empowered to represent it"[3]. Conceived in this way, the national content of the monument or public architecture is usually discerned searching for particular national historical narratives inscribed in national monuments, and forming their *identitarian image*[4]. Carmen Popescu suggests using Brubaker's notion of *identification* in order to recognize the always fluid perception of nation, where the recognition can be both successful and failed[5].

In East Central Europe the concept of *national styles* – historical and later also folk-based – were particularly strongly associated with national languages[6]. Both were pictured

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[2] Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (1903), in Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (eds.), *The Blackwell City Reader* (Malden: Blackwell, 2002).
[3] Carmen Popescu, "Space, Time: Identity", in *National Identities*, vol. 8, issue 3 (2006), 193.
[4] Popescu, 192.
[5] Rogers Brubaker, "Beyond 'Identity'", in *Theory and Society,* vol. 29 (2000), 1-47.
[6] Ákos Moravánszky, *Competing visions: aesthetic invention and social imagination in Central European architecture, 1867-1918* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998).

taking part in a similar kind of fight for "recognition" in urban space of multicultural cities of Habsburg empire as part of emerging national movements. The disappearance of the trend to search for national architectural styles during the interwar period calls for a revision of some of the established historiographical approaches to national content of the monument, to emphasize its spatial and experiential quality besides the visual message.

As the interwar East Central European city experience is characterized by a cohabitation of different nations, so their architectural environment can be approached as a multiplicity of national visions. That invited for an East Central European type of *flaneur*, mixed with the urban experience of Western modernity. The notion of *flaneur* is twofold[7]. On the one hand, under influence of George Simmel, Walter Benjamin was worried about the urban disenchantment, increasing detachment from the urban space, creation of a certain blase-attitude caused by intervention of market economy into cities that were intermingled with fading personal space. In East Central European context the decorative architecture of the end of 19th century suggest similar experience of detachment, difficulties in being recognized, since the architectural surfaces halted being allusions, and became instead a mere play with surfaces, not aiming at deeper experiences.

The experience of the particular national space, I suggest, could be grasped in the evolution of its idea and material space. For this I suggest to revise Carl Schorke's influential approach to urban studies to stress his emphasis on the dialogical formation of Vienna's urban space. Schorke suggests that the foundational ideas of the architecture of Vienna' Ringstrasse are rooted in the crisis of modernity, it was shaped by individual ideas which reflected the bigger ideological clashes. Benjamin, on the other hand, was wandering in the streets, following the disappearing fleeting environment in search for remaining personal memories

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[7] David Frisby, *Fragments of modernity: theories of modernity in the work of Simmel, Kracauer, and Benjamin* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 44.

and how they can be reinvented in modern times. Where Schorske is more helpful for his quest to find the collective experience of emerging of urban space, Benjamin offers the possibility of reunion between the individual mind and ideas inherent in particular architectural sites and their historical use. Thus Benjamin's approach was much more situated in particular places; it was more about concrete urban experience rather than architecture as representation of cultural elite's sensibilities.

When we are looking for ways of grasping the national aspect of urban experience in the interwar period, the strength of Schorske' sophisticated approach to *fin-de-siecle* Vienna lies not so much in visual architectural representations he found but in a suggested dialogical understanding of the architectural environment, an emphasis on its *becoming*. Similarly, Henri Lefebvre questioned the one sided semiotic approach to architecture, he suggested that architecture is less a text but a texture[8]. If it was a literary work, it would be not a monologue, not just multilingual, but dialogical itself from within. Furthermore, Lefebvre recognizes that the monument provides us more profound experience than a visual artwork, it involves all our body senses and thus here not the "recognition" but a deeper communication is at work. Similarly Schorske filled Vienna's urban space with a forth dimension by strongly tying the track of intellectual discourse with the metamorphosis of urban space.

In the book on *fin-de-siecle* Vienna various motives and ideas appear as rather unproblematic manifestations in urban space and reflect exclusively the visions of political, intellectual and cultural elite of Vienna. The interwar period does not let for big generalizations on urban history; one particular monument is enough to unclose the whole spectrum of competing national ideologies. The intellectual history allows approaching the monument as a frame of certain ideas and senses about the nation that extend the specific

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[8] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

place. Stepping into a broader intellectual debate about the *national culture* is needed in order to bring into daylight those alternative visions of nation that might have had only indirect influence on urban space but which are important in maintaining the very dynamism of internal discourse about the essence of nation. While the competing historicist national interpretations are emphasized as a major source of various national projects, the interwar approaches to nation, aiming at integrative experience, creating their own *loci* of nation, often remain unnoticed by urban historians, dealing with a reduced understanding about the national sensibility, "frozen" in the official rhetoric. Thus the relevance of the radical integral approaches to nation is often overlooked in interwar East Central European urban history, for example, the schools of thought in Romania, Poland and Lithuania which stayed during the interwar in the background of the ruling historicist regimes.

One of the best examples of how such national discourse can have influence on historical space, to endow it with a-temporal experiences, can be found in fascist Italy and Germany. There the nationalist ideology, placing the nation in mythical time stemming from the classical tradition, was the dominant force during the interwar revising the historically loaded urban space, at least theoretical aiming to bring it to timelessness[9]. Furthermore, the fascist architecture provides some of the best examples of interwar monuments where this aspiration was to a large extent realized. Italian monuments, where any direct allusions to national history were missing, were used as a setting for some of the most sound and effective national experiences in interwar Europe.

The last aspect in revising the paradigm of Schorske for the experience of national monuments to approach is to define the relation between the ideas of the main initiators of the monument, and material urban space. As seen from the interwar fascist architecture, the

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[9] Emilio Gentile, *The sacralization of politics in fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

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relation between the two does not necessary lie in the visual language or *representation* of historical narrative. Instead I use William Whyte's suggestion to use the term *translation* or *transposition* of (national) ideas[10]. The search for *organicity*, *authenticity*, and *national uniqueness* was often a common aim of national philosophers and architects promoting the ideas of *national style*. The difference is only in the forms and stages in which they the national ideas are expressed. In the case of national monuments this can be reflected in the descriptions, sketches, visualizations, construction, changes and use of space. Using the ideas of literary theorist Bakhtin, as suggested by White, these various formats of the same concern could be seen just as different genres[11]. This way of seeing national monument steps away from an *identitarian* approach and invites for a much more fluid perception of national space. Instead of explaining fragmentary pictures and narratives leading to the final work in the linear narrative, it comes closer to what I call in this thesis the *experience* of national space, as much as it could be grasped from a particular complex national monument.

An article by Popescu *Space, Time and Identity* (2006)*,* published in the same year as White's, tried to include the importance of a concrete architectural space next to the *identitarian image*[12]. But the manifestation of national sensibility (narrative) in architecture was still treated in static terms. The emphasis on intellectual discourse in this thesis allows searching for experience of national monument behind its materiality; it extends into much broader fields, beyond concrete manifestations in space[13]. As for the *national time* inscribed in the monument, in this thesis it becomes an intersection of different approaches to national time, distributed somewhere along the spectrum between historicist and ontological discourse

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[10] William Whyte, "How do buildings mean? Some issues of interpretation in the history of architecture", in *History and Theory*, vol. 45, no. 2 (2006), 153-177.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Popescu, 189.
[13] Juhani Pallasmaa, "Touching the World architecture, hapticity and the emancipation of the eye", Speech given at Helsinki University of Technology, School of Architecture, Helsinki (2010). www.arquitectura-ucp.com/images/PallasmaaTW.pdf

on the nation. As for the *national space*, the emphasis in this thesis will be put on the process of imagination and formation of the space rather than its final form. Thus the visualizations, the changes in the plans, gradual additions to the national space, never realized ideas, all form the totality of the experience beyond the concrete site and time.

Chapter 2
The Origins

In this short chapter I introduce the prewar origins of the interwar Lithuanian national monuments. The initial idea of the "National House" was part of the discussions of early 20th century about the potential cultural capital of Lithuania, still within the czarist Russian Empire. This discussion established Vilnius in the popular imagination as the inseparable part of Lithuanian national identity, and, what is often overlooked, envisaged for the first time Kaunas as a potential capital city before it became the temporary capital of Lithuania in 1919.

In polemics with a young national activist from Vilnius, Antanas Smetona, the future president of Lithuania, a Catholic Aleksandras Dambrauskas-Jakštas in 1907 suggested Kaunas as a more benevolent center than the *fin de siècle* historical capital Vilnius, which retained much of its multicultural environment from the times of medieval Grand Duchy of Lithuania, that extended once from the Black to Baltic seas. Jakštas emphasized that Polish culture has planted there deep cultural roots, and he thought that to "convert" polonized Lithuanians back to their origins was a miracle[14]. Kaunas city instead was promoted by Jakštas as a center of ethnographical Lithuanian lands, where also the main forces of Catholic leaders, who supported Lithuanian national movement, resided.

The discussion about the potential capital city, more broadly, was related to the question of national leadership which Vilnius' elite was willing to take over. Jakštas spoke in the name of Catholics, who preserved immense traditional impact on Lithuanian peasantry, which was main carrier of Lithuanian national culture and language. The Church has retained a widespread net of institutions that stood in a passive resistance to Russian policy. On the other hand, Smetona, one of Vilnius' activists, unlike the clergy, believed in good international

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[14] Darius Staliūnas, "Kauno vizija XX a. pradžioje", in *Darbai ir dienos*, no. 4 (1997), 59-64.

circumstances for Lithuanian independence to declare; he thought about the legal rights of Lithuanians to Vilnius, as it used to be a former capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania[15]. He spoke in the name of Vilnius' cultural elite, who just came back from foreign universities to Vilnius to immerse themselves into active national activities among the Jews, Poles and Russians. *Fin de siècle* Vilnius had around two percent of ethnic Lithuanians, but the new activists were there to found actively new Lithuanian national societies and even to project the "recovery" of existing old institutions as the new outposts of Lithuanian national culture.

The claim for Vilnius by the cultural elite was linked to the attempt at intensive cultural "reclamation" of the historical capital. At the beginning of the 20th century, however, Lithuanians nationalists were only one group among many claiming their historical and cultural rights to the historical heritage of Vilnius. Many Polish Lithuanians before the war were forced into difficult position to decide who they are, Poles or Lithuanians[16]. Many of them projected Lithuania as an integral part of Poland and its culture, while the Belorussians saw themselves as the true bearers of the Grand Duchy tradition[17]. Thus Vilnius, as a bastion of medieval Grand Duchy sensibility of Lithuania, was a zone of multiple intersecting national projects, while the streets of Vilnius were dominated by urban activities of the Jews. One of the last promoters to recreate the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth as a federation before the World War I, was Polish general Józef Piłsudski. Ultimately, it was not a Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz, who nostalgically mourned the extinction of the Lithuanian nation[18],

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[15] Antanas Smetona, *Raštai*, [vol. 1]: *Vienybės gairėmis* (Kaunas: Spindulio spaustuvė, 1930), 4.

[16] Egidijus Aleksandravičius, Antanas Kulakauskas, *Nuo amžių slenksčio: naujausia Lietuvos XIX amžiaus istoriografija* (Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto leidykla, 2001), 42.

[17] Alma Lapinskienė, "Gedimino miestas tarpukario Vilniaus lietuvių ir baltarusių poezijoje", *Acta litteraria comparativam*, vol. 4 (2009).

[18] Adam Mickiewicz, *Pan Tadeusz or The Last Foray in Lithuania: A Tale of the Gentry During 1811-1812.*

but the personal memory of Piłsudski which was used by Poles as a claim to the rights to Vilnius, as it is seen from his speech in 1919 before the annexation[19].

Unlike Vilnius, Kaunas had little of its own identity. It was usually considered as a foreign czarist city. Besides being a new outpost of Lithuanian Church, Kaunas was mostly known as a military bastion, founded in 1882 at the border of czarist Russia. The modern part of town was built by the czar in the mid 19th century that placed urban domination of the Orthodox church. The rectangular streets of Kaunas, the basis for modern city development, were mostly covered with wooden houses and had porous sings of modernity before 1918.

The book by Tomas Balkelis, called "The Making Modern Lithuania"[20], reveals some of the paradoxes of the first attempts of Lithuanian cultural activists in the multicultural city Vilnius which lead to the subsequent takeover of the main influence to the national production by the clergy before World War I. Under Czarist rule the clergy increasingly showed activity in social sphere, following the new encyclical. They created their first urban outpost in Kaunas, also founded a Christian Democrat party in 1905. In the meantime, the new national elite, the first generation of educated peasantry, entered into cosmopolitan urban life in Vilnius. The problem of detachment of the new elite from the reality of village lifewill soon to become more acute – related to the national leadership. Balkelis shows the moment of the surprise by the national elite when they for the first time encountered the masses of peasants in the Grand Assembly of Vilnius in 1905, held after the Russian revolution. The peasants seemed to care more about their social needs than the projects of cultural autonomy. It soon appeared that none of the parties could take the leadership of the massive peasant protests, which spread after 1905. Balkelis suggests that after the czarist control was enhanced, a

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[19] Jozef Piłsudski, "Address delivered in Vilnius" (1922). *Modernism*: *The Creation of Nation-States*: *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe 1770–1945*: *Texts and Commentaries*, vol. III/1 (Budapest : Central European University Press, 2010).
[20] Tomas Balkelis, *The Making of Modern Lithuania* (London, New York: Routledge, 2011).

calmer period of Lithuanian cultural production started, where the main influence was taken by the Church, while the Vilnius' elite was distrusted by Russians for their determined quest for national autonomy[21].

When it comes to the idea of a Lithuanian "National House" in Vilnius in the beginning of the 20th century, it was not a sole national project. As noticed by Egidijus Aleksandravičius, there were several societies in Vilnius which collected local heritage – only some some saw it as a national project; the others perceived this in terms of a homeland[22]. The idea of the Lithuanian "National House" in the context of the multilayered claims of Vilnius had to go through at least two obstacles. First of all, the Lithuanian lands belonged to the czarist Russia, integrated there after the third division of Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795. An intensive recovery of Russian "roots" was held after the second unsuccessful uprising in 1863 – a ban was put on printing in Latin letters for forty years and Vilnius university was closed. While Lithuanians sought formal independence from Russia, the Polish period had a much deeper cultural influence. After two hundred years of a shared state, most of the Lithuanian nobility were of Polish cultural identity[23].

The idea of Lithuanian "National House" was first invoked in 1900 by the national patchiarch Jonas Basanavičius. Revived by Vilnius national elite around 1907 it was seen as center of active cultural production[24] which turned soon into more concrete plans to join several existing Lithuanian national collections and libraries, which needed space. The land was bought on Tauras Hill in Vilnius for a "National House" to build, which had to contain the Lithuanian folk art, modern art and also antiques[25]. To instill inner dynamism to this idea,

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[21] Balkelis, 11-15.

[22] Egidijus Aleksandravičius, *XIX amžiaus profiliai* (Vilnius: Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla, 1993), 43.

[23] Aleksandravičius, 55.

[24] Vladas Sirutavičius, Algirdas Grigaravičius, "Neįgyvendinta idėja: lietuvių "Tautos namai" Vilniuje", in *Kultūros barai*, no. 10 (1998), 14.

[25] Ibid, 12.

it was soon challenged by the clergy from Kaunas. Their distrust about the national elite'

project looked more as a defense of the role of clergy in nation building rather than a

suggestion of a real alternative. On their own they started organizing acquisition of an old

aristocratic palace in Verkiai (Vilnius) for a folk house which lacked any cultural elitist

character, and was meant to provide only the basic needs, such as libraries[26].

Even if the conflict between Vilnius and Kaunas from 1907 till 1914 did not result in a

first Lithuanian national palace, this debate instilled the key tensions for the interwar national

monuments: the dilemma between Vilnius and Kaunas, the question of an active or passive

cultural production, the emphasis on nation or state building, national Catholicism or Catholic

nationalism. I suggest that they were transposed directly into the interwar urban experience of

the temporary capital city Kaunas. A failure to retain the capital Vilnius after the declaration

of Lithuanian independence in the interwar became a main source for the subsequent years of

"virtual" nationalization of the historical town that was mainly manifested in the streets of the

temporary capital Kaunas.

Smetona's support for active cultural production acquired a new scope. It became a

leading ideology of the authoritarian nationalist regime, lead by Smetona, which came to

power after a *coup d'etat* in 1926 to change the coalition government. The historicist projects

of the cult of Vilnius in the 1920s and Vytautas Magnus' jubilee celebrations in 1930

excluded the "Polish" element from the two hundred years of the national history[27]. It fused

Kaunas' urban space with a presence of the historical capital and the "memory" of the Grand

Duke of Lithuania thought a series of events – dedications, national festivities, temporal

stagings, special Vilnius passports[28]. The so called "national dynamism"[29], promoted by the

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Alvydas Nikžentaitis, *Vytauto ir Jogailos įvaizdis Lietuvos ir Lenkijos visuomenėse* (Vilnius: Aidai, 2002), 34.

[28] Dangiras Mačiulis, "Vilniaus vaizdinys Vilnių vaduojančioje Lietuvoje", in *Acta litteraria comparativa*,
Vol. 4 (2009), 6.

nationalist ideologist Vytautas Alantas during the interwar, dominated the urban space; it competed with Catholics for the influence on Lithuanian educational policy, and in the 1930s with the revival of Catholic thought in the movement of *new humanism.*

Fig 2. *Location of the interwar Lithuanian national monuments in Kaunas.*

[29] Vytautas Alantas, *Žygiuojanti tauta* (Kaunas: Pažanga, 1940), 17.

Chapter 3
The Nation as Cultivation

The War Museum and the National Garden, which emerged in early 1920s just outside the main avenue of Kaunas, vividly reflected in an urban setting the gradual growth and strengthening of Lithuanian nationalism throughout the interwar period. The former czarist garrison house with the tower of an Orthodox church was taken by general Vladas Nagevičius to house the future War museum. To create to the feeling of a graveyard he founded the National Garden, which was gradually filled with an array of monuments to 19th century Lithuanian national heroes. The War museum soon outgrew itself into the main Lithuanian civic space where the main national festivities took place. It became known as the Lithuanian *Forum Romanum*, in the words of the Lithuanian "national father" Jonas Basanavičius, a distinguished guest from Vilnius who was a close friend of the founder Nagevičius. The two were connected by their professional status as medical doctors and interest in collecting antiques.

There were several symbolic foundational days of the War museum. The first was the day of a decree in 1922 by the Military Ministry which placed it in the hands of Nagevičius. In 1930 the War Museum was integrated into year long celebration of Grand Duke Vytautas Magnus' jubilee, organized by the nationalist regime, which planned to build for him an "eternal monument."[30] This marked the ideological introduction of an established cult of this medieval Lithuanian hero into the National Garden, secured by the recent memory of the national struggles. The foundational stone of the monument to Vytautas Magnus, laid in 1930 in front of the old War Museum, resulted in the creation of a new palace for a National

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[30] Dangiras Mačiulis, *Valstybės kultūros politika Lietuvoje 1927-1940 metais* (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos instituto leidykla, 2005), 207.

Museum in 1936, hosting under its roof two separate museums, those of the War and Culture, supervised by different ministries.

I suggest that the interwar period's central Lithuanian civic space, the War museum, was developing at an intersection of what Pierre Nora calls *memory* and *history*[31]. In this chapter, the *history*, a more constructive approach to the nation represented by the authoritarian regime's ideology, is placed in contrast (and overlapping) with the personal initiative of the founder Nagevičius and his attitudes toward the national space. The latter will be traced from his biographical details, some of his writings, and by following the formation of the National Garden. As a founder and supervisor of the Garden, Nagevičius can be legitimately called a *gardener*, and his activities throughout the entire interwar period – as a *cultivation* of the national space. This cultivation lacked any clear planning; instead it was full of non declarative personal touches that reflected his personality. At the same time the National garden embodied a spectrum of post-war sensibilities common to other interwar European countries[32].

Fig 3. *The War Museum in the 1920s.*

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[31] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire", in *Representations*, no. 26 (1989), 7-24.
[32] Maria Bucur, *Heroes and victims: remembering war in twentieth-century Romania* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 54.

Fig 4. *The War Museum in the late 1930s.*

Nagevičius's idea to found the War Museum and the closely related National Garden reflected many factors characterizing deeply felt post-war experiences: the major losses of soldiers and the sense of ideological and physical fragility of the new independent nation states in East Central Europe. On the other hand, from the perspective of the local history of Kaunas, the appearance of the new Lithuanian civic center also marked a major reconsideration of Kaunas' own identity, acquired at the end of the 19th century. Before becoming the temporary capital of Lithuania, Kaunas was known as a first rate fortress town at the border of the czarist empire. A shelter between West and East was founded in 1848 by a czar along with many other military administrative buildings spread throughout the town. After the dissolution of the Russian Empire in 1918 the useless forts were reincarnated into a maze of roads integrating the town. One of those abandoned structures after World War I blossomed into a national shrine in a middle of the town, surrounded by eight heavy military forts. From the point of view of historical Kaunas the foundation of a new national center would mean the reconciliation between military and society. It meant the cultivation of a new

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national unity, finally breaking up the symbolic load of the czarist forts. The national military space relocated the emphasis from the exterior defenses of the town to suggest the new public role of the military, responsible now not only for the state borders, but for the national culture.

Fig 5. *The 19th century fortress of Kaunas.*

Following the example of the House of Invalids in Paris, Nagevičius conceived his civic space as dedicated to the war invalids. The human face of the military space was furthered by the special attention dedicated to women - Nagevičius encouraged them to visit the Garden dressed in traditional Lithuanian clothes, for which they were given a single rose. In response to questions of how to dress properly, the War museum issued a detailed description in

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addition to demonstrating on a mannequin in the Garden[33]. Besides this, the biography of Nagevičius reveals a variety of other activities in which he was involved: he founded societies for marines, animal protection, women, national traditions, and land beautification. He was educated as a military doctor and was also one of the first professional Lithuanian archeologist; he served in the field during the battles for independence treating solders in addition to having the mind broadening experiences of overseas service for several years. During the interwar period he continued archeological expeditions in the Lithuanian castle hills; and in 1930 he went to South Africa promoting mutual cultural exchange with Lithuania[34].

Nagevičius' perception of the nation was consistently demonstrated in the arrangement of the War museum and the Garden space. He emphasized the recent memory of Lithuanian national struggles in which he participated, the national intellectual "fighters" of the 19th century, and national folk traditions. This mixture took primacy in the garden before the historical memory of Vytautas Magnus planted its roots in 1930 with a foundational stone. Symbolically, one of the first open air statues in this Lithuanian national space was that of a donated pagan creature *kaukas*, known for collecting money[35]. Later it was gradually filled with donations and special acquisitions by the War Museum. The sculptor Juozas Zikaras and the architect Mstislavas Dobužinskis, artists of the older generation educated in Russia, established national realism as a prevalent aesthetic experience of the Garden. The central place in the "national pantheon" belonged to the statue of the Fallen Solder; a 6 meter high pyramid of stones brought from the lands of the battles for independence. The grave of the unknown soldier was added later, surrounded by wooden crosses collected during special

[33] K. M. A .- acija, "Lietuvaitės, atgaivinkite tautinius rūbus", in *Trimitas*, no. 26 (1927).
[34] Robert A. Vitas, *Civil-Military Relations in Lithuania Under President Antanas Smetona, 1926-1940* (Loyola University of Chicago, 1986), 101-105.
[35] *Karo muziejaus almanachas* (Kaunas: Kauno Vytauto Didžiojo karo muziejus, 2006).

expeditions to represent all Lithuanian lands. Together they stood for more than 4000 solders who died in fights with the bolsheviks, bermontinins, and Poles. Further, a modest Statue of Liberty, an angel with unlocked hands, arose up for several meters. Unlike the Statue of Liberty in Riga, erected to loom alone in the main square of the capital of Latvia, Kaunas' Liberty found itself in a blooming garden in the company of bright Lithuanian gentlemen. The first busts of the national activists were erected for Simonas Daukantas and Vincas Kudirka; the first called for the "separation" from Polish history of Lithuanian history in the 1840s, and the second revived the early romantic national feelings for a positive national work in the 1880s in addition to being the author of the Lithuanian national anthem. Later a bust of the national poet Maironis gave a symbolic rebirth to Catholicism in the National Garden. After major changes and rearrangement of the Garden took place in 1932, related to a relocation of the old museum to a new palace, Nagevičius envisaged a separate Lithuanian Garden for sculptures of a book smuggler and a seeder, facing each other; at the center a famous national sculpture of a Spinner (1940) was foreseen; finally they had to embrace all the Lithuanian national symbolism. The roses, a present from an American general, were blooming around the monuments while the sculpture of a lion and a fountain – presents by the Tiškevičiai family – inserted some aristocratic flavor into the picture of Lithuanian Nation Garden.

The loss of Vilnius also belonged to the memory of the recent past. Its absence was inscribed several times in the National Garden and invoked repeatedly during the special commemorations of the day of its foundation and the day of its occupation. The very delicate first appearance of Vilnius in the National Garden manifested in a new topping for an old church tower by the architect Dobužinskis, resembling the form of a castle[36]. On special occasions like New Year's eve a sign with a famous interwar period chant "We'll never give

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[36] J. Pronckus, "Karo muzėjus su laisvės varpu", in *Lietuvos žinios* (1922 06 18).

up without Vilnius" was blinking on the tower. The more profound sign of the missing historical capital was embodied in the Liberty Bell, the copy of the American Liberty Bell. It was a gift from the Lithuanian community in America, sent to congratulate Vilnius with achieved independence before the capital was lost. Raised temporarily to the old tower of the War museum in 1922 it had to be a audible reminder of the not yet fully united Lithuanian lands[37]. On the tower three coats of arms of the Lithuanian cites of Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda were also attached. The last and the most ardent inscription of Vilnius in the temporary capital's space was an obelisk – the Black Monument, which commemorated ten years of Vilnius' occupation, and pronounced: "Remember, Lithuanian, the Pole has broken the contract and occupied your capital Vilnius"[38]. The speech given by Nagevičius in 1930 while introducing the monument anticipated the advent of a combatant rhetoric of Vytautas Magnus' foundational act. Nagevičius reminded that "the way to Vilnius is not though Warsaw, but though the ways the Dukes came"[39]. Paradoxically, the shape of a black obelisk, burying "the relations between the two nations", suggested more the burial of the belief in regaining Vilnius.

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[37] Karo muziejaus viršininkas, "Pagerbsime nežinomąjį kareivį", in *Lietuvos aidas* (1934 11 20).
[38] Vaižgantas, "Juodasis paminklas", in *Lietuvos aidas* (1930 10 09).
[39] "Klastingas lenkas savo sutartį sulaužė", in *Karys*, no. 42 (1930).

Fig 6. *The modified tower of an old Orthodox church tower.*

7. *The Black Monument.* 1930

Nagevičius' perception of the nation, his emphasis on the memories of the recent past, an attempt to restore a sense of national unity, can be concluded from his professional carrier as an archeologist, and the years spent digging in the Lithuanian hills of the seaside areas close to where he was born. His personal experience moving between the layers of the history, I suggest, gives a certain light to his conservative aesthetic preferences. Already in the early 1920s Nagevičius with the Military Ministry was "ringing the bells" about the need for a new museum space considering the wooden hut was already fully filled with military ammunition and was in a danger of fire[40]. In a special meeting concerning the extension of the museum, Nagevičius imagined the new War museum as a castle on a hill with different architectural styles on each floor[41]; this became a prevailing idea for the future War museum until the end of the 1920s. I suggest that one needs to pay attention to the general's deeper sense of past and its foundations in order to distinguish it from the more formalistic application of the *national style*, practiced by the interwar East Central European historicist regimes. Nagevičius envisaged his historical museum with modern infrastructure; he was also first to suggest to combine the War museum together with other cultural museums, as was the practice in other European capitals. For the cultural museum he suggested the upper floors under glass ceilings above the "weighty" war museum downstairs[42]. This suggestion was fulfilled in 1930 in the combined Vytautas Magnus museum despite the objections of the cultural elite, who indicated that the two museums were neither stylistically, nor ideologically compatible[43].

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[40] Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas, f. 1764, ap. l, b. 51, 1927 05 12.
[41] Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas, f. 1764, ap. l, b. 51, 1922 05 06.
[42] Ibid.
[43] P. Galaunė, A. Galdikas, P. Kalpokas, J. Vienožinskis, "Dėl straipsnio Karo Muziejaus, Čiurlionies Galerijos ir kitų muziejų statymo reikalu", in *Lietuva* (1924 04 16).
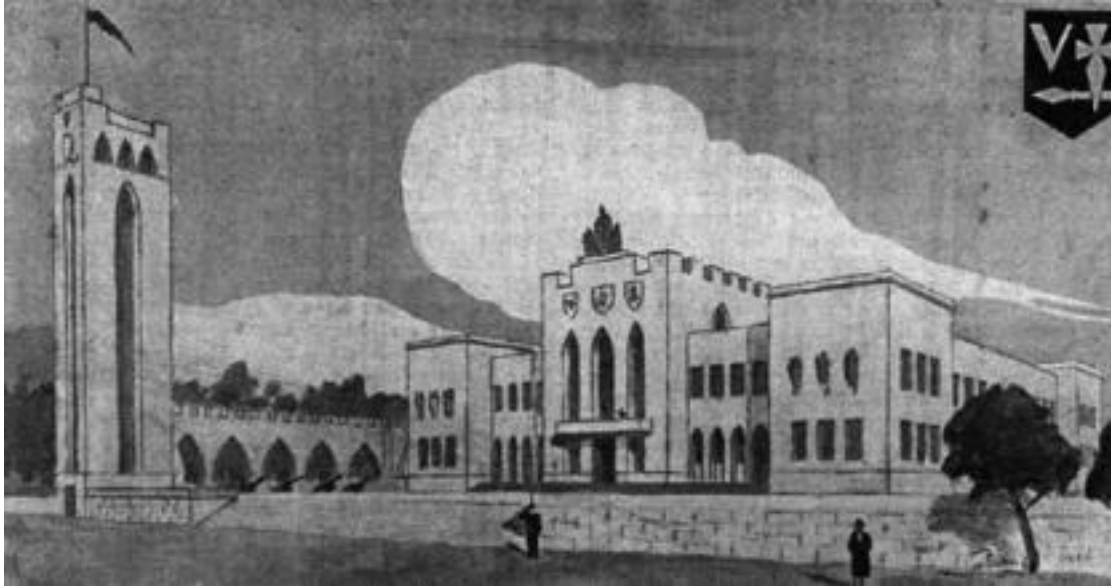
Fig. 8. *The War Museum proposal by Dubeneckis* (*not realized*).

Nagevičius' sense of past and materiality and his quest for continuity were rooted in the metamorphosis of the National Garden. Notably, it expressed respect for its czarist foundation which in a way was redeeming it for its past faults. In the ceremony in 1936 Nagevičius said that even if there were enemies here on this place, it is now accommodated and by them. "Now we are taking care of it"[44]. Here Nagevičius' idea of the *cultivation* of the *garden* also acquired a meaning of the domestication of the foreign environment. Nagevičius gave a sign of respect to the old foundations of the museum by publicly kissing the tower of the former Orthodox church, now endowed with a new "Lithuanian" topping, before it was destroyed at the feet of the already standing new palace. Nagevičius explained that "they are destroying in order to building anew. The remaining materials will be integrated into the house for invalids in front of the Garden"[45].

The similar quest for a continuous experience could be spotted in the first War Museum, a room of curiosities gathered from everything which could be found during the special

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[44] "Paskutinį kartą nuleista valstybės vėliava iš senojo muziejas bokšto", in *Lietuvos aidas* (1934 11 10).
[45] Ibid.

missions of solders, and personally by Nagevičius, all in a search for a dispersed wholeness, on which a future could be built[46]. The space organized by Nagevičius can be contrasted with a selective and evaluative reading of the history; a substantial part of authoritarian regime's policy which relied on the historical interpretations of Adolfas Šapoka[47]. The idea War Museum and the National Garden instead searched for a unity with the past and a symbolic reunification of national lands through a reliance on the material experience – touchable relics and icons which reassembled the past in the museum collection. Because of the lack of space before the museum was relocated to modern apartments in 1934 everything was displayed without a conceived order aside from the thematic divisions. Finally, Nagevičius emphasized the National Garden as an integral part of the museum experience which must be preserved in the new layout to extend the visit of the modern museum to a *passeggiata* in the garden.

It was through the aesthetic experience of the Garden that Nagevičius tried to achieve a feeling of unity[48]. It was deeply rooted in the 19th century romantic historical tradition and national narratives. He recruited artists of older generation who were exploring themes of the historical wars and struggles. Galaunė, the head of the Čiurlionis Gallery, used to question the artistic quality of the works in the War museum, and whether they were worth a place in a museum for the substantial public funds provided[49]. The whole national space was thus endowed with an educational tone; here art was in *service of the nation*, as the much as Nagevičius served as a *gardener*.

Truly, the War Museum and the National Garden contained little "democracy" or involvement of the broader public into discussions about what had to be included into the

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[46] Pronckus.

[47] Adolfas Šapoka, *Lietuvos istorija* (Kaunas: Švietimo ministerijos Knygų leidimo komisija, 1936).

[48] Pr. Pen-tis, "Pirmas karo muzejuje koncertas", in *Lietuva* (1922 07 18).

[49] Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, *Dailė ir valstybė: dailės gyvenimas Lietuvos Respublikoje 1918-1940* (Kaunas: Nacionalinis M. K. Čiurlionio dailės muziejus, 2003), 126-129.

symbolic national space. From the infancy of the museum untill its transformation into the Vytautas Magnus National Museum, the changes in the Garden where mostly advertised *post-factum* in the national press. They usually occurred under generosity of the founder and the "spirit of the museum", under his initiative, with his support, help, care, and supervision. The major change in the overall interwar experience of the museum occurred when the historicist artworks gained new modern architectural frames after the museum moved to its new palace.

The "flight" of the young Lithuanian pilots Steponas Darius and Stasys Girėnas into the museum space in 1933 gave it a modern impulse; it introduced a new moment of 20th century national heroism and pathos. The two brothers, pilots, activists in youth sport, and education, took a famous trip in the name of Lithuanian independence in 1933. In those times they planned the second longest journey with a plane in history to cross an ocean. Their route from the United States of America to Lithuania tragically ended when the plane crashed in Germany. Even though the journal *Naujoji Romuva* called them heroes and models for contemporary youth[50], they did not become a source for a modern artistic reflection in the War museum; instead a nude and sound modern "archeological" document of the national tragedy was introduced to the collection – a formless mass of the destroyed plane *Lituanica*[51].

Nagevičius' personal attitude toward the nation and contributions to national *gardening*, as well as his search for modern authentic experience of nationhood, were finally tested in the eve of the Vytautas Magnus celebrations before the official version, advocated by the regime. The special committee of state officials, critiqued for its bureaucratic composition, in 1929 introduced the idea of a major monument for Vytautas. After the internal discussion of several possible variants, the committee reached a decision to erect in his name a "National

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[50] Juozas Keliuotis, "Jaunosios Lietuvos gairės Dariui ir Girėnui žuvus", in *Naujoji Romuva,* no. 134 (1933).
[51] "Vytauto Didžiojo Komiteto paiškinimas dėl Vytauto Didžiojo muziejaus patalpų naudojimo", in *Lietuvos aidas* (1935 06 03).

Museum"[52]. That gave many expectations for several free-floating national museums, including the Kaunas municipality's, which searched for a new contemporary home. In connection to the foreseen competition, the Vytautas Magnus organizational committee received a letter from Nagevičius where he reminded about the maturity of his place, its preparedness to serve as a center for an officially planned monument for Vytautas Magnus. He spoke about "living militarism" and the role of the museum in the "disciplining of the nation" – the achieved unity with the nation, according to him, was nothing to compare with the other candidates, limiting themselves to education and museology[53]. Ironically, the matter soon turned against Nagevičius himself, when the guidance of the combined museum was assigned to the Ministry of Education. Then Nagevičius was writing letters to complain and to remind of the militant character his space, and that it can not be lead by a person without special military preparation[54].

Vytautas Magnus

The year 1930 marked the extensive one year long celebrations of the jubilee for the 500 year anniversary of Vytautas Magnus' death and the failure to crown himself king. This occasion endowed many places in Kaunas with his name, such as bridges, schools, and a university, which he would later "see" in a symbolic journey throughout "his lands". The symbolic journey of his portrait was launched in 1930. It was taken around many Lithuanian towns and villages, starting and ending the trip in the War Museum. The special Vytautas Magnus committee called for special attention to medieval glory in the special artistic contests. All this provided modern artistic forms for the medieval figure. In preparation for a main highlight of the year – the Vytautas Magnus monument – the committee sent a request to the

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[52] Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas, f. 1640, ap. 2, b. 16, 1929 10 16, 26.
[53] Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas, f. 1640, ap. 2, b. 16, 52-55.
[54] Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas, f. 1764, ap. l, b. 51, 1931 12 16.

leaders of the existing museums and the municipality asking to suggest a form for a new combined museum[55]. As it was well noticed by Galaunė, they following discussion did not embrace the idea of the Lithuanian National Museum; the question was more formal - how to fit the existing museums, lacking space for collections and exhibitions, into one Vytautas Magnus museum[56].

Concerning the location of the new national monument, the committee tried to reserve the ruins of Kaunas' castle. It received a negative response from art connoisseurs Dobužinskis and Galaunė, who claimed that Kaunas' castle has to be restored in order to respect the past[57]. While the current War Museum location was considered too tiny for a complex of museums to expand upon, the Vytautas hill was the most serious candidate for the new National Museum. Finally, in the last minute of the eve of the Vytautas Magnus year, very burning issue of the national museum was solved – a location of the current War museum place was chosen[58]. Ironically, during the foundational stone ceremony at the end of 1930 it was still unclear which museums were taking part in it; the rhetorical nationalist regime's project of the National Museum was hanging in the air.

The tone of the manifesto of the Vytautas Magnus museum, imprinted in the foundational stone and laid in the Garden of an old War Museum, called for a twofold feeling: that of the modern presence of Vytautas Magus' grandeur, and Vilnius as a national obligation to the Duke to correct the historical "mistake". The proclaiming tone of the foundational act had to create a new link in the Garden to the Lithuanian medieval past, a source of inspiration for nation building. The recent memory of the national struggles and the

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[55] Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas, f. 1640, ap. 2, b. 16, 06 4, 2.
[56] Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas, f. 1640, ap. 2, b. 16, 1930 11 30, 89.
[57] Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas, f. 1640, ap. 2, b. 16, 1929 04 08, 22.
[58] Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas, f. 1640, ap. 2, b. 16, 1930 11 30, 89.

victory in the Garden had to be added with an "unreachable" goal as a drive for the production of national culture, advocated by the nationalist ideologist Alantas[59].

The declaration introduced the unique space of the Garden into a more strategically "organized" national experience based on a variety of repetitive and easy recognizable national official symbols. Its authentic constellations of national symbols remained untouched, only reorganized according to a plan by architect Karolis Reisonas. The rhetoric was finally hiding a fully formed idea of the War museum, rooted in the quest for a more uninterrupted national experience. The War museum, after its integration into Vytautas Magnus museum, was added only with a new entry way (1936, interior by Dobužinskis) with Vytautas' sculpture, and Vytautas' crypt (1938, by Dobužinkis), comparable to the Prague's monument of Independence on Žižkov's hill; while in the Garden a huge sculpture of the "soldier from the medieval times" by the sculptor Juozas Mikėnas found its place.

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[59] Alantas, 50.

Figs. 9 & 10. *The War Museum interior, 1939.*

The appropriation of the War Museum and the Čiurlionis Gallery by the Vytautas Magnus special committee for nationalist propaganda solved two problems – an urgent need for space for at least two central museums, and the need of an "eternal monument" for Vytautas Magnus. What it failed to do, or it was not explicitly outspoken as an aim, was to establish the centrality of the authoritarian regime in the urban space of the temporary capital of Lithuania. On the contrary, during official ceremonies president Antanas Smetona addressed its audience from a balcony in the War Museum's facade remaining in the shadow of Vytautas' grandeur. No special arrangement in the National Garden was created to impose clear hierarchies between the president and the audience or to let him compete with Vytautas Magnus' figure, standing behind as a firm background. Smetona was welcomed to the Garden as a distinguished guest rather than as an owner of the national civic center. In some occasions the National Garden even became a place of asylum for young students running

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from regime's persecutions[60]. Once Nagevičius was calming people after the Polish ultimatum to restore diplomatic relations with Lithuania was accepted[61]. Thus in this way the National Garden was "nationalized" in the historicist terms of the regime mainly though a public performance of the official ceremonies.

Interestingly, there was one more representative place in the temporary capital, shared closely by the military and the state – the Military Club. It was also created under the initiative of general Nagevičius and opened in 1936; the name "ramovė", suggested by a linguist Basanavičius, gave it connotations of a divine place. Unlike the democratic space of the War Museum, the Military Club, dedicated for the spiritual education of the soldiers, also known as an entertainment club, was reserved for exclusive people. It was because on the third floor of the Military Club there were two representative rooms for the official meetings of the president. There they established a symbolic equality between the president and Vytautas Magnus. The wooden interior of both rooms was produced by the best Lithuanian artists in the "official style" – a mixture of themes from Middle Ages and the folk culture[62]. Symbolically, the Military Club became the second place, where, from the perspective of Kaunas' urban space, the regime fell under the "shelter" of the military. The "wooden wealth" of the "official style" was never given a chance to be publicly displayed. The image of the planned governmental complex from 1939 spoke about the changed taste of the regime; the neoclassical style was requested in the competition before World War II[63].

Finally, when the nationalist ideology officially became part of the experience of the National Garden in 1930, it embodied two intersecting alternative versions of the history of modern Lithuanian statehood. The "performative" emphasis was put on the Lithuanian

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[60] Aušra Jurevičiūtė, "Politinės studentų demonstracijos tarpukario Kaune", in *Kauno istorijos metraštis*, vol. 3 (2002), 134.
[61] Vitas, 102.
[62] "Ramovės rūmai", in *Kardas*, no. 8 (1937).
[63] Jankevičiūtė, 47.

medieval past while the memory of recent national independence fights was embodied in the material space of the Garden. Consequently, the transformation of the wooden hut into a stone palace of significant national importance was more a fulfillment of Nagevičius' idea of *cultivation* than its absorption. The enlargement, supported by the state, endowed the War museum with a prestigious name of Vytautas Magnus; it was expanded to include a Cultural museum, just as Nagevičius initially suggested. All this fits nicely into the *gardener's* wish to see his place getting bigger by stripping off its old clothes.

Chapter 4
The Nation as Expression

While the National Garden was little by little establishing itself as the main civic representational place of the temporary capital of Lithuania, in 1924 on Ažuolynas hill, a light flashed of the first Lithuanian national museum – The Čiurlionis Gallery. Located in a specially built temporary house, in a way it reminded one of the wooden hut of the War Museum, dreaming about the castle. Juozas Galaunė, who was the director of the national space, was no less ambitious than the *gardener* as he already envisaged a new modern palace to embrace all the national creative work under the name of a distinguished Lithaunian *fin-de-siecle* artist Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis.

Fig. 11. *The plan of the Čiurlionis' Gallery by Vladimiras Dubeneckis, 1924.*

Fig. 12. *The Čiurlionis Gallery (the temporary palace) by Vladimiras Dubeneckis, 1925.*

Throughout the 1920s, both the War museum and the Čiurlionis' Gallery constantly lamented in the national press about the unbearable conditions of their collections and their outgrown museum spaces. They were also the prophets of some of the most important debates about the nature of Lithuanian national culture; the debate which was ideologically forming a yet-to-be Vytautas Magnus monument. Both museum directors, Galaunė and Nagevičius, were suggesting their own sources of "authentic" national experience: the War Museum spoke about the memory of the wasted energy of the national fighters, the Čiurlionis' Gallery was touching upon unreleased energies of folk culture. The latter was best expressed in Čiurlionis' art, which played a central role in the collection of the newly opened national museum. The painter and composer, Čiurlionis was one of the first artists to recognize Lithuanian folk's unreleased energy and to integrate it as an organic part of his universalist artistic world.
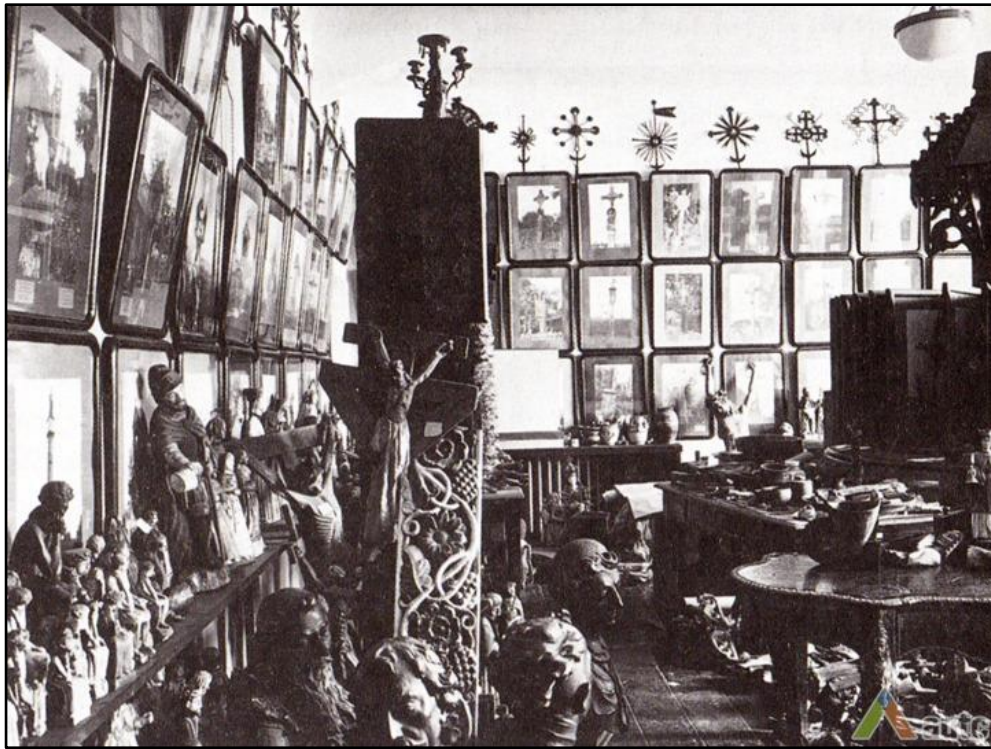
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Fig. 13. *The interior of the Čiurlionis Gallery, 1920s.*

Interestingly, it was the director of Čiurlionis Gallery, who was pointing out the very irreconcilability of the two national sensibilities. In the 1920s Nagevičius officially suggested to combine them as an extension of the War museum. In response to his idea, a public letter signed by Galaunė and other cultural activists, expressed great discontent with the idea. The main difference was described in a simplified manner – "the War museum is about destruction, while the cultural museum is about creation"[64]. Notably, the cultural activists were ignoring Nagevičius' sincere devotion for national activities; instead they reduced his idea of the National Garden to a mere function of state representation.

The very dynamism between the two national sensibilities can be found in the Lithuanian philosopher Maceina's division of *cultures of form* and *cultures of expression,* and

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[64] Galaunė, Galdikas et al.

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his claim that Lithuanian folk culture was the true *culture of expression*[65]. Similarly, Galaunė, the director of Čiurlionis Gallery searched for Lithuanian national uniqueness, a non relieved source of national creation; that naturally posed this national project against the dominant historicist and academic approach to nation, supported by the state. The roots of this misconception between the two interwar museums advocating two different national symbolisms can be found in the prewar evaluations of Čiurlionis' art by the conservative critic Adomas Jakštas who critiqued Čiurlionis' symbolism as too detached from reality[66]. Instead, Nagevičius contended that the statue of the Spinner, requested for the Garden, was much better at expressing national symbolism[67]. Despite the conservative criticism, already before World War I many local curators recognized Čiurlionis' *symbolism* and treated him as a significant national artist, or even a "national genius"[68]. His paintings alluded deeply to Lithuanian the folk spirit, which was one of the most important sources of the expressive power of his works. Although Čiurlionis' art was full of mysticism, which caused ambiguous feelings about its national content, Čiurlionis' writings and inspirations in Lithuanian national folk were widely acclaimed. Galaunė even claimed that for a peasant Čiurlionis' art was much more understandable than a historicist painting[69].

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[65] Antanas Maceina, *Raštai*, vol. 1 (Vilnius: Mintis, 1991), 501-505.

[66] Pillė Veljataga, *Lietuvos estetinė mintis XIX a. pabaigoje – XX a. pirmoje pusėje: meno tautiškumas ir visuomeniškumas* (Vilnius: Lietuvos kultūros tyrimų institutas, 2011), 69-70.

[67] Jolita Mulevičiūtė, *Modernizmo link: dailės gyvenimas Lietuvos Respublikoje, 1918-1940* (Kaunas: Nacionalinis M. K. Čiurlionio dailės muziejus, 2001), 29.

[68] Veljataga, 77.

[69] Paulius Galaunė, „Lietuvos meno keliai", in *Baras*, no. 2 (1925).

Fig. 14. *M. K. Čiurlionis, "REX", 1909.*

The *fin-de-siecle* universalist art of Čiurlionis became a core of the Lithuanian national art collection after the state bought, following his early death, all of his artworks from his wife. The guidance of the museum was soon taken into hands of a young professional museologist Galaunė, who studied in Paris and spent several years collecting Lithuanian heritage dispersed in Russian lands. With time the art collection of the Čiurlionis Gallery was growing. At its core it gathered Lithuanian folk art, modern national art, and many other small collections prescribed to the museum by the Ministry of Education[70]. Thus in its content the

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[70] Galaunė, Galdikas et al.

Čiurlionis Gallery reminded the once planned but never realized "National House"/ Museum in Vilnius on Tauras Hill. This was because Čiurlionis was one of three main activists in Vilnius' cultural life before World War I. Together with Basanavičius he promoted the idea of the Lithuanian "National House" in a competitive multicultural environment of Vilnius[71]. But in the new context of an independent state, the heritage of Čiurlionis' art as the basis of the new national museum acquired new significance. I suggest that the universalist world into which he placed Lithuanian folk culture served as an "umbrella" for the national collection growing below; folk *expressionism* became a connecting line between the three periods of the museum collection which could be discerned in the 1920s. The first period was very much in the memory of Vilnius as reflected from the prominent place of Čiurlionis in the museum's collection and the desired aesthetic form. The second period marked the maturation of the national museum's collection in the search to represent the whole of the Lithuanian national art. The third stage, finally, marked an appearance of a new "spring" of national creation which revised the modern national creative capacities.

The Expression

The first visualization of the Čiurlionis Gallery, the future central cultural museum of Lithuania, was entrusted to the architect Vladimiras Dubeneckis. Educated in Saint Petersburg in classical mastership, he later engaged in a search for a unique national expression which gave him the sensibility of an artist rather than architect. He spent much time studying Lithuanian folk culture and was much inspired by Vilnius' cityscape[72]; thus his interest in national modernist expression was shared with Galaunė and Čiurlionis. In the 1920s

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[71] Laima Laučkaitė, *Vilniaus dailė XX amžiaus pradžioje* (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2002).
[72] *Vladimiras Dubeneckis: jubiliejinė kūrybos paroda, skirta 100-osioms gimimo metinėms* (Vilnius: Lietuvos TSR istorijos ir etnografijos muziejus, 1988).

Dubeneckis was developing ideas about the Lithuanian *national style*; he suggested that its main sources lied in the national folk art and Vilnius' baroque[73].

Some additional sources of the initial idea of the Gallery can be found in the failed idea of its precursor – the Tulip House in Vilnius, the tulip being one of Lithuanian national symbols. It was a spontaneous idea in 1920 after a successful opera performance in the Kaunas National theater by a famous Lithuanian opera singer, in which Dubeneckis also took part. Kaunas' cultural elite came up with an idea about an Opera house in Vilnius and started collecting money for the idea which later expanded to include also a museum[74]. The musicality, baroque aesthetics and classicism, characterizing the unrealized spontaneous endeavor of an Opera house, were reflected in the first visualization of the Čiurlionis' Gallery in 1924 decorated with a stylized crown from Čiurlionis' paintings. Finally this crown stood for the very absence of Vilnius' "National House". The envisaged Gallery, mounted on the hill of the temporary capital city of Lithuania, had to "celebrate" the heritage of the "national genius" who passed away so young. However, the discovery and slight uncovering of the well of Lithuanian folk spirit by Čiurlionis was not destined to flourish into the modern palace. The museum was opened in a modest neoclassical house built for temporary use, and designed in the same year by the same architect waiting for the missing financial resources.

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[73] Vladimiras Dubeneckis, "Apie mūsų architektūrą", in *Baras*, no. 1 (1925), 93.
[74] Donaldas Strikulis, "Tautos namų idėja – Tulpių rūmai", in *Šiaurės Atėnai*, no. 12 (2011 03 25), 8.

Fig. 15. *Vladimiras Dubeneckis' sketch of the Čiurlionis Gallery, 1920s.*

The second symbolic stage in the formation of the idea and the form of the Čiurlionis'
national project in Kaunas' urban space can be counted from the opening date of the
temporary Gallery. As the time frame of the national collection was expanding, the initial idea
of the central national museum had changed – Galaunė now suggested that a title of "National
Museum" was more encompassing[75]. He still promised a secured special place in the museum
for Čiurlionis art, which has always been privileged in the limited exhibition areas. Galaunė
further distanced the idea of the national museum from the regime and emphasized it as
"national museum" rather than a "state museum". Besides the folk and modern art which
formed the core of the museum Galaunė in his writings was actively calling for the protection
and systematic collection of the "forgotten" gentry's heritage and religious art. For the latter

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[75] Galaunė, Galdikas et al.

he suggested founding a separate museum[76]. Several areas, like the Lithuanian cross tradition and archeological sites, preoccupied both Galaunė and Nagevičius.

The third stage of the idea of the national space can be counted from 1930 when some new air was breathed into the museum which represented, according to Galaunė, the "whole" of the Lithuanian artistic heritage[77]. By that time the universalist world of Čiurlionis was becoming more and more a history of the spirit of early 20th century and less a living memory. Instead of keeping Čiurlionis as the face of the whole collection, Galaunė suggested researching his heritage and contributing to it with books. Now Čiurlionis was "shelved" near newer Lithuanian modernist artists, like Kazys Šimonis who used similar motifs from East and West in a popular *art deco* style; or the young avant-gardists who called for the introduction of urban life experiences into modern national art. The fresh novelty in 1932 which revived the tradition of the modernist cultural *expression* from the times of Čiurlionis, was a new group of painters, called ARS. In their manifesto they expressed a determination to create a new *national style* of the epoch[78]. Their exhibitions in 1931–1934 provoked a discussion about the nature of the national art and demonstrated the existence of the clear generational division among the artists of the period, between those who recieved their education in the Russian universities, and the new younger generation who returned from Western universities in search for a way out of artistic stagnation.

As noticed by Jolita Mulevičiūtė, the tone of the ARS manifesto differed much from the times of the early Lithuanian avant-gardists, the literary group *Keturi vėjai*[79]. Behind the revolutionary tone the group ARS was hiding a very constructive endeavor. They returned to the forefront the quest for sincerity and the rehabilitation of national folk art as a source of

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[76] Paulius Galaunė, "Bažnytinio meno paroda", in *Gimtasis Kraštas*, no. 1 (1939).
[77] Paulius Galaunė, "Tautos muziejaus reikalu", in *Pradai ir žygiai*, no. 3-4 (1927).
[78] ARS, in *K*, no. 5 (1932).
[79] Mulevičiūtė, 173.

modernist national expression[80]. In this way the ARS manifesto revised the place of folk tradition in Čiurlionis' world, to find for its new place in the universal history though the reconciliation of tradition and modernity. Galaunė, as a museum director, always expressed support for artistic autonomy, as well as for the group ARS. In this way Galaunė showed himself not only as a specialist in museology, but also able to reflect on the dynamism of modern artistic creation. Although ARS' manifesto sounded much more revolutionary than their paintings, for Galaunė's collection of national art they gave a new impetus to how the folk and the modern artworks – the core of the museum – could be again related into a non interrupted line. Under the "umbrella" of Čiurlionis' art, the ARS manifesto marked a new attempt at a "creative light", a step further from Vilnius' tradition in towards a search for a new integrative national experience.

What united Galaunė with the manifesto of the group ARS was that he also sought sources of energy hidden in folk sculpture, where the art is unfolding from nature without a constraint[81]. The source of an authentic national experience in the national space, organized by Galaunė, was less reliant on preserved heritage, as was the Nagevičius' "archeological" space, but on its transformative capacity, processual and momentous experience. For Galaunė important were the efforts of the modern artists to perceive the mind of folk artists. This logic suggests that the ideal national monument, created fully by the modern national artist, should become in itself a mediator of the folk creation experience. This cultural modernity, preserving the movement and exchange, was reflected in Galaunė's imagined experience of a modern national museum – it was projected as a direct opposition to a static conservative representative official space of the War museum. In the official letter of 1924 Galaunė complained about the idea of the medieval castle as unsuitable for the cultural museum. It had

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[80] Mulevičiūtė, 174.
[81] Paulius Galaunė, *Lietuvių liaudies skulptūros problemos* (Kaunas, 1932), 13.

to be open for flux and cultural exchange, rather than endowed with a ceremonial mood[82].

Galaunė himself was actively preparing for the Lithuanian pavilions in World exhibitions, as well as organizing many art exchanges with foreign countries to bringing to Lithuania the novelties of Western and Scandinavian countries; all of this made his national space an avenue of transnational change. Related to this, following the example seen in Scandinavian, he dreamt of the open air folk museum[83]. It was one of his strongest unrealized wishes related to the national museum, which would have equaled the symbolic importance of Čiurlionis museum in Kaunas' urban space to that of the War museum and the National Church. That may have been the reason why Galaunė did not appear in the ceremony of Vytautas Magnus museum's foundational stone, held in the National Garden of the old War museum. Only a secondary role of the cultural museum could be foreseen next to the established representative civic space.

Finally, in 1930 the Vytautas Magnus committee dedicated to the architect Dubeneckis a task to unite two seemingly irreconcilable sensibilities toward the nation in one Vytautas Magnus national monument. The union of *war* and *culture*, the *form* and the *content*, *historicist* and *organic* sensibilities needed to occur in the name of the National Museum. The foundational stone of the monument, laid in 1930, and the end of construction works in 1934-6 symbolically reconciled the two national opponents of the 1920s. The idea of the shared national monument brought a new less ideological and more practical problem – that of division of space between the two museums. Interestingly, neither the initial quest of the Vytautas Magnus committee to make the monument look *national*, nor the outburst of creative energy in the visual arts, represented by the group ARS had a visible reflection in the architectural space of the national monument. Even if Dubeneckis was himself a keen

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[82] Galaunė, Galdikas et al.
[83] Paulius Galaunė, "Oro muziejai", in *Gimtasis kraštas*, no. 2 (1934).

promoter of the sensitive use of baroque and folk art in the name of the *national style*. But his turn to modernism in the eve of his death has not been reflected in the interwar architectural discourse as a conscious search for an *organic national style*. I suggest that instead of using the "national narratives" which could cause new arguments between the two museums – the plan of 1930 fused in the idea of the national monument from two *national concepts*. Dubeneckis wisely preserved in the new plan the old arrangement of the War Museum which consisted of a wooden hut and a church tower. On the other side of the monument he fully modernized the motif of Čiurlionis' crown to transform it into a large second entrance to the museum. In this way the architect reconciled in Vytautas Magnus' monument the ideas of national *cultivation* and of national folk *expression*.

Fig. 16. *The Čiurlionis Gallery during the construction in the 1930s and the Čiurlionis' crown.*

Chapter 5
The Nation as Resurrection

The second decade of Lithuanian independence brought a maturation of national ideas in the urban space of the temporary capital – the urban "liberalism" of the 1920s gave way for two national monuments which claimed central space for ideologically the strengthened ideas of the nationalist regime and the Catholic Church. Already before 1930 a new ideological tension was increasing between a not yet formed Vytautas Magnus monument and the revived idea of a national church to commemorate the national revival. This difference can be spotted in one personal cleavage, that of the writer's Vaižgantas, who was a "godfather" of the two interwar national monuments. In the 1920s he promoted Vytautas Magnus' celebrations and the idea of the Church of Resurrection. The latter was invoked for the first time by the priest Petras Bučys in the article "Let's learn from Paris" in 1922"[84] , in which he suggested for the Lithuanians to follow the example of Paris' *Sacre Coeur* church and to submit the Lithuanian nation to the Heart of Christ as a sign of gratitude for its care. Meanwhile in 1930 Vaižgantas was complaining about the growing uneasiness of being a priest and national activists at the same time[85]. This tesion associated with an increasing stress on Lithuanian nation building, a quest for the experience of national totality reflected in interwar Lithuanian cultural philosophy and the rhetoric of the authoritarian regime which reached its most tense period towards the end of the 1930s. However, experiences they aimed for were of a different nature. The young Lithuanian Catholic philosophers emphasized the centrality of the nation; they worshiped the state as an "organic creation" of the nation, whereas a quest for totality by the

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[84] Petras Bučys, "Pasimokykim iš Prancūzų", in *Laisvė*, no. 24 (1922 02 28).
[85] Mačiulis, 224.

authoritarian regime manifested itself in invitation for unconditional submission to state in the eve of war[86].

Ironically, unlike the War and Culture museums whose ideologies were contrasted throughout the 1920s, the Vytautas Magnus and the Church of Resurrection in urban space of Kaunas were never played off against one another. One of the press articles compared the idea of the national church to a small monument of the Fallen Solder in the National Garden to show that Lithuanians need a more grand monument[87]. In many aspects the two monuments were of a different kind: in the press the Vytautas Magnus museum was presented as a "representational" state project, while the idea of the Church of Resurrection from the very beginning was announced as an independent project, exclusively funded by the nation[88].

Already in the 1920s the regime and the activists of the Catholic Church started a rhetorical conquest of Kaunas' urban space which had much of the legacy of 19th century czarist planning. After the *coup d'etat* in 1926, the authoritarian regime launched two campaigns of national cultural mobilization – the cult of Vilnius and the Grand Duke Vytautas Magnus, which rippled though the modern town with many projects, rhetorically "nationalizing" the urban space of Kaunas which had little national flavor previously. Meanwhile the Catholic Church also endowed their idea of a national monument with a motif of struggle, which had to revive Kaunas as a center of the Lithuanian-minded Catholic community. Like an attempt at endowing Kaunas' urban space with a new historicist interpretation, this struggle lacked any destructive form. At most, it manifested in several urban interventions into the Old Town where it claimed its renewed centrality. Several administration buildings were erected in the heart of Kaunas' Old Town – the Town Hall and

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[86] Justinas Dementavičius, *Valstybės samprata Lietuvoje: modernios lietuviškos politinės minties ištakos ir raida* (Vilnius: Vilniaus universitetas, 2012), 122.
[87] "Kaip eina Prisikėlimo bažnyčios statyba", in *Lietuvos aidas* (1936 11 22).
[88] Kun. F Kapočius, "Mūsų prisikėlimo bažnyčia", in *Lietuva* (1927 11 25).

the Cathedral square, they were later critiqued for the "distortion of the integrity of the whole square". Also a huge statue of the priest Valančius, a famous cleric who organized a temperance movement in the 19th century Lithuanian villages, was advocated by Vaižgantas.

Otherwise, the rhetorical struggle for urban space was a competition with a faded national enemy: the location of the new church was chosen where once stood a "bastion of Lithuanian slavers"[89], as was commonly invoked by Kapočius, the spokesman of the Church building committee. We can compare his position to that of the general Nagevičius, who in a few years will be kissing a "domesticated" czarist tower before its destruction. Nevertheless, the suggestion to use the ruins of the Orthodox church for the foundations of the new National Monument, expressed in the Church building committee by one of the generals was not supported[90] even if it was the sole most commonly detested and visually dominating building in Kaunas, which was seriously threatened to be blown up in the interwar press[91]. The Orthodox church was eventually "neutralized" by converting it to a Catholic church and by naming the square around it "Independence square". Ultimately, the victorious tone in which the new church was called, was much in contrast with its precursor in Žaliakanis district – a modest wooden church, which outgrew itself several times during the interwar period in an area where the most active religious supporters of the Church of Resurrection resided.

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[89] "Akmuo jau nugabentas į Prisikėlimo bažnyčią", in *Lietuva* (1934 06 28).
[90] Just. Strimaitis, "Nepriklausomos Lietuvos didis paminklas", in *Lietuva* (1926 01 13).
[91] I. Šeinius, "Soboras", in *Bangos*, no. 27 (1932).

Fig. 17. *The Orthodox Church, the beginning of the 20th century.*

Where there lay a significant difference between the struggle of two national monuments for the priority in urban space of the temporary capital, was that the Church of Resurrection was presented as an exclusively "democratic" project. It was initiated after a "common consensus" was reached in a meeting of "200 prominent intellectuals" in 1924 in the Town Hall's Swan's Hall, here the Metropolitain invited to discuss the need for the National Monument[92]. These "elections" recalled the idea of a "democratic" folk house of the first decade of the 20th century, promoted by Kaunas' Catholics, which was contrasted with the project by the Vilnius cultural elite. Ironically, in the 1920s, the decision to build the Church to commemorate the national revival was reached in the first meeting by the national

[92] Just. Strimaitis, "Nepriklausomos Lietuvos didis paminklas", in *Lietuva* (1926 01 13).

elite which supposedly stood as "representatives of all layers of Lithuanian society"[93], as another article claims. Critical articles appeared in the press afterwards complaining that the idea of a national church represented only Catholic Lithuanians and abandoned many others who contributed to national independence[94]. Among alternative ways to commemorate independence, considered in the first meeting and in the national press, was a sculptural composition or a public house, such as a parliament or museum[95]. The only overt objection to the idea of the national church as such, was expressed by the Vincas Kudirka Society, which encouraged to boycott the whole project. The Catholic press responded with accusations of a bolshevist stance[96].

As soon as the agreement to build a Church as a National Monument was reached, and a special committee represented by Kapočius was created, it started speaking *in the name of the nation*, as if the "client of the monument is the nation itself"[97]. Following the nation's "will" to establish its central national monument sounded very different than the position of the *gardener* of the National Garden, who treated himself as if he were in *service for the nation*. Paradoxically, this "democracy" soon turned into what one reader called a "dictatorial" tone – Kapočius frequently repeated that the monument has to be the greatest and the nicest, although Nagevičius, who supported the idea of the church, was of the opinion that there was no necessity for another big monument[98]. Unlike Nagevičius, Kapočius was always personally present in the press; he expressed the contention that the monument's idea caused many discussion. A series of visualizations of the monument was published in the press and he personally answered the critique. Kapočius tried to inform the people about all stages of

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[93] Kun. Kapočius, "Mūsų prisikėlimo bažnyčia", in *Lietuva* (1927 11 24).
[94] Vinventa Matalaitytė Lozoraitienė, "Lietuvos ir lietuvių vardo paminklas", in *Lietuva* (1926 02 06).
[95] V. Bičiūnas, "Tautos paminklo sumanymo reikalu", in *Rytas* (1923 12 23).
[96] Katalikas, "Nenori bažnyčioms", in *Vienybė*, no. 7 (1930).
[97] Architektas, "Prisikėlimo bažnyčios statybos reikalu", in *Lietuva* (1927 12 06).
[98] Just. Strimaitis, "Nepriklausomos Lietuvos didis paminklas", in *Lietuva* (1926 01 13).

the monument's construction, he believed it was important for public support to be assured, because the donations were the main source of funding. Any price could be paid for the promised building – the biggest national monument in the Northern countries with the biggest organ[99]. It had to provide a magnificent experience of national grandeur, to become a gift from Lithuanian society to itself.

The Resurrection

Several stages in the idea of national *resurrection* can be discerned from the discussions of the interwar press from early 1920s on. Unlike the other two national projects, the idea of the national church had to bring in a "new era" in Kaunas' urban space: as requested by Vaižgantas, it had to be in a *national style[100]*. This call for a unique national style, interestingly, revealed two contrasting national sensibilities of the period – one rooted in the nostalgia of Vilnius; the other introduced a modern constructivist approach. According to an article by Vytautas Bičiūnas', who promoted the first idea, the *national style* had to create an organic relation to the town; the historical capital Vilnius was an example here. Bičiūnas reminded that the baroque churches which we admire were all created by architects with a strong artistic sensibility. He further suggested that there was no other artist in Lithuania who could fulfill the idea of the national monument in a *national style* besides Dubeneckis[101] – the architect of the Vytautas Magnus museum. On the other hand, the initiator of the Church, the priest Bučys, in the first meeting called for a more modernist sensibility – he suggested that they need a monument which would submit all arts to the idea of the national church[102]. This latter idea of a national *gesamtkunstwerk*, will be developed further throughout the interwar

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[99] Ks., "Paremkime bažnyčios statybą", in *Ūkininko patarejas* (1936 11 26).
[100] Kan. J. Tumas Vaižgantas, "Atgimimo paminklas šventykla", in *Lietuva* (1923 08 19).
[101] V. Bičiūnas, "Tautos paminklo sumanymo reikalu", in *Rytas* (1923 12 23).
[102] Just. Strimaitis, "Nepriklausomos Lietuvos didis paminklas", in *Lietuva* (1926 01 13).

period with a help of modern engineering. Firstly, as it was noticed in the interwar press, the special committee who selected the architectural project did not contain any architects, but only artists and engineers, whom "Kapočius calls architects"[103]. Furthermore, the Church committee expressed continuous support for the engineer Karolis Reisonas, a Protestant of Latvian origins. After the contest, in which none of 15 participating architects satisfied the committee, the third place winner, Reisonas, was asked to produce multiple new variants of his Church, in order to find a way to combine his constructivist approach with the idea of national *resurrection*.

Fig. 18. *One of many projects of the Church of Resurrection project (1928) proposed by Karolis Reisonas.*

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[103] "Prisikėlimo bažnyčios reikalu", in *Lietuvos aidas* (1930 03 08).

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The first widely disseminated and discussed visualization of the National Monument in 1929, closely tied the initial idea of national/religious resurrection to the memory of Lithuanian historical statehood and its historical capital. The first project by Reisonas suggested a clearly weighted path to national independence – he introduced "stairs which represented the five ages of suffering which one has to climb on the way to reach a huge Christ figure facing towards Vilnius[104]. Five hundred years of national suffering were counted from the death of Vytautas Magnus, after which Catholicism was introduced to Lithuanian lands. Similarly to the initial projects of the War and Čiurlionis' museums, the first visualization of the Church also sought to establish a contact with Vilnius; the difference was that the monument did not embody the absence of Vilnius, but rather searched for a transcendental unification of the historical and the temporary capitals. Kapočius claimed that the monument did not betray the historical capital: it was exactly dedicated to commemorate the unification of Lithuanian lands; this could be seen in Christ's hand, raised to the side of Vilnius and blessing it[105].

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[104] J. Matijošaitis, "Atsikėlimo bažnyčos projektas", in *Rytas* (1929 05 11).
[105] J. Matijošaitis, "Prisikėlimo bažnyčia Kaune", in *Rytas* (1929 03 28).

Fig. 19. *The non realized project of the Church of Resurrection by Karolis Reisonas, 1929.*

The expected *national style* of the national church in Reisonas' plan was embodied in several national narratives which were fused into a literary representation of the idea of *rising* by using engineering solutions. In his first plan Reisonas borrowed some ideas from the medieval castle style, whereas the painter Žmuidzinavičius applauded it for its similarity to Čiurlionis' paintings. Such an eclectic solution provoked a negative reaction in the press. A

professional art historian Halina Kairiūkštytė-Jacynienė devoted several articles to the first project[106]; besides criticism she further developed the ideas of how the idea of a national resurrection can be embodied in modern monumental forms. Jacynienė critiqued the industrial approach to arts by Reisonas for the lack of sense of unity and transcendence. She found a mismatch between the idea of the national architectural form and the so called centrality of the church in Kaunas' urban space. Jacynienė called it a mere decoration hidden behind the declaration of high symbolism and monumentality[107]. This criticism was soon recognized, as well as the request from the public for new artistic forms that would reflect the modern times. After a year of discussions the first project of the National Monument was quietly changed to a new and cardinally different project. Kapočius explained that this was also due to the huge expenses which the first version would have required as well as the problematic soil of Žaliakalnis hill, which could not sustain such a large church.

The second approved version of the Church of Resurrection by Reisonas in 1930 proved to listen to Jacyniene's words; it reflected a maturation of architectural form to embody the idea of national resurrection. A great change was introduced to purify it a national resurrection from its dependence on the historical narratives of Lithuanian statehood. The exposition of the engineering construction outwards also demonstrated a maturation of the architect's own artist explorations. Ideologically this project replaced the motif of national suffering with one of celebration of a national victory. The quest for transparency became one of the key new features of the new monument. Architecturally it showed an aspiration to realize an initial wish of Bučys – to facilitate a direct connection the people and God. Hundreds of windows in the walls, questioning their materiality, had to fill the interior of the church with an even daylight. Instead of the spiral stairs, which would have created a difficult

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[106] Halina Kairiūkštytė-Jacynienė, "Dėl prisikėlimo bažnyčios kritikos", in *Lietuvos aidas* (1929 11 28).
[107] Halina Kairiūkštytė-Jacynienė, "Dėl Prisikėlimo bažnyčios projekto", in *Lietuvos aidas* (1929 11 04).

climb to the chapel on the roof, the new visualization introduced a huge terrace on the roof for up to three thousand believers. The second altar of the church had to be in the open air, and the sculptural roads, featuring the parallel roads of suffering by Christ and the nation, had to be placed along the roof terrace. In the underground of the Church, a national Pantheon was planned which provided the idea of a monument with "lightness" already in its material basis. Finally, the façade of the new project of the Church lost all literal connections to the historical capital and its artistic history. It instead "compressed" the history of national and divine resurrection into the verticality of architectural lines.
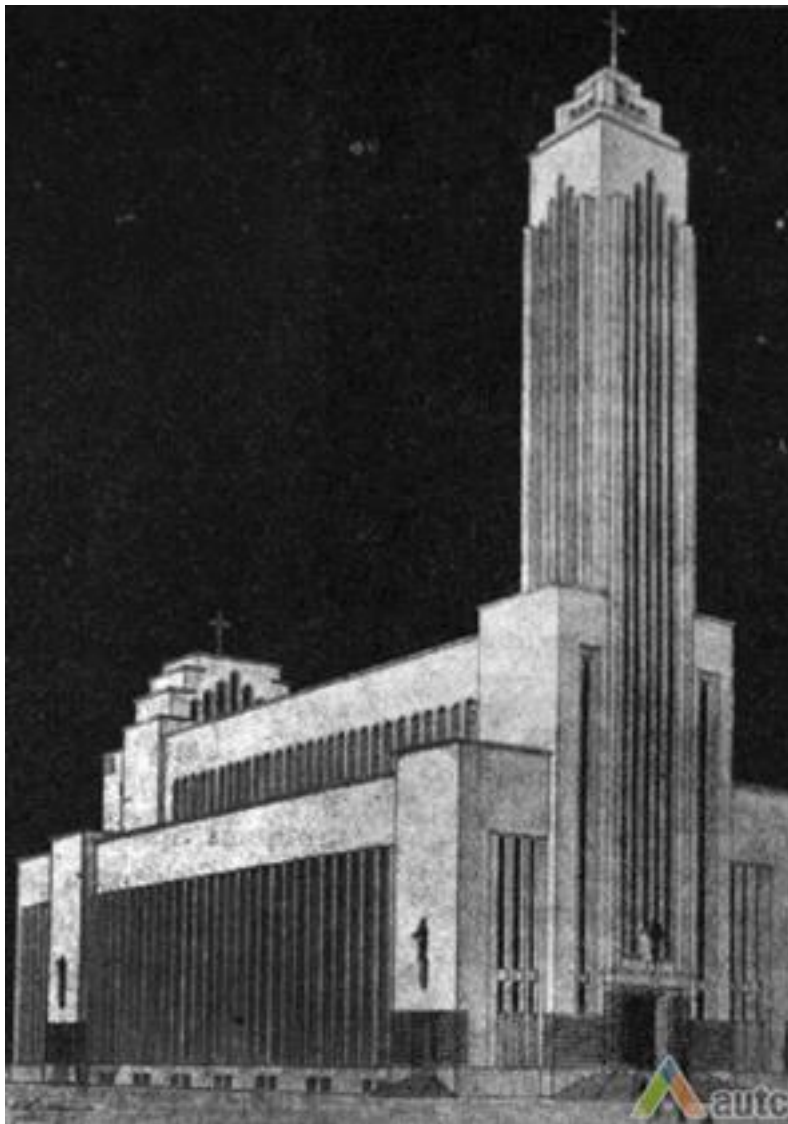

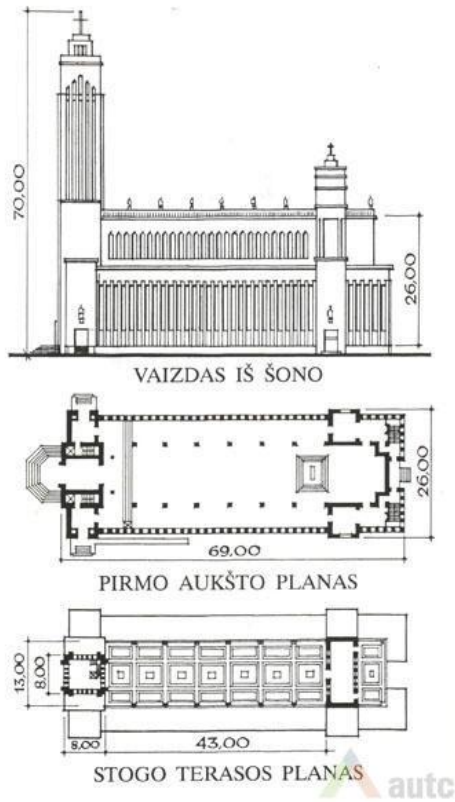Fig. 20. *The chosen project of the Church of Resurrection by Karolis Reisonas.*

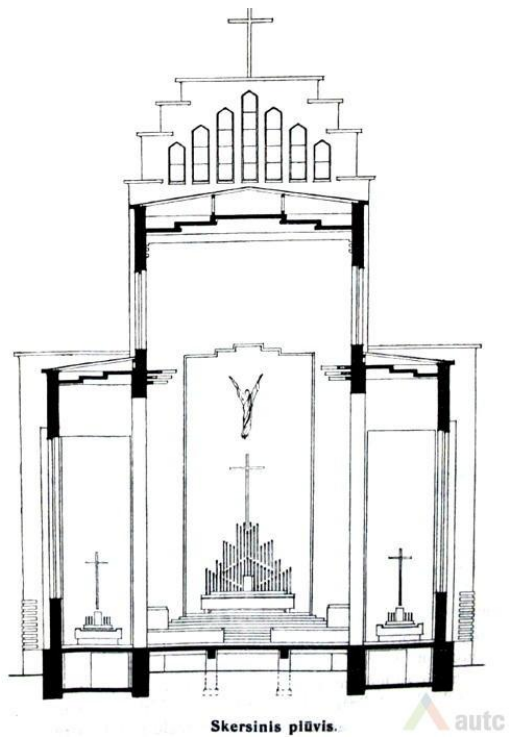Fig. 21. *The plan of the Church of Resurrection, 1930s.*

Fig. 22. *The Church of Resurrection, interior.*

The quest to give away mediation between the nation and God in the final architectural project in 1930 was symbolically confirmed during the first Lithuanian Eucharistic Congress in 1934. This event marked the very climax of the Church of Resurrection – a symbolic end of the National Monument itself. During the ceremony, attended by mass of people, a foundational stone of the church on Žaliakalnis hill was laid and an act of submission of the nation to the Heart of Christ was signed. By that time nobody expected that this monument will not be finished, that it will soon enter a stage of being built only "with a help of God"[108], as Kapočius informed about the progress in end of the 1930s. He confessed that the foundations absorbed all the initially collected money[109]. Despite this, the enthusiasm of the clergy did not falter – Kapočius insisted they will never give up, because the people will always support the idea of their national monument[110].

After the act of submission to Christ's Heart was signed officially, the project of the Church of Resurrection entered a stage were it did not need to be built because everyone already knew about its "presence"; that reminds one of the history of Stalin's Palace. The National Monument, which arose from a struggle for its own "invention" of itself in 1926, within ten years time during the Congress "celebrated" its own disappearance. The mood of "relief" during the event was "betrayed" by one of the priests, who thanked hundreds of children in a procession for help in bringing up the foundational stone, for the coins which were donated by some of the "most poor children from the forts", and he said there was no need for more donations – the most important part was already done, and now only the submission to the Christ's heart remained[111]. While the ceremony of the foundational stone of

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[108] A. P-nis., "Kaip auga Kaune Pabaltijo meno šedevras", in *XX amžius* (1939 09 05).
[109] Ibid.
[110] Pr. Ra., "Prisikėlimo bažnyčia bus statoma", in *Lietuvos aidas* (1931 11 09).
[111] "Rytoj dedamas Prisikėlimo bažnyčios kertinis akmuo", in *Lietuva* (1934 06 28).

the War Museum permeated with the nostalgia for the past was mostly attended by war veterans, invalids, and people of older generation, the children of the Eucharistic ceremony were invited to take part in the nostalgia of the never coming future.

Chapter 6
Urban Organicism

In early 1920s three independent national projects emerged in Kaunas which requested a relative cultural autonomy for the expression of their national idea in an urban space. In this chapter I would like to suggest some parallels of this urban "democracy" with a famous manifesto "Towards the organic state", published in 1936[112] in *Naujoji Romuva*, signed by 16 Lithuanian intellectuals including the philosopher Antanas Maceina and the editor of the magazine Juozas Keliuotis. The cultural production, manifested from below rather than organizing the national life from above, played a crucial role in the idea of an "organic state". The quest for organicism reflected the values of the movement of *new humanism*, calling for cultural plurality which was influenced by Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier's writings on Christian society. The Lithuanian manifesto critiqued the authoritarian regime for its political cleavages, and the application of the external qualities of interwar European fascisms. But the group behind the manifesto was equally critical to the idea of recovering a democratic system – they sought their own middle way between parliamentarism and authoritarianism which would again instill the internal cultural dynamism into the static state's organism.

A certain correlation with the idea of an "organic state" and cultural autonomy can be spotted in the urban history of the temporary capital Kaunas, where a spectrum of national projects appeared in the 1920s as an "open-ended" national project. The constellation of multiple national sensibilities in Kaunas' urban space suggested a different emphasis on the nation and avoided the imposition of the simulation of a single "consensual" definition of the

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[112] "Į organiškos valstybės kūrybą", in *Naujoji Romuva,* 8 (1936), 169-75.

Lithuanian nation. The democratic aspect of the idea of an "organic state" was emphasized by Šalkauskis, he saw it as a guarantor of human rights, placing the individual at its center. Unlike the "organic state", interwar fascism, according to him, was aimed to submit an individual to an idea of the state[113]. In national projects in Kaunas' urban space thus reminds one of the Šalkauskis' quest for a "federalized differentiation"[114]. Ultimately, the "unarticulated" organicism of interwar Kaunas' urban space manifested itself in a "resistance" to the flood of the imageries of the historical city, which served as a strong iconographical repertoire for a new national edifice to build. The establishment of the military and the church as the new centers of national culture demonstrated instead a continuation of Kaunas' urban and local identity. Ultimately the main source of two Kaunas' national monuments became its own history, and the style – characteristic to Kaunas of the 1930s.

All three national projects which searched for a home in the temporary capital of Lithuania, I suggest, collectively embodied a "defensive" position in respect to a historicist nationalist regime throughout the two decades between the wars. As discussed in the previous chapters, this was an attempt to place the Lithuanian nation within a larger universal picture. Although none of the three national projects were led by a cultural philosopher, one can assume that the practical problems – the lack of space – encouraged them to search for alternative, more "complete" national experiences, in order to win in the urban competition of national ideas.

The interwar period's main tensions in this way revived the prewar tensions inherent in the idea of the Lithuanian "National House"; there the Catholics from Kaunas juxtaposed their idea of an "organic" folk house to the "National House" advocated by Vilnius' cultural elite. Although both the interwar regime and the Catholics shared an emphasis on national

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[113] Stasys Šalkauskis, *Raštai*, vol. 1 (Vilnius: Mintis, 1993), 288-289.
[114] Stasys Šalkauskis, "Romuviečių deklaracija", in *Naujoji Romuva*, no. 11 (1936).

cultural production, the regime promulgated the historical memory and "unique" Lithuanian culture, while the new generation of Catholics sought a more integrative national experience. The clash between a synthetic approach to the Lithuanian nation and the official nationalism, which maintained the dynamism of interwar debates on national culture, was vividly expressed in a discussion between Šalkauskis and the national ideologist Altantas, where the later explicitly claimed that the national culture cannot be synthetic but only truly unique[115].

A quest for a more universalist national experience, inherent in the three national urban projects, went through two stages in the interwar period. The architectural visualizations of the first decade relied on an external literal struggle for national existence, while the second decade emphasized an inner national struggle. In the 1920s, still much affected by the recent trauma of loosing Vilnius, they reflected their nostalgia in multiple ways: from the modest brushstrokes of the castle motifs on the clock tower to the mirage of resurrected Čiurlionis' on Kaunas hill. The use of historical styles was fused with an "educational tone", the moments of national grandeur, suffering and hope, expressed though the historical styles, which were part of a universal artistic palette, which had to create "local" meanings for the national audience to reach.

The initial quest for a "synthetic" solution for the national monuments had parallels with some interwar discussions on national culture. The philosopher Šalkauskis, whose ideas were influential in the 1920s in Lithuania, described Lithuanian national culture as having a mission to bridge Western and Eastern cultures[116]. According to him, the national culture was a result of many historical circumstances, mostly affected by Eastern (passive) and Western (active) springs which have to be reconciled. He attributed the responsibility to bring up the

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[115] Alantas, 30.
[116] Stasys Šalkauskis, *Pedagoginiai raštai* (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1991), 167.

national culture to the universal level to the intelligentsia[117]. Education played a significant role in Šalkauskis's writings; it had to help for the nation to understand its mission, to create and participate in the ontological dimension. Similarly the initial visualizations of the national monuments in the 1920s were "educational" national messengers. They were trying to appropriate universal architectural languages in a healthy way, not to pose a threat to uniqueness of a national culture[118]. According to Šalkauskis, who was influenced by Kazys Pakštas' book on Lithuanian geopolitics[119], the task of the Lithuanian nation in the world was self-defensive, unlike Adam Mickiewicz's Polish salvation focused national mission of the 19th century. Similarly the combatant mood of the small Lithuanian nation prevailed in the early visualizations of the national projects, making them "ready" to counterattack.

The final architectural visualizations of the Lithuanian national monuments in the 1930s demonstrated that the question of *national form* and *universal content* was posed anew. By that time Šalkauskis' idea of *synthesis* was taken over and developed by his pupil Antanas Maceina. His writings on the Lithuanian national mission, which increasingly radicalized towards the end of the 1930s, also paralleled the maturation of two separate architectural ideas into fascist-style monuments. Maceina had much stronger negative feelings towards Western cultural influences on Lithuanian nation than Šalkauskis. He revised Šalkauskis' theories to underline a different source of the dynamic nature of the nation and limited its cultural contacts. The essence of *synthesis* for Maceina was not so much dependent on a critical reception of historical influences, but on a recreation of nation's own history[120]. The nation's inner dynamism was found by Maceina in its coexisting nomadic and maternalistic

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[117] Ibid., 174.
[118] Artūras Sverdiolas, *Kultūros filosofija Lietuvoje* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1983), 32.
[119] Ibid., 22.
[120] Maceina, 396-524.

origins, which was beyond human perception and reoccur constantly in cycles[121]. Maceina treated the idea of *synthesis* less in congruity than Šalkauskis; he underlined its paradoxical nature[122], composed of matriarchal attachment to the ground, nomadic feelings of the marches[123]. Consequently, he departed from Šalkauskis' reliance on East and West to "close" the nation into a self-contained metaphysics, where national education also had little influence. It was envisaged as partaking in universal history and preserving its own particularities. Meanwhile, the visualizations of the national monuments of the 1930s departed from visuality as a main source of national experience, which reduced it to competing national narratives. The Vytautas Magnus monument "compressed" the twofold ideological sources of the regime – the history of Lithuanian statehood and national expression – while the Church of Resurrection placed the national experience in a cyclical religious time. Thus the two modernist architectural solutions finally embodied a "compression" of the national history to eternal urban self-repetition, a firm national statement in the urban landscape of the temporary capital of Lithuania.

Visiting the national monuments

The discovered modern national sensibility, embodied in two Lithuanian modernist interwar national monuments, calls to question the claim of Leonidas Donskis that "conservative nationalism – including what might be named philosophic nationalism – that characterized inter-war Lithuanian intellectual culture sprang from peripheral models of consciousness deeply rooted in Central/East European linguistic and cultural politics and from what might

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[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid., 501-505.
[123] Ibid.

be called the fear of modernity"[124]. What he does not mentioned among the interwar Lithuanian philosophy, was the influential intellectual movement of *new humanism,* associated with the journal *Naujoji Romuva* (1930-1940). Its editor Juozas Keliuotis, although less philosophically sophisticated, represented the voice of the popular intellectual magazine[125] which encompassed a wide range of topics from world politics to modern art. The magazine gathered around itself many Lithuanian intellectuals and artists of the period in the club of *Naujoji Romuva*. Keliuotis' own perception of nation was much influenced by the philosophy of Henri Bergson, whom he studied in the Sorbonne. Keliuotis searched for a modernist expression, based on folk art; he further "radicalized" the discoveries of the artist group ARS, which towards the end of 1930s was considered an "old generation". He aspired to channel the energy acquired from Lithuanian folk art for a more coordinated use. By placing the concept of the nation at the very core of experience of modernity he reconciled in his writings the two opposing sensibilities into one[126].

Taking into consideration the influence of the movement of *Naujoji Romuva* on the educated public of the period, one can suggest that the modernist architecture of the two national monuments in the 1930s were also a manifestation of a sort of "folk fashism". Externally these monuments were similar to German and Italian fascist architecture, but the intellectual sources of national modernity found in Lithuanian cultural discussions of the period lied not in the classical, but in the local tradition. Influenced by Šalkauskis, Keliuotis in the 1930s revised his teacher's aesthetic ideas, rooted in the idealistic canon[127]; he was willing to modernize the folk tradition to reach the *universal content.* The classical tradition still served as an organizing principle of the facades and the volumes of the national

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[124] Leonidas Donskis, "On the Boundary of Two Worlds: Lithuanian Philosophy in the Twentieth Century", in *Studies in East European Thought*, vol. 54, no. 3 (2002), 195.
[125] Mulevičiūtė, 51.
[126] Mulevičiūtė, 111-115.
[127] Veljataga, 158.

monuments; they reflected the tendency towards the neoclassical style advocated by *Naujoji Romuva* in the 1930s, that followed the general tendencies in the Western interwar art history[128]. Furthermore, the sense of balance and the share of the weight was created between two national monuments – the lower emphasized horizontality and the upper verticality – even though this was not coordinated. Therefore the popularity of the journal *Naujoji Romuva* demonstrated though the "informal guide" for the general audience how to interpret the cardinal change of the first visions of national monuments. It suggested a rapprochement to the unity of national visions and their architectural forms, a quest for the purity of the national experience inherent in the ornament-less monuments.

According to Juhani Phalasmaa, "the ultimate meaning of any significant building is beyond architecture itself; great buildings direct our consciousness back to the world **[129].**" Similarly, if we start from the outside of the interwar Lithuanian national monuments, it brings us into ever deeper coded national sensibilities beyond the "intentionally" inscribed historical messages. The interwar press also put emphasis on the experience of visiting and involving oneself in the national rituals under the open sky in the extensive outdoor spaces, the National Garden and the open air terrace, which were considered as integral and almost central parts of the monuments. Visiting the National Garden, getting lost among the wooden crosses and national statues, they said, provided "the experience of entering the fields of Lithuania"[130], whereas the Church of Resurrection, founded on the stone brought from Olive hill, had to assure the feeling of "stepping into a sacred land, that extends the national soil"[131]. Similar to the fascist ceremonies which aimed to "conquer" the urban space around itself, the Lithuanian clergy also called for an experience of totality during the religious rituals. This

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[128] Mulevičiūtė, 128.

[129] Pallasmaa.

[130] Pronckus.
[131] "Pašventinti Tautos prisikėlimo bažnyčios pamatai", in *Lietuva* (1934 06 30).

would extend the limits of the monument itself: " the masses will be spread by the radio throughout all Lithuania and the world and all Lithuanians from big to small will be repeating that submission which will become our second anthem… the foreigners who visit the temporary capital will be surprised what's happening, why people pray in the streets, and every Lithuanian will respond with proud – this is the sacred Lithuania"[132].

The two monuments created two different experiences of visiting the Lithuanian sacral space. The National Garden, cultivated in the middle of the city, could have been easily entered without noticing. For ten years it looked more like a "forest" of national relics: it was a space of gradual growth, continuously complemented with donations and new acquisitions, surrounded by a rose garden with a special smell. The National Garden was about metamorphosis, contrasts and layering – transformation of wood into stone, familiar faces into cold emotionless bronze. On the other hand, entering into a sacral land on the Žaliakalnis hill was probably was stimulated by the omnipotent news about the building of the famous national monument. This made a trip into a determined pilgrimage to visit the famous Lithuanian center, asked for physical exercise and self-determination to climb up the hill. To help to reach the monument, Kapočius explains, the eyes were never ceased being lifted by the vertical lines[133]. Unlike the "national forest" in the middle of the modern urban jungle, the Church of Resurrection was a stable attraction point that was a gathering point for everyone from all sides. It had to mark the very center, the beginning of the world. During the night, illuminated by hundreds of artificial lights, it had to become a guiding light – a lighthouse of the city. Unlike the cozy space of the Garden, crowded with antiquity, one had to be offered a stunning view of the whole city from the terrace of the Church, taken in intimacy or in a unity

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[132] A. P-nis, "Kaip auga Kaune pabaltijo meno šedevras", in *XX amžius* (1939 09 05).
[133] "Kaip yra su Paminklinė Prisikėlimo bažnyčia", in *Lietuva* (1933 05 30).

with the Catholic community. Here the feeling of victory – the power to observe the historical city from above – had to endow the viewer with a sense of control of everything around.

The experience of visiting the two monuments was based on a very different relationship between the material space and the human scale. Even the new palace of the War museum retained the human scale of the settlement, the approachability and small distances. The National Garden at the War museum, as the name already suggests, was about locality, familiarity, and recognizability. Where the official space consisted of a mixture of "the warriors with the peasants", the handmade crosses co-existed next to the monument for the medieval hero Vytautas Magnus. The crosses, the Lithuanian national symbol, were a one of the central motifs in both monuments. In the National Garden they were immersed in the national soil as a tangible wooden handwork, made by villagers, collected from all over Lithuania. On the other hand, the first project of the Church of Resurrection had to embody a huge cross in itself – it had to be built on a structure of "Lithuanian cross", that is a cross with rounded intersection. From the outside it had to be decorated with hundreds of small crosses[134], something much critiqued by Jancyniene. The second project of the Church was a three nave form. A triumphant cross, a concrete structure of seven meter's height[135], had to be put on its top. Illuminated during the night by artificial lights, it had to be adorned from great distances rather than be touched.

The acoustic experience of the national spaces had to speak "in accord" with the experience of architecture – to fill it will emotions reaching the visitors from within. The soundscape of the Lithuanian national spaces throughout the period extended from the sound of gradual perfecting to the sound of imagined bells calling from the top of the hill. In the 1920s Nagevičius put many efforts to compose the sound with the bells of Russian Orthodox

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[134] Matijošaitis, "Atsikėlimo bažnyčios projektas".
[135] "Kaip statoma Prisikėlimo bažnyčia", in *XX amžius* (1937 06 21).

churches. He searched how to make the bells of different size and materials sound in harmony under the guidance of the key bell – the Liberty Bell[136]. The national press highlighted and explained in detail the preparation to acquire a carillon in the 1930s[137]. Thus, the uneven sound of the bells in the 1920s, hanged in the "modified" Orthodox church of the War Museum, were transformed into to a coordinated sound of the famous carillon, hanged in a new museum tower. The sound of the bells, which were blessed as "bells of the national struggles", lead to the heights of Kaunas' town – to the idea of a magnificent organ, distinguished by size and power, the best in all of Northern Europe[138], which was never seen but very well known in the period.

Therefore, the motif of *national struggles* became one common denominator of the two interconnected "kingdoms" of the temporary capital, erected in the 1930s for the Duke Vytautas Magnus and Jesus Christ. The lower monument took "under its shoulders" the core of Lithuanian national culture – the war and cultural museums – visually establishing the strong national foundations, whereas Christ resided in the upper kingdom[139], responsible for the national spiritual care. The lower national monument was fully dedicated to a respectful burial of the national souls. The doors on the facade of the War museum lead to a crypt under the Vytautas name, sunk in the darkness of black marble, surrounded by names of fallen national soldiers[140], invoking the mood of a burial ceremony. The symbolic connection of the buried heroes with the Church of Resurrection was suggested by the founder of the Garden himself who promoted the Church of Resurrection as a national Pantheon. When the Church was to be built, Kapočius planned to hold daily masses for the national heroes, coordinated

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[136] P. K-nas, "Kokias melodijas girdėsim iš muziejaus bokšto", in *XX amžius* (1937 06 25).
[137] "Kaip skambings Vytauto Didžiojo varpai", in *Lietuvos aidas* (1935 05 31).
[138] "Dek. Kapočius apie Prisikėlimo bažnyčios statybą", in *XX amžius* (1937 02 27).
[139] "Pašventinti Tautos Prisikėlimo bažnyčios pamatai".
[140] "Karo muziejaus žuvusiųjų skyrių įtengti tikimasi dar šiais metais", in *Lietuvos aidas* (1937 07 08).

with the tradition established by the lower national monument[141]. Unlike in the crypt of Vytautas, the national Pantheon had to be reached without a sense of entering the underground, while an inscription above had to remind that "we died to be resurrected"[142]. Thus the light and transparency of the national monument on the hill had to permeate it from the fundaments. The modern means of architecture had to diminish the line between interior and exterior. The overwhelming presence of Christ which had to be depicted in a "magnificent painting" behind the main altar with scenes from the national history[143], had to be illuminated by daylight through a special hidden window. In this way a quest for totality of experience had to be reached though architectural means; the monument had to become both a source of light and an attraction of light; it had to facilitate a promised connection between the nation and the divine. The Church of Resurrection thus symbolically entered into an urban "national story" exactly from the point where the War Museum left it untold.

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[141] Kz, "Prisikėjimo bažnyčios tolimesni statybos darbai pradedami netrukus", in *Lietuvos aidas* (1936 03 01).
[142] A. P-nis, "Kaip auga Kaune pabaltijo meno šedevras", in *XX amžius* (1939 09 05).
[143] "Kaip yra su paminkline bažnyčia", in *Lietuva* (1933 05 30).

Conclusions

The indulgence in the *involuntary memory* of interwar Lithuanian national monuments "reminded" them as a realization of the forgotten idea of Kaunas as a potential center of organic national cultural production. The thesis showed them as a manifestation of the "organic side" of the unrealized prewar idea of the Lithuanian "National House". In the 1920s, in the unfortunate political circumstances of the loss of the official capital Vilnius, the spontaneously arisen three nation projects were forming the dynamism of the yet-to-be cluster of national monuments, hidden under virtual Vilnius' presence in Kaunas' streets. Their final maturation in the 1930s established the centrality of the military and the Catholic church in Lithuanian urban national experience which meant the interwar reconsideration of Kaunas' own czarist urban heritage.

In this way I showed that the attention on the part of historians given to "intentional" interwar East Central European historicist regimes, the sources of the *voluntary memory,* do not embrace the complex national urban national experience of the period. In this thesis, instead, I touched upon the *involuntary memory*, which I found in the development and interweaving of the three national initiatives forming the cluster, and aiming at national *cultivation*, *expression,* and *resurrection*. To distinguish them from the historicist regime I showed the individual attempts at a more synthetic national experience, a quest to plant deep roots in the temporary capital. Finally this resulted in ornament-less Lithuanian national monuments, where the search of Lithuanian interwar cultural philosophers for *national form* and *universal content* were given a physical expression. I argue that the interwar cluster of Lithuanian national monuments became an example of the redempted national urban experience without passing through the midway – the 19th century East Central European trend of "intentional" *national styles*.

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The focus on the evolution of the experience of interwar Lithuanian national monuments throughout the two decades showed that they were gradually maturing into fascist-style monuments. The unique intellectual sources of the Lithuanian monuments were the modern Catholic values of *new humanism* and folk art traditions, which were radicalized in the writings of the editor Juozas Keliuotis and the philosopher Antanas Maceina. Unlike, for example, the interwar Italian case, the modern style in Lithuania never became a demanded *national style*, it was not an outspoken attempt at a *national organic* experience which would make the monuments a direct expression of the strong metaphysical discourse on Lithuanian national culture.

Following the shifting experience of the Lithuanian national monument, I suggest that the chosen fascist style in Lithuanian special case was the solution of a struggle to create the monumental form for two integralist Lithuanian national ideas. In the case of the Vytautas Magnus' monument, the fascist style appeared as a fulfillment of the quest to combine the opposing concepts of *war* and *culture*. In the case of the Church of Resurrection it was a "distillation" of architectural form from the historicist references to embody the idea of an unmediated connection between the nation and the God. To connect these artistic explorations to their indirect sources, the interwar philosophical discourse about Lithuanian nation, Dubeneckis' modernist style was the ultimate modernization of the sources of national culture, approaching to Keliuotis' dynamic perception of the folk art. Whereas the best articulated quest for transcendental experience through architectural forms in the interwar Lithuania was the Church of Resurrection, where Reisonas "introduced" a constructivist approach to the Catholic philosopher Maceina's radicalized notion of the nation which attempted to close its history in a metaphysical cycle of self-repetition.

The second part of the thesis, which placed the experience of the "organicist" national monument in tension with the historicist national perception, promulgated by the authoritarian regime, revealed that during the interwar period there was a gradual move towards an overall more integrative urban experience of the nation. The attempt to see the national monuments as dialogical in their nature showed that the 1920s remained indebted to the unfolding *conflict* between the national *form* and the national *culture*, a juxtaposition of the two national basis which dated from the prewar period. The first national monument of Vytautas Magnus, which fused together the War and Culture museums, emerged as a resolution of this conflictual national experience. Futhermore, in the 1930s the urban union between the initial competitors for the Lithuanian "National House" was established. The historicist and Catholic organicist perceptions of nation, embodied in Vytautas Magnus' monument and the Church of Resurrection, stood now as complimentary foundations of the Lithuanian nation. The quest for integral experience was embodied in the metaphysical connection between the lower and the upper national monuments, another manifestation of "unintentional" evolution of the national monuments, where the Church of Resurrection was responsible for the continuous *resurrection* of the national heroes, buried in the National Garden. I suggested this reconciliation as a reflection of the radicalization of the two discourses, competing from the end of 19th century, which turned the national struggle from external to inner self-building.

Finally, the discovered quest for a redemptive experience of the Lithuanian national monuments as a sort of *moment bienheureux* delineated the thematics of the dialogue between the emerging national monuments and their contemporaries. Paradoxically, the discovered *organic* nature of the monuments' architectural form in "opposition" to the historicist perception of the nation was vaguely recognized by the general audience of interwar Kaunas. On the contrary, modernist Kaunas often was considered as a failure in providing a national

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content to its modern urban environment. The rise of "faceless" modern architecture was often attributed to the forgotten experience of Vilnius' Old Town, where the organic relation between people and architecture was preserved in the curvy pattern of the streets. Thus the approach of *moment bienheureux* allows us, the historians, given the distance of time, only to observe their inherent intellectual "national load", gradually perfecting relationship between national idea and form of the monument. It helps us to place it in the broader regional context, to find the incongruities of the experience of this East Central European fascist style monument, which was always a dialogue between the two perceptions of the nation.

Lastly, I argue, that the recognition of the quest at a redempted urban experience in interwar Lithuanian temporary capital city reminded us of the paradoxes inherent in any attempt to embody a single national idea in the monumental form. Despite the discovered transcendental connection between the two monuments, I suggest, they were failed projects of their own, the illusionary national statements. The Vytautas Magnus' monument, on the one hand, stood for an absence of Vilnius' "National House". Although its foundational stone called for the active national reclamation of the historical memory, it planted the seed for two forces resisting to the historicist regime. Where the War museum spoke about personal experience of national struggles in the National Garden, the Cultural museum searched for an unconstrained modernist folk expression as a true modern national experience. Finally, the most paradoxical and self-refuting national monument appeared to be the Church of Resurrection. Built on the extinct symbol of the national enslaver on Kaunas' hill, it took the Orthodox church as a reference point for urban competition with the lower town. The main ideological content of the Church was grounded in the motif of a permanent rise, the national and religious *resurrection*. The symbolical end of this promised monument can be counted from the signing of the act of submission on the part of the nation to the Heart of Christ. As

the leaflet of the Church of Resurrection suggested, with it the temporary capital city of Lithuania was permeated with all-embracing love[144]. Even the need for national mobilization to finish the national monument evaporated.

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[144] *Tėvynės garbei*, (Kaunas: Žaibas, 1939), 4.

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Visual material

1. Vladimiras Dubeneckis' sketch of the War Museum, 1930. Kaunas apskrities archyvas, f. 156, ap. 1, b. 25.

2. The interwar Lithuanian national monuments in Kaunas' map, 2013.

3. The War Museum in the 1920s.

4. The War Museum in the late 1930s.

5. The 19th century fortress of Kaunas, http://img11.imageshack.us/img11/3989/800pxkaunotvirtovekauna.jpg

6. The modified tower of an old Orthodox church tower. Išeivijos studijų centro archyvas, f. 1, ap. 1-9, B. 6647-975

7. The Black Monument (1930), www.delcampe.net.

8. The War Museum proposal by Dubeneckis (not realized), *Naujas žodis*, 1930, Nr. 23-24.

9. The War Museum interior, 1939. Giedrė Jankeviciute, *Daile ir valstybe*. Kaunas, 2003, 124.

10. The Čiurlionis' Gallery by Vladimiras Dubeneckis, 1924. Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, *Dailė ir valstybė: dailės gyvenimas Lietuvos respublikoje 1918-1940*. Kaunas, 2003, p. 92.

11. The Čiurlionis Gallery by Vladimiras Dubeneckis (the temporary palace), 1925. Lietuvos dailės muziejus, f. 56, 3454.

12. The interior of the Čiurlionis Gallery, 1920s. Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, *Dailė ir valstybė: dailės gyvenimas Lietuvos respublikoje 1918-1940*. Kaunas, 2003, p. 98.

13. Čiurlionis, REX, 1909. http://ciurlionis.eu/paveikslas/rex-5/

14. Vladimiras Dubeneckis' sketch of the Čiurlionis Gallery, 1920s. Kauno apskrities archyvas, f. 156, ap. 1, b. 25.

15. The Čiurlionis Gallery during the construction in the 1930s and the Čiurlionis' crown. Čiurlionio dailės muziejus, G-151553.

17. The Orthodox Church, the beginning of the 20th century. Algimantas Miškinis, *Kaunas: Laisvės alėja*. Vilnius: Savastis, 2009, 74.

18. One of many projects of the Church of Resurrection project (1928) proposed by Reisonas. *Meno Kultura*, 1928, no. 7-8, 18.

19. The non realized project of the Church of Resurrection by Karolis Reisonas, 1929. Kauno apskrities viešosios bibliotekos (KAVB) 2003 exhibition.

21. The chosen project of the Church of Resurrection by Karolis Reisonas. *Savivaldybė*, 1933, no. 7, p. 28

22. The plan of the Church of Resurrection. Kauno apskrities viešosios bibliotekos (KAVB) 2003 exhibition.

23. The Church of Resurrection, interior. *Savivaldybe*, 1933, no. 7, p. 29.