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# Old Lithuanian

Introduction – Part 1: Language and speakers

# Roadmap

- Historical information
- Genetic affiliation
- Varieties
- Language map

## Interest in Lithuanian

Antoine Meillet (1866–1936):

Qui veut retrouver sur les lèvres des hommes « un écho de ce qu’a pu être la langue commune indo-européenne, dit M. Meillet du Collège de France, va écouter les paysans lithuaniens d’aujourd’hui ». C’est

“who wants to know how distant ancestors of the Indo-Europeans spoke need only to look at the mouth of a Lithuanian farmer”

## Conservativity

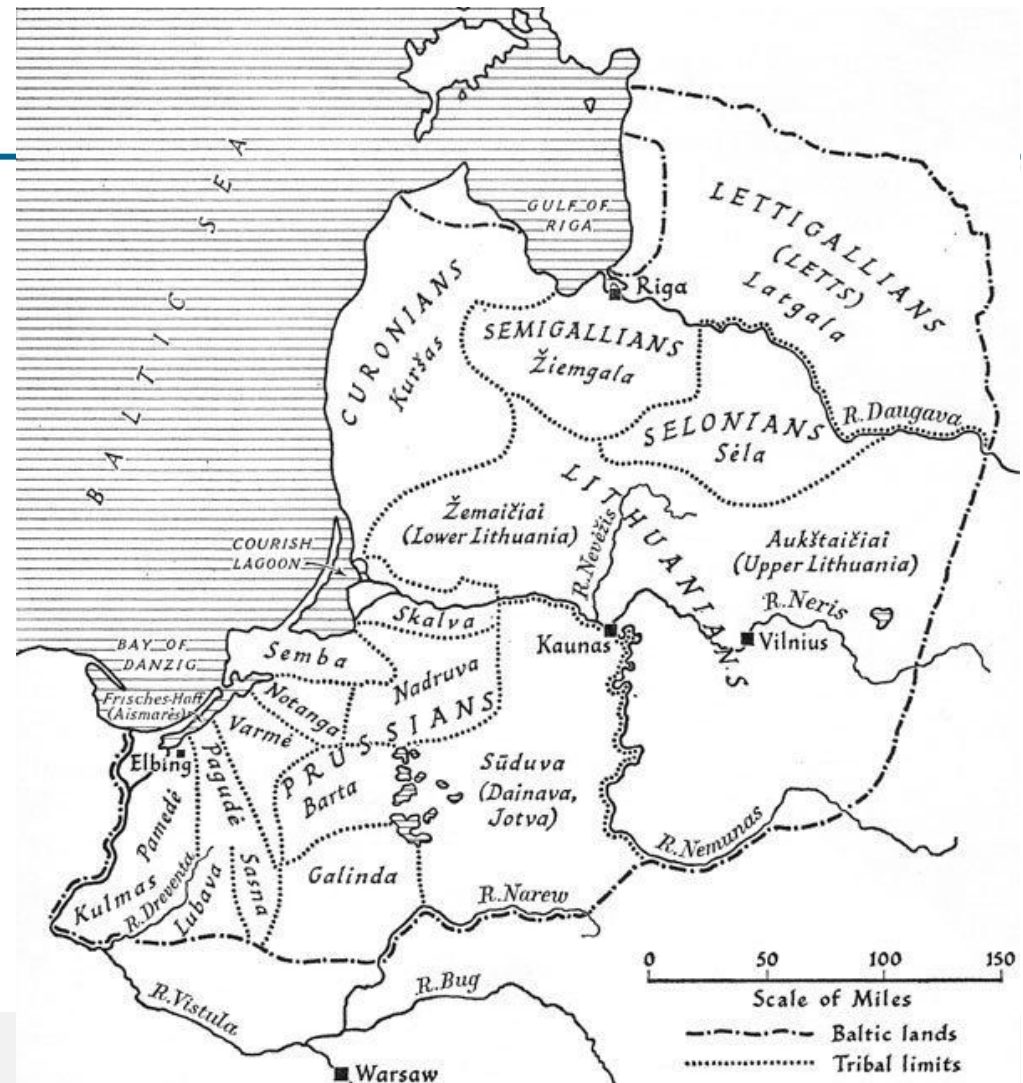
Dievas	davė	dantis,	‘(he/she) gives’, 3 <sup>rd</sup> p. sg. Pres. from dā, dadāti – to give	dadāti	duoti	to give (inf.)
god:NOM.SG	give:3PST	tooth:ACC.PL		tooth (N. sg. m.)	dantas	dantis
			husband's brother (stem form, m.)	devar	dieveris	husband's brother (N. sg. m.)
duos	ir	duonos				
give:3FUT	and	bread:GEN.SG	god (N. sg. m.)	devas	dievas	god (N. sg. m.)
‘God gave the teeth, [God] will give also bread’			corn, grain (N. sg. f.)	dhānā	duona	bread (N. sg. f.)
			fume (N. sg. m.)	dhūmas	dūmas	fume (N. sg. m.)
			day (N. sg. m.)	dinas	diena	day (N. sg. f.)

Old Lithuanian – Introduction, Part 1

## Baltic languages

Northern dialect of Indo-European:

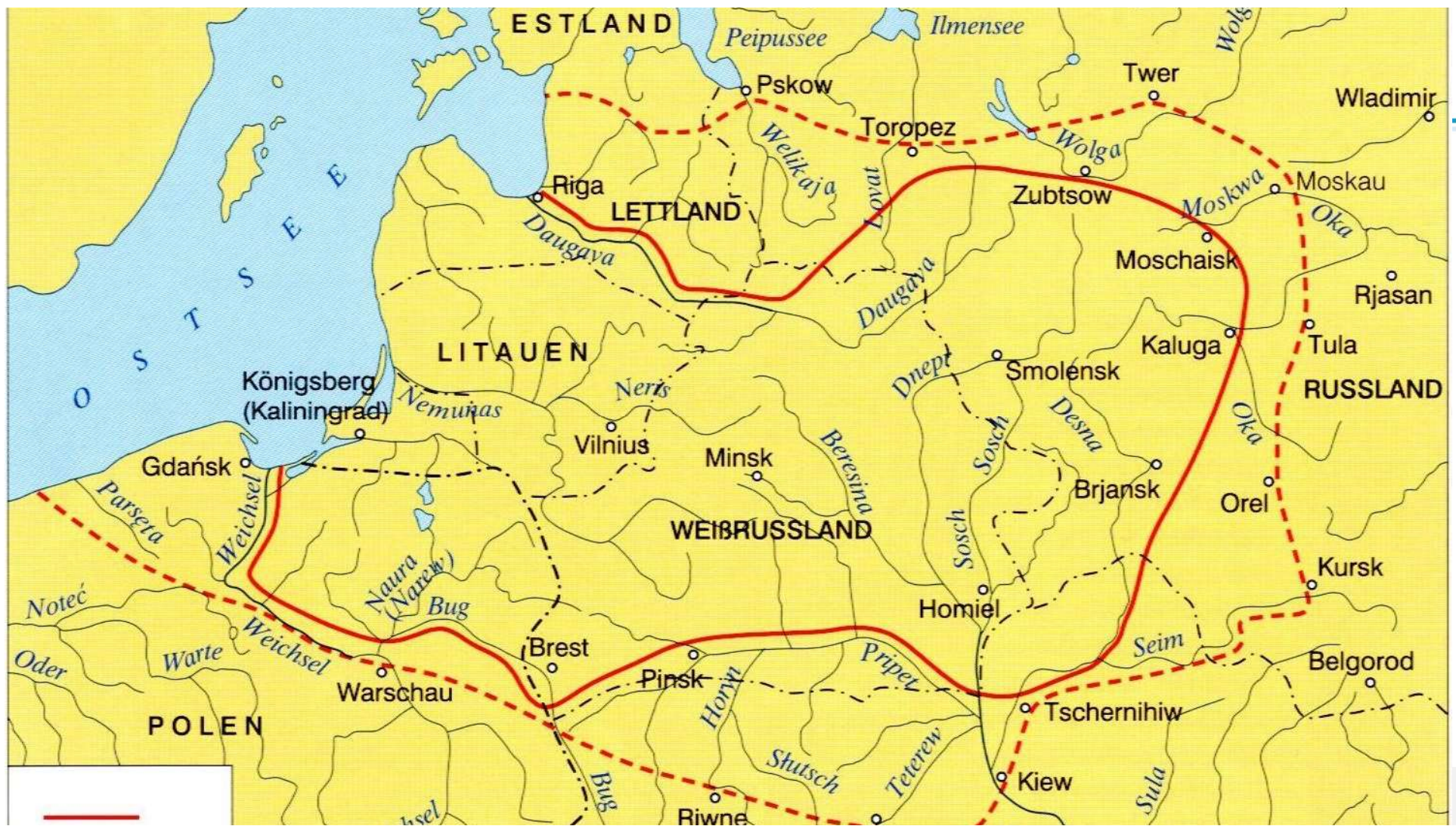
- Lithuanian
- Latvian
- Old Prussian
- Curonian
- Semigalian
- Selonian
- Yotvingian
- Scalvian
- Galindian (West- and Dnepr-)



“I would suggest calling this family the Baltic languages family or somehow else”



que linguis principatu. Halis 1837. und Commentatio de linguarum Letticarum cum vicinis nexu. Halis 1841. Obgleich in beiden Abhandlungen die Preussische Sprache nur eine Nebenrolle spielt und die vollständiger vorliegende Lithauische und Lettische dem Verfasser Hauptgegenstand sind, so fällt doch auch für unsern nächsten Zweck manche geistreiche und interessante Bemerkung ab, für die ich ihm dankbar bin. Nur über einen Punct möchte ich mit dem gelehrten Verfasser rechten. Warum benennt er, wie auch E. Hermann und Hennig vor ihm, die ganze Sprachfamilie mit einem Namen, den schon eine einzelne von ihnen für sich in Anspruch genommen hat? Seine linguae Letticae geben gar zu leicht zu Mißverständnissen Veranlassung. Ich würde vorschlagen, diese Familie die der Baltischen Sprachen oder sonst irgend wie zu nennen. So wenig bezeichnend z. B. der Name der Semitischen Sprachen ist, so ist er doch sehr viel besser, als wenn man die unter demselben verstandenen Sprachen die Hebräischen nennen wollte.



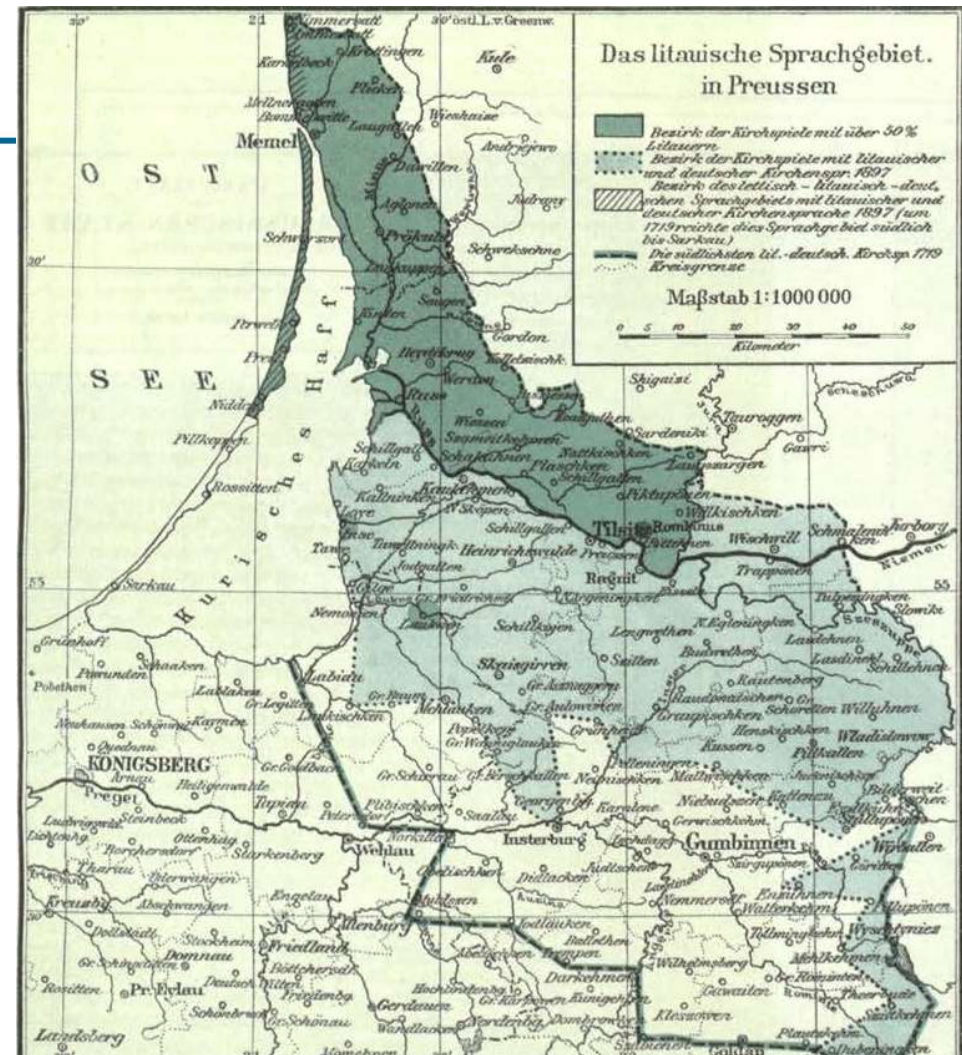
Dialectal differentiation of Proto-Baltic (ca. 6th–5th c. BCE)			
peripheral dialects		central dialects	
Proto-West-Baltic (ca. 5th c. BCE)		Proto-East-Baltic (homogeneous until ca. 3rd c. CE, differentiation ca. 5th–7th c. CE)	
South-West-Baltic	North-West-Baltic	Curonian (easternized WBalt.)  Lithuanian, Latgalian, Semigalian, Selonian  East-Baltic languages (ca. 7th–8th c. CE)  South-East-BalticNorth-East-Baltic  LithuanianLatvian	
Old Prussian  Yotvingian (alias Sudovian or Dainavian)			



# Lithuania Minor (Prussian Lithuania, Kleinlitauen)

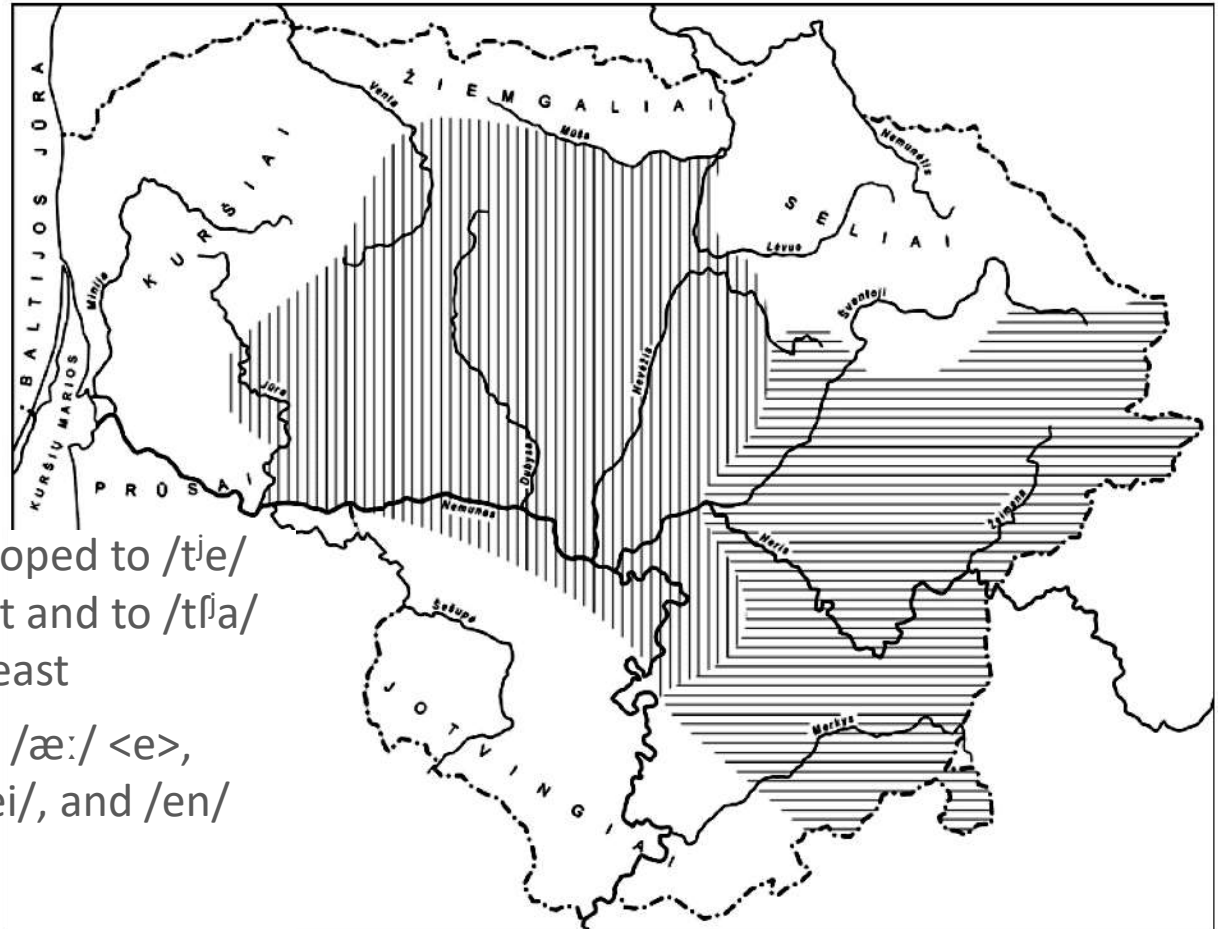
- Duchy of Prussia (since 1525)
- Kingdom of Prussia (since 1701)
- East Prussia (since 1773)

Lithuanians inhabited the north-eastern part, along the Curonian Lagoon, the peninsula of Samland. In the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> c. in the districts of Ragnit, Insterburg, Tilsit, Labiau, Schaaken, Gumbinnen, Laukischken.



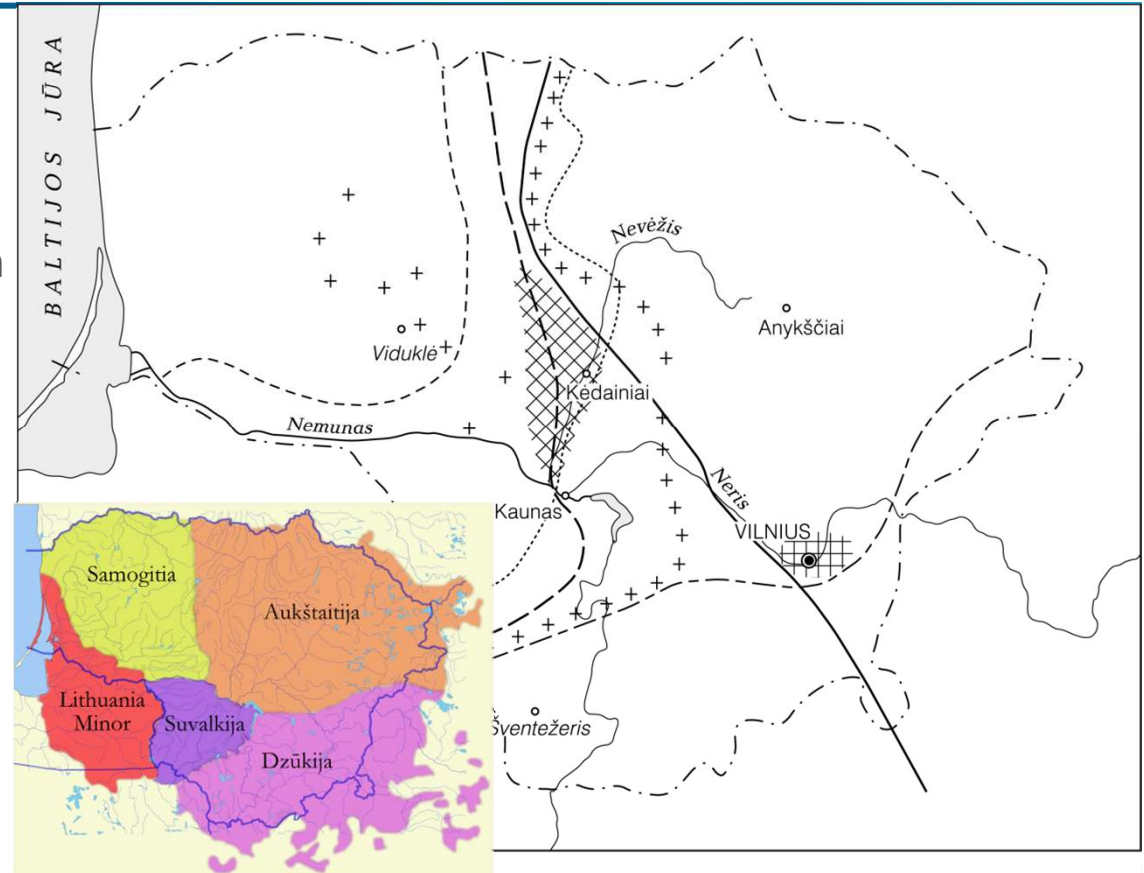
## Dialectal differentiation of Lithuanian (10<sup>th</sup> c.)

- Long nasal vowels /a:/ <ą>, /æ:/ <ę> narrowed to /u:/ <ų>, /i:/ <į> in the east
- Nasal diphthongs /am/, /an/, /em/, /en/ narrowed to /um/, /un/, /im/, /in/ in the east
- Clusters \*-tja-, \*-dja- developed to /tʲe/ <te>, /dʲe/ <de> in the west and to /tʲia/ <čia>, /dʲia/ <džia> in the east
- /j/ before the front vowels /æ:/ <e>, /e:/ <è>, /ɪ/ <i>, /i:/ <y>, /ei/, and /en/ in the west



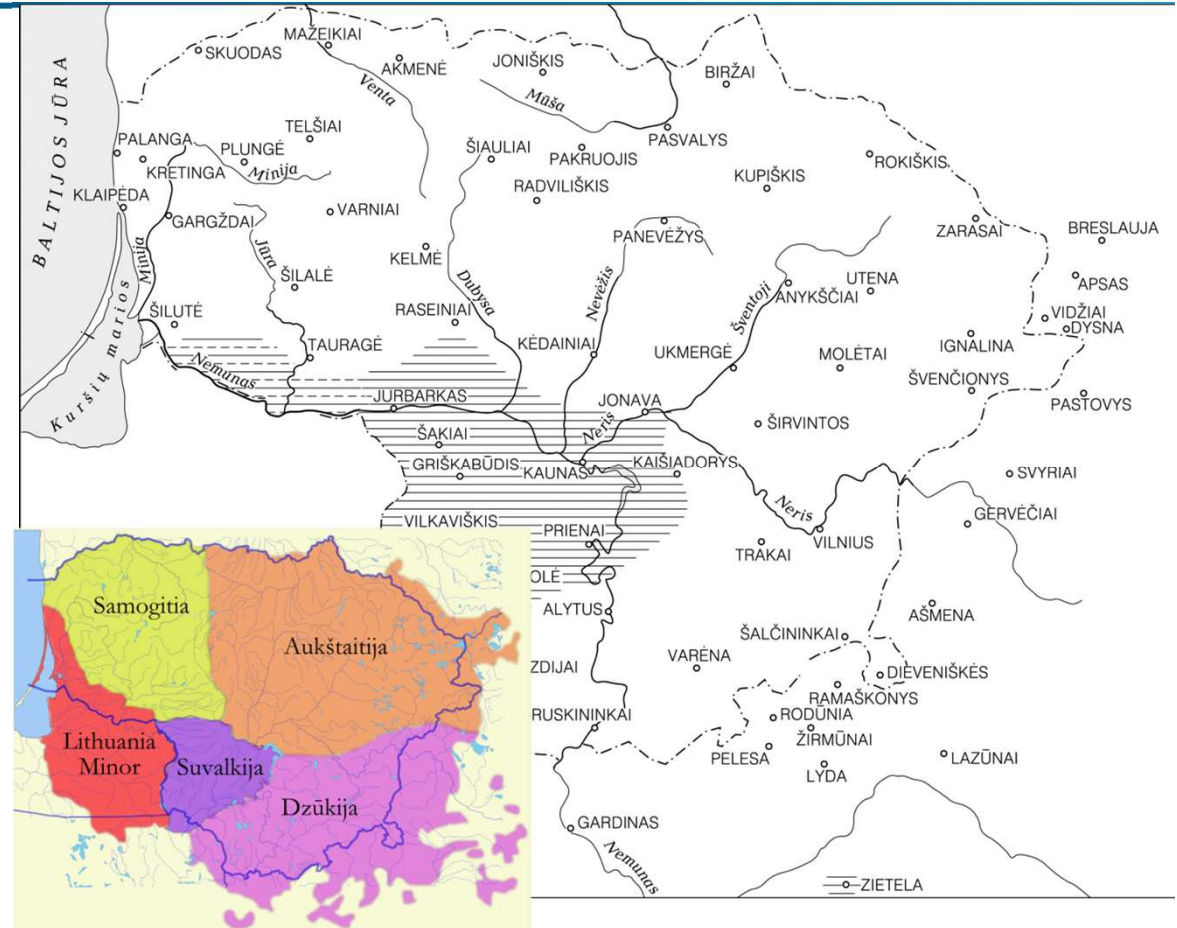
# Interdialects in Lithuania Maior

- **Eastern (= “Lithuanian”, “Dzūkian”)**  
current in the bishopric of Vilnius  
(founded in 1387); based on the  
Vilnius *koine*, which developed from  
the East Aukštaitian dialect  
(subdialect of the Vilnius region)
- **Middle (= Central, “Žemaitian”)**  
current in the bishopric of Žemaitija  
(founded in 1417), mostly in the  
former territory of the Duchy of  
Samogitia; based on the West  
Aukštaitian dialect of Kėdainiai



# Lithuanian in Lithuania Minor

- Western (= “Prussian”) —** current in the Duchy of Prussia; based on the South-West Aukštaitian dialect, which remained more archaic than the other dialects. The dialectal differentiation here was smaller than in the Lithuanian state. Standard Lithuanian, which is based on the Kaunas region subdialect, is closest to the Western variety of Old Lithuanian.



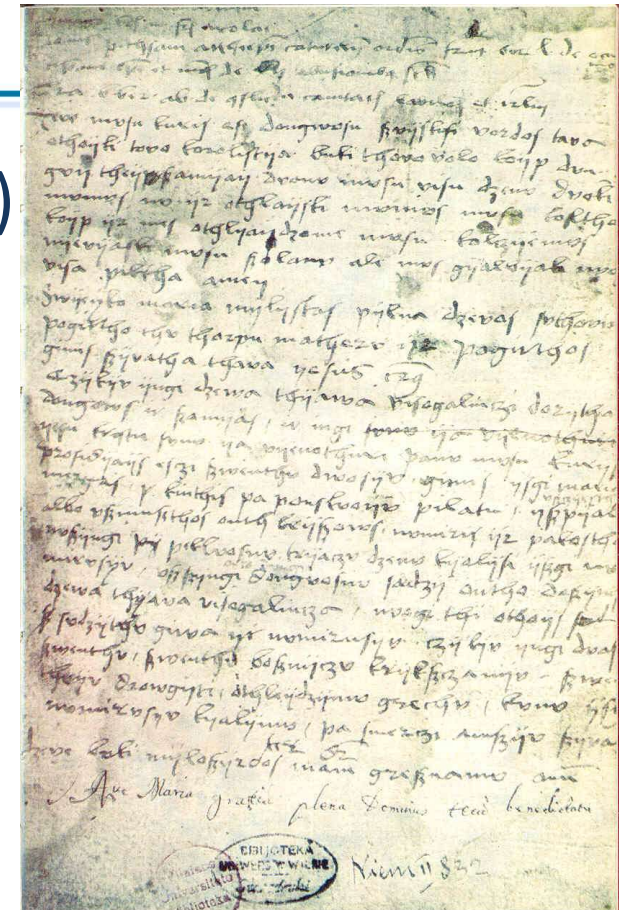
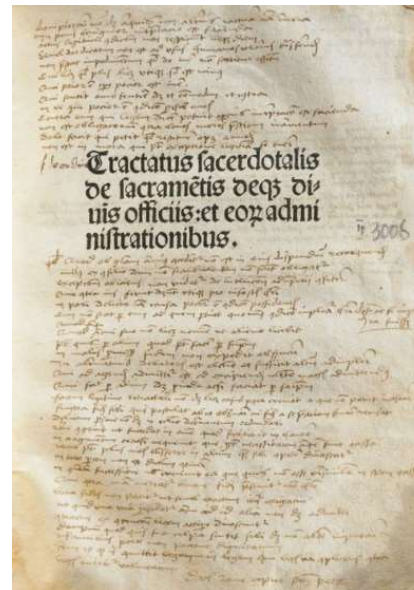
## Variations of Old Lithuanian

Western (“Prussian”)	Middle (Central, “Žemaitian”)	Eastern (“Lithuanian”, “Dzūkian”)
Lithuanian in the Duchy of Prussia	Low Lithuanian Interdialect in the Bishopric of Žemaitija (founded in 1417). Centre: Kėdainiai	Lithuanian in the Bishopric of Vilnius (founded in 1387)
Based on the South-West Aukštaitian (High Lithuanian) dialect (=southern subgroup of West Aukštaitian)	Based on the West Aukštaitian local dialect of Kėdainiai (=middle and southern part of the northern subgroup of West Aukštaitian)	Based on Vilnius <i>koine</i> , developed from the local East Aukštaitian dialect
Evangelical Lutheran	Roman Catholic, Evangelical Reformed	Roman Catholic
<b>Writings since 1547</b>	<b>Writings since 1595</b>	<b>Writings since ca. 1503 / 1610</b>
<i>Grammatica Litvanica</i> (1653) and <i>Compendium Litvanico-Germanicum</i> (1654) by Daniel Klein (1609–1666)	anonymous grammar <i>Universitas Lingvarum Litvaniae</i> (1737)	<i>Dictionarium trium linguarum. Polonico-Latino-Lituanicum</i> (ca. 1629, 1631, 1642, 1677, 1713) by Konstantin Sirwyd (1578/1581–1631)
“Transition” into Standard Lithuanian in the 20th c.	<i>Universitas</i> shaped the orthographic and grammatical system until the 19th c.; second edition in 1829	Extinct in the 18th c. (last book 1713)

# Old Lithuanian (ca. 1503/1520—1800)

## (1) 16th—17th century

- “Dzūkian prayers” (*Pater noster*, *Ave Maria*, *Credo*) in: Nicolaus de Blony, *Tractatus sacerdotalis* (Straßburg: Martin Flach, 1503)



## Old Lithuanian (ca. 1503/1520—1800)

### (2) 18th century

- Christian Gottlieb Mielcke (1732–1807),  
*Anfangs=Gründe einer Littauischen Sprach=Lehre*  
(Königsberg: Hartungsche Hofbuchdruckerei, **1800**)

