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# Polemics as a Symbolic Capital Defence Way in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century in Prussia: the Case of Christian Gottlieb Mielcke and Gottfried Ostermeyer<sup>1</sup>

Polemik als Weg der symbolischen Kapitalverteidigung im 18. Jahrhundert  
in Preußen: der Fall Christian Gottlieb Mielcke und Gottfried Ostermeyer

Polemika jako droga obrony kapitału symbolicznego w XVIII wieku  
w Prusach na przykładzie Christiana Gottlieba Mielckiego i Gottfrieda  
Ostermeyera

**Keywords:** Lithuanian Literature, Lithuanian Language, Prussian Lithuania, Cultural Field, Cultural Capital, Symbolic Capital, Polemic

**Schlüsselwörter:** Litauische Literatur, Litauische Sprache, kultureller Bereich, kulturelle Kapital, symbolisches Kapital, Polemik

**Słowa kluczowe:** literatura litewska, język litewski, pole kulturowe, kapitał kulturowy, kapitał symboliczny, polemika

### ABSTRACT

The research was based on the methodological premises of the cultural capitalism theory, formed by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, where a *cultural field* was perceived as a battle-field of interested actors (*agents*) seeking to accumulate as large as possible *cultural* and *symbolic capital*. The interests of Mielcke and Ostermeyer clashed in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when both of them started working on the same cultural project: the preparation of an updated

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Lithuanian hymnal, based on the principles of rationalism and the Enlightenment theology. As Ostermeyer was the first to prepare the hymnal and to publish it on governmental funds, Mielcke could not accept the fact that he was circumvented by an ambitious newcomer in the field of Lithuanian culture where his own family had been among the predominating ones for a number of years. In the criticism of Ostermeyer's hymnal, Mielcke sought to present him as an impudent intruder who, despite significant symbolic capital accumulated in other areas, did not have sufficient cultural capitalisation in the field of Lituianistic Prussian culture and who had a too poor command of Lithuanian. Mielcke succeeded in stopping Ostermeyer's decisive engagement in the field of Lituianistic activity. Nonetheless, in the fight with the opponent, Mielcke also lost a significant part of his accumulated symbolic capital.

### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die Forschung basierte auf den methodologischen Prämissen der Theorie des kulturellen Kapitalismus, die von dem französischen Soziologen Pierre Bourdieu erstellt wurde, wo ein kulturelles Feld als ein Schlachtfeld interessierter Akteure (Agenten) wahrgenommen wurde, die versuchen, ein möglichst großes kulturelles und symbolisches Kapital anzuhäufen. Die Interessen von Mielcke und Ostermeyer stießen in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts aufeinander, als beide an demselben kulturellen Projekt arbeiteten: der Vorbereitung eines aktualisierten litauischen Gesangbuchs, das auf den Prinzipien des Rationalismus und der Theologie der Aufklärung basierte. Da Ostermeyer der erste war, der das Gesangbuch vorbereitete und mit staatlichen Mitteln herausgab, konnte Mielcke nicht akzeptieren, dass er von einem ehrgeizigen Neuling auf dem Gebiet der litauischen Kultur umgangen wurde, auf dem seine eigene Familie einige Jahre lang zu den Vorreitern gehört hatte. In der Kritik an Ostermeyers Gesangbuch versuchte Mielcke, ihn als einen unverschämten Eindringling darzustellen, der trotz des in anderen Bereichen angehäuften bedeutenden symbolischen Kapitals nicht über eine ausreichende kulturelle Kapitalisierung auf dem Gebiet der lituanistisch-preußischen Kultur verfügte und der das Litauische zu schlecht beherrschte. Mielcke gelang es, Ostermeyers entscheidendes Engagement auf dem Gebiet der lituanistischen Tätigkeit zu stoppen. Nichtsdestotrotz verlor Mielcke im Kampf mit dem Gegner auch einen bedeutenden Teil seines angesammelten symbolischen Kapitals.

### STRESZCZENIE

Badania oparto na założeniach metodologicznych teorii kapitalizmu kulturowego, sformułowanej przez francuskiego socjologa Pierre'a Bourdieu, gdzie pole kulturowe było postrzegane jako pole walki zainteresowanych aktorów (agentów) dążących do akumulacji jak największego kapitału kulturowego i symbolicznego. Zainteresowania Mielckiego i Ostermeyera zderzyły się w drugiej połowie XVIII wieku, kiedy obaj rozpoczęli pracę nad tym samym projektem kulturalnym: przygotowaniem zaktualizowanego śpiewnika litewskiego, opartego na zasadach racjonalizmu i teologii oświeceniowej. Ponieważ Ostermeyer jako pierwszy przygotował hymn i wydał go z funduszy rządowych, Mielcke nie mógł pogodzić się z tym, że został ominięty przez ambitnego nowicjusza w dziedzinie kultury litewskiej, gdzie jego własna rodzina dominowała przez szereg lat. W krytyce hymnu Ostermeyera Mielcke starał się przedstawić go jako bezczelnego intruza, który mimo znacznego kapitału symbolicznego nagromadzonego w innych dziedzinach, nie miał wystarczającej kapitalizacji kulturowej w zakresie lituanistycznej kultury pruskiej i zbyt słabo władał litewskim. Mielckemu udało się powstrzymać zdecydowane zaangażowanie Ostermeyera na polu działalności lituanistycznej. Jednak w walce z przeciwnikiem Mielcke stracił także znaczną część zgromadzonego kapitału symbolicznego.

The term *polemics* comes from the Greek word πολεμικός (*polemikos*) “bellicose, hostile” ← πόλεμος (*polemos*) “war”. Based on the etymology, German literaturologists defined polemics by the metaphor of “a quill war”<sup>2</sup>. The war always breaks out for some reason and against somebody, and the cases when weapons are quills result in written works, i.e. dispute literature. In Prussian Lithuania, Lituaniistics–related issues were first discussed, and the dispute literature was published, relatively late: in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The “quill war” between Gottfried Ostermeyer (1716–1800) and Christian Gottlieb Mielcke (1733–1807) at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was the so-called second polemic for the Lithuanian language.

## METHODOLOGICAL PREMISES OF THE RESEARCH.

### PIERRE BOURDIEU’S (1930–2002) THEORY

A war, including a “quill war”, breaks out due to the clash of interests of two parties. The goal of the attackers is to win, i.e. to establish one’s power and to dominate.

French sociologist Bourdieu developed a theory of cultural capitalism, based on the premise that culture, just like economics, is a battlefield in which the interested actors (*agents*) compete in order to accumulate cultural capital and thus gain the power of domination in relevant fields of social space. A *field* is a system of social relations operating under the logic and rules of capitalism, a competitive space in which permanent fighting takes place and generates elements of the field in complex interrelations again and again. It is in such a competitive environment that the conditions are created under which one form of capital can be converted into another<sup>3</sup>.

According to Bourdieu, a *field of culture*, as well as a political or any other one, is a battlefield in which competitions for achievements take place: for a dominant position or for monopoly rights to regulate the norms of the field and to legitimise values in order to establish and accumulate as much cultural capital as possible. A *cultural field* by itself is not autonomous or uninfluenced by other fields. It is fluid and dynamic, mainly because it is always being changed both by internal practices and politics and by its convergence with other fields.

Actors (*agents*) of the *cultural field* pursue their goals as *habitus*. *Habitus*, in Bourdieu’s definition, is “embodied history”, i.e. a set of individual’s beliefs that pre-determines perception, thinking, emotions, needs, imagination, and the motives of behavior<sup>4</sup>. Knowledge (the way we understand the world, our beliefs, and values) is always constructed through the *habitus*, rather than being passively recorded.

<sup>2</sup> G. Wilpert, *Sachwörterbuch der Literatur*, A. Kröner Verlag, Stuttgart 1979, p. 612.

<sup>3</sup> P. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, edited and introduced by J.B. Thompson, translated by G. Raymond and M. Adamson, Cambridge: Polity Press. 1991, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> P. Bourdieu, *Sozialer Raum und “Klassen”*. *Leçon sur la leçon*, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp. 1985, p. 69.

*Agent* is disposed towards certain attitudes, values, or ways of behaving because of the influence exerted by his cultural trajectories. These dispositions are transposable across fields. *Habitus* – a concept that expresses, on the one hand, the way in which individuals “become themselves” – develops attitudes and dispositions and, on the other hand, the way in which those individuals engage in practices<sup>5</sup>. In the *cultural field*, agent seeking to dominate accumulates *the cultural capital* as *habitus*. Even though Bourdieu’s definition of *cultural capital* is very broad and includes also material things (which can have a symbolic value), in the present research, another form of *cultural capital*, defined by Bourdieu, is relevant to us, and those are intangible, however, culturally significant attributes, such as prestige, status, and authority, which under certain conditions turn into symbolic capital in the cultural field and manifest themselves as the acquired authority, the power of decision, etc. Thus, in the battlefield, “agents possess power in proportion to their symbolic capital, i.e. in proportion to the recognition they receive from a group”<sup>6</sup>.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE POLEMIC

The pretext for the so-called second philological polemic on the Lithuanian language was a hymnal *Giesmes šventos Bažnyčioje ir Namėj’ giedojamos su nobažnomis Maldomis į wienas Knygas suglaustos* by Gottfried Ostermeyer, published at the end of 1780, however, with the year 1781 indicated as the date of publishing. It was a new official Lithuanian hymnal, compiled with the permission of the Consistory. In that edition, Ostermeyer, following the example of German rationalist hymnals, embarked on a major transformation of the so-called Quandt-Berendt’s hymnal that the Lithuanian community was accustomed to and that, in the period from 1732 to 1776<sup>7</sup>, was re-printed for 13 times without any significant corrections, just each time supplemented by new hymns. Not only did Ostermeyer substantially change the usual structure of the hymnal, but he also edited quite a few hymns appreciated by Lithuanians beyond recognition.

That hymnal by Ostermeyer provoked the dissatisfaction of both priests and some parishioners. It was Christian Gottlieb Mielcke who became the mouthpiece of the camp of the dissatisfied and who in 1781 distributed a manuscript *Notes on the New Lithuanian Hymnal (Anmerkungen zu dem neuen Littauischen Gesangbuch)*

<sup>5</sup> J. Webb, T. Schirato, G. Danaher, *Understanding Bourdieu*, Los Angeles – London – New Delhi – Singapore – Washington 2002, p. 58.

<sup>6</sup> P. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic*, p. 106.

<sup>7</sup> *Iš naujo perveizdėtos ir pagerintos giesmių knygos*, prepared by Johann Behrend (1667–1737) under the supervision of Johann Jakob Quandt (1686–1772): <sup>1</sup>1732, <sup>2</sup>1735, <sup>3</sup>1738, <sup>4</sup>1740, <sup>5</sup>1745, <sup>6</sup>1748, <sup>7</sup>1750, <sup>8</sup>1752, <sup>9</sup>1757, <sup>10</sup>1763, <sup>11</sup>1766, <sup>12</sup>1773, <sup>13</sup>1776, <sup>14</sup>1791.

which criticised Ostermeyer's hymnal.<sup>8</sup> Ostermeyer began to hotly defend his hymnal. A controversial discussion flared up that lasted for 10 years (1781–1791)<sup>9</sup>.

## POLEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Presently, five published polemic treatises by Gottfried Ostermeyer are known: 1) *Reflections on the Project of the New Lithuanian Hymnal* (Ostermeyer 1786); 2) Sinceri's *Letter to Priest Ostermeyer in Trempai, Published with the Necessary Answers* (Ostermeyer 1787); and 3) three parts of the treatise *An Apologia for the New Lithuanian Hymnal* (Ostermeyer II, III 1790; Ostermeyer 1791). *The First History of Lithuanian Hymnals*, written by Ostermeyer, is also closely related to the process of the polemic: it set out very comprehensively the circumstances of the preparation of the criticised hymnal, the logic of its structure, the principles of the hymn editing, and the problems of its reception<sup>10</sup>. Although we know from the writings of Ostermeyer that Mielcke and his supporters had written at least three polemic treatises, presently only one was found, i.e. *Modest Response* by Christian Gottlieb Mielcke (Mielcke 1788).

Ostermeyer is known to have written at least two treatises that remained in manuscripts and have not been found so far. Those are *Thoughts on the Lithuanian Word "išgaišti"* (*Gedanken über das Littauische Wort iszgaizsti*) and *Something on the Lithuanian Word "išgaišti"* (*Etwas über das Wort iszgaizsti*).

One more document written by Gottfried Ostermeyer was found by Birutė Triškaitė in the Secret State Archives of the Prussian Cultural Heritage in August 2016. It was Ostermeyer's request, dated 24 June 1785, to the Consistory of East Prussia to defend the hymnal prepared by him. The manuscript consisted of

<sup>8</sup> [Mielcke Christian Gottlieb] *Anmerkungen zu dem neuen Littauischen Gesangbuch de anno 1781*. The manuscript has not been found, and the title is known from the works of Ostermeyer; see: [Ostermeyer G.], *Bedenken über einen Entwurf zu einem Neuen Littauischen Gesangbuch zu einen Entwurf zu einem Neuen Littauischen Gesangbuch, nebst vorangesetztem Bericht von der Veranlassung dazu. Ans Licht gestellet von Gottfried Ostermeyer, der Trempenschen Gemeine Past. Seniore und der Königl. deutschen Gesellschaft zu Königsberg Ehrenmitgliede*, Königsberg 1786, p. 6; [Ostermeyer G.], *Erste Littauische Liedergeschichte, ans Licht gestellet von Gottfried Ostermeyer, der Trempenschen Gemeine Pastore seniore und der Königl. Deutschen Gesellschaft zu Königsberg Ehrenmitglied*, Königsberg 1793, p. 191–192.

<sup>9</sup> For more information about the process of the discussion and its results, see: V. Biržiška, *Senųjų lietuviškų knygų istorija [History of the old Lithuanian Books]* I, Chicagos Lietuvių literatūros draugijos leidinys 1953, p. 114–122; V. Vanagas, *Gotfridas Ostermejeris – pirmasis lietuvių literatūros istorikas [Gotfridas Ostermejeris – the First Historian of Lithuanian Literature]*, *Literatūra ir kalba* 5, 1961, p. 403–404; L. Gineitis, *Pirmoji polemika lietuvių raštijos klausimais (Naujai surastų raštų šviesoje) [The First Polemic on the Questions of Lithuanian Writing (in the Light of Newly Discovered Publications)]*, *Literatūra ir kalba* 6, 1962, p. 244–256; J. Lebedys, *Senoji lietuvių literatūra [The old Lithuanian Literature]*, Vilnius 1977, p. 155–157; L. Gineitis *Kristijonas Donelaitis ir jo epocha [Kristijonas Donelaitis and His Epoch]*, Vilnius 1990, p. 90–92; L. Citavičiūtė, *Gotfridas Ostermejeris – pirmasis lietuvių literatūros istorikas, poezijos teoretikas ir kritikas [Gottfried Ostermeyer – the First Historian of Lithuanian Literature, Theoretician of Poetry and Critic]*, w: G. Ostermejeris, *Rinktiniai raštai*, parengė ir išvertė Liucija Citavičiūtė, Vilnius 1996, p. 34–40; Ž. Sidabraitė, *Kristijonas Gotlybas Milkus. Gyvenimas ir literatūrinė veikla [Kristijonas Gotlybas Milkus. Life and Works]*, Vilnius 2006, p. 74–79.

<sup>10</sup> G. Ostermeyer, *Erste Littauische Liedergeschichte...*, p. 153–227.

20 pages: the story about the circumstances of the preparation, publishing, and distribution of the hymnal and 6 re-written documents<sup>11</sup>.

### THE LITHUANIAN LANGUAGE AS CULTURAL CAPITAL. THE POLICY OF BENEFITS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF KÖNIGSBURG

It has to be admitted that the editing of Lithuanian writings in Prussia was not merely an act of cultural sacrifice, as the Soviet narrative of research on the history of writings often claimed. Since the founding of the Duchy of Prussia, when, upon adoption of Lutheranism as the state religion, the evangelisation of autochthonous people became particularly important, the knowledge of the indigenous languages among educated people became substantial cultural and symbolic capital which under favourable conditions could also turn into real economic capital: the priests who knew local languages found it easier to get jobs, moreover, more gifted ones were actively involved in evangelisation and cultural activity<sup>12</sup>.

As early as in the years of studies, a command of the local language could become significant symbolic and economic capital, as proved by the policy of benefits practiced in the University of Königsberg. Right after the founding of the University, Duke Albert himself took care of attracting young people who knew local languages, and especially Lithuanian, to the studies. In the boarding school (*alumnas*) established on the Duke's order, where poor students were provided with board and accomodation, 14 places out of 24 were given to Poles and Lithuanians. When in 1561 the number of places in the boarding school grew to 28, 8 places were given to Lithuanians (Prussians and Sudovians), and 8 to Poles<sup>13</sup>.

Since at the beginning of the University activities, for social reasons<sup>14</sup>, there was a shortage of local students who were able to study at the University, i.e. who had completed the so-called Latin schools, on the Duke's order, the places in the boarding school, intended for the autochthons and not occupied by them, could be

<sup>11</sup> Based on the found document, Birutė Triškaitė gave a presentation *New Archival Data on the Mielcke Family and their Polemic with Gottfried Ostermeyer* (Kaliningrad, 22 September 2016).

<sup>12</sup> On the programme of preparation of Lithuanian books in Prussia, see: I. Lukšaitė *Reformacija Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje ir Mažojoje Lietuvoje [Reformation in the Great Duchy of Lithuania and in Lithuania Minor]*, Vilnius 1999, p. 236–245.

<sup>13</sup> A particular desire to train as many as possible priests with the knowledge of local languages was emphasised by the author of the University history, professor Daniel Heinrich Arndt (1706–1775), who noted that “the Academy tried hard to get Polish and Lithuanian (students), to find them, and to provide with the boarding school benefits, as churches and schools in those lands needed such teachers”. („... hätte die Academie nach Polen und Litthauern vor andern mit Fleiß sich umzusehen, sie aufzusuchen, und mit dem Alumnat zu versorgen, weil die Kirchen und Schulen in diesen Landen solche Lehrer brauchten.“) D.H. Arnoldt, *Ausführliche und mit Urkunden versehene Historie der Königsbergischen Universität* 1, 2, Aalen: Scientia Verlag 1994 (1746), p. 288.

<sup>14</sup> A vast majority of the local population were serfs and had neither social opportunities nor material resources to send their children to preparatory Latin schools in towns, see also I. Lukšaitė, op. cit., p. 235.

given to Germans “provided they knew one of those languages, and they would be obliged to train their speaking and writing skills on a daily basis.”<sup>15</sup> Since neither the possibilities of fulfilling such obligations nor their control were laid out in the order, the idea must have failed, and later an instruction followed to “save” the places until appropriate local students appeared.

The situation changed in 1718, after the establishment of the Seminars of the Lithuanian and Polish Languages<sup>16</sup>. In 1723, an instruction was issued to the effect that the students of the Seminar of the Lithuanian Language had to be admitted to the boarding house in priority order (*von allen andern*). Somewhat later, in 1728, the privilege was also granted to the students of the Seminar of the Polish Language. Students coming from Polish and Lithuanian parishes were obliged to attend at least one of the seminars, otherwise they did not have the right to claim any privileges<sup>17</sup>. The attendance of the seminars guaranteed both priority in getting a place in the boarding house and a scholarship in the years of studies and also priority in filling vacancies as a priest assistants or even priests in parishes. In case of free places, the seminars could be attended, and privileges granted by them enjoyed, by Germans who wanted to learn local languages. As proved by the history of Lithuanian writings, the privileges provided by the seminars encouraged more than one student of German descent to attend the Seminar of the Lithuanian Language.

The possibility of contributing to the preparation of Lithuanian writings or even their independent development in the 18<sup>th</sup> century became an obvious opportunity for the accumulation of symbolic capital, so that, under favourable circumstances, it could be converted into real capital: receiving of better or worse-paid additional work (translating educational or religious texts or governmental edicts or engaging in other cultural activities).

## **SYMBOLIC CAPITALISATION OF THE OPPONENTS MIELCKE AND OSTERMEYER AT THE BEGINNING OF THE DISPUTE**

Both Ostermeyer and Mielcke undertook work on Lithuanian writings only after having accumulated certain cultural capital which in the cultural field of Prussian

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<sup>15</sup> „...wenn eine von den polnischen oder litthauschen Stellen vacant, und der Sprache kündige Studiosi nicht zu haben wären, man ihre Stellen an deutsche nicht vergeben soll, es sey denn, daß sie auch dabey der obbenannten Sprachen kundig, und sich täglich mit reden und schreiben darinn zu üben verpflichten würden...” D.H. Arnoldt, op. cit., p. 289.

<sup>16</sup> On the circumstances of launching and functioning of the Seminars, see: D. Bogdan, *Das Polnische und das Litauische Seminar an der Königsberger Universität vom 18. bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, “Nordost-Archiv” Bd. 3, H. 2, Lüneburg, 1994, p. 393–425, L. Citavičiūtė, *Karaliaučiaus universiteto Lietuvių kalbos seminaras. Istorija ir reikšmė lietuvių kultūrai [Seminar of the Lithuanian Language at the University of Königsberg. Its History and Impact on Lithuanian Culture]*, Vilnius 2004, p. 35–44.

<sup>17</sup> D.H. Arnoldt, op. cit., p. 134–137.

Lithuania turned into more or less significant symbolic capital. They represented two different social cultural groups of Prussian Lithuania. Thus, the conflict that came to light in 1781 meant a confrontation between two personalities and two different *habitus*, formed by those different social groups.

Neither Mielcke nor Ostermeyer were of Lithuanian descent. However, Mielcke's family had long enough been residents of Prussian Lithuania; at least Mielcke's grandfather's family had come to Tilsit, most likely from Pomerania. His father Peter Gottlieb Mielcke (1695–1753), having grown up in a Lithuanian environment, came to study to the University of Königsberg with a good command of Lithuanian. As a result, he was able to enjoy the privileges granted to the students who spoke local languages: he got a place in the boarding house and a scholarship of the Tilsit City. When the Seminar of the Lithuanian Language was launched, Peter Gottlieb Mielcke attended it, and later became the first associate professor of the Seminar. As a gifted student with a good knowledge of Lithuanian, he was noticed by professor Johann Jacob Quandt and involved in the activity of Lithuanian writings preparation organised by him. Peter Gottlieb Mielcke is thought to have taught Lithuanian to professor Quandt himself<sup>18</sup>. As proved by the documents of appointment that had survived in the archives, the authority gained through Lithuanian activities, i.e. the accumulated Lithuanian capital, provided Peter Gottlieb Mielcke with an opportunity to rather easily and right after the studies to get a priest's place in the parish of the city of Georgenburg next to the Insterburg County centre<sup>19</sup>.

Christian Gottlieb Mielcke's mother Regina Loysa Schimmelpfennig-Mielcke was a descendant of a Lithuanianised Dutch family and the sister of a famous organiser of Lithuanian writings, as well as another Quandt's helper, Adam Friedrich Schimmelpfennig (1699–1763). Adam Friedrich Schimmelpfennig joined the team of Quandt somewhat later than Peter Gottlieb Mielcke, however, in the middle of the century, he became the best helper of Quandt in the activity of preparation of Lithuanian writings: he translated a part of the Bible (1735), translated and edited hymns and compiled a Lithuanian hymnal (1753), edited the entire second edition of the Bible, and wrote a rhymed preface to it (1755). Moreover, intellectuals of Prussian Lithuania enjoyed Schimmelpfennig's poems on different occasions.

<sup>18</sup> B. Triškaitė, Ž. Sidabraitė, *Johannas Jacobas Quandtas tikrai mokėjo lietuviškai [Johann Jacob Quandt really knew Lithuanian Language]*, *Archivum Lithuanicum* 18, Vilnius 2016, p. 77.

<sup>19</sup> For more information, see: L. Citavičiūtė, *Karaliaučiaus universiteto Lietuvių...*, p. 49–50, 56–57; Ž. Sidabraitė, *Milkų šeimos vieta XVIII amžiaus Mažosios Lietuvos raštijoje [The Place of the Milkus Family in the Eighteenth Century Literature of Lithuania Minor]*, *Archivum Lithuanicum* 5, Vilnius 2003, p. 97–103; Ž. Sidabraitė, *Kristijonas Gotlybas Milkus...*, p. 11–15; B. Triškaitė, *Petro Gotlybo Milkaus prieraišai rankraštiniame žodyne Clavis Germanico-Lithvana [Inscriptions by Peter Gottlieb Mielcke in the Manuscript Dictionary Clavis Germanico-Lithvana]*, *Archivum Lithuanicum* 15, Vilnius 2013, p. 39–44.



Christian Gottlieb Mielcke started his studies in 1751. Like his father, Christian Gottlieb came to the University of Königsberg with a good command of Lithuanian. As stated by Mielcke in his polemic treatise *Bescheiden Beantwortung*, he had learnt the language as a young boy, when growing up in Lithuanian parishes and observing Lituianistic activities of his father and uncle<sup>20</sup>. At the University, Christian Gottlieb Mielcke attended the Seminar of the Lithuanian Language. After graduating from the University in 1762, he was appointed to the Lithuanian parish of Pilkalnis, where he served as cantor until the end of his life<sup>21</sup>. It is not clear until now why he never became a priest.

Christian Gottlieb Mielcke inherited a significant “dowry” of the accumulated symbolic capital both on his father and mother’s side: the authority of his family members in the area of the Lithuanian language was unquestionable. In addition, it is important to keep in mind the fact that, both by descent and by the cooperation with Quandt, the families of Mielcke and Schimmelpfennig belonged to the Prussian intellectuals of local descent who, under the influence of the Prussian political strategy pursued in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and the ideas of the Enlightenment reviving the historical awareness, sought to limit the cultural influence of Brandenburg–Berlin that spread in the region together with pietism and tried to find the ways to defend the traditional uniqueness of the region<sup>22</sup>. Therefore it goes without saying that the rather consolidated group was suspicious of new colonists.

Gottfried Ostermeyer, who as early as in the years of his studies was more closely associated with the Berlin–Brandenburg aristocrats than with the Königsberg intellectuals, could at least partly be considered as such a colonist. He was a descendant of an Austrian knight. The founder of the Ostermeyer family, Lorenz Ostermayer, was born in Western Austria in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, was made a knight by Archduke Maximilian of Austria, and was granted a family crest<sup>23</sup>. Later, the descendants of Lorenz Ostermeyer moved to east Prussia via Bavaria, Silesia, and West Prussia. Gottfried Ostermeyer, having grown up in Marienburg (Malbork), after graduating from a Latin school in Torun, arrived to study in Königsberg in 1737. In 1739, he started attending the Seminar of the Lithuanian Language<sup>24</sup>. Ostermeyer’s

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<sup>20</sup> C.G. Mielcke, *Bescheidene Beantwortung des Bedenkens, so Herr Pfarrer Ostermeyer von Trempen über einen Entwurf zum neuen Littauischen Gesangbuch bekannt gemacht, aus Licht gestellet von C.G. Mielcke, Cantor zu Pillkallen, Königsberg*, gedruckt mit Kanterischen Schriften 1788, p. 55.

<sup>21</sup> On Mielcke’s years of study and work, see: Ž. Sidabraitė, *Milky šeimos vieta...*, s. 105–120; eadem, *Kristijonas Gotlybas Milkus...*, p. 18–42.

<sup>22</sup> L. Gineitis, *Prūsiškasis patriotizmas ir lietuvių literatūra [Prussian Patriotism and Lithuanian Culture]*, Vilnius 1995, p. 67–72.

<sup>23</sup> P.R. Ostermeyer, *Die Ostermeyer alias Ostermayr. Genealogische Studie*, w: *Altpreuussische Monatsschrift neue Folge. Der Neuen Preussischen Provinzial-Blätter fünfte Folge* 40, Hrsg. von R. Reicke, Königsberg 1993, p. 553.

<sup>24</sup> L. Citavičiūtė, *Karaliaučiaus universiteto Lietuvių...*, p. 344; idem, *Gotfrydas Ostermejeris ir jo palikuonys lietuvių raštijoje [Gottfried Ostermeyer and his Descendants in Lithuanian Writing]*, *Senoji Lietuvos literatūra* 41, Vilnius 2016, p. 18.

decision to learn specifically Lithuanian makes one slightly confused, as he must have had a quite good command of Polish from his youth<sup>25</sup>. Therefore, it would have been much simpler for him to learn in the Seminar of the Polish Language, with all the benefits for the seminarians available. Thus, one can conclude that Ostermeyer's decision to learn Lithuanian was determined not only, but perhaps not so much, by the material interest of the moment but rather by the ambitions of a gifted student and by a clear perception of a possible higher perspective. Ostermeyer kept improving his practical skills of Lithuanian as a home teacher in the families of priests in Prussian Lithuania. After graduating from the University, he was appointed to Trempen, first as a precentor, and since 1752, as a priest. He worked as a priest there till the end of his life. Still as a precentor, Ostermeyer married Anna Regina, daughter of Fabian Kalau (1691–1747), a priest in Werden and a well-known figure in the area of Lithuanian writings. Fabian Kalau was one of the compilers of the Lithuanian catechism (1719) who later joined Quandt's team and contributed to the translation of the Bible (1735). The example of his father-in-law could have encouraged Ostermeyer to contribute to the work on Lithuanian writings and thus to get an opportunity to join the ranks of Prussian Lithuanian intellectuals. Unfortunately, the early death of Kalau prevented him from taking the opportunity.

As mentioned above, Ostermeyer is likely to have acquired influential friends in the ruling circles of the Brandenburg–Berlin aristocracy in the years of his studies. He is believed to have maintained good relations with the Prussian State and War Minister, the Trempen Church inspector Friedrich von Görne (1670–1746), who invited Ostermeyer to work as a precentor in Trempen after the studies<sup>26</sup>. Ostermeyer also maintained close relations with another Prussian aristocrat and State Minister Friedrich Wilhelm III Rochow (1690–1764)<sup>27</sup>, and it was Ostermeyer who delivered a sermon in his funeral<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> The fact that Ostermeyer had a command of Polish was mentioned by Mielcke in his polemic treatise *Bescheiden Beantwortung*. It is also witnessed by documents found in the *Secret State Archives of the Prussian Cultural Heritage* and related to the appointment of a priest to a Lithuanian parish of Schirwindten: Gottfried Ostermeyer was recommended as a candidate with a command of both languages. *Bestallung des cand. Theol. Ephraim Friedrich Meisner zum Pfarrer in Schirwindt als nachfolger des verstorbenen Naugardt*, GStA PrK, XX. HA EM 118 d, Nr. 461.

<sup>26</sup> L. Citavičiūtė, *Gotfrydas Ostermejeris ir jo...*, p. 19.

<sup>27</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm III Rochow was the father of Friedrich Eberhard von Rochow (1734–1805), a famous figure of the Enlightenment, reformer of the Prussian system of education, and a popular author of the reader *Kūdikių draugas* (*Kinderfreund*). In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the reader was translated into Polish and Lithuanian. See: Ž. Sidabraitė, *Skaitinių vadovėlis „Kūdikių prietelius“, Skaitinių vadovėlis „Kūdikių prietelius“* [*The Textbook Kūdikių prietelius*], mokslinis dokumentinis leidimas, parengė Ž. Sidabraitė, Klaipėda 2015, p. 680–709; idem, *Dar kartą apie „Kūdikių prietelius“ išleidimo aplinkybes* [*Once again – about the Circumstances of Publishing „Kūdikių prietelius“*], *Archivum Lithuanicum* 12, Vilnius 2010, p. 121–132; J. Kodzik, *Identitätsbildung durch Kinderbücher. Friedrich Eberhard von Rochow (1734–1805) und eine „Kinderfreund“ in der polnischen Volksaufklärung. Hybride Identitäten in den preußisch-polnischen Stadtkulturen der Aufklärung. Studien zur Aufklärungsdiffusion zwischen Stadt und Land, zur Identitätsbildung und zum Kulturaustausch in regionalen Kommunikationsnetzwerken*, Hrsg. J. Kodzik, W. Zientara, Bremen 2016, p. 211–234.

<sup>28</sup> L. Citavičiūtė, *Gotfrydas Ostermejeris ir jo...*, p. 19.

Before starting work on Lithuanian writings, Ostermeyer was already well known as an author of ethnographic works on the ancient population of Prussian Lithuania<sup>29</sup> and a scholar recognised by the intellectuals of Königsberg: he was an honorary member of the Society of German Scientists. Thus, Ostermeyer was a well-known figure among Prussian intellectuals, he had acquired great authority through his works, therefore it was not surprising that the Consistory specifically entrusted him with the preparation of a new edition of a Lithuanian hymnal. However, although Ostermeyer, as mentioned above, had accumulated rather significant symbolic capital, to the old residents of the region that was the capital of an “alien”, of an “outsider”.

Both Ostermeyer and Mielcke were active Enlighteners who clearly understood that Quandt-Berendt’s hymnal, dating back to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, no longer met the needs of the Age of Enlightenment. The preparation of a new version of the official hymnal was probably the easiest task for both opponents: apart from the linguistic competences required for such a task, both cantor Mielcke and pastor Ostermeyer had accumulated significant experience of liturgical and ritual hymn singing, and both of them had poetic and hymnal preparation ambitions. Ostermeyer was just more resolute and faster.

## THE TACTICS OF THE OPPONENTS

Due to the fact that the opponents belonged to different cultural social groups of Prussian Lithuania and because of their different *habitus*, during the polemic, they focused on different support groups: Ostermeyer defended the hymnal through the principles of social subordination and the Consistory authority, and he looked for support in a wide circle of Prussian intellectuals (not necessarily Lithuanian), while Mielcke, on the contrary, tried to emphasise that, in that particular case, a social hierarchy was not important, as other nationals, even of the highest social rank, who did not know Lithuanian were not able and could not decide the fate of a Lithuanian hymnal; it was the matter of the Prussian Lithuanian intellectuals who had a command of Lithuanian.

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<sup>29</sup> Ostermeyer published two works of an ethnographic character: *Kritischer Beytrag zur Altpreussischen Religionsgeschichte* (1775) and *Gedanken von den alten Bewohnern des Landes Preussen* (Königsberg und Leipzig, 1780). A famous researcher of the history of Prussia, a Counsellor of the Consistory, professor of the University of Königsberg and the head of its library Friedrich Samuel Bock (1716–1785), who wrote a five-volume economic history of nature of East and West Prussia (*Versuch einer Wirtschaftlichen Naturgeschichte von Dem Königreich Ost- und Westpreußen*, 1782–1784), in the first volume, when describing the old residents of East Prussia, referred to the above mentioned ethnographic works of Ostermeyer. F.S. Bock, *Versuch einer wirthschaftlichen Naturgeschichte von dem Königreich Ost- und Westpreussen. Erster Band, welcher allgemeine geographische, anthropologische, meteorologische und historische Abhandlungen enthält, von Friedrich Samuel Bock*, Dessau, auf Kosten der Verlagskasse und zu finden in der Buchhandlung der Gelehrten 1782, p. 82–292. Incidentally, Mielcke, Cantor in Pillkallen, was named in the book as a subscriber (p. 8).

The decision of Mielcke to make use of Ostermeyer's reputation in a rather narrow circle of the Prussian Lithuanian cognoscenti of the Lithuanian language in the polemic was well thought out. In that circle, Ostermeyer was known as a too self-confident and quarrelsome alien who had learnt Lithuanian.

Mielcke hinted that Ostermeyer had sought to be accepted as an equal member by editors of Lithuanian writings, however, he had been rejected by the priests who had grown up in Prussian Lithuania, including close relatives of Mielcke<sup>30</sup>. It is understandable that the local East Prussian cognoscenti of Lithuanian, and first and foremost Mielcke, were disappointed at being circumvented and at the first rationalist Lithuanian hymnal having been prepared by alien Ostermeyer. Therefore, from the very outset of the polemic, Mielcke tended to particularly emphasise Ostermeyer's alienness that clearly stood out in his speech. He made use of the mocking indignation caused in the community of Lithuanian-speaking priests by some funny mistakes in Ostermeyer's hymnal: in the hymns, when speaking about Christ and the Holy Spirit, Ostermeyer used the verbs *išgaišti* and *išdvėsti* 'to fall, to die' (*išdvėsti* – in that context 'to breathe out', Holy Spirit breathed out, i.e. spoke), employed in the spoken language solely with reference to animals, as the synonyms of *numirti* and *iškvėpti* 'to die' and 'to breathe out, to speak' used for people. Ostermeyer's phrases "Jesus *išgaišo*" and "the Holy Spirit *išdvėsta*" sounded so scandalous for a Lithuanian's ear that they caused indignation and laughter simultaneously and therefore were easily remembered. From the viewpoint of the language history, the failures were not fatal (as Ostermeyer later proved in the polemic, the verbs occurred in some previously published Lithuanian writings). However, Ostermeyer's stubbornness in that case to refer merely to the written sources and to ignore the living language, and therefore to fail to correct mistakes, created a prolonged scandalous situation. For Mielcke, the mistake and Ostermeyer's refusal to correct it became the most important argument in demonstrating how little the alien Ostermeyer knew the Lithuanian language.

Despite a particularly reserved or even a negative attitude of a large part of the most influential figures in the Prussian Lithuanian cultural field, Ostermeyer did not cease to trust his knowledge and power: he stated being determined to correct almost the entire collection of Lithuanian writings, published in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century under the leadership of Quandt. Still, realising that he did not have sufficient support of the priests of Lithuanian parishes, Ostermeyer looked for it in the history of writing and began to associate himself with Daniel Klein (1609–1666), who, due to the resistance of some priests, could not publish his Lithuanian hymnal, edited in accordance with the requirements of the poetic theory of Martin

<sup>30</sup> „Herr Pf. wollte nehmlich, wie oben bereits erwähnet, schon bey Leb-Zeiten des Pf. Schimmelpfennigs an dem G. B. und Bibel arbeiten, und adreßirte sich deshalb an den Oberhof-Prediger D. Quandt. Dieser ließ sich aber gar nicht mit Ihm ein, sondern schickte seinen Brief an den Pf. Schimmelpfenning.“ C. Mielcke, op. cit., p. 61–62.

Opitz (1597–1639), for several years (it was only published in 1666). Ostermeyer argued that, due to the reform in his hymnal, he experienced the same persecution in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as Daniel Klein, one of the most talented and most prominent editors of Lithuanian writings, had experienced in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, Ostermeyer clearly claimed domination in the cultural field of Prussian Lithuanians.

In order to silence his critics, and primarily Mielcke, Ostermeyer tried to use the levers of social hierarchy, i.e. the authority of the Church and the Consistory (his hymnal was published with the approval of the superiors and the Consistory, and therefore above criticism) and the position of a priest (a cantor was in no position to criticise the efforts of a priest). According to Ostermeyer, “a cantor’s duty” was “to sing the hymns as found in the hymnal and as indicated by the priest both in church and at school and never puzzle their brains over what they were.” Cantors should leave the concerns to “those entrusted with saving souls”<sup>31</sup>. Such a conservative position of Ostermeyer in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century could no longer be effective. Mielcke’s justified retort to Ostermeyer’s improper instructions was that, under the sceptre of Prussia, “the coercion of conscience had long been forbidden”: as a proof of appropriateness to discuss the hymnal, he presented an example of the Berlin (1780)<sup>32</sup> hymnal<sup>33</sup>, well known to the then Prussian intellectuals.

Compiled on the principles of rationalism and the Enlightenment theology, the Berlin hymnal became a prototype of the hymnals of the Enlightenment in Prussia. As soon as it had been published, it was accompanied by urgent recommendations of the supreme ecclesiastical authorities and insistently recommended to be used during sermons. However, the hymnal caused a great dissatisfaction among hymn singers, and the efforts of radically inclined priests to impose the reformed hymnal on church goers sometimes used to acquire dramatic forms: despite the demands of priests, congregations would sing the old versions of the hymns, protesting against the persuasions and threats of the radically inclined priests (who occasionally would threaten the disobedient with fines), would noisily leave the church before the sermon, etc. The rumours of the confrontation of several years finally reached the King: a merchant Apitzsch at the beginning of 1781, on behalf of several Berlin parishes, wrote a complaint to the King himself and asked for a permission to use the old customary hymnal of Johann Porst (1668–1728) during the worship. It was then that, in

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<sup>31</sup> „Eines Cantors Pflicht ist, die Lieder in der Kirche und Schule zu singen, die im Gesangbuch befindlich sind, und welche ihm sein Pfarrerherr daraus vorschreibt, ohne sich auch nur im geringsten darum zu bekümmern, von welchen Gehalt sie seyn. Die Sorge dafür muß er allein denen überlaßen, welchen die Seelenpflege anvertrauet ist; anders er sichtbar in ein fremd amt greiffet.“ G. Ostermeyer, *Bedenken über einen...*, p. 6.

<sup>32</sup> After the name of the publisher August Mylius, the hymnal, anonymously compiled by Johann Samule Diterich (1721–1797), is also called a Mylius’ Hymnal.

<sup>33</sup> „Ueberdem leben wir ja unter dem Preussischen Scepter, wo Gewissens-Zwang längst verbannet vorden, und wo das vortrefliche Berlinsche Gesangbuch noch keiner Gemeine aufgedrungen, sondern eine jede zuvörderst befraget worden, ob sie dasselbe auch annehmen wollen.“ Mielcke, op. cit., [VIII].

response to his subordinates, Friedrich Wilhelm I wrote his famous answer: “Every one of my subordinates, as long as they are honest, can believe in what they want ... and free to sing what they like ... and the priests must not forget the tolerance ...”<sup>34</sup>. After such a royal response, the Berlin hymnal sank into oblivion. Through that parallel, Mielcke demonstrated the fate of Ostermeyer’s hymnal.

### THE END OF THE POLEMIC

Mainly due to the efforts of Ostermeyer who hoped for the support and backing of the authorities, the rumour about the “quill war” reached the highest strata of Königsberg. The criticism of Mielcke and the Lithuanian priests supporting him severely undermined Ostermeyer’s authority; his symbolic capital acquired in the cultural field of Prussian Lithuania was devalued so much that the Consistory withdrew from further cooperation and declared that the defence of the hymnal was Ostermeyer’s own business<sup>35</sup>. Despite his titanic efforts, Ostermeyer failed to get his new hymnal established in active use. Conservative hymn singers did not want to give up their favourite old hymnal. Therefore, in a short while, Ostermeyer’s hymnal was sold as scrap paper<sup>36</sup>.

Thus, in the first stage of the “quill war”, Mielcke formally managed to get the better of Ostermeyer. However, the victory weakened Mielcke’s authority as well instead of boosting it and possibly prevented him from obtaining a paid position of a translator of governmental decrees, i.e. from converting his symbolic capital into real capital<sup>37</sup>. A casual view of the representatives of the authorities on the quarrelling activists of Lithuanian culture was revealed in the official letter on the position of a translator of governmental decrees, dated 7 March 1789, of the then Head of the Seminar of the Lithuanian language, chief royal preacher, the Superintendent General, and Counsellor of the Consistory Johann Ernst Schutz (1742–1806). In that letter, beside the other candidates, Ostermeyer and Mielcke were proposed, with an ironical comment on their quarrels: “... the last two [Ostermeyer and Mielcke] are now engaged in a public debate in the press over the issue of whose knowledge of the Lithuanian language is better.”<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> „Ein Jeder kann bei mir glauben, was er will, wenn er nur erlich ist; was die Gesangbücher angeht, so steht einem Jeden frei zu singen: Nun ruhen alle Wälder, oder dergleichen thöricht und dummes Zeug; aber die Prister müssen die Toleranz nicht vergessen; denn ihnen wird keine Verfolgung zugestatt werden.“ J.F. Bachmann, *Zur Geschichte der Berliner Gesangbücher*, Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag 1970 (1856), p. 216.

<sup>35</sup> „Daß zur Zeit die Streitigkeit über dieses von ihm verbeßerte Gesangbuch bloß ihn als Schriftsteller betreffe, und es also nicht die Sache des Consistorii, sondern seine eigene Sache sey, sich bey dem Publico zu verteidigen oder nicht.“ Consistorio 01-09-1785.

<sup>36</sup> To date, not a single surviving copy of Ostermeyer’s hymnal is known.

<sup>37</sup> For more information, see: Ž. Sidabraitė, *Kristijonas Gotlybas Milkus...*, p. 57.

<sup>38</sup> „... so würde es vielleicht das ratsamste [...] diese Sache entweder dem hier zunächst gelegenen Litthauischen Pfarrer Jahnke in Laukischken bei Labiau, der sonst auf dem Ruf einer guten Kenntniß der Litthauischen

The devaluation of the symbolic capital of both opponents during the polemic could be regarded as a significant loss of Lithuanian culture; however, the surviving polemic treatises revealing the everyday life of the Prussian Lithuanian cultural field in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the relations between its participants are by themselves a very valuable cultural monument. Finally, in the long run, both opponents became winners of that polemic. The competitive tensions between the two first figures in the Lithuanian field of Prussia, Ostermeyer and Mielcke, were so high in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the forces concentrated in the polemic so strong, that they stimulated an outburst of editing and publishing of Lithuanian writings at the end of the century. The Lithuanian studies-related experience accumulated in the polemic enabled the opponents to publish significant works. Ostermeyer became the first historian of Lithuanian writings (his work *Erste Littauische Liedergeschichte*, 1793) and editor of a grammar of the Lithuanian language with the first Lithuanian theory of poetry as its chapter (*Neue Littauische Grammatik*, 1791). In turn, Mielcke also published: 1) a grammar of the Lithuanian language (*Anfangs-Gründe einer Littauischen Sprach-Lehre*, 1800), in whose poetry section an extract of *The Seasons* by Donelaitis was first published; 2) a bilingual vocabulary (*Littauisch-deutsches und Deutsch-littauisches Wörter-Buch*, 1800), the preface for which was written by Immanuel Kant himself; and 3) a collection of sermons (*Miszknnygos*, 1800), which became the most popular Lithuanian book at the turn of the century. The ideas matured and expressed in the process of the polemic, as well as the edited Lithuanian works, not only enabled the opponents to accumulate their symbolic capital in the Lithuanian cultural field, but also became a significant contribution to the history of Lithuanian culture.

## CONCLUSIONS

The research was based on the methodological premises of the cultural capitalism theory, formed by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, where a *cultural field* was perceived as a battlefield of interested actors (*agents*) seeking to accumulate as large as possible *cultural capital*. Cultural capital meant education, knowledge, or specific skills that provided *agent* with some or other advantages and distinction among other participants of the field. In the cultural field, agents acted as *habitus*, i.e. their activity was predetermined by their unique personal and social experience. In the cultural field, the accumulated cultural capital would turn into symbolic capital: authority, the power of decision, etc., which under favourable conditions were converted into real capital.

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Sprache hat, oder dem Pfarrer Ostermeyer in Trempen, oder dem Cantor Mielcke in Pilkallen aufzutragen, als welche beide letztere sich dem gegenseitigen Vorzug der besten Kenntniß dieser Sprache in öffentlichen Schriften noch strittig machen.“ Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz (GStA. PK), J.E. Schulz, sygn. XX HA 22 a Nr 3, 1789-03-09.

After the Duchy of Prussia had converted to Lutheranism and had become concerned about the evangelisation of the autochthonous population, a demand for teachers and priests with a knowledge of local languages dramatically grew. Upon foundation of the University in 1544, a field formed in which a command of the Lithuanian language could be realised as substantial cultural and symbolic capital. Such opportunities were created by a special policy of benefits granted to young people speaking local languages, and especially Lithuanian: accomodation in the Duke Albert-established boarding house free of charge, an opportunity of getting a scholarship, and a guaranteed workplace as a priest or teacher upon completion of the studies. The said policy was continued at the University in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, after the Seminars of the Polish and Lithuanian Languages had been launched. In the framework of the Seminar of the Lithuanian Language, more gifted University students and alumni were involved in the activities of language teaching or preparation of Lithuanian writings, and thus, as early as in the years of studies, used to accumulate significant symbolic capital that could be converted to real through the easier getting of better jobs. Peter Gottlieb Mielcke, the father of Christian Gottlieb Mielcke, could serve as an example of a student who succesfully realised the symbolic capital accumulated through Lituianistic activities.

Both Christian Gottlieb Mielcke and Gottfried Ostermeyer were alumni of the Seminar of the Lithuanian Language of the University of Königsberg. Both were of non-Lithuanian descent, however, their *habitus* through which they acted and accumulated symbolic capital in the Prussian cultural field vere different. Mielcke, who had grown up in Prussian Lithuania, came to the University with a good command of Lithuanian; moreover, he inherited the cultural and symbolic capital of his father Peter Gottlieb Mielcke and uncle Adam Friedrich Schimmelpfennig, accumulated through their succesful Lituianistic activities. The Mielcke family belonged to the local patriots of the region who sought to resist the influence of Berlin-Brandenburg and to preserve the cultural uniqueness of the region. Ostermeyer was a first generation-newcomer to Königsberg from Pomerania and started learning Lithuanian at the University; an author of well-known ethnographic works and a member of the Society of German Scientists, he was supported by some high aristocrats and officials of Berlin-Brandenburg. The cultural symbolic capital accumulated by him belonged to a broader Prussian cultural field.

The interests of Mielcke and Ostermeyer clashed in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when both of them started working on the same cultural project: the preparation of an updated Lithuanian hymnal, based on the principles of rationalism and the Enlightenment theology. As Ostermeyer was the first to prepare the hymnal and to publish it on governmental funds, Mielcke could not



accept the fact that he was circumvented by an ambitious newcomer in the field of Lithuanian culture where his own family had been among the predominating ones for a number of years. In the criticism of Ostermeyer's hymnal, Mielcke sought to present him as an impudent intruder who, despite significant symbolic capital accumulated in other areas, did not have sufficient cultural capitalisation in the field of Lituanistic Prussian culture and who had a too poor command of Lithuanian. Such tactics of Mielcke, based on Ostermeyer's fatal defence errors, was effective: Mielcke succeeded in stopping Ostermeyer's decisive engagement in the field of Lituanistic activity. Nonetheless, in the fight with the opponent, Mielcke also lost a significant part of his accumulated symbolic capital. The authority of both Mielcke and Ostermeyer was dwindling for some time. After the height of the polemic had faded out, the authority was restituted thanks to Lituanistic works prepared by the two great activists of Lithuanian culture.

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