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The Image of an Occupied City: Walter Buhe's Vilnius of the First World War

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The issue of the relationship between war and art during the First World War in Lithuania has hitherto been little researched. This is particularly true of German art produced in Lithuania during the war period: it has not yet been subjected to any major research. Art by German artists was ignored for certain political reasons for all of the 20th century. Only in 1991 were German wartime works of art published by the Lithuanian art historian Vladas Drėma, as a visual source in a historical investigation of Vilnius architecture,¹ and quite recently Hermann Struck, a Berlin artist of German-Jewish origin, was covered in a paper by Lara Lempertienė.² The works of art produced in Lithuania by German artists are worth closer attention, since they reflect the results of the clash of different cultures in the military context. This article is the first attempt to present the German artist Walter Buhe, and to analyse the image of the occupied city in his work.

The German army occupied Vilnius on 18 September 1915, without any resistance or devastation, and immediately established its order. All local organisations and cultural societies were closed down, artistic activities were restricted, and the development of Lithuanian art during the First World War was cut short. Many artists had left Vilnius in the evacuation of civilian refugees to Russia. Some went to the countryside, and

¹ V. Drėma, *Dingęs Vilnius* (Lost Vilnius), Vilnius, 1991, pp. 23, 24, 50, 98, 128, 168.

² L. Lempertienė, Iliustruota 'Lietuvos Jeruzalės' mitų knyga: apie Zalmano Šneuro ir Hermano Štruko knygą *Vilna* (An Illustrated Book of Myths of the 'Lithuanian Jerusalem': Zalman Schneour's and Herman Struck's book *Vilna*), Berlin, 1923; *Atrasti Vilnių: skiriama Vladiui Drėmai* (To Discover Vilnius: Dedicated to Vladas Drėma), Vilnius, 2011, pp. 153-161.

could not return due to the German policy of limited movement of local civilians. Some artists, however, stayed in Vilnius. The most prominent among them were the painters Antanas Žmuidzinaičius and Stanisław Bohusz-Siesteńcewicz, and the sculptor and architect Antanas Vivulskis. The latter even erected an outstanding monument during the First World War. In 1916 he built the Three Crosses monument, in memory of the first Christian martyrs in Vilnius. Made of concrete in the late Art Nouveau style, the monument towered high on a Vilnius hill, and could be seen from nearly everywhere, becoming an iconic sign of the Catholicism of the city.³

Local artists were excluded from cultural life in Vilnius by the restrictions imposed by the German military authorities. The main exhibiting institution established by the Germans was the Wilnaer Arbeitsstuben. It showed traditional crafts, and the folk art of local national groups, Lithuanians, Poles, Byelorussians and Jews, and functioned as a commercial gallery.⁴ Professional local artists were excluded from the art scene; only German artists represented professional art in the city. Their works were shown to the public: the exhibition entitled Bild und Druck in October 1916 showed works by German press artists,⁵ an exhibition of Königsberg artists took place in February 1917,⁶ the exhibition Maler in Ober Ost was held in October 1917,⁷ and an exhibition of Munich artists was brought to Vilnius in February 1918.⁸ Solo exhibitions of work by German artists were held in the premises of Wilnaer Arbeitsstuben, such as the exhibition in 1917 of paintings with Vilnius as a theme by Alfred Holler.⁹ The only solo exhibition of work by a local artist organised during the First World War in Vilnius was the exhibition by the

³ The Three Crosses monument was destroyed by the Soviets in 1950, and rebuilt at the time of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Singing Revolution in Lithuania in 1989.

⁴ See the article by Lijana Šatavičiūtė in this volume, pp. 56–70.

⁵ Bild und Druck, *Wilnaer Zeitung*, 26 October 1916.

⁶ Deutsche Kunstausstellung Wilna, *Wilnaer Zeitung*, 1 February 1917.

⁷ Maler in Ob. Ost, *Wilnaer Zeitung*, 9 September 1917.

⁸ Deutsche Kunstausstellung Wilna 1918, *Wilnaer Zeitung*, 21 February 1918.

⁹ *Zeitung der 10. Armee*, 14 January 1917.

photographer Jan Bulhak that was held in 1917.¹⁰ He showed two series of photographs, entitled Vilnius and Lithuania, that were successful with the German military.

The Germans brought with them a well-organised propaganda machine and modern printing facilities. They immediately closed the local press in the occupied countries, and established their own instead (they later allowed some press activity in the local languages). As Vilnius was one of the main transit centres of Ober-Ost,¹¹ several German newspapers were published here, including *Zeitung der 10. Armee* for the army, and *Wilnaer Zeitung* for the civilian population. Both of them had illustrated supplements: the first had *Scheinwerfer*, and the second *Bilderschau der Wilnaer Zeitung*. These supplements contained numerous drawings, photographs and reproductions, and many German artists who had enlisted as soldiers on the Eastern Front supplied the newspapers with drawings. Some of them became regular contributors to these newspapers. Residing in Vilnius as artists with the military press headquarters, they avoided service at the front and mortal danger. Among them there were Walter Buhe, Fred Hendriok, Gerd Paul, Felix Krause, Paul Weber, Carl Schmoll von Eisenswerth, Magnus Zeller and others.

Bilderschau der Wilnaer Zeitung was a weekly four-page illustrated supplement to *Wilnaer Zeitung*. A set of copies of it from the years 1916 to 1918 is an impressive collection of views of wartime Vilnius. Its editorial board included the editor Paul Fechter,¹² a theatre and art critic, writer and literary historian, and also the first person to produce a book on Expressionism in Germany before the war.¹³ Other members of the

¹⁰ Wystawa fotograficzna, *Dziennik Wileński*, 1 March 1917.

¹¹ Ober Ost is short for Oberbefehlshaber der gesamten Deutschen Streitkräfte im Osten, a German term meaning 'Supreme Commander of All German Forces in the East' during the First World War. It was also used to refer to the whole area of the Eastern Front.

¹² Paul Fechter (1880–1958) was a feuilleton editor of *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten*, and *Vossische Zeitung* before the First World War; after the war he worked for *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* and was known as a supporter of German National Socialism. During the First World War he worked on *Wilnaer Zeitung*, and published a guide to Vilnius, *Wanderstunden in Wilna* in 1918 under the pseudonym Paul Monty.

¹³ P. Fechter, *Der Expressionismus*, München, 1914.

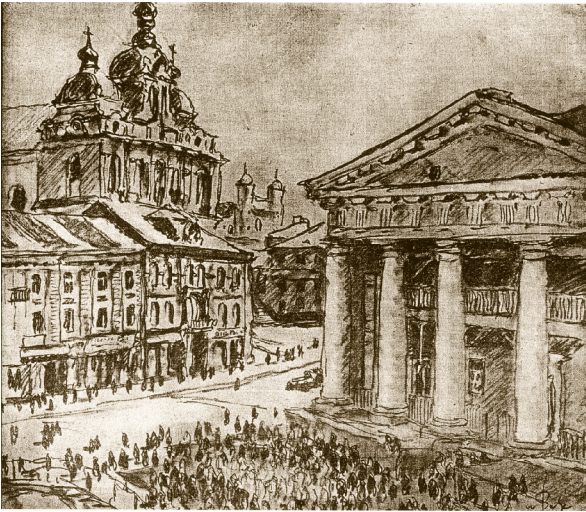
editorial board were the photographer Ludwig Boedecker and the press artist Walter Buhe.¹⁴ It was a kind of intellectual command, whose Vilnius experiences should be taken into consideration.

Conscripted into the army, Buhe became a newspaper artist, came to Vilnius early in 1916, and stayed here until the spring of 1918. He was already a mature artist, thirty-four years old. However, he was not a war artist, or a painter of battle scenes. The pages of *Bilderschau der Wilnaer Zeitung* contained only a few photographs witnessing the cruelties of the enemy and the damage wrought by the Russian army. On the whole, the war itself looked quite attractive in the illustrations, showing views of solemn military parades in occupied cities, and pictures of soldiers and their commanders. Buhe produced covers for *Bilderschau der Wilnaer Zeitung*, and illustrated its articles using various techniques, such as Indian ink, charcoal and gouache. He also made a drawing for each daily copy of *Wilnaer Zeitung*. He used different styles in his work: some pictures were realistic sketches from nature, others were stylised in the Art Nouveau manner, and some had Expressionist features. He made hundreds of drawings of local sights during the First World War. There is possibly no other artist in Vilnius' history who has left such a big visual legacy of the city.

Buhe's image of the occupied city can be classified in three visual discourses: 1) the Germanisation of Vilnius; 2) a presentation of the architectural heritage of the city; and 3) an image of the city's inhabitants and their everyday life.

According to the military ideology of Ober-Ost, the meaning and goal of the conquest of new lands in the east was to bring the higher German culture to less civilised countries. The greatness of that culture and

¹⁴ Walter Buhe was born in Achersleben in 1882, and studied applied graphics in the Kunstgewerbemuseum school in Berlin. Between 1920 and 1945, he was a professor at the Akademie für graphische Künste in Leipzig. He designed posters and book covers, illustrated books, made layouts and created typefaces. He died in Leipzig in 1958. U. Thieme, F. Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, Bd. 5, 1911; H. Vollmer, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler des XX Jahrhunderts*, Bd. 1, 1953; *Allgemeines Künstler-Lexikon*, Bd. 15, 1997.



1. Walter Buhe. *Concert in Front of the City Theatre*. 1916



2. Walter Buhe. *Silvestre at St Casimir's Church*. 1916

the new order were also demonstrated in the drawings in *Bilderschau der Wilnaer Zeitung*. At Easter in 1916, a military band gave a solemn, public, open-air concert in front of the City Theatre (which had been turned into the German Theatre). Buhe drew a wide view of the square from a high vantage point, enlarging the proportions of some buildings, and thus transforming the intimate and unpretentious Old Town into a metropolis with small human figures (Fig. 1). For the cover of the 1917 Silvester issue, he drew a view of St Casimir's Church, which had undergone many changes during occupations (Fig. 2). Dedicated to the only Lithuanian saint, the country's patron saint, it was turned into an Orthodox church during the Russian period, and during the German occupation it functioned as a Protestant church, the main one for the German army during religious festivities in Vilnius. Against the background of a starry sky, the church presented a joyful and idyllic view of Christmas.

Buhe's work shows how the city and its buildings were adapted for the needs of the German military and institutions. The image in



3. Walter Buhe. *Casino of the Officers*. 1917

the press of German institutions served the purposes of propaganda. Thus, the officers' casino, which was set up in the former residence of the Russian civilian governor of the city, was presented as a place of civilised German entertainment. Buhe's drawing *Casino of the Officers* (Fig. 3) on the cover of *Bilderschau der Wilnaer Zeitung* showed a nighttime view of the building, on a wide street, with a beam of light shining through the door, and freezing coachmen with their sledges waiting at the entrance for fares.¹⁵ This building

in Gubernatorskaya (now Klaipėdos) street was destroyed during the Second World War, and Buhe's drawing is the only record of it.

Every conqueror demonstrates his power by means of pompous festivities. During the war, the most solemn festivities in Vilnius were connected with the birthdays of Kaiser Wilhelm II. Every year, Buhe recorded the eve of the emperor's birthday. On 26 January 1917, he was at the theatre in Pohulanka, where a crowd of onlookers (some were even in the trees) watched a military ceremony called a *Zapfenstreich*.¹⁶ Military technical means, such as rockets and fireworks, were used for the illuminations. Contrasts of light and dark, sparks, smoke, the glowing façade of the theatre and a low vantage-point made an astonishing

¹⁵ An article in the journal described the casino, and was accompanied by Boedecker's photographs and Buhe's illustrations. One of the drawings showed a point of 'particular attraction', the Chamber of Music and Ladies, a boudoir with a grand piano and Biedermeier furniture. It was presented as a place of intimacy, good taste and civilised leisure in a German home.

¹⁶ A military tattoo with a drum performance.



4. Walter Buhe. *The Parade on the Kaiser's Birthday*. 1917

and dynamic impression (Fig. 4). In 1918, Buhe drew *The Parade on the Kaiser's Birthday* with the troops and cannons in Cathedral Square during a *Zapfenstreich*, lit at night by rockets. Impressive military ceremonies, with bands, fireworks on Gediminas Hill, and military parades with torches along Vilnius' streets¹⁷ during the First World War were a kind of paratheatrical demonstration of German power.

Another group of Buhe's sights of Vilnius comprised drawings of architectural monuments in the city. Buhe discovered the beauty of the Old Town soon

after his arrival. He spent much of his time strolling along its streets, drawing Baroque churches, palaces, bell towers and narrow winding alleys. He made dozens of pen and ink drawings, such as the series *Vilnius Churches*. In his gouache paintings, he combined architecture and figures (*By the Church of St Teresa*, *The Courtyard of the Old Jewish School*), or he made drawings in charcoal (*The Vilnius Ghetto in the Moonlight*) to render the romantic atmosphere of the Old Town. It is noteworthy that German wartime publications paid particular attention to the architectural heritage of the city. Books and newspapers reproduced

¹⁷ The Kaiser's birthday was one of the most solemn feasts celebrated in Vilnius: in 1916 the military parade was staged between Lukiškės Square and Cathedral Square, with choruses at the Schloßberg Palace, torches with a military band at Gediminas Castle, and fireworks (*Wilnaer Zeitung*, 27 January 1916). In 1918, the scenario was different: the parades of regiments with torches marched from Vokiečių, Didžioji, Pilies and Arsenalo streets to the square of the army headquarters (now the President's Office) for the fireworks and 'Grosser Zapfenstreich' on the occasion of the emperor's birthday (*Wilnaer Zeitung*, 27 January 1918).

numerous drawings of monuments, with accompanying descriptions, often in series. In this respect, Vilnius was no exception: the German attention to monuments was noticeable in all areas on the Eastern front. In determining the reasons for this phenomenon, we cannot but agree with the historian Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius in stating that in the east the Germans occupied enormous territories belonging to Russia, and thus came into contact with previously unknown ethnically diverse lands which had to be surveyed. Cultural monuments were also treated as resources that had to be surveyed, and their registration was a part of the cultural policy in Ober-Ost. The German administration 'needed to list and inventorise the treasures now in its keeping'.¹⁸ On the other hand, German soldiers were also interested in the new land, its heritage and special places: for them it was a kind of tourist attraction. Several German guidebooks to Vilnius were published during the First World War, some of them even went through several editions, and certainly the main political aim of these publications was to show the historical influence of German culture in Vilnius' heritage. Postcards with the city's main landmarks were in great demand among soldiers, as they sent them home to their relatives and friends. Numerous series of postcards of local monuments, both drawn and photographed, were published by the printing facilities of *Zeitung der 10. Armee* in Vilnius, and by various printing presses in Germany.

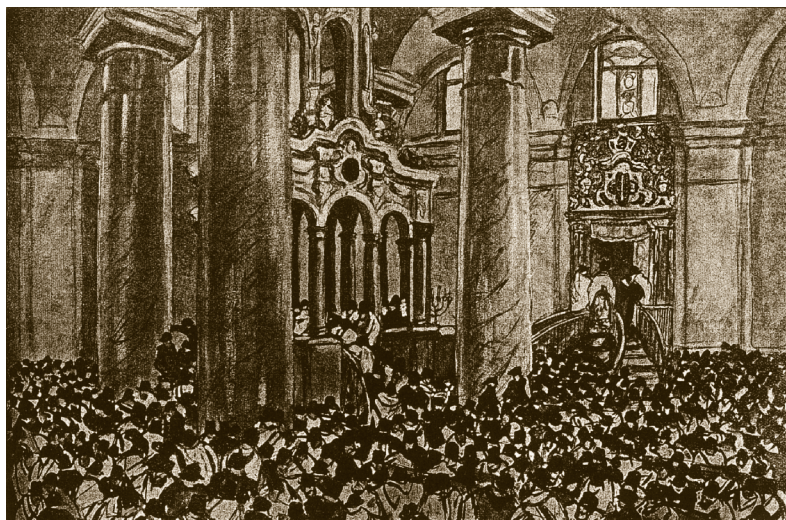
Buhe made a number of drawings of the architectural heritage; however, he did not confine himself only to recording the architecture. The third group of Buhe's works, perhaps the most interesting, deals with the everyday life of the city, the daily routine of the inhabitants of different social strata, religious belief, age and gender. The artist sketched in the most varied places: in the streets, places of worship, auctions, markets, parks and suburbs. He illustrated propaganda articles about the charity institutions *Hilfe durch Arbeit* (on teaching crafts to poor Jewish children) and *Arbeitsstube* (on fostering traditional handicrafts), and

¹⁸ V.G. Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity and German Occupation in World War I*, Cambridge, 2004, p. 130.



5. Walter Buhe. *In the Spring Sun*. 1918

feeding places for the poor, and so on. He was enchanted to observe the changes of the seasons in the city, in *The First Spring Flowers* with a girl selling flowers in the park, *In the Spring Sun* (Fig. 5) with porters snoozing in their empty barrows and warming themselves in the sun, and others. He also recorded domestic scenes: peasant women selling their harvest, knife grinders, washerwomen, and fishermen. In Buhe's drawings, the city looks as if it has nothing to do with war: people are engaged in their everyday work, and the Halė Market is full of food in the spring of 1918,



6. Walter Buhe. *Divine Service in the Old Synagogue*. 1916



7. Walter Buhe. *By a Warm Stove*. 1917



8. Walter Buhe. *Candlemas in Vilnius*. 1918

a time when people in Vilnius were starving.

Buhe was greatly impressed by Vilnius' houses of worship. In 1916, one of the first issues of *Bilderschau der Wilnaer Zeitung* acquainted its readers with the Jewish quarters of the city, local Jewish traditions and the way of life. Buhe drew scenes of the old synagogue: in *Divine Service in the Old Synagogue* (Fig. 6), he showed a sea of black *kippas* (skullcaps) and striped *thalliths* (prayer shawls) in the vast space of the synagogue, worshippers in *In the Old Prayer House*, beg-

gars in *By a Warm Stove* (Fig. 7), and rabbis in *In the Talmud Hour*. The Germans were no less impressed by the devotion of Vilnius Catholics. Buhe recorded their festivals in his pictures *The Magi* and *Candlemas in Vilnius* (Fig. 8), depicting praying women in a cold and dark church with lit candles in their hands. This picture, with distorted black figures, simplified means of expression, and subjective, dramatic feeling, was close to German Expressionism. The figures by Buhe are close to images by German artists at that time depicting the sufferings of war, like Käthe Kollwitz, who embraced the victims of poverty, hunger and war, and was full of commiseration and compassion for them in her work.

On the other hand, Buhe's images should be seen in the context of Vilnius through the eyes of the Germans. What was the description of the Ober-Ost image and the characteristics of the visual specifics of Vilnius during the First World War? This question was discussed by German intellectuals residing in Ober-Ost. Articles published in Vilnius magazines contained reflections on the subject, and one of the answers to the question can be found in Lieutenant R. von Garvens' article in *Zeitung*

der 10. Armee. The article, entitled Rembrandtesque and Other Tastes of Art in the East, presented the artistic identity of the land lying to the east, unknown to Germany and referred to as ‘eastern’, and thus attempted to introduce it into artistic topography familiar to the Germans. The visual specificity of the region (including Vilnius) was linked with 17th-century Dutch painting:

Wenn auch die äussere Form wie kleine strohgedeckte Bauernhöfe, die Silhouetten feinzweiger Weiden gegen einen klaren Abendhimmel, die ich sie in den vorigen Kriegswinter in Belgien beobachtet habe, mich selbstverständlich an die alten niederländischen Meister erinnerten, so finde ich noch stärkere Anklänge hier in Osten, so seltsam es auch klingen mag. Ich denke da vor allem an Rembrandt. Es liegt wohl daran, dass das Land hier noch einen so ursprünglichen Charakter bewahrt hat, ich möchte sagen, einen mittelalterlichen Geist ausstrahlt. Täglich begegne ich Rembrandts Modelle: den Bettlern, Rabbinern, den alten runzeligen Frauen, komischen, zotteligen, mischrassigen Hunden.¹⁹

A comparison of Garvens’ writings and Buhe’s images leads us to the conclusion that Buhe’s figures are allusions to Rembrandt’s late models. Vilnius types in the charcoal drawings by Buhe, full of the play of light and shade, and contrasts of dramatic luminosity, resemble those by Rembrandt. The deprived, mostly Vilnius Jews, make up a gallery of psychologically expressive types on the verge of death, portraits of old wrinkled paupers. They are people in rags, disabled, peddlers frozen to the bone: *Travelling Book Trade in Vilnius* (Fig. 9), *Kiosks of Street Vendors* (Fig. 10), eating in the street in *Lunch in the Street* (Fig. 11), street musicians in *Musicians* (Fig. 12), the hungry in the people’s soup kitchen in *Old Woman with a Child* (Fig. 14), children with soup dishes in *Jars Waiting for Food* (Fig. 15), a boy eating with a spoon from a kettle in *The Longed-for Lunchtime* (Fig. 16). Not only the local inhabitants, but also their clothing and daily details resembled themes of Rembrandt:

Und dann gemahnt mich noch eine ganz geringfügige Äusserlichkeit an Rembrandts Motive; nämlich das altmodische Pelzwerk, wie es mir hier begegnet,

¹⁹ R. von Garvens, Rembrandtische und andere Kunstgenüsse im Osten, *Zeitung der 10. Armee*, 1 February 1916.



9. Walter Buhe. *Travelling Book Trade in Vilnius*. 1918



10. Walter Buhe. *Kiosks of Street Vendors*. 1918



11. Walter Buhe. *Lunch in the Street*. 1918



12. Walter Buhe. *Musicians*. 1917



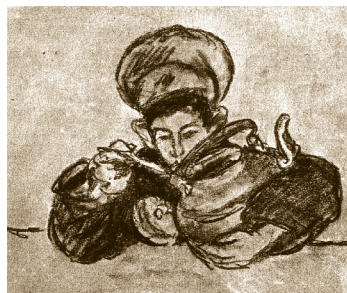
13. Walter Buhe. *Card Players*. 1917



14. Walter Buhe. *Old Woman with a Child*. 1916



15. Walter Buhe. *Jars Waiting for Food*. 1916



16. Walter Buhe. *The Longed-for Lunch-time*. 1916

*richtiges Gebrauchspelzwerk, ein Schutz gegen das Klima. So jedenfalls malte Rembrandt das Rauchswerk, wie es hier immer vorkommt in seiner Form und in seinem meist abgenutzten Zustand, so durchaus echt als solches wirkend und den Begriff des Luxus, den die Mode daraus gemacht hat, gänzlich vergessen machend.*²⁰

Like Garvens, Buhe was astonished at the appearance of the local people. In his sketches, he depicted their old-fashioned threadbare clothes, in particular the peasant sheepskin coats worn all the year round by adults (*Auction Herald*) and children (*Card Players*, Fig. 13); while in Germany only coats lined with fur were worn at that time.

The presentation of Jewish and Christian shrines in Buhe's above-mentioned works, referred to by Garvens as reflecting the opulent medieval beauty and piety of the people, were also close to the style of Rembrandt: '*Macht nicht auch das prunkhafte, goldene Innere einer russischen Kirche, sei es katholisch oder griechisch-katholisch, den Eindruck eines Rembrandtschen Tempels?*'²¹

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

Later in his article disclosing the variety of aesthetic tastes influenced by ethnic and religious traditions, Garvens deals with the diversity of local art, including traditional peasant clothes, Lithuanian wooden crosses, Catholic sacred art, Byzantine Orthodox churches, the decoration of Jewish synagogues, and hand-made tools and utensils. Nevertheless, the 'Rembrandtesque' discourse was pivotal for Garvens in revealing the beauty and visual peculiarity of the region.

However, this 'Rembrandtesque' discourse was not so attractive or so innocent if we look at it from the point of view of German cultural policies and ideology in the Baltic region. In his book *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity and German Occupation in World War I*, Liulevicius describes those cultural policies as follows:

Ober-Ost's cultural policies had three aims. First, they sought to project a compelling image of the state and its civilizing German Work in the east. Second, the native culture was to be bracketed by German institutions which would define native identity and direct their development. Finally, cultural policies also aimed to provide German soldiers with a sense of their mission. The last two projects of constructing identities for the occupied and the occupier defined their specific roles in the division of labor of German Work.²²

The setting of Vilnius in a Rembrandtesque context coincided with Ober-Ost's ideological endeavour to 'bracket', to adapt the local 'uncivilised' culture to its own cultural 'genius'. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Rembrandt was regarded as such a German genius, and his glorification reached its climax in 1890 in Julius Langbehn's book *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, which appeared in more than 40 editions in Germany. In Langbehn's view, Rembrandt was the most perfect expression of the German spirit (despite the fact that he was of Dutch origin: his belonging to the German nation was internal, spiritual, rather than political).²³ He was supposed to be a teacher in all spheres of culture and life, a rescuer in the modern crisis, a source of essential features, universality and individuality, so necessary for the German nation. Lang-

²² Liulevicius, p. 114.

²³ J. Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, Leipzig, 1890, p. 9.

behn's views were exceptionally conservative, anti-liberal, and directed against the modern world, secularisation, science, cosmopolitanism and urbanisation. The book was anti-Semitic, for in admiring the Jewish portraits by Rembrandt, Langbehn accepted only Orthodox Jews in their traditional closed community, and denounced their expansion into the modern world of science, culture, finance and trade. For Langbehn, Rembrandt was a tool in the education of the German nation, and subsequently Langbehn's ideas would be used by the Nazis. The book celebrated the Nordic character and racial purity: 'genuine' German art, based on 'sound' folk traditions, and directed against modern art, in particular French influences. Rembrandt, as the paragon of 'the German national genius', had become entrenched in the German popular conscience before the First World War.

The ideas in the book are related to Garvens' article *Rembrandtesque and Other Tastes of Art in the East*, and a visual interpretation of this discourse, whether deliberately or not, was presented by Buhe. His drawings showed how the occupied city was transformed by the Germans into their 'own'. The process began with its adaptation for their needs, and ended with its inclusion in their artistic tradition. German intellectuals saw Rembrandtesque reflections in the medieval city, untouched by modern civilisation, in its architecture and in its inhabitants, uncivilised primitive people, such as beggars, rabbis, old women and street vendors. Their archaic way of life was coloured by picturesque poverty and piety, of the kind no longer seen in the West.

The Rembrandtesque discourse of the city's inhabitants, especially the Jews, was characteristic not only of the work of Buhe, but also of other German artists residing in Ober-Ost during the First World War, such as Hermann Struck. He was a well-known artist from Berlin, a member of Berliner Sezession, and an expert in etching. Conscripted into the German army, he spent several years in Lithuania as an artist for *Kownoer Zeitung*, the military newspaper published in Kaunas. In 1916, Struck drew 60 lithographs for the book *Skizzen aus Litauen, Weissrussland und Kurland*, which he published together with the German writer

Herbert Eulenberg.²⁴ Struck's drawings presented various ethnic types, especially Jews. One of the drawings depicted a portrait of an old Vilnius Jew with a long white beard; the face was similar to Rembrandt's subjects. It is noteworthy that the portrait was accompanied by a text with a question addressed to Rembrandt, and answered by Eulenberg and Struck themselves:

Warum malt Ihr so gern alte Juden, Meister?' fragte man einstmals Rembrandt.

Weil sich das Leid des Lebens doppelt stark in ihren Zügen ausspricht. Weil sie das, was wir alle, die wir atmen, durchmachen und durchdenken müssen, noch bitt'rer schmecken mussten als die andern Menschen, dadurch, dass ihnen durch ihre Geburt das Dasein von vornherein versalzen war. Weil sich in ihren vergrämten Gesichtern das Gefühl, ein Fremdling auf der Erde zu sein, das sich auf dem Antlitz der Besten ausprägt, wunderbar und erschreckend deutlich widerspiegelt. Weil sich bei ihnen von der kleinen Fläche des menschlichen Angesichts, die man mit zwei Händen zudecken kann, die Tragödie unsers ganzen Geschlechtes ablesen lässt.²⁵

Being a German of Jewish descent, Struck was a fervent Zionist, and took a particular interest in the local Jews. He respected them as custodians of the Jewish identity and religious traditions, and sympathised with them for their sufferings and misery in Ober-Ost. As an artist, he admired them, and portrayed them like Rembrandt's personages, with human sympathy and psychological depth.

To sum up, the image of Vilnius in works by German artists during the First World War was rather complicated and contradictory. On the one hand, it was targeted at propaganda aims and the germanisation of the country. On the other hand, German artists found a 'Rembrandtesque beauty' here, and felt compassion for the inhabitants of the city. Nevertheless, the discovery of the 'beauty' of Vilnius was related to the cultural policy of German nationalism, and to the endeavours, by manipulating artistic traditions, to 'inscribe' the local context in the German cultural framework. Viewed from this perspective, Vilnius looked like a city shrouded in a past of several centuries, in extreme poverty and medieval piety.

²⁴ H. Struck, H. Eulenberg, *Skizzen aus Litauen, Weissrussland und Kurland*, Berlin, 1916.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, no page numbers.

L a i m a L a u č k a i t ė

Okupuoto miesto vaizdas: Walterio Buhe's Vilnius Pirmojo pasaulinio karo metais

Santrauka

Pirmojo pasaulinio karo laikotarpiu Lietuvoje kurta dailė yra beveik netyrinėtas, dėl politinių priežasčių ignoruotas reiškinys, ypač tai pasakytina apie vokiečių dailę, kuria Lietuvoje. Čia dislokuotoje kaizerio kariuomenėje tarnavę vokiečių dailininkai sukūrė nemažai darbų su lietuviška ikonografija, kurie atspindi skirtingų kultūrų – vietinės ir vokiškosios susidūrimą specifinėmis, karo aplinkybėmis. Šis straipsnis skirtas atvejo studijai – Vilniuje kūrusiam vokiečių spaudos dailininkui Walteriui Buhei ir okupuoto miesto įvaizdžiui jo kūryboje.

Vokiečiai ėjo į Rytų Europą ne tik gerai ginkluoti, bet ir su puikiai paruoštu propagandiniu aparatu, modernia spaustuvių baze ir, uždarę okupuotuose kraštuose vietinius laikraščius, ėmė leisti savus. Vilnius tapo vieno pagrindinių karinio-administracinio vieneto – Ober-Osto – tranzito centrų, čia leisti keli laikraščiai *Zeitung der 10. Armee* ir *Wilnaer Zeitung*. Prie jų ėjo iliustruoti priedai, vienas jų buvo *Bilderschau der Wilnaer Zeitung*, šio priedo 1916–1918 m. komplektas sudaro įspūdingą vizualinį karo laikotarpio Vilniaus albumą. Pagrindinis jo dailininkas Buhe kūrė viršelius, iliustravo straipsnius, o kiekviename laikraščio *Wilnaer Zeitung* numeryje spausdino po vieną piešinį. Vilniaus dailės istorijoje nedaug dailininkų, kurie būtų palikę tokį didelį vizualinį miesto liudijimą. Galima kalbėti apie tris tematinius jo diskursus: 1. Vilniaus suvokietinimas, 2. Vilniaus paminklų fiksavimas, 3. Vilniaus gyventojų paveikslas. Pirmajame ryškiausias propagandinis aspektas: Buhe's darbai rodo, kaip miesto erdvė, jos pastatai buvo pritaikyti karinėms reikmėms, kaip jie reprezentavo vokišką kultūrą, kaip valstybės ir armijos galia buvo demonstruojama per viešas iškilmes. Svarbią vietą Buhe's kūryboje sudaro miesto architektūros paminklų piešiniai, padiktuoti vokiečių dėmesio meno, kultūros paveldui okupuotose teritorijose. Trečiasis diskursas susijęs su įspūdžiu, kurį svetimtaučiams darė Vilnius, su vizualiniu įvaizdžiu, miesto ir jo gyventojų paveikslu. Vokiečių dailininkai, rašytojai, žurnalistai diskutavo, apmąstė vizualinę miesto specifiką, vienas iš Vilniaus periodikoje publikuotų tekstų, R. von Garvenso straipsnis „Rembrantiškasis ir kiti meno skoniai Rytuose“ pristatė nepažįstamo, į rytus nuo Vokietijos esančio krašto savitumą ir siekė įrašyti jį į vokiečiams pažįstamą meninę topografiją. Straipsnyje krašto vizualinis savitumas buvo siejamas su olandų tapytoju Rembrandtu, jo vėlyvųjų paveikslų tipais. Buhe's piešti Vilniaus personažai – varguoliai, dažniausiai žydai, sudaro galeriją psichologiškai raiškių, ant egzistencijos ribos atsidūrusių tipų, ir jie primena vėlyvojo Rembrandto modelius.

Tačiau šis „rembrantiškasis“ diskursas nėra toks patrauklus ir nekaltas, jei žvelgsime iš vokiečių ideologijos, kultūros politikos pusės. Vilniaus įrašymas į rembrantiškąjį kontekstą sutampa su Ober-Osto ideologiniu siekiu „necivilizuotą“ vietinę kultūrą „priderinti“ prie savojo kultūrinio „genijaus“. Toks kultūrinis genijus vokiečiams XIX a. pabaigoje – XX a. pradžioje buvo Rembrandtas, kurio garbinimas viršūnę pasiekė Juliaus Langbeho knygoje *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (1890). Šios knygos idėjoms artimos Garvenso straipsnio mintys, o vaizdinį jų aspektą sąmoningai ar nesąmoningai pateikė Buhe. Rembranto kūrybos atgarsius vokiečių intelektualai matė viduramžiškame, modernios civilizacijos nepalietame mieste, jo senovinėje architektūroje, archajiškame gyvenime, kur dominuoja pamaldumas (jau išnykęs pasaulietiniuose Vakaruose), kur gyvena necivilizuoti, pirmapradžiai žmonės – elgetos, rabinai, senės, gatvių prekeiviai, kur akį traukia „tapybiškas skurdas“. Taigi, viena vertus, jie rado Vilniuje „rembrantišką grožį“, kita vertus, už to „grožio“ atradimo glūdėjo vokiškojo nacionalizmo kultūrinė politika, manipuliavimas meno tradicijomis ir siekis „įrašyti“ vietinį kontekstą į savuosius kultūros rėmus.