THE RITUAL YEAR 13

City Rituals 1

The Ritual Year Working Group, Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore (SIEF)
Institute of Sociology, Romanian Academy

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EDITED BY
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Introduction – City Rituals

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A century ago, early ethnologists, folklorists and scholars from related disciplines were still searching for illusional, unchanged ritual practices that would allow them to reconnect to a distant and idyllic past. From the comfort of their study or, less frequent, from the field, they had turned their attention to rural life, which they saw as less corrupted than life in the cities. This approach has since long been replaced by the study of the constantly changing and adapted traditions. Looked at from a long-term historical evolution, traditions appear to be "under constant construction or reconstruction, whether the individuals and groups who participate in those traditions realize this or not" (Burke 2009: 103). Change, a constant of the human evolution, is inherent in all social constructs, including culture, which is passed on, from one generation to another, through tradition.

If change cannot be avoided, what is it about the ever-changing tradition that we dread? Folklorist Thomas McKean offers an answer, when he writes: "tradition is predicated on constant change, as long as it is not so fast that its entire 'content' changes in one generation" (2021: 7). Thus, the threat lies not in the change itself, but in the speed with which it occurs.

Since entering the new millennium, it has become clear that we live in a high-speed society, driven by increased time pressures. Our reality accelerates so rapidly that we can hardly keep up with the change. This frenzied rhythm, that sociologist Hartmut Rosa calls social acceleration (2010), is most visible in cities and large urban centres, which continue to attract more and more people. Since 1950, the world's urban population has grown as a proportion of the total population, increasing more than 500% in 65 years (UN DESA 2018). By 2018, it reached 55% of the world's population and the United Nations projects that the percentage will surpass 68% by the year 2050 (UN DESA 2018). As these percentages reveal, the rural-urban balance has recently been reversed, with more people now living

in urban, rather than in rural environments. Facilitated by the rapid changes in communication, the influence of urban centres is today stronger than ever before.

Cities are contact zones (Pratt 1991), places of encounter and interaction between people and cultures, where objects and ideas are exchanged and circulated, thus making them the ideal ground for innovation and change. Cities attract people not only from rural areas, but also from other parts of the world, as they tend to be centres of trade and industry. As people migrate, they bring with them traditional rituals, that they adapt to their new home. Scholars today are no longer merely confronted with the challenge of identifying patterns within homogenous societies, rather they are faced with the multiple tasks of mapping and understanding interactions within blended, heterogeneous urban societies.

While social acceleration intensifies, affecting more and more people, one can only wonder if there will still be a place for traditions in the future. Will we still find time for ritual practices, in our busy lives? Will we still need them? For now, the papers reunited in this publication bring good news, showing the resilience of traditions and the persistence of rituals within the city.

The first volume of *City Rituals* addresses ritual practices and public events (such as seasonal festivals and traditions, national holidays and commemorations, and religious feasts) that mark the life of urban residents in cities in all corners of the world. Based on one, or more examples, the authors highlight their connection with local traditions and history, describe their evolution over time, and draw attention to more recent trends, due to globalization.

In the opening article of this volume, Laurent Sébastien Fournier examines European urban rituals through the *longue durée* perspective of historical anthropology, while choosing to focus on the idea of urbanity, instead of the term "ritual". Using historical as well as more recent ethnographical examples of urban festivals, he brings forward several permanent features of European urban rituals, as well as some of their contemporary transformations.

Drawing on more recent examples, Honey Libertine Achanzar-Labor, writes about the consequences of changes in the academic calendar on the performance of various rituals, both sacred and secular, in the Philippine urban areas, where most of the country's universities are located. The author shows the reasons and the manner in which the initial flexible academic calendar was replaced with a fixed August-May calendar, starting with 2014. Despite some initial setbacks in the conduct of some city rituals, the reconfiguration of these rituals has finally been accomplished by means of accommodation, simplification and alternation.

Vito Carrassi discusses the recent revival of an old Catholic ritual known as the *Rosary of 100 Requiem*, in Castellaneta, a city in Southern Italy. Consisting of a collective prayer for the dead, in particular the souls in the Purgatory, in 2016 the ritual began to be carried out as a monthly procession throughout a cemetery. It

soon became a community event, that established a deep connection between the world of the living and the world of the dead.

Terry Gunnell considers the changes that have taken place in the new urban festivals in Reykjavík between 1998 and 2018, noting how they have been influenced by tourism and migration, a growing sense of international involvement, and the wish to make the city an all-year round attraction. The author also considers the key differences between these new festivals and those that preceded them.

Using the same, evolutionary approach, Mare Kõiva and Andres Kuperjanov explore the ways in which contemporary cultural events and festivals in the city of Tartu (Estonia) reflect local traditions and history and have, more recently, been infused with contemporary elements. Four categories of events are brought forward: student traditions, ethnic events, agrarian events and the Hanseatic Days celebration. While most remain local, the student events have over time spread to other cities and the diaspora.

While some of the previous examples show the gradual internationalisation of urban festivals, Victoria Legkikh brings forward an example that opposes this trend. The author follows the evolution of the newly established feast of family and faithfulness, celebrated during the commemoration of Saints Peter and Fevronia, in the city of Murom (in Central Russia). This celebration was meant to replace the western feast of Saint Valentine's Day, with a Slavic equivalent. Since 2008, the feast has gradually become popular in other Russian cities.

Maria Bernadette L. Abrera investigates the devotion to the Virgin of Antipolo, a 17th century old tradition carried out in the Philippines. Each year, from May until July, devotees visit the shrine and the statue of the Virgin, called Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage; many make the trip by foot. On account of the millions of pilgrims that visit the shrine, the local government has initiated a city festival, in an effort to create other economic and commercial opportunities beyond the religious event. This civic celebration, however, struggles to justify its existence. As the author points out, it is the religious devotion to the Virgin of Antipolo that sustains the influx of people to the city and gives it identity.

The following article is dedicated to the celebration of Christmas among the Vlachs from Eastern Serbia, currently living in Vienna, on a permanent or temporary base. The author, Natalia Golant, compares their Christmas practices with the ones celebrated by Vlachs in Eastern Serbia, focusing on particular ceremonial practices, such as the use of the Christmas log (*badnjak*) and the Christmas cake with divination objects inside (*banica*, *cesnica*).

Based on extended fieldwork, Evy Johanne Håland scrutinizes the festival dedicated to Saint Nektarios, celebrated in the city and the island of Aegina, Greece, on 9th of November. This is an important healing festival, dedicated to the former bishop of the Greek church, who spent the last years of his life secluded, at the

monastery he founded on Aegina. He died in 1920 and was canonised in 1961, becoming the island's patron saint. Known as a healer of cancer, Saint Nektarios' relics are today spread among many sanctuaries worldwide. His body is of the highest importance for the worshippers, and although several churches both in Greece and abroad today have a share of it, his monastery on Aegina, the main pilgrimage centre, possesses the most important parts, among which is his head. The author focuses on the healing function of the festival both for Greeks and the many pilgrims coming from abroad, especially from Romania.

Laura Jiga Iliescu builds up her argument from the observation that in contemporary Romanian urban society, there is a multilevel trend to revive the 'archaic tradition', a particular return-to-nature movement. This involves the creation of new rituals, which have little to do with original old rituals, despite appropriating their descriptions and interpretations. The case study brought forward by the author is the wedding in a vegetal sanctuary (*biserica de brazi*). By analysing an article from a new-age magazine with a large audience, the author discloses the strategies that are being used in order to turn a genuine ritual into a legend.

Observing the Women's March of 2017 as a response to the election of Donald J. Trump to the Presidency of the United States, Jack Santino investigates ways of analysing such large-scale public performances. Despite the apparent resemblance to carnivals (it was large, festive and carnivalesque with its costumes and bodily imagery), the event was not a carnival, as the participants were serious in their presentation of a counterpoint to the apparent validation of values they saw embodied in Trump. In order to discuss this case study, the author suggests the term "ritualesque" as a useful complement to the idea of the "carnivalesque".

Cozette Griffin-Kremer examines two invented festivals of Rambouillet, France: the Lily-of-the-Valley Festival (*Fête du Muguet*, celebrated in mid-May begun in 1906) and the Festival of Saint Lubin (*Fête de la Saint-Lubin*, celebrated every two years in September, begun later, in 1990). Based on archival records and oral testimonies, the author investigates the efforts to mobilize the energies of the town folk and to create a festival with multiple benefits. Everything comes from somewhere, so this examination attempts to trace the landscape of social context, precedents and often impressive personal networking that enabled inventors to carry town festivals over into broad acceptance and make of them, as they explicitly intended, a tradition.

In the next article, Skaidrė Urbonienė analyses the temporary and more permanent memorials commemorating the victims of the violent confrontation between the civilian population of Vilnius and the Soviet Army, following the restoration of independence in Lithuania, on the 13th of January 1991. Today, the memorials are still used by locals for memorial services, mourning and other commemorative

rituals on special dates. In her article, the author analyses the rituals performed at these sites, as well as the written messages left behind by attenders.

The last article of this volume is also focused on Vilnius. Based on extended fieldwork in the city and various published sources (historical documents, legal acts, memoirs and periodicals), Žilvytis Šaknys addresses the aspect of seasonality in relation with six national holidays in Lithuania, between 1919–1940 and 1990– 2019. The author's conclusion is that seasonality has little impact on the vitality of the celebrations, and this is best illustrated by the Day of the Restoration of the State (the birth of the modern state of Lithuania, celebrated on the 16th February). Despite the unfavourable cold weather, it is the only festival that retained the status of public holiday and non-working day between 1919–1940, as well as after 1990, surpassing in popularity all other national holidays.

Divided into two volumes, *City Rituals* reunites thirty of the studies presented during the 13th conference of The Ritual Year Working Group (SIEF), held from the 7th to the 9th of November 2018, in Bucharest, Romania, where it was hosted by the Institute of Sociology, Romanian Academy[1]. This scientific event was an important landmark in our working group activity, as soon after, the world as we knew it would change forever.

The conference papers were collected for publication the following year, but once the Covid-19 pandemic was declared, in early 2020, they were put on hold, as were most of our usual activities. Despite the obvious inconveniences, the pandemic and the inherent restrictions surprisingly increased our working group activities. Banned from meeting in person, we met online, and we did so more often than ever before[2]. Continuing to do what we knew best: studying, researching and discussing our findings, and our mutual support, helped us overcome everyday life difficulties during the pandemic. We hardly had the time to recover from the sanitary situation, when, in February 2022, the war in Ukraine broke out, and with it, old ideologies and divisions reemerged. This impacted us much worse than the pandemic, as it threatened everything we had accomplished and the values upon which our working group was built.

Established in 2003, at the initiative of Emily Lyle (University in Edinburgh), The Ritual Year working group soon became a bridge between East and West, built on the solid ground of scientific cooperation, a safe harbour for academics from behind the former Iron Curtain, where they could openly share their ideas and engage in dialogue with their more fortunate colleagues, from the West. When initiating The Ritual Year, our charismatic founder, Emily Lyle, certainly had a vision. She might not have changed the world, but she certainly changed the lives of many of us. In her unique, profoundly humaine yet challenging approach, she always knew how to motivate and get us involved in our shared activities, advising us to take

one way or another, or simply gently pushing us in the right direction. This is how many of us advanced in our careers: through action, dialogue and mutual support.

The war in Ukraine, followed by the war in Israel, and the rise of extremism all around the world, reminds us today of what our working group stands for: open dialogue, academic freedom, and unconditional support of our members. All this considered, it is not an overstatement to say that this first volume reuniting fourteen papers of our conference in Bucharest, brings us back to the good times. It is the vestige of one of our most successful reunions, in which we enjoyed each other's company and the free flow of ideas, on the ground of genuine scientific cooperation. The *City Rituals* conference held in Bucharest, merely 500 meters away from the former House of the People, build by the communist dictator Nicolae Ceauşescu, will remain a highpoint in the history of our working group, a marker we should constantly look back to, and try to equal in the future.

Notes

[1] Partner institutions of the event were the Institute of Ethnography and Folklore "Constantin Brăiloiu" and the Institute for South-East European Studies, both from the Romanian Academy, together with the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant. The conference was attended by sixty-seven scholars from twenty-four countries from all over the world (from the U.S.A., Iceland, various countries in the European Union, to Albania, Serbia, Russia, and the Philippines). The conference included two plenary sessions, seven panels organised in three parallel sections and one special movie panel. During the conference the participants attended a city tour (which included visits to the Village Museum and the National Peasant Museum) and the annual pilgrimage occasioned by the Feast of Saint Nektarios, celebrated at Radu Vodă Monastery, not far from the conference venue. The Saturday following the conference, the participants attended an excursion during which they visited the Pelişor castle in Sinaia, the fortified Saxon church in Prejmer and the Museum of Urban Civilisation in Braşov.

[2] During the Covid-19 pandemic, the working group initiated The Ritual Year Seasonal Webinars, initially dedicated to seasonal rituals, feasts and festivals, and later including other topics of interests, as well. The recordings of the series are available online at: https:// www.siefhome.org/wg/ry/seasonal_webinars.shtml.

For more on The Ritual Year WG activities and publications go to the end of this volume or access the working group's webpage at: https://www.siefhome.org/wg/ry/index.shtml

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Biographical note

Irina Stahl is a Senior Researcher at the Institute of Sociology, Romanian Academy, and a former Associate Lecturer in European Ethnology at the University of Bucharest. She is currently serving her 2nd term on the Executive Board of the International Society of Ethnology and Folklore and has been Secretary of the Ritual Year Working Group (SIEF), since 2014. She was the organizer of the 13th Ritual Year Working Group's conference, *City Rituals,* in Bucharest, in 2018. Since 2010, she has conducted fieldwork on, and published in religious studies, with particular attention to vernacular Orthodox Christianity and religious practices in the urban environment. She has authored over 60 articles, chapters, and dictionary entries and edited two books. Among her most recent publication is *Structures sociales en Europe du Sud-Est* (2024), reuniting the works of the French Southeast European ethnologist, Paul-Henri Stahl (edited with S. Șerban & A. Timotin).

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Urban Rituals in the *longue durée:* Permanence and Changes

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Abstract: What does the perspective of the *longue durée* bring to the anthropological analysis of urban rituals? In this essay, I will propose an approach to European urban rituals based on historical anthropology. Such an approach aids in analyzing the different types of rituals through history, but also to study the evolution of the social representations of the city. In the *longue durée*, historical anthropology enables one to focus on permanence as well as on changes. Using different historical and ethnographical examples of urban festivals, I will present, on the one hand, some major invariant structures of European urban rituals, and on the other hand, some of their modern transformations. The notions of play, authority and social structure will be questioned first in order to understand the age of some rituals. The notions of mobility, rationality and cultural economy will then be used to trace back the major contemporary innovations in the field of urban rituals. Comparing older and newer features of European urban rituals will eventually relate to the general evolving perceptions of the seasonal annual cycle.

Keywords: city, rituals, history, anthropology, factionalism, social structures

Introduction

In this essay, I would like to introduce and question the notion of *longue durée* which originally comes from history, but which can also be useful for European ethnology, especially when studying rituals and city rituals. This notion was popularized by the French historian Fernand Braudel in his work on the Mediterranean in the Middle Ages (Braudel 1958).

The *longue durée* was first an expression used by the French Annales School of Historical Writing to designate their approach to the study of history. It gives priority to long-term historical structures over what the previous generation of historians called *histoire événementielle* ("event history", the short-term time-scale that is the domain of the chronicler and the journalist). The Annales School decided to concentrate instead on all but permanent or slowly evolving structures.

The *longue durée* is part of a tripartite system that includes short-term events and medium-term conjunctures (periods of decades or centuries when more profound cultural changes, such as the Industrial Revolution, can take place).

The *longue durée* acquired its legitimacy during a debate with Claude Lévi-Strauss, who used to oppose long-term anthropological "structures" to short-term historical "events" (Lévi-Strauss 1958). For his part, Braudel showed that history had different times: structures at a long-term scale, conjunctures at a middle-term scale and events at a short-term scale.

Here, I would like to suggest that the *longue durée* perspective can be very useful when studying European ethnology. In this respect, this discipline is sometimes closer to cultural history and historical anthropology than to exotic social anthropology. European societies, where writing and history have occupied a prominent position for centuries through the centuries, desperately need the help of historians to investigate the past beyond the immediate memory of the people the ethnographers can question in their present fieldwork, for instance, through interviews. The *longue durée* then offers the possibility to make some hypotheses on the past of some contemporary cultural practices. To make it clear, I think that in our disciplines, the help of historical sources is of major interest in fieldwork, which I will try to show through different examples concerning European city rituals.

Let us define 'city rituals'. Here, I will not discuss the notion of ritual itself. This notion has prompted a considerable amount of literature, and I have presented elsewhere a synthesis of the different theoretical positions in the field of European ethnology (Fournier 2008). To quickly summarize the different possible interpretations of rituals, I would oppose the Durkheimian approach within which rituals are understood as an objective means to maintain collective order and to reinforce pre-existing social hierarchies (Durkheim 1912), the symbolist approach according to which rituals would be connected to ideas, myths, or beliefs which pre-existed in the different communities (Frazer 1911, Griaule 1966, Leach 1982), and the performative approach conceiving rituals as specific dynamics managing to build a special unity and to articulate gestures, speeches and objects (Austin 1962, Tambiah 1979, Schechner 2003). I usually like the performative approach and I use it myself in my research on traditional games where performances take a great part (Fournier 2009), but in this essay, my perspective will understand rituals in a more classical way, as helping the regulation of the relations between

the different groups in the community (Turner 1969) or as a means to solve social conflicts (Gluckman 1954).

In fact, the nexus of my questioning will not be in the term "ritual" itself but more in the expression "city rituals" and in the idea of urbanity. Indeed, the *longue durée* perspective seems especially productive to look at in this field of studies. What is a city ritual? How did European city rituals change through history? Did some ritual features remain the same? And what do these evolutions or changes owe to the changes of the European cities themselves? Working in the *longue durée* will enable us to question some permanent features as well as some contemporary changes in a more and more urbanized world. In this essay, I will progressively shift from historical to more recent examples, using different cases, from different European countries, and more specially focusing on the case of urban festivals, which of course are only a special case of rituals, but which I will nevertheless consider here as representative of rituals in general. Comparing older features and new tendencies will eventually lead to a questioning of our own position as ethnographers or folklorists today.

1. Factions and Divisions

In the first part of this essay, I would like to focus on some historical examples, some of which I have taken from the literature and some others I have found out through my own fieldwork. Presenting these examples will enable us to point out some of the permanent structures of European urban rituals.

According to many historians, one major feature in urban or city rituals in the past was their relation to factionalism. Factionalism is a widespread phenomenon which also concerns non-European cultures. John Perry, for instance, has provided an enlightening analysis of factional antagonisms in modern Iran (Perry 1998). Between the 16th and the 18th centuries, he says, European visitors in Persia were struck by the fact that all the cities were divided into two halves or factions called *Haydari* and *Ne'mati*, which fought regularly in street fights, without any apparent reason. Perry explains that the factions gathered the young men from traditional gymnasiums for wrestling and around the guilds which took part in the religious processions. These factions followed territorial logic, considered their enemies impure, did not marry their sisters, and used to fight against each other every week or sometimes only a few times a year during religious festivals. Perry connects this practice of street fighting with the importance of the guilds in a strong Nation-State. The Safavide dynasty in the 17th century united the political and religious system, giving more freedom to the guilds within which local antagonisms could be expressed. Other reasons connect factionalism with the fact of becoming adults and

with the local struggle for prestige. Moreover, in many cases, the factions recover the divisions between Shiites and Sunnis.

Quoting Perry: "For festivals and other public meetings, one of the two parties attacked the other one in order to have the precedence, and the rest of the time wrestlers and young people from each party would challenge those from the other side. Sometimes, pitched battles then took place in the old square of the town, with hundreds of people fighting on each side. The participants were always from the working classes, and although they only fought with sticks and stones there were always a few killed and a lot injured" (Perry 1998: 109–110).

The example of Iranian factionalism is an interesting one to understand the local dynamics of violence, but I will use it here only as a starting point for a comparative overlook of similar customs in Europe, or in other times. Perry himself compares the Iranian example to Byzantine factionalism. Alan Cameron, in a great book on "Circus factions", shows how important factionalism was in Rome and Byzantium at the Hippodrome (Cameron 1976). In this context, "blues" and "greens" would support their chariot and would regularly continue the fight after the spectacle. If Cameron understands factions as sporting associations, different authors have stressed their relation to different urban districts or residential areas. A study of the literature enables one to find a lot of comparable phenomena, for instance in the Italian Renaissance with the "Guelphs" and the "Ghibellines", or in Medieval Andalusia where stick fights were commonplace in the city of Grenada, as a French historian Christine Mazzoli-Guintard documented it a few years earlier (Mazzoli-Guintard 2013).

In France too, the same sort of factionalism has been documented in smaller places during pilgrimages. A Provencal example concerning pilgrimage violence has been reported by a historian, who mentioned, in the village of Brenon, near Castellane in the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence district, *lou roumeiragi deis cops de batoun*, the stick-fight pilgrimage (Froeschlé-Chopart 2014: 56). This pilgrimage was called so because "the young people of the neighboring villages came armed with sticks and fought for the honor of stealing the instruments during the ball: this fight often occasioned murders". Again, in this example, struggles and provocations among youngsters were regularly happening during local pilgrimages, showing the importance of factions in the structuration of collective life.

Another example in Seillans (near the city of Draguignan in the same region in Mediterranean France) was *lou romeiragi deis pesseguis durs*, the festival of hard peaches (Froeschlé-Chopart 2014: 64). This pilgrimage traditionally ended with a stone-fight around the Saint-Arnould chapel. In this case, "those of Seillans" fought against "those of Bargemon", a neighboring village. In the beginning, it's all dances and jumps for the ball, which accompanies any festival. "But soon the spirit changes; a dispute opposes an inhabitant from Seillans and another one from

Bargemon. The spirits heated by the dances and often by the wine burst into flames and the theater of pleasure becomes a collective stone-fight with the big heaps of stone lying around. These people run after each other for miles. When the people from Bargemon are not enough to fight, the quarrel begins between the peasants and the artisans of Seillans. They fight against each other and throw stones even in town. (…) We are not able to explain the reason for this frenzy (…). The wounds, the procedures, the most severe forbidding, nothing has changed this practice, nothing has abolished it" (C.-F. Achard, quoted by Froeschlé-Chopard 2014).

According to these historical accounts, there would be some sort of necessity to fight in these collective occasions. In the last case, the struggle is well organized and concerns the people of Seillans, if the people of Bargemon are not enough. In this case, the territorial divisions between the villages are not at the center of the struggle anymore: the social divisions between peasants and craftsmen become central. The pilgrimage, because it happens beyond the boundaries of the village, in an open space, becomes a moment when we meet otherness but also the perils represented by the other. In the context of traditional communities, characterized by their endogamy and xenophobia, this exceptional situation brings great excitement. In the beginning, the people look at each other with defiance, then they fight. At the same time, in the pilgrimage context, violence as a transgression of the law is conceived as homage and as a sacrifice for the Saint who is protected against those considered as not legitimate enough to honor him.

In my own works, I have investigated the traditional football games in England and Scotland and I have found out how important the representations of conflicts were in the small cities where these sorts of games were performed. For instance, looking at the folk football game in Kirkwall, Orkney brings another evidence concerning the importance of factionalism in the structuration of urban identities (Fournier 2009).

Each year, on Christmas Day and New Year's Day, a very spectacular sportive game is organized in Kirkwall, in the Orkney Islands, in the north of Scotland. This game, known as *the ba' game* – from "ball game" – belongs to a broader set of games known as "mass football", "folk football" or "old style football", which have often been considered as archaic forms of our rugby and football games in the history of sports (Jusserand 1986: 265–283, Guttmann 2006: 177–179, Hornby 2008: 18–35).

A bronze tablet fixed by officials on Kirkwall's "Mercat Cross" in front of the Cathedral, on January 1st, 2000, gives the first information on the game:

> *"The ba' has been played in one form or another annually on Christmas days and New Year days for at least two centuries here on the Kirk Green and over the streets of Kirkwall. A cork filled leather ba' is thrown up from the Mercat Cross and is contested by Up the Gates and Down the Gates in widely supported boys and men games. The event knows no social barriers and is an*

important part of Kirkwall's heritage. Its origins lies in mass football at one time played throughout Orkney for weddings and during the festive season, and still celebrated in a local form in the Borders of Scotland at Fasternse'en and in Ashbourne, Derbyshire, at Shrovetide".

Unlike contemporary sports which need a separate ground, the ba' game takes place in the town itself. The ba' is thrown in the centre of the town near the Cathedral, by a neutral official. The Uppies, coming from the upper part of the town, have to bring the ba' to their own camp and make it touch a wall at the southern gate of the town, near the ruins of a castle, whereas the Doonies have to bring it to the north and to sink it in the water of the harbor's dock called "the basin".

The game looks like an enormous rugby scrum, which may involve 200 contestants or more, depending on the year. With neither uniforms nor identifying signs, the teams are supposed to know everybody individually. By pushing or pulling, by making use of powerful pressure on the center of the scrum, the contestants who are on the fringe of the group try to manage the game.

The Scottish ethnologist Emily Lyle comments on the classical analyses and brings additional elements to explain the antagonisms of such seasonal rites as the ba' game (Lyle 1990). By comparing the ba' game example with other seasonal competitions during Ancient times or in the Amerindian world, she reveals the existence of complex systems of opposition and correspondence. They are expressed during festivities: between the seasons (winter versus summer), between the natural world or cardinal points (land versus sea, south versus north), and between different types of goods (fruits, crops, and ground animals versus fishes and seafood). The structuring of systems of opposition revealed in the seasonal celebrations should be understood as archaic attempts to explain the different seasons as being mythically interconnected (Lyle 1990: 168).

Indeed, our research has shown that the apparently chaotic scrum of the ba' game hides a series of structural oppositions between the two teams of players. The Uppies and the Downies are not only enemies in the game, but they also represent opposite principles: the land and the sea, the cattle breeders and the fishermen, the Earls of Orkney and the English Bishops, etc.

2. Authorities and Social Structures

In the previous section, the examples I have developed show the importance of divisive ritual games in the structuration of city identities. The cities ritually divide into factions fighting against each other, a feature we can trace to modern sports, taking, for instance, the opposition between Celtics and Rangers in Glasgow today.

Now I will show that this divisiveness is counter-balanced by the presence of different sorts of authorities which have historically shaped and organized the European city rituals. Usually, these authorities are discrete during the divisive rituals, but they can be more visible on other occasions. However, I suggest that it would be a misinterpretation to oppose the two sorts of rituals. Rather, the unanimous rituals shaped by the authorities complete the divisive rituals in the course of the local ritual year cycles.

Here, another series of examples is needed, documenting the importance of authorities in European city rituals. The classical model is given by the Emperor's triumph in Roman times, when the leader presented to the urban crowd (plebeians) the fruit of his military victories. The triumph represents the evidence of the political order and of the Emperor's power in the streets of the city. This model will be handed down and imitated through centuries and it will be revived during the Renaissance through the tradition of the "Royal Entries" (Lévy 2015). During such "Entries" the keys of the city are solemnly given to the King by the local authorities. The streets are richly decorated. The King and his suite go through the streets on parade in their finest costumes. It is an occasion for everybody to show his wealth and his power. The tradition of the "Royal Entries", I would say, is extremely important in the structuration of urban rituals in the *longue durée*. It is connected with the representation of the different social orders that go in procession through the towns. But it consists of entering the urban space and showing the power in the centers of the cities.

Another interesting ritual, which is also connected with the raising consciousness of urbanity and urban identities, is the custom of periodically visiting the boundaries, the external limits or *limes* of the town and of its territory. In this case, the identity of the town is defined by its outskirts, not by the penetration of an overarching power inside the town. The custom of inspecting the limits of a town's territory is commonplace in Western Europe. In Germany, it is known as the *Grenzgang* (Bimmer 2004), and in Scotland, I have studied it in the city of Jedburgh under the name of "Common riding" (Bogle 2004). The Jedburgh ritual consists of "riding the commons" or "riding the marches" which is a cavalcade to the different boundaries of the territory, where the common lands used to be in the past. According to historians, this ritual had a functional value in the 17th and 18th centuries, which consisted of verifying that nobody had encroached on the common lands. In a time when the limits between the different countries were mobile, it was important for the people to see with their own eyes these limits. The townspeople went in procession around the fields and checked the stones fixed at different points of the boundaries. They could then see that nobody had taken possession of their land.

During the Entries as well as during the *Grenzgänger*, the rituals were organized by the local authorities. Even small cities were granted the status of towns by the King if they had the capacity to be organized, which meant having a militia and a governing body. Besides the aristocrats who could be related to the king's family and who usually had some connections with the court, the European cities have kept municipal governments since Antiquity. Historians have documented the presence of consuls or mayors who represent a very old and important European heritage in France, Italy, Germany, Great Britain, Netherlands. The terms consul and mayor both come from Latin and represent annually elected local authorities. In Medieval times, it is interesting to note that the end of the Roman Empire didn't end this type of local urban organization. Even in the darkest ages, when the Visigoths invaded Western Europe, from the 6th to the 10th centuries, this local political structure survived and kept shaping the local political life. The municipal institutions of the consuls (usually 2 per year) and of the mayors have survived until today in the terms "councillor" and "town council" in English, *mayordomos* in Spanish, *counse* (for mayor) in Occitan.

From the perspective of the longue durée, I suggest that these urban political institutions are extremely important to understand the organization of local rituals. All over Europe, the city rituals have been worked out by the local authorities, giving birth to a specific folklore. With the "giants and dragons" processions, which were nominated by UNESCO on the Intangible Cultural Heritage representative list in 2005, we have a good example of a long-lasting European urban ritual. Let me present this set of urban festivals through the UNESCO website presentation:

> *"Traditional processions of huge effigies of giants, animals or dragons encompass an original ensemble of festive popular manifestations and ritual representations. These effigies first appeared in urban religious processions at the end of the fourteenth century in many European towns and continue to serve as emblems of identity for certain Belgian (Ath, Brussels, Dendermonde, Mechelen and Mons) and French towns (Cassel, Douai, Pézenas and Tarascon), where they remain living traditions. The giants and dragons are large-scale models measuring up to nine meters in height and weighing as much as 350 kilos. They represent mythical heroes or animals, contemporary local figures, historical, biblical or legendary characters or trades. St. George fighting the dragon is staged in Mons; Bayard, the horse from the Charlemagne legend, parades in Dendermonde; and Reuze Papa and Reuze Maman, popular family characters, parade at Cassel. The performances, often mixing secular procession and religious ceremony, vary from town to town, but always follow a precise ritual in which the giants relate to the history, legend or life of the town" (UNESCO website, consulted September 9th 2019: https://ich.unesco.org/fr/RL/geants-et-dragons-processionnels-de-belgique-et-de-france-00153).*

Giants and dragons enliven popular festivals where they are the main actors at least once a year, as each effigy has its specific feast day. They act out historical scenes and dance in the streets to the accompaniment of fanfares and costumed people. The crowd follows the procession, and many participants help in the preparations at different stages of the festival.

In the south of France, in Provence, the festival I have studied within this set of "giants and dragons festivals" is the festival of the Tarasque, in the city of Tarascon (Fournier 2011). Here, the dragon bears the name of the town and mythically represents the pagan times before the Christian foundation of the city. The annual procession of the Tarasque, according to anthropologist Louis Dumont, represents the ritual embodiment of the local foundation myth, and Dumont traces the origins of the ritual back to the Early Middle Ages (Dumont 1951).

In several cases, the municipal authorities do not take charge of the urban festivals themselves. They manage the "serious" everyday businesses and give the young people the responsibility to organize the profane part of the festivals, whereas the religious part is taken charge of by the Church. All over Europe, folklorists have documented the importance of the young people corporations in traditional urban life. The young people, traditionally unmarried men, take part in the militia and have different customary rights. During the wintertime and Lent, they go around the country singing songs and collecting money or different edible things like eggs or flour. They can court the girls and offer them flowers during the spring. In the summer, they organize local festivals and actively participate in dances and collective games. In Central France, Nicole Pellegrin has investigated the *Bachelleries*, which, according to her, means *bas-chevalier* (Fr.) or "low-chivalry" but is also related to the term "bachelor," the single-man, and to the French *baccalauréat*, the exam the young generation gets before entering the university (Pellegrin 1983). In other towns, similar institutions have been documented by historians and folklorists, such as the *capitanage* or the Youth Abbots in Provence, the "Callants" or the "Hornets" in Scotland, and in any case the "Kings of Youth" or *princeps iuventutis* in the Latin tradition. Interestingly, several historical records show how the young people involved in these roles very often become "true" consuls or mayors afterward, which means that their role is not only a mockery.

All these examples of local urban authorities and of their involvement in the festive rituals enlighten a different facet of our question. In my first part, I focused on the disorder and on importance of customary divisions in the building up of the urban social order. In this second part I was more interested in the role played by the authorities in the shaping and the structuration of urban festivals. In both cases, however, what is at stake is the importance and the permanence of the social structures in the *longue durée*. It is then time to consider the changes which have occurred in more recent times.

3. Changes in recent times

Looking at our modernity from the perspective of the *longue durée* supposes some sort of relativism. From this perspective, modernity is already quite an old lady, if you consider its early outspread in the late Renaissance. Indeed modernity, in the historians' eye, begins with the conquest of the new world, in the 16th century and with the conceptualization of the *ratio individualis* by the French philosopher René Descartes, leading to the affirmation of the importance of human progress, the Enlightenment movement in the 18th century and the universal declaration of human rights during the French Revolution of 1789. Today, at a time when our disciplines, European ethnology, and socio-cultural anthropology are more and more assimilated within social sciences, sociology, and political sciences, I find it important to reaffirm the importance of history and of the "Humanist" point of view, anchoring modernity in the last two or three centuries more than in the last two or three decades.

Interestingly, the study of urban rituals and their changes through modernity brings evidence that the notions that were invented in early modernity, from the 16th to the 18th centuries, have lasted until now and continue to shape our contemporary urban rituals. Here I will simply insist on three aspects of modern urban rituals: rationality, mobility, and cultural economy.

Let's tackle rationality first. Modernity has introduced the idea of city planning, meaning a rational structuration of public spaces and streets. Neo-classicist architecture became fashionable in the 18th century and culminated in the 19th century to build new towns that corresponded with the ideals of modernity. The streets are made larger, and right-angle grid layouts appear. Michel Foucault, retracing the history of madness in Occidental Europe, suggests that modern cities do not admit dark corners and winding streets anymore (Foucault 1972). He shows how modern institutions like hospitals, prisons, schools, and factories all follow the new rationalist ideals. Festivals do not escape the rule, and historian Mona Ozouf has shown how the Revolutionary power in Paris shaped new rituals fit to adapt the new order (Ozouf 1976). Weeks are replaced by decades, old religious cults are suppressed and replaced by the cult of virtues or abstract notions such as liberty, equality, the union of the people, etc. In such a context, new festivals appear under the rationalist banner, and they must follow a rational order. New city rituals are invented, even if older forms survive, like the processions of the town officials. From the 19th century onwards, modern urban festivals and rituals were closely connected with the new political order, supposedly embodying a new rationality in itself. When the traditional political regimes, the aristocrats and the kings, drew their powers from the sacred, the ancestors, or other forms of otherworld, the new revolutionary elites and their republican descent are supposed to hold their power

from the people's choice, through regular elections. Rationally elected, they invent new rituals and new festivals in the context of the modern nation-states. New national holidays appear in connection with historical events, armistices, Labor Day, or other occasions corresponding to the new values and the new rational ideals of modern nations.

Another important feature of modern urban rituals is their connection with mobility. In traditional societies, the festivals were usually centered on the community itself. Of course, as we have shown before, some rituals could be divisive while others could be more unanimous when welcoming some external powerful character. In the modern context, things change because there is no reason to conceive the local community as an organic whole. Inventions such as the compass and the sextant in the 17th century, as well as a huge progress in map drawing and in the measurement of time with clocks and watches, have deeply influenced the conceptions of space and time and enabled better control of communication paths. In the 19th century, the apparition of trains and motor cars had a decisive impact on the cities, which dramatically changed the nature of the rituals and festivals. With the spread of tourism and modern leisure mobility, the city rituals will meet a significant series of changes. New forms of festivals like the urban carnivals in Nice or Viareggio appear and try to attract tourists, while technical progress makes it easier to go from one city to another to attend different fashionable urban rituals. Such a trend continued until today with the acceleration of public transportation and the reconfiguration of the urban festivals map at a global level. Today, looking globally at urban festivals opens up a specific "ritualscape" or "festiscape," just to paraphrase Appadurai, made of specific "musts" where tourists have to go and who build up a global offer of envied destinations (Appadurai 1996).

The last feature I would like to underline concerns the cultural economy. During the last two centuries, the notion of culture has been considerably extended. Once limited to the fine arts and the historical monuments, it now encompasses intangible cultural heritage. Due to this dramatic extension, rituals and festivals become a more and more important stake in territorial marketing. Urban planners pay attention to the traditional festivals which may become new cultural amenities if properly marketed and commoditized. Interestingly, at the beginning of the Modern era, Enlightenment philosophers like Rousseau or Montesquieu sharply criticized traditional festivals as an obstacle to human progress, a time when rational work was forbidden and when a man would be badly driven by his passions. The modernists then met the moralists. Two centuries later it is generally admitted that festivals and rituals take a significant place in the cultural economy. In a post-industrial world, they provide an alternative resource when they are revitalized as tourist destinations. They can give the best image possible of a given territory, and

moreover, they play a role in entertaining people. They then become a viable way for smaller or poorer cities to engage in development projects.

Conclusion

I would suggest that the three features I have underlined in the last part of my essay, rationality, mobility, and cultural economy, are essential because they enable in the *longue durée* to oppose the traditional and the modern city rituals in Europe. Of course, traditional rituals had their own rationality, they had some special functions but they were not rational in the same way because they were always caught in some overarching order, being performed to comply the gods or the ancestors more than in connection with the individual modern reason. They also featured mobility, undoubtedly, but the communities were more self-centered, and their conception of space was somehow concentric, not linear. And even if they had a link with the economy, if you think about fairs and markets, for instance, the notion of the cultural economy was not extended to the festivals by then.

In conclusion, I would stress the fact that things change a lot if you look at them through the *longue durée* lens. The problem which remains is, however, that such a lens only enables one to grasp the general tendencies. It doesn't encourage thinner or thicker ethnographies. It nevertheless leads to some interesting perspectives. As we have seen, city rituals have some features in common: they express factional divisiveness, as well as long-term authorities and social structures, and they all face some global changes regarding their relation to rationality, mobility, and cultural economy. Last, but not least, they are distributed in the ritual year cycle in a way that deserves attention: city rituals are not cut off from nature but rather reflect the ways urban populations imagine it. Marcel Mauss, in his work on the Innu seasonal cycle, has already shown how the modern rhythm of life has led to a new duality between the winter,when everybody lives in town, and the summer when the people go on holidays (Mauss 1904). Just to come to an end, I regret I couldn't be more precise concerning the different types of city rituals (from the town festivals to the neighbor's intimate celebratory drinks and from the enterprise rituals to the parks socialization…), but this was due to this *longue durée* perspective. As an analytic tool, it is interesting because it forces us to have the historical times in sight, but as a descriptive method, it is, of course, too limited regarding the taste we have for fieldwork and dense ethnography.

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Philippine Urban Rituals Amidst Calendar Change

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Abstract: Changes in the academic calendar have been implemented in a number of higher education institutions in the Philippines. The most obvious and pragmatic motivation for the move for change was the difficulty that students face in school during the rainy season, such as cancellation of classes during heavy rainfall events, floods, and typhoons. Additionally, there was the issue on the educational standard in the country, and the need for its educational institutions to participate much more globally, especially when it comes to foreign exchanges and scholarship grants. The decision is said though to be primarily a scholarly move, an attempt to improve its academic ranking, as well as an attempt to foster ASEAN collaboration.

This study shows the consequences of these changes on the performance of rituals – both sacred and secular – particularly in urban areas where most of the country's premiere universities are located. The cessation or continuous pursuit of the conduct of these rituals will be discussed and analyzed to reveal individual and community valuation. Factors in the innovative conduct of some of these rituals will also be discussed.

Keywords: academic calendar, calendric ritual, Flores de Mayo, Misa de Gallo, Nuestra Senora de Buenviajo, Simbang Gabi.

1. Introduction

Calendrical rites are ritual events marking particular times of a year or annual cycle. These rites or rituals are fixed periods that mark important events within the year. Calendrical rites give social meaning to the passage of time – one whole

year – creating repetitive weekly, monthly or annual cycles. Some of these rites are oriented towards seasonal changes and, thus, may be fixed or scheduled by the observance of either the solar or lunar calendar. The rites fixed by the solar calendar fall on the same day each year (such as New Year's Day which obviously falls on the first day of January), while the rites observed using the lunar calendar fall on different dates each year (such as the Chinese New Year or the Islamic Rahmadan which are scheduled based on the physical sighting of the moon).

Parallel to this discussion of calendrical rites, we have the academic calendar (observed in educational and training institutions or centers) which is unique in the sense that, although it follows the solar calendar, it does not have a fixed start. In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 4116 (enacted 20 June 1964) set a school calendar of not less than forty weeks (or 200 days on a 5 day a week class schedule) (Philippines 1964). While on August 25, 1994, the Philippine Congress enacted Republic Act No. 7797, which lengthened the school calendar "from 200 days to not more than 220 days" (Section 1) and which set the start of the school year "on the first Monday of June but not later than the last day of August" (Section 3) (Philippines 1994).

The Philippine academic calendar does not have a definite end because it may be extended when a particular semester experiences days of class cancelations due to typhoons and other calamities, or when the country or a particular city hosts an international event of major importance (e.g. in November 2017, when the Philippines hosted the 31st Summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, classes in all levels were suspended for two days in Metro Manila (region which consists of 16 cities and 1 municipality).

A move to change the academic calendar in the Philippines was expressed due to a number of reasons: the most obvious and pragmatic motivation was the difficulty students faced during the rainy season, such as cancellation of classes during heavy rainfall events, floods, and typhoons. Additionally, there was the issue on the educational standard in the country, and the need for its educational institutions to participate much more globally, especially when it comes to foreign exchanges and scholarship grants (Navarrete, 2015).

The academic calendar shift was finally implemented in 2014, aligning the Philippine educational system with universities in Southeast and Northeast Asia, America, and Europe. This also manifested the country's pursuit for economic integration with the ASEAN region. The integration would allow for more international scholarships for Filipino students, as well as an overall higher standard of education – one that can be at par with the global standard. In addition to the general potential effect of the program, it had been argued that the shift is truly pro-Philippines, in that it "can create globally competitive professionals who could help the country develop and progress" (Academic calendar 2014).

Although the legislative act proposed in 2014 did not materialize at first, some universities, namely the University of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila University, De la Salle University, and University of Santo Tomas, decided to implement a new academic calendar in order to enable more flexible participation of students in exchange programs and eventually promote their global competitiveness. These institutions are the so-called "Big Four" universities of the country. The trend has caught on since, with a total of 34 universities and colleges adopting the August to May calendar by 2017 (Luci-Atienza 2017).

2. Objective

This study shows the consequences of the changes in the academic calendar on the performance of rituals – both sacred and secular - particularly in urban areas where most of the country's premiere universities are located. The cessation or continuous pursuit of the conduct of these rituals are discussed and analyzed to reveal individual and community valuation.

3. Methodology

To collect data, interviews were conducted and questionnaires regarding their views on the new academic calendar were distributed to students, faculty, and staff in the University of the Philippines Manila (UP Manila) Data from the UP Manila populace were examined in conjunction with data coming from local and international studies. Continuity, accommodation or the cessation of the practice of rituals were then analyzed and viewed in pursuit of possible secularized manifestations of rituals.

4. Results

4.1 Sacred or Religious Rituals

An offshoot of more than three centuries of Spanish colonization, the Philippines is one of the only two predominantly Roman Catholic nations in Asia (the other being East Timor). It ranks fifth in the list of countries worldwide with the greatest number of Catholics and has been projected to rank fourth by 2050. According to the 2010 census of the Philippine National Statistics Office, an estimated 90.1% of Filipinos are Christians; 80.6% of whom are Roman Catholics (Philippine National Statistics Office 2010).

Philippine history is riddled with numerous accounts of revolt primarily

due to local and colonial socio-economic and political conditions, not the practice of Christianity itself. This is reflected in a unique academic calendar followed by most schools, colleges, and universities in the Philippines which allots and allows the longest time for both preparation and celebration of two Christian feasts most important to Filipinos: Christmas and Easter Sunday. Dr. Bernadette Abrera, former Chairperson of the Department of History in the University of the Philippines Diliman, wrote that historically, the basis for academic breaks in the Philippines have been economic practice, comfort of students, and cultural practice, and indeed, a lot of these are anchored on rituals which follow the Christian liturgical calendar (Abrera 2018).

Fig. 1: A shopping mall in the UP Town Center with Christmas decor and lights on the 1st Sunday of November, 2022. Photo: Honey Libertine Achanzar-Labor.

Christmas Celebration

It is said that the Philippines celebrate Christmas the longest. As early as September, Christmas decors already appear for sale in a number of city malls, Christmas songs are played on some radio stations, and on-line reservations of possible gifts for Christmas are already marketed. As early as October, some Filipinos are actually done buying Christmas gifts, since the tradition of Christmas *tertulias* (parties) and exchange of gifts starts as early as the second half of November. Besides, the

shopping malls at Divisoria, the commercial center in Manila, known for shops that sell low-priced goods, already get unbearably crowded with people by November. Shopping during the months of November and December in Divisoria should in fact be avoided, when possible. Although an average of 600,000 people go there daily, according to the Manila Police District, almost 1 million shoppers were recorded in Divisoria in November 2017; this number is usually sustained until December (Badilla 2016).

Although the season of Advent has been established by the Catholic Church as the period of preparation for Christmas, a devotional nine-day series of masses are practiced by Roman Catholics in the Philippines in anticipation of Christmas Day and to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary. These Night Masses (*Simbang Gabi*) in the Philippines are held daily from December 16 to 24 and occur at different times, ranging from as early as 3:00 to 5:00 in the morning. Despite its apparent untimeliness, the churches are filled with people. In fact, it is customary for Filipinos to bring stools to church aware that getting a seat inside is uncertain.

The entirety of Holy Week, on the other hand, which used to take place at the end of the academic calendar, marks the start of the two-month long summer break. Students and professionals working in academia have now the luxury of time, devoting the entire week to the preparation and participation in Holy Week liturgical events. Since the Holy Week can be spent anywhere, some Filipinos take the opportunity to leave the urban areas or even the country during this period. There is also time to do the traditional *Visita Iglesia*, the practice of visiting seven churches on the evening of Maundy Thursday. In the case of the Philippines, there is the option to do the *visita* during Good Friday and recite the Stations of the Cross, or even on any other day(s) of the Holy Week when groups take the visita as an opportunity for sightseeing, either to visit churches that have not been seen before, or to focus on a particular province of interest, where several churches can be visited. Two stations are recited in each church if the goal is just to visit seven churches, or one station per church if fourteen churches are aimed for.

The Holy Week in the Philippines culminates with the *salubong,* or pre-dawn reenactment of the encounter of the risen Christ with his Mother on Easter morning. This event is said to be most theatrical in the Philippines, where a young girl clothed as an angel in white is strapped to a contraption to make her appear to hover in midair, and instructed to sing the *Regina Coeli,* as she is lowered towards Mary's statue. With confetti falling all around her, she unveils Mary's black headpiece. Participants join in the celebration of the Resurrection and the end of Mary's sorrow through the liturgy.

Christmas in the New Academic Calendar

In the old academic calendar, semestral breaks happen between October and November. When the students come back, they enroll for the second semester and attend school for around one more month before having their Christmas break – typically starting a week prior to Christmas day (25 December). School resumes as soon as the last of the official holidays for the season have ended. The students usually go back to school as early as the first week of January.

Philippine schools and universities that have adopted the new calendar provide their students and staff a longer and uninterrupted Christmas break, as this coincides now with the semester break. Because Filipinos are accustomed to begin to celebrate Christmas very early, the academic calendar shift is actually seen as a beneficial thing in this sense (Casal 2017). The new academic calendar will allow schools to merge the semester and Christmas breaks together, creating a new, month-long Christmas holiday for students and teachers. Christian families may now complete the Simbang Gabi – a tradition of celebrating mass at midnight for nine straight days –, passing on the significance of the tradition to the younger generation. More time with the family also means more opportunities to venture out and take part in many activities such as travel and shopping, a benefit to both big businesses and small, private ones. Most importantly, it has an impact on the calendar shift that had not been mentioned in most discourses prior to its implementation (Lacuata 2016).

Fig. 2: Family clan reunion during Christmas season, December 2022.
Photo: Honey Libertine Achanzar-Labor.

The earlier start of the Christmas break has challenged a number of rituals carried out within the urban university setting. Among these are the traditional Christmas lantern parade and the lighting of university buildings, carried out at the start of the Christmas break to officially welcome the season in the university. These used to take place merely a week before Christmas, but will be too early now, after the calendric change.

The Holy Week in the New Academic Calendar

Since it used to mark the start of the summer break, Holy Week in the Philippines is a yearly celebration, when Filipinos travel en masse to their home provinces for a long vacation. The week begins on Palm Sunday (usually around mid-April) when Catholics carry woven palm fronds to be blessed by the priest. Weaving palm fronds for Palm Sunday is actually a very lucrative job to have around this time which is usually done by entire families. The Easter exodus starts straight after the blessing of fronds. Prior to the calendar shift, students would have already been on their summer break, and in order to maximize their time with the younger ones, many members of the workforce take extra time off work to enjoy a weeklong vacation. Holy or Maundy Thursday and Good Friday are national holidays, but many companies also give employees Wednesday off, although Holy Monday and Tuesday are almost never considered. Maundy is when Catholics observe the last Mass before Easter or the Institution of the Lord's Supper. Priests also renew their sacerdotal vows in an elaborate ceremony that attracts thousands. The washing of the feet of the apostles is re-enacted in many churches, followed by the procession of the Blessed Sacrament to the "Altar of Repose". The traditional *Visita Iglesia*, or church visit, starts after Maundy Thursday rituals. People visit several churches around town, supposedly to meditate on the Way of the Cross (Torres, 2016).

The Holy week – a time for reflection, commemoration, but also togetherness with the family – will have to be celebrated within the second semester of the new academic year, meaning that schools will have to provide off-time to their staff and students outside of term break. Typically, schools will begin the official Holy Week break on Maundy Thursday, giving students and employees a total of only four straight days to celebrate the holiday. As a result, many workers in the education sector do not have the luxury of taking time off early due to the fact that students are still in school. This gives them less time for their families, and the same goes with the students as well. In universities, there is a particular issue with dormitory and boarding house policies that prohibit residents from signing out for vacation early lest they be given a misdemeanor, hurting their chances to acquire a spot in the dorm in the future. Since many students cannot afford better housing, most opt not to leave early, resulting in them missing out on the holiday with their families.

Perhaps the most disheartening effect of the calendar shift, on the family rituals during the Holy Week, is the type of activities families end up doing due to the short vacation time they have. Less time is spent (especially among city folk) on going to mass and conducting traditional activities, such as the *Visita Iglesia*. Many families would rather spend time going out and participating in other forms of entertainment with their children (which was originally done during Holy Monday and Tuesday) in order to make the best out of the limited time (Torres & Torres 2016). With this trend, there is potential risk of many of the Holy Week traditions eventually dying out, at the very least in urbanized areas.

Flores de Mayo in the New Academic Calendar

Characterized as the "Queen of Philippine Festivals," the *Flores de Mayo* (Engl. "May Flowers") is a Marian festival held in the Philippines in the month of May, the month dedicated to Mary, the mother of Christ. The traditional feast is marked by a 9-day or *novena* prayer and a month-long daily offering of flowers to the image of Mary at the altar in the church. Flowers and petals are either sprinkled while walking to the altar, or bouquets of flowers are brought and offered. The celebration comes to an end on the 31st of May with a grand procession of the Holy Cross widely recognized as the *Santacruzan*.

Fig. 3: Flores de Mayo with a twist, a parade of Philippine endemic flowers. May 2018. Photo: Honey Libertine Achanzar-Labor.

The fact that this festival continues to be celebrated has a lot to do the with the old academic calendar, which presents all the reason to celebrate the month of May, as

this signifies the start of the two-month long summer break. It is the month when most flowers in the Philippines are in bloom; it is the month when beaches which abound in the Philippine archipelago are most welcoming; it is the month when the greatest number of feasts and festivals take place in the Philippines. In fact, in the province of Bohol, one may be invited daily as a house guest for lunch or dinner, as long as one have at hand the schedule of the town *fiestas*. It is also therefore the month when families allot time to bond and rekindle family ties.

Slowly, more and more universities will be shifting to the new academic calendar wherein classes will be held in the entirety of May. Attempts to incorporate the Flores de Mayo celebration have been made by some school organizations. The sustainability of the celebration of the festivity will greatly depend on this inclusion in the academic calendar.

Fig. 4: Poster for the 2023 Flores de Mayo Festival and Conference organized by the Faura Project with the University of the Philippines Manila.

4.2 Secular Rituals

There are also some rituals that are not connected to the Christian liturgy. Secular rituals included in this study are those related to the agricultural practice, annual summer family reunions, as well as rituals related to the opening of classes and the start of the new academic calendar itself.

With summer vacation moved from April and May to July and August, students in the agricultural sector will actually have more time to assist in the farm during harvest season which, in the Philippines, is during the months of June, July, and August (Behance 2018). This not only increases the amount of hands available to help, but it also gives more time for family members to bond. In contrast, it is also an issue come sowing season, which usually starts around May. Agricultural production may be affected by the new academic calendar, as some students may choose to help out in the farms rather than go to school (Lacuata 2016). Moving the start of classes will also mean students, especially in farming communities, might not be able to afford to go to school because of the conflict with the agricultural calendar (de Santos 2014).

On the other hand, it has been a ritual for students studying in the urban centers to go home to their hometowns during summer time. And as the Philippines is archipelagic, it is routine for them to spend some time at the beach during this period for their much-needed break and relaxation. Logically, it is also around this time that Filipino families schedule their family reunions.

5. Discussion

Accommodation of Rituals within the Academic Semester

Since Christmas break usually takes place just a week before Christmas, various forms of celebrating the Christmas season have been accommodated in the Philippine academic calendar. The most established may be the ceremonial lighting of building facades, as well as the competitive parade of lanterns at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, the conduct of which is always made a part of national news coverage. Even long after graduation, it has been a custom for some people to spend a night at one of the sprawling campuses of the University of the Philippines to watch the parade of multi-themed Christmas lanterns as they sample different types of street food; this also marks their last activity of the year in campus. Also scheduled throughout the Christmas season are free Christmas concerts to carol the members of the academic community; this is usually open to the public as well.

Common to many academic institutions are multiple Christmas parties organized at different levels, wherein members of the teaching staff are enjoined to

attend a Christmas party organized for his/her assigned class, another one organized for his/her school department, another at the college level, and in the case of universities, another one at that level. The expense for these parties is sometimes shouldered by the academic institution, but oftentimes, the ones who attend are asked to share in the expense.

The ritual of exchanging gifts is carried out in some of these parties. A simple way of exchanging gifts is to take a gift, the cost of which is agreed to in advance by participants, to the Christmas party. Each gift is numbered and raffled off during the party. This tradition has been sustained since it removes the expectation of receiving a gift from each one of your friends, thus lowering one's holiday expense.

Another version of giving gifts during the Christmas season is the Kris Kringle. This is most often done among classmates, office mates, or among a group of friends. It slightly differs from the usual exchanging gifts because one knows in advance to whom a gift will be given during the group's Christmas party. A small gift is given to the Monito or Monita[1] each day, if the activity is done close to the Christmas break, or once weekly if this is done on the first week of December.

However, the new academic calendar in the Philippines has made December the end of the first semester. Although classes in the University of the Philippines now end in the first week of December, final exams are scheduled for the following week. The Lantern Parade is set on the last day of the final exams..

With the Christmas rush, together with all the activities Filipinos have traditionally taken part in during the Christmas season, the scheduling of final examinations in the middle of the season can be stressful and disconcerting. Many students are also tasked to make Christmas lanterns and ornaments and are part of rehearsals for Christmas themed productions adding additional stress. Many school teachers and university professors find it difficult to get into the Christmas mood when their minds are still on the piles of paper they need to check and final grades that need to be computed.

Accommodation of Rituals Outside the Academic Semester

Unlike Christmas, the Flores de Mayo - as an event in schools and universities - has never been accommodated in the regular semester since this used to take place during summer break. But universities that have opted for the change in their

[1] In the Philippines, Secret Santa is also known as *Monito Monita,* or *Manito Manita*. This is a tradition of gift exchange that finds its roots in early Christmas traditions. The original *manitos* or *manitas* were the gift-bearing helpers of St. Nicholas. The said tradition requires everyone to write their names on strips of paper which would be individually "raffled" to everyone involved. The title "manito" is given to a male gift recipient, with "manita" being its female equivalent.

academic calendar, classes on the month of May have generally prevented student participation to the said event.

To address this concern, Project Faura[2] incorporated in its campaign to conserve heritage, a week-long event called *Flores de Mayo: Endemic Flowers in the Philippines* last May 2018. Right along Padre Faura Street, where the Manila campus of the University of the Philippines is located, images of flowers endemic to the Philippines were paraded by a number of UP students. The parade culminated at the UP Manila Museum of a History of Ideas, with a lecture and painting exhibit on the theme of endemic flowers. The activity sparked much interest and was covered and aired by CNN Philippines on national television. Project Faura intends to make this a yearly event, and to accommodate this in the academic calendar.

The change is most beneficial when the conduct of a ritual is made more conscious, deliberate, and not just done out of routine. Although the rites of the Holy Week remain a sacred and essential aspect of worship for most Catholic families in the Philippines, it has been become quite common for Filipinos to schedule out of town vacations during Holy Week. Since the Philippines is a predominantly Catholic country, there is a church in practically every town, thus allowing everyone to attend the Paschal Triduum, the three days that begin with the liturgy on the evening of Maundy Thursday. It reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil, and closes with evening prayer on Easter Sunday. Unfortunately, and perhaps a consequence of the latter practice, the attendance to the Triduum has become a routine for some. Since only two days of the Holy Week are now declared as national holidays – Holy Thursday and Friday – the attendance of rites may be more deliberate and made more significant.

Ironically, despite the prolonged Christmas break, confirmation of practices related to the season of Christmas needs to be also affirmed as one encounters members of the teaching faculty who complain of "no longer having Christmas breaks" since this is spent checking papers and working on student grades at the end of the semester. Again, owning the moments of preparation for Christmas break can be done and needs to be done through basic planning and setting of individual deadlines.

Alternative family traditions: this should not be a problem in the Philippines now, since several indoor sports and wellness facilities have been built in the past decade – from gyms, to archery arcades, dance studios, and wellness centers. Since

[2] The Faura Project is an organization of faculty, students, and alumni of the University of the Philippines Manila that aims to position Padre Faura Street as a heritage zone. The group magnifies long-overlooked issues across fields through weeklong events that focus on heritage conservation and other related issues along the street and its environs that are taken for granted. At the core of the project is the awareness that promotion of heritage can be best undertaken if its culture-bearers increase their awareness of heritage and thus, pride of place.

the Philippines is archipelagic, nearby beaches can be visited on weekends even during the regular semesters of the new academic calendar. However, gone are the days when families could linger on these beaches during the two-month long summer breaks.

6. Conclusion

Calendric rituals serve to simplify the chaos of life and impose a more or less coherent system of categories of meaning onto it (Bell, 1997). Although the change in the academic calendar has posed problems for the conduct of some rituals, reconfiguration of these rituals has been accomplished by means of accommodation, simplification of form (focused on the essential), and/or alternation of ritual.

1. *Accommodation and simplification of form.* In the course of using the old academic calendar, several Christmas rituals have been accommodated and made more complex and elaborate. All these need to be simplified in the new calendar; perhaps one Christmas party in the workplace would suffice, although since Filipinos are highly festive people, this will most likely not happen.

On the other hand, rituals which did not used to be acknowledged in the old academic calendar might have to be accommodated now. The Flores de Mayo may be a means not only of fostering a Marian devotion, but also the importance of the preservation of endemic flowers, which used to grow in abundance in the month of May. A campaign to raise awareness on the existence of these flowers is now much needed in an age when imported flowers are made more accessible in flower shops.

2. *Alternation.* Two-month long summer breaks used to be accommodated in the old academic calendar. The intense summer heat has made visits to public beaches or private resorts customary for Filipino families who make sure that this is scheduled accordingly, right before the months of unpredictable rainy season that usually begins in the month of June. These visits to the beach are considered essential summer rituals and are often times the venue for annual family reunions. Unfortunately, as June now marks the start of the term break in the new academic calendar, visits to the beach and family reunions have to be scheduled during summer weekend breaks, which should not be difficult to do since the Philippines is archipelagic and beach resorts will always be accessible.

As in the old academic calendar, classes start in the month of June, the school year begins with the celebration of the country's independence from under the colonial rule. Philippine Independence Day is celebrated on June 12. Classes usually start after this, but occasionally, this takes place a few days before the opening. Independence Day is always celebrated in school as this serves as a perfect teaching tool for instilling patriotism and love for the country. With the new academic calendar that starts in August, this will no longer be done. And for a country that

has gained independence only after World War 2, rituals which instill patriotism, and which foster national pride are still necessary. The government may need to be more conscious of this and make use of media as an alternative venue of instruction. A campaign in which individual families foster patriotism and national pride can and should be carried out since Philippine law in fact requires it. What is wanting is the stricter implementation of law, starting with the simple act of putting a flag on every edifice during Independence Day.

3. This study shows that the change in the academic calendar has consequences on the performance of both sacred and secular rituals, particularly in the urban areas where most of the country's premiere universities are located. Furthermore, the cessation or continuous pursuit of the conduct of these rituals reveals valuation. Rituals of utmost value to Filipinos are reconfirmed either through the confirmation of essential aspects of old rituals or through the accommodation of new ones. The innovative conduct of some of these rituals has also been shown and suggested. It has also been suggested that rituals which could no longer be incorporated in the new academic calendar be supported through other means and promoted by media and individual families themselves.

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Bibliographical Note

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The *Rosary of 100 Requiem*: Reviving an Old Ritual (and a Traditional Belief) in the Public Space of a Cemetery

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Abstract: The worship of the dead, and in particular of the holy souls in Purgatory, is a deep-rooted tradition in southern Italy. The related beliefs and rituals concern both the calendric customs (November is the month dedicated to the faithful departed) and the life cycle customs (the surviving connections with the dearly departed). One of the most widespread practices has been the recitation of the *Rosary of 100 Requiem*, during which participants recite ten sets of ten *Requiem aeternam*, the main Catholic prayer devoted to the faithful departed. This ritual could be individually or collectively performed within domestic/private or sacred/public spaces (churches, chapels, cemeteries). In this paper I discuss a collective ritual which a lay confraternity has recently revived in Castellaneta (Apulia). While originally (until the 1960s) it took place in a small room in the cathedral, now it is set within the larger space of a cemetery, in the form of a procession going through the cemeterial buildings. The participants, walking behind a Crucifix, recite one hundred *Requiem aeternam* and read pious texts along a sort of *Via Crucis* in ten stations. Significantly, instead of being bound to a specific period (for example, November), this ritual is performed on the first Sunday of every month. In so doing, the *Rosary of 100 Requiem* enables a dynamic reconfiguration of a sacred, urban, liminal space (the cemetery) through a revived and innovated ritual, whose monthly repetition transforms an almost vanished traditional practice into an ordinary community event that creates a deeply felt experience of life/death relationships.

Keywords: Purgatory, worship of the dead, cemetery, procession, confraternity, Catholicism, afterlife.

Introduction

Castellaneta is a town of about 17000 inhabitants in the province of Taranto (Apulia, southern Italy). As Castellaneta has been an episcopal see since the eleventh century, it is not surprising to find here a great number of liturgical and paraliturgical events that deeply characterise the religious and cultural identity of the local community (see Fonseca 1993). Chief among these events are processions, the primary and most crowded rituals taking place in an urban landscape. The most solemn and significant processions are performed during Holy Week (Good Friday and Holy Saturday) and in the month of May for the Patron Saints (Saint Nicholas and Saint Francis of Paola). These processions are highly formalised rituals, carefully organised by clerical and secular agencies (notably the lay confraternities), performed by hundreds of people, and attended by thousands more.

However, the research I present here deals with a quite different kind of city ritual, a less formalised and much less crowded procession[1] taking place not through the urban streets, but within the boundaries of a well-defined area of the town: the cemetery. This is a monthly ritual procession through which the participants basically express their devotion to the dead and their belief in the existence of an otherworldly place, Purgatory, as well as in the efficacy of their prayers for the holy souls in Purgatory (for a historical analysis see Le Goff 1984; perhaps the most significant Christian source on this topic is Caterina da Genova 2000).

Worship of the dead, and especially of the holy souls in Purgatory, is a traditional custom in southern Italy, as perfectly demonstrated by the famous case of Naples, with its cults and rituals devoted to the so called *capuzzelle*, literally 'little heads', referring to the thousands of skulls of unknown dead piled up in the underground of the city and regarded as belonging to as many holy souls in Purgatory (see De Matteis and Niola 1993; Niola 2003). However, this is just one of the numerous features by which one can understand how the piety, attitude and imagination of so many people and communities in southern Italy were – and are, though to a lesser degree – steeped in an intense relationship with their dead, death itself, and the afterlife. Churches and lay confraternities dedicated to Purgatory and to Our Lady of Mount Carmel – traditionally seen as the patron saint of the holy souls in Purgatory – are countless (for Apulia see, for instance, Alemanno 1988; Boaga 1990). Purgatorial iconography is rich and widespread (holy cards and devotional images, votive aedicules or shrines, paintings, statues, etc.), and pious practices for the dead are still common among quite a large number of individuals and families. I personally can confirm this by my direct experience both in Castellaneta, my hometown – I grew up in a family sensitive to the remembrance and the reverence of the dearly departed – and in many other towns in southern Italy. Rituals related to the dead and the afterlife concern both the calendric and the life cycle customs,

both the social-public and the individual-private fields of the people's lives (see Bronzini 1974: 119–125). On one hand, there is a yearly period expressly dedicated by the Catholic Church to *all* the faithful departed, namely the month of November, especially the first and second days of the month – All Saint's Day and All Soul's Day. On the other hand, individuals and families may commemorate *their own* dead whenever they like, by visiting them in the cemeteries (usually bringing flowers and/or lighting votive candles), by praying for them at home (in many houses, including that of my parents, there is a space reserved for pictures and other items memorialising dead relatives), and by offering them requiem Masses in churches (traditionally, there are Masses celebrated eight days, thirty days, and one year after a relative's death, followed by Masses celebrated on each yearly anniversary).

Faith in the afterlife – and more precisely in Purgatory – as well as in the efficacy of the living's prayers for the dead, which are at the heart of the city ritual I discuss here, are firmly grounded in Catholic doctrine. The following are perhaps the most authoritative sources, which explain the dogmatic core of beliefs and practices concerning the relationships and the interconnectedness between the living and the dead, the mundane and the otherworldly dimensions of human existence:

> Whereas the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has, from the sacred writings and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, taught, in sacred councils, and very recently in this oecumenical Synod, *that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls there detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful*, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar […]. *But let the bishops take care, that the suffrages of the faithful who are living*, to wit the sacrifices of masses, prayers, alms, and other works of piety, which have been wont to be performed by the faithful for the other faithful departed, *be piously and devoutly performed*, in accordance with the institutes of the church […] (The Council of Trent: The Twenty-Fifth Session 1848(1563): 232–233; my emphasis).

> All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. […] This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture […]. *From the beginning the Church has honoured the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God*. The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead […] (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1999: 235; my emphasis).

Though separated by more than four centuries, both the Council of Trent (sixteenth century) and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (twentieth century) officially and solemnly establish and confirm two basic concepts: 1) the reality of a transcendent place and of an ontological condition called 'Purgatory', whose function is patently expressed by the name itself (there the 'still imperfectly purified' souls undergo a veritable process of 'purgation'); and 2) the effectiveness of those pious practices that the living faithful are allowed to perform – and, as good Catholics, are invited to do so – to help the dead "to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven".

The Fieldwork

For this project I attended the *Rosary of 100 Requiem* as an observing participant fourteen times to date, from August 2018 until May 2019, and from August until December, 2019. Outside of the ritual itself, I conducted an extensive and semi-structured oral interview (September 3, 2018) with three significant members of the organising lay confraternity: Egidio (75, graduated, former journalist and theatrical director), the oldest Brother and the only living witness of the previous form of the ritual; Roberto (57, high school diploma, typographer), the most active and engaged Brother in organising and disseminating the ritual; and Antonella (43, graduated, former accountant, now unemployed), at the time of the interview, the last person to have joined the confraternity. The interview took place in the house of Egidio. Curiously, Roberto and Antonella – as well as all the other Brothers – ignored the existence of the *Rosary of 100 Requiem* before joining the Confraternity, a practice, as I will show, essentially revived by Egidio. In addition, before and after performing the ritual I talked with a number of common participants (that is, not belonging to the confraternity). As a rule, however, it has been difficult to obtain clear answers from them: they could not (and sometimes did not want to) explain the reasons for their participation, apart from a general devotion for and commemoration of their dearly departed, thus associating these souls, more or less consciously, with the holy souls in Purgatory. With the help of my wife, I took many photographs portraying different moments, places and actors in the ritual (see Figures 1 and 2) and filmed the performance in its entirety.

Fig. 1: The Brothers leading the ritual procession. Photo: Elettra Carrassi, October 7, 2018.

The *Mediatisation* of the Ritual

To advertise the *Rosary of 100 Requiem*, and to encourage townspeople's participation, posters are displayed each month in the cemetery, in the churches and, initially, along some streets (it is from one of these early posters that I discovered the launch of the *Rosary of 100 Requiem*). The ritual has been also advertised via the Facebook profile of the confraternity and reported by a local online news channel. Interestingly, WhatsApp messages (each time including a different prayer and pious text concerning the belief in Purgatory) are sent one day before each event, as a reminder, from the aforementioned Roberto, to the group of customary participants (including myself, who have been soon considered as one of them).

The Actors

The main actors of the *Rosary of 100 Requiem* are the members of the confraternity of the Holy Crucifix, who play simultaneously the roles of organisers, coordinators, and performers of the ritual. Their total number is 16. However, not all the Brothers attend the ritual; some of them never did. During my observations, their number has fluctuated from a minimum of 2 to a maximum of 8 participants. Only Roberto has always been present.

The ritual is also attended by common faithful. Their number has varied. I have recorded a minimum of 10 (August 2018) and a maximum of 26 participants

(December 2019). Almost half of the participants are regular attendees. They represent the core of the *Rosary of 100 Requiem*. The other half or so consists of more occasional participants[2]. The common faithful are mainly middle-aged and elderly women. I have often been one of the only two men participating, apart from the Brothers.

Worth noting is also the category of spectators. According to my observations, virtually all the cemetery's visitors (usually not so numerous) paid attention to the people performing the *Rosary of 100 Requiem*; quite often they took a break to look at them, to follow their procession, or even to join them in the recitation of some *Requiem aeternam*. When interviewed, Egidio declared that he was impressed by the reaction of these people: 'Often interested, sometimes enchanted and even touched' (interview, September 3, 2018).

The following chart summarises the attendance data concerning the monthly events I have observed first-hand:

Date	Brothers	Common faithful	Total
August 5, 2018	3	10	13
September 2, 2018	3	11	14
October 7, 2018	6	14	20
November 4, 2018	6	24	30
December 2, 2018	3	16	19
January 13, 2019[3]	8	13	21
February 3, 2019	6	17	23
March 3, 2019	6	16	22
April 7, 2019	4	21	25
May 5, 2019	4	13	17
August 4, 2019	2	13	15
September 1, 2019	5	19	24
October 6, 2019	5	15	20
December 1, 2019	5	26	31

As the chart shows, except for three months, the attendance of common faithful did not fall under 10 and did not exceed 20, resulting in an average attendance of 16.28. After one year and four months of observation, the trend appears to be constant, without substantial drops or peaks in participation. Among other things, these data show that the ritual is still a marginal and comparatively unsuccessful initiative, whose strength and appeal seems, so far, unable to increase the number of its participants. However, it seems to have gained sufficient stability and regularity to make it a vital, almost routine practice for a certain number of people, especially

for those most committed to the worship of the dead, either for personal motives (such as a mother whose young son died ten years ago or a woman who recently lost her parents) or for more general religious reasons connected to a spiritual mission (the Brothers).

The confraternity of the Holy Crucifix has a two-part history. It was originally established in Castellaneta in 1648 but disappeared in the 1960s for lack of members. It was later re-established, on 21 November 2016, after some years of surveys and attempts among people more or less related to the cult of the Crucifix or to the heritage of the former confraternity. In the town there were already four confraternities – Blessed Sacrament, Our Lady of Sorrows, Rosary and Saint Francis of Paola (see Bertoldi Lenoci 1990) – therefore, it was important for this fifth sodality to differentiate itself from the others, to give sense and value to its rebirth. Indeed, it has recovered the worship of Jesus Christ crucified, which is especially embodied, in Castellaneta, by a miraculous Crucifix enshrined in a cathedral's chapel. Furthermore, the re-founders of this confraternity have assumed the virtue of mercy and the carrying out of merciful deeds as their specific mission, among which the prayers for the faithful departed – and in particular for the faithful departed with no parents or friends praying for them – have a major role.

Fig. 2: The common faithful walking in procession. Photo: Elettra Carrassi, October 7, 2018.

Space-time Framework and Ritual Structure

Unlike the large and heterogeneous space of the traditional urban processions, the cemetery of Castellaneta, where the *Rosary of 100 Requiem* is performed, is an open yet delimited space. The path of the procession was approved following a number of inspections in situ by the Brothers, whose intention was to trace a route encompassing the widest area as possible – in other words a perimeter route surrounding all the cemeterial area or so and, consequently, virtually including all its *guests.*[4] Given the public and municipal nature of the space in question, an official authorisation was approved by the town council. To obtain the necessary ecclesiastical approval, the Brothers had also consulted the parish priest of the Castellaneta's cathedral and the cemetery chaplain.

The ritual takes place on the first Sunday of every month and starts at 9:30 am, so as to facilitate the attendance of the common faithful: it is a non-working day (unlike Friday, which, after all, would be the most advisable day from a strictly religious point of view, given its link with the passion and death of Jesus Christ). The hour is not too early, but also not too late, to allow the participants, if they like, to attend Sunday Mass afterwards. The average duration is approximately thirty minutes.

Fig. 3: The path of the procession inside the cemetery of Castellaneta.

The *Rosary of 100 Requiem* is structured in form of *Via Crucis*, namely as a walking itinerary consisting of ten stations, starting and finishing in front of the cemeterial church, thus covering the cemetery and most of its extension (see Fig. 3). However, owing to bad weather in winter and to extreme heat in summer (and in considera-

tion of the average age of the participants), the ritual has been performed four times in a static form within the cemeterial church and twice in a mixed form (that is, two walking stations – the first and the last – and eight with people standing within the cemeterial church)[5]. Four-page leaflets containing the texts to be read during the procession are handed out by the Brothers to the participants. About half of the participants used chaplets to keep count in reciting the prescribed *Requiem aeternam* (see Figure 4). This is the most traditional and widespread Catholic prayer devoted to the dearly departed (see Righetti 2005: II, 377, 628–629). It is recited, in its Italian version, a hundred times overall during the *Rosary of 100 Requiem*, that is, ten times at each station. The text, in its original Latin version and in Italian and English translations, is the following:

> *Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis. Requiescant in pace. Amen.*
>
> *L'eterno riposo dona loro, o Signore, e splenda ad essi la luce perpetua. Riposino in pace. Amen.*
>
> *Eternal rest grant unto them, o Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.*

When the procession stops at one of the established stations (sometimes marked by a stone or metal cross placed in the ground), one of the participants who is not a Brother reads from her/his leaflet a pious commentary associating a moment of *Passio Christi* with the deliverance of the holy souls in Purgatory. Along the path in between two stations, all the participants, walking in line without a specified order and at a normal pace, and prompted by the reader of the current station, recite ten *Requiem aeternam*. The Brothers of the Holy Crucifix, wearing their traditional clothing (a white surplice and a red *mozzetta* – a sort of cloak), walk ahead of the procession, one of them carrying a huge Cross. At the beginning and at the end of the ritual the canonical Catholic prayers are recited: *Pater*, *Ave,* and *Gloria*.

Fig. 4: Detail of a woman with a chaplet during the *Rosary of 100 Requiem*. Photo: Elettra Carrassi, October 7, 2018.

Liminal Places and People

From a ritual and performative point of view, it is particularly significant that the *Rosary of 100 Requiem* features and refers to places and people characterised by their liminality. The cemetery is immanent; Purgatory is transcendent; the lay confraternity (usually replacing the clergy in the paraliturgical rituals) is immanent; the holy souls in Purgatory are transcendent. As explained by Victor Turner (1988: 25): "The dominant genres of performance in societies at all levels of scale and complexity tend to be liminal phenomena. They are performed in privileged spaces and times, set off from the periods and the areas reserved for work, food and sleep".

Accordingly, these liminal places and people symbolise and embody an intermediate condition, which enables, just through a ritual performance, a temporary yet crucial connection between life and death, secular and sacred, material and spiritual, human and divine, visible and invisible, past and present (and future). The liminality, indeed, "is often the scene and time for the emergence of a society's deepest values" (*ibid.*: 102).

Let me develop on this issue. First, the *Rosary of 100 Requiem* is a form of prayer. The prayer, from a religious point of view, functions as a bridge between the human and the divine, as a channel connecting us with God through the mediation of the

saints, the Virgin Mary and above all Jesus Christ, whose double nature is inherently liminal, bringing together the human and the divine. In particular, the one performed during the *Rosary of 100 Requiem* is a kind of "prayer of intercession", defined by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as follows (1999: 561):

> *Intercession is a prayer of petition which leads us to pray as Jesus did. He is the one intercessor with the Father on behalf of men, especially sinners. He is 'able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them'.*

Purgatory, as an afterlife space-time, identifies an intermediate place between Paradise (the kingdom of the blessed souls) and Hell (the kingdom of the damned souls), or else between heaven and earth. The dead holy souls, as inhabitants of the Purgatory, live in an intrinsically liminal condition; moreover, when prayed to, they can act as mediators between (living) humans and God, and between the mundane and the otherworldly dimensions of human condition. The lay confraternity consists of laymen characterised by a faith, a diligence and an activism higher, at least in principle, than those of the average faithful; as such, they can be seen as a liminal category of humans who place themselves between the secular and the sacred, the 'laity' and the 'holy orders'.[6] Finally, the cemetery, as a physical and symbolic urban space hosting the dead of a city/town, and receiving parents and friends wishing to visit and commemorate their dearly departed, functions as a liminal space-time connecting the living and the dead of a certain city/town, its present and its recent or distant past. On the other hand, cemeteries are usually located at the periphery of the cities or towns, on the border between the inhabited area and the countryside, something that emphasises their spatial liminality. Roberto suggestively summed up the dual nature of the ritual: 'By walking and praying through the alleys of the cemetery, we perform a route that is both spiritual and physical. Passing by the tombs and looking at the pictures displaying the departed we meditate about the sense of life and death' (interview, September 3, 2018).

What arises from this ritual performance is an exchange of intercessions between the holy souls in Purgatory and the living people praying for them, passing through the redemptive mediation granted by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. In fact, the participants offer to Lord God, on behalf of the holy souls in Purgatory, the pains suffered – and then the merits earned – by Jesus Christ on earth and, consequently, ask the dead holy souls to intercede with God on behalf of themselves. This is what clearly emerges from the introductory and concluding formulae framing each station of the *Rosary of 100 Requiem*. The introductory formula reads as follows: 'I offer to You, my beloved Jesus, in support of the dead holy souls…'; such is the concluding formula: 'Holy souls, souls of Purgatory, pray God for me, because I shall pray for you, so that He gives you the glory of Heaven.' This is also the core

meaning that the interviewed Brothers have claimed to ascribe to this ritual, as well as the main reason pushing them to perform it:

> *We pray for the holy souls in Purgatory who, in their turn, will pray for us, so as we all gain the resurrection into the glory of Heaven. Through our ritual – beside the individual prayers and the requiem Masses – we are glad to create a stronger connection between us, the living, and the dead people (Roberto, interview, September 3, 2018).*

In the last sentence one can arguably find the most distinguishing feature of a religious performance, which William O. Beeman (2015: 38) describes as a "kind of social ritual involv[ing] the joining of parts of the spiritual world"; consequently, this kind of performance "usually involve[s] the uniting of secular and spiritual universes". And, as showed, all the elements implied in the *Rosary of 100 Requiem* are fundamentally liminal, thus functioning as privileged ways – at least from a religious and Catholic point of view – for connecting different levels of reality, that is what is *down here* and what is *up there*. Particularly significant, in my view, is the fact that this ritual connection takes place within the cemetery, namely in the space physically (and not only spiritually, as it would be in a church or at home), occupied – though in an increasingly decayed form – by the recipients of the ritual performance, whose presence is objectified – and whose absence is "culturally mastered" (de Martino 1975: 3–11) – by the gravestones and especially by the related pictures.

Ritual Year and Public Space-time

Being set in a cemetery, this ritual performance provides an interesting case of use or re-use of a public urban space. Its goal is to revive a traditional belief and reinvigorate an ancient practice almost disappeared and largely ignored even by most of its organisers. According to the direct testimony of my oldest informant Egidio, between the 1950s and 1960s, the Brothers of the Holy Crucifix gathered once a month (first or second Friday of the month[7]) in a room located inside the cathedral of Castellaneta to carry out the so called *Coronella* (literally 'little crown', more commonly known as *Corona* or *Coroncina*, referring to the Rosary Crown)[8], a ritual prayer devoted to the holy souls in Purgatory. Basically it was a blending of two important Catholic practices: the Rosary, with *Requiem aeternam* replacing the canonical *Pater*, *Ave,* and *Gloria*, and the *Via Crucis*, though in a static form, since the participants were sitting. The current ritual renamed *Rosary of 100 Requiem for the holy souls in Purgatory*, launched in March 2017, may therefore be considered

as the recovery of this earlier practice, also in consideration of the leading and inspirational role assumed by Egidio, the only first-hand witness of the *Coronella*.

A quite innovative recovery, indeed, inasmuch as a static practice, set within the closed and (semi)private space of a cathedral's room, has been reinvented as a dynamic and processional one, to be performed within the (semi)open and public space of a cemetery. In so doing, the *Rosary of 100 Requiem* has given a ritual and a more solemn form to the informal tradition of walking through the cemetery for visiting and praying our own dearly departed[9]. Consequently, it re-evaluates and revitalises – at least, this is one of the goals pursued by the organisers – the cemetery as a place of meeting and socialisation, as a living part of the urban landscape (see, for instance, Faeta 2011).

On the other hand, while the worship of the dead and the related rituality are traditionally associated with a limited period of the year – the first two days of November, framed between the *Novena* (24 October–1 November) and the *Ottavario* (2–9 November) – they are extended to the whole year by the monthly recurrence of the *Rosary of 100 Requiem*. Therefore, at least for those who attend it and, to a lesser degree, for those who know it, this city ritual makes it quite *ordinary*, just because of its iteration and regularity, a set of beliefs and practices commonly and increasingly perceived as something *extra-ordinary*, not by chance institutionally enclosed in a specific period of the year. In other words, there is a noticeable effort to use the public and culturally significant space of the cemetery as a means to transform into a *routine* what is today generally lived as an *exception*.

In fact, by shifting the ritual prayer for the holy souls in Purgatory from the church to the cemetery, Egidio – who, incidentally, has been a theatrical director and is an expert in the opera – has given a "second life" (see Honko 2013; Hovi 2014; Carrassi 2017) to this religious tradition, making it both more pertinent to its meaning (being set in a cemetery, the ritual, literally, gets closer to its recipients) and more suitable for a broader participation.[10] This kind of ritual prayer is performed in many other towns in southern Italy, but generally within the churches and not in processional form.[11] And yet, the cemetery appears to be an ideal place, able to create the appropriate "cognitive frame" (Beeman 2015: 36) for performing this pious practice, above all because it emphasises, physically and symbolically, the universal dimension of prayers devoted to *all* the holy souls in Purgatory, especially those without living relatives or friends praying for them.

Nevertheless, most of the participants, when asked, have justified their attendance by citing personal and individual purposes, above all the remembrance of one or more relatives (sons and parents primarily); they see in this ritual a means to make themselves closer to their dearly departed. In this regard, I find particularly significant an incident that happened during the *Rosary of 100 Requiem* of April 2019. A woman – incidentally, the most regular participant – whose son died at

an early age, had been given the reading of the seventh station; this is a station commemorating the "violent separation" of the Virgin Mary from her son. After the first few words, the woman burst into tears, incapable of finishing the reading of the station. She later admitted identifying herself with the Virgin Mary and her distress. One month later, the same woman was again requested to read the seventh station by a Sister of the Holy Crucifix, who did not witness the previous incident. She refused, taking the Sister aback. Roberto, who saw what happened, explained to her the misfortune of the request. Since then, the Brothers have been careful not to assign the seventh station to that woman. However, except this incident, I observed very few cases of visible poignancy; the participants generally displayed a plain and restrained attitude during the ritual.

Perhaps it is not surprising that the interviewed Brothers complain and blame the increasing suppression and concealment of sorrow and death in modern society, something that explains, in their view, the fact that so few people nowadays frequent the cemeteries. In the South of Italy, as argued by two important Italian scholars, "the violent severing of cultural roots coincided with the ejection of the death from the horizon of cultural awareness of the urban-industrial society" (Lombardi Satriani and Meligrana 1982: 7); more generally, it is a widespread idea that, in the contemporary age, death is dead, "and, with it, a manifold set of rituals and ceremonies, which have been cut to the bone in order to remove this event and resume the route of a commodified and homogenised everyday life" (Faeta 2011: 223). On the contrary, my informants have claimed and demonstrated a genuine care and respect for the mystery of death, as well as a firm belief in the existence of Purgatory and in the effectiveness of their prayers for the dead holy souls. As argued by Antonella: 'It is crucial what a person learns and experiences within her/his family in order to become sensitive to the worship of the dead and the afterlife' (interview, September 3, 2018). To join the confraternity and to give rise to the *Rosary of 100 Requiem* may be seen as a sort of natural *upgrade* for individuals sincerely and intensely attached to the Catholic faith and to the Catholic value of mercy, felt as a means to provide human life with a higher and deeper sense.

Conclusion

Retrieved from the past and changed into a more visible and engaging form by the faith, the will, and the imagination of an old Brother with aesthetic and theatrical flair, the *Rosary of 100 Requiem* has quickly gained the firm approval of a recently revived confraternity. Here is a tangible example of how the traditional culture constructs itself by means of a dialectic between individual creativity and community acceptance (see Bogatyrëv and Jakobson 1980). It can be regarded as an indicative and intriguing case of post-modern rituality built on a pre-modern

heritage of beliefs and practices, fostered, among other things, by the ongoing re-enchantment and re-sacralisation of our societies. As pointed out by Frog (2012: 134): "Any tradition is characterised by tensions between inherited models and their adaptation to current valuations, interests and ideologies".

It is too early to understand whether this ritual procession will take root in the local tradition and become a durable part of cultural heritage just like other, older and more spectacular city rituals: almost three years are not sufficient for a proper assessment. The attendance reached so far and the resonance in the town life are still quite limited; nonetheless, the members of the organising confraternity seem extremely confident in what they do and plan to do, both on the religious and the secular side. In particular, they seem frankly convinced about the spiritual value and the social usefulness of the *Rosary of 100 Requiem*, and eager to make it even more visible and engaging (taking care not to distort its religious meaning). At any rate, by virtue of its peculiarity – perhaps its apparent uniqueness – in the current landscape of Italian city rituals, I recognise in the *Rosary of 100 Requiem* a significant case study. I plan to continue my participant observation in the future, in order to observe and evaluate the persistence and vitality of some traditional beliefs and practices, whose changing forms act as new means for handing down their ancient contents.

Afterword

Almost four years after writing this article, I can confirm both the continuity of the ritual and the persistence of my commitment to it as a researcher; I have discussed these topics at the last SIEF Conference in Brno (June, 7–10, 2023). Nonetheless, I consider it worthwhile to provide a brief update to give a more comprehensive and substantial picture of the subject. The *Rosary of 100 Requiem* has continued to be performed as a walking procession until March 2020. Thereafter, between 2020 and 2021, the pandemic outburst and the related restrictions have forbidden for many months the participants to carry out the ritual in the cemetery; anyway, the ritual continuity has been preserved in a virtual form, by means of a Whatsapp group. Once finished the Covid emergence, the *Rosary of 100 Requiem* has come back to the cemetery, but its original processional form – more engaging but also more demanding for the majority of the participants – has been replaced by a static recitation of the same prayers in the cemeterial church. Despite the claims of Roberto and of some participants (including myself), it seems that the ritual has definitively changed its form, though keeping its cemeterial setting. Perhaps, the sudden death of Egidio (November, 18, 2020), that is the *re-inventor* of the ritual, as well as the traumatic break produced by the pandemic, have contributed

to weaken the original idea of a collective prayer for the dead carried out as an itinerant *Via Crucis*.

Notes

[1] This ritual has so far been scantily documented. I have been the first (and so far the only) person to photograph and film it, something that over time has become a common and almost a mandatory practice among those who attend the traditional processions, especially during the Holy Week. It might be said, indeed, that my observation has caught this ritual in a still 'spontaneous', 'informal', 'hidden' stage of its 'life' (its "first life": see Honko 2013), since it is not yet involved in the increasing processes of "reflexivity" and "heritagisation" affecting our intangible traditions (see Bendix 2018; Hafstein 2018). Given its nature and scope, however, it is also possible and plausible that the *Rosary of 100 Requiem* might remain foreign to these processes.

[2] The interviewed Brothers did not expect a massive attendance, although Roberto hoped for a little more. Their relationship with the participants is generally limited to the performative moment of the ritual. Nonetheless, over time I have observed a growing sense of togetherness and even of friendship between the participants. Personally, I have established a friendly relationship with Egidio and Roberto.

[3] An exception to the schedule, this event was carried out on the second Sunday of the month, because the first fell on the Epiphany.

[4] Faithful to such an approach, Roberto suggested modifying and enlarging the ritual path once an expansion of the cemetery is completed.

[5] Egidio, despite his advanced age, disagrees with these alternative ways of performing the *Rosary of 100 Requiem*. In his view, only in processional form it does it keep all its sense and value.

[6] *Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1999: 209; my emphasis): "Since, like all the faithful, lay Christians are entrusted by God with the apostolate by virtue of their Baptism and Confirmation, they have the right and duty, individually or *grouped in associations*, to work so that the divine message of salvation may be known and accepted by all men throughout the earth. […] Their activity in ecclesial communities is so necessary that, for the most part, the apostolate of the pastors cannot be fully effective without it".

[7] I found a similar practice only in the Lucanian town of Pignola, where the *Rosary of 100 Requiem* is currently celebrated the third Friday of every month and, what is more, not in a church but in the cemetery.

[8] Interestingly, in a testimony collected by de Martino in Lucania (1975: 107), a person able to do *coronelle* (plural of *coronella*) is one who can create a connection between the living and the dead.

[9] More specifically, it formalises the common practice of accomplishing an overall tour of the cemetery in the first two days of November, a practice I regularly fulfilled during my childhood and adolescence.

[10] There are no rules to be admitted into the *Rosary of 100 Requiem*; anybody is welcome by the organizers. It has also happened that someone joined it *in medias res*.

[11] In Castellaneta itself, however, between the evening and the night of the First of November, the confraternity of the Rosary performs a traditional procession devoted to the holy souls in Purgatory. Starting from and finishing at the church of San Domenico, this procession goes through some streets of the old town, with the participants reciting the *Rosary of 100 Requiem*. Moreover, in Manfredonia, in the province of Foggia, on the eve of the August 15, a ritual procession devoted to the holy souls in Purgatory is performed through the urban streets up to the cemetery's entrance.

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Biographical note

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Ritualising Reykjavík
New Festivals in the Capital of Iceland
1998–2018

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Abstract: As the title suggests, the aim of this article is to consider the new festivals that have developed in Reykjavík between 1998 and 2018, noting how they have been influenced by the rise in the number of tourists and foreign citizens, a growing sense of international involvement, and the feeling that the ritual year needs "filling in" to make the city an all-year round attraction. Starting by noting the arrival of the Reykjavík Arts Festival in the 1970s, the article considers a range of urban festivals including Cultural Night, the arrival of Gay Pride, Women's Free Day, Iceland Airwaves and the development of Halloween in recent years. It also considers the key differences in nature between these new festivals and those that preceded them.

Keywords: modern festivals, invented traditions, Gay Pride, spaces, ritual, Reykjavik.

In June 2005, at the *First International Conference of the SIEF Working Group on the Ritual Year* in Malta, I presented a paper on "Ritual Space, Ritual Year, Ritual Gender: A View of the Old Norse and New Icelandic Ritual Year", in which I described how the ritual year in Iceland – and probably in many areas in the Nordic countries – was originally divided into two seasons which appear to have been associated in some way with two different sexes, the winter being associated with women and female goddesses while the summer was essentially associated with the male gods. I also noted the way in which the spaces and groups involved in Nordic festivals past and present seem to reflect weather, light and geographical conditions, midsummer in Iceland being associated with the nation and outdoor spaces, while midwinter is essentially an indoor celebration of family identity (Gunnell 2006; see also Gunnell 2021).

One of the themes of this Ritual Year volume is that of urban festivals, something which has provided me with a useful opportunity to consider the changes that have taken place in terms of public festivity in Iceland over the course of the two decades that passed between 1998 and 2018 (the date of the conference the lies behind this book). Most changes have occurred in the capital city which was rapidly growing in size in this period, increasingly making the city an entity in itself, and not least a hub for tourists and tourism in the wake of the enormous financial meltdown that took place in Iceland in 2008 (according to the Iceland Tourist Board, a total of c. 2.3 million tourists visited Iceland in 2018, as compared to c. 600,000 in 2000). One major result of this change was that the centre of the city was increasingly becoming a tourist domain during the day, while Icelanders tended to carry out their shopping in the malls outside the centre, something that has continued into the present day. The night time was and is naturally different.

The present population of Iceland is around 387,758. In 1998 the total population was around 273,000. Today around 236,500 people live in the Greater Reykjavík area, while in 1998 the figure was around 164,000 (Statistics Iceland 2023). One can understand why the city commonly sees itself as representing the nation.

Prior to 1996, the ritual year in the city largely reflected that which was common around the country (for further details on the following festivals, see Árni Björnsson 1995). Christmas was celebrated at home, fireworks were fired off on New Year's Eve, and in a few areas, people celebrated Twelfth Night with bonfires and masks (see also Gunnell 2012). After that, little happened during the spring apart from annual gatherings associated with work places involving preserved Icelandic meats (the so-called Þorrablót [lit. Þorri sacrifice]) until children went guising on Öskudagur (Ash Wednesday: see Kristín Einarsdóttir 2007) and were given summer presents on the first day of summer (according to the Icelandic calendar), in late April. Then came Labour Day on 1st May; *Sjómanndagur* (National Seamen's Day) on the first weekend in June; Þjóðhátíðardagur (the National Day) on 17th June (see further Gunnell 2016); and *Verslunarmannahelgi* (the National Bank Holiday) at the end of August, when a large number of people would leave town to take part in outdoor festivals around the countryside. After that people tended to retreat indoors until Christmas came.

The first step towards creating new festivals and processions that focused on Reykjavík (many of which were often echoed elsewhere in larger towns around the countryside), underlining the idea that Reykjavík was an international cultural capital that could effectively stand alongside other cultural capitals in Scandinavia (if not elsewhere), might be said to have taken place with the establishment of the Reykjavík *Listahátíð* (Arts Festival) in 1970 (one notes that from the start, the Arts Festival was connected to Reykjavík, rather than Iceland as a whole). This festival which has since taken place in the first part of June, leading up to the national

day, and brings in artists from all over the world, was initially the brainchild of the director of the Nordic House in Reykjavík, but he received effective support from the pianist Vladimir Ashkenazy who was then living in the city (see "Árleg listahátíð…" 1968: 24; "Listahátíð í Reykjavík…" 1969: 3; and "Listahátíð í Reykjavík" 1970: 19).

Soon after this came another festive development which reflected Iceland's increasing awareness and involvement in international movements. This was the establishment of *Kvennafrídagurinn* (Women's Day Off) on 24th October 1975, when the women of Iceland attracted world attention by going on strike from all kinds of work for a day ("Kvennafrídagur" 1975: 15). The strike, held on United Nations Day, was initially designed to commemorate the UN International Women's Year. It nonetheless went on to lead to the establishment of the Icelandic women's political party (*Kvennaflokkurinn*) and even the election of the world's first democratically elected female president, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir. Still celebrated today at regular intervals (rather than annually), and most recently in 2023, this festival, which still has its heart in Reykjavík, centred around a procession that ended in a large-scale gathering in the centre of town after women had left work (and child-care) at a time that reflected the average difference between women's and men's wages for the same job. In 2018, they stopped work at 2.55 p.m., underlining that their wages were around 25% lower than those of men (see further Ćirić 2018).

Another reflection of this sense of growing international awareness and involvement came when the annual anti-NATO walk that used to go from the military airport at Keflavík into the city (Stefán Pálsson & Páll Hilmarsson 2015) was effectively moved into the middle of the city in 1980 ("Blysför í miðborginni" 1980: 1). Still going at the start of Christmas on the evening of 23rd December (St Þorlákur's Mass: the last shopping evening when shops are open until 11 p.m.) and still led by the school choir of what used to be the most left-wing grammar school in Reykjavík, the candlelit *Friðarganga* (Peace March) starts at 18.00. Led by the carol-singing students, it moves along what used to be usual route for processions in Reykjavík, that is, along the main shopping street from the main downtown bus station into one of the three main squares in the old centre where a speech is held. It was, and still is, essentially a statement of solidarity with peace movements throughout the world. It has since become a traditional feature of the Christmas festival for many Reykjavík people.

Each of the above developments underlined the idea that Reykjavík was now not only the centre of Iceland, its representative in terms of international attention, but also an increasingly international city in nature, well aware of the growing attention of the world, and people's growing involvement in international politics.

The more radical recent developments in urban festivities can be said to have begun in the mid-nineties, essentially under the guidance of Reykjavík's first female

mayor, Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, who had been one of the leading members of the earlier-noted Icelandic women's political party. It was the Tourist Committee of her council that decided, in July 1996, that the establishment of a so-called *Menningarnótt* (Cultural Night) in mid-August, in honour of the 210th anniversary of the city, would be a good way of pulling the inhabitants of the city together and drawing more tourists to the country. The original plan was to create a different kind of city festival to that which was normally experienced by Icelanders. In short, following the model known in other capitals ("Engin útihátíð" 1996: 4), the festival would:

> offer citizens *and foreign tourists* various kinds of cultural activities throughout the night or at least from midnight until 5 or 6 in the morning. The idea is that galleries, restaurants, book shops and perhaps other places will be open throughout the night, offering art exhibitions, concerts, readings, dramatic performances and more. The conditions for restaurants to have permission to stay open longer than usual is that they must offer some form of programme that follows these ideas.
>
> ("Menningarnótt haldin í Reykjavík" 1996: 7; my emphasis.)

Stress was placed on the fact that "this is not a night for drunkenness; the focus is on culture for all the family," something which is somewhat illustrative of the hours that Icelanders commonly lead during the light nights of the summer.

From the start, however, it was clear that activities on Cultural Night would not be limited to the night-time. Soon after this, the day started to be connected to the Reykjavík Marathon, which (since 1984) had always circled the centre of the city, allowing the event to take on a role that in a sense echoes the border-tracing rituals known around the world from earlier times (see "Reykjavík maraþon" 1984: 23; see also "Hatíðarhöld um helgina…" 1996: 23; "Menningarnótt á afmælisnótt" 1996: 13 and "Vökum af list" 1996: 13 and 15; and "Menningarnóttin og maraþon…" 1998: 6). Cultural Night, which always takes place on a Saturday (either on the 18th September or the first Saturday after this) and ends at around midnight (now at 11.00) with a dazzling municipal firework display over the city harbour (even after the financial crash of 2008), has continued to play a central role in the life of the city ever since.

Various things are worth bearing in mind about the nature and timing of this newly-created festival. Over and above the fact that increased tourism was evidently one of the new factors involved (see above), it is also worth noting that 1996 saw the start of the gradually increasing wave of emigration to Iceland of people from other cultures (the number of foreign citizens jumped from 938 to 1,258 that year; by 2018, the figure had reached 11,537 (cf. Statistics Iceland 2019). In short, the city was beginning to become aware that it was now home to a wide range of people that had different cultural backgrounds. Bearing this in mind, it was interesting

to note that when I and a student of mine took interviews with immigrants that had come to Iceland from Vietnam and elsewhere in 2003 and 2004 (see Gunnell 2003), more than one of them noted that whereas the national day was really only for Icelanders born and bred, Cultural Night was something that they could personally relate to. In short, while they might not have been "Icelanders", they belonged to Reykjavík like everyone else. And certainly, it was noteworthy that the early Cultural Nights deliberately stressed that the festival was not just about being Icelandic. The programmes stressed that this is an international city, with open doors and a sense of brother- and sisterhood (something also underlined by both the Women's Day Off in 2023 [also referred to as *Kvennaverkfall* or Women's Strike] and Gay Pride [see below] that same year, in which the use of Icelandic was joined by English in both events).

With regard to timing, it is also worth noting that Cultural Night took on the role of a "final" summer celebration (after the National Day and the Bank Holiday festivals and various tourist trips out of the city), a final festive late night out before the return to work and school as darkness is starting to return. The firework display against the backdrop of growing darkness underlines this in no small way. In a sense, there are certain parallels here to the role of Twelfth Night underlining the end of Christmas.

Over the six years that followed the arrival of Cultural Night, new city festivities started appearing one after another, most of them taking place at the weekends so that they did not disturb the working week. The year 1999 saw the beginning of Reykjavík Gay Pride, under no small influence from a young man named Páll Óskar Hjálmtýrsson, a much-loved Icelandic pop star who almost single-handedly changed Iceland's attitudes to homosexuality in the space of just a few years. First held in this form in June 1999 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in New York (see "Hinsegin helgi" 1999: 19; and "Hringiðan" 1999: 40), the three-day festival was initially built up around yet another weekend procession (with floats) that rolled into the centre of town along the usual protest route noted above. *Gleðigangan* (lit. The Gay Procession), as it has come to be called, went on to become the high point of a week-long LGBT festival held in mid-August that was called is now called *Hinsegin dagar* (lit. Gay Days: see further Valgerður Óskarsdóttir 2014). Today it has become a summer highlight for all the family, and is of a size that has meant it has had to take a new route to the centre of town (partly also because much of the old protest route has become a "pedestrian street"). In 2018, the festival began with the more recent mayor, Dagur B. Eggertsson (another Social Democrat) and others painting one of the streets in the centre of town with rainbow colours, effectively underlining that the festival had now become a physical part of the town (see Sylvía Rut Sigfúsdóttir 2018; see also "20 Years of Reykjavík Pride" 2019). This has since become an annual ritual.

In 1999, Reykjavik also saw the arrival of another kind of arts festival in the form of the international music festival, Iceland Airwaves, which has since been held annually in early November. This festival began as a local music festival held in an empty air hanger ("Sérstök kynning…" 1999: 68), but as a result of the ever-growing international interest in Icelandic rock music, it quickly began involving not only famous foreign bands, but also an increasing number of tourists, in a period that up until then had been comparatively unattractive to outsiders. Like Cultural Night and the Arts Festival, the festival takes over the entire centre of the city, using a wide range of venues. While it focuses on the evening, it lasts a long weekend as the *Hinsegin dagar* used to do. It has evidently become now a high point of the autumn for a particular generation (at home and abroad), and an obvious generator of both money and international attention (see also "Iceland Airwaves").

The growing awareness of the potential that could be found in connecting festivities with tourism can be clearly seen in the next festivals that came to be added to the Reykjavík calendar. In 2000, the older traditional festival of *Sjómannadagur* (Seaman's Day), which, as noted above, used to be held in early June, found itself transformed into another weekend long festival called *Hátíð hafsins* (The Festival of the Sea), extending the focus away from seamen and their families onto a wide range of generally marine-related activities aimed at both families and tourists. This festival was deliberately centred in the neighbourhood of the old harbour in Reykjavík, an area that the city was gradually transforming into a new cultural and culinary centre aimed at both tourists and local people. (See "Hátíð hafsins" 2000: 12.)

Two years year later, in 2002, a less successful attempt was made to kick-start yet another music festival in the centre of the city in mid-August at the time when, as noted above, many Icelanders (and especially the young) used to leave the city for outdoor Bank Holiday festivals in the countryside (see above). Named *Innipúkar* (lit. Indoor Demons), this was arguably partly aimed at those tourists who were in town at a time during which the city was relatively empty of Icelanders (see "Innipúkar sameinist" 2002: 44).

Closely related to the development of the festivals noted above, and not least Cultural Night, was yet another festival planned by the mayor, Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, which was deliberately designed to fill in another culturally "dead space" that existed between Christmas and the later spring festivals. This was the Reykjavík *Vetrarhátíð* (called the "Winter Lights" festival in English) set in early February. Initially planned to take place in 2000 (see "Árleg vetrarhátíð" 2000: 14), the weekend-long festival eventually started in 2002, with light and warm water as its theme (see "Ljós í myrkri" and "Logandi vatnsbunur…" 2002: 26 and 60). As Ingibjörg Sólrún noted (see "Árleg vetrarhátíð" above), she had been inspired by the Stockholm Festival of Water that was held between 1991 and 1999 (Wikipedia 2019), and the Helsinki Forces of Light festival (since changed into the Lux Festival,

now held in January: see "Lux Helsinki" 2019). Described on its 2018 web site as "an annual event that celebrates both the winter world and the growing sun light after a long period of darkness," which involves "light installations, culture and outdoor activities," the Winter Lights festival is once again meant to provide "entertainment for Reykjavík's locals and guests alike" ("Winter Lights Festival" 2019). As the party manifesto for the Social Democrat *Reykjavíkurlistinn* (Reykjavík List) party Ingibjörg Sólrún had led announced in 2002, the deliberate development of such festivals was seen as part of creating a new modern, international cultural city (see "Borg…" 2002: 38). Indeed, this particular festival has since gone on to incorporate two other small sub-festivals which go by the name of *Safnakvöld* (Museum Night) (since 2005), when museums organise various activities for visitors to visit free in the evening (see "Yfir hundrað viðburðir" 2005: 51); and *Sundlauganótt* (Pool Night) (since 2012), when the various warm outdoor swimming pools of Reykjavík do the same ("Grindhvaladráp…" 2012: 58).

After the financial crash of 2008, which left Iceland desperate to repair its fortunes as fast as possible, all of the above city festivals, which were now effectively spread across the year, became very useful tools to be employed as part of the highly-successful government-run *Inspired by Iceland* tourism campaign. Indeed, one of the aims of *Inspired by Iceland* was to underline that Iceland, and especially Reykjavík, has something culturally to offer visitors all year round (see further Inspired by Iceland 2019), and without question, most of the festive occasions that have come into being since this time can be seen to have an international dimension, something seen in their English names, their theme or their direct aim to attract guests from abroad.

One of the more recent developments in this sense is the annual *Drusluganga* (SlutWalk) which takes place in late July. Started in 2011, and deliberately modelled on the "SlutWalk" held in Toronto in April of that same year ("Drusluganga…" 2011: 54), the walk (like *Gleðigangan* nowadays) runs from the Hallgrímskirkja church which dominates the Reykjavík horizon down into the centre of town. Like the Toronto festival, this is another gender-related protest against rape and other forms of violence against women, which, like Gay Pride, involves costuming of various kinds. It has naturally been fed by the #Metoo movement in recent years.

Another recent arrival has been the international "Secret Solstice" music festival which started in 2014 ("Hita upp..." 2014: 41), and takes place in a sports stadium in Reykjavík over three days around the 20th June. Since this is both privately run (as "Airwaves" recently also became) and (unlike "Airwaves") essentially limited in space (on the outskirts of the main city), it is nonetheless questionable whether it should be counted as a public festive occasion like the others discussed here ("Secret Solstice" 2019).

Somewhat different is the gradual development of Halloween (*Hrekkjavaka*) in Iceland in late October. In the past, the adoption of this festival had been questioned, essentially because Iceland (like many other Nordic countries) already had its own "Trick or Treat" festival for children on Ash Wednesday (see above). Although some villages had Yuletide festivals which involved similar costuming and house-visiting traditions (see Vilborg Davíðsdóttir 2007), Halloween tended to be viewed as a "foreign", American tradition that should be avoided.

The first step towards a more widespread acceptance of this festival can be said to have taken place in Reykjavík in around 1998, in the Hamrahlíð Grammar School, where the authorities were trying to get students to abandon their longstanding tradition of leaving town for a an annual late autumn barn-dance in the countryside, something which had come to be associated by the press (and students) with drunkenness and debauchery. A thematic costumed dance in school connected with Halloween seemed like the perfect replacement (see "Hrekkjavaka í MH" 1998: 72). At around the same time, smaller parties aimed at the same late-teen early twenties age group had started to be held in the English Department of the University of Iceland and among the English-speaking immigrants, and restaurants, dance places, shops and newspapers were catching on fast. By 2008, the festival was evidently becoming widespread in the city, but essentially still in the form of costume-parties and dances (see "Skrautleg hrekkjavaka" 2008: 39).

Arguably, the first signs of a movement down into the younger generation could be seen around 2009, when a newspaper noted how "Halloween is starting to put down roots as a festival in Iceland. Children in costumes are going from shop to shop singing, and receiving sweets as a reward" ("Hryllingur…" 2009: 37). This was an interesting statement for several reasons. First of all, the pattern of visiting shops and singing during daytime mentioned here is modelled not so much on American traditions, as on the Icelandic Ash Wednesday traditions noted above. Secondly, any analysis of Icelandic papers from previous years on the "tímarit.is" website (2023) underlines that at this time young children rarely seem to have been involved. Nonetheless, one can see growing encouragement for such a development from both newspapers and shops (see "Hryllileg hrekkjavaka…" 2011: 10, which provided a link to a web site where various kinds of information on costumes and foods were available). All the same, it was not until 2015 that one started seeing pictures of younger children in costume in the papers alongside images of lit pumpkins and decorative biscuits (see Inga Rún Sigurðardóttir 2015, in comparison to Kristín Heiða Kristínsdóttir 2013).

Following on from this, a new tradition has started to develop in the city in the last seven or eight years, whereby the parents of younger children in different areas have started using Facebook to assemble a list of safe houses for children to visit in costume during the evening of 31st October. A clear differentiation between

this tradition and that associated with Ash Wednesday has also come into being, in that these visits take place in the evening rather than the daytime, and involve homes being visited rather than shops. In short, both the timing and the spaces are different. Furthermore, the fact that the tradition takes place in neighbourhoods rather than the centre of the city underlines that it is not aimed at tourists or the international press but rather the locals, the schools and local communities.

As this short article has underlined, the present festive scene in Reykjavík both in 2018 and still in the present day is obviously very different from what it used to be twenty five years ago, at a time when the focus tended to be more inward looking. If one examines what happened between 1998 and 2018 in comparison to the earlier ritual year, several interesting patterns become clear. First of all, there is no question that, as in the past, we are dealing here with festivities which involve a breakdown of normal patterns of order and some degree of entertainment. These are all times when, as Victor Turner writes: "much of what has been bound by social structure is liberated; notably the sense of comradeship and communion, in brief of communitas" (Turner 1882: 29). If we consider these festivals on the basis of the useful play/ ritual dyad suggested by Richard Schechner (2013: 49 and 79–80), there is also little question that in all cases, as in the past, we are dealing with some form of repeated ritual, even when it comes down to music and artistic gatherings. In all cases this is a ritual that makes or underlines a statement of shared identity (see Schechner 2013: 225–249 on the seven "functions" of performance, two of which underline this element: in other words, "to make or change identity", and "to foster community"). This statement of identity can sometimes be visual, as is effectively outlined by face-paints and costumes of the Halloween groups; the wristbands worn by the "Airwaves" and "Secret Solstice" crowds; the candles borne by the Peace Marchers; and the placards and garish clothing worn by those participating in the *Druslaganga* and *Gleðiganga*. However, it can also be stressed simply by personal involvement in a gathering that takes place in a limited space and during a limited moment of time when people are behaving "differently". It can involve being part of a march, listening to a concert, visiting the various venues as part of "Cultural Night", or simply watching a large firework display huddled together as part of a huge crowd.

One might also consider the degree of costuming involved in many of these traditions which not only underline the element of artistic creation, but also that of carnival, emphasising a strong element of release (something particularly necessary in the dark winter months of the Nordic countries). Here we witness three more of Schechner's performative functions: those of creating beauty, entertaining, and healing (see Schechner 2013: 225–249).

We are nonetheless in most cases dealing with invented traditions (Hobsbowm 1983), most of which (apart from Halloween) are very much top-down,

unlike those traditions of the ancient past which tended to be related in some way to turning points in the course of the natural year. In a sense, one can see slight parallels to the festivals instituted by the Roman emperors or Orwell's Big Brother (Orwell 1954) that were designed to keep the masses occupied, although in Iceland, fortunately, we have not been dealing with a dictatorship trying to prevent revolution. All the same, it is evident that most of the traditions noted above have been introduced with a particular purpose in mind: to make a political point, or to bring in tourism, effectively increasing Reykjavík's attraction as an international cultural hub, filling in the spaces of the year that are not already occupied. Many of these festivals can thus be viewed as being essentially planned and organised performances that were designed to be seen and cause a reaction, rather than anything automatically designed by and for the group itself, the organisers here being the town council, entrepreneurs or people with a political statement in mind. Rather than being group rituals which later go on to become "heritage" events designed to be displayed to the outside world, here (for the main part) we have events that are from the beginning designed to work like heritage and designed to attract the attention of the media. Indeed, as this article underlines, much of the research that lies behind it has been undertaken by the means of public social media and the papers.

In spite of the strong element of deliberate "creation" that lies behind these festive gatherings, it is nonetheless evident that very few Reykjavík people would question their existence, any more than they ever complain about the enormous cost of the annual city firework display on "Cultural Night". (The only thing that might bring that to an end in the next few years is consideration of potential environmental damage and global warming.) As people recognise, there is little question that all of the above have played an effective part in turning Reykjavík into a cultural centre that can compete with other cultural centres around the world. This was something that the romantic nationalist painter, Sigurður Guðmundsson (1833–1874) could only dream of in 1873, when he put together two simple lists of how cultural life in Reykjavík needed to be developed to give people (and visitors) something to do all year round (see Sveinn Einarsson 2017: 362–363). As noted above, and as Sigurður was well aware, the Reykjavík climate is far from being the most attractive even at the best of times, and a little brightness, a little noise, and a little carnival can always come in useful, not least when you have comparatively recently become aware that your economy can collapse at any minute.

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Bibliographical Note

Terry Gunnell is Professor Emeritus in Folkloristics at the University of Iceland. He is author of *The Origins of Drama in Scandinavia* (1995); editor of *Masks and Mumming in the Nordic Area* (2007), *Legends and Landscape* (2008) and *Grimm Ripples: The Legacy of the Grimms'* Deutsche Sagen in Northern Europe; and joint editor of *The Nordic Apocalypse: Approaches to* Vǫluspá *and Nordic Days of Judgement* (with Annette Lassen, 2013); and *Málarinn og menningarsköpun: Sigurður Guðmundsson og Kvöldfélagið* (with Karl Aspelund), which was which was nominated for the Icelandic Literature Award in 2017. He has also written a wide range of articles on Old Norse religion, Nordic folk belief and legend, folk drama and performance.

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Tartu City Events: Expressing the Ethnic and Historic Connections

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Abstract: This article explores the ways that contemporary cultural events and festivals reflect and handle ethnic and historic connections, and how they have changed over time. The article investigates four types of events. The student customs analysed include the celebration of Walpurgis Night (April 30) within the framework of corporation culture and the celebration of the anniversary of the University of Tartu. St John's Eve celebrations organized by the Estonian National Museum and the Estonian Agricultural Museum represent ethnic events. From agrarian festivals, the article presents the Viss or the Cow Day (selection of the prettiest cow) and the Animal Breeding Day. Celebration of the Hanseatic Days in July is a compound event focusing on handicraft, food, and culture of the Middle Ages. These are unifying events for the larger community, for people of all ages, and they also provide a distinctive identifier of a place – the city of Tartu.

Keywords: city events, St John's Eve, student traditions, agrarian festivals, invented traditions

Introduction

The list of festivals, thematic days and weeks of city districts, literature, art, and music festivals, festivals of street and home cafés, handicraft festivals, etc., is long and varied. These events bring professional art and domestic products side by side into the streets. Some of them contain new elements and attract people's attention and interest. They show how community-based cultural festivals grow over time. However, there are also events with a longer history, which are a part of Tartu's cultural life. Part of them act as place marketing, part of them as image or society marketing, part are reinventions or invented phenomena. In this paper, we will explore various events with different backgrounds and give an overview of selected

student, ethnic, agricultural, and Hanseatic festivals. All these events are part of the complex cultural life in Tartu, and concentrate on the segments related to the ethnic history and identity, and traits specific to the city of Tartu.

The student traditions to be discussed include the celebration and customs of Walpurgis Night (this is the only night all student corporations open their doors to the public); also, the celebration of the anniversary of the University of Tartu on the 1st of December is analysed.

The selected agrarian events include the celebrations of St John's Eve organized by the Estonian National Museum (in cooperation with the city) and the Estonian Agricultural Museum, as well as the so-called Viss (selection of the prettiest cow) and Breed Animal competitions.

The celebration of the Hanseatic Days in July is a complex event focusing on handicraft, food prepared from local raw materials, or national food, workshops, and spontaneous and official concerts; a temporary science town is also set up for the occasion.

All the abovementioned events in Tartu are free; some of them are supported by different funds and the city government, though local companies and institutions as well as nonprofit organizations and societies that help to organize the events also contribute. In the following examples, responsibility is shared between a student organization and a museum or some other institution. By way of example, we observe changes in the policy of event management and in the process of changing their form and content, production of heritage, and entertainment.

The basic question of this study is the following: How are ethnicity, the specifics of Tartu and general tendencies of festivity culture matched?

Methodology

With a population of 100,000, Tartu is the site of the oldest university in Estonia. Students and faculty members constitute a significant part of the city's population. Tartu has also been important in Estonia for more than a century when it comes to political decision-making and cultural events, hence the nickname "the smart city". The data used in the article come from the scholarly archives EFITA (the academic archives of the Department of Folkloristics of the Estonian Literary Museum), and from the collections of the Estonian National Museum. General information was collected from the portal Window of Culture (https://kultuuriaken.tartu.ee/en/node), which advertises the main cultural events in Tartu. It contains information about event agendas, workshops, and performers. We collected data from the special social media accounts that offer more information on the events as well as contacts of supporters. In addition, we interviewed two of the main organizers of events, Sirje Madisson and Merli Sild, as both of them play an important role in

the celebrations of Victory Day and St John's Eve, and important festivals like St. George's Day, May Day, St. Michael's Day, Harvesting Day, and others. We used folkloristic methods for the analyses.

Student festivals in the city

There are plenty of archival materials and some descriptions in literature on the emotionally laden and vivid memories of student traditions in Tartu. The beginning of student celebrations goes back to 1632. However, the colourful student life in Tartu is mostly associated with the Baltic German students, and later on with the Baltic German student corporations that were founded in the 19th century. Societies that copied the corporation culture of their motherland united Baltic German students and caused a great deal of talk among the local citizens, because of the diverse traditions they brought to public attention on some holidays. From the 19th century onwards, Russians and Jews also had their own corporations, as did the Poles (Konwent Polonia, established in 1828). Following the Baltic German style, the first Estonian student corporations were established at the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century. The first of them was established in 1882 under the name Eesti Üliõpilaste Selts ('Estonian Students Society'), followed by Vironia in 1900. To this day, the model of the former Baltic German corporations has prevailed in Estonia, including the custom of having same-sex corporations. As the Association of Baltic German Corporations did not recognize Estonian organizations, the Association of Estonian Corporations was founded.

Baltic German corporations ceased their operation in 1939, when Baltic Germans were recalled to Germany; Estonian corporations and student societies were mostly closed down either in 1940 or after the Second World War, with the establishment of the regulations of the Soviet Union. During the Second World War many Estonians left their homeland and emigrated to Western Europe, America, Australia, and New Zealand. In larger expatriate Estonian communities, student corporations continued their activities. At the same time, in the Soviet period (1945–1990) many attempts were made in Estonia to restore earlier student customs and societies between the walls of the *alma mater*.

From earlier customs the student cap (*tekkel)* was restored in the 1950s. Originally, the cap with coloured stripes along the edge was given to students who were members of a student society or corporation and were allowed to wear it in public only on special occasions. Every corporation had their original cap with original colours. After the Second World War, all students were given caps in university colours and they were supposed to wear the cap every day. (In the case of the University of Tartu it was the cap of the former Estonian Students Society, only the black stripe was replaced by a red one.) The cap was a symbol of status and

affiliation. University students were thus clearly distinguishable from other people and from one another, as each institution had their own colours. Naturally, this situation inspired quite abundant folklore. The new caps in uniform colours were meant to be more democratic and unifying than the former caps in the colours of various student corporations.

Some of the earlier customs were temporarily allowed; for example, the procession of the corporations took place as a students' procession. The procession at the end of April was highly popular in Tartu in the 1960s. Considered a "potentially dangerous gathering" by the Soviet regime, the event was forbidden at the beginning of the 1970s.

Student corporations and their traditions were revived with the help of diaspora communities at the end of the 1980s. Among them were the public procession of corporation members through the city of Tartu on April 30th, and the popular parody procession on the following day, through Supilinn ('Soup city', part of Tartu), a district close to the city centre which has traditionally been the area of affordable rental apartments for students. The parody procession was a popular student ritual in the first half of the 20th century. The ordinary public procession of the corporation members through the city of Tartu is the most popular in the 21st century.

The students' procession in Tartu follows a clear pattern. The morning before the procession (April 30), or sometimes right after it has ended, another ritual takes place: the students wash/squirt/water/sprinkle/drench the head of the statue of biologist Karl Ernst von Baer (a ritual called 'head washing') located on Toome Hill.

At 8 pm the members of the various student corporations and societies march, singing, through the city. They take part in the procession, wearing their respective caps and carrying their flags and scabbards. The mayor of Tartu makes a short speech, and symbolically hands over the keys of the city of Tartu to the students' representative, who is then offered some beer. For one night students are delegated the power of decision making in Tartu.

The procession then heads to the front of the main building of the university, where students greet the rector with a song and the rector responds with a speech. The rector of the university may give a longer speech and, depending on the rector's speaking skills, he/she may weave admonishing calls for action or an assessment of the university's success in education and science or other topics. After the speech, the rector is also offered beer.

Walpurgis Night at many student corporations and societies includes, in addition to singing *cantus* and dancing, staged self-written plays, shadow theatre, parodies of operas, and beer-drinking (unless the society observes the temperance policy). However, a number of other festive rituals are also performed.

On the eve of 30 April, the students head to the corporation/society buildings, which open their doors at midnight to visitors from other societies, students from

other cities and also non-affiliated students. It is not easy to enter the corporation/society buildings due to the strict dress code: many guests are turned down because they do not wear a suit, a white shirt and a necktie or a (full-length) evening gown. Guests who are good singers are accepted more easily.

For other academics (lecturers, professors) an alternative event is organized – a ball in the theatre building –, and there are also spontaneous smaller parties for non-organized students.

The following morning, 1 May, members of corporations/societies take a boat down the Emajõgi River, drinking beer and singing, or finishing the party with other rituals, such as eating porridge.

Two important innovations can be mentioned: the week-long celebration of student days before the Walpurgis Night and the celebration of *Walpurgisnacht* (*volbriöö*) by citizens.

The celebration of student days starts a week before April 30, and includes a fair with peculiar merchandises, a self-made vehicles contest, a rubber boat rally on the Emajõgi River, and numerous concerts, all of which are open and highly expected events for all the citizens of Tartu.

Recently, the student culture has spread from Tartu to Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, and to other colleges and higher education institutions in Estonia, founded in the 20th century. These processions are usually organized by the alumni. Everyone invents their own traditions, following the example of those performed in Tartu.

One example of the adapted celebration on 30 April is recorded from Rakvere, and involves, like in Baer's case, washing the head with champagne:

> *Like in previous years, the Walpurgis Night party is celebrated in Rakvere community centre and the community yard on 30 April. The celebration starts at 7 pm, with an address of the head witch; the programme also includes the Tapa brass band performance, a pony ride for children, and a dancing group of the local girls.*
>
> *At 8 pm, the pop group Nexus makes an appearance; one hour later, Ants Viermann plays records at a disco terrace and the Walpurgis Night bonfire is lit. There is a lottery and a broom auction.*
>
> *On the same day current and former students celebrate an event called Krambambuli, during which the head of the statue of [Friedrich Reinhold] Kreutzwald is washed.* (Daily newspaper "Virumaa Teataja", 27. 04. 2004)

Nevertheless, the student tradition has never been so prominent and popular as in Tartu, the city with one of the highest percentage of students of the total population, and a long tradition of student celebrations that can be traced back throughout centuries.

Those who are not students and people who do not like crowded public events prefer to light bonfires instead, in the company of family members and friends, which attests to the incorporation of Walpurgis Night tradition into the general cultural tradition.

In the late 1980s, attempts were made to introduce the German-influenced *Walpurgisnacht* (or *Hexennacht*) as a festival of witches and magic. The newly invented custom is one of the media newcomers, supported by schools, village societies, restaurants, etc. During the morning and daytime schools and kindergartens are celebrating, in the evening cultural societies start with performances, and later on it is possible to continue in pubs and restaurants. The tradition is accessible to all who are interested in spending great time together, masking, dancing, and having fun.

In the student calendar, the anniversary of the national university of Estonia (1 December) is important, although it has a much narrower meaning in Tartu and other parts of Estonia than in the diaspora communities in general (Kõiva, Kuperjanov 2014: 201–211, EFITA Australia, Sweden). Diaspora communities celebrate this day everywhere, as a decisive date that marks the educational and scientific history of Estonia. The celebration in Tartu is ceremonious; former students are invited to Tartu, they can visit lectures and university buildings, and celebrate the day in Tartu. The largest public event was organized in 1982, for the 350th anniversary of the University of Tartu. During the festivities, the university building was partially open to the general public. An outdoor performance *Vivat Academia!* took place in front of the main building. A students' torch procession, a formal reception, and a ball were also organized. Usually, in Tartu, this celebration is largely confined to the university's internal agenda.

Ethnic festivals: St John's Eve

The importance of St John's Eve on the family, community, national, and state levels gives a reason for comparing it to Christmas. Some important practices that are related to St John's Eve are followed both in the countryside and in the cities, in the public and private spheres: visiting cemeteries and having a sauna, swinging and singing, and decorating homes with birches. St John's Eve was associated with ritual food practices (19th-century dairy foods were replaced by meat dishes after the Second World War, and later on by grilled meat), but ritual drinks (ale and root beer) have preserved their place. As not everyone wanted to go to the official big St John's Eve party, campfires were also lit in backyards and on riverbanks or seashores.

In 1918, with the establishment of the independent Republic of Estonia, Victory Day (23 June, established officially in 1934) fell right on Midsummer Eve (Est. *jaanilaupäev*, 23 June) and before the important St John's Day (celebrated on 24 June). In the 1930s the day became an official national holiday with military parades,

state addresses, and the commemoration of the heroes of the War of Independence (Kõiva, Särg, Vesik 2004), and was thus integrated into the folk calendar. The following annexation of Estonia by the Soviet army led to the banning of many holidays, especially those connected with national and political events, prompting the destruction of monuments, later also the collecting and burning of textbooks, academic literature and fiction published during the period of independence. St John's Eve was preserved because of its folkloric background, and its extensive celebrations in the private and public realm. It was celebrated in villages, but also as a city event with a common bonfire, concerts, and festive meals.

After the restoration of independence in August 1991, St John's Eve was celebrated in Tartu with great enthusiasm, though the city's Department of Culture placed the responsibility for managing this event on other organizations; various museums, organizations and societies celebrated St John's Eve.

After the Estonian National Museum regained its former lands on the shores of Lake Raadi, the largest St John's Eve celebration of the city started to take place at Raadi. The secretary of the Society of Friends of the Estonian National Museum was in charge of it.

One of the characteristics of the event was its prolongation, since the 2000s, into a full-day celebration, with the highlight being the lighting of the St John's Eve bonfire, accompanied by music and entertainment. The ten-hour-long celebration includes many activities for different age groups, especially children: exploring of new attractions – human hamster balls, big chess pieces for playing, giant photo cameras, chairs and tables, combat games and car shows, to name but a few. However, there have been several changes, one of which is to link the celebration of St John's Eve with the celebration of Victory Day. This changes the spirit of the event: the Estonian Defence Forces and the military personnel are present, and the bonfire is lit by women in the military. Thus, the Estonian National Museum's (ENM) way of celebrating has shifted closer to the customs from the 1930s, although it is still not quite the same as it used to be. In 2018, the event manager presented it as one of the biggest city events of the year. This is how Sirje Madisson described it:

> *I've been in charge of Midsummer Eve celebrations for **12 years**. It is a ten-hour-long entertainment programme for all age groups from Tartu and the nearby area as well as their guests. We are seeing more and more foreigners that want to learn about our national traditions at these events. Tartu city's Midsummer bonfire is held on 23 June each year. This is to celebrate the most important holiday in our national calendar, as well as to commemorate **Victory Day**. Over the last few years, we've hosted more than 10,000 visitors. There are a lot of family entertainments — fun attractions for the kids, workshops by specialists from the ENM's Education Centre, different exhibitions, open-air chess and checkers, etc. There is a special playground for the littlest ones. A*

folk music concert starts at 8 pm on the shore of Lake Raadi, and the bonfire is lit at 9 pm (it is usually lit from the victory fire ignited on Victory Day by the members of the Defence League and Women's Defence Organization, but we have also worked together with the Gaudeamus Student Song and Dance Festival and others).

This is followed by greetings from municipal and city leaders and then the party starts. Folk music and folk dancing continue until 1 am. I try to maintain high standards; this party is very safe for all the visitors.

I pick the performers, draw up the programme, order the stage equipment. I also take care of the lights for the stage and the dance areas, the sound equipment, G4S for security, and the Rescue Board to monitor the bonfire. This is normal practice.

In 12 years the following groups have performed in the Raadi Manor Park: Kiiora, Zetod, Lõõtspillipoisid, Svjata Vatra, Kihnu Poisid, Kõrsikud, Lõkõriq, Cätlin Mägi – Torupilli Jussi Trio, Paabel, Oort, Ro:Toro, Folkmill, Audru Jõelaevanduse Punt, Curly Strings[1] *– I can't recall all of them right now. People are happy, children dance until the very end of the party; there is catering for adults with low-alcoholic drinks.*

The parking is organized, [and] the temporary traffic signs ensure safety. (EFITA, Sirje Madisson 2018)

In 2018, for example, the agenda of St John's Eve included a bigger military exposition, and various activities connected with the military side of the day. The exhibition of military technology was attractive to the male visitors: the participants could explore the technology of the defence forces, take part in paintball target shooting, play and compete under the guidance of Young Eagles and the Voluntary Defence Organization.

The musical side started with an hour-long concert, performed by the academic brass band Popsid of the Estonian Defence Forces' Tartu Brigade. At 3 pm, a motorcade arrived at Raadi with the victory fire ignited by the President in Viljandi, where a motorcycle exhibition was later opened. During the ceremonious lineup of the Tartu Brigade of the Estonian Defence Forces, the fire was handed over to the city of Tartu, Tartu County, and its municipalities.

At the same time, handicraft workshops were organized in another part of the park, trampolines and small cars for children were available, as well as a playground.

The maquette of the new building of the Estonian National Museum (measurements 1:20) exhibited for the occasion provided the visitors with information about the layout of the rooms in the new building.

At 7 pm the representatives of the Tartu Brigade of the Estonian Defence Forces lit the midsummer bonfire with the fire of victory. The greetings of the city government were followed by a music and dance party for every interested citizen until one o'clock at night. All in all, more than half of the long day was dedicated to military topics.

Fig. 1: St John's Eve. Tartu. Photo: Alar Madisson, 2018.

Alternative entertainment and Midsummer celebrations are also offered by the Estonian Agricultural Museum. This establishment has long been known as a promoter of old agrarian customs and practices as well as of traditional foods. The museum has its own farm, with horses, cows, sheep and other animals, as well as croplands where citizens can see various crops growing and witness their harvesting with simple tools, as back in time. The museum organizes many educational exhibitions and programmes for students all over Estonia, such as the rye bread programme established at Ülenurme. With the support of the Ministry of Agriculture, schools all over Estonia have the opportunity to travel to Ülenurme, near Tartu, to learn how rye bread is made.

The organizers of St John's Eve try to stick to traditional St John's Eve games, competitions, and other activities that were characteristic of the event in the past. The bonfire is collectively lit and is followed by music and a dance party. Local folk dance groups are always involved. The whole event is advertised as a 'traditional'

St John's Eve party, but in reality it is a performance, led by a host. This is how the main organizer, Merli Sild, described it in 2018:

> *We celebrate St John's Eve with an enjoyable folk party where, in addition to the local cultural collectives, well-known singers and bands are performing; the event is hosted by two experienced ladies from southern Estonia – Mafalda and Loreida, who have a knack for talking to people.* (EFITA, Merli Sild 2018)

Separate events are organized for children and young people. The Õnnemaa NGO and Youth Centre conduct folksy games for children, and pony rides are organized by the museum; young people can learn how to weave wreaths, make bath whisks, and the blacksmith shows them how to sharpen scythes. Õnnemaa's collectives (dance groups for 12–14-year-old youngsters, a punk band) perform in the arena. Traditional entertainment includes a rural strongman competition, and the winner receives a prize. Some of these competitions are amusing innovations, such as the skiing competition (in late June!) in which the competitor has to carry a beer box. Prizes are given out to the participants and free bus transport is provided (as is also the case with the Estonian National Museum). Rural-style celebrations, including Midsummer parties, are quite similar elsewhere (cf. Midsummer Day in Ireland (Soverino 2016: 21); local feast in New Zealand (Grima 2019); harvesting festivals in Poland (Gierek 2016)).

Agrarian events and reinvention of competitions

Two events – the Viss (the most beautiful cow) and the Breed Animal competition – offer great excitement, especially for younger citizens. Renewed and supplemented with a small fair, which allows the selling of various foods and handicraft, these events continue the tradition of the 19th- and early 20th-century farm animal and farm produce competitions. The competition of cows, hen, sheep, pigs, horses, and products like cabbages, pumpkins, and cucumbers were also restored at the earliest opportunity, in the 1990s. Recently, many new aspects have been added to this event. This is an important meeting when it comes to local breeds because it gives the animals and their owners the chance to catch the attention of the media and demonstrate to citizens and visitors healthy local animals and farm produce. However, the event's main mission is to reestablish the human-animal relationship in the times of urbanization, when the contact between people and animals or nature is rather sparse and superficial. Local handicraft and traditional food are also promoted.

Fig. 2: Breed Animal competition, Ülenurme. Courtesy of Merli Sild, 2018.

The first exhibition of Estonian Red Breed cows took place on 14 June 1990. It was soon followed by an exhibition dedicated to the Black-and-White Breed, in August of the same year. In 2000, the competition moved to the Estonian Agricultural Museum at Ülenurme.

Last year, the competition was attended by 90 most beautiful Estonian Holstein and Estonian Red Breed cows. The exhibition was held in cooperation with the Estonian Agricultural Museum and the Animal Breeders' Association of Estonia. In 2018, Tanel-Taavi Bulitko, the Chairman of the Board of the Animal Breeders' Association of Estonia, concluded:

> *The dairy sector is one of the main domains of Estonian agriculture and in terms of milk production we held the second position in the EU last year. Cow competitions are popular all over the world. The candidates are evaluated by appearance, conformance to the type of breed, and the structure of the udder and legs. Not less important is also the presentation of animals and the harmony between the animal and the presenter. The competition is judged by Bruno Almeida from Portugal, a judge that has great experience.* (EFITA, Bulitko 2018)

The purpose of the animal competitions is to highlight the work of Estonian breeders and to introduce the results of their work to the general public. Nineteen animal husbandry organizations from all over Estonia participated in the Viss competi-

tion on 29 June 2018. Participants came from Tartu, Jõgeva, Põlva, Järva, Viljandi, Rapla, Lääne, Harju, Võru, and Lääne-Viru counties.

The Estonian Animal Breeding Association (EABA) was established on 18 August 18, 1993; the competition was organized for the first time in 1996, by the Estonian Agricultural Museum, in cooperation with the EABA (which includes various breeding organizations). The programme of the event is established by the head of the museum, and the entire staff contributes to the organization. Merli Sild is one of the important figures; she communicates with associations and farmers.

The Breed Animal competition is one of the biggest public events in Tartu, with 5,400 to 7,300 participants every year. In recent years, during competition attention has been paid to introducing traditional Estonian foods, but last year (2018) one month was dedicated to the cuisine of the former province of Livonia. Currently the Agricultural Museum and several other museums introduce to their visitors various foods and tastes.

Invented events: Hanseatic Days

The Hanseatic Days in Tartu are an invented tradition. Tartu was one of the influential cities belonging to the Hanseatic League, a powerful group of allied cities during the Middle Ages, which controlled trade in the Baltic Sea region, and to some extent also in the North Sea. At that time, Tartu was an important meeting place for tradesmen from Germany, Sweden, Russia, and other countries. In 1986, the Hanseatic Days celebration was established to preserve this aspect of Tartu's heritage (see Hobsbawm 1983: 1 for invented traditions). It has since become one of the most important cultural events in Estonia. The Hanseatic Days owe their success to the increasing popularity of the medieval culture. Although filled with a variety of trades – with up to 400 local merchants involved – it is also a place to buy luxury and innovative items. It includes spontaneous as well as thoroughly prepared performances, river-related events, special food and drinks. Medieval music and clothing create a distinct atmosphere, in contrast to the ethnic clothing, fashion, and folk music present during other events.

Fig. 3: Hanseatic Days, Tartu. Photo: Alar Madisson, 2018.

Conclusion

In their research on Finnish cultural events, Katja Pasanen and Eva-Maria Hakola (2012) conclude that, from the attendee profile and marketing point of view, the majority of the Finnish events are mainly local or regional. In nearly half (49%) of the events, the attendees come from the same municipality or from neighbouring areas. The same seems to be the case for Tartu, although some local traditions have spread to other cities (e.g., the Student Days) or to the diaspora communities (anniversary of the University of Tartu).

Resuming the characteristics of the chosen examples, it can be said that the events in Tartu are related to traditions and history; they are partly heritage, partly invented traditions of recent history. Student corporations have acquired neither Scandinavian nor American characteristics, but continue to follow the German corporate culture, particularly its Estonian version. The same conservatism and authenticity are characteristic of many other events. Although the Hanseatic Days are also known in other countries and share features with similar events in Europe, they everywhere reflect also local history, highlighting local customs.

St John's Eve and Student Days are meant to be unifying events for the larger community, as well as for the students. The extensive events organized by the ENM require a great deal of planning; they have acquired a certain political stance by combining Victory Day and a national holiday. The agenda is diverse, with a variety of special and more common events. The question is surely whether such large-scale events are sustainable and can maintain free access for citizens. Probably most events are close to saturation point, both in terms of participants and the

choices available. In Tartu, you can choose between two big St John's Eve celebrations in the city or make your own small bonfire and celebrate it with your family and friends. The most ethnic holiday, St John's Eve, is filled with contemporary content and elements, including music and exhibitions, and can no longer be called a completely ethnic holiday; it is rather a contemporary fusion event. From the traditional characteristics, only the bonfire and the dancing have been preserved. Basically, the same model can be applied to all kinds of other outdoor parties, and in many cases this has already happened. The Hanseatic Days have a more specific audience, for instance people interested in handicraft and gourmet food.

We can see the commercialization of bonfires and other public events, but there is neither withdrawal nor stigmatization – the events are open to all age groups and are free of charge.

Despite the fact that agriculture and related activities do not employ many people anymore, the agrarian feasts are still popular in Estonia. The Viss and the Breed Animal competition have become whole family events, appreciated by all age groups, and are usually related to a fair, often following ecological trends. Festivals and public events demonstrate the popular definition of community whose sense relies in the connections, belonging, support, empowerment, participation, and security it engenders (Derrett 2003: 52).

The events analysed not only support the sense of place; they also provide a distinctive identifier of place – the city of Tartu.

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Notes

[1] The list includes popular Estonian folk bands.

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Russian Saint Valentine's Day: The Feast of Holy Princes Peter and Fevronia

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Abstract: In 2008, the feast of family and faithfulness was established in Russia. This day was connected with commemoration of the Russian saints Peter and Fevronia. The initiative came from Murom (a city in Central Russia), because Ss. Peter and Fevronia are originally from the region of Murom however, since 2008 it has become a popular feast in many Russian towns. The feast has its own symbol (the chamomile flower) and awards (the medal of love and faithfulness). The most probable reason for the establishment of this feast was an increased popularity of Saint Valentine's Day. The feast of Saints Peter and Fevronia, the couple of a prince and a peasant woman, was meant to replace the western feast with a Slavic equivalent. Ss. Peter and Fevronia were locally canonized in 1547, but their veneration is known since the 15th century. The most famous vita of Ermolaj-Erazm was ordered for a menology, but it was refused because of its non-canonical character and replaced by a more canonical one. It is still unknown exactly who these saints were, as there is no clear mention of them in the chronicle. Even if the feast was established more recently, it has already started to form its own traditions, especially in the provinces. This paper is devoted to a comparison of the image of Ss. Peter and Fevronia in hymnography and hagiography and their modern image in the popular feast of the family.

Keywords: Russia, holy princes, Peter and Fevronia, folk religion, city feast Saint Valentine's Day.

The beginning

The feast of family, love and faith connected with commemoration of Saints Peter and Fevronia of Murom is celebrated on the 8th of July (25th of June according to the Julian Calendar). This feast was first mentioned in last decade of the 20th

century in Murom (city in central Russia), when the celebration of the Day of the City was combined with commemoration of the patron saints of the city, Ss. Peter and Fevronia. In 2002, Andrey Kutsaev from Znamensk (further the author of the first "fevronka") proposed the establishment of this feast throughout Russia, as a Russian version of Saint Valentine's Day. He also proposed a postcard as a symbol of the feast which is called *fevronka*. The idea was supported by the Russian Orthodox Church and Swetlana Medevedeva, the president of the Fund of Social and Cultural Initiatives, became the main organizer of celebrations[1]. In 2008, the feast became an All-Russian event and the chamomile flower, known as a symbol of love, became the symbol of this feast.

In 2011, the president of Ukraine also established this feast by decree Nr. 1209/2011 (Majstrenko 2019). Recently a medal „For love and faith" was also established, for couples, who lived in marriage for 25 years or more (NP Nacionalnyj komitet 2019, Romashkaday 2018).

According to the official version, this feast was initiated by activists from Murom. However, it is well known that the popularity of this feast is also connected with the desire to replace the western celebration of St. Valentine, which had become more and more popular in Russia.

This feast of family, love and faith, with the help of the government, started to be celebrated in many cities. At the same time, it provoked a lot of criticism due to the choice of the subject. Although the idea of a "Russian Valentine" was mainly accepted, many people noticed that according to the most famous vita of these saints they were not the best choice to be a symbol of the family. This paper examines the evolution of their image and their suitability to represent the new feast.

Who are Saints Peter and Fevronia

Firstly, it is necessary to describe these saints. This subject has been analysed by Anna Markova (2011). She collected all known facts from chronicles, vitas and folklore related to Ss. Peter and Fevronia. Her conclusion is that it is still difficult to say who they really were, since the chronicles do not identify any saint princes with these names from that time period. However, they do mention Princes David and Evfrosinia, which are the monastic names of the saints. Another difficulty is that several *Menologions* mention Ss. Peter and Fevronia as being mother and son[3]. It could be seen just as a misinterpretation, in parallel with Ss. Constantine and Helen (or with Ss. Vladimir and Olga, even if Olga was in reality Vladimir's grandmother), but since there are more than one saint couples, it could also be interesting to investigate if several couples were combined into one. If we take this into consideration, Prince Peter was the second son of Yuri of Murom, one of the descendant of another saint, St. Constantine, converter of Murom (Markova 2011:

10). But the main information is taken from the vita of Ss. Peter and Fevronia, which is not a typical religious text. It was probably written by Ermolaj-Erazm (see, for example: Dmitrieva 1979)[2], at the request of the Metropolitan Macarius, but was not approved by the Metropolitan, because there were too many fairy-tale like details. There was another more canonical vita which was later introduced into the *Menaions* (2002). There are also many folk stories which mention St. Fevronia. According to the vita and the folk stories, she was a peasant from the village of Laskovo.

Although there is a more classical vita of Ss. Peter and Fevronia, the vita of Ermolaj-Erasm has become the principle source for the veneration of these saints. According to this vita, Prince Peter noticed that the wife of his brother Paul was seduced by a snake, who took the appearance of his brother. Peter fought against the snake and won, but the snake made him sick, resulting in the contraction of ulcers. No doctor could cure him, but he knew of a women in the village Laskovo, who could heal him. He went to her and asked to be cured. She healed his entire body, except one wound, with the condition of becoming his wife. After he was cured he decided to give her many presents but, did not marry her and his illness returned. Then he married her and discovered that she was a wise and virtuous wife. But his court was unhappy that a mere peasant became a princess and forced Peter to choose between his kingdom or his wife. Fevronia adviced him to refuse his kingdom, and he did. Soon afterwards he received messengers asking him to return. At the end of their lives they both took monastic vows and they died at the same time. They wanted to be buried in the same coffin, but they were put in two separate coffins. On the next day, their bodies were found together, in the same coffin.

This short retelling of the story appears more like a fairy tale than a classical vita. Perhaps one of the reasons for the folk's enduring love and veneration was that fact that Fevronia was a peasant who came to be known as a wise and righteous princess. People related closely to her because of her previous life as a peasant. The exact date and circumstances in which the relics of Ss. Peter and Fevronia were found, are unknown. Ss. Peter and Fevronia were canonized as local saints at the ecumenical meeting organised by Metropolitan Macarius, in 1547. It is supposed that the king's decree (Golubinskij 1903: 547) regarding the celebration of these saints was issued in 1552. By this time the veneration of Ss. Peter and Fevronia already had a stable long-standing tradition in Murom. Like many canonized princes (a tradition which has been ongoing in Russia since the time of Ss. Boris and Gleb canonized in the 11th century), Ss. Peter and Fevronia were patrons of the princely family. Perhaps the tradition of veneration of Ss. Peter and Fevronia as prince patrons began with John the Third, who founded an asylum in Murom, in 1446, after the blindness of his father. Already as a Great Prince, he made a

pilgrimage to Murom to pray at the tomb of the locally revered saints Peter and Fevronia (Markova 2011: 111). But the canonization was only an official recognition of a long tradition of veneration of these saints. Proof of this can be seen in the existence of a manuscript from the 15th century, which contains a religious service in the honour of them (Javorskij 1930: 57–80).

Although there is extensive information found in the literature devoted to Ss. Peter and Fevronia and in Anna Markova's biography (2011), collected and structured from chronicles, folklore and vita, one type of text was still not taken into account. This is a service to Ss. Peter and Fevronia. A service is by definition canonical and does not provide exact facts of vita and veneration of the saint, but very often it is a service which forms necessary associations and puts a saint into a context of Christianity. In the case of Ss. Peter and Fevronia it is more difficult to define their image through the service, since one half of it was written by a monk who used endless borrowings, the same ones for four services of him. But it is still possible to define their image and there veneration because of another part of the service and because of some additional hymns describing them. In general, there are three manuscripts from the end of 15th– and the beginning of the 16th century, which contain this version of the service. The services to Ss. Peter and Fevronia have not been much studied, but it is known that the first version was compiled by the monk Pachomius[4] (his name is the only thing we know about him). There have been attempts to attribute the service to the authorship of Pachomius Logofet, but, as Feodossij Spassky shows, the style of this Pachomius is not comparable with the style of the famous hagiographer (Spasskij 2008: 155–160). A later service was compiled by the monk Michael: he wrote some stichera and a canon. There is a manuscript from the middle of the 16th century, found in the Russian State Library (RSL, Rumyantsev, nr. 397), which includes many services to the two saints, canonized in 1547. This service was named "the creation of Mr. Michael Mnich" (Dmitrieva 1979: 119), which indicate,s the authorship of Michael, a "princely" hymnographer from the 16th century. In the canon to Ss. Peter and Fevronia troparia, which were already used at the service to St. Alexander Nevsky, are used again.

Service to Saints Peter and Fevronia

When analysing the service, two layers should be discussed; the first, which belonged to Pachomius, is more personalized and the second, which belonged to Monk Michael, is composed from other services and contains materials more common to his princely services. In the second layer, biographical details were taken from an episode seen in the vita of Ermolaj-Erasm; the fight against a snake who seduced the wife of St. Peter's brother, Paul, while taking his appearance: "nasha zastupniki voshvalim pregordago zmija popravshija" ['we will praise our defender, who tram-

pled the serpent'] (the first sticheron on "Lord I've cried")[5], "raduisja preblazhenne Petre, izhe gordago zmija svirepstvo pogubil esi" ['Rejoice, oh blessed Peter, who destroyed the anger of the proud serpent'] (the sessional hymn of the 8th mode on *polyeleos*), "zmija ubo inogda ubiv" ['killing once a serpent'] (the first troparion of the 4th ode, second canon).

This fact belongs more to the folklore than to the *vita*'s tradition and reflects the folk veneration of the not yet canonized saints. Even if in the service, the snake is considered more metaphorically, one can see that this detail was probably the best known to the hymnographer. The image of the snake-fighter brings one to the clear parallel with St. George who was among the most beloved saints in Russia. If one takes into account that, according to the Russian tradition, all saint princes are patrons of the future princely generations and defenders of Russian land, this image gives all the necessary additions for the peaceful prince. So the most common prayer at the end of hymns devoted to Ss. Peter and Fevronia in both layers, is a prayer for help in defending Russia in the event of war "molite Hrista Boga sohraniti otechestvo vaju ot jazyka chuzhdago" ['pray to God to save your land from alien people'] (the first troparion of the 6th ode, second canon), "s nimi zhe molitesja Gospodevi sohraniti bez vreda otechestvo vaju" ['pray with them to Lord to save your land without harm'] (troparion of the 8th ode), "i nyne s supruzhnitseju tvojeju zastupnitsi i hodatai budite otechestvu vashemu" ['and now be defender and intercessor with your wife for your land'] (the sessional hymn on *polyeleos*). Sometimes in the first layer we can see a clear combination of the image of a snake-fight and the ability to defend the country "jakozhe inogda zmijz ubiv, konechnomu bezvestiju predal jesi, tako I nyne otechestvo borjuschih pobedi" ['Like once killing the serpent you brought it to final obscurity, so defeat now people, who are fighting your land'] (the second troparion of the 3rd ode, first canon).

But the main function of the saints in the first layer is healing. This is also understandable, since Fevronia healed Peter (her first miracle in the *vita*). It was also supported by the healing property of relics. We see in almost every hymn a prayer for healing "molitvami vashimi, blazhenni, istselite nedugi i bolezni nasha" ['heal with your prayer, oh blessed, our illnesses and diseases'] (sessional hymn of the first mode after the first kathisma) "v bolezni k tebe pribegajuschih izbavljaj" ['save those coming with their illnesses to you, oh blessed Peter, together with Fevronia'] (the first troparion of the 7th ode, first canon) and so on.

Immediately upon examination of the second layer one can see that the starting cycle of stichera on "Lord I've cried", was copied from the cycle of stichera to the first Russian saints – Ss. Boris and Gleb, who were brothers and princes. This comparison is clear even if Peter and Fevronia were not martyrs: in both cases we have two saints, and in both cases they were princes and healers. Hymns to Ss. Boris and Gleb also became models for other hymns, such as the ones to Ss. Peter and

Fevronia. For instance, the 5th ode borrows elements from the stichera on "Praises" to Ss. Boris and Gleb. Even if one did not find so much in common between these couples of saints, the parallel imposes Ss. Peter and Fevronia as a couple possessing virtue and chastity. It is not by chance that the main metaphor of the service is light "O predobraja dvoitse! O presvetlaja svetila! O blagosopjazhenne, edin svet vo dvoju telese susch! O svetilnitsi blazii svojemu zhitiju byvshe! Jarem bo Gospoden' vzemshe. Tomu posledovaste veroju" ['Oh, kind duality! Oh, illustrious luminaries! Oh, blessed connection of one light in two bodies! Oh, blessed luminaries to your *vita*! You have taken the yoke of our Lord, following Him by your faith'] (the first *troparіopn* of the 5th ode, second canon). The symbol of light and the parallel with Ss. Boris and Gleb shows that the saint couple is seen as a chaste couple, being together in God. It is also not by chance that in the service we find a passage taken from the service to Ss. Boris and Gleb: "You are separate by the bodies, but you are unified in your soul". Taking this into account, one can better understand the moment in the vita when Fevronia insists that she heals Peter only if he marries her. Fevronia is shown as a wise girl, who knows that this is the wish of God: it has to be done in order to save Peter. It is also interesting that if in the vita Peter is shown rather passive, in the service, he is shown as an active healer and defender, and his name is always the first. This is partly due to the model (since Ss. Boris and Gleb are men) and grammar (dual in the service to Ss. Boris and Gleb is used in masculine) but it also shows that, if in his vita, Ermolaj-Erasm shows the transformation of Peter from a prince into a saint, in the service, Peter is only depicted as a saint.

Hence, it can be seen that even if Ss. Peter and Fevronia were married, they were not a couple married out of love with the goal of raising children. Even more, we still do not know if they had children, and they were never patron saints of marriage and family. But, since their day was chosen to replace the western St. Valentine's Day, several towns started to create their own traditions.

The modern feast

All the organizers agree that, since this is a feast of the saints, the celebration should begin in a church. Normally the religious service held for the occasion is devoted to the saints, but after the service it can also be a special prayer. The priests share different opinions referring to the question if this service should continue to be celebrated, or not. Some of them find that it is enough to go to the church and to pray to their icon. Others actively participate in the organization of different events.

For example, when the Church in Putinki in Moscow organized a feast in the Hermitage garden, the bishop of Bronnitsi Ignatij said: "The Day of commemoration of the Princes Peter and Fevronia is not just a day of remembrance of saints, it is also a day dedicated to the family, to love and faith. Before this day was officially

declared as the day of the family and faith, there were disputes and discussions if it is right and necessary at all. And now, three years later, we understand that we have chosen the right way, this feast is more than ever necessary to modern Russia" (Korovina 2010).

Even if originally Ss. Peter and Fevronia were patrons of princely generations and defenders of Russian land, in modern tradition they became not only patrons of the family but also patrons of love in general, so it corresponds more with St. Valentine's Day than with the church tradition. As a new element of "folk orthodoxy" one can also notice the increasing popularity of new prayers for marriage, addressed to Ss. Peter and Fevronia. On some internet sites, the prayer is even accompanied by an almost magical ritual combining various orthodox elements. Here is an example:

> *Like before any prayer to God, before prayer to Ss. Peter and Fevronia you should;*
>
> *Wash yourself with holy water early in the morning,*
>
> *Visit an Orthodox church,*
>
> *Pray in front of an icon of Jesus Christ thanking Him for everything what you have,*
>
> *Put a candle at the icon of Jesus Christ,*
>
> *Pray in front of an icon of Theotokion and put a candle there,*
>
> *Think about what disturbs you, what you really want and ask God to help you,*
>
> *And, go home and in solitude pray to Ss. Peter and Fevronia*[6].

The usual actions, which people do in an Orthodox church, become here magical rites that have to be done completely and in a specific sequence. All s except the first one are common for believers, but done all together, they look more like a spell. The impression is reinforced by the first action, since holy water is usually meant to be drunk, and the beginning of the ritual, since washing yourself with clean water reminds more of a fairytale or village folklore ritual. Later on, in the same site we find advises such as "if a girl asks first St. Peter to bless her to find love and afterwards asks St. Fevronia to help her get married, it will happen very soon" or "the safest and the most effective way to keep the family [united] is a prayer to bring the husband back addressed to Ss. Peter and Fevronia". These transforms the prayer into Orthodox magic. By examining the text of the proposed prayer, one will see typical formulas of princely service "save your town Murom, defend your land giving peace to Russia and give all of us peaceful life and death", but no special request to help families.

In some parts of Russia, the tradition involving fortune telling and divination for the groom (see Sputnik 2016), even sees this feast as a part of folk calendar feasts,

since a divination for a groom is one of the most typical parts of folk Yuletide. The establishment of the feast of family and faith brought forth the idea that this is the best day for marriage. This practice however, is contradictory to church rules which state not to get married during fast periods, therefore the idea was changed and the day is now believed to be the best day for an engagement. The actions that should not be performed during this day also have some religious roots:

Not to marry
Not to eat fish
Not to work in a garden
Not to sew or embroider
Not to quarrel[7]

As one sees, forbiddances are connected with fasting (no wedding, no fish) or with how people spend a Sunday or great church feast (no work, no quarrel), the forbiddance not to sew could also be connected with the rule of not to work. Separation of sewing from other work also has its own religious-superstitious rules: if somebody sews on Sunday or on a great church feast, the work will not come out well (Pochemu nelzja 2018). Thus, the idea of forbiddance from sewing again makes a strange connection between religion and secular superstition, even if for the feast of Ss. Peter and Fevronia. This forbiddance looks rather strange: according to the vita, Fevronia was embroidering the face of Christ before her death and agreed to die only when she finished this work. This would lead one to more likely expect a tradition of embroider for this day.

This new feast has not only a sacral part but also a secular one. Even if the feast is rather new, different traditions are apparent in different towns. The main common part is the so called *fevronjka* – a postcard with chamomile flowers or chamomile flowers made out of paper or some other materials, which should replace the "Valentine card" (Bogucharskij 2015). It is interesting that the postcard is called fevronjka and not *petronjka* which can be explained not only by the wish from the famous Valentine card (*valentinca*) but also by the fact that in the vita, Fevronia was the active part insisting on the marriage. The tradition of fevronjka is not yet so common as the Valentine card. To popularize it, some towns present it to participants to the feast (Gosobzor.ru 2018) or give it to all the people passing by (Galieva 2018: 5). They even organize master-classes on how to hand make a fevronjka, for example, include the library "Svetoch" (Romashka na schastie (chamomile for good luck) 2018, 2019), in Loznoe (Tylchenko 2018) and in many others, or even in the park in Ozera near the monument to Sweeties. Since children are normally the most frequent visitors to this kind of master-class, it is probable,

that this initiative tends also to replace a Soviet tradition of preparing postcards in nurseries and schools for the 8th of March.

Although normally fevronjka is a postcard with a chamomile flower or a couple surrounded by chamomile flowers, sometimes one will see a more eclectic display: for example a heart, a church and the slogan "I love Russia" (Bogucharskij 2015).

There are also amusing versions of fevronjka. In Kazan for instance, they were showing a young couple representing Ss. Peter and Fevronia, with or without the chamomile flowers and the text "Love is" (Cherkina 2008). These versions, however, are rather rare. Some of them are more difficult to understand, as is the version of the postcard with the handcuffed hands, since the picture is very realistic and does not remind of a joke. In Moscow the day of the family, love and faith was announced on Facebook with a poster showing handcuffed hands (Moskva menjaetsja 2018).

The spread of the feast initiated a mass construction of monuments dedicated to Ss. Peter and Fevronia. The first one was erected in 2008, in Murom, and ever since, new monuments appear in different Russian towns every year. Although the feast of Ss. Peter and Fevronia is not yet well established, one notices a work in progress in the way the celebration is organised. The biggest celebration takes place in Murom, where it combines the reconstruction of a medieval part of the town with a market of traditional handmade works and the so called "marriage square", where couples can have a their picture taken. There is also the honouring of couples who have been married for many years, some entertainment for children and, at the end of the feast, an open air concert (see the detailed description in Romashkaday 2019). In Moscow and St. Petersburg the secular part of the feast resembles other city feasts, with music and dances. However, the only unique characteristic is that these concerts are led by married couples of artists. Recently various master classes have been introduced (for example: learning how to prepare soup or how to work with clay), as well as interactive games and competitions connected with family. There are even cartoons about the life of holy princes (NN mama.ru 2018). In St. Petersburg there is a special place of the celebration (even if there are local programs in other districts) connected with the unofficial vita of Ss. Peter and Fevronia: the Petropavlvskaya square, situated on Zajachij Island (Hare Island). The choice of place is symbolic, since a tamed hare, belonging to Fevronia, is mentioned in the vita. Since the feast of Ss. Peter and Fevronia is relatively new, the program of the festivities is usually a surprise for most citizens. For example, one informant working in Petropavlovskij Museum told me: "It was so strange! I came to work and suddenly it appeared that there are a lot of music and competitions on the island, but we all had to continue working in that chaos!". In 2018, the program of Petropavlovskaya Square included: congratulations and the awarding of medals to couples with 25, 35, 45 and 50 years of marriage; a parade of newly married couples; a dance of newly married couples; congratulations to families

who were nominated winners of the competitions: "Large family", "Young family", "Golden family", and "Family - the keeper of traditions". There was also a consultation given by a specialist archivist on how to correctly compose your family tree and how and where to look for the necessary documents to compose your family tree. The day was ended with a concert (Peterburg2 2018).

In Novosibirsk, the feast is celebrated with a lot of competitions (Vdovik 2017). The city has also established a new tradition: a parade with prams and little children[8].

The most interesting combination of traditional village and town folklore, and church motifs can, however, be found in the small town of Berezovo. Here, there is an honouring of couples who lived together for many years, but the main participants of the celebration are couples who recently celebrated their first year together. They proceed along a "path of fulfilment of desires" making wishes in every significant place of the town. Their first wish is made when lighting candles in a church. The following wishes are made while dancing a circular dance (Rus. *khorovod*), while holding a bundle of chamomile flowers, while throwing into the river wreaths of chamomile flowers they have themselves woven, while touching the old cedar in the square and the "Stone miner" monument, while launching into the air heart-shaped balloons with their names on, or while biting off a piece of a loaf of bread (Galieva 2018).

The actions accomplished by the newly wed are a combination of church motifs (to lid a candle) with folk magic (to make a wish). Most actions, however, are a reinterpretation of folk motifs connected with the pre-marital stage (e.g. *khorovod*, weaving a wreath) and the wedding (biting a loaf). Their "path" is also completed by local town rites (e.g. touching the old cedar and the Stone miner) and the modern tradition of releasing a heart-shaped balloon into the air (which is similar to western Valentine cards or the international tradition of putting a lock with the couple's names on bridges).

Conclusions

In conclusion, it can be said that the idea of the feast of Ss. Peter and Fevronia, which begun in 2008 as a "Russian Valentine's Day", has already developed its own traditions, partially connected with the church feast, but much more connected with folk motifs referring to marriage, in the idea that Valentine's love would lead to marriage.

Almost all towns actively participate in the formation of the tradition. The feast has its own superstitions and as it happens for some great church feasts in the Russian folk mind, it becomes a special day of connection between two worlds and provides possible contact with "bad souls", making it suitable for divination and other "orthodox magic".

The feast was artificially instated, and so far has not yet become stereotypical and known in all towns. However, considering the governmental efforts to make it more popular, one can suppose that it may become a common Russian feast, known to everybody and beloved by average citizens. Although the official intention was to slowly replace the Soviet Women's Day (the 8th of March), and at the same time combining it with the western St. Valentine (the 14th of February), it is most likely that Ss. Peter and Fevronia feast continue to exist together with all other feasts, becoming more and more eclectic.

Notes

[1] See, for example, https://www.msk.kp.ru/daily/24081/315508/ (date of access 25 Nov. 2023).

[2] This information is cited in the Book of Psalms in the Russian State Archive of Old Acts (RSAAA, fond. 181, Nr. 716) and in the manuscript called "The Roman Prologue" (PIO, Slavo 5).

[3] Some, however, contest this information (see, for example Javorskij 1930, Skripil 1949: 215– 224, Vodovozov 1958: 217).

[4] This service has only one canon. We can find it in the *Trefologion*, in the Russian State Library (RSL, f. 304, nr. 618, f. 65).

[5] All quotations of the services are cited from the modern edition, of the so called "Green Menaion" (*Menaion* June 2002: 326–343).

[6] Cited from Ikony i molitvy 2019.

[7] Cited from Majstrenko 2019.

[8] Personal communication from a woman of about 30 years of age, on 15 Nov. 2018.

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Ritual and Conflict in a Maytime Festival: Turning Pilgrims into Tourists

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Abstract: Antipolo City is considered the pilgrimage capital of the Philippines, with devotees coming to the shrine of the Virgin called Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage. This religious phenomenon takes place during the entire month of May, although it officially ends in July, after seven cycles of novena masses. The devotion to the Virgin of Antipolo began with its arrival in the 17th century and the city took its identity from the presence of the statue, with its rituals adapted from the historical events that involved the people and the Virgin. The opening of the festival is characterized by the annual pilgrimage done on foot by her numerous devotees. On account of the millions of pilgrims that visit her shrine, the local government initiated a city festival to create other economic and commercial opportunities beyond the religious event. This civic celebration however struggles to sustain its own existence and would do well to recognize that it is the religious devotion to the Virgin of Antipolo that sustains the influx of people to the city and gives it identity.

Keywords: Maytime festival, Antipolo pilgrimage, Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage, religious tourism

Antipolo City in the Philippines is located 20 kms east of the capital city of Manila, located on a plateau of the slopes of the longest mountain range of the Philippines, the Sierra Madre. The city is named after a tree, *tipolo* (English name, breadfruit; *Artocarpus communis*) which has an edible fruit and used to grow abundantly in the area and in other parts of the islands. The city has a total land area of 38,504 hectares comprising almost 30% of the entire land area of the province. With a census of 776,386 residents, it has the largest population in the province. It is mainly

a rural district (77% of the land area) as it is home to a watershed territory, but the agricultural area is quite small at 4.75% (Antipolo City 2013: 6).

Culturally, Antipolo prides itself as the pilgrimage capital of the country and as its first international shrine on account of the image of the Blessed Virgin venerated as Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage. This identity of the town is intimately linked to the statue of the Blessed Virgin found in the cathedral. Although the patroness of the town is the Immaculate Conception, whose feastday is celebrated on the 8th of December, it is the image of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage that is found at the center of the high altar. It is this image that people seek when they come to Antipolo.

It is a national tradition that Catholics trek to the mountain city of Antipolo on the month of May to pray to the Virgin. The Virgin of Antipolo is traditionally implored for help related to travel: to obtain visas, to find employment abroad, for safety during travel, for thanksgiving for travel completed. However, pilgrims bring all manner of petitions to the Blessed Lady, ranging from family issues, work, health, relationships, studies and national examinations. The shrine attracts millions of plgrims annually and there is a constant flow of devotees throughout the year (Antipolo Cathedral 2023).

The establishment of a colonial town

Antipolo does not appear to be a town of significance prior to the 17th century. Its emergence in history is on account of the image of the Blessed Virgin brought to the town. When the Spanish Franciscan missionaries first came to the area in 1578, they built a church in Boso-Boso, in the lower part of the foothills of the Sierra Madre mountain range. The Jesuits took over the mission in 1591, and they built a chapel in an area which they called Santa Cruz, not far from Antipolo. The former site may have been chosen as it was where an indigenous group called Aetas had established a permanent settlement (de la Costa 2014: 157). The missionary potential of the town of Santa Cruz appeared bigger than Antipolo. The small town of Antipolo on the hill was not a site of choice, since it had only some 100 households of about 2,400 to 3,000 inhabitants, where wild boar, deer and boa constrictors roamed.

However, Antipolo is reported to have increased considerably in population during 1595 and 1596, with the households soon numbering 700 excluding the migratory Aetas, who came over to the growing town. The increasing population together with the pleasant climate of a mountain settlement made the Jesuits decide to move to Antipolo. Soon after, they began reporting numerous conversions in the area and the burning of numerous wooden idols (de la Costa 2014: 154). The accounts of the conversion process and the number of converts in Antipolo

indicate that there had been a lively practice of the indigenous religion evidenced by the presence of numerous wooden images.

It was therefore a gradual process of Christianization where the new images and practices were slowly made to replace the indigenous beliefs. The Jesuit historian Horacio de la Costa noted this subtle substitution saying that "in general, the fathers never destroyed or forbade a pagan usage without introducing a similar Christian usage to take its place. This was in line with the policy of making Christianity permeate the culture (…). It was perhaps not a fully conscious policy, but actual practice both at Antipolo and the other missions fairly consistently conformed to it" (de la Costa 2014: 155). For example, one renowned Jesuit missionary and founder of several churches in the area, Pedro Chirino, set to music the Christian prayers and catechesis using the melody of the indigenous chants called *awit*. This method captivated the people and women in particular were reported to have been very skillful in putting into song the homilies and other Christian teachings they heard in church.

Conversion was also facilitated by obtaining the assistance of the local chiefs. In the Jesuit towns of Antipolo and Taytay, they formed a confraternity of *principales* (the local elite) that acted as guardians of the new Christian faith and practices (Schumacher 1987: 80). The confraternity members who were "the most prominent, most Christian, and most trustworthy" town residents ensured that the local folk practices, particularly during times of illness and mourning, were stamped out, and prevented other abuses, superstitions, idolatries, intoxications, dirges, music, and wailings. These confraternities were immensely successful. In 1595, 500 adult baptisms were administered in Antipolo and in five years, more than 7,000 more people were brought over to the Catholic faith (de la Costa 2014: 154). The missionaries zealously taught the Catholic catechesis and stressed the sacrament of penance. They reported that in the Antipolo mission, many went to confession regularly every month, and some every two weeks or even weekly. By 1600 the Jesuits listed all 3,500 inhabitants as Christians; they had built a hospital, a boarding school for boys, and a seminary which all helped to achieve spiritual and temporal progress (de la Costa 2014: 184, 186). The vibrant indigenous faith was being transformed into a strong Christian devotion.

The town started to have greater spiritual significance after the arrival of a statue of the Blessed Virgin, sculpted in Mexico and brought to the Philippines by Governor General Don Juan Niño de Tabora in 1626 (Mercado 1980: 45). The pealing of church bells and sound of canons accompanied the religious procession that brought the image to the Jesuit church in Intramuros, Manila. The Jesuits decided to bring the statue to their hill mission and placed the image in the village chapel in Santa Cruz. However, the statue was soon discovered missing, and a long search led to her discovery on a tipolo tree. The statue was brought back to Santa Cruz,

only to be reported missing again and found on the same tree. The missionaries, along with the townspeople, believed that the Blessed Virgin was expressing her preference for that place and a church was then constructed on the site. For good measure, the tipolo tree was cut down and the wood made into her pedestal in the belief that it would keep her from leaving her altar again. Another icon, that of the Black Nazarene which was likewise carved in Mexico from mesquite wood, draws a similarly strong devotion among the Filipinos (Fortunado 2018: 1).

Fig. 1: The illustration depicts the *Nuestra Senora de la Paz y Buen Viaje*, known as the Virgin of Antipolo, atop a tipolo tree. This is the most popular Marian devotion in the Philippines.
Photo: www.flickr.com/photos/ (retrieved 30.10.2023)

The icon is carved from the heart mesquite wood (*corazon de mesquite*) of the genus *Prosopis* which is native to Mexico. The mesquite wood becomes darker through the passage of time, and this black hue is one of the factors to which the devotion to the image is attributed, being dark-skinned like the local population.

There was no significant growth though in terms of the town population. The town was mountainous with limited resources. When the Americans recorded the number of residents three centuries later, in 1906, there were only 3,800 inhabitants. However, the parish was wealthy all on account of the pilgrims that came to visit

the shrine and pray to Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage. Thus the church was able to sustain itself through the sales of religious items such as rosaries, printed pictures of saints, and other goods (Foreman 1980: 184), rather than from tithing the parishioners. When the Americans took over the Philippines, they recognized that of all the Marian shrines in the country, the most popular by far was that of the Virgin of Antipolo, Our Lady of Good Voyage and Peace. An observer at the turn of the 20th century remarked that the village really depended on the pilgrims for its existence which in the month of May ran into the thousands.

The reputation as the patroness of safe voyages began when the Spanish governor-general who brought the image to the country in 1626 attributed their safe crossing of the Pacific to her presence in the galleon. Six other return voyages to Mexico with her on board as patroness solidified her reputation for ensuring protection in travel and built the devotion to her as the patroness of Peace and Good Voyage.

The Maytime Festival

May has been associated with numerous Philippine festivals due to the agricultural foundation of the economy. The rice harvests were traditionally done in March and April thus May became a month of celebrations. The Virgin of Antipolo alone has the distinction of having an entire month specifically identified for pilgrimage. However, due to the numerous number of people coming to pay a visit to the Virgin, pilgrimage season is now extended until July, celebrating novena masses for seven cycles or a total of 63 days.

The image remains as one of the most popular Marian images in the country, widely held to be miraculous and efficacious. Most Filipinos traveling abroad or hoping to travel abroad petition her help for their safe journeys or the processing of their travel documents especially the applications for either a passport or a visa. At present, the pilgrimage is undertaken not only to visit the shrine and hear mass in her honor, but also to bring their cars and other vehicles to be blessed. From January to October 2018, the City Tourism office estimated that the number of vehicles brought to the shrine for blessing averaged 4,000 a month (Bacani, 2018). But the Virgin of Antipolo is believed to be so powerful that almost any petition is brought to her shrine. In the 19th century, the mother of the Philippine national hero Jose Rizal vowed to take her son to visit the Virgin of Antipolo after his difficult birth in 1861 (Zaide 1984: 12). The promise was fulfilled seven years later, when the young boy was taken by his father from their town in Laguna across the lake to go up the mountain of Antipolo. It was a riverine journey, as he later recalled in his memoirs: "How sweet the emotions I felt as we passed the banks of the Pasig (…) and made stops at Cainta, Taytay, Antipolo (…)" (Bantug 1982: 18).

Upon reaching Antipolo, they prayed before the image of the Virgin in fulfilment of his mother's vow.

There are two religious feasts where pilgrims have traditionally trekked to Antipolo on foot, during the Holy Week, particularly on Maundy Thursday evening, and at the beginning of May. (Antipolo Cathedral 2023) The May pilgrimages bring in more people who come as families, communities or parishes. There are daily masses in the shrine every hour beginning at six in the morning until 12 noon, then another mass in the late afternoon, making a total of seven masses a day. After it became an international shrine, ten masses are now celebrated on regular days and twelve on Sundays. This number is indicative of the number of pilgrims who visit the shrine. In comparison, another popular Marian shrine, Our Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag in Pangasinan province 199 kms north of Manila, has five daily masses and eight on Sundays (Philmass 2023).

The pilgrimage season begins on the first of May, which is the feast day honoring Mary's spouse St. Joseph as worker. On the eve of May 1st, the image is brought down to the Minor Basilica in Quiapo, Manila, in the morning of April 30, leaving the cathedral at 6:30 AM. Her arrival in the Shrine of the Black Nazarene is celebrated by a mass at 8:00 AM where she stays the entire day. At the end of the last mass for the day, 6:00 PM, the Virgin is then brought back to Antipolo followed by devotees who proceed on foot, reaching the cathedral anytime from 2:00 to 4:00 in the morning of May 1. The trek is done by thousands of pilgrims who can converge with the main procession from any point. There are families with young school-age children, teen-aged groups, members of religious organizations; they may come alone or with large numbers taking only water with them; some walk barefoot. These pilgrims come to fulfill promises or to continue family tradition; for petitions or for thanksgiving. What is common to all is the element of sacrifice in doing the penitential walk, to cleanse them of their sins and nourish their devotion (De Guzman 2012). The pilgrimage, involving hardship and suffering, becomes a form of spiritual retreat in the tradition of the great Catholic saints. It is this aspect of penance that the people put into the living tradition which sustains the devotion. It builds upon the spiritual wealth that becomes its legacy to the pilgrim, the stories of faith that nurture the customs and make belief visible.

Fig. 2: Pilgrims in 2017, taking over the highway leading to Antipolo in the annual penitential walk that begins on the eve of May 1. Their starting point is usually the Basilica of the Black Nazarene, situated at a distance of 24 kms from Antipolo.
Photo: https://bluecrystal248.wordpress.com/2017/04/13/ (retrieved 30.10.2023).

The logistics for the penitential walk is a major undertaking not only of the city but the entire province. To ensure safety and order in the streets as thousands make the annual trek, the Police Provincial Office arranges for police officers to be present along the 15-km length of main route in Ortigas Avenue (Bautista 2017). Alongside them, the police units of Antipolo are likewise deployed within the city limits and outside the cathedral, together with the non-military and civic volunteers sent from different villages and community organizations in the city.

Bringing the image to the shrine in Quiapo recalls the time during the Second World War when the statue was brought there for shelter. Antipolo was among the hardest hit by American bombing runs in the battle for liberation against the Japanese that began in 1945. The Japanese began to retreat from Manila, bringing the battles to the surrounding provinces. In February 1945, due to the escalating bombings in Antipolo, the people sought to flee the town taking the image of the Virgin with them to Sitio Colaique, a secluded hill some four kilometers at the outskirts of the city. The church in Antipolo was destroyed by American bombs and the Virgin was then brought to Quiapo church, where the image of the Black Nazarene was enshrined. This is a life-sized image of Christ bearing the cross that was brought over from Mexico in 1606; it was carved from the same kind of

dark-colored wood as the Antipolo image. The image of the Mother taking refuge with her Son captivated the imagination of the family-oriented Filipinos and from here arose the tradition that was initiated during the episcopacy of Msgr. Gabriel V. Reyes (Saquido 2018).

From a religious perspective however, the liturgical season of the pilgrimage begins on the first Tuesday of May, not on the first of May. The first Tuesday of May tradition also came as a result of the war. After the image was restored in Antipolo, the townspeople brought her to the highest point of the town on May 1 and a mass was celebrated in her honor in thanksgiving to the Virgin for having spared their lives. The hill they chose overlooked the entire town of Antipolo which was symbolic of her protection of the whole area. The place is now called *Pinagmisahan* hill (the hill of the mass) or White Cross, in reference to its marker. May 1 in 1945 was a Tuesday and to commemorate that thanksgiving on the first of May after the war, the liturgical feast officially begins on the first Tuesday with a procession and a mass at the site. After seven cycles of a nine-day novena to the Virgin, the pilgrimage season officially closes on the second Tuesday of July (Saquido 2018). After each nine-day cycle, the image of the Virgin is brought out in a procession. Outside of the pilgrimage season, there is a regular First Saturday of the month procession.

There are no organized religious events other than the masses at the Antipolo cathedral, though pilgrims previously proceeded to the waterfalls called *Hinulugang Taktak* after the visit to the shrine. Now a protected national park, the picturesque 12-meter height falls serves as a picnic ground for pilgrims. However, the old residents of the town recall that the people used to dip in its waters for healing rather than recreational bathing. The oral testimony of local residents indicate that the main altar of the church where the image of the Virgin is found was positioned on top of a spring, whose waters ran down to where the street named *Calle de la Virgen* is now located and merged with the waters at the Hinulugang Taktak falls. In the past, parents would bring their sick children to dip in the stream so that they might be cured of their ailments.

The number of pilgrims going to Antipolo is truly remarkable, and it has been that way from its establishment as a shrine. During the 2018 pilgrimage season, the city police department estimated four million visitors to have come to visit the shrine (Saquido 2018). The devotion has translated into various acts of gratitude to the Virgin for numerous favors. There is now a collection of 500 dresses for the image donated by devotees, along with crowns and scepters, such that the Church no longer accepts donations of clothing for the image and asked the people to put them in charities instead (Group Birhen Maria ng Pilipinas 2010). There is also a collection of donations, called the *Patronato de Nuestra Señora de la Paz y Buenviaje Fund*, that supports a scholarship program for elementary and high school students.

These *Paaral ng Birhen* (Scholars of the Virgin) are selected from indigent communities and provided with their school fees, school uniforms and school supplies.

The vendors outside the church make a living selling religious items but most of them sell the food items most associated with Antipolo: *suman* and *kasuy* (sticky rice snack and cashew nuts). Mangoes are also sold, but it is a seasonal fruit that is in season from March to June and thus most abundant during the summer month of May. The suman that Antipolo is famous for is evidence of the market power of the shrine. This was originally sourced in Cainta, a town at the foothills of Antipolo which grew rice and where making rice delicacies became a cottage industry (Malasig 2018). In the 1940s they turned to Antipolo, where a large market existed in the form of the pilgrims. Thus the vendors came up to sell their suman outside the church. Eventually, either through marriage, migration or adaptation, suman came to be made in Antipolo town itself, where it has distinguished its product for being more deeply yellow-colored than those originally made in Cainta (Bacani 2018). This is due to adding turmeric to the water where the suman is cooked, thus turning the coconut leaves into a deeper shade of yellow. There are two main areas where these products are sold, the first being right outside the church and the other in a "souvenir center", a one-storey structure built by the city government to contain the numerous vendors. Women meet the pilgrims coming out of the church yard and lead them to favored food stalls, where suman, kasuy, and other food delicacies are sold. These elderly women themselves are not vendors, but earn commissions from the stall owners for the buyers that they bring. The vendors are registered with the City Hall through one association, thus it is hard to know for certain how many vendors there are. The trade does well even outside the pilgrimage season, where thousands of products are cooked daily. In a day, a vendor usually cooks around four or five vats containing 500 pieces of suman per vat, making between 2,000 to 2,500 pieces of suman each day (Bacani 2018). On Sundays and during the Holy Week and Maytime festival, they make even more. The cost of the suman is six pesos per piece, but it is usually sold in a bundle of ten pieces for 100 pesos. The vendors pass on the trade to their children and some stalls are now owned by second- and third-generation vendors. The income from this commerce is significant. During May, suman alone can gross a vendor some US$880 on a single Sunday. Outside of the pilgrimage season, they earn half of that amount on Sundays. A second-generation vendor says they make their profit for the year during the month of May; the rest of the months brings their bonus income (Mariñas 2022). Vendors are able to put their children through college from their earnings.

This is an ongoing phenomenon. When the town prepares for the Maytime crush of pilgrims, temporary stalls and tents are put up that sell agricultural harvests and also serve food.

Antipolo, as an ecclesiastical district, was carved out from the Archdiocese of Manila in 1983 and became a separate diocese. This administrative independence indicated that the number of its Catholic population, the priests, and religious establishments (churches, chapels, schools) was sufficiently large to justify its creation as a distinct ecclesiastical territory (Knight 2018).

The recognition of Antipolo's religious significance is indicated by the canonical coronation of the miraculous image of the Virgin of Antipolo. The decree, signifying official recognition of popular veneration of an image, was granted by Pope Piuis XII in 1924. It is true that it was the fourth Marian image to be thus crowned officially, the first being the image of the Most Holy Rosary of La Naval de Manila in 1907. However, the coronation of the Virgin of Antipolo was done in the Luneta, a public park of 58 hectares where the remains of the Philippines' national hero is located. This was the only Marian image to be officially bestowed its crown in a place that had a foremost public and national character. It is likewise notable that despite the La Naval being canonically crowned 17 years ahead of the Virgin of Antipolo, the churches holding these images were declared national shrines on the same year, 1954, thus making equal the recognition of the special part they have in religious observances. (Pintakasi 2021) Thus the primacy and the drawing power of the image of the Virgin of Antipolo has been confirmed through the years.

The City creates a festival

In contrast to the religious preeminence of Antipolo over other sites, the political development of the town was not as notable. Antipolo became a city only in 1998. This meant that only at this late date could the income and population of Antipolo qualify for cityhood with a locally generated income of at least US$881,000 based on 1991 prices and a population of over 150,000. However, Antipolo still remains only a "component city" which means that despite its relative political autonomy, it does not yet meet the population and income requirement of a highly urbanized city and remains under the jurisdiction of the province (SEPO 2013). It still lacks revenue and the pilgrims that converge at the shrine are a ready market to tap.

The earnings of the town, and later the city, from the pilgrimage season consist of the business permits and parking fees that the local government charges. Vendors coming from other areas in the Philippines would set up stalls in the municipal plaza (square) as makeshift outdoor restaurants and to hawk their products. Residents within a block of the church would earn extra income by offering parking space within their premises. When the place became a city, it became more imperative for the local government to increase its revenues and develop the place as something more than a religious site.

After cityhood in 1988, the local government started initiating changes that would not only improve the local revenue but also showcase local culture and products outside of the religious festival. It was also a way of stamping the Antipolo identity on the festival and gain political capital. The small political units known as *barangays* were organized to sell their products which were mostly agricultural items. In 2000, the national government held a tourism campaign and challenged the various cities and provinces to initiate their own festivals that would attract tourists to their areas. This became the impetus for Antipolo to stage its own festival. Together with the Department of Education officials, the term SUMAKAH was adopted by the city in 2002 to showcase Antipolo's culture outside of the religious festival. From all the other suggestions, SUMAKAH was selected as it stood for Antipolo's main products, SUman, MAngga, KAsuy, and Hamaka (the rice delicacy suman, the mango, the cashew nut, and the hammock). The major festival was a street dancing competition which was intended to draw the pilgrims to discover Antipolo culture beyond the religious tradition "to familiarize the tourists with all the fine facets of the city" (Student Irregular 2016).

Fig. 3: Students participating in the 2017 SUMAKAH Festival dance while holding images of the Virgin of Antipolo, although the church is not part of this civic celebration that begins on May 1. The dome of the cathedral is seen in the background. Photo: https://www.pna.gov.ph/ (retrieved 30.10.2023).

The name Sumakah however lasted only for ten years, after which political change and tourism priorities prompted a reexamination of the festival tag. The city festival however has become part of the Maytime celebration in Antipolo, taking advantage of the large number of pilgrims visiting the Virgin in her mountain shrine.

The city gives a big subsidy to the participants of the civic celebrations in order to mount a grand street parade. Ninety thousand pesos (approximately US$ 1,700 at current rates) is given to each participating group for their costumes and meals during rehearsals. There are about twenty school- and community-based groups that participate, making the total subsidy a little less than two million pesos (approximately US$34,000). Substantial cash prizes of 100 thousand pesos, 75 thousand, 50 thousand, 30 thousand and 20 thousand (US$ 1,886; $ 1,415; $ 943; $ 566; and $ 377) are given to the top five prizes. The same cash amounts are given to winners in the drum and lyre competition among school bands, in both a junior and senior divisions. All these expenses are devoted to making the visiting guests feel the vibrant events of the city and increase tourist arrivals.

The secular and commercial aspect of the festivity has caused some friction between the church and the city administrators. It has mainly to do with the noise generated by the activities and programs in the public square just outside the church courtyard during mass. Priests apologize to the pilgrims during their homilies for the noise coming from the civic celebrations outside. A coordinating committee involving both church and city representatives is tasked to coordinate the activities and schedules in order to maintain the religious aspect of the Maytime devotion.

The national and the city rituals

On March 25, 2023, the Antipolo cathedral was elevated into an international shrine, making it the first church in the Philippines to be accorded this recognition by the Vatican. (Ramirez 2023) With this distinction, even more pilgrims are expected to flock to Antipolo to pray to the Blessed Virgin, further boosting the economic and political recognition of Antipolo as a place of unique importance.

May is associated with Mary and among her shrines, Antipolo takes primacy. The pilgrims who flock to her on this month come from all over the country and other parts of the globe. After its declaration as an international shrine, regular daily masses even outside of the pilgrimage months were increased to nine, with Sundays having 14 masses (Philmass 2023). Even outside of the pilgrimage season, easily 90 per cent of the people who attend mass are pilgrims coming from places other than Antipolo itself (Saquido 2018). The Antipolo residents on Sundays prefer to attend mass in their own parishes rather than at the shrine, due to the huge crowds in church, leaving them little space to fit inside the huge cathedral.

The annual penitential walk that opens the Maytime pilgrimage season is undertaken mainly by non-residents of Antipolo. They are indeed pilgrims, some returning in keeping with a promise to the Blessed Virgin and others to continue family devotions began by their parents and grandparents. This homage by her devotees gives Antipolo its primary identity as the "pilgrimage capital". Residents who belong to other parishes in the Antipolo diocese have taken to making the pilgrimage themselves in keeping with the tradition although the nearby parishes are amused when their trek is also referred to by the pilgrimage label "ahunan" or ascent, since they live in the mountain city themselves. Indeed, the pilgrimage as a religious ritual is undertaken for the purpose of traveling to a holy site "in order to encounter God where He has revealed Himself" and strengthen their faith.

The ritual involving the image of the Virgin that does contribute to the local identity and sense of community among the city residents is another event entirely outside of the pilgrimage. It is the reenactment of the evacuation of the townspeople to safety at the close of World War II, when in February 1945 they brought the image to a hill outside the town in order that it would not be destroyed during the battle for liberation. A reenactment of this evacuation is done annually on the 19th of February, beginning with an early morning procession from the Antipolo cathedral to Sitio Colaique, where a mass is then celebrated. The city government provides for a light breakfast for the people who attend the *paglilikas* (evacuation) commemoration, numbering anywhere from 600 to a thousand. Church and local officials collaborate closely to ensure the order and safety involving the police, Office of Public Safety and Security, City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, City Health Office as well as the government-run San Jose National High School Dance Troupe, the Antipolo City Band, and the private Catholic school Our Lady of Peace School Drum and Lyre band. The city government provides a marching band, deploys policemen to look after the participants, and assigns fire trucks, ambulances and medical teams to the site. This is the local ritual; the May festival is a national event.

This local commemoration does not attract any significant number of pilgrims; it is usually the local residents who participate. Hence, the city does not prepare a separate festivity at this time and instead participates in the procession and mass celebrated by the church.

Conclusion

Antipolo is always associated with the Virgin and its drawing power comes from the presence of the miraculous image. Secular festivals such as parades and musical contests will not be able to draw the same numbers to the city. The long tradition

of pilgrimage to Antipolo is a religious ritual and draws its strength from the sustained devotion of the people.

The identity of the city is undeniably and irretrievably linked to the image of the Virgin of Antipolo. It would be a mistake for the local government to ignore and much less deny this formidable historical and cultural connection. The connection is so strong that upon its institution as a city, the seal of the local government was drawn with the image of the Virgin in the middle of the logo. The other picture elements in the seal all have religious significance and connection to the Virgin: the Antipolo cathedral, the Boso-boso church which was the first Catholic establishment in the area, and the Hinulugang Taktak falls whose healing spring waters are found at the foot of the shrine (City of Antipolo 2023). The seal of the diocese of Antipolo has the Virgin in the center too, although the illustrations have more historical references. These are the leaves of the tipolo tree, from which the city is named, and the galleon ship, which brought the holy image to the Philippines. At the top is a dove, representing the Holy Spirit according to Catholic tradition (Diocese of Antipolo 2023).

Instead of veering away from the religious character of the festival, the city would be better served to recognize the deeply-rooted tradition and devotion to the Virgin. Such historical references to her image have to be incorporated and built into the festival because, in the words of a resident, "Antipolo would not be Antipolo without the Virgin". Recognizing its intimate connection to the place and identity of the city would give the created festivals its anchor in history. The created festivals of the local government, no matter its color and gaiety, would not be able to draw the same huge crowds as the image. The festival and therefore the revenues from it can only be sustained if this historical ties are maintained.

The May-time festival is not a local ritual and does not actually engage the community nor contribute to the community identity. It is the character of the Antipolo pilgrimage to be a national undertaking with no need for the local population to participate in the events. The government festival only capitalizes on the religious motivation for the visit to offer other economic and commercial opportunities. Even without these government-initiated marketing and tourist-oriented activities, the Antipolo festival will remain and continue. Government needs to partner with the church in order to strengthen the popular devotion and maintain the tradition for the pilgrim-tourists to continue coming to the city.

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Biographical note

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Vlachian Christmas in Vienna

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Abstract: The article is dedicated to the celebration of Christmas among the Vlachs from Eastern Serbia, currently living in Vienna, on a permanent or temporary base. The author compares their Christmas practices with the ones celebrated by Vlachs in Eastern Serbia (the Zajecar village community, Zajecar district, and the from the Negotin and Kladovo village communities, Bor district). The paper focuses on particular ceremonial practices, such as the use of the Christmas log (Rom. dial. *badnjak*) and the Christmas cake with divination objects inside (Rom. dial. *banica*, *cesnica*). The text is based on fieldwork materials collected by the author from 2016 to 2018.

Keywords: Vlachs, Romanians, Eastern Serbia, Vienna, Christmas

Introduction

The findings reported herein are based on the materials from field research conducted between 2016–2018, in Vienna, amongst the Vlachs (Romanians) from Eastern Serbia, who permanently or temporarily reside in the city.

Native Romanian speakers of various subdialects of the Romanian (Dacoromanian) language reside in Eastern Serbia (in the Branichevo, Bor, Zaechar and Pomoravlie districts)[1], and in Voevodina (in central and south Banat). Romanian language speakers living in the territory of Voevodina are officially recognized as Romanians, while other speakers of the language who reside in Eastern Serbia are traditionally referred to as Vlachs. According to the population census of 2011, the number of residents of Eastern Serbia declaring themselves to be Vlachs is situated around 31 thousand people, and of those calling themselves Romanians there are a little more than three thousand (Popis stanovništva 2011). However, one must

note that the Romanian speaking population of Eastern Serbia is several times larger than those figures combined.

The ethnonim "Vlach" (this is the South Slavic - Serbian and Bulgarian - variant of the word, cf. Ukrainian and Old Russian "Voloch" and Russian "Valach") is the common name of the ancestors of the Eastern Roman peoples (Romanians, Moldovans, Aromanians, Meglenoromanians and Istroromanians). In the past, the Slavs called the Romance peoples as a whole Vlachs. The Vlachs were first mentioned in Byzantine sources of the 11th century. The main occupation of the Vlachs was transhumance (Rusakov 2006). In medieval sources there is a transfer of the term "Vlachs" to representatives of other ethnic groups engaged in transhumance (Litavrin 2001: 135).

Lazar Şăineanu defined the term *Valahia* – the name given by neighboring peoples to the principality of *Ţara Românească*, which arose at the beginning of the 14th century between the Carpathians, the Danube and the rivers Milcov, Putna and Siret – as a toponym of Slavic-Germanic origin, included in other languages, but only occasionally used in Romanian literature and the official language (see Şăineanu 1929). For the majority of Eastern Roman ethnic groups, the term "Vlachs" is an exoethnonym, however, among certain groups living in a foreign ethnic environment, it is adopted as a self-name (for example, among Meglenoromanians, as well as among some Istroromanians) (Rusakov 2006).

Currently, the term "vlasi" (pl.), borrowed from the Serbian language, is sometimes used by Romanian-speaking informants from eastern Serbia as a self-name along with the term "rumâni". The expression "*limba vlahă*" (Vlach language) can be heard primarily from public figures who insist that it is a separate language and not a group of dialects of Dacoromanian, although it is now penetrating into the speech of rural residents. Traditionally, Romanian-speaking residents of eastern Serbia referred to their speech as "*vorbím rumâneşte / rumâneaşce*" (we speak Romanian). Unfortunately, it is impossible to obtain accurate data on the population of Serbian Vlachs (Romanians) residing in Vienna, because many of them do not live and work there legally and because most of them are frequently reported in the local census records as Serbians.

The massive labor migration of Vlach (Romanians) from Eastern Serbia to Austria began in the late 1960s. This was caused by the economic reforms initiated in Yugoslavia in 1965, which caused unemployment growth and were soon followed by labor recruitment agreements with various Western European countries. The labor recruitment agreement between Yugoslavia and Austria was signed in 1966, and the one between Yugoslavia and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), in 1968 (Butterwegge 2005; Stakanov 2013). The major labor migration destinations for Serbian Vlachs in the 1960s and the 1970s were FRG, France and Austria. Industrial manufacturing was the main sphere of employment for both the Serbian

Vlachs and other Yugoslavian citizens; some people also worked in construction and the service industry.

A second wave of migration took place in late 1980s. This period was marked by drastic political changes across the entire Eastern Europe. The collapse of the "socialist camp" and the introduction of economical reforms in its constituent countries during their transition towards capitalism, caused unemployment growth and a decrease in the quality of life of their populations. Besides the economical reasons, one can also note the political turmoil caused by the disintegration of Yugoslavia, which lead to wars in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1991), and in the Kosovo conflict (1999). Germany remains the main country of destination for people from Southeast Europe in the years since the collapse of the socialist system. Together with Germany, Austria and Switzerland are in the top three migrant destinations, followed by Italy and France (Brücker, Damelang 2009). According to the information gathered in interviews with Vlachs from Zajecar and Negotin, Germany, Austria and Switzerland have been the main countries of labour migration for them, since the late 1980s to the present. But it should be noted that during this migration wave the number of destinations increased. There was also labour migration to the USA and Scandinavian countries. These countries are especially popular among the Vlachs from the villages of Kladovo municipality of the Bor district. Serbian Vlachs who moved to the West at that time mostly work in the service industry and constructions.

Christmas Celebrations

Christmas, celebrated according to Julian calendar, on January 7, is the most important winter holiday for Serbian Vlachs residing in Vienna. The informants call it by its all-Romanian name of *Crăciun*. Many people want to celebrate it in their home country, but not all of them are able to get a vacation for the period, as in Austria Christmas is celebrated according to the Gregorian calendar, on December 25. There is also a contrary tendency: according to some informants living in Vienna, their relatives from Serbia visit them during Christmas time. Those who spend Christmas Eve and Christmas in Vienna, can buy a *badnjak* (Christmas log, Yule log) in the Serbian market located in District 16. Nowadays, the "log" usually looks like a bunch of oak branches with leaves. The custom of cutting down and burning a Christmas log, widespread among the Balkan nations, is also common for the Vlachs of Eastern Serbia, while it has become rare among the Romanians residing in Romania. It is known that in Romania it used to be popular in the Mehedinți district (Oltenia, Banat) and in the Western Mountains (Transilvania); it is also familiar to the Romanians of North Bukovina (the Chernovice Region of Ukraine), Aromanians and Meglenoromanians (Ghinoiu 2001; Popovici 1974;

Pamfile 2005; Papahagi 1974; Papahagi 1979). The *badnjak* is a derivation from the South-slavic names for Christmas Eve (Serb. *Badnji dan*, Bulg. *Бъдни вечер*). The Vlachs interviewedin Vienna, as well as the residents of Romanian villages in Eastern Serbia, where the author has gathered materials on calendar rituals for many years, always refer to this ritual item as *бадњак*, while the Vlachs in the territory of North-Western Bulgaria (Bregovo, the Vidin region) mention the Romanian term *Moş Crăciun* – literally, "Grandfather Christmas" – together with the Bulgarian term *бъдник* or *дъбник*. According to the data gathered in Romanian villages of Eastern Siberia, the *badnjak* is brought into the house on Christmas Eve, or the night before, and burnt on Christmas Eve, or at Christmas. Inside the house, *badnjak* is layed on straw and adorned with walnuts. While the *badnjak* is burning, people read aloud a certain text or sing a ritual song which foretells good animal offspring in the upcoming year. *Badnjaks* sold in early January in the Serbian market of the 16th district of Vienna can also be presented as baskets, which, besides oak branches with leaves, may also contain corn seeds, walnuts, green grass in small pots, and red plastic or wax apples (Fig. 1). Those are all symbols of fertility. The baskets can also contain various modern symbols of Christmas and the New Year, such as: paper icons with the image of the Mother of God, "*Христос се роди*" (Serb. for Christ has born) signatures on the fabric packaging of the oak branches (Fig. 2), and images of snowmen or Santa Clauses. The sale of *badnjak*s during the relevant calendar period is a temporary business activity for "freelancers" coming from Serbia for that purpose. Unfortunately, traders from Eastern Serbia could not be located among the *badnjak* traders; those who spoke Romanian turned out to be Gypsies from around Belgrade.

Fig. 1 and Fig. 2: Sale of *badnjaks* on the market on the 16th district of Vienna. January 2017. Photos: Natalia Golant.

The tradition of burning the *badnjak* is difficult to be maintained within large cities; the log is bought before Christmas and kept in the apartment as an interior decoration, and then disposed of. Some informants have stressed that one are not allowed to burn a *badnjak* near churches in Vienna (the tradition of burning a Christmas log in the church yard is characteristic for Serbians, however, Vlachs among the residents of Zaechar and Negotin, who attend ceremonies of the Serbian Orthodox Church, also recognize it as their own). In Serbian churches in Vienna, a *badnjak* is grandly brought inside the church on Christmas Eve, placed on straw and surrounded with walnuts and sweets for children. In Vienna, Vlachs usually attend Serbian Orthodox Churches, such as: the Cathedral of St. Sabbas, in the 3rd district, the Church of the Resurrection of Christ, in the 2nd district, or the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, in the 16th district. None of the surveyed Vlachs in Vienna ever mentioned visiting churches of the Romanian Orthodox faith, although in Eastern Serbia, many Vlachs visit Romanian churches and invite priests of Dacia Ripensis Deanery of the Romanian Orthodox Church (established in 2005), for home visits.

Another ritual realia partially retained by Serbian Vlachs residing in Vienna, is the Christmas bread, which is called either by its Romanian name, *turtă,* or by its Serbian name, *cesnica* (Fig. 3). Traditionally, divination items were put into the bread: a coin, as the symbol of prosperity; cornel sticks, which symbolized health, etc. Depending on the items found in their piece, one could predict what awaited the family members in the upcoming year. On January 7, 2018, during the Christmas dinner in a Vlach family, which took place in Miloshevo village of Negotin community, the author found a plastic pig in her piece of Christmas bread. According to the hostess, it was a symbol of health and good fortune. Her husband got a tin coin pendant, decorated with coloured enamel. In this case as well, the explanation remained unchanged: a coin in Christmas bread promises wealth, despite the fact that the actual coin had been replaced with its decorative proxy. Christmas bread may also contain a pencil (symbol of intellect and academic studies), a branch of basil (symbol of beauty and health), etc.

Fig. 3: *Turta* (*cesnica*). Vienna, January 2017. Photo: Natalia Golant.

Other traditional dishes are consumed at Christmas: roast or boiled pork, home-made sausages, sauerkraut rolls, etc. Both the Vlachs who reside in Vienna and those from Vlach villages of Eastern Serbia have a tradition of putting all food and drinks in the house on the table before the beginning of the Christmas dinner. Once it is done, all persons present put their hands on the table and pronounce the phrase "Let Christmas help us" (Rom. *Să ne ajute Crăciunu'*). Similar actions are performed at the beginning of other festive meals, during other calendar holidays (each time, the ritual phrase contains the name of the relevant holiday).

Naturally, the described ritual realia are not exclusively Vlach. Vlach or Romanian specific features are to a large extent relevant to the ritual texts, which have almost disappeared among the Vienna Vlachs, having lost their relevance, and also to the terminology. In general, in our view, one can say that among the Vlachs residing in Vienna, the process of assimilation to Serbians is more rapid, compared to the same ongoing process in Eastern Serbia. Among other things, it is also reflected in traditions associated with winter calendar holidays.

Notes

[1] In Romanian, this region in called *Valea Timocului* (the Timoc Valley)

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The Festival Dedicated to Agios (Saint) Nektarios in his Monastery on the Island of Aegina, Greece

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Abstract: In Greece the festival dedicated to the healing saint, *Agios* Nektarios, is celebrated on the island of Aegina on 9 November. This is an important healing festival dedicated to one of the most recently deceased saints; that is, the former bishop of Pentapolis, who lived a secluded life on Aegina until his death in 1920. The bishop was canonised as Agios Nektarios in 1961, becoming the island's patron saint. His monastery is situated in a geographical area where the cult of deceased holy persons has been particularly important. A key ritual during the festival is connected with a chapel that is reserved to women. This chapel is part of the monastery dedicated to the saint and housing his skull. When I first visited the monastery in 1990, I learnt that Agios Nektarios' relics reposed in more than eighteen churches in Greece and Cyprus. Today this has changed, since his relics have been spread out among many more sanctuaries, inside and outside of Greece; that is, worldwide. His body is indeed of the highest importance for the worshippers, and although several churches both in Greece and abroad today have a share of it, the main pilgrimage centre on Aegina possesses the most important part: his head that rests in a crown made of gold, while the saint's relics repose in a casket inside his chapel.

The article is based on fieldwork which I have carried out on Aegina where I attended the festival in 1991, 2011 and 2012. The study explores especially into the healing function of the festival both for Greeks and the many pilgrims coming from abroad, especially from Romania.

Keywords: death cult, festival, fieldwork, Greece, healing, pilgrimage, religion, saint cult

Fig. 1: The monastery dedicated to Agios Nektarios, in front of which is the new church, Aegina, 7 November 2011. (All photos are by the author)

Introduction

In Greece the festival dedicated to the healing saint, Agios Nektarios, is celebrated on Aegina on 9 November, the anniversary of his death. This is an important healing festival dedicated to one of the most recently deceased saints; namely, the former bishop of Pentapolis, who lived a secluded life on Aegina until his death in 1920.[1] He was canonised as Agios Nektarios in 1961, becoming the island's patron saint. The reason for this is, *inter alia*, that his body did not decompose in a normal way and gave off a sweet fragrance (see Håland 2022, 2023: Ch. 5 and 7). But, Nektarios is known for performing miracles already in his lifetime. He also had the gift of divination. He is particularly renowned for curing cancer, the illness of which he himself died. Although he was sanctified quite recently, his celebrity has spread all over Greece and Europe. Villages and cities compete in the building of churches dedicated to him as votive offerings. His popularity is growing, and his relics repose in more and more churches in Greece, as on Tinos, and Cyprus, and

also further abroad, such as in Bucharest. Nonetheless his main pilgrimage centre on Aegina possesses the most important part: his head that rests in a crown made of gold, while the saint's relics repose in a casket inside his chapel.

Before 1961 this women's monastery, situated six kilometres from Aegina town, was known as the Monastery of *Agia Triada* (the Holy Trinity). It was established by the saint between 1904 and 1910 on the site of a chapel dedicated to the Life-Giving Spring (*Zōodochos Pēgē*), and downhill in front of the monastery a massive church has recently been built (Fig. 1). The monastery is furthermore situated in a geographical area where the cult of deceased holy persons has been particularly important.

The monastery is made up of a complex of buildings, including chapels, two shops selling books, icons, holy oil, candles, postcards, souvenirs, and the old house in which the holy man once lived. The small monastery church housing his relics is the most holy space on the site. The second chapel in the courtyard is the oldest one in the complex, dedicated to Agia Triada and is now reserved for women only. The small chapel dedicated to the Archangels, which is partly shaded by a pine tree covers the saint's first resting place, until 3 September 1953 when his relics were transferred to the new chapel, and outside is the spring with holy water.

The church in which his relics rest is packed with votive offerings, such as thanksgiving lamps, and the number of pilgrims to the site is constantly increasing. Several thousand pilgrims visit the monastery and the newer, large church on the anniversary of his death. They come for their *tama* (pl. tamata), their pledge which involves offering something to the miracle-working saint in return for his help with problems, mainly concerning health. The same happens in his other churches. A small community of nuns live in the monastery. In 1991, they numbered twenty-two, but by 2011, only fifteen. They take care of the spiritual needs of those who come to seek consolation and healing. The nuns stress that the church in which the saint rests, is much more holy than the "copy tomb" down in the new church. Nonetheless, the "copy tomb" is actually also a tomb since it contains his right arm and hand. The nuns are also eager to stress that they celebrate their own night-long holy vigil in the monastery along with visiting nuns and other women, while the official male one indicated in the festival's programme takes place in the new church. Thus, the nuns prefer their own monastery to the new church.

Both in 1991 and 2012 it was difficult to travel from Athens to Aegina because all the ferries were on strike. On the day before the festival, Flying Dolphins was given dispensation for two departures, more ferries followed but they had to dock at another quay. So, the pilgrims managed to reach the place, and at the little bus station in Aegina town, there were several extra departures up to the monastery.

The Festival of Agios Nektarios

In the afternoon of 8 November, pedlars had already started to set up their booths in front of the large church. In 1991 the sellers were ordinary Greeks or coming from other Balkan countries, but today they are usually Africans paralleling the change that has occurred steadily on Tinos during the celebration of the Dormition on 15 August from the 1990s until today, when for example South African sellers are present although they underline that they are also Greek, trying to make a living. At the entrance to the new church in 1991, a woman was busy pasting the typical labels – "Agios Nektarios, Aegina", accompanied by a picture of the saint – on the collars of the jackets and coats of the arriving people. This is a usual custom in other places as well, and allows the festival and its participating people to be identified. Next to the woman, a little boy stood holding a collecting box: one has to pay for the blessing and the label. The church was full of activity, and women were decorating an altar symbolising the saint's deathbed (*Epitaphios*), with flowers, while repeatedly giving orders to a man carrying a ladder, instructing him what to do.

In 1991, some of the arriving black-clad pilgrim women, entered the new church, but most proceeded up the hill to the monastery. Today most enter the church before they continue through the new and beautifully decorated path linking the monastery and the new church. On their way, they point towards *Paliachōra*, "the Holy Mountain", literally "Old Town", while loudly discussing the different sanctuaries. Paliachōra is situated on a hill behind the monastery. The mountain is covered with small churches dedicated to a host of saints within the Orthodox Church. According to a monastery priest, these are "abandoned sanctuaries and an archaeological area". When inspecting the site, one learns the opposite: in some chapels, candles had been lit, and at some of the altars, people had dedicated money and flowers.

At the entrance to the monastery hang a wide variety of skirts and other clothes in different sizes, as in most Greek monasteries. The clothes are intended for the women who are not properly dressed to enter the holy area. The announcement is clear: "It's strictly forbidden to enter into the monastery men with shorts and women with trousers or half-naked". Another sign denotes "clothes for women" and under this hang the clothes. Many pilgrims in short skirts or jeans wear these clothes over their own.

In a niche in front of the main entrance to the monastery, is a flower decorated icon depicting the saint. It is the first icon the pilgrims encounter at this sanctuary, while arriving by the old gate. Many pilgrims put some cotton wool on this icon at the entrance. The monastery provides lodging for pilgrims in their two-storey guesthouse, and the day before the festival started, they received dinner along with the other arriving pilgrims. After passing the next entrance, many visit the shops

to buy bottles for holy water or icons they wish to make holy by putting them on the tomb of the saint, as they also do with other objects, as a young woman placing a pair of running shoes on the tomb, alternatively one shoe after the other. Others put baby clothes on the tomb to absorb power. Two candles, formed as coiled snakes, are left as dedications at the tomb, before they are lit.

On 8 November, the annual feast of the Archangels, Michael and Gabriel, is also celebrated. The first, namely, Taxiarchēs, is celebrated especially in the village of Mantamados on the island of Lesbos where he is also patron saint. On Aegina, however, the sanctuary of the Archangels covers Agios Nektarios' first resting place, and by his original tomb, the faithful fetch holy and healing oil from the lamp hanging between the tree and the tomb. One woman, who has drawn quite a lot of oil, finishes her ritual by pouring holy oil from the tap into a small blue plastic bottle. Due to her greed, the monastery staff has to refill the lamp with more oil. Another woman who is less indulgent, takes only a little oil on one of her fingertips and wipes her forehead with it. Others ingest the oil. The large votive candles are lit outside the chapel covering the grave, next to the aforementioned lamp. On the other side of the tree is another door, so the pilgrims do not need to turn around (which would be inauspicious anyway) but can pass in front of the grave, always to the right (cf. du Boulay 2009; Håland 2017: Ch. 4 and 6). So, inside a little consecrated area within the monastery are the original tomb, a tree and holy water. Several pilgrims immediately drink some of the holy water on arrival there; others, mostly young men, brush it through their hair with their fingers. A young couple knelt on either side of the grave, praying intensely. This is where the pilgrims cluster, since at his original tomb, people are especially eager to "hear the saint [that is, his footsteps] inside".

Fig. 2: Pilgrims listen to Agios Nektarios' footsteps at his original tomb, Aegina, 8 November 2012.

To hear him, they place themselves close to the tomb, putting their heads and hands in contact with the stone of the coffin, after having placed their votive gifts on top (Fig. 2). A young woman brought with her a newborn baby, which was also positioned as close to the tomb as possible. She also placed a supplication paper or "letter" on the tomb. Another woman brought with her a dark blue bonnet, evidently belonging to a child, which she laid on top of the tomb while reading aloud from her prayer book. Afterwards, she went down to the other tomb in the new church and repeated the process. A supplication paper or "letter" was also placed on the tomb. Here, the lid has been removed and through a glass top one can see a silver representation of the saint inside, his right arm and hand clearly indicated with the brown bone. Many pilgrims also cluster here to sing prayers over the "sleeping" saint, caress his face, or pass written supplication papers over his body, particularly his arm, hand and face to make them holy. The same procedure is carried out with various items, such as children's clothes and other persons' clothes or amulets (cf. Håland 2014: Fig. 14 and 2019: 162–3 Figs. 49a–c); some of them are placed or

wrapped in plastic bags. Various other items are placed next to the flowers or on the marble shelf that runs around the silver coffin. The women around the coffin perform their own individual rituals.

In the small monastery church housing the saint's relics, are many votive offerings, which are dedicated there in increasing number throughout the festival. People touch the saint's icon with the votive gifts, before attaching them to the string hanging along the icon. All the lamps hanging from the ceiling, are thanksgiving offerings. Further inside the chapel, the saint's relics repose in a casket and his skull rests in a crown made of gold. Many votive offerings hang next to the holy relics. Two swords are showcased just beneath the votive gifts, which are also framed and glazed. Some pilgrims lay flowers on the saint's reliquary. There is a separate exit door used by the pilgrims who have performed the required set of devotions in front of the saint's relics. Outside the entrance doors to the two monastery churches, a large icon depicting the saint is placed for the event and decorated with flowers. When people pass, they kiss the icon and dedicate votive offerings. Access to the other monastery church is reserved to women. The supplication papers (*chartia paraklēseis*) are collected in this chapel, to be read by the priest during the liturgy. In here, today, is an icon of the "*Panagia* (the All-Holy One from *Pan*: all and *Agia*: holy; the Virgin Mary), the defender or supporter" (*ypermachos*), on which she hovers over a circle inside of which is painted the Greek flag along with a map of Greece (cf. Håland 2014: Fig. 76). Its contemporary importance and potency as an icon is all the greater in the light of the country's current economic crisis, the fact that it "feels threatened by Europe" in general, and is, according to some of my informants, in real danger of "being erased from the map" (cf. Håland 2019).

In the monastery's courtyard, many sit in deep concentration, writing their supplication papers or "letters". Since the saint's power is especially strong on his feast day, it is important to ask him to intercede on behalf of one's closest family members. A nun sitting just inside the entrance to the "women's chapel" distribute writing paper. The bread and wine offered by the pilgrims are stored by her feet. A young girl is writing supplication papers on behalf of an old woman who dictates with a loud voice. There is an intense activity in the monastery, especially at the grave: the faithful lit candles, pray, hand in their written supplication papers and buy candles of various sizes. A mother arrives with her daughter who appears to have learning difficulties. A man fetches blessed bread from the nun and touches the saint's grave with a piece of it. Then he wraps the bread in foil and attaches it to his breast pocket, thereby acquiring an amulet for the next year.

Behind the church dedicated to the Archangels, a staircase leads up to the rooms in which the saint had his home. Here, everything is intact. In a closet are several personal belongings: slippers, comb, the red Easter egg from the year he died. A sponge he once found, with a cross at its centre, underscores the fact that these are

holy objects.[2] Pilgrims kneel in front of the bed and all the other holy objects and kiss these as well. In Agios Nektarios' bedroom in 2011, I observed a female pilgrim praying on her knees in front of the bed. She appeared not to be Greek because, like most of the pilgrims from Russia, Romania, Bulgaria and other eastern European countries, she wore a scarf on her head. Her husband and young son were waiting for her, and she seemed to be very devout and emotional as she was weeping a lot. They spoke a Slavic language, and the mother was very eager to put the boy on a chair in the living room of the apartment and take a picture of him, although it is forbidden to sit on the chairs, as outlined on nearby notices in Greek, which apparently she could not read. In 2011 and 2012, I encountered many pilgrims from other Orthodox countries, Romania in particular, but also Bulgaria and Russia.

In 1991, below the staircase leading up to Nektarios' private apartment, I entered a room in which some nuns and female helpers were busy cutting bread for the liturgy the next morning. They cut the bread in front of an altar, where it would also be kept in baskets overnight, to render it particularly holy.

Before the start of the celebration, buses of pilgrims arrive continually. Among them are many parents carrying their sick children, some suffering from rickets. People carry with them chairs, flowers and other necessary items for spending the night inside the church. All night pilgrims arrive. It is important to remain in the sanctuary overnight: the saint is thought to be present during his festival and because his potency particularly increases at night, pilgrims have to remain awake. It is for this reason that all saints' festivals start on the eve of the actual feast and culminate in "the holy all-night-service", and procession. Some pilgrims sleep in the courtyard, but most spend the night inside the church, while the priests and cantors sing invocations. According to popular belief, the Holy Nektarios usually wanders around at night, visiting the place he used to live. Accordingly, he receives new slippers once a year.[3]

During my fieldwork in 1991 the new church was not fully completed, and the first part of the festival took place in the monastery. Twenty years later this had changed. Then, as always, the festival starts on the eve of 9 November with a vesper when the head is carried into the women's chapel. But afterwards it is taken down to the new church in a candle procession through the path that links the two sanctuaries. The head is placed in the middle of the church in a decorated wooden lectern. When the ecclesiastics perform the ritual announced in the programme, the activity at the "right hand" tomb becomes very intense: people, kiss the glass top above the silver figure of the saint, pray, and place or rather pass clothes, icons and other items over the silver corpse of the saint in the sign of the cross. The tomb is almost entirely covered with flowers; several pilgrims also bring long candles and sticks. In 2012, many Romanian pilgrims were especially eager to take pictures of the saint. Later, a great dinner is served for special guests in a former school next

to the new church. The official all-night holy vigil service starts in the new church simultaneously as the nuns' ritual up in the monastery, paralleling the gendered tasks and spheres during wakes over the dead (see Håland 2014: Ch. 4).

The Feast Day, 9 November

The feast day starts with a service early in the morning. Pilgrims arrive all through the previous night. This was particularly the case in 1991 and 2012, due to the aforementioned strikes. Before the start of the procession, the situation at the bus station was chaotic: everyone wanted to go up to see the saint and people fought to get on the buses. On the way up to the monastery in 1991, we passed a car decorated with flowers carrying an icon, and the frantic people on the bus started to shout: "Have we missed something? Has the procession already started?"

During the feast day the saint's decorated Epitaphios in the large church received many votive offerings in 1991. This particular icon illustrates the dead saint in a similar fashion to that of the icon that hangs over the door to his sleeping room in the monastery. On the way leading up to the monastery I met many beggars sitting along the path, a common sight at festivals dedicated to saints with powerful healing capacities as well as at pilgrimage centres famous for their healing power, as on Tinos. Many beggars had only one leg. Some pilgrims crawled to the sanctuary on their knees, paralleling the situation on Tinos. Many travelling sellers had set up their booths. At the monastery, the situation was even more chaotic. There was also some money at the icon outside the entrance to the monastery, illustrating that prayers had been fulfilled or were expected to be fulfilled.

While the priests performed the morning liturgy on the feast day in the new church as the case was in 2011 and 2012, people busily worshipped the same three items as the previous evening and night: the saint's icon outside the door, his head in the middle of the church, and the tomb. Many pilgrims lie half-asleep along the walls inside the sanctuary of the new tomb in this church. They have been awake all night, although many of them had brought sleeping equipment with them. In 1991, the procession started with the ecclesiastics setting out from the women's chapel carrying the saint's head. Outside, a hysterical girl stood pouring holy water over herself, another collapsed. On their way down from the monastery, many women were busy collecting herbs, flowers and green leaves in the grass growing on the hillside. The herbs are thought to be particularly holy when the saint's head is carried in procession, thus paralleling the holy earth traditionally collected on Tinos as well as the "dust" from the tomb of Agios Gerasimos on Kephallonia (Håland 2014: Ch. 2, 2023: Ch. 7).

After the liturgy, the saint's head is taken to the town by a flower decorated car. When the head emerges from the church, carried by a priest, people become quite

excited and wild, many of them because of lack of sleep. The saint's head is placed into a decorated car to be carried to the town. An old woman, clad in black, manages to come close to the head before it is passed over to an older priest who, in turn, passes it back to the former once he has taken his seat in the car. In recent years, all the visiting pilgrim groups have their own buses back to town. The older women struggle and jostle a lot to get onto the public bus when it finally arrives. On the bus to town in 1991, two women started to fight; emotions were running high on this day and many of the pilgrims were in a particularly bad or excited mood after a combination of fasting, the sleepless night and all the incense in the sanctuary.

Along the road leading down to Aegina town, many villagers have removed the saint's icon from among the other family icons in their holy corner, putting it in front of their houses, along with the oil lamp and their household censer. In this way, the household cult shifts from the innermost to an outer space. The holy symbols are placed at the roadside or in a niche at the gate, thus their power will be renewed at the same time as ensuring the saint's relics pass through clean air, like in the village of Olympos on the island of Karpathos during the procession on Holy (Good) Friday, and on Tinos. As the holy head passes before the house, the housewife throws incense on the embers, and the priest rewards her for having made the air smell sweetly for its passage by pausing to say a prayer for her. The procession is assembled at the outskirts of the town. As on Tinos and in other festival locations, the processional route is marked with white crosses bordered with apotropaic (cf. *apotrepein*, to ward off) blue (as on the Greek flag itself), and two crossed Greek flags, as well as the usual flags at the sanctuaries.

At 11:30 am the procession around Aegina town begins, attended by many visiting bishops in full regalia. Carpets are laid in the streets and strewn with flowers and green branches, and icons and lamps are placed in the windows or outside the houses along the route to greet the saint. At the various stops by the churches and public administrative buildings, services are held and the head and icon are sprinkled with flowers. It is also important to walk under the canopy carrying the head in his golden crown to be purified and therefore protected for the next year (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3: At all stops it is important to walk under the canopy carrying the head to be purified and therefore protected for the next year, Aegina, 9 November 2012.

Scouts, Guides and school children head the procession. The latter, starting with the youngest pupils, lead the way carrying flags; all the schools on the island are represented. They pass by the church of the Panagia or Panagitsa, as many locals say, next to which a small market is held on occasion of the feast. The children are followed by marching bands. Choirboys lead the ecclesiastical procession, in which nuns and priests are present. They swing their censers, in order to "purify" the area before the arrival of the head. Some carry banners with various symbols, and their coats are a diverse range of colours. A priest dressed in a yellow robe carries the Holy Bible. In 2011 and 2012, two laymen or non-ecclesiastics, carried an icon of the saint. Next, follows a boy, clad in black, carrying a censer. Then follows the icon decorated with flowers, carried by young priests, also dressed in black. After this come the nuns, and an old nun follows carrying a censer. In 1991, a car with loudspeakers came next, and a "rolling" or "moving" service was being held from the car. The priests chanted in turn. In the intervening years, the technical apparatuses have improved, and today the car has been substituted by a portable microphone. The priest carrying this is followed by more members of the clergy with Agios Nektarios' skull in the golden crown. The icon and head are carried by

priests, and nowadays (in 2011 and 2012) the officiating priest comes next. The most important part of the procession, the priests carrying Agios Nektarios' head, are walking below a sort of "moving" canopy carried by policemen, under which is the *koubouklio* (canopy), the "movable sanctuary", bier or platform and on which rests the head, carried by the priests. The metropolitan bishop of Hydra, Spetses and Aegina and other bishops wearing crowns on their heads and carrying staffs in their hands follow the bier. One also carries some green leaves. In the middle of the last section of the ecclesiastical part of the procession, a priest dressed in black carrying a staff is the leading person. The procession ends with the people following the saint through the town.

In 1991, a woman went up to the saint's head, strewing petals and leaves around the relic from a sack. In several places parts of the house altars have been moved outside to greet the saint. At the church of the Panagitsa (or Panagia), the church version of the saint's icon has been transferred outside. Here the saint's icon, heading the sacred part of the procession, makes his first stop, thus greeting his other icon, which is placed on a lectern outside of the church. The latter is decorated with flowers, thus, in "festival attire" it meets and greets the icon that has been brought from the saint's main sanctuary outside of the town. When arriving in front of the church, both the visiting icon and following holy head, below the canopy, are sprinkled with white flower leaves, and a choirboy swings a censer. Helpers roll out red carpets in front of the church, and a service is held. A second stop is made at the town hall where an icon depicting the saint is suspended. During the procession, a woman on a balcony holds the saint's icon over the procession passing underneath. On several streets in the historical centre of the town, beautiful carpets have been rolled out awaiting the procession, and they are sprinkled with green leaves and flower buds. There is a third stop in front of the church dedicated to Agios Nikolaos. The final stop is made at the church dedicated to the Dormition of the Panagia, generally called only *Mētropolis*, perhaps to distinguish it from the first church, since both are dedicated to the Panagia. At the third and fourth stops, the head and icon are sprinkled with flowers; at the former, an old woman does the sprinkling, while a young man holds the censer. Here, at Agios Nikolaos' church, two decorated icons have been moved out in their lecterns and some of the women start their own singing.

Fig. 4: A house altar awaiting the procession with the head of Agios Nektarios, Aegina, 9 November 2011.

All along the road, beautiful decorated house altars await the procession (Figure 4, see also Håland 2014: Fig. 15). In some places, the women also stand next to their altars holding lighted candles. Some nurses in uniform have put a decorated icon of the saint in a lectern outside the building housing the first government building of John Kapodistrias. The local hospital of Agios Dionysios is some five hundred metres away on the same road. The procession traverses the town, tracing a route between the local churches. In front of nearly every single house, the "household altar" or parts of the household cult are displayed outside, and as the holy saint passes before each one; the woman of the house, standing ready with a sack of flower buds, throws them at the procession. The procession ends up at the Metropolitan Church, where the last prayer is held in favour of the town, its residents and the pious pilgrims. At this final stop, only a few pilgrims are permitted to enter with the ecclesiastic procession, since the police close the gate after them. The rest can enter after the termination of the liturgy and speech, which is followed by the national anthem. During the final speech at the last church to be visited by the procession in 2011, all the foreign pilgrims from Russia, Romania, Bulgaria and other eastern European and Balkan countries; that is, all the non-Greek Orthodox

believers present, were given a special mention alongside the Greek worshippers. Through the procession the town is blessed, and so are, particularly, its churches and public administrative buildings, thus paralleling other festivals both in Greece and abroad. So, the procession terminates with a service in the church dedicated to the Panagia or Mētropolis, while it is visited by Agios Nektarios' icon and head.

When the service in the Metropolitan church is finished, people are enthusiastic to receive blessed bread after the ceremony. Some fetch the flowers and green leaves from the canopy in which the head was transported. Simultaneously, people line up outside the entrance of the church waiting their turn to making their devotions in front of the head, now displayed on a tall table draped with red silk, next to the decorated icon (Håland 2014: 379, Fig. 44). In the church of the Panagia then, three objects are worshipped by the faithful: everyone bows and kisses the holy head, then, they proceed to the icon, and finally many bow their heads into the empty canopy. People move around wishing each other "*Chronia Polla*" (Many Years), and most pilgrims rush onboard the Flying Dolphin which is bound for Piraeus; others await later boats. Some of them eat their packed lunches in the parks or in the streets, while others still invade the various *tabernas* in the town. The priests go up to their lunch, which starts at 1 pm in the building called *scholē* (a former school for girls who were taught practical handicraft or needlework, "housekeeping"), next to the new church.

In 2011, while waiting the return of the saint's head to the monastery in the late afternoon, an old woman was very excited, telling the saint had opened one of his eyes the previous night, asking me if I had managed to catch this moment when taking pictures from the gallery. I said no, having to confess that although I also took several pictures of the silver figure under the glass top in the chest of the right-hand tomb and of the detached lid, I did not see that he had opened one of his eyes. She looked at me as if I had really missed something. I did not reflect on the issue then, but later I would be reminded of the topic. Down in the new church the following year, a female Romanian pilgrim sweeps pieces of candles, dust and flower buds from the new tomb putting these holy amulets into a plastic bag, before going up to the monastery. Here, as usual, pilgrims line up waiting their turn to perform devotions in front of the saint's head, and in its absence, they pay homage to the space it usually inhabits and to the icon that has temporarily replaced it. More votive gifts had been dedicated, also at the saint's tomb, including money and a box containing 500-milligram tablets of cortisone along with a supplication letter and a plastic syringe in a plastic sack. Just before the service starts, the ritual activity becomes intense: the head is brought back up from town accompanied by screaming sirens. It is escorted ritually into the women's chapel in the same way as when it was removed from its usual space, posed on a table and people start to venerate it, while the bishop sits down next to it. His closing speech by the end of

the vespers touches on most aspects of the present situation in Greece, including the crisis. Next, the head is ritually returned to its own chapel. Since Agios Nektarios leaves and returns via the women's sanctuary, we observe a symbolic rebirth, via the female sanctuary and female aspect, paralleling other passage rites both in Greek and other contexts.[4] So, through the annual liturgy in the women's chapel that officially concludes the festival, Agios Nektarios, who instituted a women's monastery, has been "reborn". During the entire service, and after venerating the saint's head though, everybody eagerly lines up on the steps awaiting the climax of the festival: the opening of the saint's closet in his flat. Now he will have his new clothes and slippers, and the enthusiastic pilgrims are venerating all the holy items in his closet in the same way as his holy head.

After the liturgy in 2011, I shared a taxi back to the town with two young Greek women. One of them was very excitedly telling us that she had noticed the saint opening one of his eyes. In the beginning, she did not believe her own eyes, but another woman said she had witnessed the same, convincing her that she had in fact seen what she thought. All the way down to the town, while repeatedly telling the story, she crossed herself continually, and the female driver started to share her own story; that is, "her miracle": she had an allergy, eczema on her hands, but had been healed through the help of Agios Nektarios. I feel it is important to note here that although the aforementioned woman from the gallery is an older woman, the driver is middle-aged and the two pilgrims I travelled with are quite young. In addition, I met several young women who brought along their newborn babies, and placed them next to the head to kiss it. In other words, women of all ages come to Agios Nektarios to get help.

Furthermore, it is important to mention that all the rituals left out of the official programme, such as the meals, the annual opening of the closet, and so on, are popular and female rituals that seem to be particularly important to the female pilgrims I talked with along with their personal worship of the saint's head and body in his two tombs at the area. I assume that all the discussion about the saint opening his eye both in Greece and Romania accounts for the fact that so many, particularly Romanian, pilgrims were eager to take pictures of the saint in 2012. The same year, I noticed that the main icon of the saint in the women's chapel is painted so it seems that the saint is winking with his right eye.

The day after the festival dedicated to this dead mediator, the remaining pilgrims in the monastery receive *kollyba*; that is, a mixture of wheat, nuts and fruit usually offered to the dead during memorial services at the tombs. The ingredients symbolise immortality, abundance and pleasures, and the wish for a plentiful future crop, November being the time of sowing in Greece (Håland 2014: Ch. 5; cf. 2017: Ch. 6).

In 2011 and 2012, I encountered many Romanian pilgrims on Aegina, many wore yellow caps stating they were from Romania, reminding me of the poster I

had seen pinned outside the Orthodox cathedral in the northern Romanian city of Alba Iulia in October 2011 that invited people to make a pilgrimage to Aegina in the period 6–13 November, during the festival of Agios Nektarios.[5] This invitation and the many nuns and several buses filled up with pilgrims from Romania attending the festival both years, illustrate his growing importance in that country.

Although my descriptions have been based on three periods in the field studying the festival in 1991, 2011 and 2012 (with a gap of twenty years between the first and second periods), I hope I have managed to illustrate that even though much of the decor has changed, primarily because of the enlarged importance of the new church during the festival, the core of the rituals endure as does the attendees' faith in the saint. To quote a female Greek PhD student in 2011: "I am looking forward to meeting you and sharing your experiences from Aegina. I have never been to Aegina and Agios Nektarios is considered to be one of the most Divine Saints who performed many miracles". The same opinion is expressed by other people, particularly women in Athens. One woman in her thirties asked me to light a candle for her during the festival in 2012, saying that "Agios Nektarios is so special since he is one of the most recent saints here in Greece, and he is indeed a proven wonder-worker, otherwise people would not return to Aegina".

In the article I have stressed the importance of the house altars greeting the saint, because this is an important parallel to the custom in small villages and communities in northern Greece where the icons carried in procession actually are brought into every single house to bless the house and its altar for the next year (Håland 2017: Ch. 4, 2019: 10, 96, 214, 309).

Some Concluding Remarks

In 1990, the first time I visited the monastery on Aegina, I learnt that Agios Nektarios' relics reposed in more than eighteen churches in Greece and Cyprus. Today this has changed. According to Abbess Valentina Drumeva of the Bulgarian monastery dedicated to the Presentation of the Virgin Mary in the Temple in the town Kalofer, with whom I spoke in June 2012, some of the nuns from the monastery had already gone to Aegina in 1990 to obtain some of his relics. A small relic is on display in their monastery church, that today has eleven nuns, one of whom is named Nektaria. I have also learnt of a monk called Nektarios, which is also a typical male name on Aegina (cf. Håland 2014: 131 for the background). In addition, Agios Nektarios' relics repose in more and more churches, such as in Romania and Spain. The Romanian Orthodox Church; that is, the Radu Vodă Monastery in Bucharest, obtained one of his relics in 2002, and he is particularly famous for healing cancer in a country where the health system is on the verge of collapse[6] Actually, an important explanation for the saint's body starting to decompose is

that it indicated that he, or rather his relics, should be spread out among many sanctuaries, inside and outside of Greece; that is, worldwide (Dionysiatēs 1979: Ch. 8.2, i.e., 163; Håland 2014: Ch. 2). The situation today means it is by no means certain how many places can boast of having an actual relic of Agios Nektarios residing in their church. As already mentioned, Agios Nektarios now also resides in the Church of the Annunciation on Tinos, since the Metropolitan of Aegina and several nuns came to Tinos with his relic during the festival of the "Finding of the Icon" in 2012. After being on display in the church during the day, he resides next to the miraculous icon of the Annunciation in its "safe" every night (see Håland 2014: 381 Figure 45). Before receiving this relic, they already had a relic of the saint in the nuns Monastery of Kekhrovouno on Tinos. He is indeed a "migrant saint".

List of Figures (all photos are by the author)**:**

1: The monastery dedicated to Agios Nektarios, in front of which is the new church, Aegina, 7 November 2011.

2: Pilgrims listen to Agios Nektarios' footsteps at his original tomb, Aegina, 8 November 2012.

3: At all stops it is important to walk under the canopy carrying the head to be purified and therefore protected for the next year, Aegina, 9 November 2012.

4: A house altar awaiting the procession with the head of Agios Nektarios, Aegina, 9 November 2011.

Notes

[1] The following article builds on Håland 2014, especially Ch. 2. See also Tsotakou-Karbelē 1991: 226 f.; Dionysiatēs 1979; Chondropoulos 1998; Panagopoiloi 1987. I visited the monastery in 1990 for the first time, and the festival in 1991, 2011 and 2012.

[2] In the 19th cent. the sponge trade was particularly important and many rich sponge merchants lived on the island.

[3] Today the same custom is found in Mantamados on Lesbos: in front of the holy icon of Taxiarchēs, which, according to legend, is made of earth and blood from monks killed by the Turks, many pairs of golden shoes are dedicated.

[4] Cf. passage rites, when people are reborn after being at "the place of death", Dowden 1989: 36.

[5] And, for the price of 280 euros, to also visit other places in Greece, such as Thessaloniki, Meteora and the Akropolis of Athens.

[6] The information relating to Romania was communicated to me by Irina Stahl (Romania) who presented the paper, "Saint Nectarios, 'The Migrant Saint': Healing Rituals in Post-communist Romania", at the Eight Conference of the SIEF Working Group on The Ritual

Year, *Migrations*, Plovdiv, Bulgaria, 2012, later published as Stahl 2014. She also tells that from Romania his cult has spread to the Romanian parish in Coslada, a suburb of Madrid, Spain. See also Håland 2014: Ch. 2.

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Biographical note

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Creation of a *New Archaic* through Ethnographic and Journalistic Strategies. A Case Study from the Romanian Shepherds' Tradition

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Abstract: As eclectic as they are, our times express a multilevel predisposition to re-actuate the 'archaic tradition' (unclear and vague expression, in connection with another contemporary obsession, which is 'authenticity') as a return-to-nature movement. This process comes from the urban environment and is often formalised through new rituals, which do not absorb original, genuine old rituals, perhaps already vanished, despite being based. on their descriptions and interpretations. The case study discussed in this article is from Romanian tradition and is represented by the wedding in a vegetal sanctuary (Rom. *biserica de brazi*). I analysed an article published in *Formula As*, a new-age magazine with a large audience, in order to disclose strategies of a turning a ritual in a legend, that occurs at the intersection between ethnographic and fictional texts.

Keywords: inventing tradition, fictional ethnology, journalism, Carpathian Mountains, ritual, local religiosity, shepherds

The premise of this article comes from Clifford Geertz's assertion that anthropological writings are *fictions* "in the sense that they are 'something made', 'something fashioned' – the original meaning of *fictio* – not that they are false, un-factual, or merely 'as if' thought experiments" (Geertz 1973: 15).

Texts written by scholars, by journalists, or by writers all work as meta-realities that differently describe the same referent, depending on the reason why a certain text is written, on its audience, on the conventions of the genres to which a text dominantly belongs to, and last but not least, the skilful pen the writer wields. An

interesting phenomenon occurs when the demarcations between genres become blurred and the written artefact glides from one type of literary convention to another. For example, when the fictional component of an ethnographic text is augmented, or when journalistic rhetoric leans toward ethnographic realism, then the dialectical tension between *true* and *false* takes on specific meanings and nuances. My intention is to explore the relations between distinct categories of texts – ethnographic description, journalistic fiction, and promotional literature – when they refer to the same item. I chose as a study case the so-called *fir trees church* (Rom. *biserica de brazi*), an item taken from the Romanian ethnologic literature.

In 1901, the French geographer Emanuel de Martonne participated in a shepherds' wedding that took place near a sheepfold (located in Petrimanu Mountain, Latorița Valley). Instead of using a church building, the priest, brought from the foot of the mountain for the occasion, officiated the wedding in a place delimited by four fir trees.

> Il n'est même pas rare de voir célébrer un mariage dans la montagne, et il est curieux de retrouver, dans les rites observées, des usages spéciaux à la Transylvanie, dont presque tous les bergers sont originaires. L'invitation se fait toujours de la même façon, portée par deux jeunes gens à cheval, qui vont de *stâna* en stâna, offrant à boire d'une *plosca* pendue à leur selle. Le pope, appelé du village le plus voisin, célèbre la messe entre quatre jeunes sapins plantés dans le sol, qui figurent l'église; tandis que, tout comme dans la plaine, les invités dansent à côté (devant la porte de l'église), aux sons d'un violon râclé par quelques tzigane. (...) Il est curieux de voir la soin que pend la roumain de rester ainsi, malgré son isolement, en communion avec son village. (De Martonne 1902: 112–113)

Forty years later, Ion Conea recorded a 73-year-old shepherd speaking about another mountain of the same Latorița Valley:

> On the Coasta Benghii there were some fir trees planted in a circle (...). On the East, there were an opening that served as the entrance (...). From a distance, the group of fir trees looked like a church (...). It was at the limit of the forest (...). Our elders said that these trees had been planted by shepherds from Poiana Sibiului, so they could have a church (...). Many shepherds married in the grove of trees. I have seen this church around 1921 (...). When the Carpathina Society forest exploitation arrived there, part of the fir trees were cut down. The other burned in a huge fire, around the '40s (...). There is nothing there, anymore" (Conea 1943: 25–26; apud. Ciurea-Genuneni 1981: 31–32).[1]

The mountain mentioned above and its "church" are key elements of my current article.

The Coasta Benghii Mountain is closely located to the former political border area along the South Carpathian crest, which until 1918 separated Austro-Hungary from Romania. The mountain is also very close to one of the passageways that cross the mountains and link the two Romanian historical regions of Oltenia (south flank) and Transylvania (north flank). Administratively, it is included in Oltenia. The area was – and still is – used for grazing by shepherds from both North and South faces of the mountains.

On the military map of Oltenia drawn between 1790–1791 under the guidance of the Austrian General Specht, on Coasta Benghii is a placed marked as *monastir* (monastery). The edifice identified on the Austrian map no longer exists.

In my book "The church 'outside'. Ethnological study about Carpathian shepherds' religiosity" (Jiga Iliescu 2020) I dedicated an entire chapter to this church and the body of legends around it, along with the wedding ritual among the fir trees (the emic terms would be 'behind the fir trees'). In writing it, I conducted consistent fieldworks during 2011 and 2019 up to the mountain and the villages at its base, and had the chance to find and to deeply observe the very place and topography where the church from Coasta Benghii was settled. Nowadays, the spot is marked by *two* stones with engraved crosses, one of them with the inscription: 'I, Ion Lazăr, put this stone as an offering, in remembrance of this halidom. 1868'. The text on the other stone is illegible, but the year 1888 is still visible.

Fig. 1: The stones that mark the place where the church was settled.
Photo: Laura Jiga Iliescu. 21 of July 2012

I examined the landscape and noticed how many paths connect this place with a wide net of stables, also connecting seven peaks where mountain fairs (Romanian terms are *târg de plai, târg de două țări, nedee*) took place until the end of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth century. These fairs, where shepherds and their families gathered from both flanks of the mountains, played an important role in the regulation of grazing lands and in the control of the matrimonial alliances system. In the past, some weddings took place up on the mountain, on the very day of the fair.

> According to the village elders from the Oltenia mountains (...), a few decades ago [the recording was conducted in the 1940s] in this church from Coasta Benghii wedded shepherds and shepherdesses who decided to marry at the fair. Those days, fairs took place all over the mountains, starting with St. John's day (June 24) when the flocks climbed on to the mountain and ending with Little Mary's day (September 9), when they came down again (...). The shepherds even had a church in Coasta Benghi. They were wedded here by priests who came from Poiana, Răşinari [Mărginimea Sibiului, Southern Transylvania], from Novaci, Bengeşti [villages in Northern Oltenia, on the other flank of the Parâng Mountain]; aside**,** they married on the mountain, without any church: they stuck few small fir trees [in the ground] *as if* they were the chancel table and encircled them while ritually dance (Conea 1943: 25–26).

This intriguing paragraph, written in 1943 by Ion Conea, indicates *two* spaces, both dedicated to wedding ceremonies: a constructed edifice and a vegetal sanctuary.

Searching the narrative file of the area and particularly of the Coasta Benghii, I was not so much interested in finding out exactly what (in historical terms) was actually there, but how local people perceived the high level of the mountain in relation to a church that is outside of any village and out of the control of the parish community. I identified two groups of legends. One tells of a forbidden marital union: against their parents' will, a couple decides to flee and to marry in the very church at Coasta Benghii. In another, a maiden is kidnapped by a dragoon, the *stranger* par excellence*,* from the very dance at the fair. The second group has nothing to do with marriage, but with some supernatural events that cast a strange shadow over the place and its church(es). Here is an example, told by a non-shepherd:

> There was a man in Polovragi whose wife was pregnant. At Easter, according to their tradition, they had to bring food and drinks to church. Because the woman was late, (...) the man became angry [and] destined the child to the devil (...). Seventeen years later, the boyar Bengescu, who owned Coasta Benghii Mountain, sent a group of hunters to chase chamois. They met there the cursed boy, who, in the meantime, had become the devil's serf and grazed

> its wild goats**.** The boy took the hunters to the devil's palace, where they ate and drunk (...); the devil wasn't at home. Then the boy asked them: 'Go to my father and tell him to pay the priest to read the Holly Book in my behalf for six weeks, and after six weeks, to come here, together with the priest, to break this curse'. The father did so, and finally the priest baptized the boy and freed him from the devil's chains. (...) In that moment, the devil's hotel turned into a stone and fell down. Then the boy went home with his father and the other people (Mocanu 2003: 256).

The above variant was recorded in 1975, in Voineasa, Northern Oltenia; I recorded two other variants of the legend in 2012 and in 2014, in Baia de Fier, Northern Oltenia. The legend paradigmatically articulates semantic fields of marginality and wildness: at the high level of the mountain, away from human settlements, we have an ambiguous shepherd, an outsider who grazes wild animals, and an ambiguous building, as well. Through baptism and the priest's prayers, not only the boy, but also the space, at its turn polluted by the devil's presence (whatever 'devil' means here) have been cleansed and Christianised. But where exactly on the Coasta Benghii was the devil's *palace*? Or, in other words, to which kind of edifice does the legend refer to? Could they refer to the fir trees sanctuary, namely the *aside* church mentioned by Ion Conea? In this case we might speak about a (non-Christian?) space assigned to the devil, a space that was cleansed and *baptised* through the concrete presence of a Christian church built there later on.

Or, on the contrary, could the legend refer to the building Christian edifice that, even if it was a church from the very beginning, was perceived as having an ambiguous nature (such as the boy does, too)? It perhaps was a church that did not belong to a monastery, nor to a parish, but that served a fluid community of people who only seasonally gathered around it. It would then be a church contaminated by the liminal significance of the space *between* territories, thus getting a hybrid status (it is neither *here,* nor *there*, but away from ecclesiastical control).

At the end of the seventeenth century, far from the Carpathians, in Val d'Aran, the Spanish flank of the Pyrenees, descriptions of similar kinds of churches appear:

> [C]*inq églises foraines sont considérées comme des ermitages (...). Précisons encore le vocabulaire. Quand on parle d'ermitage, en Aran, on ne pense pas à un lieu reculé, habité par un ermite vivant en solitaire. Les ermitages sont d'abord des lieux de cultes pour les bergers, qui sont desservis par des prêtres portionnaires, généralement à tour de rôle. Parfois, des prêtre décident de s'y retirer.* (Brunet 2001: 326)

These churches were dedicated to the wedding ceremonies between people from different valleys or from both sides of the border between France and Spain (Br

funet 2001: 657). In the same area, forbidden weddings (against parents' wishes) celebrated in a fir tree sanctuary are also attested, as in the Carpathians. Here is a description from 1884:

> *Paul Perret nous parle d'union, désormais sans prêtre, «devant la nature», au Portillon* […]. *Le col apparaît, il n'est guère éléve que de 1300 mètres (1.308)* […]. *Voici quatre sapins (ils sont quatre). Ici on renouvelle le sacrement sommaire de Gretna Green; seulement il n'y a point de forgeron. Les amoreux qui n'ont pas la patience d'attendre que M. le Maire ait scellé et que M. le Curé ait béni, prennent à témoins ces quatre troncs rugueux qui ne disent jamais non. C'est ce qu'on appelait, en d'autres temps, épouser devant la nature.* (Brunet 2001: 659)

Similarities with the Coasta Benghi case include topography with frontiers between pasture lands on both sides of a mountain chain, the marital destination for these small non-parish (or multi-parished) churches, their ambiguous status, and last but not least, the built church is joined by an outdoor, or *aside* edifice of fir-trees. There are very likely other such places in the European mountains.

Literature, Fiction and the Fir Trees Sanctuary

In Romanian scholarly literature the most known and apparently richest description of the so-called *fir trees church* is, in fact, the most doubtful. It comes from Romulus Vulcănescu, an ethnologist who was interested in finding the pre-Christian, Dacian roots of Romania, and especially the pagan survivals during Christian times. It was Vulcănescu who actually coined the expression 'fir trees church'. In emic language, as recorded in the field, people say *wedding behind, or among the fir tree* (Rom. *nunta după brazi*, *nunta printre brazi*):

> My grandmother married like that. In the fair day, they took the priest and walked around the fir trees. And that was all. No party, only wedding behind the fir trees. (personal field recording, 20 of July 2017; Maria B., 67 years old, sheep owner, from Poiana Sibiului, Mărginimea Sibiului, Southern Transylvania)

The same informant spoke about a fair on the high pasturage plateau, at which shepherds from Oltenia, on the other side of the mountain, also took part.

In 1987, Romulus Vulcănescu wrote:

> The holiness of the fir tree acquired *magico-religious* [my italics] meaning in the consciousness of the Romanian shepherds. For example, the mountain

> fir trees church. A flock of fir trees planted in a circle or a circle formed by cutting the forest around them; in this circle shepherds engaged or married with the maiden who came at the stable from the village, in order to shirk from their parents' authority. The wedding in the fir tree church was summarily officiated by an *old* [my emphasis] shepherd or *even* [my italics] by a priest. (Vulcănescu 1987: 487).

The unique reference for this paragraph is represented by a book (Ciurea Genuneni 1981: 30–34) that also alluded to Ion Conea's study from 1943 (see above). The original text, however, does not contain any information about a circular clearing of the forest, or about an old shepherd taking the role of the priest in the wedding religious ceremony.

Ten years later, in 1997, the same Romulus Vulcănescu gave more details, again without any bibliographical or field evidences:

> There were fir tree churches close to the mountains shepherds' fairs (Rom. *nedei*); some of them were not hidden within the fir tree forests, other were camouflaged within the fir trees flocks. The un-hidden churches consisted in cut fir trees re-implanted in an open circle line, near the mountain fairs. The camouflaged churches usually consisted of three concentric circles of green fir trees. They lasted as long as they were not destroyed by those who were sabotaging such churches for the reason that they were not canonically consecrated. For protection, sometimes the access to the camouflaged churches was through two Y-shaped paths, at their turn camouflaged by fir trees. (Vulcănescu 1997: 11)

In reading scholarly literature, searching archives, or conducting fieldwork for my research on this topic, I never found anything about open or concentric circles, about cut and re-implanted trees, about camouflage, or active hostility against these sanctuaries. Such information would have been of great interest if certified by documents, bibliographical references or field recordings. Romulus Vulcănescu, however, was silent about his sources. Instead, through axiomatic sentences and allusive style, he induced an aura of mystery around these shepherds who are given generic and metaphoric values, as if they represent the embodiment of a culture that comes and survives from *archaic* times, a culture with a religion more or less independent of the Christian institutions from the bottom of the mountain. He cloaks himself in an aura of mystery, too, as being the one who learned and was initiated in these sorts of secrets.

When Vulcănescu wrote about the fir tree churches (1986, 1992), he was an emeritus scholar and an influential member of the Romanian Academy (elected in

1993). His popularity, thanks to the book *Romanian Mythology,* has since spread outside the academic milieu.

Despite several voices who expressed doubts (mostly informally) regarding the accuracy of some descriptions from this book, the author's prestige encouraged other more or less professional ethnologists to simply credit him. Here is an example:

> The famous ethnologist, academician Romulus Vulcănescu, the one who peregrinated the villages around the mountains, asking the elders about the fir tree churches, how they were made, what services took place inside and for whom, concluded: 'there were fir tree churches close to the mountains shepherds' fairs (Rom. *nedei*); some of them were not hidden within the fir tree forests, other were camouflaged within the fir tree flocks'. (Moga 2010: 254)

Some Avatars of the Ethnological Fiction

Romulus Vulcănescu was a scholar whose work in the 1980s promoted the idea of autochthonous Dacian pagan survivals within Romanian culture, an idea encouraged by the nationalistic and atheistic (anti-Christian and anti-Church) communist regime of those times. A few decades later, this notion is being revisited as neopaganism, combining with ecology and new age trends; it is, in effect, its own *new* survival. In this context, Vulcănescu's comments about fir tree churches generate avatars that circulate – without quotation marks – through written and online media, popularising (and selling) *old tradition* and, passing from one site to another, entering the virtual database, becoming anonymous and 'collective' property, and hence marked by the process of variation. I will give an example taken from the virtual field.

On a website dedicated to bioenergy – a key concept for the new age movement – I found a new fiction whose credibility is assured by a collective and *en vogue* character, who takes the place of the scholar's authority, namely, witches:

> The fir tree churches – energetic balance of malefic places. The witches say that the fir trees churches grow only in holy places. What are they? Since very old times, the shepherds used to plant isolated clumps of fir trees, or to cut down a round section of a fir tree forest (...). When you meet such an isolated, but rich group of fir trees, the chances that there is a beneficial energetic space are high.[2]

The next example is taken from a journal that appears both off and online. There is a more elaborated text, representing an interesting case of journalistic narrative that mimics both literature and ethnography (or aims to). *Wedding in the Sky* was

written in 2009 by Bogdan Lupescu for *Formula As*, an eclectic, dominantly new age magazine, whose profile contains a certain interest in the Romanians' spirituality in connection with vernacular and ecclesiastic, much more monastic religiosity, from the perspective of the past idealisation and its present survivals, resulting in a sentimental – and stereotyped – portrait for the Romanian identity, in which both Orthodoxy and Dacian *magic* roots are shown to play an important role.

The epic frame of the article is represented by the quests for the fir trees church (we recognize Vulcănescu's appellative, so different from the emic term): one conducted by a local teacher, writer and amateur ethnographer (who failed to find any such sanctuary) and the other one by the reporter himself (who succeeded):

> What if I would be the one to find the traces of such a fir trees church? Even only the remnants of such a sanctuary would be a treasure indeed. Both for me, as a reporter, as well as for those who would like to study it. (Lupescu 2009)

The message is clear: the journalistic text may be used as an ethnological document or, much more likely, the journalist takes the role of the one who clears the way for scholarly research.

Both the reporter and the teacher from whom the reporter declares he learned about this kind of 'churches', had their own informants, whose words are not transcribed, but stylistically reworded. The result is a multi-voiced text, coagulated, under the journalist's pen, into a *story inside a story* structure.

Even if it is hard to imagine how the reporter's documentation could not have led him to the few ethnographers who wrote something about the weddings between fir trees, the name of Romulus Vulcănescu is not mentioned anywhere. However, the article communicates exactly the information that Vulcănescu had launched into circulation without any references. As an example, here is a second-hand rewording (the local teacher shared with the reporter what an old shepherdess would have told him a *long time ago*):

> The churches of love…the strange trees churches from the crests of the mountain. Green trees, under whose canopies the old times shepherds married with their brides. They dig the church shape in the ground, right there, on the fair's place and planted fir trees. (…). Consecrated by long haired, old priests, by shepherd priests, who have long buried their prayers and incantations (Lupescu 2009).

The impression of 'archaic' through terms designating *old* times, also suggests a certain syncretism between Christian religion and local paganism.

Finally, the reporter learned that there was once a *church* on the Coasta Benghii mountain. Finding this mountain, he went to a sheep fold there and a shepherd guided him to the two stones engraved with crosses. Seing them, he exclaimed: "The holy place of the fair, preserved from ancient times!" (Lupescu 2009) In fact, there was no fair on Coasta Benghii, whose slope and lack of a plateau make it unsuitable for a large gathering of people. The journalist located the place on the very crest, at the end of a difficult ascension (suggesting symbolical and spiritual meanings), but which is actually placed between the valley and the top, on a very small flat terrace.

Fig. 2: Larger view over Coasta Benghii. The church was settled on the slope, not on the top of the mountain. Photo: Laura Jiga Iliescu. 21 of July 2012

The quoted article published in *Formula As* magazine does not mention anything about a built edifice (which is still present in the local memory of the shepherds, as I had the occasion to learn from the field), as if the term *church* (in the sense consecrated by Romulus Vulcănescu) automatically refers to the fir trees sanctuary and as if there was nothing else in Coasta Benghii. Consequently, the topographic configuration of the place is interpreted in this regard: beside the hole with the two stones, there are two other holes (approximately 1.5m wide) covered with grass, which seemed to me to be former military trenches (the view from there covers

the entire valley, and the road that crosses the mountain is very close). But in the reporter's eyes they

> (…) look indeed like the pits left after the grubbing-up of trees, grandiose trees which at one time have been removed from their roots. As if the shepherds have pulled them out from the ground and taken them to another place.

In the subtext, we recognize the issue of the sabotage against these sanctuaries, which had to be moved (not destroyed), hidden, or, speaking like Vulcănescu, camouflaged.

The reporter observed that, "around the stone there grow many little, purple, thin flowers. They are a strange specie of violas, which bloom only here, in this very space". The suggestion is that we are in an unique place, marked by a special beneficial energy, energy that is manifested through an abundance of vegetation, a detail that reminds the new age witches' already quoted words: 'When you meet such an isolated, but rich group of fir trees, the chances that there is a beneficial energetic space are high.' At a second level, the idea of the still active holiness of the place (incorporated by the flowers), perpetuated even after the concrete churches disappeared from the landscape, sustains the message of ethnic continuity from Dacians to today's Romania, an idea encouraged by the new Dacophil trends of nationalism. As there can be read in the article, the teacher interviewed by the reporter asserts:

> Here, the essence of the old Dacians spirituality was purely preserved. The fir trees churches [were] erected exactly on the same places of the old pagan sanctuaries, in continuity with the old temples of the Dacian hermits (...) these mountains are inhabited un-interrupted at least from Neolithic times. (Lupescu 2009)

Information delivered by *Formula As* magazine entered and have been acknowledged by local oral milieus:

> Author: Did you say that there is a deserted church on the mountain?
>
> Informant: *There is a deserted church, yes, as I learned at my turn. It was built long time ago and they abandoned it and now they found it. And I heard that some priests served it and put a cross there.*
>
> Author: Where exactly, in which mountain?
>
> Informant: *From Ștefanu, down to Coasta Benghi (...). And they found some stuff there, but I don't know. This one, Costică Popa (...), he said he was there.*
>
> Author: Who is Costică Popa?

Informant: *Well, he's a forest ranger. And he said that he heard about, or was there when a group of priests consecrated the place; books and whatever they found, because there had been a church there.*

Author: When did this event take place?

Informant: *It was not long time ago. Last year or so.... We didn't know until he told us.* (personal field recording, I.P., not shepherds, 77 years old, Baia de Fier, Gorj County, Oltenia Region; July 2012)[3].

After further inquiries, I found out that the forest ranger had in fact read the article published by Bogdan Lupescu in *Formula As*.

Conclusion

It was not my intention to cast doubt on Romulus Vulcănescu or the *Formula As* reporter's honesty, but only to question their assertions. The aim was to explore a small part of the mechanism of fabrication, at an imaginary level, a mysterious and exotic picture of the local 'archaic' embodied here by the so-called fir trees church invented tradition, and not by the real wedding among the fir trees as described by Emanuel de Martonne, or by the wedding in the shepherds' built church as that from Coasta Benghii. In this regard, both journalistic and fictional ethnographic texts promote a 'second life' of the ritual that, thus reshaped, re-enters in the collective oral and written public domain and memory.

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Notes

[1] The 1943 study of Ion Conea was republished in a volume edited by Lucian Badea and Nicolae Stoicescu in 1984 (Badea; Stoicescu, 1984: 15–31). The paragraph which mentions the church in Coasta Benghi is missing from the second edition.

[2] http://mannix-father.blogspot.fr/2012/01/magie-14-bisericile-de-brazi.html (accessed in 13 of January 2012; no longer accessible in 6 of July 2018).

[3] As I had the occasion to learn during my fieldwork, the persistence (even if distorted) of the church in the local memory is more or less alive especially among shepherds. The informer I. P. had a different profession.

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Pussies Galore: Women, Power, and Protest in the Age of Trump

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Abstract: The Women's March of 2017 was an international response to the election of Donald J. Trump to the Presidency of the United States. In Washington, D.C., the gathering was estimated to be 500,000 participants. It was large, festive and carnivalesque with its costumes and bodily imagery, but it was not a carnival. The participants were very serious in their presentation of a counterpoint to the apparent validation of values they saw embodied in Trump, those of intolerance toward women, LGBTQ people, and racial and ethnic groups. This article investigates ways of analyzing such large-scale public performances, and suggests the term "ritualesque" as a useful complement to the idea of the "carnivalesque".

Keywords: Women's March, protest, demonstrations, carnivalesque, ritualesque, pussy hats

The Women's March of January 2017 was, by many accounts, one of the largest, if not the largest, mass demonstrations in U.S. history. Although clearly influenced directly by previous political actions, such as the 1963 March on Washington, the Million Man March, and the Million Mom March, the Women's March took place in its own specific historical moment – one represented by the election of Donald Trump to the U. S, Presidency. The Women's March has served as a new paradigm for female empowerment and has spawned follow-up marches, including a national gun control demonstration following a mass shooting at a Florida high school in 2018. In this article, I will analyze the Women's March in the context of previous research on public assembly and performative actions of grievance and censure; I will do this in the particular context of the Trump presidential campaign and inauguration.

To say that Trump is a polarizing figure is an understatement. During his presidential campaign against other Republican candidates, and then against former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Trump was seen ridiculing a reporter with a

physical handicap; he directly insulted all Americans of Mexican descent; he was endorsed by the Ku Klux Klan; and he made innuendoes that a reporter was having her period during a presidential debate. During debates with Clinton, he moved into her area of the stage and hovered, glowering behind her. He is overwhelming in his social transgressions, and a great many of these indicate a hostility toward women in any role other than sexual object. It is, perhaps then, no surprise that his victory in the electoral college (he lost the popular vote by a substantial margin to Clinton) sparked a widespread movement loosely called "the Resistance" (see Carmon 2016, Simon 2018, Reuters Staff 2016, The Guardian 2015).

Historical Context

Perhaps the Occupy movement and especially Black Lives Matter can be viewed as immediate precursors to the wider Resistance, although the Arab Spring must be seen as the first mass resistance of the 21st century. Marches on Washington are traced to 1884 by historian Lucy Barber (2004), and the 1963 Poor Peoples' March is perhaps the most widely-recognized protest march in American history. Like all such rituals of protest preceding, people called attention to their grievances through their physical presence. For instance, influenced perhaps by the Arab Spring demonstrations, in the Occupy movement, people came and stayed: camping out, eating, and sleeping at significant sites. Occupy was largely a protest against neoliberalism and its political allies, by means of people occupying a site day and night as a means of calling attention to their grievances. Black Lives Matter is an ongoing struggle that took its shape after so many police shootings of unarmed Black men went unaccounted for. In this latter case, African Americans took to the streets and announced that they simply would not allow it to continue. To say "Black lives matter" is a way of saying "We are people too," demonstrating en masse is another way of asserting personhood and personal value through spectacular presence.

When Trump was elected, his extremism was responded to, fittingly, by a women's movement. The March of 2017 was by no means the first such action by women; it was not even the first Women's March. The Women's March to Versailles, in October 1789, resulted when the women of the Paris markets, tired of high prices, set out on foot to the Palace of Versailles. There, having been joined by the Marquis de Lafayette, they persuaded King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette to return with them to Paris as prisoners. Despite some failed escape attempts, the two never returned to Versailles and were eventually beheaded. While these events cannot be said to be a direct precursor to the recent Women's March on Washington, it is a precedent. In more recent years, there have been several female-led public protest marches, such as the Million Mom March, Slut Walks, lesbian demonstrations (see Currans 2017), and also the Madres de la Plaza demonstra-

tions in Chile and Argentine, and even the Pussy Riot actions in Russia. It is my belief that, along with these others, the Women's March was a cultural milestone. I believe such women-centric and performative public actions will continue to be of particular significance.

The Women's March 2017

In public protest gatherings, people find it necessary to speak not only with their voices but also with words and gestures, embodied and material. They speak also with their very presence. At the Women's March, the multitude of women's and men's bodies gathered spectacularly for all to witness was a performance of rejection, censure, opposition, but also a demonstration of an alternative, an enactment of ways of being together with other human beings. Some have said the Women's March was focused entirely on a negative, anti-Trump message. Still, I would argue that the massive gathering was a display of a worldview that values diversity, creativity, inclusivity, and equality – a very positive worldview that was realized in the manifestation of hundreds of thousands of people demonstrating together as individuals in consort with others. It is the mass coming together of bodies of all types, people of many backgrounds and identities that makes that statement; the bodies are the medium, the demonstration or manifestation is its own genre. Like a festival, the protest demonstration is a genre made up of other genres (song, music, procession, flags, etc.) and involves many dimensions, all of them symbolic and significant. For example, one can consider such aspects as size, place, participants, and symbols employed.

In a demonstration of this type, size matters. Such movements stake a claim to popular representation (I regret the acceptance of the term "populist" to refer exclusively to the extreme right-wing political movements we are seeing in the US and abroad). The more sizeable the turnout, the stronger the claim. The number of participants acts as an index to "the people". In mass demonstrations, the participants display themselves – they intend to be seen as a way of legitimizing the underlying claim that they are representative of a larger abstraction called "the people". It is important that there be many participants and that this large number of participants be seen.

In this regard, the Women's March was a stunning success. Estimates of crowds in Washington, D.C., range from 450,000 to 500,000. Millions of people demonstrated throughout the United States and internationally as well. The importance of this aspect of the event is illustrated by Trump's insistence that he had the largest crowds ever assembled for his Inauguration the day before (demonstrably false) and that his crowds were larger than the Women's March (also false). It seems that size matters a great deal to Donald Trump (bodily imagery will be addressed below.)

Composition

Despite the large numbers, attention needs to be paid to inclusivity. An issue arose with Black Lives Matter participants and organizers, who felt that being invited to the party after all their manifestations were ignored by white folks, was insulting. They have a point. Issues of inclusivity, and focusing on issues relevant to people of many different backgrounds, have long plagued women's movements. For instance, according to Elizabeth Currans, the March for Women's Lives in 2004 initially segregated Black and Latina women according to the messages on their signs, and the march was critiqued as being concerned with white, middle-class women's issues exclusively (Currans 2017: 120) If the demonstration is to signify inclusion of many different people's backgrounds, including race, as well as gender identity, bodily type, age, ethnicity, and so forth, people of those types need to feel represented and welcome to be present. Bridges have to be built, and efforts made to create real diversity, and real inclusivity. The Trump regime has shown hostility to many different categories of people. He has actively done away with legislation aimed at equality for the LGTBQ community, African Americans, Latinos (most recently Puerto Ricans), poor people who need health care, people with disabilities, and on and on. Each of these groups may have their own particular issues, and there may be disagreements and misunderstandings among constituent members. But if one meta-message of a mass gathering during a time of purposeful political division is the presentation of an alternative model of being, one in which mutual respect and acceptance are dominant values, then the inclusion of diverse and multiple groups is crucial. In this medium of public performance, presence is necessary. It is not enough to agree with the principles and goals presented – this is the flaw in the case of Black Lives Matter. White people supported the protests without ever thinking of joining them. There are in fact many groups who have felt left out not only of neoliberalist policy but also of so-called progressive thought. All who share in being the recipients of Trump's glare and hostility are all, to refer to Judith Butler, "precarious" (Butler 2004). A mass demonstration such as the Women's March seeks to assemble multiple groups whose shared quality is that of precarity.

The timing of the March is also an important dimension. Coming as it did, the day after the Inauguration, the Women's March presented itself as a kind of alternative inauguration, as well as a reminder to Trump, to the participants themselves, and to observers that the values that Trump represented had not succeeded in displacing and would not smother the values of inclusivity and diversity. As Butler says, "Political claims are made by bodies as they appear and act, as they refuse, and as they persist, under conditions in which that fact alone threatens the state with delegitimation" (2015: 83). Among other things, the Women's March said to Trump: "There are more of us than there are of you".

Physical Locality

Finally, in this regard, the place where the event occurs is symbolically important. It took place in precisely the same place the Inauguration did, the National Mall, on politically sacred ground amidst sacred national symbols of the American democratic ideal. This symbolism is always compelling, but in this particular context, the Women's March might be read as a reclaiming of these symbols and the ideals for which they stand, back from the narrow, xenophobic, militaristic, and white supremacist readings the Trump administration campaigned on, delineated in his inauguration speech, and was about to put in place.

A word on performativity: I use the term to mean more than simply performance, taking my cue from J.L. Austin. He described "performative utterances" as speech acts that make things happen socially; for example, "I now pronounce you a wedded couple" (1962, 5). Likewise, the Women's March was not merely a festive gathering, despite the carnivalesque bodily imagery it manifested. It was, in that sense, carnivalesque, but its purpose was to actively impact everyday life and culture. Like ritual, it was transformative and transformational in nature: the world does not simply return to the "right-side-up" after the carnivalesque inversions. Rather, the intent is to have a direct and lasting effect on social life, continuing after the event is concluded. This I call ritualesque (Santino 2017), The Women's March was a brilliant example of such.

I've been speaking about values, clashes of values, and ways of "speaking" with voice and body and with material objects such as signs. At the Women's March, most famously, apparel became the most visible and central symbol. Hats. Pussy hats.

Pussy Hats

The Pussy hats were not without controversy. Before the march, many women objected to them for many reasons – women shouldn't be associated only with their genitalia; the pink hats were too "girlish," or the term "pussy" was offensive, not suitable for children; it was even said that the hats resembled a women's reproductive system (personal communication January 2017). In reality, of course, the use of the term "pussy" is a classic example of a subaltern group seizing a taboo word used as a weapon of superiority and control by those in a dominant position and reversing its value, thus seizing control and power. Like "black" or "queer," the word was suddenly used against those who, like Trump, saw women only as pussies to be grabbed at (his) will. Moreover, the mass use of the reappropriated word served as a constant reminder that it was Trump, not the marchers, who had first introduced the word into this particular discourse. He had been caught bragging on

tape that he was so rich, so famous, and so powerful, that he could molest women with impunity (Wikipedia 2023).

Later, he dismissed this as "locker room talk". However, the crucial point was that he had been talking not of attraction but of his own personal power to impose himself on others without their consent. He was bragging about himself and how he could do whatever he wanted to anyone he wanted to. This was a strongly anti-woman statement, and it did not go unnoticed.

When we speak of carnivalesque bodily imagery, as suggested in the ground-breaking work of Mikhail Bakhtin, we are speaking almost exclusively of the male realm. Bakhtin notes that carnival foolery often involves reference to the "lower bodily stratum (1984: 303)" Here, he refers to costuming that includes oversized phalluses or men with swollen, pregnant wombs. Both the breaking of social taboos (including reference to defecation) and inversive categorical violations (male-female, e.g.) are at work here. In all of these, traditionally and historically, female genitalia has not been seen in carnival imagery.

Alina Mansfield (2017) has pointed out that at the Women's March, along with the reclaiming of the term "pussy," female genitalia was frequently depicted on signs and placards. Unlike the traditional use of male genitalia in traditional carnivals, however, the vaginas were drawn realistically. Both the use of female sexual bodily imagery and the naturalistic appearance are new developments in carnivalesque and ritualesque events. This reflects the female authorship of the imagery and further reinforces the event as a female counter-statement to the Trump victory.

Thus, the hats – homemade and hand-crafted, emerged as the primary symbol of the Women's March: embodied material culture representing women, representing true sexuality, of course, and also fecundity, fertility, reproduction, life - the real physical power of women that the Trump objectification denies and might very well be afraid of. And, of course, he ran against a woman, Hillary Clinton, who would have been the first female American President. Because the ultimate symbolic dimension of the Women's March was the women themselves, it is symbolically very powerful that the Resistance is led by women, who assert presence and power.

Currans points out that traditionally, public space is seen as a male domain, while women are relegated to the domestic. The rise of women-centered protest events represents a real inversion, with women asserting power in and claiming public space as theirs to recontextualize by speaking out on public issues of importance to them (Currans 2017: 132). In the face of Trump's insistence on reaffirming what many consider toxic masculinity, it was an almost cosmic rebalancing, an equal and opposite reaction, that the resistance be led by and in the image of women. Trump talks about women as trophies ("she was married, but I was on her like a bitch"), his own daughter as a sexual object defined by her body ("a piece of ass") (Nelson 2016). He referred to the size of his penis during a presidential debate (Krieg 2016).

The physical imagery has always been present in his speech. Additionally, he likes to present himself as a man of violence ("I'd like to punch him in the mouth, I really would") (Diamond 2016). He has complained that attempts to lower the rate of concussions in the NFL were ruining the game (Loria 2017). Against this, we saw an uprising of women, who, in their pluralistic public performance, posited inclusivity, multiplicity, diversity, and cooperation, all as a female counterstatement to the public performances of Donald J. Trump. Vive la Résistance!

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Biographical notes

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A Tradition of Invention

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Abstract: The nineteenth and twentieth centuries were a heyday for founding festivals, some of which were to die on the vine, while some continued until meeting an especially rough obstacle (like a world war), and yet others have carried on to become centenarians. There are ample records of particular people as "inventors", whose ambition is to see a festival take hold and survive their own influence for the greater benefit of the community. This can provide an opportunity to examine the dynamics of continuity and the eventuality of rupture. A town outside Paris, France, has two invented festivals, one in spring, begun in 1906, the other in autumn, begun in 1990, both attributed principally to the mayor at the time of inception. Examination of these "inventions" entails adding considerable nuances and attempting to see into a multi-stranded weave of custom, agency, feedback loops and shifts in context over time. In both cases, there is an archive record, as well as oral testimony, on efforts to mobilize the energies of the town folk and create a festival with multiple benefits, from providing an event embracing the symbols of their identity in a forest and rural region, make everyone pleased with a lasting impact on tourism, underwrite a congenial interest in making money, as well as in development of the town as residentially desirable, and, most recently, insert these festivals into an emerging pattern of national policy on social integration and strategies of territorialization. Everything comes from somewhere, so this examination will attempt to trace out the landscape of social context, precedents and often impressive personal networking that enabled inventors to carry town festivals over into broad acceptance and make of them, as they explicitly intended, a tradition – twice.

Keywords: lily-of-the-valley, *Convallaria majalis*, Fête du Muguet, Fête de la Saint-Lubin, Rambouillet, town festivals, farming fairs

"The trick is not to set up a holiday, but to find someone who will enjoy it". Friedrich Nietzsche (Koerner, 180)

At the heart of any on-going festive event, one might see the question of continuity – what motivates people enough for them to go on with a particular festive activity over the years, through several generations, and to lace their discourse, be it official or in everyday language, with the term "tradition"? Must a fête be "enjoyable", according to Nietzsche's line, so that it attracts people to attend, go on attending, bring friends and family and even draw in strangers from outside?

In Rambouillet, a town in the Île-de-France, between Paris and Chartres, among the many national holidays, there are two homegrown festivals patently regarded as invented. First celebrated in 1906 is the annual Lily-of-the-Valley Festival (*Fête du Muguet*) on a weekend in mid-May, and the second is the Festival of Saint Lubin (*Fête de la Saint-Lubin*) every two years on the last Saturday of September since 1990. The latter has never been cancelled during its shorter history, while the Fête du Muguet has withstood the tides of world war, twice, to be reinstated at the return of peace, and cancelled twice due to political events: in 1960 for the visit of Premier Khrushchev to General De Gaulle, one of many diplomatic meetings that made Rambouillet famous in the annals of international summitry, and in 1997, due to the dissolution of Parliament and calling of snap elections to be held on the Sunday of the fête, when only the Sunday *corso fleuri* was called off. Cancelled during the covid pandemic in 2022, the "FM" bounced back, if somewhat reduced, in 2021, and seems to have recovered in 2023 and 2024. The two-yearly Saint Lubin was not held in 2020, but had also come back to its former flourishing in 2022 and is scheduled as usual for 2024.

These festivals, clearly "invented" and regarded as identitary to the town, are frequently linked in discourse and everyday discussion of their respective merits, so that we might ask whether they interact, what impact they may have on each other, and how they stand in relationship, in the perceptions of the people who partake in or observe them. Can one fête come to outweigh and draw allegiance away from the other? Both are associated with official narratives that project them back to a period that lends them historical legitimacy and that are explicitly stated to underwrite local identity, often in relation to the still-rural setting of the town, surrounded by agricultural lands and the second largest forest in France. The Lily-of-the-Valley Festival is a harbinger of spring and the flower is the classic luck-bringer (*porte-bonheur*) celebrated in poetry and song, while the Festival of Saint Lubin harks back to the farming fair (*comices agricoles*) held in mid-September right into the early twentieth century that brought harvest production and most especially livestock to the town for sale. With these dates, they might be seen to mirror each other at the opening and closing of the warm season. The way they are timed today within the rich offering of festive events on local, regional and national levels likewise has a direct impact on their viability.

A narrative of the history of the two fêtes, the usual discourse of town website and press, credits their invention to two mayors – the Fête du Muguet by Marie-Louis-Joseph-Jules Roux ("Marie Roux" for short), whose term extended from 1904 to 1935, and the Fête de la Saint-Lubin by Gérard Larcher (time in office 1983-2014, with a brief stand to the sidelines from 2004 to 2007), who is now President of the French Senate. Both these mayors represent a deep attachment on the part of French officials, whether political or in the civil service, to Republican values, in which secularism, dedication to a cohesive educational system, and social inclusion are repeated bywords, if not always part of the *realia* of national life. Of course, beyond the website and into the archival documents, both the inventors can be seen explicitly sharing credit for their inventions with a larger cast of local actors. As an aside, their two impressively long terms in office stand on either side of a major player of equal longevity, Jacqueline Thome-Patenôtre, mayor from 1947 to 1983, whose unwavering support for the Lily-of-the-Valley Festival, and its association with famous guests in politics or particularly in entertainment, is another factor in the long life of the spring fête. By the time Gérard Larcher succeeded her in 1983, there was a consensus that the flower fête's momentum was faltering, in no way due to lack of effort to keep it going, but rather as an effect of modernization, particularly with television replacing the attractions of live entertainment. All three of these long-term mayors were communications experts in their own times and ways, had and have remarkably rich personal connections, and drew valuable assistance from their entourage in the town hall and in the municipality as a whole.

In the case of our mayors as festival "inventors", Roux and Larcher, both called upon able companions who are cited by name in the archives of internal municipal records, press reports and personal testimony. Marie Roux' most active partner in promoting the early years of the Lily-of-the-Valley Festival was the Duchesse d'Uzès, a flamboyant aristocrat famous as the first French woman to have a driver's license and, true perhaps to her prowess as a hunter and rider, also the first to receive a speeding ticket, among many other adventures indicating her intrepidness (Huon 34). Her own address book added considerable punch to Marie Roux' personal contacts as a prominent Paris attorney. By the time of the first photographs of the most active players, we know their names and professions from the remarkable notebooks (*cahiers*) meticulously kept by the Festival Committee (*Comité des Fêtes*), that the town's shopkeepers and trades people were highly committed, as were the two representatives of the local press, the editors of *Le Progrès* and *L'Indépendant* (Archives Municipales 1J6–1J8–9). In fact, by 1908 there is even a brief but sharp debate over whether it was the newspaper owners who invented the fête, a debate clearly resolved in favor of Marie Roux (Programme 23–24 May 1908 and Cahier du Comité, 12–13). The role of communication in promoting and popularizing the festival was paramount and included international press reports (*Le Monde*

Illustré, 6 June 1908), as well as intense publicity to attract Parisians in the form of distribution of the sheet music with the song composed explicitly to glorify the Fête du Muguet and hiring of street singers to bring that over with the maximum impact in Paris.

Added to the star-studded list of invited guests, such as the Duchesse d'Uzès or Baron Rothschild, it is no wonder that the highly popular raffle offered as first prize a Sèvres porcelain vase donated by the President of the Republic, premier among the long list of donations, that included lesser prizes such as liquors, toiletry kits, bicycles, and other desirables. Additional donations to the fête activity included the regal apparel for the queen and demoiselles, free use of carriages, expert horse teams and automobiles, participation by the town's important Army contingents and their musical bands, as well as the volunteer work of town employees, foresters and local builders.

By the time we have archival documents of all kinds in 1907, from booklet-programmes to posters, sheet music and press reports, the Fête du Muguet has all the elements it was to keep and enrich over the early years – a special train service from Paris to enable holiday-makers to reach Rambouillet (even to stay overnight for a return the next day), mountains of lily-of-the-valley for sale in the square, decoration of homes and shops, a contest with prizes for the finest flowered children, baby carriages and bicycles. These were already linked in a parade (*corso fleuri*) tending towards the giant horse-drawn floats that were to emerge immediately after the First World War, with their evening torchlight parades. Numerous excursions in charabancs were organized directly from the train station for day visitors. From the outset, the major attractions were the two dance balls, one indoors by invitation and the other outdoors for the crowds flooding in from village, town and city, the outdoor Theater in the Green (*Théâtre de Verdure*), where famous actors and singers were invited, and the crowning of the Lily-of-the-Valley Queen, accompanied by her two Maids of Honour (*Demoiselles d'Honneur*).

The 1911 photograph of the coronation on the town hall entry steps provides a hint at some of the inspiration, often undocumented, that may well have laid behind the ideas for the invention of the Fête du Muguet, since we see not one Queen and two Demoiselles, but six young women, regally dressed. This is well documented, as Rambouillet invited the Queen of the Paris Central Market (*La Reine des Halles*) with her own Demoiselles, a most fruitful comment on the strategies of leaders in a small town to cope with living in the shadow of the City of Light. Marie Roux was an attorney, a prominent Parisian professional, as well as mayor of Rambouillet, and surely well aware of the Maytime festivities in the capital and beyond. After all, giving *muguet* around and for May Day is well attested in illustrations since the late 1800s, as in the 5 May 1907 edition of *Le Petit Journal* and there were elegant Parisian Flower Festivals in early summer by the late 1890s in the form of parades

down the Avenue du Bois (today's Avenue Foch) with horse-drawn carriages, then automobiles, elaborately decked out on their way to becoming flower floats (for example, the covers of magazines such as *L'Illustré Le Soleil du Dimanche*, 17 June 1898, 11 June 1899, and *Le Monde Illustré*, 15 June 1907).

Fig. 1: *Le Petit Journal* 5 May 1907: Giving lily-of-the-valley for May Day, Collection Griffin-Kremer

In addition, there was a plethora of local events involving flower and greenery decorations as well as processions that were familiar to one and all – the Corpus Christi stations in the town that were decorated like immobile floats, as well as the processions for the same holiday in most localities. On top of this, the Duchesse d'Uzès had her own fête on Easter Monday during which she threw treats from her balcony to the crowds who came to attend (Huon, 108–111) There was, however, no inclusion of any element connected with the Church in the Fête du Muguet until after WWII, in 1949, and the first postcards show us a resolutely Republican affair with flowers and national flags. Among the other early documents spanning the pre-WWI inception through the mid–1930s, the gems are the Festival Committee

notebooks (*cahiers*) and programmes, alongside written pourparlers with department store (*grand magasin*) owners such as the Galeries Lafayette for donation of the girls' apparel, textile-makers for lily-of-the-valley print scarves, or exchanges of correspondence with the President of the Republic and other notables. Marie Roux was attentive to international visibility and among the first articles printed on the Lily-of-the-Valley Festival is one in the 6 June 1908 edition of *Le Monde Illustré*, a magazine published in Paris and London for French-speaking residents there.

Today, there are many human sources to bear testimony to the Lily-of-the-Valley Festival, often based on family traditions, such as Gisèle Deschamps whose grandmother was the first queen to be crowned, her great-aunt following closely thereafter. She inscribes, literally, elements of Rambouillet history – farming, shops and trades, even opening of the recent cultural center – in her ceramic work, where the Fête du Muguet holds pride of place. She was among a host of town folk to loan family memorabilia, from bracelets to gowns to posters and photographs, to the centenary exhibit in 2006 and the more developed exhibit in March–May 2018 called, appropriately, "Let's Celebrate the Lily-of-the-Valley" (*Fêtons le Muguet*) accompanied by a day's colloquium and a second exhibit on a wider context of lily-of-the-valley in history and custom (Bernard; Mayer-Küster; *Fêtons le Muguet*). Town officials who organize today's fêtes are willing partners in interviews and present-day, as well as former, float-makers are an equally helpful source. Former mayor, Gérard Larcher, is President of the French Senate and hence would take over as President of the Republic, should anything seriously hinder the present office-holder in his duties. He has been a most helpful interviewee and participated in the March 2018 colloquium, where he emphasized again, with humor, the fundamental "composition" (Ozouf 2010) with Republican values that both he and Marie Roux, as well as Thome-Patenôtre, in their quite different ways, insisted on respecting. In his talk to introduce the colloquium day, Gérard Larcher said, to pleased laughter, "There are monarchies of divine right, there are constitutional monarchies. In Rambouillet, we have an annual monarchy and, basically, one that can be quite well combined with Republican values" (Larcher in Meunier, 24 March 2018).

Fig. 2: Cover of Colloquium *Fêtons le muguet*

Larcher has always insisted that the Festival of Saint Lubin, so often attributed to him as inventor, was the creation of two people who stood by him over long years in his duties, the municipal counsellor Marie-France Faure and Germain Dalin, a man prominently associated with a major institution in Rambouillet, the National Sheep-Breeding Station (*Bergerie Nationale*), French cradle to the merino sheep breed, brought "on the hoof" in 1786 from flocks in Spain (Bergerie Nationale website). Marie-France Faure and Germain Dalin had already invented another Rambouillet event, the F.A.I.R. (*Festival Animalier International de Rambouillet* / The Rambouillet International Animal Festival), a colloquium dealing with human-animal relations, long accompanied a thriving biennial sculpture competition.

In fact, by the late 1980s, there was a whole series of traditions of invention building up that gave rise to the momentum for the Saint Lubin Festival, first and foremost, the awareness that Marie Roux had invented a festival which, over the years, often brought the town a number of visitors and holiday-makers up to four or five times the population, as well as the positive, and intentional, collateral effect

of high visibility for Rambouillet as a desirable place to live with rapid transport into the capital. By the 1960s, the town was on the radar internationally due to its role in summitry, with the meetings between De Gaulle and other international leaders (Benning, 39–63). In 1983, there was international attendance from nineteen countries at the bicentennial celebrations of the Bergerie Nationale, in large part organized by Germain Dalin. By 1984, even discussions in print about the Lily-of-the-Valley Festival spoke of a desire to "re-dynamize" it by going back to certain traditions, with much emphasis on the balance between "tradition *and* innovation", as well as reminders that the local Saint Lubin, the most famous 6th-century bishop of Chartres, had been the original patron of an important autumn farming fair until 1915 (*Rambouillet Information* 6–9). The Nature and Animal Day (*Journée de la Nature et de l'Animal*) on the first Sunday in October was created in 1988 by the Friends of Animals association (*Amis des Animaux*), a group of veterinarians. Here, it is pertinent to note that Gérard Larcher, before entering politics at the request of Jacqueline Thome-Patenôtre in 1983, was a practicing veterinarian, had accompanied the national equestrian team to the 1976 Olympics in Montreal, and is still an avid promoter of French animal breeds, especially horses.

To cap this multi-strand of highly successful initiatives over the 1980s, the 7th October 1989 bicentennial of the French Revolution attracted crowds from around the world to Paris, as well as enlivening villages, towns and cities outside the capital, which gave rise in Rambouillet to an explicit popular demand for an autumn "event" (Rambouillet Informations 14). This was easy to do – just get together the same, quite willing, partners to organize the new Saint Lubin Festival, schedule it for every other year and take inspiration from one of the recent Lily-of-the-Valley Festivals which had had, for the first time, a period theme (1920s and 1930s, flapper days). The very first 1990 poster for the Saint Lubin event show a line-up of activities that have continued to today: large-scale invitation of costumed craft people and food-sellers with street stands, all shops open throughout the day, a "Republican banquet" on hay bales in the town hall square, street artists and musicians, and most especially, the continual presence of animals and prizes for best groomed and trained horses. Equally on the very first 1990 Saint Lubin programme, there is a list of no less than twenty-five official sponsors, from one shop owner to large institutions such as the Banque de Paris, the National Forest Bureau or a large hunters' association. Today, as in the beginning of the festival, one of its major characteristics has been its participative aspect, as wearing period costume is obviously considered great fun for many among the regular public, as well as for the participants from the town hall, various associations, and choral or instrumental groups who animate the song and dance events throughout the day, and take part in the costume procession from one end to the other of the high street.

Fig 3: 1990 Saint Lubin programme

Although it is no longer announced in the press, Gérard Larcher has continued at each Saint Lubin to lead the afternoon judging of the animal breeds and this "unannouncement" points toward one of the crucial issues in any of today's festive events in France – security – bringing us back to the questions raised at the beginning of the article. Security for the public has become a major concern and has multiplied the financial burdens involved in festival activity, especially for a fête that runs over two days, every year. It is responsible for a major and definitive change in 1915 in the Lily-of-the-Valley Festival: elimination of the Saturday evening triple event of the town orchestra concert, the crowning of the Queen and the subsequent fireworks show inside the château park in front of the ornamental reflecting pool (the *Rondeau*), which is a splendid setting, but surrounded by iron fencing that prevents access during closing hours and requires considerable efforts in effective crowd control (Cintrat, 26–27). Luckily, the ensuing years mostly repaired this: the concert presently takes place at the *end* of the Corso fleuri on Sunday before judging and award of prizes to the floats, while the coronation and fireworks have been reinstated on the Saturday night.

Nonetheless, this triple loss did represent a blow to the Lily-of-the-Valley Festival. In contrast to its beginnings as a calculated, highly profitable event for local shops, the fête's most popular element today is the fun fair spread over the town in four locations. Although it is very attractive for young families and teenagers, the fun fair has no discernable impact on local restaurants and shops on the Friday evening or Saturday, with even less on the Sunday, when the float parade is scheduled. In itself, the float parade (*corso fleuri*) is often a small miracle of organization, having to wend its way through a long path that makes it visible to large parts of the town. Even this has been "simplified", that is, made shorter and along the same route every year, so that the various neighborhoods the parade used to move through now feel quite left out. Again, this was done for security reasons. By definition, the shorter Sunday morning procession of the Queen and Dauphines from the crossroads square to the church and the afternoon float parade disrupt traffic and parking totally, so shopkeepers look upon that as a time they are pleased *not* to be open, having already been subjected to the inconveniences of the preparations, streets closed off with concrete security barriers from Friday through Sunday, for example.

The float parade continues to be perceived and explicitly praised as a gift from the associations to the town folk. In spite of its charm, often admirable technicity and aesthetics, it is a largely spectator sport, with active participation and commitment only from the builders. There is no question of recapturing the glory days familiar over a long part of Madame Thome-Patenôtre's mayorship in the 1950s to the 1970s, when national stars were invited for concerts – television and YouTube have replaced that. However, many attendees felt that the highly developed March-May 2018 exhibit at the cultural center with its emphasis on the lily-of-the-valley in general, seconded by the specific exhibit on the Rambouillet festival, represented a real shot in the arm and a raising of awareness, as well as visibility, for the fête. Be that as it may, among the more problematic aspects that cannot be altered, timing is also paramount. The mid-May date of the Lily-of-the-Valley Festival provides the organizers with a regular headache, because they must calculate it not to coincide with the religious holidays following Easter, with school vacations. It is inconveniently close to the national holiday of Victory Day on 8 May, and the more general nearby "heat" from the preceding May Day, often a long weekend. The flower festival suffers from comparison with more recent nationally popular events such as World Music Day (*Fête de la Musique)* on 21st June, when the streets are totally impassable, filled with enthusiastic onlookers that recall, to the elderly town residents, the crowds that once attended in the Fête du Muguet's heyday. Springtime in France is one of "hard" choices about when to take time off: considering the frequently granted swing holidays, it is tempting to take two or three days off work to have a full week – if not more – of holidays.

There is open discussion of whether the Fête du Muguet will go on, in the press and among the public, although there is likewise much support for it from the town hall. This is not an issue for the Saint Lubin, which has any number of points in its favor – only held every two years, hence there is little "fête fatigue". The Saint Lubin is considered highly participative and lucrative for local business, as well as more manageable, running only one day and in the daytime (think "security" again), with no fun fairs to compete with it and coming at end September, when there is no official holiday or school vacation to create calendar conflict. Although there is no fun fair element to attract families, the massive presence of animals more than makes up for that, along with the children's games and special activities in the small Roi de Rome mid-town park.

The Lily-of-the-Valley Festival and the Saint Lubin "face off", mirroring each other, at opposite ends of the summer and, at least in their local narratives, both play to a sense of town identity emphasized in the increasing concern with integration of newcomers, and territorial valorization through the attractiveness of local events. These objectives have been the object of two influential reports made for the town hall and frequently cited by officials (Cintrat *et al.,* Réhel). Equally important, if less tangible, is the intimate insertion of flowers, harvest fruits and animals into the unfolding of the seasons and the rural/forest world still felt by many residents to be a major characteristic of the setting. This view of the town's identity as close to nature is constantly underwritten by tourism publicity directed inwards and outwards.

What sort of dynamic is at work in the population? Is it a fruitful tension between two "brands" of fêtes or are there signs of stress, that one invention may be overpowering the other? People like to say that the French hate rules but love traditions and "tradition" is the most used (over-taxed) term in all discourse about both festivals, but… will people continue to support a fête simply because it has been there for a long time, perhaps Grandma was even once Queen? The proportion of townsfolk whose forebearers come from Rambouillet is decreasing rapidly. The same demographics apply more acutely to shopkeepers and trades folk, and these sentiments of belonging no longer have the impact they did over much of the twentieth century. Most certainly, shopkeepers are clear about their own choice, since the Saint Lubin is a hands-down winner, as far as profits go.

For every article in the local press intimating that the Lily-of-the-Valley Festival is losing steam, there will be more than one with the counter-argument. There have been articles noting that the Saint Lubin is not seen in a positive light by everyone, as well as a running debate in the municipal council over the years about the expenses involved. As an interested bystander – and even active participant at times (for example, as one of the March 2018 colloquium organizers) – it is not easy to take the temperature of the trends toward continuity and rupture in this nuanced landscape

of custom, agency, feedback loops and shifts in context over time. However, the wealth of strands involved is also a fruitful reminder of the utility of uncertainty. Festivals are not enjoyed, more or less, because someone has predicted they will last, and allegiance to them, from the many participants involved, may be far more nuanced than what appears in conversation, interview or media reports. Rambouillet is a town with a tradition of invention and the festival organizers – be they on the town council, in the various associations or among the shopkeepers – have always these precedents in mind. With two examples of pro-active and determined invention still very "present", these actors – or others, depending on the tides of political fortune – may well find ways to sustain the momentum of both of their homegrown festivals, and keep them on the road to the future.

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monarchie annuelle [rires]. Il y a des monarchies de droit divin, il y a des monarchies qui sont constitutionnelles. À Rambouillet, nous avons une monarchie annuelle, et, au fond, ça se conjugue bien avec les valeurs républicaines…'

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Biographical Note

Cozette Griffin-Kremer, Associate Researcher, Centre de Recherche Bretonne et Celtique, Brest, France, took her doctorate in Celtic Studies on the subject of May Day practices in the British Isles and an Advanced Research Degree (DEA) in the history of technology at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, and so attempts to marry the two fields, especially concentrating on the calendar system, human-bovine relations, the relationships between ritual and work, museum work for intangible heritage, food history and plant uses.

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Memorialising Historical Events in the Urban Space: Temporary Memorials, Monuments and Rituals

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Abstract: In commemorating certain events, especially tragic ones relating to the deaths of people, temporary memorials, showing people's respect for the dead, or expressing other feelings, thoughts or ideas, usually appear at the sites of these events. The article deals with temporary memorials put up at the time of the events of 13 January 1991, in Vilnius, Lithuania, and the permanent monuments that replaced them afterwards. Citizens use these sites for memorial services, mourning and other commemorative rituals on the date of the event and other relevant dates. The article analyses the message that is transmitted through these memorials, and their significance in the city's rituals.

Keywords: 13 January, temporary memorial, spontaneous shrine, permanent monument.

Introduction

In Lithuania, as in many other countries, people erect small wooden or metal crosses, or put flowers and light candles in places where somebody has died in an accident, or where some other tragic death has occurred. Sometimes various small objects, such as notes, pictures, photographs and other memorabilia, are placed there. All these objects on the site of a tragic death create a kind of temporary memorial, which is an expression of grief and compassion, or other thoughts in connection with the tragic death. These places have an easily understandable symbolic meaning, that someone died here in an accident or another tragic event.

In this article, I analyse the temporary memorials and permanent monuments that relate to the tragic events that followed the reestablishment of the independent Lithuanian state and its proclamation on 11 March 1990. By these events, I mean

the events that took place between 11 and 13 January 1991, and especially the events of 13 January, which is sometimes referred to as Bloody Sunday. I focus attention on the memorials (temporary and permanent) dedicated to the 13 January events in the city of Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. The aim is to discuss the message transmitted through these memorials, and their significance in the city's rituals.

Data concerning these memorials was gathered from photographic material, recorded and printed evidence, and memoirs, and also online media. This is the first attempt to discuss the topic of temporary monuments in Lithuania. It clearly requires a more thorough examination in the future. Lithuanian researchers have not yet paid attention to temporary memorials, or to the memorials dedicated to 13 January. We can find articles and monographs in Lithuanian historiography which discuss the memorialisation of historical events such as the First World War and the Second World War, and the proclamation of Lithuania's independence in 1918, but no attention has yet been paid to the memorialisation of 13 January 1991, or to people's attitudes to the January events. Even in the publication *Vilniaus paminklai: kaitos istorija / Vilnius monuments: a story of change* (2012), no monument relating to the events of 13 January is included. Meanwhile, researchers in other countries discuss broadly the temporary memorials connected with sudden or traumatic deaths, which have occurred due to car accidents, political events and terrorist attacks (Santino 2006, Margry and Sánchez-Carretero 2011a, Viggiani 2014).

An overview of the events

Lithuania declared its independence from the Soviet Union on 11 March 1990. From that day, 11 March became a national holiday, called the Day of the Restoration of Lithuania's Statehood. The following period was difficult, with a shrinking economy, energy shortages, and high inflation, due to the economic blockade imposed by the Soviet Union. The leaders of the Soviet Union, and pro-Soviet groups in Lithuania, were unhappy with the proclamation of independence. Thus, the political situation was unstable.

The Soviet Union sent in special military units at the beginning of January 1991 in order to restore Soviet rule in Lithuania. On 11 January, Soviet troops occupied the buildings of the Department of National Defence and the Press House in Vilnius. Tanks appeared on Vilnius' streets on the evening of 12 January. The intention was to seize strategic objects: the Television Tower, the building of the Radio and Television Committee, and the Supreme Council of Lithuania (parliament). The new Lithuanian government then called on citizens to protect the parliament and other important public buildings, including radio and television centres. People all over the country responded to this call: thousands gathered at these buildings to defend them. Many people from other cities, towns and villages came to help

the residents of Vilnius. Soviet military forces began a crucial crackdown on the night of 13 January. The fiercest attacks on the supporters of independence took place at the Television Tower and the Radio and Television Committee building. In their storming by the Soviet army, 14 civilian protesters died, and hundreds were injured. Although some objects were seized, the ultimate aims of the operation (occupying the parliament, provoking strife between Lithuanian citizens of different nationalities, presenting these events as a struggle between two armed sides) were not achieved. Occupations and military raids continued for several months following the attacks, but no large open military encounters took place after the January events.

January 13 became an official commemorative day, the Day of the Defenders of Freedom. It marks the successful public defence against brutal Soviet aggression, thanks to the immense sacrifice, determination, beliefs and unity of the people. The Day of the Defenders of Freedom is considered one of the most crucially important and most meaningful days for the Lithuanian state.

Temporary memorials

In the aftermath of these violent events, in the next few days, temporary memorials, consisting of lighted candles, green twigs and flowers, began to appear on the spots where people were killed, at the Television Tower and the building of the Radio and Television Committee. They were soon supplemented with small crosses, holy pictures, statuettes of saints, rosaries, notes and photographs. A large wooden sculpture of the Sorrowing Christ (made by an unknown craftsman), one of the most popular images in Lithuanian folk sculpture, stood out among the various memorabilia around the Television Tower. Since the time of the national liberation movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this particular image of Christ has borne the meaning of a national symbol, expressing the Lithuanian spirit, the nation's rural culture and values, and the sufferings of the Lithuanian people during the long period of Imperial Russian rule. It was popular as a national symbol in Soviet times as well. It is therefore no wonder that the sculpture of the Sorrowing Christ was placed at the Television Tower after the tragic events, and became a spontaneous shrine: a lot of flowers, candles, holy pictures and rosaries were placed around it. Later, several crosses (including one with a sculpture of the Sorrowing Christ) were erected next to this sculpture at the newly formed Hill of Crosses on the slope of a hillock at the foot of the Television Tower. There were various kinds of wooden crosses: some were very simple, and some were decorated. Some of them had inscriptions dedicated to the victims of 13 January. One was decorated with portraits of the defenders of the Television Tower who died.

Another location where a temporary memorial appeared was the building of the Radio and Television Committee. This was also defended by hundreds of people during the January events, and its defence claimed one victim. In the morning of 13 January, people began to light candles and put flowers, green twigs, small crosses and other religious items in front of this building, in honour of the civilian who died there, and the other victims who died at the Television Tower. Later in 1991, this spontaneous temporary memorial was replaced by 24 wooden crosses, dedicated to the victims of 13 January and several other episodes in 1991. People continued to use the place for mourning and commemorative purposes long afterwards (to pray, remember and light candles, and to put flowers, rosaries, holy pictures and photographs).

Fig. 1: Crosses at the building of the Radio and Television Committee in Vilnius. Photo: Viktoras Kapočius, 1991, Lithuanian Central State Archives.

Thus, in the cases discussed, sites of death were marked by flowers, candles and crosses, and other small religious items and personal memorabilia, such as notes, pictures and photographs. All these items at the site of tragic death create a temporary memorial that can be defined as a spontaneous shrine. I use this term according to Jack Santino's definition: spontaneous shrines are "temporary memorials that people construct, on their own initiative, to mark the site of untimely deaths. These memorial assemblages are usually made up of flowers, candles, personal memorabilia, and notes, as well as religious icons. […] People often use these sites to hold vernacular memorial services and other rituals of commemoration, at the

time of the deaths and on significant dates thereafter […]. They are a kind of folk shrine. […]. Spontaneous shrines are created, when possible, at the actual sites where the deaths occurred, or as close to them as possible" (Santino 2011: 98–99).

Another important place to mention during the January events is the parliament. From the beginning of January, thousands of people stood on guard around the building and at barricades. When the news reached them about the casualties, people started lighting candles.

The barricades that surrounded the parliament building also became a kind of temporary monument. A lot of posters, various inscriptions and slogans appeared on them. Later, some of the posters were collected and taken to museums or archives. Many of them, as well as slogans and inscriptions on the barricades, were photographed, and some were published. On the basis of this material, several groups of inscriptions and slogans that reflected people's attitudes can be distinguished. One group testifies to the aspiration for freedom and independence ("Freedom for Lithuania", "We support the Lithuanian Parliament", "We want to live in independent Lithuania", "We are for freedom and peace", "Peace will triumph over war", "We will die, but we shall remain faithful to freedom") (Girdvainis 2011: 66–67, 84, 101). Another group of slogans criticised the Soviet army's actions ("Soviet Army go home", "The army will not defeat the Nation", "The Soviet army is an army of assassins") (Girdvainis 2011: 121, 140). A third group of inscriptions honoured the victims of 13 January ("Eternal honour for those who died for Lithuania's freedom and independence", "Flowers of victory will grow from the sacrifice of people", "Glory to the victims") (Girdvainis 2011: 154–155). Some inscriptions put the responsibility for the mass killings on Mikhail Gorbachev, the leader of the Soviet Union. People were especially angry because he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize ("Gorbachev, the Nobel Peace Prize is not for you", "Think of the Nobel Prize as you shed blood", "Gorbachev, Hell is waiting for you"), and some comments revealed people's views of local collaborators as well: they were called butchers, murderers and degenerates (Girdvainis 2011: 177, 198–199, 222).

The posters and slogans on the barricades were supplemented by Lithuania's tricolour flags, pictures or small objects with state symbols (the Vytis coat of arms, the Columns of Gediminas, the double cross of the Jogaila dynasty), as well as cartoons, children's drawings, defaced Soviet passports and military call-up cards, and discarded Soviet medals, orders and other awards. Soon afterwards, portraits of victims and photographs depicting the scenes of the tragic events on the night of 13 January appeared on the walls of the barricades. Makeshift wooden crosses were put up on Parliament square in honour of the people who died (Figure 2), alongside a small altar with holy pictures, where people prayed and lit candles asking for God's help in their difficulties. Many rosaries, holy pictures and other memorabilia were soon hung on them. In addition, a temporary wooden monu-

ment dedicated to Iceland, consisting of three roofed crosses, was put up there in February. That was how people expressed their gratitude to the first state to recognise Lithuania's independence.[1]

Fig. 2: A roofed cross dedicated to the victims of 13 January in front of the barricades at the parliament building in Vilnius. Photo: Algimantas Cimbolaitis, 1991, Lithuanian Central State Archives.

The slogans, inscriptions and various material signs of grievance and loss, expressing the feelings and the mood of ordinary people, were a witness to people's attitude to the events, and to their determination to fight for an independent state, and expressed a demand for accountability and justice.

These objects by the parliament building created a huge temporary memorial that lacked the aura of a 'shrine' and did not mark a site of death, but with their expression of pain at the losses, they reflected political elements and a form of protest. This temporary memorial by the parliament building corresponds with the definition of a grassroots memorial. As the editors of the book *Grassroots Memorials. The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death* point out, "grassroots

memorialization is understood as the process by which groups of people, imagined communities, or specific individuals bring grievances into action by creating an improvised and temporary memorial with the aim of changing or ameliorating a particular situation" (Margry and Sánchez-Carretero 2011b: 2).

Permanent memorials

In all the discussed sites, which are especially important to the Lithuanian nation and state (and not only to one person or family), the temporary memorials were replaced by permanent memorials and monuments.

The remodelling of these memorial sites was undertaken by the Vilnius city authorities. At the premises of the Television Tower, the spontaneous shrines that marked the sites of people's deaths were replaced by small nominal granite obelisks and newly planted trees. The spontaneously formed Hill of Crosses survived until 2014. Because the wooden crosses and the sculpture of the Sorrowing Christ were in very bad condition, it was decided by official initiative to take them to the Lithuanian National Museum for restoration. These memorabilia are now on display in a museum on the ground floor of the Television Tower, and, together with documents and photographs, they tell the story of the January events. In addition, in 2005, an eight-metre-high bronze sculpture called *The Sacrifice* (by Darius Bražiūnas), dedicated to the memory of those who lost their lives for freedom, was unveiled at the Television Tower. It depicts the stylised figure of a young woman standing on a huge bell with her hands raised to the sky. The words of the Lithuanian national anthem are engraved at the bottom of the bell.

The Hill of Crosses did not remain empty. At the end of 2014, the city authorities organised the building of five new wooden monuments. Events, dates and tragic deaths traditionally used to be marked in Lithuania by wooden crosses, as signs of grief or gratitude and memory relating to Christian religious practices. Accordingly, monuments reflecting the cross-crafting traditions of the different ethnographic regions of Lithuania were constructed. The region of Samogitia (west Lithuania) is represented by a chapel with a sculpture of the Pietà (by the woodcarver Steponas Kaminas), the Aukštaitija region (northeast Lithuania) is represented by a pillar shrine with a sculpture of Jesus the Nazarene (by the woodcarver Adolfas Teresius). Saulius Lampickas made a typical cross from Dzūkija (southeast Lithuania), with the instruments of Christ's torture and an image of the Crucifixion. The woodcarver Klemensas Lovčikas carved a tall and lavishly ornate double cross. He deliberately chose the form of a double cross. The double cross (called a St Benedict Cross or Caravaca Cross) is popular in the Lithuanian cross-crafting tradition, and was believed to protect against major disasters, such as plague, war or famine. This cross was often used for monuments commemorating the first ten-year anniversaries of

Lithuania's independence (1928 and 1938). On the Hill of Crosses, this double cross not only symbolises respect for the victims, but also expresses a prayer to protect the state's freedom. The fifth monument, a chapel carved in a modern style with a big sculpture of the Sorrowing Christ (by Rimantas Zinkevičius), testifies to the continuation of the cross-crafting tradition in the modern world. The renewed Hill of Crosses was consecrated during a commemoration service on 12 January 2015.

Fig. 3: The consecration of the renewed Hill of Crosses by the Television Tower in Vilnius. Photo: Skaidrė Urbonienė, 12 January 2015.

At the building of the Radio and Television Committee, the 24 wooden nominal crosses eventually decayed, like those at the Television Tower. The city authorities transferred these material commemorative signs to the National Museum of Lithuania too, in order to preserve them. In 2017, a new memorial, of which the main part is a six-metre granite obelisk with a bell on top (by Romualdas Kvintas), dedicated to the memory of the defenders of freedom, was unveiled on 12 January at an official commemoration service.

The main symbolic element of the two above-mentioned permanent monuments (the sculpture *The Sacrifice* and the granite obelisk) is a bell. In societies and cultures around the world, bells have many meanings and purposes. The bell has the universal meaning of a signal to announce something or warn of disaster; it also has the power to drive away evil forces. On those tragic January days in 1991, a small bell calling people to Holy Mass was installed at the spontaneously formed memorial in front of the building of the Radio and Television Committee. That is why the artists used this well-known and easily understood symbol of a bell,

which reminds us of the tragic but crucial days in Lithuania's struggle for freedom, and symbolises restored independence and victory over the forces of aggression.

The barricades around the parliament were removed in 1992, except for some pieces that were left around the side of the building. A permanent memorial was put up there in 2008. This is a shatterproof glass structure displaying parts of the defensive barricades, and original wooden crosses, chapels and sculptures, which stood on the square as temporary memorials. Photographs of the events, along with posters, pictures and other memorabilia, are also exhibited, together with documentary evidence of the January events. The square by the parliament is now empty, save for a few small granite blocks that mark the places where the barricades once stood. This empty space, or, as qualified by Margry and Sánchez-Carretero, a void, remains as a meaningful space for memorialisation (2011b: 20), since the annual commemorative events there keep the space (or void) meaningful.

Rituals

The rituals performed at the temporary memorials during the January events had a mourning function, and consisted of lighting candles, putting down flowers, religious items and various other memorabilia on the sites of death, and praying and attending Holy Mass.

Since 1992, people have gathered at the Television Tower, the building of the Radio and Television Committee, and the parliament, every year on 12 January, in memory of those who died for Lithuania's freedom. On that evening, huge memorial bonfires burn, as reminders of the day when the country's freedom was defended; flowers and candles are placed at the sites of death, and on the graves of the victims in cemeteries. People still sometimes light candles and bring flowers on other days of the year, but the main commemoration takes place annually on the eve of the events, on 12 January. In recent years, the forget-me-not movement has grown up. Its slogan is: "We remember why we are free". On these days (12 and 13 January), people wear small blue forget-me-nots as symbols, and lay them on the sites of death and on the graves of the victims. Visiting memorials and cemeteries is followed by attending Mass, and official commemorative events.

Concluding remarks

In all these cases, temporary or permanent memorials used to mark and still mark the places of the most crucially important and meaningful happenings for the Lithuanian state. Along with this meaning, they mark horrible events, people's deaths. As Hege Westgaard pointed out, through symbols, flowers, candles and other

memorabilia, a space of tragic death is aestheticised, it is redefined, and reclaimed. It changes from being a place of horror to a place of recall (Westgaard 2006: 170). In Vilnius, the places of horror discussed here became places of remembrance and national pride, where freedom was protected by human sacrifice.

In their time, the spontaneous shrines at the Television Tower and the Radio and Television Committee, and the grassroots memorial at the parliament, attracted many people all year round; not only those who were involved in the events, but many passers-by as well. Official memorials and monuments that replace temporary memorials are usually more formal, they are not so heartfelt, and do not arouse such deep feelings; therefore, over time, they have a tendency to become invisible, or, according to James E. Young, the construction of an official memorial marks the first stage of forgetting (quoted from: Santino 2011: 105). However, in the case of Vilnius, it is not the memorial itself that is important. Many people do not actually notice the monuments now standing in these sites. Nevertheless, these sites of memory are still well attended on commemorative days (12 and 13 January). This shows that people still remember, and that the sites are important and relevant, not only to individuals, but to the nation as well. Speaking about the memorialisation of 13 January, it could be said that it is not the monument that matters but the site itself. The sites discussed here have a special symbolic meaning to the citizens of Lithuania, whether they are marked by a monument or not.

Notes

[1] On 4 February 1991, just three weeks after the attacks, Iceland became the first country to officially recognise the Republic of Lithuania as a sovereign independent state, and diplomatic relations were established between the two nations.

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Biographical Note

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The Creation of National Holidays in Lithuania: The Aspect of Seasonality

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Abstract: This research covers six national holidays introduced in Lithuania between 1919 and 1991. These holidays are more or less related with the country's history and their dates cover the four seasons of the year. Based on fieldwork data as well as legal acts, memoirs of contemporaries, online sources and press publications, this article aims to analyse the links between national holidays and seasonality between 1918 and 1940, and between 1990 and 2019. The author concludes, that the seasonality of a festival – natural-climatic conditions, relations with agricultural work or the dominant vacation season, religious, ideological or other restrictions on the celebration – has limited possibilities to shape the festival by adjusting festive events. However, overt attempts to frame a holiday as 'celebrated during a particular season' or to replace one festive day with another were bound to fail. The vitality of a national holiday, is subject to its content, apprehensible to both the government structures and common citizens who observe the holiday. Throughout the period under consideration the Day of the Restoration of the State, celebrated on the 16th of February, best coincided with the aforementioned conditions. Although extremely unfavourable to public celebration, the birthday of the modern state of Lithuania is the only festival that retained the status of public holiday and non-working day both from 1919 to 1940 and after 1990, and surpasses in popularity other national holidays.

Keywords: national holidays, National Day, seasonality, ritual year, Lithuania

Introduction

As to the ritual year in a number of European countries, it can be stated that most calendar holidays in contemporary society are related to the Christian calendar. In this regard the ritual year is more or less global. However, the folk traditions

associated with the said holidays have retained certain local features that were determined by the natural and cultural environments and have little to do with the official religion. Lithuanian ethnologists have paid considerable attention to the research of calendar holidays. According to Libertas Klimka, the calendar is a very important attribute of ethnic culture. It reflects certain characteristics of the climate, peculiarities of agriculture and other sources of sustenance, social relations, and the distinctive features of spiritual culture (Klimka 1999: 179).

For example, when researching how the social activeness of young men and women in rural areas of Lithuania changed over the year in the late 19th-early 20th century, I arrived at the conclusion that these changes were subject to the rhythm of work and the perspective of the marriage season and measured up to the interests of an agricultural society. Changes in the activeness of different the sexes were usually related to one or other holiday and to the specific rituals performed either by men or women when rendering the holiday its particular features (Šaknys 2001). On the other hand, in modern society alongside the days dedicated to the commemoration of important events in Jesus', the Virgin Mary's, or other saints' lives, secular events of national importance are given the status of holiday and non-working day (Šaknys 2015: 103)[1].

The concept of a national holiday is a relatively new phenomenon. The political elite started creating them in the late 18th century for the sake of national solidarity (Hobsbawm 1983: 271–283), whereas in Eastern Europe they were introduced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when Eastern European countries started celebrating independence. These holidays were particularly important in the formation of national communities (Myerly, Hunt 2001: 198), and the system of national holidays, as an integral part of the nation-building process, played a critical role in the development and boosting of national identity (Anastasova 2011: 159). On the other hand, festive rituals reflect the society that generated them (Hornborg 2007: 83).

Therefore, the research of national holidays is important in order to understand a country's national culture. The structure of national holidays – official non-working days – in Lithuania is not yet firmly established and thus an object of continuous discussion. This means it is valid to analyse national holidays not only as rituals denoting a secular, ethnic or civic identity, but also from the point of view of seasonality, identifying their place in the structure of the ritual year.

From the first glance such research may seem impossible or at least irrational. Certain events of national importance (for example, declaration of independence, adoption of the constitution, etc.) are normally not coordinated in advance with dates favourable to their celebration. However, later, as the date of the event is turned into a holiday, it absorbs the value-related aspects of national identity and becomes more or less convenient for public celebration due to its position in the

annual cycle. During its 50 years of independence (1918–1940 and 1990–2018) Lithuania has had six national holidays, in addition to which Constitution Day was declared a non-working day for a short period and International Workers Day (1st of May)[2], which in Lithuania, contrary to some European countries, was not in any way associated with the traditional calendar, was from time to time celebrated as a public holiday.

Lithuanian National holidays

1919–1940, 1990–present: February 16, **The Day of the Restoration of the State**, associated with the declaration of Lithuania's independence in 1918.

1924–1928: May 15, **Day of Convening** *the* **Constituent Seimas** (Parliament) in 1920.

1929: August 15, the **Assumption – the combination of all national and state holidays into one.**

1930–1940: September 8, **the Day of the Coronation of Lithuanian Grand Duke Vytautas** (1430).

1990–present: July 6, **State Day**, honours the coronation of the country's first and only king, Mindaugas, in 1253.

1991–present: March 11, the **Day of the Restoration of Independence**, associated with the restoration of Lithuania's independence by the democratically elected parliament in 1990.

The seasonality of Lithuanian national holidays has already been analysed in several of my articles. Between 1988 and 1991, I carried out field research to collect ethnographic material on young people's free time activities and celebrations. A question regarding the celebration of the 16th of February – the Restoration of the State Day – in independent Lithuania (1918–1940) was included in the questionnaire. The research revealed certain problems associated with the celebration of the 16th of February during Lent (Šaknys 1992: 12). In 2018, based on field research as well as legal acts, memoirs of contemporaries and press publications, I reviewed all national holidays celebrated between 1919 and 1940. The research revealed not only the hierarchy of festivals but also discussions in the press regarding the introduction of a national holiday that would be celebrated "on a convenient date" (Šaknys 2018: 129–154). I came to the conclusion that the formation of national holidays is a complex phenomenon that does not end with their formal validation and the introduction of public celebration. Choosing the right time for the holiday, its coupling with historical events or Christian celebrations, and promotion

in the press, schools, and via youth organisations, does not necessarily guarantee its popularity or longevity (Šaknys 2018: 147).

This conclusion encouraged me to continue the research chronologically. This article, based on the abovementioned sources and research of the situation between 1990 and 2018 carried out between 2013 and 2018, is aimed at analysing the links between national holidays and seasonality in the 1918–1940 period and between 1990 and 2018. The article does not cover the period from 1940 to 1989 when Lithuania was under Soviet and Nazi occupation[3].

National Holidays between 1918 and 1940

The list of festivals and public holidays, especially religious ones, was quite constant between 1920 and 1940. In 1920, Lithuanians celebrated New Year's Day (1st of January), the Feast of the Epiphany (6th of January), St Casimir's Day (4th of March), St Joseph's Day (18th of March), Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday, Easter Monday, Ascension Day, Corpus Christi, St John's Day (24th of June, observed only in 1920), the Feast of St Peter and Paul (29th of June), the Feast of the Assumption (15th of August), All Saints' Day (1st of November), the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (8th of December), Christmas Eve (24th of December), and Christmas (25th and 26th of December). In some years, Pentecost Monday was observed as well (Šaknys 2018: 151). This was not the case with state holidays, with the exception of the Day of the Restoration of the State of Lithuania (16th of February).

Development of modern national holidays in the newly restored Republic of Lithuania was not an easy task. In contrast to religious celebrations, which had been observed for centuries and some of which were listed in the official Russian Empire lists of holiday non-working days (ditto the German Empire in the case of Lithuania Minor)[4], national holidays in Lithuania, which had just regained its statehood, were a completely new cultural phenomenon. Similar to most European countries, the Republic of Lithuania declared the day of signing the Act of Independence, 16th of February 1918, a national holiday. This became National Day and was the first secular holiday that had no direct association with the Church. In 1919 the celebration of the first anniversary of Lithuania's independence, despite the unstable political situation and the ongoing hostilities (the government was even forced to move from Vilnius to Kaunas), was expected to be quite solemn. The official newspaper *Lietuva* published the "National Day Event Program". The celebration in Kaunas featured high Mass with the participation of representatives of the State Council, the Cabinet, and local public organizations, a military parade, meetings in three venues around the city "to explain the idea of independence", and a solemn meeting of the State Council and the Cabinet in Kaunas city theatre, followed by a performance and a gala concert (Šaknys 2018: 134).

Cold weather was often mentioned in the press publications dedicated to this celebration – the 16th of February was not the most convenient time for official celebrations.

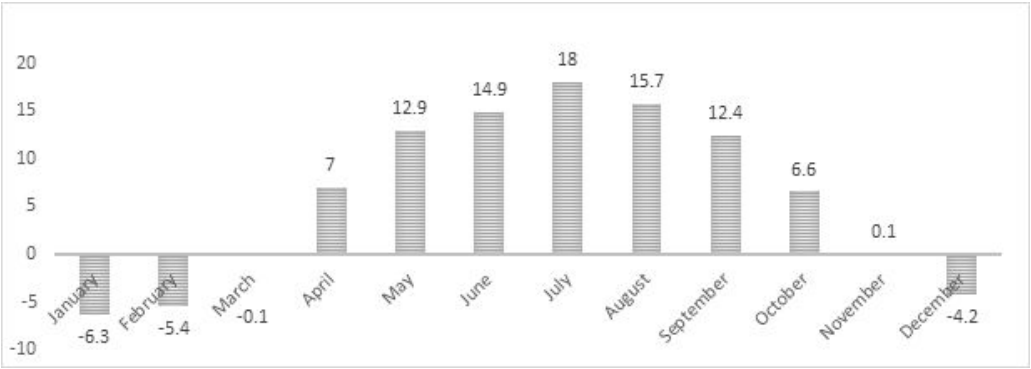

Fig. 1: Average monthly temperature in Vilnius between 1919 and 1929 (Žilinskas, Šulaitis, Čeikauskas 1932: 60)

Another problem was that more or less every three years this holiday fell during Lent. Lent was associated with fasting and limited entertainment and thus inconvenient for celebrations of such scale. It was not only the dominant Catholic Church that prohibited boisterous and merry celebrations during Lent, official legal acts also provided against them. Rules for the enforcement of the Law on Public Holidays and Non-working Days of 1930 prescribed that "concerts, performances and rehearsals thereof, public parties, dances, and other types of public entertainment" were forbidden during the first days of Lent (Švenčių ir poilsio jstatymui vykdyti taisyklės 1930: 4–5). On the 16th of February, however, such events were organised. Even in rural areas young people were at times allowed to have dance parties (Šaknys 1992: 12).

The creation of other national holidays followed shortly. On the 15th of May 1920 the Constituent Seimas was convened to consolidate Lithuania's independence. This date was made prominent nationwide. In 1924 this day was already referred to as the Day of the Nation's Freedom and hosted the solemnities that had been transferred from the 16th of February, whereas in 1925 it was validated as a holiday in the amended Law on Public Holidays and Non-working Days (Švenčių ir poilsio jstatymas 1925: 1). In 1925 the editorial of the official gazette *Lietuva* presented the holiday as consciously chosen:

> *The people have chosen the symbolic spring time – the most beautiful month of May – for its holiday, so that the rebirth of nature from the wasteland of winter and the bright blossoms and fresh greenery would make a perfect background for the expression of the nation's joy. Joy and the noble idea of life are incompatible*

> *with the nature of autumn and winter drifting towards death, but choose the time of the year when everything comes to life and manifests its will to live. The people celebrating a day in its spring life cannot get along without the charming sun and flowers* (Tautos šventę švenčiant 1925: 1).

Although this was the day when the new Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania was adopted, the 15th of May gradually lost its significance (Šaknys 2018: 138). It would seem that after the coup d'état of 1926, the 16th of February yet again became the most important holiday in Lithuania as Antanas Smetona, who became president after the coup, was the signatory of the Act on the 16th of February 1918. However, following the death of Dr Jonas Basanavičius, one of the principal ideologists of independent Lithuania, on the 16th of February 1927, the holiday was shaded with mourning. The next 16th of February was also quite solemnly commemorated as 1928 marked the 10-year anniversary of independence. In 1929, however, an unexpected decision was made as part of the process of national holiday formation. On the 14th of August the daily *Lietuvos aidas* featured an article stating that "Tomorrow we are celebrating the National Day. Our state has incorporated all national and church holidays into one National Day and dedicated the 15th of August – a church holiday – for this occasion". In 1929, the Assumption of Virgin Mary was declared the National Day, explaining in the editorial of the *Lietuvos aidas* that it was more convenient to celebrate in summer than in winter on the 16th of February or on the 15th of May when spring work was in full swing. The most convenient date for the National Day was the 15th of August, which was already a church holiday, so there would be no need for an additional day off (Tautos šventė 1929: 1). Apparently, this was relevant in the context of the global economic crisis, however, "*the combination of all national and state holidays into one*" could hardly create a celebration ritual worthy of attention. On the other hand, it is difficult to understand how the Assumption of the Virgin Mary could satisfy the inhabitants of the recently annexed Klaipėda Region where the Evangelical Lutheran faith prevailed. In the rest of Lithuania August was also not a free from work as the majority of the country's population lived in rural areas. The relative intensity of agricultural work becomes obvious from the chart drawn up on the 12th of April 1922 indicating the number of working hours assigned to manor workers (Morkūnas 1977: 160).

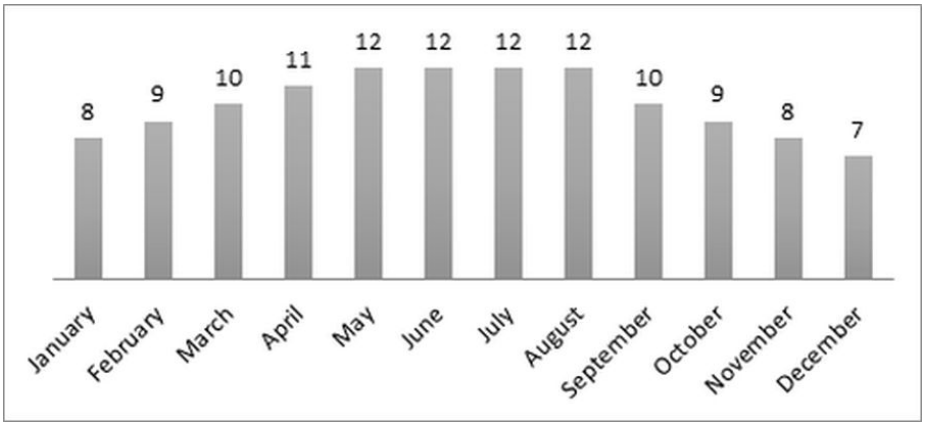

Fig. 2: Number of working hours per week, shown by month in 1922.
(Morkūnas 1977: 160)

Based on this chart, work intensity in May and August was similar. It is no wonder that the celebration of the National Day on the 15th of August lasted for one year only. This suggests that the artificially formed seasonality of a holiday can hardly serve as the basis for success. On the other hand, this was the single most important National Day that had no relation to events important to the state. The historicity of the holiday, however, was framed by creating a new National Day. The year 1930 was declared the year of Vytautas the Great. The celebrations culminated on the 8th of September 1930, a particularly solemn commemoration of the 500th anniversary of Grand Duke Vytautas planned coronation[5]. However, unlike previous cases, this time the press focused on the holiday's links with the country's glorious past rather than on the convenience of the date to the celebration (Smetona 1990: 398).

The 1930 Law on Public Holidays and Non-working Days allowed two holidays to be introduced to commemorate events of state importance, namely Independence Day on the 16th of February, and the 8th of September, which became National Day (Švenčių ir poilsio jstatymas 1930: 2–3). Both the holidays were formalised in the 1938 Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania and were referred to as national holidays without singling any holiday out (Lietuvos konstitucija 1938: 1). However, on the eve of World War II the 16th of February once again became the most important national holiday. In 1938, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the state, the celebration was particularly solemn and when, in 1939, Lithuania regained its capital Vilnius, where on the 16th of February 1918 the Independence Act had been signed, the celebration was exceptional, despite the severely cold February of 1940. Unfortunately, shortly afterwards Lithuania lost its statehood and the Soviet occupation regime replaced the 16th of February, alongside other holidays observed between 1918 and 1940 (with the exception of New Year), with revolutionary Soviet celebrations.

National Holidays between 1990 and 2019

Unlike the period between 1919 and 1940, there were no changes in the validated list of national holidays between 1990 and 2019. After the restoration of the independent Republic of Lithuania on the 11th of March 1990, this date soon became the Day of the Restoration of Lithuania's Independence. Alongside New Year (1st of January), Easter Sunday and Monday, International Workers' Day (1st of May), Mother's Day (first Sunday in May), Assumption (15th of August), All Saints' Day (1st of November), and Christmas (25th and 26th of December)[6] the Law on Public Holidays, adopted by the Supreme Council Reconstituent Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on the 25th of October 1990, listed the 16th of February – Restoration of the State Day –, and the 6th of July – State Day (Day of King Mindaugas' Coronation) –, as public holidays and non-working days. Shortly afterwards the 11th of March – the Day of the Restoration of Lithuania's Independence –, was also declared a public holiday. Thereby events of national importance were simultaneously reflected in three holidays and, unlike in the inter-war period, none of them was singled out as more significant than the others.

Meanwhile, the Day of the Constituent Assembly of Lithuania (together with the International Day of Families) and the Day of the Coronation of Vytautas the Great (the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and from 1991 also Thanksgiving for Independence and Defending Lithuania's Freedom) only have the status of commemorative days[7]. Assumption, a public holiday, has not been observed as a National holiday (Šaknys 2018: 153–154).

The celebration of the 11th of March in pious Roman Catholic families is even more complicated than the celebration of the 16th of February, as the 11th of March in all cases falls on Lent. As a matter of fact, the number of religious people in the late 20th and early 21st centuries Lithuania has decreased. Not everyone observes Lent, and young people do not normally follow restrictions on entertainment. Moreover, unlike during the inter-war period, there is no law imposing restrictions on public events during Lent. On the 16th of February 2018, when the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the state fell on the first Friday of Lent, the Lithuanian Bishops' Conference officially released the congregation from fasting, i.e. the obligation to refrain from meat dishes (Vilniaus arkivyskupija). The mood of the latter celebration is also adjusted by its chronological proximity to Valentine's Day, which in Lithuania has been celebrated since around 1993–1995 (it was feared that Valentine's Day could overshadow Restoration of the State-related celebrations) and on some occasions even Mardi Gras, a merry celebration with traditional dressing up (in 1999 and 2010 Mardi Gras was celebrated on the 16th of February). The only holiday close to the 11th of March is International Women's Day, on the 8th of March, which has recently significantly decreased in popularity.

The commemoration of Lithuania's two restoration dates (16th of February 1918 and 11th of March 1990) was supplemented with the coronation day of Mindaugas, the first King of Lithuania. This day is related to the establishment of the state of Lithuania following Mindaugas' elevation to King of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in July of 1253. The exact date of the event is unknown; therefore, the date of the holiday was chosen from four possible options (the coronation took place on a Sunday in July). Theoretically the 6th of July should be an ideal day for celebration, particularly among urban dwellers whose means of sustenance are not directly related to agriculture. There are no chronologically close holidays that might overshadow the 6th of July (the closest important celebration is St John's Day on the 24th of June).

As suggested by Laima Anglickienė and her colleagues' assessment, what makes it different from other national holidays is fewer official events and the increasing popularity of various entertaining public events related to Lithuania's history and culture. For example, the Days of Live Archaeology in Kernavė, the ancient capital of Lithuania, or the events of Culture Night in Vilnius Old Town are always swarming with visitors. There is also a beautiful unique tradition originating from a public initiative of singing the national anthem – V. Kudirka's "Tautiška giesmė" – at 9 pm on the 6th of July at a pre-arranged place or at home together with all Lithuanians in the motherland and around the world. Mindaugas' Coronation Day is also distinguished by the abundance of concerts, and cultural and sports events (Anglickienė *et al.* 2014: 168–169). However, based on public opinion poll data this holiday is not particularly popular. Results derived by sociologist Jolanta Kuznecovienė in 2005, regarding the situation around all Lithuania, are as follows: 31.6% of respondents attributed the 16th of February to the five most important public holidays, 22.4% indicated that the 11th of March should also be on this list, and only 7.5% chose the 6th of July (Kuznecovienė 2008: 83). This study is seconded by the ethnological research carried out in 2012–2013 in the city of Vilnius which suggested that the 6th of July, being a non-working day, was not ranked among the 12 most popular recently observed family celebrations (Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2016: 13). Comparison of the two independence days revealed a slight preference for the 16th of February (Mardosa 2016: 111–112). The research suggests that the popularity of public holidays has little to do with seasonality. This is again confirmed by my research on the attitude of young Vilnius residents to calendar and national holidays, carried out between 2013 and 2016 (40 respondents were asked to indicate where they celebrated a particular holiday last time). Most respondents indicated that they celebrated the 16th of February and the 11th of March in Vilnius, while on the 6th of July they were visiting other towns.

Holiday	Celebrated with family	Celebrated with friends	Celebrated with co-workers	Not celebrated at all	Celebrated as one of the three most important holidays with friends
Restoration of the State Day	8	11	5	17	3
Restoration of Lithuania's Independence Day	5	11	4	20	0
Mindaugas' Coronation Day	4	7	6	23	2

Table 1. National Holidays in Vilnius (2013–2016)

A similar situation is reflected in my research in the Vilnius region conducted in 2017–2018. In fact, the popularity of the 6th of July might be higher in those towns which host major events, for example Kernavė. As Laurent Sébastien Fournier has observed, not all people view festivals as an opposition between work and play (Fournier 2019: 15). For those involved in their organisation it is usually a hard-working day when, according to them, "there is no time for celebration" because "it is the hardest day in the year". On the other hand, it is also an occasion when one can be visited by guests and have a joint celebration. Field research data suggest that national holidays are not particularly popular in towns and villages outside Vilnius, especially the 6th of July, which, due to its informal character, could theoretically be an important celebration among young people. It would seem that July is the perfect time for public events in Lithuania. Most of the celebrations that take place on that day could hardly be organised on the 16th of February or the 11th of March because of the weather, and because of Lent. In addition, at that time Catholics have no restrictions on their choice of food or merrymaking. However, the celebration of the 6th of July in Lithuania has not yet acquired a scope similar to the celebration of the 4th of July in the United States. This is already the period of the holidays in Lithuania and schools, colleges, and universities are closed. Few people remain in the largest cities, so apparently it is more difficult to attract people to the previously mentioned events than in winter or spring.

What is the difference between these three holidays? Let us compare the official scenarios of the three festivals in 2019 as posted on Vilnius events website. The official ceremony of the commemoration of the 101st anniversary of Lithuania's independence on the 16th of February 2019 opened with the honouring of the signatories of the Independence Act signed on the 16th of February 1918 at Rasos cemetery, followed by a patriotic young people's walk given the name Following the Road of Statehood, a flag raising ceremony involving the flags of the three

Baltic States on Simonas Daukantas Square, high Mass at Vilnius Cathedral, and a ceremony outside the House of Signatories (where the Act was signed in 1918). In addition, events related to the anti-Soviet movement were planned, including a ceremony on the square outside the Ministry of Defence near the monument to General Jonas Žemaitis-Vytautas, Chairman of the Union of Lithuanian Freedom Fighters and signatory of the declaration of the 16th of February 1949[8]. To commemorate the 70th anniversary of the declaration, 70 bonfires were lit along Gediminas avenue and a pop concert dedicated to the 16th of February was organised on Cathedral Square (Vilnius kviečia vasario 16-ąją švęsti kartu (Renginių programa)). The official commemoration of the 29th anniversary of the restoration of Lithuania's independence, on the 11th of March 2019, consisted of the flag raising ceremony of the three Baltic States on Independence square, a walk carrying the 400-metre-long flag of Lithuania, Doors Open Day at the Seimas and other locations, free excursions around Vilnius, and high Mass at Vilnius Cathedral. In the Town Hall the youngest citizens of Vilnius received well-deserved awards in the spheres of science, culture and art, sport, and voluntary work. Students of the Military Academy of Lithuania lit bonfires on Stalo hill in Vilnius. In addition, a walk to Medininkai castle and the memorial to Lithuanian customs officers killed on the night of the 31st of July 1991 was organised, various sports competitions, quiz programs, and other educational activities were planned. The Church of St Johns and the Teachers' House hosted festive concerts (Ką veikti kovo 11-ąją Vilniuje? (renginių kalendorius)).

According to the scenario presented in advance to Vilnius residents, the commemoration of the 766th anniversary of the coronation of King Mindaugas, on the 6th of July 2019, included a picknick on Lukiškės square, festive events in the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania (exhibitions, lectures, documentaries, concerts, sports events, cultural studies), a jubilee run around the Green Lakes outside Vilnius, and a celebration on the Hill of Angels in Trakai district. This celebration included the participation of the Lithuanian Armed Forces Band followed by the singing of the national anthem and waving of a 60-metre national flag. The national anthem was also to be sung in Akropolis, one of the largest shopping malls in Vilnius, and in Lentvaris on the outskirts of the capital (following a concert by the choir of political prisoners and exiles). Vilnius University Botanical Gardens (located in Kairėnai just outside Vilnius) organised a flower exhibition entitled Lilies for King Mindaugas' Crown. Kernavė hosted one of the most important events on the occasion, the 20th festival of experimental archaeology, titled the Days of Live Archaeology in Kernavė, dedicated to the 740th anniversary of the first mention of Kernavė and the 40th anniversary of archaeological research. The three-day festival offered its guests the possibility to listen to Baltic music, observing ancient crafts, outfits, and warfare and an opportunity to try to make something with their own

hands (Kur švęsti Liepos 6 d. Vilniuje? (Lietuvos Karaliaus Mindaugo karūnavimo dienos renginių gidas 2019)). Despite the similar programs, the summer festival exploited the possibility of covering a greater variety of events and expand the space of the celebration in Vilnius from the city centre (on the 16th of February), to the surrounding hills and to the town of Medininkai in the Vilnius district (on the 11th of March), to the surroundings of Trakai outside Vilnius district, and to the first capital of Lithuania, Kernavė, in Širvintos district (on the 6th of July). However, according to the research of both ethnologists and sociologists, the seasonality of the festival cannot be coupled with its popularity, while the action-packed program does not necessarily make the festival the model of success for a national holiday. This helps explain why the 16th of February, which is least suitable for celebration from the point of view of seasonality, has retained its status as the most popular national holiday between 1919 and 1940, during the occupations, and after 1990.

Conclusions

The research aimed to compare six national holidays introduced in Lithuania between 1919 and 1991 and their manifestations between 1919 and 2019. These holidays are more or less related with the country's history, with their dates covering the four seasons of the year. The research revealed that the seasonality of a festival – natural and climatic conditions, relations with agricultural work or the dominant holiday season, religious, ideological or other restrictions on the celebration – has limited possibilities to shape the festival by adjusting festive events. However, overt attempts to frame a holiday as 'celebrated during a particular season' or to replace one festive day with another were bound to fail. The vitality of a national holiday is, subject to its content, apprehensible to both the government structures and common citizens who observe the holiday. Throughout the period under consideration the Day of the Restoration of the State, celebrated on the 16th of February, best complied with the abovementioned conditions. Although extremely unfavourable to public celebration, the birthday of the modern state of Lithuania is the only festival that retained the status of public holiday and non-working day both from 1919 to 1940 and after 1990, and surpasses in popularity other national holidays.

Notes

[1] Until 1918 most of the territory of present-day Lithuania was part of the Russian Empire and until 1923 the western part of the country belonged to the German Empire. Secular holidays related to certain events in the emperors and their family members' lives were celebrated.

[2] The concept of the national holiday will be used to denote political rituals that have no religious background and were developed in the Modern Age to nurture loyalty to the nation

and the state (Hobsbawm 1983: 271; Bell 1997: 128–137), therefore International Workers' Day is not listed among such holidays. On the 8th of September 1920, the Lithuanian government approved the list of public authorities' non-working days which, alongside "church celebrations" and other "public holidays", included two national holidays, i.e. the 16th of February, the Day of the Declaration of Lithuania's Independence, and the 1st of May, Workers' Solidarity Day. However, according to Vladas Sirutavičius, the 1st of May, though being a non-working day, was never actually officially celebrated until 1930 (Sirutavičius 2001: 137). Later, the revival of this festival came with the Soviet and Nazi occupations of Lithuania. Following the declaration of independence in 1990, this festival was in the list of non-working days, however, was soon removed. In 1996, the 1st of May regained its status as a non-working day. In 2004, on this day Lithuania joined the European Union, so for a few years in a row there were attempts to mark this occasion, but the celebrations did not gain ground. To date, the holiday has not been celebrated in any particular way and there are discussions regarding its removal from the list of non-working days.

[3] Alongside Soviet and Nazi holidays, festivals typical only of Lithuania were celebrated. By the order of the Presidium of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic Supreme Council of the 11th of October 1940, the 21st of July – the declaration of Lithuania as a Soviet republic – was declared a public holiday, whereas in the years of Nazi occupation the 22nd of June – the Day of Lithuania's "Liberation" – became a public holiday by the Commissioner General's order of the 6th of April 1943 (Laukaitytė 2010: 123).

[4] Until World War I the western part of Lithuania, the so-called Klaipėda region, was part of the German Empire and was attached to Lithuania only in 1923. The rest of Lithuania was part of the Russian Empire from 1795.

[5] The coronation of Vytautas the Great (1350–1430), the Grand Duke of Lithuania, was scheduled for the 8th of September 1430, however, for political reasons the coronation never took place.

[6] In 2004 St John's Day was added to the list of non-working days, and in 2006 the list was supplemented with the 1st of May (which after 1990 was removed from the list) and in 2012 with Christmas Eve.

[7] The Law on Commemorative Days of the Republic of Lithuania adopted on the 3rd of July 1997 validated the list of commemorative days, filled with important historical and political events. The commemorative day is defined as an important day related to the most important facts and/or events in the development or establishment of Lithuania's statehood, promotion of universal values, preservation of memory culture and living history. Today, there are 69 commemorative days on the list (Lietuvos Respublikos Atmintinų dienų įstatymas).

[8] The Declaration, together with other documents adopted at the Congress of Lithuanian Partisan Commanders provided legal and political bases for armed resistance, rendered a new format for the struggle for freedom, and legitimised the Union of Lithuanian Freedom Fighters as an organisation of the universal organised armed resistance against the Soviet occupation and its Council as the sole legitimate authority in the territory of occupied Lithuania. At the Congress of Lithuanian Partisan Commanders that took place in February 1949 J. Žemaitis (15th of March 1909–26th of November 1954) was elected Chairman of the Council of the Union of Lithuanian Freedom Fighters and was the acting Chief of the Defence Forces (Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimų centras).

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Biographical note

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Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore
The Ritual Year Working Group

An inaugural meeting proposing the establishment of a SIEF working group on "The Ritual Year" was held at the Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh, on 11 July 2003. The meeting was convened by Emily Lyle who had previously prepared a proposal and approached the SIEF President, Regina Bendix. Based on the general topic of ritual activities, customs and festive celebrations throughout the yearly calendric cycle, The Ritual Year Working Group was officially established on 29 April 2004, during the 8th Congress of the International Society of Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF), in Marseille.

Since, the working group has organised fifteen conferences and nineteen panels; it has published twelve volumes of The Ritual Year Working Group's Yearbook series, as well as various other volumes reuniting the WG's panel papers; in October 2020 the working group started The Ritual Year Seasonal Webinars series.

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Conferences of The Ritual Year WG

20–24 March 2005, First Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), Department of Maltese, University of Malta, Junior College, Msida, Malta.

7–11 June 2006, Second Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), *The Ritual Year and Ritual Diversity*, Institute for Dialectology, Onomastics and Folklore Research, Gothenburg, Sweden.

25–29 May 2007, Third Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), *Ritual Year and History*, National Institute of Folk Culture, Strážnice, Czech Republic.

22–26 June 2008, Fourth Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), *Ritual Year and Gender*, Folklore and Ethnology Department, University College Cork, Ireland.

2–6 July 2009, Fifth Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), *The Power of the Mask*, , Vytautas Magnus University**,** Kaunas**,** Lithuania.

4–7 June 2010, Sixth Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), *The Inner and the Outer*, Estonian Literary Museum, Folklore Archive, Tallinn, Estonia.

10–13 November 2011, Seventh Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), *Performer, Performance, Researcher. Co-Designing Heritage, Co-Designing Performance*, Institute of Slovenian Ethnology Scientific Research Centre, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

26–29 June 2012, Eight Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), *Migrations*, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, and "Paisii Hilendarski" University of Plovdiv, Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

14–16 March 2013, Ninth Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), *Politics, Feasts, Festivals*, Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Szeged, "Bálint Sándor" Institute for the Study of Religion, Szeged, Hungary.

25–28 September 2014, Tenth Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), *Magic in Rituals and Rituals in Magic*, Institute for History and European Ethnology, University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria.

4–7 June 2015, Eleventh Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), *Traditions and Transformation*", Kazan Federal University, Kazan (Volga Region), Russia.

8–12 January 2016, Twelfth Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), *Regulating customs*, Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, Findhorn, Scotland.

7–9 November 2018, Thirteenth Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), *City Rituals*, Institute of Sociology, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania.

1–4 June 2022, Fourteenth Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), *Commerce and Traditions,* National Library of Latvia, Riga, Latvia.

11–13 December 2024, Fifteenth Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), *Food, Feasts, Festivities & Folklore,* University of the Philippines Diliman, Manila, Philippines.

The Ritual Year WG panels

16–20 June 2008, 9th SIEF Congress, *Liberating the Ethnological Imagination*, Derry, Northern Ireland. The Ritual Year WG panels: *The Ritual Year and Folk Religion I*, *The Ritual Year and Folk Religion II* and *Masks and Mumming in the Nordic Area*.

17–21 April 2011, 10th SIEF Congress, *People Make Places – ways of feeling the world*, Lisbon, Portugal. The Ritual Year WG panels: P204 *Ritual places through the ritual year* (*I)* (https://nomadit.co.uk/conference/10#740), convenors Laurent Fournier and Irina Sedakova; P230 *Ritual places through the ritual year (II)* (https://nomadit.co.uk/conference/10#903), convenors Laurent Fournier and Irina Sedakova.

30 June – 4 July 2013, 11th SIEF Congress, *Circulation*, Tartu, Estonia. The Ritual Year WG panels: The Ritual Year WG panel: P10 *Differentiation of the ritual year(s) through time and space: selectivity and its reasons* (https://nomadit.co.uk/conference/21#1856), convenors Laurent Fournier and Irina Sedakova.

21–25 June 2015, 12th SIEF Congress, *Utopias, Realities, Heritages. Ethnographies for the 21st century*, Zagreb, Croatia. The Ritual Year WG panels: Heri013 *Folk costume in the ritual year and beyond: heritage, identity marker & symbolic object* (https://nomadit.co.uk/conference/38#3462), convenors Irina Sedakova and Nina Vlaskina; Reli005 *The transformation of traditional rituals: imposed change or natural evolution?* (https://nomadit.co.uk/conference/38#3409), convenor Irina Stahl.

26–30 March 2017, 13th SIEF Congress, *Ways of Dwelling: Crisis – Craft – Creativity,* Göttingen, Germany. The Ritual Year WG panels: Sui06 *Statics vs. dynamics, nature vs. culture in the dwelling-connected practices of the ritual year* (https://nomadit.co.uk/conference/48#4996), convenors Nina Vlaskina and Irina Sedakova; Urba07 *Dwelling in the festive city* (https://nomadit.co.uk/conference/48#4916), convenors Tobias Boos and Fabio Mugnaini.

14–17 April 2019, 14th SIEF Congress, *Track changes: Reflecting on a transforming world,* Santiago de Compostela, Spain. The Ritual Year WG panel: *Tracking the ritual year on the move in different cultural settings and systems of values* (https://www.siefhome.org/congresses/sief2019/panels.shtml#7122), convenors Irina Sedakova and Laurent Fournier.

19–24 June 2021, 15th SIEF Congress, *Breaking the rules? Power, participation, transgression,* Helsinki, Finland (online). The Ritual Year WG panels and roundtable: Perf01a,b *Calendric rituals: a time to break the rules(I and II)* (https://www.siefhome.org/congresses/sief2021/panels#9568, https://www.siefhome.org/congresses/sief2021/panels#10595), convenors Irina Sedakova and Laurent Fournier; Perf03a,b,c *Old rituals, changing environments, new rules (I and II panels; III roundtable)* (https://www.siefhome.org/congresses/sief2021/panels#9591, https://www.siefhome.org/congresses/sief2021/panels#10633, https://www.siefhome.org/congresses/sief2021/panels#10634), convenors Nina Vlaskina and Irina Stahl.

27–28 October 2022, 10th International Conference *Synergies in Communication* (SiC2022), Bucharest, Romania (online). The Ritual Year WG panel: Panel5 *Synergies in rituals and folklore texts* (https://sic.ase.ro/wp-content/uploads/SiC2022_Final-Conference-Program_28-oct_FINAL.pdf), chairs Irina Sedakova and Irina Stahl.

7–10 June 2023, 16th SIEF Congress, *Living Uncertainty,* Brno, Czech Republic. The Ritual Year WG panels: Perf01 *Uncertainty, improvisation and constancy in the ritual year*

(https://www.siefhome.org/congresses/sief2023/programme#12680), convenors Laurent Fournier and Irina Sedakova; Reli06 *Rituals of faith and religion during uncertain times* (https://www.siefhome.org/congresses/sief2023/programme#12828), convenors Irina Stahl, Maria Bernadette L. Abrera and Jesus Federico Hernandez.

3–6 June 2025, 17th SIEF congress, *Unwriting,* Aberdeen, Scotland. The Ritual Year WG panels: Perf03 *Writing and Unwriting Rituals* (https://www.siefhome.org/congresses/sief2025/programme#16173), convenors Jesus Federico Hernandez and Mary Josefti Nito; Perf05 *Un-writing and reshaping the ord rural ritual year in the new urban setting* (https://www.siefhome.org/congresses/sief2025/programme#16205), convenors Irina Sedakova and Irina Stahl.

The Ritual Year Working Group's Yearbook series

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Midholm, Lina and Nordström, Annika (eds.). *The Ritual Year 2: The Ritual Year and Ritual Diversity* [Proceedings of the Second Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), Gothenburg, Sweden, 7–11 June 2006]. Gothenburg: Institutet för språk och folkminnen, 2007, 377 p.

Sedakova, Irina (ed.). *The Ritual Year 3: The Ritual Year and History* [Proceedings of the Third Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), Strážnice, Czech Republic, 25–29 May 2007]. Strážnice: Národní ústav lidovè kultury, 2008, 208 p.

Butler, Jenny (ed.). *The Ritual Year 4: The Ritual Year and Gender* [Proceedings of the Fourth Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), Cork, Ireland, 22–26 June 2008]. Edinburgh: Traditional Cosmology Society (a joint publication with Cosmos 25), 2011, 251 p.

Vaičekauskas, Arūnas (ed.). *The Ritual Year 5: The Power of the Mask* [Proceedings of the Fifth Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), Kaunas, Lithuania, 2–6 July 2007]. Kaunas: Vitautas Magnus University, 2013, 150 p.

Kõiva, Mare (ed.). *The Ritual Year 6: The Inner and the Outer* [Proceedings of the Sixth Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), Tallinn, Estonia, 4–7 June 2010]. Tartu: ELM Scholarly Press, 2011, 400 p.

Fikfak, Jurij and Fournier, Laurent Sébastien (eds.). *The Ritual Year 7: The Interplay of Performances, Performers, Researchers, and Heritages* [Proceedings of the Seventh Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), Ljubljana, Slovenia, 11–13 November 2011]. Ljubljana: ZRC Publishing, 2012, 270 p.

Gergova, Lina and Parusheva, Dobrinka (eds.). *The Ritual Year 8: Migration* [Proceedings of the Eighth Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), Plovdiv, Bulgaria, 26–29 June 2012]. Sofia: Paradigma, 2014, 484 p.

Barna, Gábor and Povedák, István (eds.). *The Ritual Year 9: Politics, Feasts, Festivals* [Proceedings of the Ninth Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), Szeged, Hungary, 14–16 March 2013]. Szeged: Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, 2014, 283 p.

Minniyakhmetova, Tatiana and Velkoborská, Kamila (eds.). *The Ritual Year 10. Magic in Rituals and Rituals in Magic* [Proceedings of the Tenth Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), Innsbruck, Austria, 25–28 September 2014]. Innsbruck–Tartu: ELM Scholarly Press, 2015, 598 p.

Stolyarova, Guzel; Sedakova, Irina and Vlaskina, Nina (eds.). *The Ritual Year 11: Traditions and Transformation* [Proceedings of the Eleventh Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), Innsbruck, Austria, 25–28 September 2014]. Kazan–Moscow: T8, 2016, 296 p.

McKean, Thomas A. (ed.). *The Ritual Year 12: Regulating Customs* [Proceedings of the Twelfth Conference of The Ritual Year WG (SIEF), Findhorn, Scotland, 8–12 January 2016]. Moscow: Polymedia, 2021, 205 p.

Other working group publications

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Sedakova, Irina and Vlaskina, Nina (guest editors). *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore*, vol. 66: *Folk costume*, 2016, 207 p. https://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol66/

Stahl, Irina (guest editor). *Revista Română de Sociologie* [Romanian Journal of Sociology], XXVII, nos. 1-2: *Transformation of Traditional Rituals*, Bucharest, 2016, 162 p. https://www.revistadesociologie.ro/content/nr-1-2-2016

Fournier, Laurent Sébastien and Sedakova, Irina (guest eds.). *The Yearbook of Balkan and Baltic Studies,* vol. 3: *Tracking the ritual year on the move in different cultural Settings and Systems of Values*, Vilnius–Tartu–Sofia–Riga, 2020, 254 p.

Sedakova, Irina; Vlaskina, Nina and Stahl, Irina (guest eds.). *The Yearbook of Balkan and Baltic Studies,* vol.5: *Memory, Tradition and Ritual in the Balkan and Baltic Contexts*, ELM Scholarly Press, Vilnius-Tartu-Sofia-Riga, 2022, 327p. https://www.folklore.ee/balkan_baltic_yearbook/YBBS/issue/view/vol5/55

Sedakova, Irina; Vlaskina, Nina and Fournier, Laurent S. (guest eds.). *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore*, vol. 87, 2022, 263 p. https://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol87/

The Ritual Year WG's publications (in pdf format), as well as the recordings of The Ritual Year Seasonal Webinars are available on the SIEF website: www.siefhome.org/wg/ry.

Pictures from the 13th Ritual Year WG conference, *City Rituals,* Bucharest, Romania, 7–9 November 2018

Fig. 1: Opening of the 13th Ritual Year WG (SIEF) conference, *City Rituals,* at The House of the Academy, Bucharest, Romania. From the left to the right: Laurent S. Fournier, Irina Sedakova, Acad. Cornelia-Sabina Ispas, Irina Stahl. 7 November 2018. Photo: Ion Şerban.

Fig. 2: The audience during the opening of the 13th Ritual Year WG (SIEF) conference, *City Rituals,* at The House of the Academy, Bucharest, Romania. 7 November 2018. Photo: Ion Șerban.

Fig. 3: Plenary session: Academician Cornelia-Sabina Ispas during her keynote speech, *Processions and religious celebrations in the city: New trends and* terminology. The 13th Ritual Year WG (SIEF) conference, *City Rituals,* The House of the Academy, Bucharest, Romania. 7 November 2018. Photo: Ion Șerban.

Fig. 4: Plenary session: Laurent Sébastien Fournier during his keynote speech, *City rituals in the "longue durée": Permanence and change.* The 13th Ritual Year WG (SIEF) conference, *City Rituals,* The House of the Academy, Bucharest, Romania. 7 November 2018. Photo: Ion Șerban.

Fig. 5: Panel 1.B *Rituals of Body Modification.* Alexander Novik, presenting *Male circumcision: A custom among urban and rural populations of the Western Balkans.* The 13th Ritual Year WG (SIEF) conference, *City Rituals,* The House of the Academy, Bucharest, Romania. 7 November 2018. Photo: Ion Șerban.

Fig. 6: Panel 2.C *Folk Orthodoxy and the ritual year.* Ksenia Klimova, presenting *Folk Orthodoxy in contemporary Greek city culture.* The 13th Ritual Year WG (SIEF) conference, *City Rituals,* The House of the Academy, Bucharest, Romania. 7 November 2018. Photo: Ion Şerban.

Fig. 7: Panel 2.B *Documenting old and new rituals within the ritual year.* Digne Üdre presenting *Contemporary calendar: Virtual ethnography as a research method for a ritual year.* The 13th Ritual Year WG (SIEF) conference, *City Rituals,* The House of the Academy, Bucharest, Romania. 7 November 2018. Photo: Ion Şerban.

Fig. 8: Bucharest city tour: the conference participants visiting the National Village Museum "Dimitrie Gusti". 8 November 2018. Photo: Irina Stahl.

Fig. 9: Bucharest city tour: the conference participants visiting the National Village Museum "Dimitrie Gusti". 8 November 2018. Photo: Žilvytis Šaknys.

Fig. 10: Bucharest city tour: the conference participants visiting the Visual Archive of the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant. 8 November 2018. Photo: Irina Stahl

Fig. 11: Walking tour: the conference participants at Radu Vodă Monastery in Bucharest, taking part in Saint Nektarios' feast. 9 November 2018. Photo: Tatiana Minniyachmetova

Fig. 12: Walking tour: the conference participants at Radu Vodă Monastery in Bucharest, taking part in Saint Nektarios' feast. 9 November 2018. Photo: Tatiana Minniyachmetova

Fig. 13: Walking tour: the conference participants at the Romanian Patriarchate, posing in front of the Parliament building (former House of the People). 9 November 2018. Photo: Tatiana Minniyachmetova.

Fig. 14: Excursion: the conference participants at the Pelişor Castle, in Sinaia. 10 November 2018. Photo: Irina Stahl.

Fig. 15: Excursion: the conference participants visiting the fortified Saxon church in Prejmer. 10 November 2018. Photo: Irina Stahl.

Fig. 16: Excursion: the conference participants during dinner, after visiting the Museum of Urban Civilization in Brașov. 10 November 2018. Photo: Irina Stahl.

List of Authors

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