

Lithuania Through The Ages

April 1, 2021

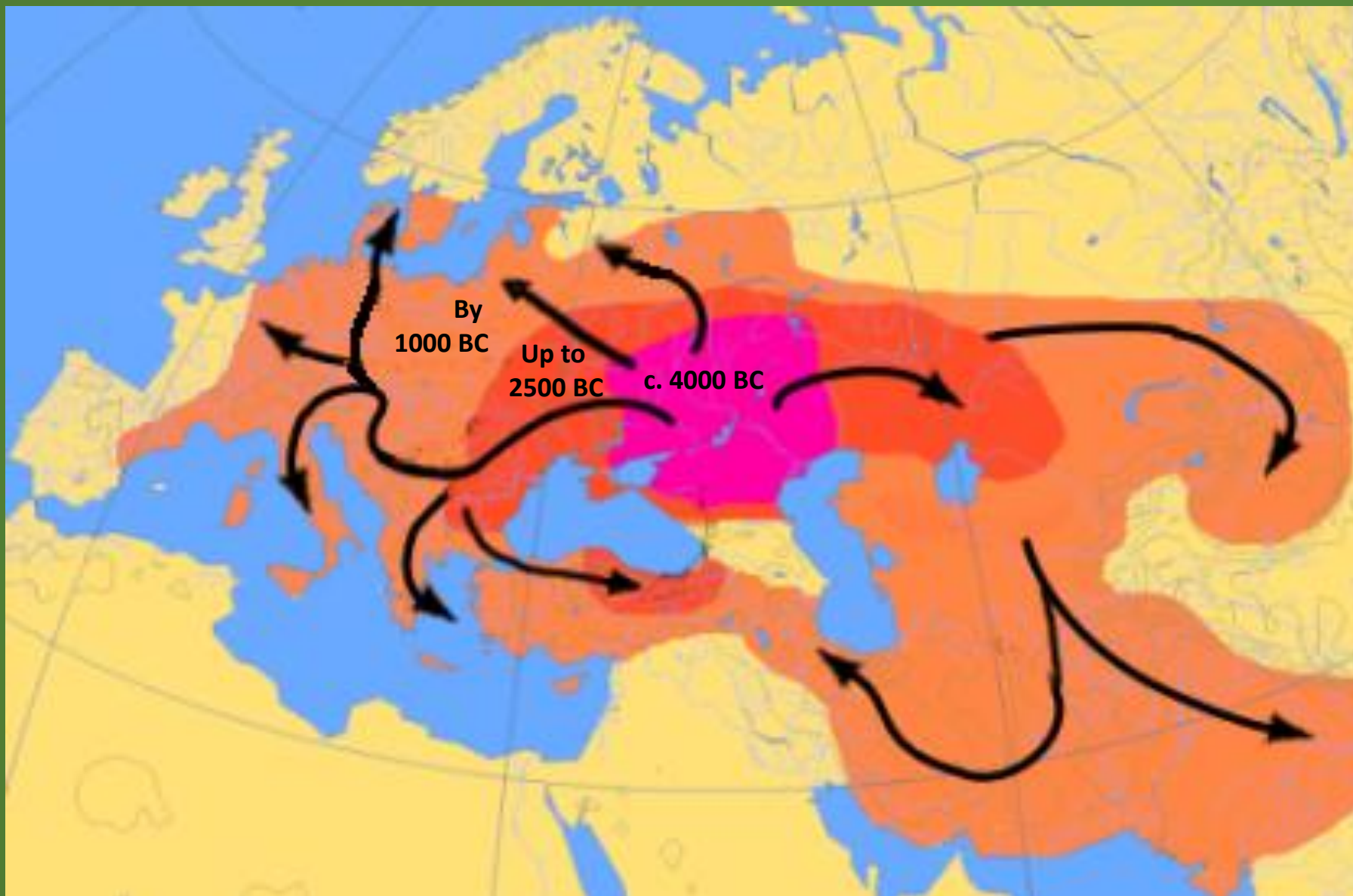
Andrew Kapochunas (*Andrius Kapočiūnas*)

<http://www.newyorkmapsociety.org/>

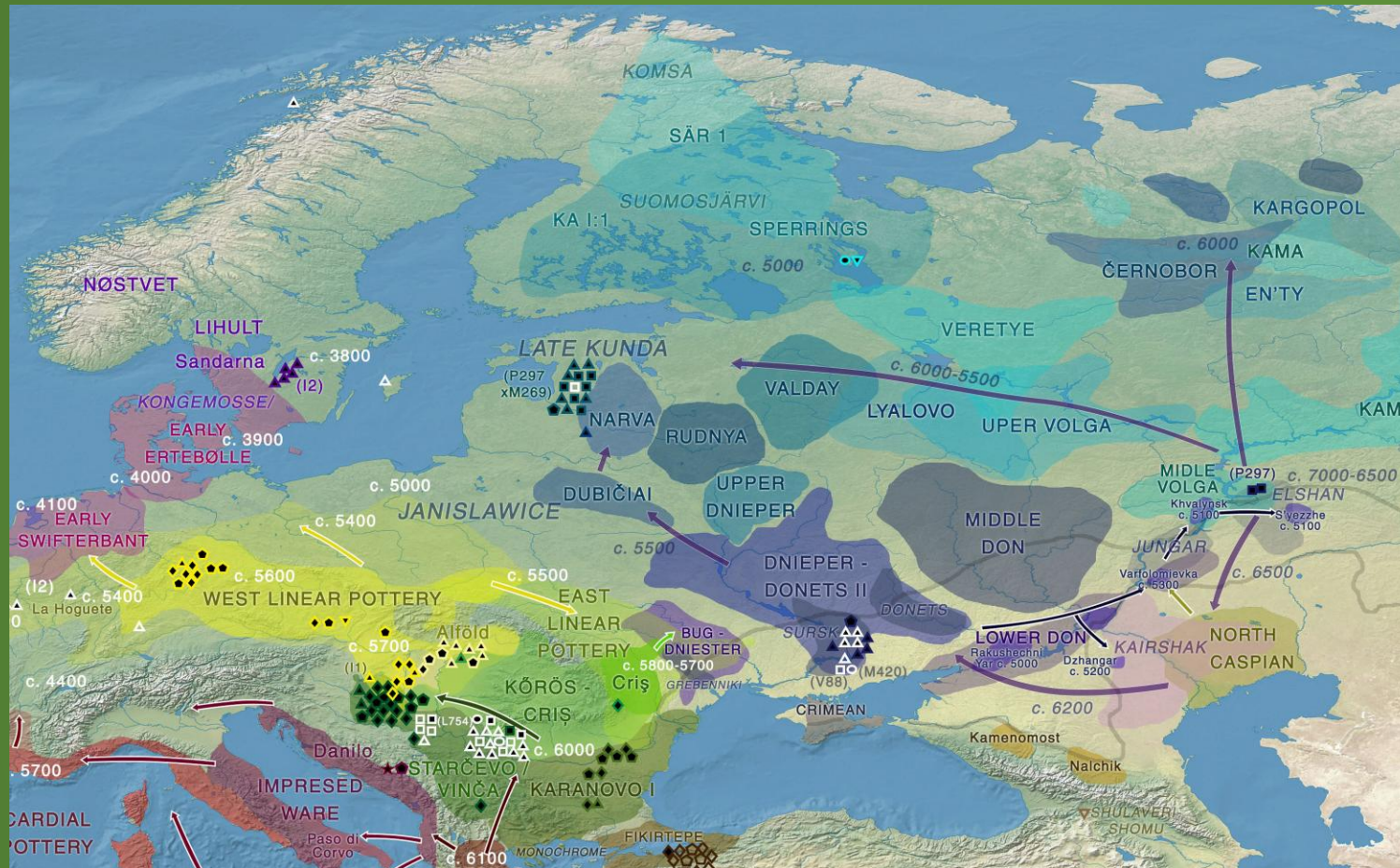
<http://lithuanianmaps.com/>

<https://www.lithuanianjournal.org/>

Lithuanian Cartographic Society: <https://lietuvoskartografija.lt/>



Indo-European migrations from c. 4000 to 1000 BC, according to the **Kurgan (Burial Mound) Model**, based on archaeology and linguistics, and championed by Marija Gimbutas in her 1956 book: “The Prehistory of Eastern Europe, Part 1.”



13,000 – 3,000 BC



250 – 750 AD

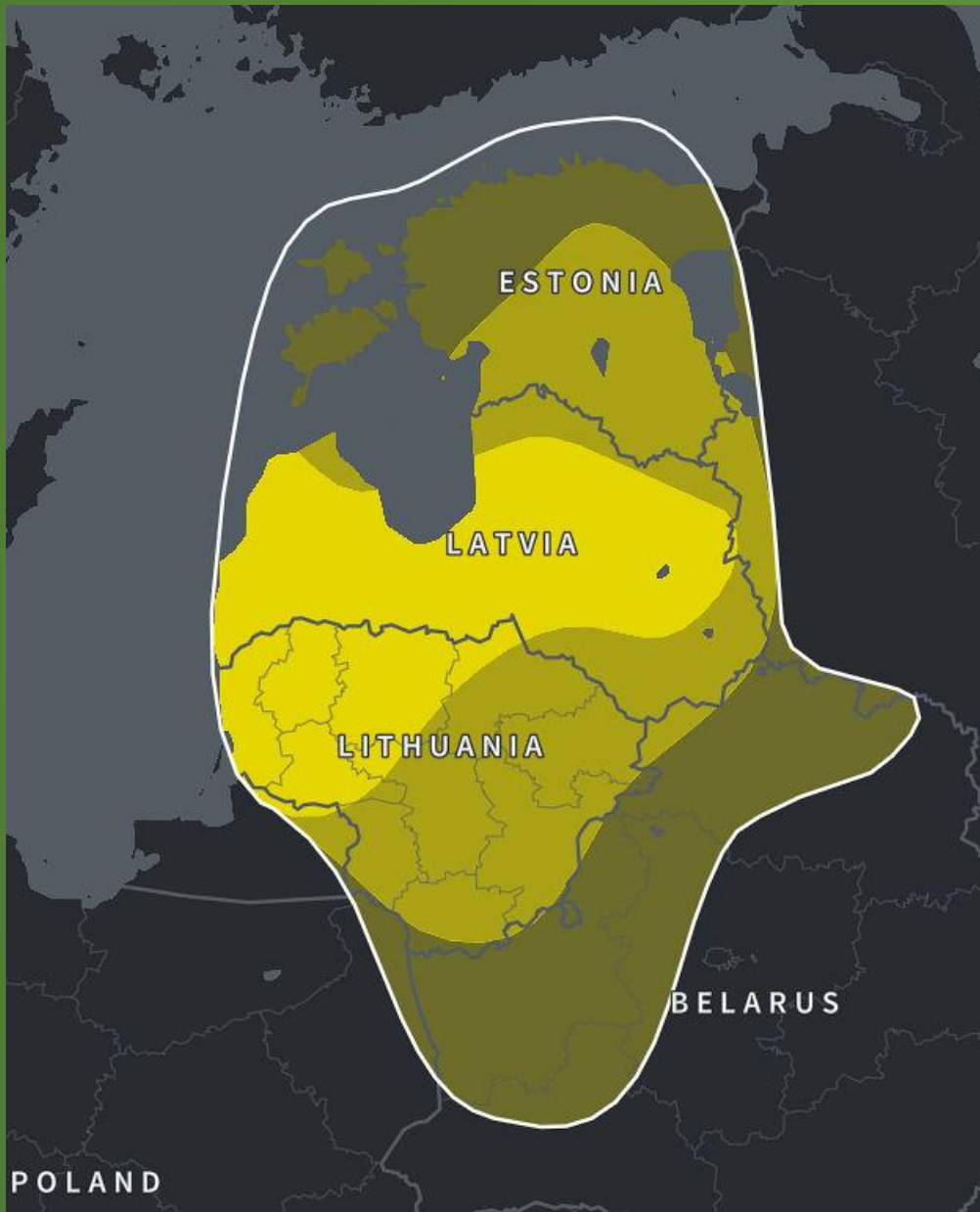
2021 ethnographic maps (at <https://indo-european.eu/maps>), with the benefit of genetic data, go back further and are much more nuanced



“Baltic tribes in the 5th Century,”
based on the work of Marija Gimbutas.

Baltic tribes that remain:

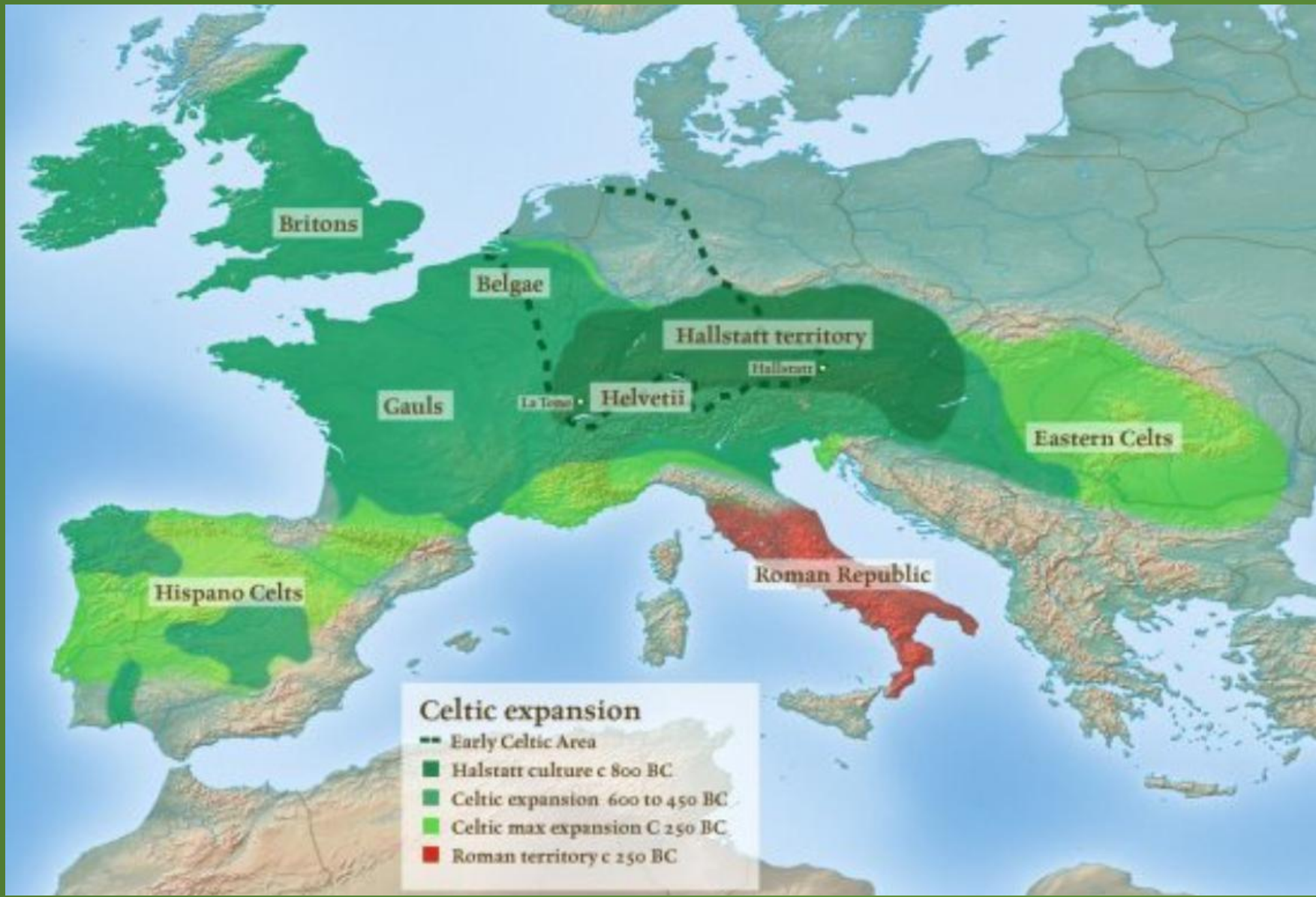
- Lithuanians
- Latvians



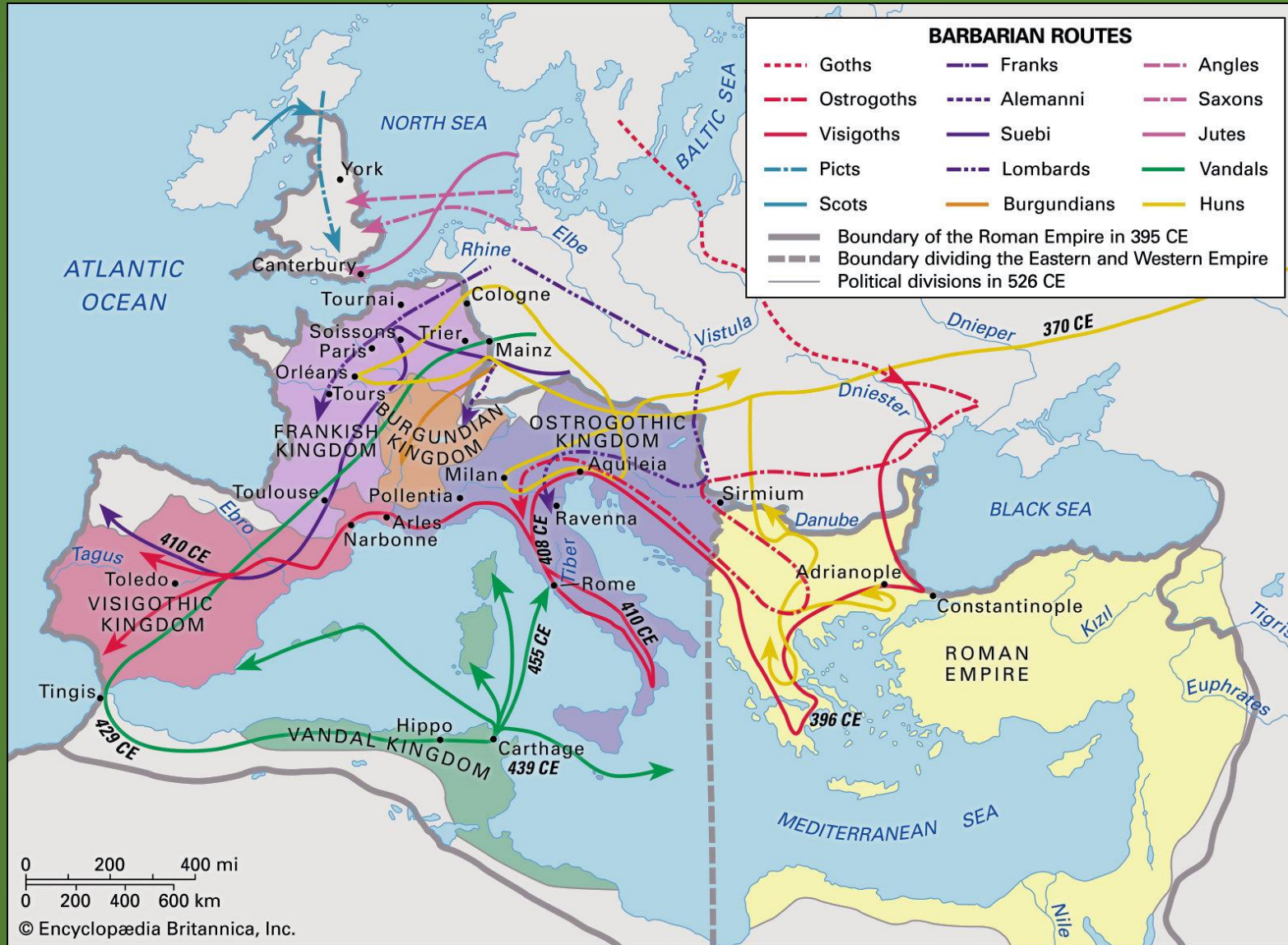
Kapočiūnai have lived in the area of Žiežmariai, halfway between Kaunas and Vilnius, for over 300 years. *Ancestry.com* says 73% of my DNA is sourced from the Baltics, focused on Žemaitija (*Samogitian: Žemaitėjė*) and Latvia, but 27% from today's Poland, Ukraine, European Russia, and Siberian Russia.

What are ethnic Lithuanians *not*?

- 1. Descended from Palemon, relative of Nero, and 500 noble Roman families**
 - A 16th Century myth created to give stature to Lithuanian nobility, to counter Polish claims that Lithuanians were barbarians**
- 2. Celts**
- 3. Goths**
- 4. Vikings**



Not Celts.



Not Goths.
 Or Visigoths,
 Ostrogoths, or
 any of the other
 “barbarian”
 tribes on this
 map.



wikipedia

Not Vikings.

Settlements (*in green*) and routes (*in blue*) of the Vikings – who were Danes, Norwegians and Swedes.

See the Viking settlement at Grobiņa, just east of Liepāja, Latvia, founded 650 AD, and Viking routes down Latvia's Daugava, and Poland's Vistula.



Ancient Europe depicted in 1703.

The Lithuanian area was “Aesti,” described in 98 AD by Roman historian Tacitus as a people who worshipped the mother of the gods, and who were *“the only people who collect amber -- in the shallows or even on the beach.”*

“Venedi,” to the east, was populated by Slavs.



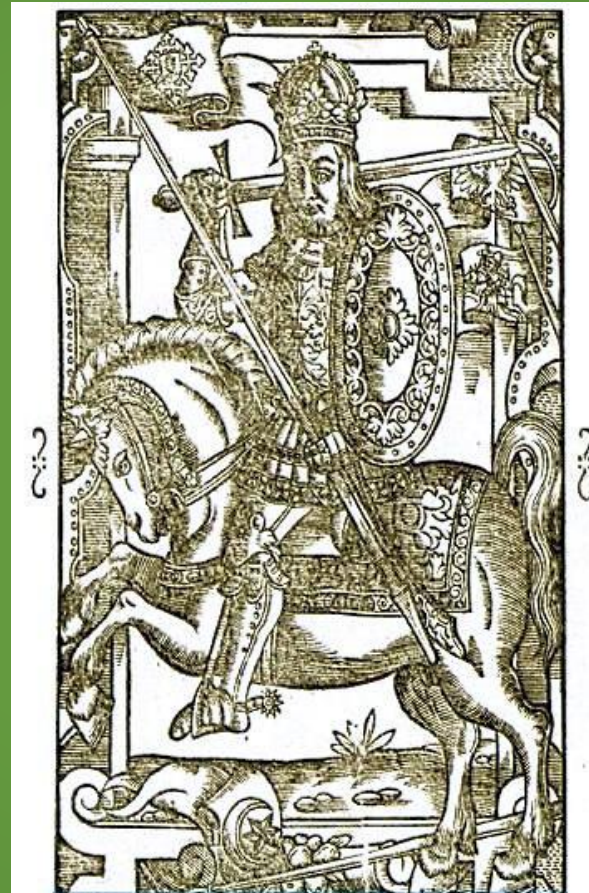
"The Amber Route and its Branches from Antiquity to the Middle Ages"



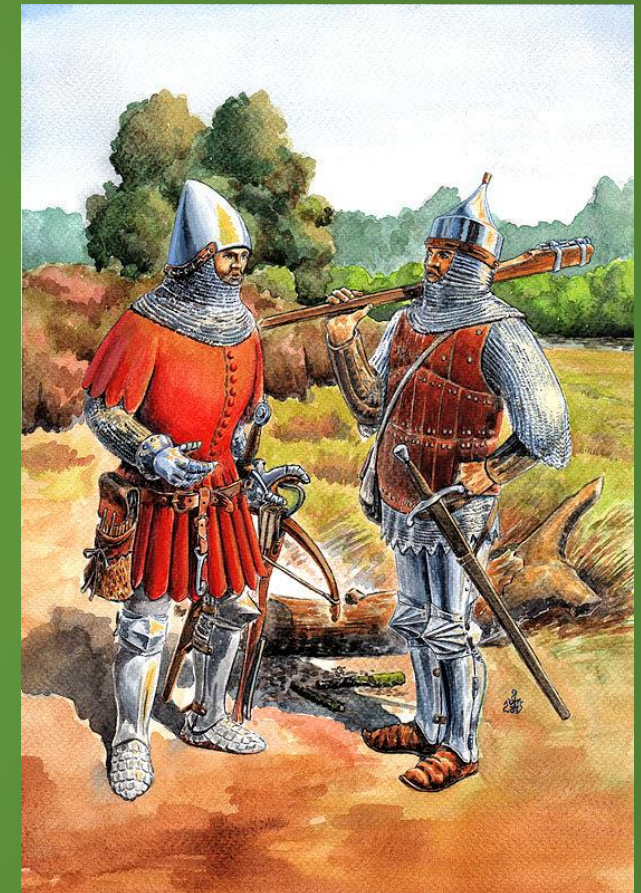
Lithuania in the 13th Century – the time of Mindaugas: the first Grand Duke of Lithuania and its only Christian King. He is mentioned in a 1219 treaty as an elder duke, and in 1236 as the leader of all Lithuanians.

This was the one era when the Grand Duchy (GD) was majority ethnic Lithuanians.

Mindaugas began the expansion of the Grand Duchy as a warrior state, 13th - 15th cents.



1578 Guagnini
Mindaugas



sidaly, on facebook
Late 14th cent. GD armor



Orlenov, wikipedia

c. 1362 Battle of Blue Waters (*Mūšis prie Mėlynųjų Vandeny*): fought on the banks of a tributary of the Southern Bug, between the GD army under Grand Duke Algirdas, and the Mongol Golden Horde, finalizing the conquest of the Principality of Kiev (today's Ukraine) – Tatar country.



1568: the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuanian just before the 1569 Union of Lublin.

The GD was under pressure both from Russia and Sweden, and thought a political union with Poland would protect them.

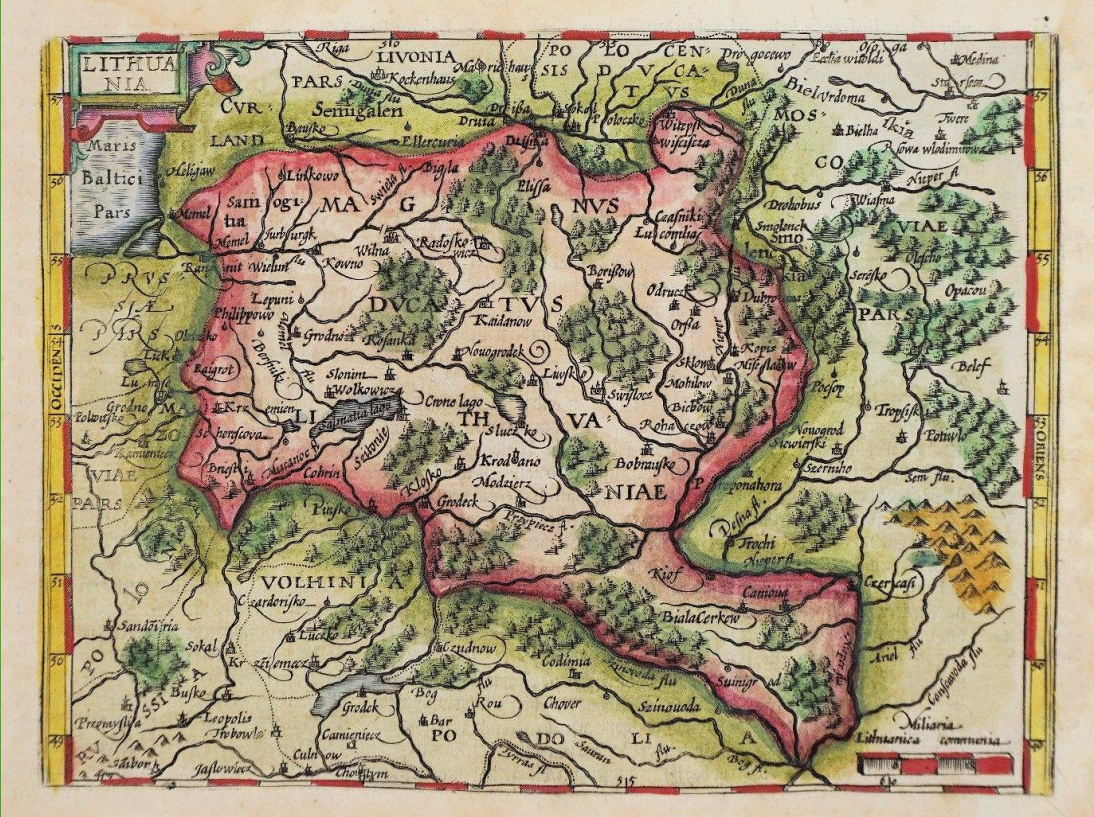


The Grand Duchy and the Kingdom of Poland after the 1569 Union of Lublin, creating the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Lithuanians initially walked out of talks, objecting to Polish demands to settle, and own property, in the GD. In response, Poland annexed much of the GD's land, with approval from local gentry. Lithuanians came back to the table, and signed away their losses.

Soon, famous mapmakers, like the Dutch Mercator, began to depict Lithuania separately in atlases.



1596: Mercator: "Lithvania," from his "Atlas Cosmographicus"



1609: Mercator: "Lithuania," in his pocket "Atlas Minor"

An important map engraved on copper, created and published by the Dutch as a 29-inch square wall map, reprinted in various sizes for decades, was based on survey drafts prepared by the Royal Geographer to the Hungarian King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania, Stefan Batory, under instructions of Lithuanian Prince Mikalojus Kristupas Radvila. The map shows 1,020 towns and villages; within the GD alone are 511 towns, 31 villages, and 1 monastery.



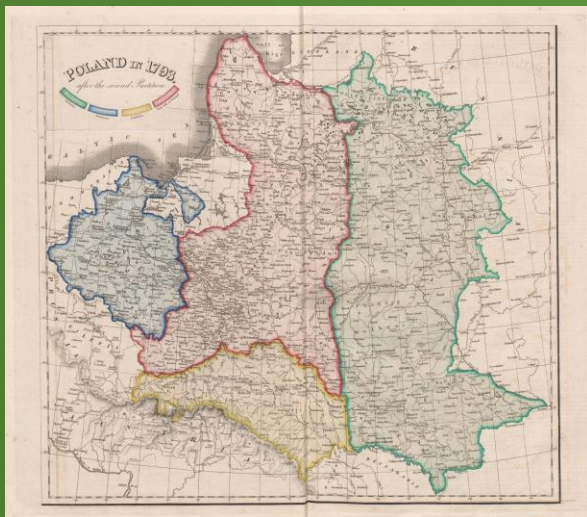
1613 Gerritsz – Blaeu: "Magni Ducatus Lithvaniae"



1771



1772, after the First Partition

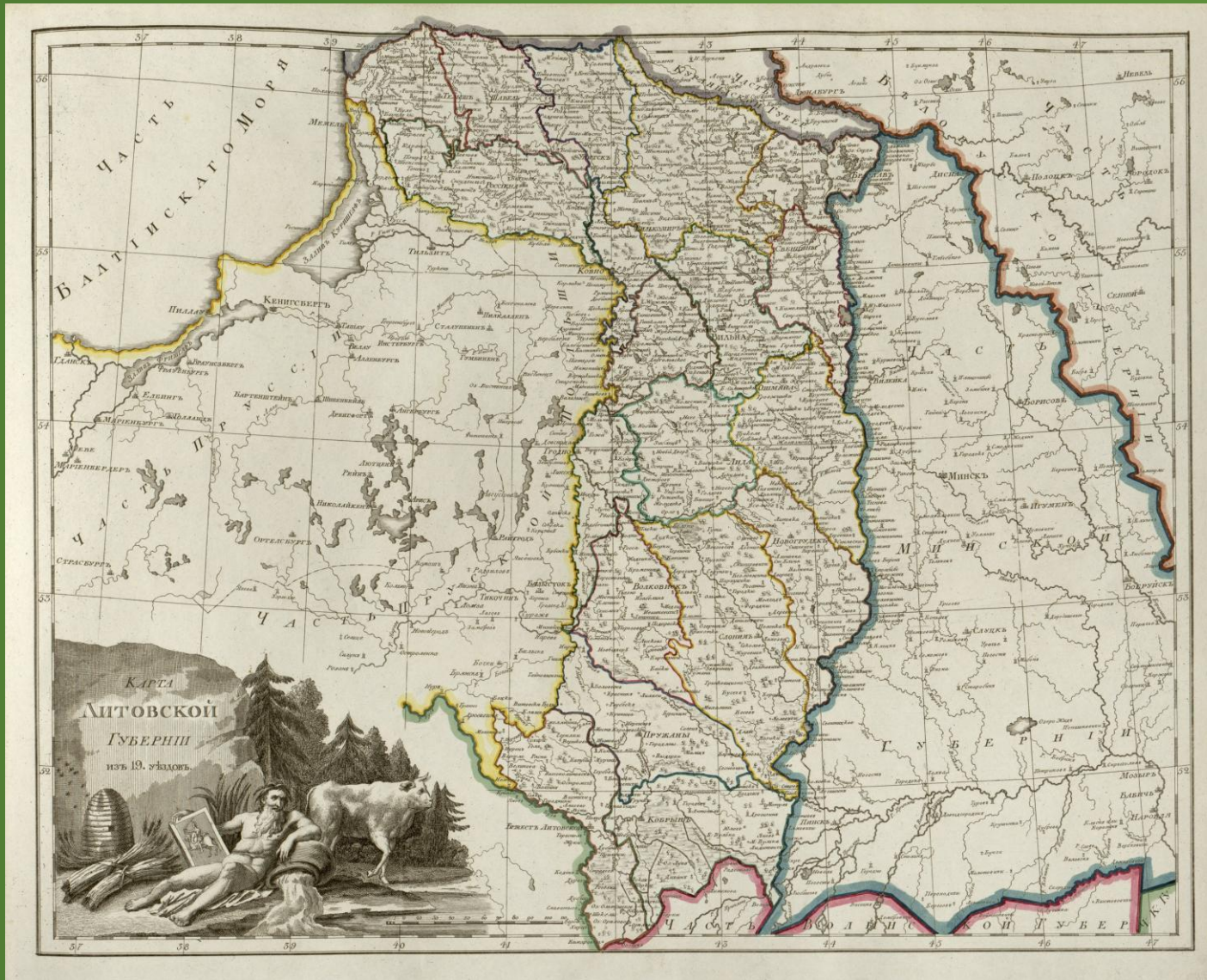


1793, after the Second Partition



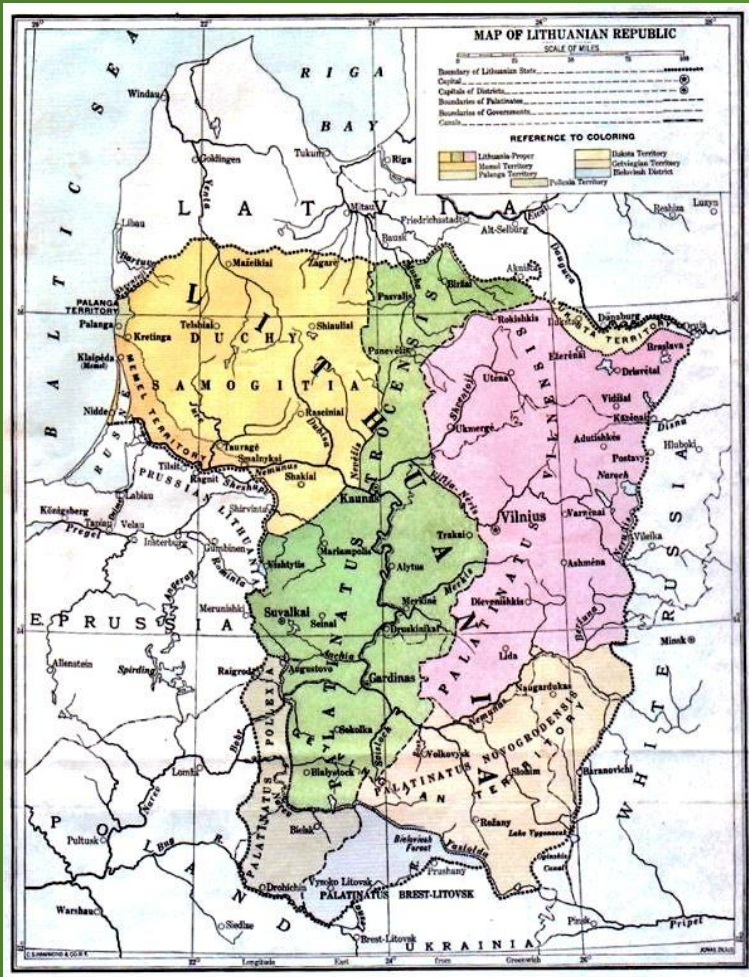
1795, after the Third Partition

The Commonwealth's boundaries didn't change much until Russia, Prussia and the future Austria, fearful of developments in the Commonwealth they thought were dangerous to them, began carving up territories between them in 1772, again in 1793, and then finally in 1795, at which point the Commonwealth ceased to exist. The GD had been annexed by Russia in the east, and by Prussia in the west.



Did Lithuania “disappear from the map of Europe” until World War I? Only from the political map of Europe. Russian administrative names in the area of the former GD retained “Lithuania” until 1840. Russian – *and even Polish* -- mapmakers continued to label former GD lands as “Litwy/Litva” Until WWI.

1800: “Map of the Lithuanian guberniya”



Proposed map of Lithuania presented in Paris by Lithuanians



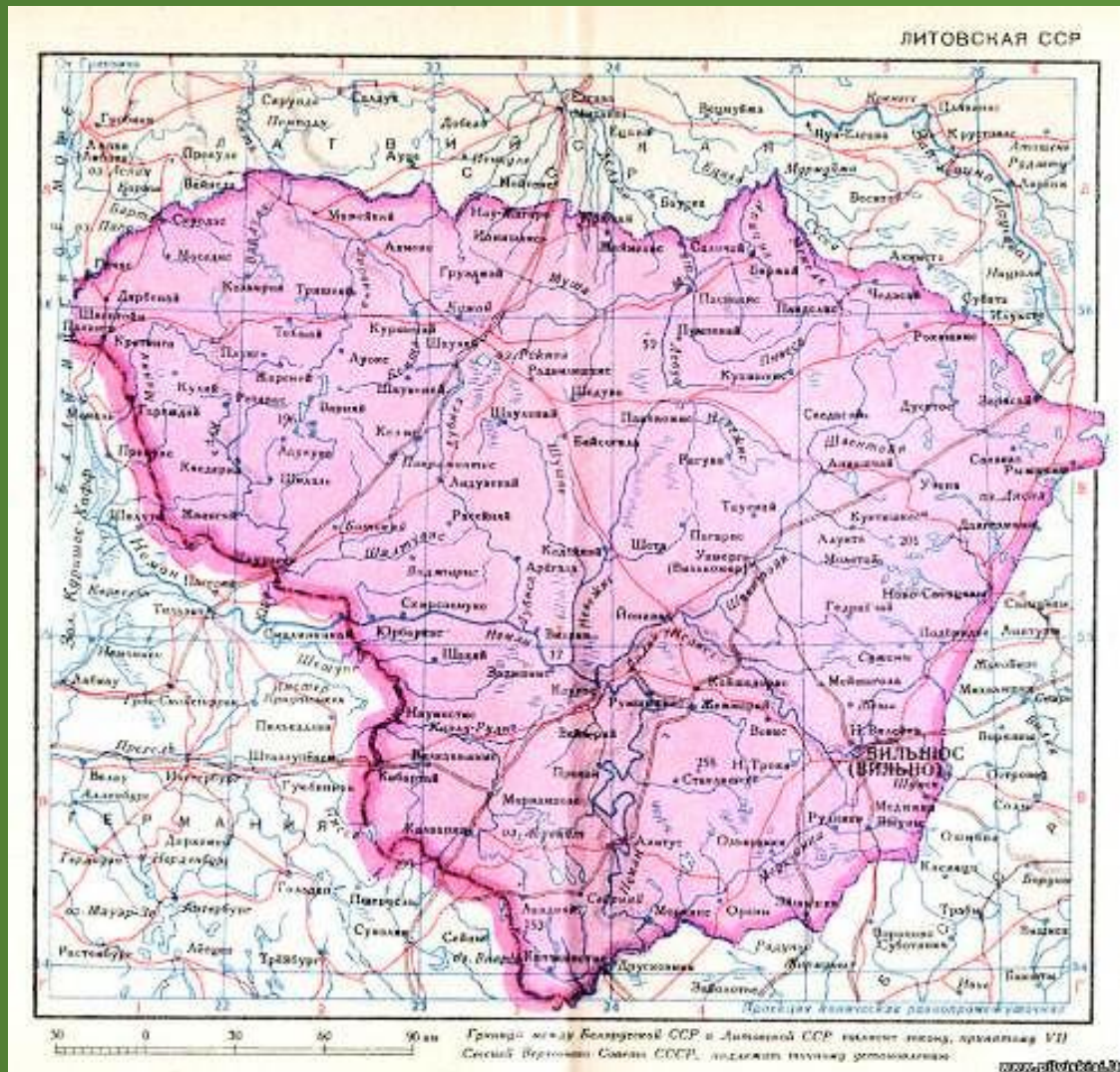
Proposed map of Poland presented by Poles

When World War I began in 1914, Lithuanians and their neighbors saw an opportunity to become independent. Proposed boundaries were promoted at 1918-19 Paris peace talks. Lithuanians promoted language as a determinant, Poles pushed for a “Greater Poland.”



World War I ended 1918, but the fighting continued in the Baltics and Poland between German army remnants, Russians, Latvians, and Poles over final boundaries. Lithuania ultimately lost its historic capital, Vilnius, which had never been in the Kingdom of Poland.

1932 Knauer's Atlas: "Polen, Baltikum..."



World War II started September 1, 1939, with Hitler and Stalin dividing Poland between them.

On June 15, 1940, Stalin forced Lithuania to accept Russian troops on its soil. In return, he gave it the Vilnius region. Two months later, Lithuania became the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic.

1940: Lithuanian SSR

Hitler attacked Lithuania and the USSR in June 1941, after fanning the flames of anti-Semitism by blaming the Russian occupation of Lithuania on its Jews. Within six months, 95% of the 210,000 Jews in the area (nearly 100,000 of whom were in the Vilnius area) were murdered.

There were Lithuanians who rescued Jews at risk of their own life and of their families – that's the definition of a hero, and Israel's Yad Vashem recognizes 575 as "Righteous Gentiles."

In 1388 Grand Duke Vytautas granted privileges to the Jews of Trakai, who may have come centuries earlier. Relations between Christian and Jewish Lithuanians were generally "live and let live," with occasional serious problems, until the mid-16th century, when Lithuanian nobility, newly able to take part in legislation, issued the "Lithuanian Statute" of 1566; its paragraph 12:

"The Jews shall not wear costly clothing, nor gold chains, nor shall their wives wear gold or silver ornaments. The Jews shall not have silver mountings on their sabers and daggers; they shall be distinguished by characteristic clothes; they shall wear yellow caps, and their wives kerchiefs of yellow linen, in order that all may be enabled to distinguish Jews from Christians."



As Russia's borders moved west thanks to the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, five million Jews suddenly became part of the Empire of Russia. Catherine the Great decided to restrict them to her new territories, and the restriction lasted until 1917.



Though there are not many Jews (Litvaks) left in Lithuania (between 2,700 and 6,500) their language, Litvish, a dialect of Yiddish (along with Polish and Ukrainish), remains in the area of the Pale of Settlement.

(An American-based Jewish organization, The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, at jfr@jfr.org, financially supports righteous Lithuanians and their families.)

Soviet Union Administrative Divisions, 1989

The United States Government has not recognized the incorporation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the Soviet Union. Other boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.



KAZAKH Union republic (SSR)

- Union republic (SSR) center
- Autonomous republic (ASSR), oblast, or kray boundary
- - - Autonomous oblast (AO) or autonomous okrug (AOK) boundary

Note: The union republic administrative centers are shown. The only other administrative centers shown are for oblasts having the same name as their administrative centers.

0 400 800 Kilometers
0 400 800 Miles

- ASSRs and AOs in the Caucasus**
1. Kabardino-Balkarskaya ASSR
 2. Severo-Osetinskaya ASSR
 3. Checheno-Ingushskaya ASSR
 4. Adzharskaya ASSR
 5. Nakhichevanskaya ASSR (Azerbaijan SSR)
 6. Adygeyskaya AO
 7. Karachayevo-Cherkesskaya AO
 8. Yugo-Osetinskaya AO
 9. Nagorno-Karabakhskaya AO

* Areas with no oblast-level administrative divisions, where rayons are under direct republic jurisdiction

The Soviet Union was the largest country in the world, two and a half times the size of the United States, and only slightly smaller than all of North America.



The first Soviet republic to declare independence from the Soviet Union was Lithuania, on March 11, 1990, signed by all members of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania, led by Sąjūdis, the political organization which led the struggle for Lithuanian independence in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It was led by Vytautas Landsbergis, its first head of Parliament after independence.

Ačiū!

Turite klausimų?