

REFLECTION OF EUROPEAN SARMATIA IN EARLY CARTOGRAPHY

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Abstract. The article aims at finding arguments to ground the hypothesis that Lithuania as geographical territory was in existence for a few thousand years instead of a thousand. The method used is analysis of different maps, by different authors, found in cartographical archives. In old times Lithuania was called European Sarmatia. The article presents the authors and designers of the maps, where Sarmatia is marked, as well as their characteristics: the issue dates, the names of territorial units and their possible to identify administrative centres, geographical objects, tribal settlements, their neighbours, etc. Summarizing research results the authors conclude that ancient maps where European Sarmatia is marked are true historical witnesses helping to understand long and complicated formation process of the state of Lithuania; however the analysis alone is insufficient to fully reveal its prehistoric concept.

Keywords: Sarmatia, Lithuania, istoriography, maps and atlases, tribe settlements, localities.

1. Introduction

While looking for the origins of the state of Lithuania, it is the study of old maps that helps solve a number of riddles, so far weighing on the history of our nation. Historical data, traced in maps and their images, unrestricted by any political, religious or pseudo-scientific taboos, allow us to cast a broad view on the dim and distant past of our state. It is worth mentioning here that on quite frequent occasions maps and atlases include textual explanations of great historic value. The texts give short descriptions of natural conditions, most significant farming features and historic events.

Encouraging continuing research on unknown Lithuania by his book “Tikroji Lietuva”, its author Algirdas Gustaitis (1983) ends it with the following sentence: “It is possible that we do not possess ancient maps about Lithuanian tribes, we even do not know where they could be. However, they could be traced not only in famous archives, but also in Greek, Arabic, Spanish lands in Southern Europe, Asia Minor, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Finland.”

Baltic history is very modestly reflected in cartography because the branch of science dealing with map design and technology emerged only in the 15–18th centuries. The first prehistoric precursors by the Baltic Sea appeared in 3000–2500 Before Christ. Despite this, the value of ancient cartography works for our culture is great and our ambition to reveal secrets of the development of nations from them is even greater; but manuscripts, chronicles or descriptions of travels in various publications are of different significance and reliability.

The article touches upon widely discussed hypothesis that Lithuania as geographical territory has been in existence not for a century, but a few centuries; at that time it was marked as European Sarmatia so Lithuanians as well as Sarmatians mean the same nation. So Sarmatia is the prehistory of our state and the fact cannot be denied.

European Sarmatia, the area inhabited by Sarmatians, covered the lands from the Sarmatia Ocean (Sarmaticus okeanus) at present the Baltic Sea up to the Pontus Sea (Uknus) at present the Black Sea. The words “Sarmatia” and “Uknus” etymologically have preserved their equivalents in the Lithuanian language: the words sarmata, besarmatis, sarmatyvas are closely connected with honour, and uknus means being in the shade, dark.

Sarmatia was a community, ruled by women, in present terminology - matriarchy. The information about its existence in European territory is presented in “Geography” by a cartographer Ptolemy (87 -150). Claudius Ptolemy was an Egyptian mathematician, astronomer and geographer. He lived in Alexandria, which used to possess the largest library in the world at that time. “Geography” by Ptolemy dominated in both Christian and Muslim worlds for 1500 years. Due to the book’s fundamentalism the author was called the “father of cartography”. On the basis of this world-famous work the cartographers of the Renaissance Nikolas Cusanus (1401–1464), Sebastian Munster (1489–1552), Girolamo Ruscelli (1504–1566), Gaspar Henenberger (1529–1600) and others converted Ptolemy’s geographical descriptions into maps, which we attribute to Ptolemy. His “Geography” including the maps was first published in 1477, in Bologna (Italy).

The web <http://www.lietuvos.net/istorija> presents

quite many resources where, as researchers of Lithuanian history claim, the Balts and Sarmats are the same nation. Among the authors such names could be mentioned: Albertas Kojelavicius, Simonas Daukantas, Teodoras Narbutas, Česlovas Gedgaudas, Romualdas Zubinas, P. Dusbargietis and others.

As a matter of fact Albertas Vijkas-Kojelavicius (1617–1674) in his history of Lithuania written 360 years ago wrote: “However, everybody agrees with the fact that in the whole European part of Sarmatia including Prussia, Samogitia, Kursa, Livonia, Estonia, Lithuania, Jotvingia or Poleksia and some other lands, distanced from the Veneds Sea and inhabited by the nations, which share the language, and their origin were in common with Lithuanians” pg. 44. In another spot: “Vilnius is the most outstanding of all towns of Sarmatia: it is the rulers’ residence, also the centre of courts and commerce, as well as both the state and ecclesiastical lives”, pg. 207. A. V. Kojelavicius took over scientific approach from his predecessor Aleksandro Gvanjini who in 1578 published an important work in Latin: “Description of European Sarmatia “ (Sarmatiae Europae descriptio, quae Regnum Poloniae, Lituaniam, Smogitiam, Rusviam, Masyviam, Prususiam, Pomeraniam... complectitur) and from Motiejus Strijkovskis (Chronicle of Polish Poland, Lithuania, Samogitia and the Whole of Russia, 1582).

Alessandro Gvanijini (also written as Gvagnini, in Italian Alessandro Guagnini) (1538–1614). was a historian of Poland and Italy of the 16 – 17th centuries. The copy of his chronicle “Description of European Sarmatia” is preserved in Vilnius University library. Motiejus Strijkovskis (in Polish Macej Strykowski) was a historian and poet (1547–1593?). His chronicle up to 19th century was one of the most important works about the history of Lithuania.

A.V. Kojelavicius admitted “that his Lithuanian History was not an original work; it was based on Motiejus Strijkovskis chronicle, as its main resource...” A. V. Kojelavicius mentions Sarmats respectfully, with no chauvinistic emphasis differently from Polish average and small farmers, who also claimed to have originated from Sarmats.

Refresher of our rich history Simonas Daukantas in his writings more than once repeats that Lithuanians and Samogitians are Sarmats. E.g.: “Not through impatience but through dishonesty Sarmats disappeared from the respectful world...”pg. 394, and in another place: “so we first, as true descendants of Scythians, Sarmats, will overpower them through our patience...” pg. 48 (Daukantas 1976).

The researcher of Lithuanian past Česlovas Gedgaudas emphasizing the Lithuanity of Sarmat tribes writes: “This is the Amber Road or in another words with reference to the past Sarmatia state’s 35 tribes their names are written today with no change at all, such as galindai, sudinai, pagirytai, neriai, rasai, parusiai (prūsai) etc.”, pg. 51 (Gedgaudas 1994).

The researcher of the origins of Lithuanian nation Teodoras Narbutas in his book “History of Lithuanian Nation; about Sarmats” published in 1837 in Vilnius

wrote: “Since the times of Herodotus up to now all historians, geographers and researchers of the ancient world did not write about any other ancient nation, neither they left any uncertainty about any of them, except the Sarmats” pg. 62. The author discusses the origin of the word in appendix No. 9 of the book. This is what he says:” Soon after Herodotus, the next historian Skilaksas claims that near the southern mouth of the river Kuban there used to live the Maiots, the Ginekokratumens, i.e. the tribe ruled by women, and only towards the North, to the mouth of the river Don used to live the Sarmats. It could be seen that all the three tribes made one compound.” (Narbutas 1995).

The question about the origin of the Lithuanian language is of huge importance, so while analyzing linguistic treasure of the Sarmats he concluded: like in Roman Empire there used to be over a 100 “nations”, but only one official language was used, so in our Sarmatia one language was used.” pg. 52 (Gedgaudas 1994).

Historian Romualdas Zubinas in his book “Perkūnas” (Thunder) (Zubinas 2007) wrote: “Namely in those lands, visited by Sarmatia tribes and nations one should seek for the traces of our forefathers in prehistoric times. They did bring to-lagging-behind Europe new farming technologies, new trades, culture, even soldiership, clothes and all its attributes”, pg.: 216; in another place it says: “Amber Road was like the main artery of Central Sarmatia Federation. Especially precisely it was showed by a French geographer J. Andrius. His book presents the border of the Baltic state Sarmatia in 372”, pgs 239 and 246.

Vilnius University professor Kazimieras Sarbievijus (1595–1640) printed the first published edition in Vilnius University publishing house. His contemporaries in all European centres started to call the poet from a distant province Horatius Sarmaticus. Traditionally it was an appeal to Northern Europe along the Baltic Sea (called Okeanus Sarmaticus) (Bucys 2008).

In 1517 the Rector and professor of Cracow University Mateush Miechowski published his tractate “About Two Sarmatias Asian and European...” In it the author presented historical-geographic and ethnographic descriptions of areas from the Vistula up to the Don and from the Don up to Asia. Virtually the tractate comprises two books: the first one is devoted to Asian Sarmatia, the second one to European Sarmatia (about Lithuania, Samogitia and Russia).

The introduction of the articles serves as an intellectual provocation to continue cartographical heritage on the subject of Sarmatia because it helps understand certain historical events in European and regional context. It would be interesting to present all the existing maps with Sarmatia in a chronological order so that to illustrate one, especially long and significant period of the development of our nation. Unfortunately, the scope of the article limits to the most important and doubtless ones, which do not give any clues to forgery for political or other reasons.

2. Sarmatia in the Maps of Claudius Ptolemy

Claudius Ptolemy (87–150) in his work “Geography” presented cartographical picture of Lithuania for the first time. As the original version did not survive, its copy by M. Planud (1260–1330) was located by V. Langola (1829–1869) in the Athos Mountains Voto Pedis monastery documents, dating 13–14th centuries. (They are at present in the Vatican Library). The copy of Ptolemy’s map, made by M. Planud is treated as closest to its origin.

Fig 1 presents its Italian version taken from the Cracow stocks.

In 1416 the Italians after C. Ptolomeus “Geography” data among others restored the map of Central Europe, which by its contents and cartographical pictures is similar to the 13th century copy by M. Planud. Both “Geography” and maps were first time printed in Bologna (Italy) in 1477.

The researcher of old maps A. Gustaitis prepared a special edition “C. Ptolomeus’ Central Europe Map”, 1988. Good-quality and large- in- size print map is in Lithuanian Language department of the National Martynas Mazvydas Library. A. Gustaitis presents the numerology of the map objects, a list of geographical names as well as translation of the Greek text into Lithuanian at the top of the page, completed by prof. P. Rabikauskas.



Fig 1. Map of Europae Tabula VIII from „Atlas zur geographie von Claudios Ptolomeus“, Atlas of the State library in Cracow, fol. 248



Fig 2. Map of Europae Tabula VIII from „Atlas zur geographie von Claudios Ptolomeus“, published by S. Munster, 1574

Through the efforts of A. Gustaitis and P. Rabikauskas a renewed old map of Europe offers better opportunities to study old place-names, geography and history. The map is of special interest to us as in these areas Vytautas Magnus and other rulers of Lithuania had been expanding their lands.

The expert of old maps A. Samas while evaluating it says: “the map is of little precision, there are quite many invented objects, however, it gives the picture of Central Europe and Lithuania in the 2nd century AD. The second river on the left, running into Sarmaticus Okeanus (Baltic Sea), is the Chronon (Nemunas), the 3rd is the Rubon (Daugava). The tribes residing between the Chronon and the Daugava are called Galinde and Sudini”.

Philosopher M. Planud was well acquainted with C. Ptolomeus personality and demonstrated his respect by writing solemn poems in his honor.

C. Ptolomeus invented in his map the notions of length and width in the grid, covering the entire world in this way offering a possibility to mark terrain objects according to measurements and other sources of information. His cartography was greatly influenced by the fact that there had been too few measurements at that time, so the lines of the river banks lacked precision, the lack of information determined misleading or invented contents. Disregarding these inadequacies, the work at that time was fundamentally important and earned its maker a reputation as a “father of geography”.

C. Ptolemy’s influence is proved through multiple atlas printing; it was printed up to 1840.

Much more precise and detailed map of Central Europe (Sarmatija terra in Europa) was prepared by a German astronomer and cartographer Nicolus Cusanus (1401–1464). In the terrain belonging to Sarmatia there were many more objects: rivers the Nemunas, Sventoji, Venta; towns Klaipeda and Kaunas, the Kuronian Lagoon. In the Cusanus’ map the Great Duchy of Lithuania is marked. This map was printed in 1491, in Strasbourg. Exactly 100 years later appeared the most widely known map in Lithuania by Mikolaj Radziwill.

3. Sarmatia in Bernard Wapowsky map

In synoptic and specialized historic analyses of cartography science its Polish pioneer Bernard Wapowsky's (1470–1535) cartographical heritage takes a considerable place. This cartographer is considered to be a predecessor of the second period of cartography development. His works were less influenced by antique cartographical practices, which had been widely applied by the earlier mentioned map makers.

B. Wapowsky prepared the maps of *North Sarmatia* and *South Sarmatia*. In Boleslaw Olszewicz (1930) opinion most likely these two maps should be treated as two parts of the same map, but not separate cartographical units. The North Sarmatia map (1517?) shows such parts as Pmarys and Prussia, parts of the Great Duchy of Lithuania (GDL) and Livonia lands; the map also includes the North-western part of the Great Duchy of Moscow (GDM). South Sarmatia map (1520) outline includes the lands of South and Central Poland, Hungary, GDL, Turkey, Crimean Khan's, as well as part of GDM lands. Wapowsky's maps present a more realistic view of the Nemunas delta with its branches the Rusne and Gilija, if compared to the maps of earlier authors. The maps also show the major rivers of Samogitia: the Minija, the Jura, the Akmena, the Svetoji, the Varduva, and the Dubysa. There are quite many settlements, such as Klaipeda, Vente, Telsiai, Plateliai, Sveksna, Vieksniai, Luoke, and Alsedziai. The total number of Samogitia settlements is 19, out of which 9 are marked in the map of 1526 and first named as towns. It is a great pity that only a fragment of eastern part in South Sarmatia map has been preserved; the map of North Sarmatia has vanished leaving no traces (Sirko 1999, Buceviciute 2007).

4. Sarmatia in the Neighborhood of the Roman Empire

The importance of Sarmatia as a territorial-based state is proved by the maps of the Roman Empire. In the political map of the 3rd century AD (Fig 3) both Sarmatia parts are marked: European and Asian. European Sarmatia extends eastwards from Germany, from the Baltic Sea up to the Black Sea. In the western corner of the Black Sea the bordering country with the Roman Empire is Dacia. This map is a copy from the one of 1907 "Antique and Classical Geography" atlas; reprinted in 1925 (Fig 3 comes from Wikipedia, free encyclopedia).

The existence of Sarmatia is also proved by the 3rd century Roman Empire Kastoria road map, known as Peutinger table or Peutinger Map; Sarmatia is marked outside the borders of the Empire (Fig 4).

The roads of the Roman Empire are treated to be the masterpieces of engineering: while marching through alien lands, the Roman legions very often left cobbled roads and bridges behind, helpful to ensure fast positioning, also withdrawal, if needed.



Fig 3. Map of the Roman Empire at it's greatest extent

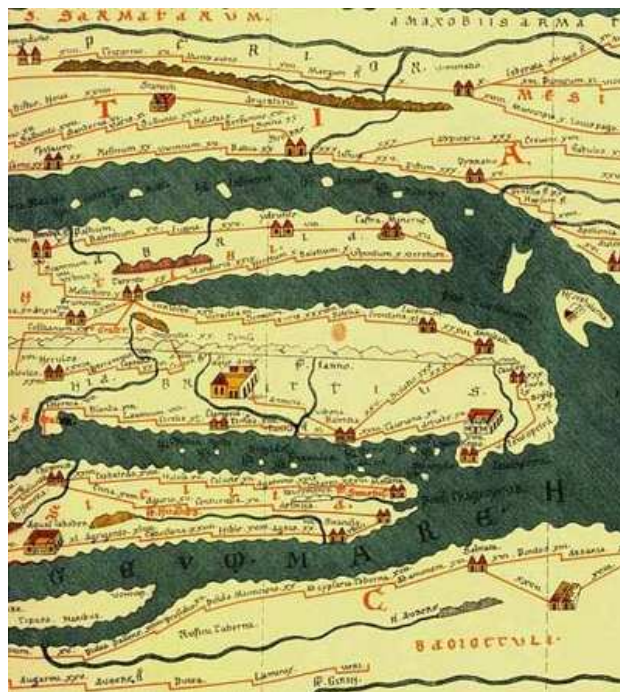


Fig 4. Kastorijus map or the roads of the Roman Empire

5. Sarmatia in Sebastian Munster Maps

Sebastian Munster (Sebastian Münster) (1489–1552) was one of the most influential cartographers of the 16th century. His "Cosmographia Universalis" was first published in 1544 and spread widely geographical knowledge all over Europe. "Cosmographia Universalis" was reprinted 40 times in six different languages. S. Munster is the first cartographer to have published the atlases of separate continents in separate maps. His second significant work was "Geographia", i.e. new Ptolemy's "Geographia" publication. Vilnius University library possesses "Cosmographia Universalis" publications in German, Latin, and French.

Sarmatia is first marked in the following three of S. Munster's maps: "New Map of Poland and Hungary", 1540; "Central Europe Map", 1544 (Fig 5 presents its much later publication) and K. Ptolemy's new version of Central Europe Map (presented in Fig 2).

Fig 5 presents S. Munster's Central Europe Map, printed in 1578. The map shows Sarmatia and Littaw areas (Lithuania), also Vilna (Vilnius), and the river Memel (Nemunas). The top of the map reads *"From the democratic kingdom of Poland this Sarmatia is also supported by the master in order to rearrange it into a country, suitable for the kingdom"*. Lithuania is mentioned in the map three times. Next to the Baltic Sea there is Samogitia, towards south east there is an inscription Littaw (Lithuania), in between them Sarmatia. Eastwards from Littaw behind the River Depenew (Daugava) it is written Plescovia. In this way the land of Pskov is mentioned. Major towns are also included: Vilnius, Garden, Gdansk, Cracow, and Moscow. The territorial boundaries are unmarked. The map was reprinted in later years (Gliozaitis 2008).



Fig 5. Map of Middle Europa by S. Munster, 1578

6. Sarmatia in Johan Honter Map

Johan Honter is also known as Johanes Honterus or Johann Hytner, (1498–1549) was famous for cultural and religious activities, is best known due to his works in geography and cartography as well as for implementing the Lutheran reform in Transylvania. He is also called Luther from Transylvania or the apostle from Transylvania.

In 1530 Johan Honter wrote his "Rudimenta Cosmographiae", which was reprinted in 1542 under a new title "Rudimenta Cosmographica"; its text was presented in hexameter in order to be able to memorize it better; in 1532 he designed the map of Transylvania "Chorographia Transylvaniae Sevemburgen".



Fig 6. Map of Sarmatija of Johan Honter (1530, 1542, 1552)

Johan Honter compiled a map of Sarmatia (Fig 6). It was printed in 1530, 1542, and 1552. The map covers

Central Europe; in its eastern part we can see Prussia, Major and Minor Polands (Major Polonia, Minor Polonia), in the centre–Sarmatia with Samogitia and Lithuania. The map marked Vilnius (Vilna) and Garden (Grodno). North east from Sarmatia one can spot Latvia (Livonia) with Riga. East from Sarmatia is the land of Pskov (written Plescovia). Sarmatia and its lands are not separated by bordering lines, but, without any doubt, are included into them. The map is preserved in the National Library of Hungary.

If to compare both maps in Figs 5 and 6 no essential differences are spotted.

7. Sarmatia Map by Christoph Cellarius

Christoph Cellarius (Christoph Keller in German) born in 1638, died in 1700? He was a professor in Hull University since 1693; he is the author of the work "Historia Universalis" (1702). He also suggested the idea of splitting universal history into different periods. The modern history is often based on this work.

The map of Sarmatia (Fig 7), printed in 1705, covers the lands above the Black Sea. Between the Black and Caspian Seas it is Asian Sarmatia, to the east we find Scythia. The map was compiled on the basis of antique knowledge in geography. An interesting fact is that it was called European Sarmatia. The inscription is in the middle of the map, written in big letters. The map cannot boast having a number of geographical objects, in spite of the fact that at that time there used to be much more informative maps by N. Kuzietis (1491) or M.K. Radvila (1613).

Christoph Cellarius map presents the names of tribes, residing in the lands of European Sarmatia: sudini, borusci, cariones, alanians, burgundiones, gelonus, roxolani, meotians, tanaite, nomads, agathyrsi, tranomontani, etc.

The tribes of Asian Sarmatia are not interpreted in the map.



Fig 7. European Sarmatia and Asian Sarmatia in the map of Christoph Cellarius, 1705



Fig 8. European Sarmatia and Asian Sarmatia in the map of Christoph Cellarius, 1705

The map was printed in London, Amsterdam, and other places; and for over 100 years after its printing it used to be one of the most popular cartographical works from the antiquity.

Fig 8 presents colorful geographic Ch. Cellarius map of the Black and Caspian Seas, Albania, Turkey and partly Russia with its attributed lands. European Sarmatia is very distinctly separated from Asian Sarmatia.

8. Sarmatia in Edward Wells Map

Edward Wells (1667–1727) was an English clergyman, teacher of mathematics and geography in Christ's Church College of Oxford University.

New European Sarmatia, Pannonia and Dacia map is one of the 22 maps, dedicated to His Majesty William Gloucester, Duke, who at eleven was Oxford University student, at thirteen became an heir to the throne and died hardly a year after the printing of the first E. Wells atlas. Pannonia is the territory, where at present Austria and Croatia is located. Dacia is the area, more or less adequate to the present Romania and Moldova.

The map is attractive, artistically designed and it

says a lot about the author's talent and creativity. Especially outstanding is its décor. The inscription reads: "New map of European Sarmatia, Pannonia and Dacia, showing basic division, peoples, towns, rivers and mountains. It is dedicated to His Majesty William Gloucester the Duke". The map is also supplemented with mythological pictures and written fragments. It was very popular all through the 18th century.

9. Sarmatia in Jovan Rajic Map

Jovan Rajic (1726–1800) was a Serbian historian, writer and pedagogue, one of the most outstanding Serbian literary representatives of the 18th century Baroque style. In 1759 he became a geography professor in Pokrov – Bogorodnicina School in his native place Sremski Karlovici.



Fig 9. Sarmatia in the map of Edward Wells, 1700

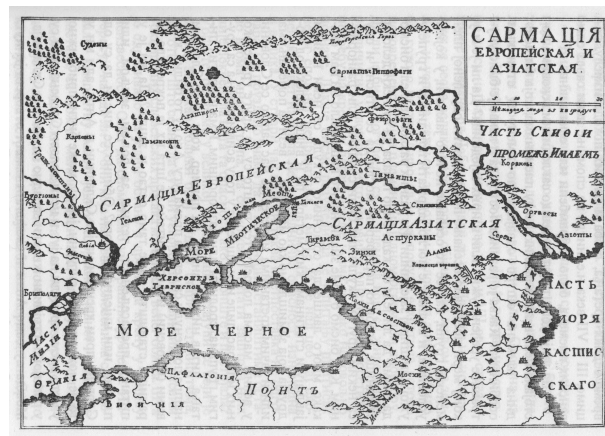


Fig 10. Map of European and Asian Sarmatia by Jovan Rajič, 1794

The map of European and Asian Sarmatia by Jovan Rajic was first printed in 1794 in Jovan Rajic's book "History of Different Slovak Peoples: Bulgarians, Serbs and Croats". The map is more modest, compared to Edward Wells' map (Fig 9), though it was printed 94 years later. It shows the Black Sea, part of Caspian Sea, named rivers and different settlements of Sarmatia tribes. European Sarmatia includes 10 tribes. Among them are

such tribes as sudini, meotians, tanaite, sarmaty-gippofagi, foiofagi, etc.

10. Sarmatia in Rest Fenner map

Rest Fenner was a famous London publisher and cartographer. He is the author of "Fenner's Pocket Atlas, of Modern & Ancient Geography"; the first series showing different states of Europe, Asia, Africa and America.



Fig 11. Sarmatia in Rest Fenner map, published by Joseph Thomas, 1835

The map of Sarmatia (Fig 11) created by Rest Fenner was printed by publisher Joseph Thomas in London in 1835. (Fig 11 comes from David Rumsey map collection). Scale of the map is 1:22 000000. Rest Fenner map covers European and Asian Sarmatia and presents in detail geographical objects and tribes located in this territory.

11. Conclusions

The possessed information about European Sarmatia is neither thorough nor comprehensive, but the public interest in the past is far from decreasing. In "The History of Lithuania", published by the Lithuanian History Institute prehistoric period takes first two (already published) books. No information is found in any of them about Sarmatia, so the society feels concerned about the researchers' unwillingness to analyze more objectively and present the far away history of our nation. It is hardly possible here not to mention quotation by Maciej Miechovsky from his letter to Stanislaw Turson, the bishop of Olmuc: "A great number of writers in their researches and findings took apart all of the world, however, Sarmatia lands had been silenced or ignored" (Miechovsky 1517).

The romantically oriented part of the society, finds background in the works of already mentioned historians, such as A.V. Kojelavicius, C. Gedgaudas, R. Zubinas, Polish historian M. Strijkowsky, C. Ptolemy, his followers and others. The pictures of Sarmatia and their descriptions in maps urge the contemporary historians to try and give more light on the historical development of our nation. The opponents of historians sometimes cannot

avoid hot disputes for a good reason. The latter ones are unable to answer the questions, because the problem is really complex and the number of historians limited.

The research of early cartography in order to understand long and complicated formation of the state of Lithuania is highly important; however, alone it is unable to fully reveal the prehistory of the nation. The problem of the state prehistory can be solved only by united efforts of cartographers, archeologists, linguists and anthropologists. This publication is also oriented towards the problem solution.

Summarizing we can state that the above mentioned maps by Lithuanian authors lack thorough historical analysis, more attention to scientific discussions so Lithuanian society knows about it very little. The territories, taken nowadays by Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine and part of Russia historically since the 1st century up to 12th century, used to be European and Asian Sarmatia. Their lands are limited by geographical objects (seas and rivers). With time, the boundaries were rapidly changing and were different during different periods. The tribe settlements were changing too. It is possible to trace the migration of different tribes by comparing different maps but it is hardly possible to draw strict tribe settlements and their borders.

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