



Summary

Lithuanians at the University of Dorpat (Yuriev) until 1918 and their later fortunes. Biographical dictionary

This book, a biographical dictionary, is devoted to students of Lithuanian origin from the University of Dorpat (Yuriev) in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The basic problem is separating Poles from Lithuanians in the period from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. An additional problem is the ambiguity of the term “Lithuanian” at that time. For there were two different concepts: historical Lithuanian and ethnic Lithuanian. However, these differ in many respects, primarily social, territorial, historical and ethnic.

What we mean by the term ‘historical Lithuanian’ is an inhabitant of the historical area of Lithuania, i.e. the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania prior to the partitions (before 1795), of various ethnic origins, basically of noble origin, raised in a Polish cultural environment, functioning in the world of the Polish language, usually of Catholic faith (and other Christian denominations), and a supporter of the traditional ideology of the Polish-Lithuanian Union of 1569. An ethnic Lithuanian, on the other hand, was a person living in a territory with a compact Lithuanian settlement, i.e. principally in the then Kaunas (Žemudź) governate, in the northern part of Suwałki governate and a small western part of Vilnius governate, excluding Vilnius itself. In social terms, they were mainly Lithuanian peasants, to a lesser extent members of the bourgeoisie, and very few noblemen.

This work consists of two parts: a biographical dictionary of Dorpat University students (Chapter I) and pharmacy students (Chapter II). Chapter I presents the collective of 154 Lithuanian students and their later fortunes. The overwhelming majority are Lithuanian in the ethnic sense. Only a few are of other origin, although through their later activities they became involved in Lithuanian culture, science and society. Among these were Poles (three Kownacki brothers, a large part of the nobility), Germans (A. Hegentornas), Jews (P. Berkavičius) or a Latvian born in a family of German pastors (E. Vol-

teris). The aforementioned community functioned at Yuriev University from the very end of the 19th century. With the outbreak of World War I, they usually interrupted their studies or continued them in the first years of the war.

The social background of these 154 students is predominantly peasant, with 118 peasants (about 79%). In second place is the nobility, numbering 23 people (about 15%). Students with other origins were extremely rare: bourgeois (6), Jewish (1), the son of a clerk (1) and of a pharmacist (1). As far as territorial origin is concerned, Kaunas governate with its seven districts and the Lithuanian part of Suwałki governate are clearly predominant. The largest number of students came from Panevėžys district – 40, significantly fewer from Šiauliai district – 23, Telšiai and Ukmergė (Wiłkomierz) districts – 14 each, Raseiniai district – 12, Kaunas district and Novalexandrovsk district – eight each. The second most important place of origin of Lithuanian students was the above-mentioned Lithuanian part of Suwałki governate, i.e. the area north of the present-day Polish-Lithuanian border dating from 1919. As far as the Marijampole, Kalwaria and Władysławów districts were concerned, 19 students were recorded, one of whom came from Augustów, the Polish part of this governate.

Medicine dominated among the fields of study undertaken. Although only 33 doctors out of 154 students graduated with a medical degree, far more studied this subject without graduating (69 people). This makes a total of 102 medical students out of 154 (about 66%). Many of these medical students or graduates went on to have a great scientific, professional, literary, social or political career in free Lithuania. These students often finished their studies at other universities in Russia (e.g. in Moscow, St. Petersburg or Kiev), but most often they went to the newly established (1922) Kaunas University. With 36 students, law was also an important field of study, although but many of these undergraduates did not complete their studies. Law graduates became lawyers or judges, but also chose political careers. Other fields of study included natural sciences, which were studied by 17 people. Other courses were rarely taken by students.

Observing the further fate of 154 students and graduates of Yuriev University, one might conclude that they formed a significant part of the Lithuanian political, scientific, cultural and social elite during the interwar period. First of all, it is necessary to note that there were as many as 11 professors, mainly of medicine. Among the scientists, there were also several historians, mainly connected with the Calvinist milieu and researching the history of the Church. One outstanding scholar in the field of archaeology and ethnography was Professor E. Volteris. The pinnacle of a scientific career in Soviet times was the title of academician, i.e. member of the Academy of Sciences, a title which three Dorpat graduates gained. In the field of literature, the eminent writer J. Biliūnas stands out, while D. Alseika, S. Antanaitis and J. Kaškevičius are also worthy of mention. In politics, there are two prime ministers, nine ministers of various ministries and eleven members of parliament. The latter are members of the Lithuanian Seimas in the interwar period with one exception. Many Dorpat graduates made their mark in the Lithuanian army,

in local government activities in their cities and towns, and in the Evangelical-Reformed Church, where they held the highest positions.

Of the professions, most were doctors: 33 doctors graduated from Yuriev, and many others studied medicine here, graduating from another university. These doctors served Lithuanian society in various ways, including in the army, educating new generations of doctors at Kaunas University, developing science, and running private practices. Many were awarded the title of professor of medicine (as mentioned above), while others were heads of departments and directors of hospitals or health centres. The profession of attorney was practised by a relatively large number of Dorpatians – ten. There were distinctly fewer judges, of whom only three pursued a notable career: in the District Court, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court, respectively. There were also two notaries, who during their lifetimes held a whole array of positions, including ministerial ones. A relatively small group were teachers, but the information given may be understated due to the lack of relevant material. Several of them were school head teachers.

Chapter II of the dictionary records 71 pharmacy students who were considered to be Lithuanian. It is worth pointing out that in several cases there were doubts about the national identity of the person in question. In this collective, there was a clear predominance of students of peasant origin, accounting for 45 out of 71 persons (about 62%). In second place were persons of noble origin: 20, which is a rather high result. As far as the territorial origin of the students of pharmacy is concerned, they came mainly from the historical area of West Lithuania (Samogitia), i.e. from the Telšiai (11 persons) and Šiauliai (10) districts, as well as from Raseiniai (6) and part of Kaunas (5) with the adjoining Panevėžys district (13). In second place was the northern part of Suwałki governate, inhabited mainly by Lithuanians – 8 people.

Pharmacy students took the pharmacy assistant examination outside Lithuania, because there was no university there. The University of Dorpat (Yuriev; 23 students) was the most important, ahead of the second-placed Military-Medical Academy in St. Petersburg (18), which was slightly ahead of the University of Moscow (16). Other universities played a lesser role. In the vast majority of cases, students graduated with the title of provisional pharmacist: 57 out of 71 students (about 77%). Of these, the overwhelming majority were graduates of Yuriev University (53, albeit including two dubious ones). After studying pharmacy, whether completing their studies or not, most often pharmacists with the title of provisional pharmacist worked in pharmacies, and their goal was to buy a pharmacy and become the owner and manager of their own pharmacy. In many cases, they achieved this goal. Occasionally, pharmacy assistants who did not hold the title of provisional pharmacist also purchased pharmacies. Many of these pharmacists belonged to the elite of the cities and towns in which they ran pharmacies.

Translated by Rob Pagett