INTRODUCTION

In 1945, East Prussia became a subject of territorial transformations and had to play an un-rewarding role of compensation to Poland and the USSR. During World War II, the USA, Great Britain, and the USSR resolved that the said German province was to be divided up and abolished. Since 1945, in three parts of the former East Prussia, annexed to socialist Poland and to Soviet Russia and Soviet Lithuania, a number of content-wise different, however, form-wise similar parallel processes were taking place; the most significant of them must have been the population of the territories with settlers who had little in common with the new residing space, its material relics of the past, or the former, relatively few, residents. The predominating response of the settlers (which, however, should not be absolutized) was a lack of interest in the uniqueness of the newly populated space; they frequently saw it as incomprehensible and therefore deserving rejection; the view was also promoted by the provisions of the anti-German propaganda.

On the other hand, such a response to the space by the official discourse and the settlers was just primary. In the colony where intensive migration processes were substituted for by the settlers' anchorage, the root taking process gradually developed, elements of understanding and identification of themselves with the landscape of the former East Prussia appeared, and several new generations whose only homeland was related to the territory of the former East Prussia grew up. The identification with the territory was facilitated by the fact that, despite a lack of the personal experience of the settlers in the space and personal relationship with it, a specific relationship with the former East Prussian spaces had already existed in respective cultures (systems of meanings). The meanings of the East Prussian Region which prevailed in Russia in the early 20th c. did not fit for the maintenance of continuity in the post-war Kaliningrad Oblast. Meanwhile, the existence of historical Polish- and Lithuanian-speaking regions in East Prussia allowed Poles and Lithuanians to establish very clear links with the pre-war period. In the national Polish and Lithuanian cultures of the early 20th c., these regions acquired the role of the imaginary "our own" spaces and irredentas of Warmia-Masuria and Lithuania Minor. In the post-war years, Warmia and Masuria were integrated into Poland not as a part of East Prussia, but as a part of the "Recovered Lands" (also called the Western and Northern Lands), and thus made links with the already existing images of the Polish national culture. In a similar way, the integration of Klaipėda Region into the Lithuanian SSR was facilitated by the fact that, long before World War II, the Lithuanian culture and politics had formed specific meanings which could be used in the post-war years to form and maintain the "our own" character of the region in Lithuanian culture.

Favourable conditions for appropriation, incidentally, in all three – the Polish, the Lithuanian, and Kaliningrad – cases were boosted by an opportunity of active and unlimited support to anti-German attitudes. Their political instrumentalization and sharpening to maximum was enabled by a frequently overlooked fact that all three territories of the former East Prussia occurred in the USSR sphere of influence in the postwar years, i. e. the sphere of influence of the winner of the war and one of the two major participants of the world's geopolitical arena. It was specifically the system of the Eastern and Western blocks and the presence in the Moscow-guarded Eastern bloc that allowed to ignore the potential response of Germany from the Western bloc to the measures taken to integrate the former East Prussia. Another important factor in the appropriation processes was the approach of "socialist" regimes in Moscow, Vilnius, and Warsaw of looking for legitimation in elements of national cultures by adapting them to the Soviet ideology. Particularly in Poland

and the Lithuanian SSR, it allowed to supplement the Soviet ideology that promoted futurism and "the friendship of nations" by elements of national cultures and pasts[1]. All of that enabled a rather effective "conversion" of East Prussia into new spaces, resulting, however, in different outcomes in different parts of East Prussia, which primarily took place at the level of cultural symbols and images.

That was of great significance. The former boundaries of East Prussian province, its districts and counties were erased from the maps in postwar years and included in newly-formed administrative structures: Białystok, Olsztyn, and Gdańsk Voivodships in Poland, Kaliningrad Oblast in the Russian Soviet Socialist Federal Republic, and Klaipėda, Šilutė, Jurbarkas, and other raions in Lithuanian SSR; all those boundaries had nothing in common with the former boundaries of East Prussia. It was the expression of the consciously implemented East Prussia "dissolution" policy, expressed also in the mental meaning of cultural perceptions. The Institute of Masuria (*Instytut Mazurski*), moved to Olsztyn in 1945, looked for traces of Polish culture and activity in the past of Warmia and Masuria not with the aim of witnessing the exclusivity of the said regions, but to justify their Polish character and to consolidate the conception of their having been as Polish as the rest of Poland. Kaliningrad Region in postwar years was integrated into Russia and the USSR at a mental level also with the aim of justification and consolidation of its typicality, by bringing out one or another link with Russia and workers' movement activity in the past of the region and trying to overcome the provincial character of the region by the ideologeme of "the westernmost outpost". Simultaneously, in postwar Lithuania, any cultural images related to Lithuania Minor were maintained not in order to justify the exclusivity of the region, but rather its significance for the *common* Lithuanian culture. Lithuanians of Lithuania Minor were unconditionally understood as part of the Lithuanian nation who lived on the territory as its autochthons; therefore, Lithuania Minor was to "dissolve" and to be integrated into Lithuanian national culture.

On the other hand, in the course of time, not the typicality, but the specificity of the regions were becoming of an increasingly greater interest. The resource of the sense of their specificity in the former East Prussia was the unique material legacy. It first played the said role in the Polish part. As early as in the 1950s, the destroyed fragments of the Old Town of Olsztyn started to be restored in accordance with the plan approved in 1951. True, in many cases, it was new construction, matched to the environment by its volume and stylistics; the buildings were frequently designed by neglecting the height and proportions of the old architecture, however, by maintaining the scale typical of the Old Town. It is interesting to note that, in the facades of the buildings, allusions to Baroque predominated, i. e. the period when Warmia belonged to Poland. Moreover, the newly constructed buildings were decorated with folk motifs or portraits of personalities related to Warmia in Poland[2]. That would witness that the meaning related for Poles to Warmia and Masuria conveniently facilitated the appropriation of the remaining legacy (the Museum of Masuria in 1945 took up its quarters in the former castle of the Warmian Chapter in Olsztyn), and, whenever no legacy remained, strong and nationalist forces of the Polish monument preservation were directed towards the restoration of old towns, castles, and churches which acquired very different forms: from scru-

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[1]   In the context of Poland, the process was thoroughly disclosed in: ZAREMBA, M. *Komunizm, legitymizacja, nacjonalizm: nacjonalistyczna legitymizacja władzy komunistycznej w Polsce*. Warszawa, 2001. Recently, it was translated into German: ZAREMBA, M. *Im nationalen Gewande: Strategien kommunistischer Herrschaftslegitimation in Polen 1944-1980* (Klio in Polen, Bd. 14). Osnabrück, 2011.

[2]   Cf.: LEWANDOWSKA, I. Oswajanie dóbr kultury, architektury i nazewnictwa a procesy integracji społecznej na Warmii i Mazurach po II wojnie światowej. In *Polacy na ziemiach odzyskanych. Regiony przygraniczne w poszukiwaniu tożsamości: przed i po akcesji*. Red. A. MAKOWSKI. Szczecin, 2008, s. 102-103.

pulous restoration of individual objects to stylized reconstruction (like in Olzstyn) or totally new developments called Old Towns; those were constructions most expressly illustrated by Elbląg Old Town which was started to build in the 80s. In Klaipėda Region and Kaliningrad Oblast, such phenomena were difficult to imagine, primarily due to the absence of monument preservation practices in immediate postwar years that would have been able to use professional arguments in order to initiate restoration works, let alone nationalist monument preservation practices. Despite the fact that in Lithuania, differently from Kaliningrad Oblast, the ties with the prewar past of Klaipėda were not broken, the material legacy in Klaipėda did not become what it became, e.g., in Gdańsk, also due to the fact that the war losses in Klaipėda, as compared to Gdańsk, were not that great; the architectural traditions manifested in postwar Lithuania were also far from a nationalist character.

However, in the period of 60s to 70s, the relationship with material legacy also changed both in Klaipėda and Kaliningrad. The efforts of architects and intellectuals to preserve the remnants of Königsberg Castle in Kaliningrad[3] (which were nonetheless blown up in 1967-1968) and the suspension of the sanation of the Old Town in Klaipėda at the end of 1960s look like parallel phenomena. They were caused by getting together of groups of people who were no longer satisfied with the relationship of their cities with the USSR (via all-Union patriotism) and/or Lithuania (via the links with ethnolinguistically defined national culture) construed over several postwar decades. The need for construing bonds with the city itself made one turn to what was unique in the city, and the representation of uniqueness was primarily its material legacy. In Klaipėda, part of this legacy was started to regenerate by turning it into a resource of support for the sense of uniqueness of the city. In Kaliningrad, the material legacy in 70s to 80s was increasingly becoming a resource which facilitated the understanding of the oldness of the city and enabled local enthusiasts to maintain an alternative to the official discourse.

Thus, a paradoxical situation developed: officially, East Prussia and its boundaries did not exist anymore, however, a lot of things that could serve as a basis for settlers' consciousness in the newly constructed spaces, isolated in the frameworks of the Soviet / national discourse, were in one or another form oriented towards the East-Prussia-related specificity. The causes of the phenomenon should evidently be related not so much to the mechanical change of generations, but rather to the qualitative changes in the world outlook of generations. The aspiration of maintaining the uniqueness may have been promoted not by the spirit of collectivism-based wish to look and to be "like everybody else", but rather by individualism and consumer behaviour-based striving to stand out by demonstrating a "we have something that nobody else has" attitude. With the development of such trends, although the master narratives and the meanings of the national culture were still playing a regulatory role in the interrelationships of meanings, in particular in Warmia-Masuria and Klaipėda Region, the search for the bonds with individual items of the versatile legacy of East Prussia, both tangible and intangible, became a common (although not necessarily predominating) trend as early as in the 70s to 80s. In other words, it was no longer the integrating meanings of national cultures/ all-Union patriotism related to Warmia-Masuria, Lithuania Minor, or Kaliningrad Oblast in respective parts of East Prussia, but rather the regional specificity that became the object of an increasingly growing interest.

At the turn of the two last decades of the 20th c., the retreat of the influence of Moscow from the bloc of "real socialism" caused gravitation towards Western culture and democratization of the public discourse. The case of Kaliningrad may serve as the best illustration of how, due to the

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3   See: HOPPE, B. *Auf den Trümmern von Königsberg. Kaliningrad 1946-1970* (Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, Bd. 80). München, 2000, S. 128-147.

changing situation, the regional specificity of officially extinct East Prussia which promoted the sense of the exclusivity of the region turned into a factor of political influence. The awareness of the "German" cultural heritage in Kaliningrad Region and its opening to the Western world significantly contributed to the sense of the exclusivity of the region, promoted, of course, by its position of a semi-exclave. In Poland, the regional exclusivity was formalized in the voivodship reform of 1999, by establishing a new voivodhip of Warmia and Masuria boasting self-governance rights: its boundaries essentially reflected the former boundaries of East Prussia (which for Poles primarily meant the boundaries of historical regions of Warmia and Masuria). In Lithuania, the historical uniqueness of Klaipėda Region has not been marked yet, which proves that in Klaipėda, the identification with the regional semantics of Lithuania Minor has been hegemonized, but has not become dominant, and therefore has a number of alternatives; on the other hand, the social groups in Lithuania who continue to support the Lithuanized conception of Lithuania Minor are designing the space not only (and not primarily in) Klaipėda Region[4]. Despite all that, the sense of uniqueness in Klaipėda is as strong as in the remaining parts of the former East Prussia, and the legacy of the past plays a significant role in it. Nobody is any longer surprised by the celebration of anniversaries of the Teutonic Order-founded cities (Grand Master of the still existing Teutonic Order was invited to the 750th anniversary of the City of Klaipėda in 2002); a great interest in the signs of unique and other distinctive heritage in the landscape, as well as restoration and even reconstruction of historical buildings, are characteristic of all the area of the former East Prussia.

The present collection of articles specifically focusses on the disclosure of a multidimensional phenomenon of space appropriation, or, in other words, on the conversion of somebody else's space into one's own. One could say that the book was inspired by several factors. The first one is the co-ordination of regional studies with the research into the "reading" of the meaning of spaces that have been intensifying over the last decade. Such research is based on the assumption that the attachment of the meaning to space-representing symbols or to the space itself enables people to prescribe its belonging to themselves. In the process of such research, efforts are made to establish what meanings are attached by communities to their living spaces and particularly to the relics of the past in them, what are the reasons for it, and how the attachment of meanings convert the spaces into "our own" in different cultures. In the case of East Prussia, Robert Traba[5] has done it more than once: his article published in the introductory part of the book presents the practices of "reading" of the spaces prevalent in the inter-war period. In his article, Traba discloses the attachment of unique meanings to the East Prussian space primarily in the German system of meanings.

However, East Prussia remains one of the spaces of East-Central Europe which, once a geographical entity, was, and still is, semantically split: relevant for the semantics of several cultures, it becomes a meeting point of several imaginary spaces. East Prussia is a land whose parts historically had different names and different meanings at different times not only for the Germans who used to live there, but also for Warmians, Masurians, and Prussian Lithuanians, as well as the populations of the neighbouring countries (Russia, Poland, and Lithuania). The said perspective – the conversion of the same geographical space into "our own" by different cultures – has been attempted to disclose in three chapters of the present collection of articles.

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[4]   For more on this issue, see: SAFRONOVAS, V. Apie istorinio regiono virsmą vaizduotės regionu. Mažosios Lietuvos pavyzdys. *Istorija*, 2012, t. LXXXVI, p. 66–80.

[5]   The principal work: TRABA, R. *„Wschodniopruskość". Tożsamość regionalna i narodowa w kulturze politycznej Niemiec*. Wyd. 3. Olsztyn, 2007. Translation into German: TRABA, R. *Ostpreußen – die Konstruktion einer deutscher Provinz. Eine Studie zur regionalen und nationalen Identität 1914–1933* (Klio in Polen, Bd. 12). Osnabrück, 2010.

Here we come to the second factor that promoted the appearance of the book. In fact, the subject of our collection of articles is not entirely new or never studied in historiography. Over two last decades, in Poland, Germany, Russia, and Lithuania, more than one publication appeared[6] that explored these processes in the former East Prussia. However, the explorations were isolated and merely sought to find out "how things were with us", paying little attention to how the same processes took place "at the neighbours'". The present publication sought to create a framework for a comparative perspective, especially since the first attempts to do it have already been made[7].

The collection of articles consists of three parts that focus on the disclosure of the same phenomenon of symbolical appropriation of space from the perspective of Kaliningrad Oblast, Warmia and Masuria, and Klaipėda Region. The phenomenon has been analyzed on a broad scale and covers such fields as the meanings of East Prussia in the Lithuanian, Polish, and Russian cultures in the first half of the 20th c., the implementation of political claims formed on the basis of those meanings, and the rejection of the "Germanness" of East Prussia, partly predetermined by, and related to, a stereotyped view of Germans typical of the postwar period. However, the greatest attention is paid to the reasons of the symbolical appropriation, its preconditions, the process, and the strategies employed in three cities of the region: Kaliningrad, Olsztyn, and Klaipėda after WWII. Special attention to cities is not accidental, as it is the cities that represent the spaces of intense communication, and it is the phenomena typical of the said spaces that allow to best identify the processes of the provision of meanings, the association and dissociation with something that constitute the essence of symbolic appropriation of spaces. The focus on the changes that took place in Kaliningrad, Olsztyn, and Klaipėda adds to several other publications on symbolic appropriation of spaces in cities that have lately appeared in the historiography of Europe[8], primarily due to the fact that the present collection of articles is oriented not towards case studies of different regions of Europe, but rather towards a case study of one territory, i. e. East Prussia. Similar historical experiences of meaning rejection and appropriation in the former East Prussian cities after WWII allows the comparison and identification of similarities and differences of the process typical of specific regions. However, the comparison would be impossible without contexts (see the articles of Felix Ackermann and Alvydas Nikžentaitis in the final chapter of the book) that finally provide

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6   The major ones include: *Wokół niemieckiego dziedzictwa kulturowego na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych* (Ziemie Zachodnie. Studia i Materiały, Nr. 18). Ed. by Z. MAZUR. Poznań, 1997; *Wspólne dziedzictwo? Ze studiów nad stosunkiem do spuścizny kulturowej na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych*. Ed. by Z. MAZUR. Poznań, 2000; HOPPE, B. *Auf den Trümmern von Königsberg. Kaliningrad 1946-1970* (Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, Bd. 80). München, 2000; MATTHES, E. *Verbotene Erinnerung. Die Wiederentdeckung der ostpreußischen Geschichte und regionales Bewußtsein der russischen Bevölkerung im Gebiet Kaliningrad 1945-2001*. Bietigheim-Bissingen, 2002; КОСТЯШОВ, Ю. *Изгнание прусского духа: Как формировалось историческое сознание населения Калининградской области в послевоенные годы* / МАТТЕС, Э. *Запрещённое воспоминание: Возвращение истории Восточной Пруссии и региональное сознание жителей Калининградской области (1945-2001)*. Калининград, 2003; *Masuren: Trauma, Sehnsucht, leichtes Leben. Zur Gefühlswelt einer Landschaft*. Hrsg. von U. MAI. Berlin, 2005; *Ziemie Odzyskane/ Ziemie Zachodnie i Północne 1945–2005. 60 lat w granicach państwa polskiego* (Ziemie Zachodnie. Studia i Materiały, Nr. 23). Ed. by A. SAKSON. Poznań, 2006; BRODERSEN, P. *Die Stadt im Westen. Wie Königsberg Kaliningrad wurde*. Göttingen, 2008; SAFRONOVAS, V. *Praeitis kaip konflikto šaltinis: Tapatybės ideologijų konkurencija XX amžiaus Klaipėdoje*. Vilnius, 2011.
7   Cf.: *Ostpreußen nach 1945* (Annaberger Annalen, 1999, Nr. 7); SAKSON, A. *Od Kłajpedy do Olsztyna. Współcześni mieszkańcy byłych Prus Wschodnich: Kraj Kłajpedzki, Obwód Kaliningradzki, Warmia i Mazury*. Poznań, 2011.
8   *Die Aneignung fremder Vergangenheiten in Nordosteuropa am Beispiel plurikultureller Städte (20. Jahrhundert)* (Nordost-Archiv, Bd. XV / 2006). Hrsg. von Th. SERRIER. Lüneburg, 2007; *Villes baltiques. Une mémoire partagée* (Revue Germanique Internationale, 11/2010). Sous la dir. de M. ESPAGNE et Th. SERRIER. Paris, 2010.

an answer to the question whether the postwar space appropriation phenomenon in East Prussia was in some way unique in the regional context.

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Part of the articles for the present collection were written on the basis of an international seminar *The Appropriation of Space in East Prussia* held in May 2011 at Klaipėda University. Another part was specially commissioned. When compiling the collection, great attention was paid to the language aspect: articles are published in Lithuanian and Russian, followed by exhaustive summaries in Russian and Lithuanian respectively, as well as in English. The choice has been motivated by a lack of literature on the subject primarily in Lithuanian and Russian. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of translators of the collection: Laimutė Servaitė into English, Kristina Sprindžiūnaitė from German, and Irena Aleksaitė and Vyturys Jarutis from Polish. The subject-specific editing of all translations was done by the compiler of the book. On behalf of the Baltic Sea Region History and Archaeology Institute, I would like to thank Thomas Mann Cultural Centre in Nida (Director Lina Motuzienė) and Polish Institute (*Instytut Polski*) in Vilnius (Director Dr Małgorzata Kasner) for their help in the organization of the seminar and the compiling of the present publication.

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