

PRE-CHRISTIAN NAME GIVING IN LITHUANIA

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The concept of the Lithuanian pagan name structure as well as the interpretation of the giving of a name to a person in pagan Lithuania is generally based upon the concept of the ancient Indo-European anthroponymic practice. Thus, A. Salys states: "...all the personal names derive from the appellatives. The Indo-European nations of antiquity had only a single personal name... Indo-European nations had numerous personal names and a great variety of them. With the birth of a new person new names were created. The ancient people believed that a name given to an infant could determine his fate. The meaning of the name given to the new member of society by the parents expressed their hopes and wishes. The name corresponded to the person, and human essence was expressed in it. For example, in every nation some names have been selected to which higher value is given. Only in the thinking of modern man has the name become separated from the person. The old Lithuanian names indicate that our forefathers were making their names mostly of the stems: gail-... taut-... kant-... mant-... etc. Subsequently, as many people had identical names, a single name was insufficient identification, therefore determinatives were used: the patronyms, the birthplace names, the trade names and the nicknames... and in time these adnames developed into the surnames. There are many nicknames which later became surnames." [1](#)

The logic of A. Salys's statement definitely points out that the giving of a name means the giving of it to an infant to "determine his fate". The possibility of the giving of a name to an adult is entirely excluded by A. Salys. However, when implying the anthroponym of nickname and analyzing its meaning and application, A. Salys comes to a contrasting logic in pointing out that the nickname practically is a determinative applied to an adult. He comments: "In the old past, when people had a single name, i.e., were named by a single personal name, that name could have been the only name given by someone as a nickname, therefore, in all the languages the surnames in a great many cases derived from nicknames. In the dialects of Lithuanian the term *pravardė* 'nickname' corresponds with the appellative *vardas* 'name' and with the verb *vardyti* 'to give the name'." [2](#)

In the course of this article a certain proof will come out later to support the theory of giving a pagan Lithuanian name to a person in which act no established name-giving rules were followed and no religious rituals were involved. Indeed, the act happened as a free habit of the giving of a name, depending on the families, groups or generations of people and also depending on the locations and parts of the country where the people lived.

Regarding the anthroponymic motivation of the giving of a name a most convincing source would be available in the material of the Lithuanian *pravardė* 'nickname'. The interpretation of A. Salys of the *pravardė* as a personal name given to an individual in an unusual way, however the meaning of the event coincides with the understanding that the personal name held by the individual previously and replaced by the nickname which ultimately and factually becomes a person's only name, then later it becomes his surname or second name. Hence the identity of name and nickname. The conclusion is arrived at that the so-called proper name of a person or the traditions of getting and keeping it did not interfere with the getting and keeping of a nickname and then turning it into the proper personal name, replacing the one supposedly given by the parents before the acquiring of the nickname. Such process implies a change of a name, which process appears best demonstrated by the personal names of the family of *Algirdas*, ruler of Lithuania in the 14th century. (*Algirdas* is mentioned later in the article).

The patronymic material of the Lithuanian anthroponymy is also significant as being very rich in patronymic suffixes. (More about it later). A person being called by a patronym, even in present everyday life, is very analogical to a person being called by a nickname. Both patronym and nickname sources are very extensive and rich structurally as well as lexically.

A. Salys's logic inadvertently coincides with the logic of the giving of a name in the Christian religion, particularly in the Roman Catholic, where a ritual has to be fulfilled, i.e., the infant has to be christened as soon as possible after its birth. However, this logic does not agree with the practice of the giving of a name of other nations or religions, as for example the Jewish practice: Christ was baptized when a grown man.

In addition, a quotation from P. Jonikas: "...a portion of the dithematic anthroponyms, inherited in the deep past, normally containing a noble meaning; in them was expressed the parental wish for the newly born member of the family, believing in the magic power of the name that might condition the fate of the child." [3](#)

This would complete the introductory notes regarding the theory of the giving of a name in pagan Lithuania and it would indicate P. Jonikas as being under the influence of A. Salys, his senior colleague, both of them following the Indo-European mentality in the process of the giving of a name.

Thus, so far no convincing argument has been discovered regarding the practice of the Lithuanian giving of a name, in the pre-Christian period.

The Pre-Christian Nomenclature

Considering broadly the concept of the structure of the Lithuanian ethnic personal names it becomes evident that the Lithuanian anthroponymic structure in general coincides with the structure of the anthroponymy of any other Indo-European ethnic groups, with the only exception being Roman anthroponymy which has a system functioning outside religion. To make the rule applicable and proven by the Lithuanian instance, a proper synchronic insight has to be made into the Lithuanian system of the making of the name, of the choosing of the name and of the giving of the name (christening) to a person, and the matter has to be appropriately discussed, if sufficient material can be collected. The fact is that no work of research and no documents containing such material are available to help the analysis of this problem of the Lithuanian pagan name-giving and name-holding, and the attempt of the approach in this article is adopted—the analysis of the material of Lithuanian pagan anthroponymy to find out to what extent it would help to clarify the problem of the giving of the name and the holding of it by the ancient Lithuanians, and also to find out if the typification of the selected anthroponymical material would help to understand the actual process of the giving of the name by the pagan Lithuanian people.

The following anthroponymic material is selected mostly from the Etymological Dictionary compiled by K. Kuzavinis and B. Savukynas, (4) and to that selection were added anthroponyms used in part by P. Jonikas in his article in the Lithuanian Encyclopedia. [5](#)

1. The typical Lithuanian anthroponyms of the dithematic structure:

Algimantas, Algirdas, Arvydas, Bartautas, Butginas Burvilas, Čiovydas, Dargintas, Dirmantas, Daugau-das, Dausprungas, Eidmantas, Erdvilas, Gailiminas, Gedgaudas, Gediminas, Gintautas, Ginvilas, Irtautas, Jautilas, Jogaila, Jotvingas, Kantigirdas, Kęstautas, Kęstutis, Kęsgailas, Kintvilas, Laisvydas, Liaugaudas, Liubertas, Mangirdas, Mažvydas, Milgaudas, Mindaugas, Mintautas, Narimantas, Nauvydas, Norgilas, Norvilas, Radvilas, Ramvaldas, Ringaudas, Sandingas, Saugardas, Sirvydas, Skirgaila, Švitrigaila, Tautmilas, Tolvaldas, Tvirbutas, Vaidevutis, Vydmantas, Vygantas, Vytautas, Žadvydas, Žybartas, Žygaudas, Žymantas.

2. The typical Lithuanian anthroponyms of the monothematic structure:

Aldas, Aldonas, Alkis, Arūnas, Audrius, Auksius, Aušrys, Ažuolas, Barutis, Birutis, Būtis, Būtyt, Dainius, Dalius, Bargas, Daugas, Dobilas, Drasutis, Džiugintas, Eglė, Eimutis, Eitys, Erčius, Erdenis, Gabija, Gailas, Gailius, Galindas, Gaudrys, Gedila, Gedutis, Geidutis, Geistys, Giedrius, Gintas, Girdenis, Girdys, Girdutis, Girstenis, Gytis, Gražys, Gundas, Indrė, Irtys, Jaunius, Jaunutis, Jovas, Kalnius, Kante-nis, Kastytis, Kęstas, Kęstutis, Kintas, Kintenis, Klausas, Labutis, Labys, Laima, Levas, Liauda, Liepa, Linas, Mančius, Mantas, Mantilas, Marius, Medas, Mėta, Miglius, Milda, Milius, Minas, Mintas, Mirga, Neglis, Neringa, Nerius, Nida, Norys, Pajauta, Pame-das, Radys, Ramintas, Ramūnas, Ramutis, Rasa, Rimas, Rimtas, Rytis, Rožė, Rūta, Rūtenis, Rusnė, Saugas, Saulius, Sigutė, Sirtas, Skalvis, Skiras, Sniega, Šarys, Šarūnas, Šviedrys, Šviesius, Švitrys, Tarvas, Taučius, Tauras, Tautas, Teisutis, Tovė, Ugnius, Uosis, Vaidas, Vaidenis, Vaidilas, Vidas, Vydas, Vydenis, Vilija, Viltis, Viltė, Vyta, Vytenis, Žemyna, Žibutė, Žilvinas, Žinius.

Some of the monothematic names are also the structural elements of the dithematic compounds (Tautmilas), however they also function as the independent monothematic anthroponyms (Tauta, Milius). The feminine names have been taken only of the type which have a zero posting in the masculine, contrary to the fact that practically every masculine name in Lithuanian could be used by the feminine gender according to Lithuanian grammar.

3. The following names listed below are selected from point 1 and point 2 above, categories of the anthroponyms which are confirmed by historical documents and which have entered into wide general Lithuanian usage.

- The names of the Lithuanian Kings and Princes: Al-girdas, Gediminas, Kęstutis, Mindaugas, Putaviras, Skirgaila, Vaišvilkas, Vytautas, Vytenis, etc.
- The names of the persons of the Lithuanian upper class families and of the most prominent individuals: Goštautas, Karijotas, Manvydas, Liubartas, Tautvilas, Vykintas, Žymantas, etc.

Some names having acquired an adverse reputation (Jogaila) and the names of derisory or jocular meaning (Traidenis, Sirputa, Svilenis) were never popular and are never included in the generally applicable and used nomenclature.

c) The most popular and most frequently used Lithuanian names are the following: Aida, Audrius, Būtis, Girtas, Dalis, Daudžius, Dobis, Eglė, Eitis, Eityš, Gaidas, Gėdis, Gražė, Indras, Keštas, Kintas, Lapas, Linas, Liaudas, Mantas, Milda, Minius, Mažis, Neris, Norius, Putris, Putvis, Rimas, Romas, Rudis, Saulius, Sirtas, Šarys, Šviesius, Švitrius, Taučius, Tauras, Tovė, Vitas, Vytaš, Žiba, Žilvis, etc., etc.

Excluded here are the Christian names: Jonas, Antanas, Petras etc. which ritually have been obligatory for Lithuanians belonging to the Catholic religion. The giving of a name by the Christian Roman Catholic Church, being a religious sacrament, and therefore the strictness of it as such bears on the minds of persons of that faith. The case of the christening and holding of the names by the members of the family of Lithuanian King Algirdas becomes a problem, the interpretation of which is given later in the section on King Algirdas.

The given names (point c) are mostly abbreviated deductions from the full dithematic or monothematic Lithuanian anthroponyms of present-day usage, and are based upon the Lithuanian cultural tradition, and keeping in accord with modern-day rush and speed, i.e., e.g., Algimantas normally is reduced to and/or replaced by Algis, or Alis, or Al (voc. case: Aliau, Ali, Al); Mindaugas normally reduced to Minius, or Minas, or Min (voc. case: Miniau, Mini, Min). Taking another circumstance, the grand and noble, thoughtfully and elaborately composed names would not be convenient, practically speaking, to use in everyday life and therefore the automatic structures of abbreviations of the multisyllabic names had to be used: Algimantas-Algis, Gedgaudas-Gaudis, Manigirdas-Manius, Radvilas-Radvil, Žygimantas-Žygis etc., not excluding obvious incidentals of nicknames, allnames and various add-names which were also used: Augius—for a tall one, Baldžius, for a noisy one, Burba—for a talkative one, Greičius—for a quick and fast one, Klinka—for a shrieking one, Mažius for a small one etc. The effect of rush and speed on expression is most vivid with children, as is known by this author, e.g., Mindaugas Jucevičius was called Mino Juts, and in the vocative case it was Mino, Miniau, Min.

Same Comments on the Distribution of the Anthroponyms

Having concluded that pagan Lithuanian personal names were composed freely and applied at random, it is appropriate to make some additional comments on the course of the subject.

The distinction between the noble and pejorative type of names in the Lithuanian pagan anthroponymic system permits the conclusion that the giving of the name in that system was not an established procedure obligatorily applied to every person at an accepted time. The nationally and distinctly established Lithuanian families and clans, as the popular Lithuanian names attest, vis., Algimantai, Gelgaudai, Katai, Mangirdai, Pociai, Radvilai, Tautvilai, Žymantai, etc. (the form is nominative plural) possibly had their family or regional group traditions of giving the name to a newly born, not however specifying the time and the ritual of performing the ceremony, if there was any ceremony at all.

Besides, it has to be determinatively considered as a condition that pagan Lithuania was in general an illiterate country, and the anthroponymic development was functioning exclusively orally. The written records actually started with the delayed oncoming of Christianity, and consequently the earliest recorders of Lithuanian data were the Christian missionaries from foreign countries. No native Lithuanian scribe has yet been discovered who would have acquired the craft of writing and would have used it in his own country, i.e., in the Pagan Lithuania up to ca. 1200 A.D. The recordings of Lithuanian data could have been done in the country itself and in the city of Vilnius, or in the castle of Trakai, or in any other well-developed cultural centre, but it could also have been done in the strongholds of the city of Riga, the castle of Koenigsberg, the castle of Cracow, etc. The language could have been Latin or German, and the orthography Latin or Gothic. So far no case of that kind is known. Yet the latest research in Lithuania, at the University of Vilnius, attest to some findings in the field of Lithuanian writings. An example: "It is possible to mention another bishop of Vilnius, Jokūbas Plichtas, who earlier was a Franciscan vicar at the capital of Vilnius, and by the request of Vytautas, he was elected bishop, and in a letter to the Pope, 1398, he was called Lithuanian, "vicarius Lithuaniae eiusdemque nacionis et linguae." [6](#)

The foreign scribes could be considered as not reliable because they did not acquire any knowledge of the Lithuanian language which was especially indispensable in recording the Lithuanian anthroponymic data. The mistakes were obvious. [7](#) E.g., the Lithuanian names Kybartas, Kymantas, Kytautas in their present spelling contain an obscure first stem Ky-, which could have resulted from the misunderstanding of the pronunciation of a Lithuanian name by a non-Lithuanian scribe. Thus the misspelt Lithuanian morpheme remains semantically obscure, as the examples given above of the morpheme Ky- attest. [8](#)

Considering the ritual of the giving of a name in general and taking the matter explicitly, no nickname or lallname could be assumed to have been taken and given to a newly born, thus causing a person to be named that way. This consideration is supported by the general practice of using the grand and noble names, which practice naturally went from the higher classes down to the lower classes of Lithuanian society of that era. Taking, however, the fact that the Lithuanian pagan nomenclature contains anthroponyms with a pejorative meaning, such instances naturally and obviously prove that those anthroponyms came from the practice of nicknaming. The logic of the problem leads into the argument that the original and

proper name of a person in such a case has been changed and replaced by a nickname which remained with a person all his life and consequently it has been taken down into the historical records as the regular name of the person.

Certainly, the Lithuanian society of the pagan system also implied a system of an ancient rule of one name to a person. This understanding is confirmed by the circumstantial fact that the Lithuanian nation received Christianity very late, one of the last nations in Europe to receive it, and received it very slowly, that is, over a period of 400 years, and the receiving of the new religion was yet circumstantially irregular as the clergy did not know the Lithuanian language. Because of such conditions the inventories of the people, compiled as late as the XVI-XVIII centuries, were entering the personal names into the nomenclature by a single name (*unum nomen*). [9](#) The two-name system (*dua nomina*) came about when a person knew his Christian name and was able to say it when using it as the first name, the second and the last one being a pagan name or a patronym of either pagan or Christian origin. Thus the Lithuanian anthroponymical material of that time attests to the wide variety of such material, both structurally and semantically. And it also tends to prove the rule that no rigid system or ritual of the giving of the name was established in pagan Lithuania and the nomenclature has indeed been a casual one and it has been free rather than dependent on definitely established categories.

The conclusion to that is that Christianity in Lithuania had actually no ancient Lithuanian cultural giving of a name tradition to contest and did not have to conquer one, which reality indeed conditioned the process of the introduction of the new religion. Neither has there been a struggle for the abolishing of the usage of the old pagan names; the Christian name was simply added to the pagan one, making a new *dua nomina* system, as it has been interpreted above. Therefore the Lithuanian anthroponymic material on the whole remained pagan, and the Christian nomenclature functioned as an additional element, used for the Catholic Lithuanians in the position of the first name, of which in due time numerous Christian patronyms had developed and were used in the position of the surname.

The Substance and Application of a Person's Name

After this brief sketch of the types and structures of Lithuanian pagan names the conclusions could be made of how much that helped in finding out the ways and traditions of the Lithuanian pagan giving of a name. And it is understood that the "heavy" and structurally complicated names were given with the consideration towards the person and with regard to the meaning and mysterious power of the name. The Lithuanian pre-Christian nomenclature contains such names given to and borne by the Lithuanian Kings and the individuals who were in high positions in the state.

When the noble names were abbreviated and reduced to the mere means of calling, e.g., Algirdas-Algis, Vytautas-Vytas, Žygimantas-Žygas, etc., the giving of such a simplified name to a person must also have lost its significance and importance in the methods or traditions of performing of the giving of a name. This change leads into another one, namely, into the use of patronyms and nicknames.

Lithuanian linguists, A. Salys, P. Jonikas and others, have analysed the origin and the use of patronyms and nicknames, but they did not enter into research in the field of the pagan Lithuanian giving of these anthroponyms.

The next problem discussed in this article will be the changing of a name in pre-Christian Lithuania.

The Pagan Anthroponyms and the Changing of Them by Persons in Pre-Christian Lithuania

Although the family of King Algirdas by his first wife Queen Mary were Christians, there is no ascertainment of proof that King Algirdas actually followed the pagan Lithuanian religious or ethnical traditions. No pagan religious center in Vilnius nor a pagan priest is ever mentioned in the chronicles of that time. To the contrary, it is ascertained that King Algirdas as well as his heir Jogaila had wide correspondence and negotiations with the Christian authorities about the need of accepting Christianity and bringing it into the whole Lithuanian nation. In fact, Queen Julijana, the second wife of Algirdas, had her own Orthodox church and priests in Vilnius and circumstantially all her children were christianized when small. The seven sons later, politically and diplomatically, took pagan names (see them listed farther on in the text), though they were re-christened in Cracow in 1386, in the Roman Catholic manner. This situation leads to the conclusion that the Lithuanian Kings, considering Algirdas and his successors Jogaila and Vytautas, ultimately accepted Christianity themselves officially and introduced it to the whole country. (Nevertheless, their pagan names prevailed, and paganism was alive in Lithuania for several centuries).[10](#) A contrasting procedure is confirmed in the Slavic countries, namely Russia, where the paganisms, including ethnic Slavic names, were strictly forbidden by the Orthodox Christian authorities and consequently the pagan elements perished. [12](#)

The introduction of Christianity to the Baltic lands has a rather unchristian history. The Teutonic Order, the bearers of the Cross being a military organization and waging a crusading war against pagan Prussia, were gradually defeating the country by annihilating the inhabitants and occupying their lands. Consequently, the Prussian nation perished and their language died. The Prussian anthroponyms survived in the personal names of a few escapees and in the anthroponyms transferred to toponyms which have been collected by recent German scholars. [13](#)

If the Christianity brought to the Baltic countries by the Germans was accompanied by destruction and death, so also to the Christianity brought from Poland by the Lithuanians themselves (Jogaila and Vytautas) was added political destruction in the Lithuanian nation which resulted in its ultimate occupation (1795) by the Russians.

The Changing of Names of Sons of King Algirdas

The first wife of King Algirdas, Queen Julijana, was also a Christian of Orthodox faith and her daughters were also, but her seven sons create a problem concerning their names. It is naturally probable and possible that the mother, Queen Julijana, had all her children christened in the Orthodox manner and in their childhood she called them by their Christian names. This possibility is based on the concrete fact that Queen Julijana enjoyed her private church with its priests, which was situated in Vilnius. There is also a revelation that Prince Jogaila, the heir to the throne, had in his childhood the Orthodox name of Jacobus. Nothing is revealed of the names of the other six Princes.

It seems logical that when the time came for the Princes to take part in the duties for ruling various region of the nation they chose or were given by their father's, King Algirdas's, Court traditional noble national and pagan Lithuanian names: Jogaila, Skirgaila, Karigaila, Kaributas, Lengvenis, Vygantas and Švitrigaila. And when Prince Jogaila, the eldest of them, accepted the offer to be King of Poland, he and all his brothers, the Princes of Lithuania, were baptized in the Catholic manner in Cracow in 1386. [14](#) Nevertheless, their pagan Lithuanian names prevailed and entered the chronicles of Lithuanian history.

The two-sided case of King Algirdas concerning religion is characteristic and significant. Having taken Christian wives the King actually had Christian families and they remained Christian, not being prevented by any adversaries from remaining so, until his death (1377). The Christianity in King Algirdas's Court has been the most significant circumstance which led the whole nation to the acceptance of Christianity (1387), The holding of the pagan Lithuanian names by the Princes and also by the King Jogaila is an extraordinary circumstance that has puzzled the scholars of Lithuanian history. Thus far an accepted interpretation of this anthroponymic duality has not been found. [15](#)

The Names of King Vytautas

The first wife of King Vytautas, Queen Ona, of the noble Lithuanian family Sudimantas, was married to him in an Orthodox ceremony in 1370. Her pagan name is not known. She died in 1418, and King Vytautas married her cousin, Julijana, the same year.

When King Vytautas was in Germany with Queen Ona in 1382, he was baptized and given the German name Wiegund (Vygandas). He and Queen Ona were remarried in a Western marriage ceremony. Later in Cracow Vytautas took part in the ceremonies when his cousin Jogaila was crowned King of Poland. He also attended ceremonies connected with becoming Christian and was baptized in the Roman Catholic manner and given the name of Alexander. In the Lithuanian chronicles, however, in accordance with the pagan Lithuanian names of his seven cousins he is known by the name of Vytautas. (In modern Lithuanian history he is called Vytautas the Great).

Thus because of a liberal changing of his name by King Vytautas there is no ascertainment of the rituals or the traditions of the giving and the holding of a name system in Lithuanian paganism, interrupted by the circumstantial taking of Christian names by himself and also by his cousins. The fact is to be accepted that King Vytautas never demonstrated any consideration toward the lexical meaning of his noble pagan name Vytautas, *vyd-* to see, *-taul-* nation, nor did he show any consideration regarding the fact that he carried such a name and freely replaced it repeatedly by Christian names. This understanding is in opposition to the interpretation of the significance and the mysticism of the noble pagan names as emphasized by A. Salys and P. Jonikas, (see 1 above). [16](#)

A Name Changing in the Latvian folklore

Alfreds Gaters, a Latvian linguist, in his short article "Die Personennamen in den lettischen Volksmaerchen" (The Personal Names in the Latvian Folk-Tales) [17](#) has listed numerous instances of usage of personal names in the Latvian folk-tales. It is natural and narratively obvious that a person reciting or telling a fairy-tale, i.e., a folk-tale, would tend to include and use the names of living persons in some way connected with the elements of the tale, namely, spirits, ghosts, animals, etc. Being pre-Christian most of the tales would contain native Latvian names: Cuinis, Kalninš, Krauklis, Kunogins, Paršus, Skridulits etc. though on the whole contemporary Christian names were in the majority: Janis, Anšas, Juonis, Peteris, Juris, etc.

Researching the pre-Christian ways, ceremonies and tradition of giving a name to a person, a newly-born or a grown-up, a characteristic and a rather unusual event is listed among the data given by Alfreds Gaters. To take the quotation: "Kenenam... nepatyka, kam taid vinkuoršs vuords (Francis), ju nusaucja Kenens par Prancisvilčjanu" {to a King... was not a likable name because of only one single stem word Francis, then the King was called Prancisvilčians}. [18](#) This event indicated a possibility that a name which is found in the documents could be a name assumed by the person or given by the attendants and thus entered the document. On the other hand, the event suggests that a person had changed his own name to satisfy his personal ambition, or the change might have come about by the course of events.

The Conclusional Details

It is a more or less general understanding and it coincides with that of Prof. P. Jonikas [19](#) and also with the understanding of Miss Ž. Urbanvičiūtė and Miss L. Žičkutė [20](#) concerning the Lithuanian onomastics (and anthroponymics) as being a field still unresearched and its collected material as yet unclassified.

Somewhat better conditions exist in the field of Lithuanian onomastic terminology because, taking the matter in general, Lithuanian linguistic terminology is practically international, which is also true of Lithuanian onomastics. It would be appropriate here to point out that at the present time in Lithuania (now under Russian totalitarian occupation) the terminology in linguistics tends to take mostly the international medium; as a matter of fact it is a very unusual practice when in a work written in Lithuanian on a subject of Lithuanian grammar [21](#) the names of the cases of declensions are given in Latin instead of Lithuanian. (The number of cases of the Lithuanian declensions is considered to be the most extensive, as in fact there are four ablative (locative) cases—inessive, illative, allative and adessive—and the total number of cases is ten in the singular alone). The Lithuanian *vardininkas*, *kilmininkas*, *naudininkas* etc. being replaced by Latin nominativus, genetivus, dativus, etc. hardly has any obvious motivation, and apparently is an impedimentary obstacle to a Lithuanian reader, even a university student.

The terminology of Lithuanian onomastics is obviously very limited, and is based mostly on the translation of the international terminology, e.g. onomastics (onomatology) in Lithuanian *vardamokslis*: onoma *vardas*, logos *mokslas*; the anthroponymics *asmenvardžiai*: anthropos *asmuo*; anthroponymology *asmenvardžių mokslas*. (Not, however, anthroponymology *asmenvardmokslis* as the triple compounds normally are not practiced in Lithuanian). The term toponymics *vietovardžiai*: 'topos' *vieta*, 'onyma' *vardas* (in the plural *vietovardžiai*). The hydronymics *vandenvardžiai* 'hydros' *vanduo* and so the other similar terminology.

The terminology of Lithuanian anthroponymics is used rather loosely; the concept of the terms 'name' *vardas*, 'surname' *pavardė*, 'nickname' *pravardė* (cmp, *pravardžiuti* 'to nickname') are not restricted distributively, and *pavardė* as an opposition to *pravardė* is often interchanged when used colloquially. The term *vardas* 'name' could also be used in the meaning of *pravardė* 'nickname' as a form of ridiculing. Considering the fact that in ancient times only one single personal name was used, and such practice in Lithuanian has been generally held in pre-Christian times (until XIII century A.D.), therefore obviously the concept of a surname was not used at all, and the term *pavardė* 'surname' was not known. The concept of the term *pavardė* is attested to in its structure: *pa-* (*po*) 'after' *vardas* 'name', and then *pavardė* 'the aftername'. It is further understood that the term *pavardė* has been invented when the Christian name appeared as the first name, therefore *pavardė* functions as another name, i.e. as the aftername and a natural addition. It could be argued here that the term *pravardė* 'nickname' has been used in the pre-Christian period, as by the psychology of colloquialism in an event of characterization a person was given a nickname. On the other hand, as there is no evidence of any procedure or liturgy of giving a name to a person in pre-Christian times in Lithuania, neither does any evidence exist to establish when, i.e. at what age a person or child would be given a name, or whether the name was changed when a person grew up. Considering the fact that the pre-Christian Lithuanian anthroponymic nomenclature mostly holds a nickname character the conclusion would follow that in the pre-Christian procedure of the giving of a name to a person in Lithuania there were no established traditions nor strict rules or habits generally practiced. The *pravardžiavimas* 'nicknaming' might have been a predominant system and thus the basis of the name-giving.

The ancient period of the *unum nomen* system in an apparent situation of a need of an additional name that *pravardė* 'nickname' was an additional name used to point out the identity or characteristic of a person. The producing of an additional name was an act of the *pravardžiavimas* 'nicknaming', implying the process of *pramanyti*, i.e. producing of a name or of inventing one, and applying it to the person concerned. The need of the process of inventing a nickname might

have been for multiple reasons: first, when a person had no established and no socially accepted name; [22](#) second, some peculiar characteristic of a person had provoked the nickname; third, an unpopular name and a name inconvenient to use caused the inventing of another suppository and an additional name, the nickname; fourth, in the event that there was another person close-by who had an identical name; fifth, an incidental ludicrous name, a nickname, became the permanent attribute of a person. And so on.

Then again the term *pavardė* 'surname' is of an origin posterior to the term of *pravardė* 'nickname'. Apparently, *pavardė* started when the term *vardas* was transferred to mean the Christian name, i.e. a person had his *vardas* when he was christened; the pagan, the pre-Christian Lithuanian national term *vardas* has lost its meaning of the concept of name. The practice became a factual one when after taking the Christian name the pagan one remained with a person in his everyday life, or the person retained his pre-Christian name for the customary social, traditional and official needs, and ultimately the previous *vardas* became one's *pavardė* 'surname'. In that time semantically, as it has been shown above, the *pavardė* 'surname' was normally identical with *pravardė* 'nickname', and hypothetically the latter term in its usage is as old as the language itself.

Into the complex of the Lithuanian anthroponymie terminology sometimes comes an intermediate name positioned just after the first (the Christian) name and thus supplanting the surname. Linguist P. Jonikas suggested a term for it, *prievardis*,[23](#) i.e. a term of a supplementary addition posited after the name. However, such an anthroponym and its position just after the first name would be identical with the term of patronym because of its concept and the position, and it would appear as analogy to and under the influence of the Russian tria nomina system. The Lithuanian anthroponym *prievardis*, when it is a concept of a patronym in the practice of the Lithuanian dua nomina system, excludes or replaces the surname. Thus customarily when a *prievardis* is applied the surname is left out. For example, when a son of *Juozas* 'Joseph' *Baltis* whose name is *Vincas* 'Vincent', is called *Vincas Juozytis* (*Juozytis* is a patronym, son of *Juozas*) the surname *Baltis* then, in everyday practice, is omitted. The anthroponym *Vincas Juozytis* is fully satisfactory for the local (dialectal) and colloquial needs. Then again further the son of *Vincas* by the name *Antanas* 'Anthony' would be called *Antanas Vincytis* (the patronym *Vincytis* is son of *Vincas*) or yet in another variation *Antanas Vincytis* could be called *Vincų Antanas*, i.e. Anthony of the family of Vincent. (*Vincų* is the genitive plural of *Vincas*). This way the specific Lithuanian *dua nomina* system is upheld by means of patronym serving as a surname. The formal documents, of course, disregard the anthroponym *prievardis*, the patronym of a personal name, and would use the second name (the surname) only; *Vincas Baltis*, *Antanas Baltis*, etc. [24](#)

The patronyms have had an important role in the original forming of the Lithuanian *dua nomina* system. When the primitive pre-Christian *unum nomen* system in the Lithuanian language became unsatisfactory with the development of social life, then the patronym in the statistical lists of names was used as an attributive description of a person. Unless, of course, the pagan Lithuanian name would be taken instead. This attributive anthroponym ultimately became the formal surname in the structure of the personal name. Statistically the Christian patronyms were very numerous in the Lithuanian nomenclature, whereas the pagan patronyms were not as frequent as those of Christian derivation. To take the example of the patronymic derivatives of the Christian name *Jonas* 'John' it would provide the following patronyms: *Jonaitis*, *Jonytis*, *Jonelis*, *Jonukas*, *Jonynas*, *Jononis*, *Jonėnas*, *Jonulis*, *Jonikas*, etc., i.e. there are as many derivative patronyms of one and the same name as there are patronymic suffixes in Lithuanian.[25](#) In addition to this opposition there are possible patronymic anthroponyms composed normally of double and sometimes of triple structural additions of diminutive or endearing patronymic suffixes, e.g. *Jon-el-aitis*, *Jon-yn-enas*, *Jon-el-yn-aitis*, etc. Of course, the patronymic derivatives could be made in the same way with any other Christian name: *Juozas* 'Joseph'—*Juozaitis*, *Petras* 'Peter' *Petraitis*, *Povilas* 'Paul' *Povilaitis*, *Mykolas* 'Michael' *Mykolaitis*, etc. [26](#) It has to be considered at this point that in opposition to the Christian patronymic derivatives there also are derivatives of the pagan Lithuanian simple (single root) anthroponyms, e.g. *Balčius* 'Whitey'—*Balčytis*, *Giedrius* 'bright' *Giedraitis*, *Kalvis* 'smith'—*Kalvaitis*, etc. Not so common would be the patronymic derivatives of the pagan Lithuanian upper class society (pagan nobility) personal names where rather involved compounds were mostly applied, e.g. *Algirdas*—*Atgirdaitis*, *Skirgaila*,—*Skirgailaitis*, *Žygimantas*—*Žygimantaitis*, etc. Morphemically those derivatives are conceivable, however, practically they would be rare.

The feminine terminology of the Lithuanian anthroponymics creates its own anthroponymic field, which linguistically in general could be taken as an exception. It has already been referred to above that the Lithuanian patronyms morphemically expand in large numbers because of the great variety of the patronymic suffixes in the Standard Lithuanian, those diminutive, 'endearing, pejorative and the like. Accepted masculine patronymic suffixes are: -aitis, -utis, -ytis, etc. [27](#) However, every dialect applies its own popular patronymic material and practices the use of two or even three patronymic suffixes for one and the same name, as has been shown above.

Similar procedure is applicable in the field of the feminine patronymic anthroponyms which expresses itself also in a great variety and quantity of the feminine morphemical structures. For instance, the son of a father by the name of *Algirdas* would be called *Algirdaitis* and the daughter *Algirdaitė*, i.e. the same patronymic structure but a feminine inflectional suffix ending in *ė* (masc. -is). The rule of Lithuanian grammar would be working paradigmatically in all the cases of the declensions of the patronymic suffixes of the feminine gender: -aitis -aitė; -utis -utė; -ytis -ytė; -ėlis -elė; -us -ė; etc. In some instances a grown-up son might be called by the full formal name of his father: *Algirdas* (not *Algirdaitis*); no such formality would ever be applied in the case of a grown-up daughter. The girl would remain *Algirdaitė* until her marriage and then would take the name of her husband. This latter procedure brings about a feature of anthroponym of a married woman

which feature is construed in a rather simple structure: the name of a married woman takes the suffix -ienė to the husband's name: *Algirdas-Algirdienė*. An exception is a masculine name ending in -us and -ius, in which case the feminine suffix is special -uvienė, *Eičius-Eičiuvienė*, *Eičienė*.

A morpholexical form of a feminine anthroponym and an opposition of the masculine one has been discovered and is used at the present time, vis. *Algirdas-Algirdė*, *Dainius-Dainė*, *Vytautas-Vytautė*, etc., which feature semantically coincides with the gender forms of general appellatives: *vilkas-vilkė* 'wolf', *dainius-dainė*, 'singer', *darbininkas-darbininkė* 'worker', *poetas-poetė* 'poet', *raštininkas-raštininkė* 'scribe', etc., and it is increasing in popularity. This opposition is very strong in the spoken language. However, in literary Lithuanian the general (masculine) version often is predominant, allowing the supposition based on the influence of the international lexics, vis. *ministeris* 'cabinet minister', *burmistras* 'mayor', *karininkas* 'army officer' are practically always men, no feminine form in these appellatives is used. Other appellatives notwithstanding are generally bound to the strong and unalterable opposition forms, vis. *studentas-studentė* 'student', *mokinys-mokinė* 'pupil', *bėgikas-bėgikė* 'runner', *ėjikas-ėjikė* 'walker', etc.

On the basis of the system of pre-Christian Lithuanian anthroponymic structure in the masculine-feminine opposition, vis. *Algirdas-Algirdė*, the contemporary Lithuanian onomasticists have offered some innovations, featured in the work of B. Savukynas and K. Kuzavinis. [28](#)

This innovative work of B. Savukynas and K. Kuzavinis proves that the problem discussed in this article, namely, the giving of a name in pre-Christian (pagan) Lithuania, and the theory of resolving it is upheld, i.e. the giving of the name to a person in pre-Christian Lithuanian has been free of any rules and ceremonies such as were developed in post-pagan centuries. The modern scientists in linguistics, by following the logic and philosophy of the language concerned, freely come to the formation of the natural and live lexics in the anthroponymology. (Cf. the masculine-feminine opposition of the Lithuanian anthroponymic abbreviations). The linguistic trends of ancient times are thus generatively revived and brought up to date by the free and linguistically sound application of the nomenclatural material.

Although we do not arrive at the solution of the problem of what was the system of the pre-Christian Lithuanian giving of a name, the above quotation of Alfreds Gaters suggests that the material of the primitive nomenclature contained data caused by various contrasting events and unknown circumstances. The hypothesis implies the following elements:

1. The name might be chosen before the birth of the recipient, depending on the circumstances of the parents and on the prospects for the future of the coming child.
2. The giving of the name could be delayed until the time of growing up and the development of the personality of the young individual, and then the name would circumstantially come about.
3. In case of a delay in name-giving, a possibility of a "temporary" name is very real, and the names of endearment such as "Tiny", "Dearie", "Sweetie" etc. could be substituting for the formal ones.
4. The instance reported by A. Gaters suggests that an individual himself could decide to choose his own name, as seen in the example of the king.

The history of Lithuanian anthroponymy attests to several periods of the changing of a name: pagan to Christian: Vytautas to Alexander; native to foreign: Žemkalis to Landsbergis (German), and then in the trend of modern times, hybrids to native ones: Jakševičius to Alantas, Babickas to Alanta, Ferentas to Tautvilas, Nagrodkis to Nauragis, Tupčiauskas to Tauras, etc.

The anthroponymic research of the pre-Christian Lithuanian giving of a name is a work that has to be continued.

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(1) "...visi asmenvardžiai yra kilę iš bendrinių daiktavardžių. Visos ide. tautos senovėje vadinosi vienais asmenvardžiais, pavardės vėliau išriedėjo iš asmenvardžių... Ide. tautų asmenvardžių turėta labai daug ir be galo įvairiu. Gimstant naujam žmogui jų kasdien kurtasi naujų. Senovės tautų tikėta, kad vaikui duotas vardas gali veikti jo likimą.. Varde norėta iškelti naujojo visuomenės nario būdo ypatybės, branginamos visos tautos; tėvai, duodami vaikui vardą, juo išsako savo viltis ir linkėjimus. Vardas yra lyg žmogaus lygmuo, jame įkūnyta pati žmogaus esmė. Tik moderninio žmogaus galvosenoje vardas atsieta nuo jo turėtojo. Kiekviena tauta kuriuos nors vardus yra labiau mėgusi už kitus. Senieji lietuvių asmenvardžiai rodo, kad mūsų protėviai sau vardus darėsi visų dažniau iš liemenų: gail-... taut-... kant-... mant-... Ilgainiui, atsiradus daug bendravardžių žmonių, vienu asmenvardžių jiems skirti nebepakako, todėl asmenvardžiams imta dėti determinatyvai tėvavardžiai, kilimo arba gyvenamoji vieta, amatas, pravarės... Iš atskiriamųjų prievardžių, vienur anksčiau, kitur vėliau, yra išriedėjusios moderninės pavardės... Yra apščiai ir pravardžių, vėliau išvirtusių pavardėmis." *Lietuvių enciklopedija /Lithuanian Encyclopedia/*, vol. I, pp. 315-316.

(2) "...senovėje, kada žmonės buvo vienvardžiai, t.y., vadinosi vien asmenvardžiais, pravarė galėjo būti ir vienintelis kam kieno pramintas vardas. Todėl iš pravardės visose kalbose yra kilę labai daug pavardžių. Pagaliau tarmėse ir pats pravardės terminas daug kur vartojamas pavardės reikšmė. Darybos atžvilgiu *pravardė*... sutinka su daiktavardžiu *vardas*, veiksmazodžiu *vardyti*, vardą duoti..." (*Lietuvių enciklopedija*, op. cit., XXIII, 507; further referred to as LE.

(3) ...tai dalis dvikamienių asmenvardžių paveldėtų iš žilos senovės, paprastai turėjusių taurių reikšmę; jais buvo išsakomi tėvų linkėjimai naujam šeimos nariui, tikint magiška vardo galia, galinčia veikti vaiko likimą. (LE vol. XV, 558).

(4) Kazys Kuzavinis and Bronys Savukynas, "Lietuvių vardų etimologinis žodynas", in: *Vardai ir žodžiai*, Vilnius, 1971, pp. 42-147.

(5) P. Jonikas, "Asmenvardžiai ir vietovardžiai", LE, op. cit., vol. XV, pp. 555-561.

(6) Dar galima paminėti ir antrąjį Vilniaus vyskupą Jokubą Plichtį, prieš tai buvusį Lietuvos pranciškonų vikaru, Vilniaus kapitula, Vytauto pageidavimu, jį išrinkusi vyskupu, rašte popiežiui, 1398, vadino lietuviu, vicarium Lithuaniae eiusdemque nationis et linguae. Jonas Lebedys, *Lituanistikai Baruose*, Vilnius, 1972, p. 21.

(7) A confusing fact and very characteristic of pagan Lithuanian name writing in medieval documents is the name of Prince Vygantas, son of King Algirdas. The Lithuanian Encyclopedia attests: „Vygantas, son of Algirdas, at the end of the XIVth century the Prince of Kernavė... In the documents his name is found as Vigund. In 1386 he was christened in Cracow by the name of Alexander... in 1388 he signed an act: Alexander Dei Gratia alias Vigunt Dux Kiernovensis." (Vygantas, Algirdo sūnus, XIV a. pabaigos Kernavės Kunigaikštis... aktuose sutinkamas ir jo vardas Vigunt... 1386 pakrikštytas Krokuvėje Aleksandro vardu... 1388 m. pasirašė akta Alexander Dei Gratia alias Vigunt Dux Kiernovensis.) (LE XXXIV, 51).

(8) The erroneous recordings in documents of pagan Lithuanian names when the scribes were of limited education, knew no Lithuanian, did not understand the structure of the Lithuanian names nor could tell the meaning of compounds, is clearly evident in the recording of the name Kęsgaila (kęš-'kęsti' to bear, -gaila 'galia' might, power) as: Kesgaylo, Kenzgal, Kenzgal, Keszgal, Genzegal, Kgezghal, Kinsgal, Kynsggail, Kynsgalo, Kysgeylo, etc. (LE XI, 400).

9) LE XV, 556.

(10) Martinas Mažvydas, CATECHISMUS... 1547.

(12) Astride Baecklund, *Cramoty Velikogo Novgoroda*, Stockholm, 1959.

(13) H. Mortensen, *Deutschland und der Osten*, Leipzig, 1937.

(14) LE IX, 420.

(15) LE IX, 421.

(16) The dates and facts given in this section (Vytautas) are taken from LE vol. XXXIV, 373-390.

(17) *Donum Balticum*, 130, Stockholm, 1970.

18) *Ibid.*, 138.

(19) P. Jonikas, "Asmenvardžiai ir vietovardžiai", op. cit., p. 555.

(20) Z. Urbanavičiūtė and L. Žiškutė, "Lietuvių pravardės", *Kalbotyra XXV* [I] (1975), p. 55.

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(22) It has to be considered that the Lithuanian community of pre-Christian times did not use any means of writing for family or social needs, i.e. before Christianity was introduced 1251-1413. (LE XV, 13, ff.)

(23) LE XV, 556.

(24) Such a patronymic practice is used in the birthplace of this author.

(25) Cf. P. Jonikas, LE XV, 559.

(26) The variety of such patronymic derivations obviously depends on the dialect, on the locality, on the clan, the family habits, traditions and so on.

(27) P. Jonikas, LE XV, 558. ,-

(28) B. Savukynas and K. Kuzavinis, *Vardai ir žodžiai*, op. cit., p. 46, Vilnius, 1971. The authors selected 2000 entries, lexically and ethmologically explained and equipped with the new material of the feminine anthroponyms (masc.-fem. oppositions), e.g. Algirdas: Algis-Algė, Gediminas: Godis-Gedė, Kėstutis: Kėstas-Kėstė, etc.

There have been reports that the editing of a complete Lithuanian Proper Name Dictionary is in preparation, and the first volume of it is expected, after a long delay.