## ORTHOGRAPHY

Since many of the citations in this volume are in the Standard
Lithuanian orthography, the following brief summary of the writing
system is presented on the reader's behalf.

There are three accent signs in the orthography. An acute,
which indicates a falling contour on the accented syllable, a circum-
flex indicating a rising contour, and a grave accent sign which indi-
cates merely stress or accent without any perceptible contour on the
syllable.

Lithuanian employs a Latin alphabet with a few modifications.
Unless otherwise noted, the letters have the usual phonetic inter-
pretation (i.e. "p" stands for a voiceless bilabial stop, etc.).
Exceptions are "c" and "dz" which are voiceless and voiced dental
affricates, and "dž", the voiced counterpart of "č", a palatal
affricate. All consonants except "j", a front glide, can be palatal-
ized or "soft" and velarized or "hard". Consonants are palatalized
when followed by a front vowel letter, either "i" or "e". When
palatalized consonants occur before a back vowel, the palatalization
is indicated by inserting the letter "i" between them and the follow-
ing back vowel letter, this "i" representing no additional sound.
Thus, bliauti is [b'l'aut'i]. Also, since the sound [i] never occurs
before a back vowel letter it always indicates a mere palatalization of
the preceding consonants, the only exceptions to this being foreign
borrowings like biologia, where the "i"s do represent high front vowels.

There are six vowel letters: "a", "e", "i", "o", "u", and "y".
These have the usual phonetic value except that "y" represents [i:].
These letters are modified in various ways to indicate vowel length.
There are three ways in which vowel length is represented in the
orthography. First, a given letter may always represent a long vowel.
There are two such letters: "y" which always represents [i:] and "o"
which always designates a long, tense [o:] except in foreign borrowings
like poėtas where it stands for a short lax mid vowel, and in the

diphthong "uo" where it stands for a reduced variant of the vowel
a̱ ("uo" = [u₄]).  Secondly, vowel length may be indicated by means of a
diacritic.  The letter "ė" always represents long, tense [e:], while
"ū" represents [u:].  The other diacritic used to represent length is
a nasal hook written under the letter.  Note that this hook does not
represent nasalization of the vowel, for all vowels are oral in ⋅
contemporary Standard Lithuanian.  Thus, "ą" = [a:], "ę̄" = [ɛ:],
"į" = [i:], and "ų" = [u:].  The letters "ę̇" and "ǫ" do not occur.
Finally, a letter can indicate a long vowel by virtue of its accent
sign.  This only happens with the letters "e" and "a", which designate
long vowels when the acute or circumflex is written directly above
them.  Here the long "e" is open and lax [ɛ:] for example, lė̃das is
[l'ɛ:das] and rãtas is [ra:tas]; also, gérti is [g'ɛ:r't'i] and
lángas is [la:ngas].  In all other cases, the vowel letters indicate
short vowels.                                            ⋅

For ease of reference, the following short list if the vowel
sounds and the letters used to represent them is provided.

| [i] | i, ĩ | | [i:] | y, ȳ, ỹ, į, i̇, í |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| [u] | u, ũ | | [u:] | ū, ũ̄, ű, ų, ũ, ú |
| [ɛ] | e, ễ | | [e:] | ė̇, ė̃, ė́ |
| [a] | a, ã | | [o:] | o, õ, ó |
| | | | [a:] | ã, á, ą, ą̃, ą́ |
| | | | [ɛ:] | ễ, é, ę, ę̃, ę́ |

One final point.  When the letters "i" and "u" form a mixed
diphthong with a following liquid or nasal in a closed syllable and
in addition the syllable has a falling accent, then instead of
writing an acute accent over the "i" or "u", a grave accent is written.
Thus, for example, in dìrbti and gìmti, the first syllable has a falling
contour and the letter "i" represents a short vowel.  This is the only
case in which the grave accent sign is used to represent a pitch
contour.  Evidently, the rationale behind this is the desire to preserve
the generalization that acute accent may only occur over a letter which
represents a long vowel.