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"HONOR AND SUFFERING," The Second Part of the Drama-Poem MINDAUGAS

JUSTINAS MARCINKEVIČIUS

Justinas Marcinkevičius — born in 1930 — is considered one of the leading poets currently writing in Lithuania. The drama-poem Mindaugas is one of his more recent works and was published in 1968. For a more detailed account see Jonas Vėlaikis, "Lithuanian Literature under the Soviets," Lituanius, vol. XII, no. 3 (1966), pp. 26-27.

As the second part begins, we find that Mindaugas after many years of warfare, intrigue, and treachery, depicted in part one, has achieved his goal. Having subdued all the lesser princes, he is crowned king of a unified Lithuania. The first part has also revealed that even while Morta was married to Vismantas, she and Mindaugas were lovers and she had borne him a son. Upon discovering this, Vismantas killed himself. Historians tell us that Daumantas was married to Morta's sister. Treniota, referred to briefly at the end of the play, succeeded Mindaugas, but was assassinated in 1265 by Mindaugas' supporters.

*White Chronicler
Black Chronicler*

BLACK CHRONICLER

Many things of many kinds have happened
Since the time when in mysterious circumstances
Perished the humpback Vismantas,
The first advisor to the prince. And the prince
Took pity upon his widow and orphan:
He married Morta, even though the brothers of the deceased —
Sprudeika and Edivilas — were violently
Opposed. Mindaugas
Invited them to a great hunt.
The hunt was not very successful,
For both the brothers of Vismantas perished.
All wondered at this: such powerful men,
Who had weathered with honor many a battle,
Suddenly perishing in a hunt... But, after all,
Many things happen in this world, as is said...
Upon becoming the queen, Morta
Gave Mindaugas another son.
The lands of Sprudeika as those of Edivilas,
In honor of their memory, the ruler
Annexed to Lithuania.

It happened
That there were also many disagreements
With the Samogitians. Vykintas, their prince, invited
The crossbearer brothers and spoke to them thus:
"Let us go together against Mindaugas, to baptize him."
The crossbearers were pleased. They made a pact

With Vykintas, attacked and besieged
Mindaugas. And then,
Mindaugas himself saw — there will be much blood.
Thus, he sent his legates to the pope,
To Innocent IV. He ordered them
To tell the pope the following: I consent
To baptism and the worship of your god.
And Mindaugas was baptized. Afterwards
He was crowned king
Through Andrew Stirland, who conveyed
The crown of Lithuania to him from Riga.
And all this took place, god so willing,
In the one thousand, two hundred, and fifty-first
Year.

One must still add
That in the time of all these conflicts
When Mindaugas with regiments of Lithuanians
Held Vykintas besieged at Tverai
And called upon him to surrender — the Turk Kočius
From treacherous ambush shot him
In the left thigh. Mindaugas had from this
Great pain and was greatly angered.
He doctored himself with the lard of a bear
And drank many herbs of all kinds.

WHITE CHRONICLER

Who will describe the pain which
Lithuania endures! Like a curse,
Wars, dissensions have fallen upon her,
Quarrels of all kinds, wrangling, and offences.
It seems that upon this small land
The gods...

BLACK CHRONICLER

Nowdays one must say: god.

WHITE CHRONICLER ...

The gods were visiting all misfortunes.
And Lithuania forged herself like a sword.
In suffering she was creating a single hand,
Which would wield her like a sword.

BLACK CHRONICLER

Your talk is nice, but of little use.
I have told you already: it is the facts that are important.

WHITE CHRONICLER

So there arose Mindaugas — the king
And Mindaugas—the man.

BLACK CHRONICLER

Aha! — no less than two!

WHITE CHRONICLER

... Sharp, like a cry, which upon hearing
You do not understand: is it proclaiming victory,
Or is itself a cry for help. But
You cannot remain indifferent before it.
You rise and in the middle of the night you go

And cry out, with you yourself no longer knowing
Whether in anguish or in joy you cry.
Behold this man: like a monstrous fire
He warms and he consumes.
Is he happy? — Is a fire happy?
Is he just? — But is a fire just?

1

*The curtain rises
The great hall in Mindaugas' castle
Mindaugas' coronation ceremony and the well-wishing are just over
Mindaugas and Dausprungas [Mindaugas' brother]*

MINDAUGAS

(he takes off and puts down the crown)

Well, that is done. At last
We can rest from the people and the noise,
The well-wishing and the speeches.

(examines the crown)

Take a look — it is a lovely toy.
I myself have not yet seen it well,
And only felt a heavy weight upon my head.
It will have to be well hidden from the children...
Look, how it sparkles. Yes? How it shines!
Those are jewels, Dausprungas!

DAUSPRUNGAS

Perhaps
Those are tears? They also sparkle.
They also shine... But they are dearer
Than these stones. Much dearer.

MINDAUGAS

Tears and always tears. Whose?

DAUSPRUNGAS

Of the men whose pain you paid
For these stones... with whose troubles
You paved your way to the crown...

MINDAUGAS

Brother,
Not for myself! For do I need it?
It was not placed upon my head
But on the head of Lithuania. Of Lithuania!

DAUSPRUNGAS

Did I not see your eyes shining
With joy and your hands trembling
When you touched that crown,
And a smile of greatness and of power
Like a scar twisting your face.

MINDAUGAS

Yes, I was happy — like a man
Who at last reaches his goal.
Yes, I am happy — like a father
Is glad that his son
Has at last grown up a strong man,
Whom all know, notice, praise,
And greet politely, because — they honor him.
I gave him everything I had. With myself
I fed him, with myself I nourished him.
Do you remember when this child
Took his first steps, when everyone
Tried to trip his legs with sticks?
So that he fail... Today you see yourself:
Hailed by messengers and legates
From Waldemar, the Danish King,
From the Emperor of Germany, from Briansk,
From Galicia, Volhynia, and Moscow,
Masuria and many other
Princedoms. They gave him gifts
And wished him fortune. You saw...

DAUSPRUNGAS

Those gifts, greetings, and speeches —
Lies and treachery. And those guests!
They laughed at you and us,
Our language, gods, and customs,
Our dress and manners.
You sent Lithuania into the world,
Clothing the poor thing in an alien dress.
In her breast you planted an angry and
An evil god. By buying the crown,
In truth you are selling Lithuania.
Destroying what you built with so much labor.
When the enemy was only on the outside — he
Could achieve nothing. But now,
He will eat and gnaw us from inside,
Because you let him in and ordered
That all honor, praise, and love him.
Mindaugas, discard the crown
And from the wall remove this god!

(He points to the crucified)

MINDAUGAS

I like him, for he also wears a crown
Upon his head. And also suffers.
I understand now: it seems that crowns
Signify only anguish, suffering, and pain!
So take and crucify me!

(He puts on the crown)

Behold, I am crowned! With sharp
Thorns the crown has pierced my head.
Behold, drops of my blood. Look!
But none sees... Why then do you see
That smile, that joy, so you say,
Which like a scar twists my face?
I smiled in pain — and you,
You, Dausprungas, should have understood.
Alas, you did not. Alas, you did not see.
You sat at my right hand — you should have
Understood and felt that I
Was crucified and was not crowned!

You nailed one hand, the crossbearers —
The other. There is now nothing
That I can do — I have no hands.
But still I am alive. So you attack
To tear my heart in two.
And I, a fool, am still defending it...

(He points to the crucified)

Behold, his side is also pierced...
I know One day a man will come
And pierce my heart. But even then,
All will see upon my lips a smile
And joy... For on them will play
The only word and one most just.
You know that word — Lithuania?

A long pause

DAUSPRUNGAS

Forgive me, brother, if I give offence.
For I am old and there is much I do not understand,
So it seems. But you know
How devoted I am to everything that you have
Sacrificed for the fatherland.
It is hard for you, I feel. It is hard for me.
So I decided: it is better that I leave
And let be. I will not torment
You and you, not torment me. I must go out
And look at Lithuania,
How the people think, and say, and how they live.
Perhaps then I will understand that new
Fatherland which with so much difficulty you are
creating. And if I fail, I will die, in the old one.

MINDAUGAS

How, Dausprungas? You are leaving me?
How will I alone...

DAUSPRUNGAS

You are strong. You understand everything.

MINDAUGAS

Oh my brother,
How I envy you! Everything I would leave
And walk and walk through woods and fields,
Across Lithuania — back and forth. In the west,
I heard, there is a sea.
Never have I seen it, although
It washes the borders of my land.

DAUSPRUNGAS

You see, you know not even what you govern...

MINDAUGAS

And it is long since I have visited our birthplace.
Remember that oak upon the hill?
Go, see, is it yet standing.
Go, Dausprungas, while your feet still bear you.
Return, and tell me everything.

How I envy you! Yes, I would go...
But I have said: like he

(He points out the crucifix)

I am nailed.
If you go to our birthplace — climb
Our father's burial mound and tell him
That his younger son... that he
Is very great and powerful,
But happiness he has not found...

Go!

But look well and listen well
What Lithuania is doing and thinking.

*Dausprungas leaves
Mindaugas takes off the crown and looks at it for a long time*

Now I can dash you to the ground
And trample you and break you,
Scatter those spangles — of no use to me?
Did you exalt and glorify me,
Peace and happiness did you bring?
Have you, perhaps, rid my hands
Of blood spilled by me to gain you?
No! Merely a piece of metal
With a liking for blood-stained hands.
Be content — into such you have fallen.
You are a sign of government and power
But of what worth is government, if hands are clean!
I look at you and cannot understand,
Whether I hold you or you hold me.
Those jewels — like a snake's eyes —
Freeze the blood and choke the breath.
I can no longer move... Strike!
What are you waiting for? Strike straight to the heart.
But I will never let you go. No!
You, as is our custom, will have to
Share a grave with me. Yes!
After many years a man will plow the field
And you unearth. And he will wonder —
What a queer hat! Kicking you aside
Into a furrow, he will cover you up with dirt.
You will not be — but the thought of you will stay.
Yes, like that of me. Oh, the thought of government!
How sweet you are and bitter.
By what roads you enter the heart
And totally destroy it!
Perhaps, it is not you — a man finds you?
You merely lure him on
Like a glow-fly straying in a swamp.
For you we leave our parents,
Our homes, reject our friends,
Repudiate our loyalty, our love, our dreams.
We reach you with an empty heart.
At last, when empty, lonely, and abandoned,
You hold the crown and see
That you are nothing. Nothing. Nothing!
I too am nothing who am holding you.
And if you know just how to govern and to judge,
But not to serve and to forgive,
Then, may the earth swallow you! And never haunt
The human race again. Do not appear before me.

A frightened Morta runs in

What happened, Morta? Did you also
Desire to look upon this curled snake,
From close by. The snake which I
Must wear upon my head?
You helped me gain it, Morta!
One eye is suffering and love.
The second — force and treachery.
Which one is yours and which one mine?

MORTA

I am afraid, Mindaugas! Never yet
Have I feared as much as I fear today...

MINDAUGAS

What is it?
What do you fear? Now, you are a queen.

MORTA

The monk Zyvertas taught me
Some new prayers — the Creed, the Our Father.
And told me much about his god,
Who sees all, knows and understands.
He even hears our most hidden thoughts
And punishes most harshly sinful men.
He has a hell, where in eternal fire
Sinners burn... Oh, terror!

MINDAUGAS

Be at peace, Morta! Do not fear —
We have our hell upon this earth.
The other will be no worse.

MORTA

I thought:
If god sees everything, knows, and hears,
Surely he knows by now that I deceived Vismantas... that I
Killed him... that I lusted, desired
You... and thirsted for his death... Oh god!
You know that! Yes, Mindaugas, he knows.
He knows everything — just as I do.

MINDAUGAS

Do not listen to that Zyvertas.
And Vismantas... You know yourself — he did it himself...
Is it your fault because you did not love him?

MORTA

But this god... You believe, do you not
That he is? And sees everything...

MINDAUGAS

God!
I am a ruler — and cannot too much
Believe either in our gods or theirs.

MORTA

But there must be someone... there must...
Who sees everything. For if there is nothing,

What is it that I fear so much? Why am I afraid?

MINDAUGAS

I will drive Zyvertas out...

MORTA

No, no...

He is innocent. He taught many prayers.
He says that his god allows men
To redeem their faults. Perhaps I too...
I will pray... I will fast... I
Will think only about my fault.
Maybe he will forgive... Maybe he will forgive...

MINDAUGAS

He will forgive.
But calm yourself! Calm yourself.

*Mindaugas embraces Morta
They are in the rear of the stage — two tiny men
The crown shines in the foreground. Curtain*

WHITE CHRONICLER

Why are you not writing?

BLACK CHRONICLER

What is there to write?
Nothing has happened. Thank god,
Calm has settled in. Fact!
When nothing happens, I can
Drink and eat.

(He eats and drinks)

WHITE CHRONICLER

Calm!
Then, you saw nothing.
You are blind. Deaf. Better as a
Warehouse keeper in the castle.
You could Sift your grain like facts.

BLACK CHRONICLER

Very good!
A grain or two would drop my way.
When now — nothing. Just writing, writing.
You write and ask yourself: will the ruler
Be pleased, or not. So close we are,
For all we know, to swinging from a handy branch.

WHITE CHRONICLER

There is a court above the prince's.

BLACK CHRONICLER

In this world? I do not know...

WHITE CHRONICLER

There is history. She is just.

BLACK CHRONICLER

History? Just? Ha-ha-ha!
Who writes history? You and I.
And who are we? Merely men.
Weak, faulty, fearful, hungry.
And he who is the stronger dictates
His will and his truth as well.
I tire of instructing you.
So write, and I will have a bite.

WHITE CHRONICLER

(writes)

A profound drama began to gnaw the ruler.
He resisted no longer. He suffered,
Thinking about his great purpose,
To which he was called, which he himself
Had chosen as his fate.
With sorrow he could only watch
How for that great and noble purpose,
Man, his own most precious part,
Was burning in the fire of life.
Only the Ruler now remained,
Who in the ashes of a cooling fire
Sought what had not been for many days.

2

*A pottery workshop in Mindaugas' castle
Mindaugas and the Old Man*

MINDAUGAS

(enters with the crown under his arm)

So often have I promised to show you
What Lithuania has not seen up to now.

OLD MAN

(examines the crown)

Not bad work. Yes, not at all bad...
You should have told me — I would have
Molded one no worse out of clay.

MINDAUGAS

But, Old One, you know that clay shatters!

OLD MAN

But there is nothing eternal, ruler!

MINDAUGAS

Call me by name — as you used to do.

OLD MAN

But what is to be done with it? If it were a hat,
I would hang it on a peg. If a pot,

I would place it on a shelf.

MINDAUGAS

It would be Better to place it on a shelf.

OLD MAN

Do you want,
Then, to exercise your fingers, to shape something?
You had good hands — would have been
The most famous potter in all of Lithuania. Now...

MINDAUGAS

Now — a king. The king of Lithuania!
Hand me that board. Hand me Lithuania!

The Old Man brings the board, with a ceramic map of Lithuania upon it.

OLD MAN

Have you again conquered something and
Come to patch it on? How often have I said
That a good strong thing must be
Molded from a single piece of clay!
But you, like a swallow — a crumb at a time,
From here, from there... That is not serious work.

MINDAUGAS

But, what, Old One, is clay? Clay — earth.
But earth is everywhere the same.
Here, I take a piece, I knead it in my hands.
I feel, it is obedient. It yields.
And if it yields, I add it on,
I paste it upon Lithuania. That is all,
And Lithuania is the greater. Look:
It was only so big many years ago,
When I began to create it. A small lot,
Between the Nemunas and the Neris. But now,
Look, what it is like? That is not bad work, Old One!

OLD MAN

Perhaps not bad. You know better.
But I know earth and am telling you,
It will not hold if pieced together like this.
It will shatter in an instant...

MINDAUGAS

Are you speaking
About this one, or about the real Lithuania?

OLD MAN

About this one and the other.

MINDAUGAS

You know, Old One, here is the labor of my life.
And I have done no more.

OLD MAN

But this pot? Listen, how it rings!
And this one? No words are needed!
I have already said, you had good hands...

MINDAUGAS

I molded in my youth — that is why it rings.
Most likely, now it would no longer ring like that.

OLD MAN

When the clay is good, when you mold with love
Everything rings.

MINDAUGAS

You said: with love.
But with what love I molded and created my
Lithuania! Oh, Old One!
I gave it everything: mind, heart,
And all love, joy, dreams,
And hope for happiness... There is no man
Who has given it more.
Now, listen: does it ring?

(He strikes his "Lithuania")

OLD MAN

No.
If a pot were this silent, I would shatter it.

MINDAUGAS

You see — it does not ring. .. It seems
I gave it everything.

OLD MAN

I said,
You did not rightly begin the molding.

MINDAUGAS

Are you, about the real Lithuania, or this one?

OLD MAN

About this one and the other.

MINDAUGAS

That is nothing.
It will ring. You will see — it will ring!
When I finish it, when I fire it — Y
Yes, how it will ring! In the whole world
They will hear that ringing!
But how to finish?
I mold and mold and there is never an end.
Perhaps, one must mold the Fatherland for ever.
Mold and create, create and mold?
For if you barely pause — it dies.
Yes, create all the time. All the time!
Mold and create... But am I fated
Never to hear her ringing?
A curse! I, who began,
Who out of nothing... Yes, who out nothing

Made everything... forged the crown...
Who could now be happy...
How empty, Old One! Yes, how very empty. ..
Not even fear I feel — what should I fear?
There are no gods or god. Death, perhaps?
Why should I fear it, Old One?
It will bring peace and rest
And free me from this meager body,
This clod of earth, in which only one
Good shoot has sprouted — Lithuania.
But this clod has nothing
Left with which to feed the shoot.
It is empty, unhappy, dried up,
Like a mother's breast which a
Hungry child eagerly seizes
And does not let go, even when he gets nothing.
Do you know how hard it is for a mother
When she has nothing to give the child!

OLD MAN

I have spent my whole life, Mindaugas,
In communion with three gods only:
With water, fire, and with earth.
I deem that I have guessed their secret
And understood their wisdom.

MINDAUGAS

And what,
What say they?

OLD MAN

They tell me that everything
Is only water, fire, and earth.
Everything that is born in a man's mind
Or quickens in his heart — everything, everything
Is only their manifestation.

MINDAUGAS

Old One,
That is not an answer. For where is the meaning,
Where the purpose?

OLD MAN

Think. Those three gods —
They are opposites, different. But they seek
Unity, although they struggle among themselves.
That is why they all three created man.
But their struggle does not cease in man.
One has the upper hand, then another.
Man suffers because of this and dies.
But the day will come, the gods will succeed,
Will be able to make such a man
Who in himself will unify the three of them.
There will be only one god. Immortal.

MINDAUGAS

But we two, Old One? Who are we?

OLD MAN

We are the way to that new god.
We are fire, water, and earth.
Out of us it will be born.

MINDAUGAS

Like this pot?
Honor to the pot of mud! It best
Unifies earth, water, and fire.
It gives the stomach food. What more does
A man need? Only to stuff his belly.

(He listens intently)

Cats are infesting your place, Old One!

OLD MAN

It seems to me, there were none...

MINDAUGAS

Behold, look!

(He throws the pot)
The monk Zyvertas jumps out from the wings.

MINDAUGAS

Ah, this is Zyvertas, the monk! I thought
That cats were scratching. Where did I hit you?

ZYVERTAS

The head, prince!

MINDAUGAS

It is
Because you listened to us while bent.
When next you wish to listen
To what I say — better present your backside.

ZYVERTAS

I did not eavesdrop, ruler! I wanted
Only to announce that legates come
To you from Samogitia.

MINDAUGAS

Thanks.
There are others to make announcements, monk.

ZYVERTAS

I feel that they plan treachery against you,
I rushed to warn you, that you be strong
And trust the lord god...

MINDAUGAS

I know already in whom to trust.
How is the queen, Zyvertas? You promised
To say some new prayer upon her
And with the help of god chase away the devil
Who has possessed her?

ZYVERTAS

Alas, ruler!
Prayer is powerless, god so willed...
She has become insane.

MINDAUGAS

God willed it thus?

ZYVERTAS

Whom god loves, he sends misfortune.

MINDAUGAS

He loves strangely, this your god.

ZYVERTAS

The ways of god are not known to us.

MINDAUGAS

So go and learn! And be with Morta.
And pacify, console her, anyway you can.
I go to talk with the Samogitians.
To tell the truth, Zyvertas, I have long awaited them,
A long time. Will you find the news good?
I do not know. I feel that I will find them good.

The first curtain.

An insane Morta runs out in front of the curtain. She struggles, looking for an exit.

Morta is dressed plainly, in a dress of coarse wool. On her head, a garland of twigs — a crown.

MORTA

All have gone... and shut the door.
Likely, they went to pray. For me.
For a sinner. For a queen.
But does ever a man pray for another?
Everyone prays but for himself.
Each is weighted down by sins.
But I... I will pray for others.
"I believe in god, the almighty father,
In heaven and in hell..." Oh, no!
I do not believe there is a hell. I do not want to.
There is a heaven, but no hell.
No hell, and that is that.
"The moon married the sun
In the first springtime..."
I have forgotten. I remember only this:
"Thunder, greatly angered,
Halved him with a sword!"
Thunder, most merciful! God, the father!
Both, tell me, which one should I pray to?
Which one the more merciful?
Which one better understands a miserable man?
Let me out! People, let me out!
I must pray. The hump of sin
Ever on my back grows and grows...
The humpbacked Vismantas. A hump and love.
A hump — that is love. I pray, remove
The hump from me. Leave the love.
Ah, but when the hump is gone — so is the love!
You are all humpbacked, everyone...
And I alone pray for all of you.

For you neither know nor understand
What is a hump. A hump — is love.
And one must pray for love...

(Attentively, as if replying to someone)

... Coming! ...

*(She runs out)
The curtain rises*

3

*Mindaugas' great hall
Mindaugas and the Samogitian Legates*

MINDAUGAS

What will you say, honorable men,
Who have driven your horses from Samogitia
To Lithuania? I hope, the news are good.

FIRST LEGATE

Great honor to you, Mindaugas!

SECOND LEGATE

Honor, king!

MINDAUGAS

I thank you for the respect, but I know
That not for this you traveled the long road,
To present your respects.

THIRD LEGATE

Ruler!
The gods...

MINDAUGAS

Nowdays one must say: god.

THIRD LEGATE

.. .May the gods send you health and fortune.
And grant you a long life as well.

FOURTH LEGATE

May your high granaries be full,
Your corn bins...

FIRST LEGATE

While your breast
Be overflowing with goodness, love,
And justice.

MINDAUGAS

You have begin far away,
Although you come from near here!

THIRD LEGATE

Ruler,
We are greeting you like a king!

FOURTH LEGATE

Only thus is it proper to greet a king!

MINDAUGAS

They have learned to greet. But to obey? ...
I thank you, brave men. The same
I wish upon your homes and hearts.
But we have ended the greetings. It is time
To begin serious talk.

ONE LEGATE

O ruler!
We cry for help!

ANOTHER LEGATE

Help
And defending.

ONE LEGATE

We cannot any longer...
There is no more strength to pull that load.

MINDAUGAS

From whom shall I defend you?

ONE LEGATE

From the order...

ANOTHER LEGATE

From the knights...

ONE LEGATE

From the god
Who forces his way into our land,
Razes our sanctuaries and our altars,
Destroys our sacred groves... No man is left
Who with fist clenched tightly is not
Threatening that god...

MINDAUGAS

If the fists
Are clenched — then strike, men, strike!
What are you waiting for?

ONE LEGATE

Because we are too weak.
We have come to beg your aid.

MINDAUGAS

I cannot. You know that I am
Baptized. And thus, I cannot

War against god and the order.

ANOTHER LEGATE

Do you really hold dearer, this other god,
With nothing but misfortunes for our land?
Have you, ruler, forgotten
The customs of our ancestors, our fathers' faith,
You sent a plague of lice upon the land
When castles to the order you gave,
And fields, forests, pastures in our land...

ONE LEGATE

Did not your mother infuse
Love for our gods into your heart?...

MINDAUGAS

Do not mention my mother. I allow none
To slander and abuse her memory.
Now I will tell you. I will remind you,
If your memories, men, have grown weak.
Ten years ago... Yes, ten years ago.
With whom, then, did you move against me?
The order. And why? To baptize!
Yes, yes, you came to baptize me.
You came, with raised swords, against Lithuania!
Against your brothers you came...

ONE LEGATE

Ruler,
Vykintas it was who had deceived us...

MINDAUGAS

Silence!
I have not said everything yet... Ah, men,
What pain was tearing at my heart then!
No, you do not know... You will not understand.
I could not have allowed that war...
That fratricidal war, from which only the
Crossbearers would have derived a profit.
I pleaded, I threatened, I asked,
But your hearts were closed.
What darkness! What shortsightedness,
When brother against brother raises sword!
What was I to do, then? What?
You came to baptize me — well,
I became baptized. Upon your swords
You carried the new god — welcome,
I accept him. I bow before him.
Only thus could I knock out of your hands
The sword you held above my head,
And save Lithuania. Only thus.
But, now, here, you have accused me,
That I have repudiated the gods...
Oh my brothers! I will tell you
That if I pray, I pray to them only.
Oh yes, in an hour of weakness
I fall to my knees only before them,
Even though, here, every step I take is followed,
Even though the walls, here, yes, are with ears.
I know that you suffer. But I too suffer.
You suffer because of darkness, I — because of you.

ONE LEGATE

It is hard to speak, since you are right.
Let that cursed war be the last,
That fratricidal war!

ANOTHER LEGATE

Let it be
A lesson to us and our children.

ONE LEGATE

That brother never slay brother!

MINDAUGAS

Oh, that it be thus! But — alas, alas!
Not once will discord tear us apart,
Quarrels amongst us... While Lithuania
Will be like a loaf of bread
Sliced up, shared out, and they will
Rip and tear it from each others hand...

ONE LEGATE

However now, ruler,
We must all unite our hands
Into one hand.

MINDAUGAS

You speak well.
How long I waited and hoped
In the end to hear these words!
I thank you, gods, that you my purpose,
Life, struggle, and ideal
Have not turned to nothing!
Here is a hand —
Old, tired — take it brothers.
If it still can be of use to you!

LEGATES

Here are our hands, Mindaugas! Honor
To king Mindaugas!

*Morta runs in
After her — the monk Zyvertas*

ZYVERTAS

Hold her!

MORTA

Ah, so here you are! You locked me in
While you yourselves are praying... I too wish
To pray for love...
"Our father,
Who art in heaven as on earth. ..."

MINDAUGAS

Look well, Samogitians! Look,
May you remember... Behold, what
The Christian god has done!

(He points toward Zyvertas)

Behold, what he has done,
That wolf in the skin of a lamb. Behold!
Arise, Morta, stand beside me.

VOICES

Death to the Christian god! To the crossbearers!
Death to the robbers!

ZYVERTAS

What is this, king?
Are you with them? Against the order? Against god? Y
You must explain this, king!

MINDAUGAS

I explain myself to none, monk!
What I plan, so I act.
I have been waiting for these men a long time.
But they delayed. They suffered for ten years!
I am myself surprised — whence comes so much patience,
So much humility in us, Lithuanians!

ZYVERTAS

I deem you, Mindaugas,
A wise statesman and ruler. I am surprised
You do not understand that we will win?
Sooner or later. Why shed blood,
Raze churches, and slay people?

MINDAUGAS

I am a ruler and will do everything
Which is useful to my god — Lithuania.
The struggle against the order and its god
Will unify Lithuania, gather it together.
But that is my highest aim
And my duty. I carry it out.
You see, even the Samogitians have
Come to see at last that there is strength in unity.
I am sorry, Zyvertas, but there is nothing else —
A ruler must set an example!
Thus, I will hang you, so that all may know
How to deal with your brothers.

ZYVERTAS *(raises the cross)*

Do not dare touch me!

MINDAUGAS

I have already said it:
I am sorry Zyvertas, but there is nothing else,

MORTA *(As if awakening)*

Stop! What are you doing? Are you insane?
Let the monk go! I ask...
He spoke so beautifully of love!

(Her mind leaves her again)

He taught me prayers... and promised
To lift the hump off my back. Behold, look,
What a hump! Like that of Vismantas. Oh god!
Call Vismantas! He will tell the truth,
He will tell... Ha-ha-ha-ha!

MINDAUGAS

Monk, depart! And let
Not even the smell of you remain here.

(He takes down the cross)

Take it
And your god. Thank Morta —
This unhappy woman has saved
Your life. Go, monk,
And be careful that on the way to Riga,
You fall not into hands
More just, than mine.

ZYVERTAS *(Leaving)*

Oh god the father be merciful to them,
For they themselves know not what they do!

As the curtain falls, the monk is followed by raised fists and sword's

MORTA *(In a loud voice)*

Who is merciful? Where is he? Who? None...
There are none merciful nor just...
There are only humpbacks... Only humpbacks...
Only humpbacks... Only humpbacks. ..

Curtain

4

*A pottery workshop in Mindaugas' castle
Mindaugas and the Old Man*

OLD MAN

So early today?

MINDAUGAS

Could not sleep.
Each night ever more impatiently I await the morning,
Fearing — perhaps it will not dawn?
And so I lie until the east window
Begins to lighten... And the birds awaken.
The sky reddens. And hopes revive,
That everything, perhaps, will be repeated once again.
I know that it will not, but none the less, I hope.
Not thus would I live, Old One, not thus at all!
I was not a son to my parents — a comfort.
In my family I was not a happy husband.
I did not even know how to love my children,
I used them for my own purposes.
Why then did I live? If I have
Brought fortune to none? Why?

OLD MAN

The happiness of rulers — is very different
From that of common people.

MINDAUGAS

Different? No.

Only they reject their own happiness,
If that happiness is to them not useful.
But perhaps everyone does that — repudiates
When happiness is not useful? But can happiness
Be either useful or not useful?
And could a man say what to him
Is useful and what is not useful?
When you lie thus, staring into the darkness,
You come to think that there is nothing,
And that a man —a trifling speck of dust
In an ocean of universal darkness.
And does he know what is that ocean's purpose
And what is there, beyond that boundary,
Where ocean merges with the sky?
I saw not once the stars falling.
I saw and saw how men die
And nothing happens! The ocean
Is just as huge and just as dark.
It is we who are not as great as we think.
And not as powerful, as we thought.
How then is a man happy? How?
Is it with what he has, takes, touches, sees,
What he eats, loves, hears, or feels?
That is happiness, or course. And not a small one.
But behold night comes. You are alone.
You understand all that is nothing.
All that in you is just like clay,
There is no something very important,
That you could mold happiness out of that clay.
Cursed word! Who thought it up?
In what corner of the heart was it born,
Growing into a thirst, which a man
Can never pacify!

OLD MAN

But it seems to me — you are happy,
When you sit like this supporting your head in your hands,
By the side of your "Lithuania" and think about
Something very important. .. Probably about her.

MINDAUGAS

Happy? Yes, probably, somewhat happy.
But I look further — and do not see
What fate awaits her in the future.
I see nothing. A blind darkness.
Perhaps, there, not the least trace will remain
Of that which I created through so much labor.
Why then that labor and that suffering?
Why then am I and have been?
That it were permitted for a man to return!
If no more than once... return to look...
Into what his suffering has grown... But no.
That would be the total collapse of a man.
His defeat. And his death.
Bad thoughts, Old One, very bad!

These thoughts do not ring, like a poor pot
Which must be smashed, as you say.

OLD MAN

Against whom did you send the army yesterday?
Are you getting ready to add another
Piece to your Lithuania? It would suffice.
Peace, the people want peace.

MINDAUGAS

Long it will not be. Perhaps, never.
They war, you know, how they war —
They must war... What noise is that, Old One?

Daumantas with a band of soldiers forces his way in

Ah, Daumantas! So early, brother-in-law?
I rejoice to see you... But how...
How did you get here? Surely, yesterday
With the others you left for war
Against Romanas, the duke of Briansk?

DAUMANTAS

I have come to war against you,
Cursed potter! Today or never...

*(He raises a heavy ax)
Mindaugas covers himself with "Lithuania" as with a shield
From the blow, it breaks and shatters
Mortally wounded, Mindaugas falls*

MINDAUGAS

Oh, my Lithuania

(To the Old Man)

Run, Old One, run!
The children... save the children! Call the guard!

DAUMANTAS

(To his followers)

Quickly! Find the children! And cut down
The whole progeny of his... Send a man!
A rider to Treniota!
Let him say: the throne is vacant.

MINDAUGAS

(He grabs handfuls of his "Lithuania" in an attempt to pile up the pieces under his body)

What have they done! The labor of a life,
Shattered and broken. .. Who now
Will unify her, mold and form?
Fatherland, my precious.

(He tries to piece together the image of Lithuania on the ground)

One piece is absent.

(He looks for it, does not find it)

Where is it lost? I find it
Nowhere... one must... collect them all

In one place... here, beneath the breast,
Where blood is flowing. All must be gathered..

(Weakening, he collapses upon his "Lithuania." He raises his head)

Where is the chronicler?

BLACK CHRONICLER

(running up)

Here I am, ruler!

MINDAUGAS

Oh, the black one... Call the white to me!

(To the White Chronicler)

Those leaves I told you to discard,
Rewrite them... and append,
That I killed Vismantas. .. and slew
His brothers in the hunt... I killed
Ligeikis, Višlys, Edivilas. Yes.
Write, write before it is too late.
Write: Vyžeikis, Vilikaila, Biksys,
I exiled from Lithuania... Judikis,
I left lying on the field of battle.
I could have saved him. But I left him there.
Write that — obedience imposed by force
Upon my relatives and friends.
Write that I.. . that I loved no one. ..
But add, all this I did for
Lithuania's sake... the fatherland...
And you must add, for me and her, it seems,
There was no other road...
Her instrument I was... that I
Loved only her... Lithuania... Her alone...
Perhaps, I will be understood... perhaps, forgiven..

(He embraces the fragments of "Lithuania." He dies)

BLACK CHRONICLER

No, not this. That is a lie, treachery,
That everything I wrote be lost,
My words and truth should perish!
History must all be one...
One truth... One word. And that one mine!

(He stabs the White Chronicler. He tears the white book out of his hands and rips it apart. Then, he writes in his black book)

And all this took place, god so willing,
In the one thousand, two hundred, sixty
Third year.

*The stage slowly darkens
The outline of Mindaugas' Lithuania emerges in the background
It becomes even darker
Only a crown, placed upon a large black book, shines
There is no curtain*